

lem ever to be realized? The prophet sees the agency at work. Already toward the north-east a man had appeared on the national horizon, giving proof of those abilities as a conqueror and ruler which were sure to make him the founder of a new empire. It was Cyrus, the Persian, who had already overthrown the Median empire of Astyages, and had blended the two nations into the nucleus of the growing Medo-Persian empire. The prophet sees him coming, and salutes him in Jehovah's name (Isa. xli. 25; xlv. 28; xlv. 1-6). He rejoices in the results of his approach in chapters forty-six and forty-seven. The service which Cyrus would render to Jehovah's people, however, was but a small fraction of what they needed. They were in a backslidden state, so much so that they were in danger of attributing their deliverance to idols (Isa. xlviii. 1-6). Hence the prophet passes rapidly by the service of Cyrus to notice another figure appearing on the horizon of prophecy, viz.: the servant of Jehovah and his glorious work on behalf of the backslidden Israel.

There is some ground for the impression that this second part of the book of Isaiah was written specially for Cyrus, to give him an intelligent view of the national hopes and religious convictions and aspirations of the Jews, that he might be favorably disposed to the exiles. The frequent favorable mention of Cyrus, and the description of his work as Jehovah's anointed are in accord with this theory. As a principle of interpretation, it can only have a measure of application to chapters forty to forty-six, but will not apply to the rest of the book. The unity and utility of this profoundest of prophetic writing grows luminous to us as we see that it was written especially for the exiled Jews, not for Cyrus, to convince and arouse them on three points.

The *first* of these is the supremacy of Jehovah as compared with the idol gods of the nations, and that He would vindicate that supremacy in the counsels of the nations (Isa. xl. 19, 20; xli. 24-29; xlv. 24-26).

The *second* of these is the superiority of the servant of Jehovah, who is the Lord's anointed one and exalted one, over Cyrus, who for lower and temporary purposes is Jehovah's agent (compare Isa. xlv. 1-8, and Isa. xlix. 1-13).