

pure comfort, and to that extent strikes a new note in prophecy. What we have here (Is. 40-55) is a collection of poems whose origin may extend over a number of years, yet we are justified in speaking of it as "The Book of Consolation," seeing that there is sufficient unity of subject and spirit in these poems concerning Zion the Bride of Yahweh, and Israel the Servant of Yahweh, to bind the various elements together, if not to prove the genuineness of every passage. Even if we should have to admit the separate origin and the later date of the great Servant passages (42/1-4, 49/1-6, 51/4-9, 52/13—53/12), it is sufficient for this general review for us to note that the Servant idea, in its national sense, receives here a very high form of expression. The writer brings a great message of redemption, so that he has been rightly called "the evangelist of the OT." The tone is tender throughout; even his denunciations of enemies and his polemic against idol-worshippers are free from the coarse, bitter invective that is generated by actual strife; underlying all his utterances is a strong conviction that the word of Yahweh is absolutely reliable. Empires may fall and perish, but it remains; it is a great world-force, which like the powers of nature, must do its work (40, 55/10). To a nation whose members are scattered and whose sanctuary lies in ruins he addresses the word of consolation (40/27). But he does this not with some light, soothing song, but with a magnificent conception of God and a massive theology. The belief that Yahweh is the God of nature, history, and redemption receives here a fuller exposition and more brilliant expression. These are not dead forms or abstract categories, the whole presentation thrills with life. God's manifestation of His power is here not a finished work, but a present energy, fresh, plastic. An inspiring, hopeful word was sorely needed in this situation, hence the movement of the theology is from God to man. There is little of the pastoral hortatory (the genuineness of 55/7 is questioned!); the promises all rest on Yahweh's supreme power and sovereign grace. What could any man or organization of men do for a nation in such a condition? If its destinies are not cared for by Him who rules the universe there is no hope. The thought