

CYRUS THE 'SERVANT OF JEHOVAH'

Isa. xlii 1-4 (7)

FOR the last thirty or forty years most critics have detached four passages (Isa. xlii 1-4 (7); xlix 1-6; l 4-9; lii 13-liii 12) from the work of Deutero-Isaiah, and have assigned them to another hand. They are treated as forming a separate work, and have received the title of the 'Songs of the Servant of JEHOVAH'. The best known of these passages is of course lii 13-liii 12, the lament uttered (as it seems) over a martyr, which begins with the words, 'Behold my servant shall deal wisely', and ends, 'He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors'.

Forty years ago most scholars maintained more or less firmly that the 'Servant of JEHOVAH' in these four passages was meant to represent the *nation of Israel* idealized and personified as an individual. (See, for instance, S. R. Driver *Isaiah* pp. 176 ff, second edition, 1893.) This interpretation is an old one: it is found in LXX, which paraphrases the Hebrew of xlii 1 a בְּהַרְי רַצְתָּה נַפְשִׁי בּוֹ, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth' in the words, Ἰακώβ ὁ παῖς μου, ἀντιλήμφομαι αὐτοῦ· Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου, προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἢ ψυχὴ μου. With this Rashi (*in loco*) agrees, but Aben Ezra (*in loco*, ed. M. Friedlaender, London, 1877), while he says that most interpreters take it to mean the 'Righteous Ones of Israel' (צְדִיקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), mentions that the Gaon (i. e. Saadia) explained it of Cyrus. The Gaon's own comment is unfortunately lost. 'My own opinion', Aben Ezra adds, 'is that the Servant is the Prophet.' The Targum has הֵן עַבְרֵי מְשִׁיחָא, 'Behold my servant Messiah'.

The view that an individual is meant and not the nation, nor the righteous kernel of the nation, has certainly gained ground of late. In 1901 E. Sellin maintained in his *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der jüdischen Gemeinde*, first, that the *Gottesknecht* was 'kein Kollektivum', and, secondly, that 'Der Gottesknecht ist weder ein Prophet noch ein Thoralehrer, sondern ein zur Leitung des neuen Gottesreiches bestimmter Davidide'. We may note that Sellin thought of the Servant as in effect a King. Sellin's later view (*Introduction to O.T.* pp. 142 ff, E.T., 1923) is that the Servant is Moses. 'As the book of Malachi (4. 5 f) sets its hopes on the return of Elijah, so Deutero-Isaiah hopes for the return of Moses,' cf. Mt. 17. 1-13, and assumes that he will lead back to their homes the Jews liberated by the favour of Cyrus. . . . In the third edition of his Commentary (1914) Duhm still wrote, 'Er (the Servant) ist nicht eigentlich ein Prophet, sondern ein Propheten-

jünger, ein Thoralehrer'. In 1921 S. Mowinckel (*Der Knecht Jahwäs* p. 9) identified the Servant with Deutero-Isaiah himself. Several critics followed him, and W. Rudolph in *Z.A.W.* (1928) writes that the rejection of the collective meaning of the title is prevailing more and more among Old Testament scholars in Germany (p. 156).

The great diversity of opinion as to the person of the Servant of JEHOVAH is the inevitable result, I believe, of treating the four passages as forming a kind of unity. They are in fact an unhappy group. In the first place (except perhaps in the case of lii 13–liii 12) they exhibit no marked characteristics to distinguish them from the work of Deutero-Isaiah, and (as some recent critics confess) they fit their traditional context quite well. Secondly, except possibly for the fourth 'Song', there is no obvious boundary line rounding off each 'Song' as a unit. We have to ask, Does the Song-passage at the beginning of xlii end with v. 4 (Duhm) or with v. 7 (Mowinckel)? Does the 'Song' in ch. xlix really stop at v. 6? And in ch. l must we believe that v. 10 is by a later hand? It looks like a vigorous continuation of the vigorous vv. 4–9. Above all must lii 13–liii 12 of necessity be treated as a member of the group? Is it not rather to be reckoned a unique passage in the Old Testament? It has not much in common even with the second and third 'Songs' (xlix 1–6 and l 4–9), and with xlii 1–4 (7) it has simply nothing to do. Ch. xlii 1–4 (7) describes the triumphant progress of a conqueror; lii 13–liii 12 the patient submission of a martyr. There is nothing to link the two passages except the occurrence in each of the expression, 'Behold, my servant' (הן עבדִי).

The description 'Servant of JEHOVAH' or 'My Servant' which (expressed or understood) is taken to be characteristic in these four passages, is in fact applied in the Old Testament with a disconcerting freedom. Abraham (Gen. xxvi 24), Moses (Num. xii 7; cf. Deut. xxxiv 5), Caleb (Num. xiv 24), David (2 Sam. vii 5), Eliakim the steward of Hezekiah (Isa. xxii 20), Nebuchadrezzar (Jer. xxv 9), and Job (Job i 8) each in turn is called by JEHOVAH, 'My Servant'. Finally, He gives the title 'My Servants' (in the plural) to His prophets in Zech. i 6 and to the faithful Israelites in general in Isa. lxxv 9. Any man, in short, Israelite or heathen, who carries out JEHOVAH'S will, whether tribal leader, priest, king, prime minister, foreign king, or patriarch, may be called 'Servant of JEHOVAH'. If this title be taken as a link to bind these four passages together, it is a very weak link.

In a short commentary on Isaiah published some years ago (Methuen, London, 1903) I took the view that the description of the Servant of JEHOVAH given in xlii 1–4 points quite clearly to Cyrus the rebuilder of the Temple (in intention) and so the restorer of the Jewish people. It will be realized from what has been already said that there is nothing

in the O.T. which forbids us to discover Cyrus in the description of the Servant of JEHOVAH.

On the contrary there is a clear precedent for the application of this title to him. It may even be urged that if Nebuchadrezzar who destroyed the Temple be called the Servant of JEHOVAH, *a fortiori* may the title be given to Cyrus who sanctioned the rebuilding (Ezra i 1-4). *A fortiori* again it may be urged that even greater titles are given to Cyrus by an Old Testament prophet. In Isa. xlv 28 JEHOVAH speaks of Cyrus by name as 'my shepherd', and in xlv 1 Cyrus is called the Anointed of JEHOVAH—τῷ χριστῷ μου Κύρῳ in the Septuagint. If then Cyrus is JEHOVAH'S Shepherd and His Anointed, it is a small thing that he should also be called His Servant. Even the title 'Mine elect' (or 'My chosen', בחירי, xlii 1) does not mean more than 'Mine Anointed'. There is therefore no *a priori* reason forbidding us to identify 'My Servant' or 'My chosen' of xlii 1 with Cyrus the victorious king of Anshan.

Further, if xlii 1-4 is heterogeneous to the three Songs into whose company so many scholars desire to force it, it is homogeneous with another Song which stands in its nearer context, and undoubtedly celebrates Cyrus as conqueror. Indeed it is but reasonable to look to this nearer context for light on these four verses.

They are embedded in a section (xli-xlv) in which Cyrus is described in unmistakable terms, though left unnamed (xli 25-29), and towards the end plainly announced by an emphatic repetition of his name (xlv 28; xlv 1). In xli 1-3 JEHOVAH calls upon the nations to give their silent attention and to summon all their courage to witness a great empire's fall. Towards the end of the chapter comes what I will call the first Cyrus-Song. It celebrates the fact that from the north-east JEHOVAH has raised up a Conqueror, whom no king will be able to withstand, for this Conqueror is one who calls on the name of JEHOVAH. It runs as follows:—

'I have stirred up (העירית) one from the north, and he is come;
From the east one that calleth upon my name,
And he cometh upon rulers (סגנים) as upon mortar:
And as the potter treadeth clay' (xli 25).

The rise of Cyrus foreshadows great changes, and the speaker in *vs.* 26-29 hastens to emphasize two facts: (1) that it is JEHOVAH, and not some molten image, that is bringing about this *bouleversement* in Western Asia; (2) that through the triumph of Cyrus benefits will be done to the people of JEHOVAH: 'I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings' (*v.* 27).

From this first Cyrus-Song and the comments on it Deutero-Isaiah

passes with the smallest of breaks to the second Cyrus-Song, if my reading of it be correct. The division of chapters divides absurdly between the double 'Behold' (יִבְהַל) of xli 29-xlii 1. Towards the end of xli the prophet makes a great announcement, and he desires his hearers to learn two lessons from it. 'A conqueror is coming', the prophet says, 'from whom the idols of Babylon will not be able to deliver their city. Now, ye that hear me, give me your double attention. *Behold* first (xli 29) the futility of your idols: they foresee nothing, and they do nothing. *Behold* secondly (xlii 1) the mighty and beneficent work which I the true God accomplish through my Servant.'

The second Cyrus-Song (as I have called it) is not superfluous. It repeats the story of the triumphal progress of the conqueror, it emphasizes it, and it adds to it some needed assurances. Eastern conquerors were so often destroyers, that JEHOVAH is pleased to reveal through His prophet the different character of this conqueror, who is His servant. Israel in particular must be told that JEHOVAH has put His spirit upon this foreigner. This foreign king is conquering in Gentile lands, yes, but he 'brings forth judgement for the Gentiles'. He rights the wrongs of the suffering peoples of the world (v. 1).

The Gentiles seem to know this, for they open the gates of their cities to him. He has no need to cry, nor lift up his voice, nor let his voice be heard in threatenings (like Rabshakeh) outside a city's walls (v. 2). And on Israel 'the bruised reed' he will have compassion. For them as for the Gentile nations he will bring forth judgement according to truth (v. 3). To establish true *judgement* (v. 1), *judgement* (v. 3), *judgement* (v. 4) for the Gentiles, for the Bruised Reed, and for the distant isles is the object which the conqueror sets before him.

This 'bringing forth of judgement' may be illustrated in the case of Babylon itself from the language of the Cylinder of Cyrus, especially from line 25: 'As for the Inhabitants of Babylon . . . [I freed them from] the yoke which was not befitting' (H. Gressmann *Altorientalische Texte*, 1926, p. 369).

It should be observed that the description of the Servant of JEHOVAH as one who will not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard 'without' (בְּחַוְיוֹ), does not suit a prophet.¹ Deutero-Isaiah himself thinks rather of the prophet as crying in the wilderness and shouting his message to Jerusalem from the mount of Olives. But how suitable the announcement of vv. 2, 3 is, if it be intended to reassure the trembling spectators of the triumphant progress of a conqueror. Cyrus will not have to shout a threatening summons to Babylon to surrender from without the walls: he is coming as a friend: and the gates will be

¹ Pace S. Mowinckel, *Der Knecht Jahwäs*, Giessen, 1921; 'Der K. J. in den genannten vier Liedern ist der redende Prophet, Deuterojesaja selber'.

opened to him. 'My numerous troops', Cyrus declares, 'marched peacefully into Babylon: all Sumer and Accad I freed from fear' (H. Gressmann *A.T.* p. 369).

Most critics, I believe, Cheyne in 1895, Box in 1908, Duhm in 1914, Sellin in 1923 (Introduction, E.T.), W. Staerk in 1926 (*Z.A.W.* p. 243), hold that the first of the Servant-Songs consists only of Isa. xlii 1-4. But in holding this view they put aside three verses (*vv.* 5-7) which form an entirely appropriate sequel to *vv.* 1-4. And these verses suit the case of Cyrus. JEHOVAH describes Himself definitely in *v.* 5 as the Creator of the Universe and all that live within it,—and so implicitly as the God of the nations and of Gentile kings. He does not call Himself here the 'Holy One of Israel' (cf. xli 16; xliii 3, 14), for He is thinking greatly of the Gentiles (*v.* 6). In *v.* 6 he promises the Servant to give him for a covenant of the people. Just as JEHOVAH set the rainbow in the sky as the sign of a covenant to Noah, so in later days he sets Cyrus upon earth to be the sign of the new covenant of Good Will which He makes with Israel. Finally, in *v.* 7 the work of the conqueror of Nabonidus is stated in the clearest terms. He opens the prison doors and lets in light for eyes blinded by prison gloom; then he proceeds to set the prisoners free. Cyrus does this, but Cyrus is the Servant of JEHOVAH, and not the Servant of Marduk, though he may think so. It is JEHOVAH who calls and uses Cyrus. The work of release is JEHOVAH'S own: He will not give the glory of it to another god (*v.* 8).¹ Cyrus has already begun the work appointed him, and he will continue it. JEHOVAH'S 'former things' have come to pass, but there is more to come (*v.* 9). Let Israel be ready to sing a new song for new mercies (*v.* 10).

This new song begins in *v.* 10, and (like Pss. xcvi and xcvi) with the very words,

Sing unto JEHOVAH a new song,

(It continues)

And his praise from the end of the earth; . . .

(It concludes)

JEHOVAH shall go forth as a mighty man;

He shall stir up zeal like a man of war:

He shall cry, yea, he shall shout aloud;

He shall do mightily against his enemies. (xlii. 10-13.)

If it be asked why the New Song takes this warlike tone, the answer surely is that the writer's mind is still dominated by the thought of the conquering servant of JEHOVAH—Cyrus. Isa. xlii 1-4 is firmly fixed in

¹ Though Cyrus in his relations with Babylon looks upon himself as the favourite of Marduk the great god of Babylon.

a context of which the human hero is Cyrus, and surely the reasonable conclusion is that Cyrus, and not Israel nor any individual Israelite, is intended in the description of the Servant of JEHOVAH. The *four* Songs of the Servant on which Duhm and others have so strongly insisted must at least be reduced to *three*.

It may be objected that to separate xlii 1-4 (7) from the group is to overlook the points of resemblance which link xlii 1-4 (7) to xlix 1-6. Critics may say, Surely one person, the same Servant of JEHOVAH, is meant in both passages. But are not the differences more significant than the resemblances? In xlii 1 the Servant brings forth judgement for others; in xlix 4 he stands in need of judgement for himself. In xlii 2 he is the strong silent man, in xlix 2 he is one whose mouth is made as a sharp sword. In xlii 1 he is introduced as a new character on the stage of Israelite history, in xlix 1 he is like Jeremiah called of God from the womb.

One word more. When the first 'Song' is reckoned in its larger extension to consist of xlii 1-7, it includes the phrase 'for a light of (*or to*) the Gentiles', which also occurs in xlix 6. Yet even this phrase is but a weak link between the two passages, for it may be taken in two different senses, and (I submit) is in fact differently used in xlii 6 and xlix 6. In the Septuagint the original Hebrew *לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם* is literally and rightly rendered *εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν* (xlix 6; cf. the textual note to xlii 6 in Swete's *Septuagint*). In Luke ii 32 appears the paraphrastic (but possible) rendering *φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν*, 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles' or 'a light to lighten the Gentiles'. Thus understood the reference is to the work of a prophet, and the words fit in well with the context of xlix 1-6, where plainly a prophet is the speaker.

But the words 'for a light of (*or to*) the Gentiles' cannot be limited so as to refer only to a prophet's work. 'Light' is used metaphorically in Hebrew for 'prosperity' or 'joy' or divine favour. That man may be described as the 'light of the Gentiles' who brings liberty or prosperity or gladness to them. The description may be applied to Cyrus as to one who brought to Babylon the religious liberty which Nabonidus had taken away. Indeed on the clay-cylinder it is said that the men of Babylon and all Sumer and Accad rejoiced in the coming of Cyrus into his kingdom: 'their faces shone' (*or were enlightened*: *im-mi-ru pa-nu-uš-šu-un*, Eb. Schrader in *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, iii 2, pp. 122-123).

Specially interesting is the result of a comparison between xlii 5, 6 and xlix 5, 6. In a word it may be said that the language of the former passage suits the reference to a Gentile conqueror, while the language of xlix 5, 6 (taken in connexion with *vv.* 1, 2) is natural only in the mouth of a Hebrew prophet.

In xlii 5 JEHOVAH describes Himself with emphasis as the God of Nature, the Creator and Preserver:—

‘Thus saith the (true) God (אֱלֹהִים), JEHOVAH,
 he that created the heavens . . .
 he that spread abroad the earth . . .
 he that giveth breath unto the people upon it . . .’

This is Natural Theology, which a Gentile like Cyrus can receive. There is nothing Hebraic in it but the necessary use of the name JEHOVAH.

Very different is the language of xlix 5:—

‘And now saith JEHOVAH that formed me from the womb to be his servant (לְעַבְדִּי לוֹ), to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him . . .’

This is Hebrew Theology of the period of the Return, and the Servant may very well be Deutero-Isaiah himself.

Again in xlii 6 the language suits the case of such a Gentile as Cyrus:—

‘I JEHOVAH have called thee . . .
 And will give thee for a covenant of the people,
 For a light of the Gentiles.’

No explanation is given or wanted, when a Gentile monarch is appointed to be a benefactor to Gentiles. All that is necessary to be told Cyrus is that he is not to forget the cause of Israel: so the words ‘for a covenant of the people’ (i. e. Israel) precede the words ‘for a light to the Gentiles’.

It is otherwise with xlix 6. There the Prophet-Servant reflects that he has been given an unexpected but honourable task in being commissioned to serve the cause of the Gentiles:

‘Yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob . . .’

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles . . .’

Such language would of course be meaningless in the mouth of Cyrus, but the Hebrew prophet, like Saul of Tarsus (Acts xxii 17-21), has to be given emphatic instructions when he is commissioned to the Gentiles.

The real resemblance between xlii 1-7 and xlix 1 ff, which remains when all has been said, is, I believe, to be explained by the fact that both passages come from Deutero-Isaiah himself. They represent a progress in his teaching. At first the prophet sees JEHOVAH working in world-politics, and in these Cyrus the conqueror is His Servant or His instrument. But as the situation develops a spiritual agent must take up the work. The work begun by Cyrus must pass into the hands of

a prophet. The 'Servant of JEHOVAH' assumes a new form. Naturally the terms in which his commission is described are in part changed, and in part remain the same. Cyrus opens the prison doors (xlii 7), but a prophet calls the exiles home (xlix 9-12).

Some Recent Literature.

Johann Fischer in Nikel's *Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen* viii 5, 'Wer ist der Ebed in den Pericopen Is. 42, 1-7 . . . ?' (Münster, 1922).

Sigmund Mowinckel, as cited above.

W. Rudolph *Der Exilische Messias* in *Z.A.W.* (1925), pp. 90-114, and W. Rudolph *Die Ebed-Jahwe-Lieder als geschichtliche Wirklichkeit* in *Z.A.W.* (1928), pp. 156-166.

W. Staerk *Zum Ebed Jahwe-Problem* in *Z.A.W.* (1926), pp. 242-260.

K. Budde in Kautzsch, *Die Heilige Schrift*, 4^{te} Auflage, 1922.

E. König, *Jesajakommentar* (1926), pp. 444-481.

(Both Budde and König declare for the collectivist sense of עֶבֶד יְיָ.)

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EADMER AND THE CANTERBURY PRIVILEGES

In the Appendices to my biography of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury (Oxford, 1926), I criticized the charge of forgery brought against the Archbishop by Professor Böhmer of Leipzig in his brilliant monograph *Die Fälschungen Erzbischof Lanfranks von Canterbury* (Leipzig, 1902). I put forward the hypothesis that the documents copied by Eadmer and William of Malmesbury were not the documents produced by Lanfranc in 1072, but a later and more extensive series, forged about 1120, possibly by Eadmer, at a time when the question had again become urgent, and when more documents were needed to support the Canterbury case.¹

¹ Dr Paul Kirn of Leipzig (*Historische Vierteljahrschrift* xxiv, 15 Feb. 1928, p. 274 f) asks why the forgery should have taken place in 1120 if the genuine copies, which the forger according to the hypothesis destroyed, won so brilliant a victory for the cause of Canterbury in 1072? The answer to this question has already been given (*Lanfranc* p. 281 f); the active conduct of the dispute by the Yorkist clergy after the time of Lanfranc created the necessity for more documents, greater in number and more explicit in content—especially in view of the increasing volume of the York privileges—than those which had been successful in 1072. Dr Kirn also asks why Lanfranc did not produce his documents at Easter 1072, instead of holding them back until the Council of Windsor at Whitsuntide of that year? Here, again, he overlooks my argument (p. 285, n. 1) with the authorities quoted, that the documents were produced at Winchester, and that