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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1917.

BY A COMMISSIONER.

This was the fifty-seventh General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Fifty-six years have passed since the first General Assembly met in Augusta, Ga. This covers almost two generations. Years they have been of blended sunshine and shadow; of war and of peace; of defeat and victory. And through them all the pillar of cloud and of fire has led us. And our church came to this Assembly this year stronger, we believe, than it has ever been; stronger in numbers and stronger in wealth; stronger in evangelistic zeal and stronger in family religion; stronger in love for souls and stronger in its loyalty to its Lord.

For we are not of those who place its golden days behind us. Our Atlantis has not sunk beneath the waves of materialism and commercialism. Our look is forward and outward; forward to other heights to scale and outward to the lands yet to be won for Christ.

The Assembly met in one of our new cities; Birmingham, our great iron center; Birmingham with its mountain chains of iron and coal over against each other; Birmingham with its mines, its furnaces, its forges, its massive mills; Birmingham that today fixes the price of iron for the world and tomorrow must rank as one of the world's great cities. The Assembly met in the South Highlands church, a church that has a splendid location, that has had some gifted pastors, but that has had a sad and checkered career. It is a church that our whole

THROUGH JUDGMENT TO GLORY—A BOOK STUDY OF ISAIAH.

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PART I—CHAPTERS 1-12.

“Judgment must begin at the house of God.”

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH.*

1. **Author and Date.**

In the second half of the eighth century B. C. (750-700) four great prophets lived and labored: Amos, the prophet of God's justice; Hosea, the prophet of God's love; Isaiah, the prophet of God's sovereignty; and Micah, the prophet of God's pity for the poor and the oppressed. These four, and the greatest of these was Isaiah.

Indeed, Isaiah was the greatest of all the prophets. Of him George Gilfillan, the Scotch literary critic, writes: “Isaiah is the most sublime, the most dramatic, the most poetic, in one word, the most complete of the bards of Israel.” And Professor R. G. Moulton, in his *Modern Reader's Bible*, gives the following glowing tribute to the genius of Isaiah: “Even in literary form the world has produced nothing greater than Isaiah. But when we proceed to the matter and thought of Isaiah, the literary matter quite apart from the theology founded upon it, how can we explain the neglect of

*For the full treatment of Introduction to Isaiah the reader is referred to George Adam Smith's commentary on Isaiah in the *Expositor's Bible*, John Skinner's commentary in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, O. C. Whitehouse's commentary in *The Century Bible*, and Professor George L. Robinson's little book on *The Book of Isaiah*. Professor Robinson's book is the best for those who desire to study Isaiah by the book method.—E. C. C.

such a masterpiece in our plans of liberal education? It is the boast of England and America that its higher education is religious in its spirit; how is it, then, that our youth are taught to associate exquisiteness of expression, force of presentation, brilliance of imaginative picturing, only with literature in which the prevailing matter and thought are on a low moral plane? Such a paradox is part of the paganism which came in with the Renaissance, and which our higher education is still too conservative to shake off. Isaiah and Job should take their place beside Plato and Homer in the curricula of our colleges and schools." Professor George L. Robinson, of McCormick Theological Seminary, is no less emphatic: "For versatility of expression and brilliance of imagery," he says, "Isaiah has no superior, not even an equal. His book is the masterpiece of Hebrew literature and his style marks the climax of Hebrew literary art. His picture of the Messianic age penetrates regions beyond the spiritual horizon of any and all Old Testament seers." Isaiah is unique among other things for the richness of his vocabulary and the abundance of his synonyms and the vividness and variety of his figures of speech. He uses more words than any other Bible writer; more even than all the psalmists. He is a wizard with words. "Every word from him stirs and strikes its mark," says Dillmann.

This gifted man of God preached with ever-increasing power for a period of forty years or more, 740-700 B. C. According to a tradition current among the Jews in the second century A. D. he suffered martyrdom in the heathen reaction under Hezekiah's successor, Manasseh, about 699 B. C. In all probability chapters 40-66 were carefully written out by the prophet in extreme old age, either in the quiet retirement of his home or in the loneliness and gloom of his prison cell, as he awaited martyrdom. He wrote for the comfort and guidance of the faithful remnant after his death. Thus he carried out the instructions God had given him years before in 734 B. C. to the effect that when the king and the people had refused Jehovah he "should bind up the testimony" and

seal the law "among those who were faithful." (Isa. 8:16.) In these wonderful chapters Isaiah, looking beyond the darkness and unbelief of his own age, paints the glories that are to follow the sufferings of the Messiah. Isaiah is pre-eminently the prophet of the future, of that blessed and golden age which shall usher in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. On the other hand, chapters 1-35 contain reports of sermons that were delivered red-hot on the streets and in the palaces of Jerusalem from time to time in 740-701 B. C. This fully explains the difference in style and otherwise between chapters 1-35 and chapters 40-66. Chapters 36-39 form an historical interlude, arranged with great skill: chapters 36-37 with their record of the destruction of the Assyrian army vindicate Isaiah's whole ministry and thus form a most fitting close to chapters 1-35, which recount that ministry; while chapters 38-39, with their account of the occasion of Isaiah's prediction of the Babylonian exile, naturally introduce chapters 40-66, which deal with the Exile and Return and the Messianic Kingdom that shall follow.

2. Occasion.

The *external* occasion of the book of Isaiah can be expressed in one word—"Assyria." Just as the present world-war is the one all-absorbing topic of conversation and thought with us to-day; so in Isaiah's time it was the Westward conquests of the colossal empire of Assyria, ever drawing nearer Judah, that filled the whole horizon of Isaiah's world. Assyria began this Westward extension with the accession of Tiglath-pileser III in 745, and continued till the goal was reached in the conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon in 672. The appearance of Assyria marked a supreme crisis in the kingdom of God. But God, who "standeth behind the dim unknown, keeping watch above his own," always has a strong man prepared and ready for every such crisis. Isaiah himself said, "And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest" (Isa. 32:2); and he was himself a

partial fulfilment of that prophecy; but its perfect fulfilment appeared in Jesus Christ, who is the true hiding place from every storm that blows. The great Assyrian storm threatened to wipe off the earth every vestige of the kingdom of God. But it was given to Isaiah, with his undimmed eye and unshakable faith and lofty conception of Jehovah's universal sovereignty, to see beyond the storm the bright shining of the Son of Righteousness and the coming of the day of the Lord.

"Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulder. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out: For Jehovah of hosts hath purposed it, and who shall annul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa. 14:24-27 A. R. V.)

What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation? That Jehovah hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge (Isa. 14:32, A. R. V.)

There were in Isaiah's day two outstanding points of contact between this pagan world-power and Judah. The first occurred in the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion in 734 B. C., when the presence of Assyria in the West led Pekah, king of North Israel, and Rezin, king of Damascus, to form an alliance against Assyria. When Ahaz, king of Judah, refused to join hands with them, they determined to dethrone him and place in his stead the son of Tabeel upon the throne of David. Isaiah's advice to Ahaz was: "Keep your eyes open and your head cool and your heart brave; and make no alliance with any power, but confidently trust in Jehovah." But Ahaz spurned this advice, and in panic appealed to Assyria for help. She eagerly responded, and in 732 under Tiglath-pileser took Damascus, carried two-thirds of North Israel into captivity, made Ahaz her vassal, and later in 722, under Sargon II destroyed forever North Israel. The second point of contact was in the memorable year of 701, when, under Sennacherib,

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold."

It was the presence of the one man Isaiah in Jerusalem that prevented the surrender of the city to Sennacherib; and the destruction of the Assyrian hosts before the very gates of the city was a magnificent vindication of Isaiah's faith in Jehovah and set the seal of God's approval upon the prophet's entire ministry.

The *internal* occasion of the book of Isaiah may be summed up in one word—"corruption." "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises and fresh stripes." (Isa. 1:5-6.) Political, social and religious corruption prevailed. Great wealth and extreme poverty existed side by side. The rich oppressed the poor. The women were haughty, and extravagant and vulgar in their dress. Avarice, defiance of God, open and flagrant wrong-doing, and confusion of moral distinctions reigned unopposed, especially among the ruling classes. Prophets and priests also wallowed in the slime. For the condition of the times consult the following passages: 1:5-23; 2:5-9; 3:1-26; 5:8-23; 8:19; 9:8-21; 22:1-14; 28:1-15; 30:1-14; 31:1-6; 40:19; 57:1-10; 58:1-5, 13-14; 59:1-8; 65:1-7; 66:1-4. For such a time as this was Isaiah called to the kingdom.

3. Purpose.

The purpose of the book of Isaiah is twofold: to correct and to comfort; to call the people to repentance of sin and faith in God, and to cheer the hearts of the faithful with visions of the ultimate triumph of Messiah's kingdom. Correction is the prevailing purpose in chapters 1-39. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (1:18). "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah" (2:5). "Turn ye unto him from whom ye have deeply revolted, O children of Israel" (31:6). Isaiah's appeals to the people to have faith in God are summed up in three immortal words: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be estab-

lished" (7:9); "He that believeth shall not give way" (28:16); "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (30:15).

Comfort is the outstanding purpose in chapters 40-66. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God" (40:1). "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God" (41:10). "Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (49:15-16).

4. **Theme and Structure—Isaiah a perfect literary unit.**

"Through Judgment to Glory" is the theme of the book. By "judgment" we mean not what we ordinarily call the future, or final, judgment, but the whole process of God's disciplinary dealings with His people; and by "glory" we mean all the blessings of every sort of the completed and perfected kingdom of Christ. The problem that Isaiah had to solve concerned nothing less than the continuance of the kingdom of God on earth, the very existence of the Church in the world. His solution of the problem was that God's people shall climb "the steep ascent of heaven," but only "through peril, toil and pain." Isaiah has the profoundest word on suffering in the Bible.

In the opening chapters the theme is stated with the emphasis on judgment: "Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her converts with righteousness" (1:27). "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of justice and the spirit of burning" (4:4). In the closing chapters the theme is stated with the emphasis on the blessings that shall follow judgment: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come to mind" (65:17). "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon

to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah" (66:22-23).

A study of the structure and thought-movement of Isaiah shows us that the sixty-six chapters of the book are arranged so as to form a beautiful symmetrical whole, a perfect literary organism. In chapters 1-39 the main thought is that of judgment, while the idea of the blessings that follow judgment is subordinate. In chapters 40-66 just the reverse holds true; the glory that follows judgment is the major key while judgment is a minor. Furthermore, we discover that the theme of the whole book is also found in each sub-section; yet, as we advance from section to section, it is presented in ever-increasing fullness and splendor. "The order of development is political and musical rather than scholastic and logical. We are reminded of one of the symphonies of Beethoven. The theme is suggested, taken up, and carried forward according to the laws of musical movement rather than of discussive thought. It appears, disappears, and reappears in ever-changing forms. This is according to the genius of the Oriental mind. The western mind works out its theme by a process of steady, logical advance from one position to another, moving in right lines. The Oriental moves rather under the impulse of varying emotions, returns on itself, goes forward and backward, yet ever grows in intensity and effectiveness, and advances to new and stronger positions."

The structure and development of thought will be revealed more clearly by the following

5. **Analysis.**

Theme—Through Judgment to Glory. Theme verses 1:27 and 66:22-23.

I. *The Judgment.* Chapters 1:35.

A. Judgment Upon God's Own People. Chs. 1-12.

"The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17) is the thought that binds chs. 1-12 together.

Isaiah presents six aspects of this judgment, as follows:

1. **Necessity** of the judgment, ch. 1.

God's people are so sinful that nothing short of the furnace of God's purifying judgment will cleanse them and bring in the Messianic glory. Thus ch. 1 summarizes the whole book.

a. Spiritual, social and political rottenness of the nation, 1:1-17.

b. Call to repentance, 1:18-20.

Refusal to heed this call leads to

c. Necessity for God's purifying judgment, 1:21-31.

2. **Efficacy** of the judgment, chs. 2-4.

That God's judgment will be efficacious in accomplishing the divine purpose Isaiah shows by presenting three pictures of Zion—

a. Ideal Zion, 2:1-4.

This is God's ideal for His kingdom.

b. Actual Zion, 2:5—4:1.

A dark, repulsive picture of the kingdom of God as it then was—spiritual (2:5-22), political (3:1-15) and social (3:16—4:1) corruption.

c. Zion after passing through the judgment of God, 4:2-4.

The ideal of 2:1-4 becomes realized, but only "when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of justice and the spirit of burning." (4:4.)

3. **Justice** of the judgment, chs. 5-6.

a. Just from God's standpoint, ch. 5.

This is set forth by the parable of the vineyard (5:1-7) and the wild fruits of the vineyard (5:8-24). Surely, it is just for God to cast off that vineyard which has persistently brought forth wild fruit, in spite of all God's wonderful care of it. Behold, some of the fruits of God's vineyard; insatiable greed (5:8-10), dissipation (5:11-17), defiance of God (5:18-19), confusion of moral distinctions (5:20), self-

conceit (5:21), corruption of justice (5:22-23). There can be only one issue to all this—total destruction, root and branch; “because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel” (5:24).

b. Just from the prophet's standpoint, ch. 6.

Isaiah felt the need of justifying to his own mind and heart God's judgment against His people. This he does by recalling his divine call (6:1-8) and commission (6:9-13). His call rests upon a fourfold vision—vision of God, of self, of grace and of service, and his commission will be attended by four results—spiritual deadness of the people, destruction of the present people of God, laying waste of the land, and the preservation of a “holy seed,” which is the indestructible germ of the future kingdom of God.

4. **Instrument** of the judgment—Assyria (5:25+9:8-10:4+5:26-30).

Manifestly a dislocation has somehow occurred at this point, and we are compelled to rearrange, as follows: 5:25+9:8-10:4+5:26-30. This regrouping gives us a literary unit of surpassing splendor. Duhm pronounces the refrain (five times recurring) of this majestic poem—“For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still”—to be “one of the most effective refrains that has ever been composed.” Isaiah's purpose is to show “how often Jehovah had already spoken to His people in chastisement and, because they had remained hardened under these solemn warnings, how there had now come the last worst blow of an Assyrian invasion. God had tried everything short of this, and it had failed; now only this remains, and this shall not fail.” From Jehovah's hand five great calamities have fallen on His people and left them hardened: earthquake (5:25), loss of territory (9:8-12), war and defeat (9:12-17), internal anarchy (9:18-21), and near prospect of captivity (10:1-4). Isaiah concludes with the announcement for the first time that pagan

Assyria is the divinely destined instrument of Judah's final chastisement (5:26-30).

Some great, fundamental truths are here taught (5:25+9:8-10:4+5:26-30) which we need to lay to heart today. We will name them. (a) The persistence of God's chastisement. God is "a being of permanence in character. He is not quickly irritated and then as quickly relieved by a burst of passion."

(b) The manifoldness of God's chastisement. He uses many different means and agents, even pagan nations and the very sins of His people.

(c) Man's abuse and defiance of chastisement.

(d) The long-lingering effects of sin in a nation's history.

(e) The solidarity of a people in guilt.

Primarily the leaders were to blame, yet all shared in the guilt, and the chastisement fell on all.

5. **Invincibility** of the judgment, 7:1-10:34.

This sublime section comes to a climax in the statement: "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (9:7). Its unity and climatic movement are revealed by the following paraphrase:

In spite of the opposition of the faithless Ahaz (7:1-25) and of the faithless people (8:1-8) and of the combined world-powers (8:9-15), the zeal of Jehovah will usher in for His faithful ones (8:16-18) after a night of affliction (8:19-22) the bright and eternal day of the Prince of Peace (9:1-7); for even Assyria will be destroyed and taken out of the way after she has served God's righteous purpose to chastise His people (10:5-34).

a. The faithless Ahaz brings poverty and suffering upon Immanuel (7:1-25).

"Ahaz is the Judas of the Old Testament." Isaiah appeals to the king to be true to God in the dark hour when Damascus and North Israel have combined to overthrow Judah. But Ahaz proves faithless (7:1-9). Whereupon Isaiah announces the two consequences of the king's unbelief: pov-

erty and suffering upon Immanuel (7:10-17), and the Assyrian invasion (7:18-25).

In this darkness there shines one bright star. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). This is the prophet's symbolic way of saying that the break in the Davidic line caused by the unbelief of Ahaz will be closed by a God-given ruler. Immanuel is the sign of the whole destiny of the kingdom of God and the perpetuity of the Davidic dynasty. Ahaz may bring poverty and suffering upon Immanuel, but he cannot defeat Jehovah's purpose or destroy Immanuel's kingdom.

b. The faithless people bring the flood of Assyria upon Immanuel's land, 8:1-9.

The king having failed him, Isaiah now turns to the people, who likewise prove faithless. "This people have refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly; therefore the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory; and it shall come up over all its channels; and the stretching out of its wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel" (8:6-8).

c. Neither can the opposition of all the world-powers combined defeat Immanuel's kingdom; 8:9-15.

"Make an uproar, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us" (Hebrew, Immanuel) 8:9-10.

d. For the faithful few Jehovah will banish the night of despair and affliction and usher in the day of the Prince of Peace, 8:16—9:7.

"As the king for his unworthiness has to give way to the Messiah, so the nation for theirs have to give place to the church. In the seventh chapter the king is found wanting, and the Messiah is promised. In the eighth chapter the people are found wanting, and the prophet, turning from them, proceeds to form the church among those who accept the word which the king and people have refused." "Bind thou up

the testimony, seal the law among my disciples" (8:16) is the command of Jehovah to the prophet. "This, then, is the situation: revelation concluded, the church founded upon it, and the nation abandoned. But there is hope for the future, for the zeal of the Lord will perform it. This is the first appearance in history of a religious community, apart from the forms of domestic and national life. Before Isaiah no one had dreamed of a fellowship dissociated from all forms of national life, bound together by faith in the divine word alone."

e. Assyria cannot defeat Immanuel's kingdom, for she will herself be destroyed after she has served Jehovah's righteous purpose, 10:5-34.

Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel and of all the earth, is guiding every movement of Assyria. He has allowed her to grow to world-power, in order that she may be the instrument for the manifestation of Jehovah's sole deity and His righteousness by the extinction of all nations that put their trust in false gods and the chastisement of His own people (10:5-11). But failing to honor him as the sole giver of her strength, Assyria will be stripped of her glory and destroyed (10:12-19). Thus Jehovah will free his faithful remnant (10:20-27), and deliver them at the darkest hour (10:28-34). "The Assyrian when he falls shall fall like the cedars of Lebanon, never to rise again, that send forth no fresh sprout from their broken stumps. But out of the trunk of the Judæan oak will spring a fair and powerful branch." This leads us to

6. **Culmination** of the judgment—Messiah's Kingdom, ch. 11.

The divinely endowed Messiah will establish a universal kingdom of righteousness and peace out of the chastened remnant as a nucleus.

a. Origin of the Messiah, 11:1.

He will spring from David's line.

b. His superhuman endowment through the spirit of Jehovah, 11:2.

Jesus Christ was begotten in the power of the Spirit, lived

a holy life in the power of the Spirit, was anointed for service by the Spirit, was led and taught by the Spirit, wrought his miracles in the power of the Spirit, and was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.

c. His righteous government, 11:3-5.

d. Effects of his government, 11:6-16.

(1) Harmony of creation will be restored through the regeneration of human society. Paradise will be regained. The conflict between man and the lower animals will cease. All life will be as it was before sin entered the world, 11:6-9.

(2) The nations will turn to the only living and true God, 11:10.

(3) Israel will be re-incorporated into the kingdom of God, 11:11-16.

“He will assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (11:12).

Nothing now remains to complete this great section of the book (chs. 1-12) but the doxology, which we have in chapter 12.

DOXOLOGY TO CHAPTERS 1-11.

‘ Jehovah vindicated in the faith and praise of a ransomed people, ch. 12.

Songs of salvation :

1. A song of faith, 12:1-3.

2. A song of praise, 12:4-6.

“Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel” (12:6).

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No. 1.

THE KEYNOTE METHOD.*

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One of the most interesting passages in Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* is that in which he describes the battle of Otumba. A mere handful of Spaniards confronted two hundred thousand Aztecs. Cortez thought, says Prescott, that his last hour had come. But he was to win "one of the most remarkable victories ever achieved in the New World." His method was essentially the method that we shall attempt to follow in our study of eight books of the Bible. Knowing that whatever stability or cohesiveness the Aztec armies had was due to the authority of their commanders, Cortez ordered his men not to waste their strength on the military underlings opposed to them but to seek, find, and strike down the leaders. One cacique was worth a thousand men. Had this plan not been followed it is not likely that a single Spaniard would have survived to tell the story of the battle of Otumba.

Does not every masterpiece of literature whether of prose or verse contain some central and commanding thought that gives coherence and vitality to the whole? Is it possible to understand the parts without reference to their common contribution

*This lecture, delivered March 17, 1917, was the first in the series of nine lectures delivered by Dr. Smith on the James Sprunt Foundation. The subject of the series was "Keynote Studies in Keynote Books."

THROUGH JUDGMENT TO GLORY—A BOOK STUDY OF ISAIAH.

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ARTICLE II—CHAPTERS 13-66.

THEME AND ORGANIC STRUCTURE.

In article I, which appeared in the previous number of "The Union Seminary Review," July, 1917, we gave a brief discussion of the author, date, occasion, purpose, theme and structure of the book of Isaiah. We also gave a detailed analysis of chapters 1-12. For the treatment of these topics the reader is referred to that article. However, before beginning our present study of Isaiah chapters 13-66, it is necessary that we present the following condensed exhibit of the theme and analysis of the whole book, in order that the reader may see how the book is a perfect organism with one great theme and with every chapter and section fitting into its proper place, and discharging its appointed function, and that he may be in a position to take up the study of Isaiah at chapter 13 with a clear understanding of the book as a whole. The theme is "Through Judgment to Glory." By which Isaiah means to say that God's people are to enter into the blessings of Christ's completed and perfected kingdom only through severe discipline and chastisement. They shall climb "the steep ascent of heaven" only "through peril, toil and pain." This theme is stated in 1:27 and 66:22-23. We now give the condensed analysis, in order to show how the theme is carried forward to its conclusion and climax in 66:22-24.

I. Judgment.—Chapters 1-35.

1. Judgment upon God's own people, chapters 1-12.
2. Judgment upon the surrounding nations, chapters 13-23.

3. Judgment upon the whole world, chapters 24-27.

4. Final result of this triple judgment (on God's people, the surrounding nations and the world)—Messiah's Kingdom, universal, righteous, and peaceful, chapters 28-25.

Historical Interlude, chapters 36-39.

1. Chapters 36-37, closing chapters 1-35 and recording the destruction of the Assyrian host, which destruction vindicated Isaiah's ministry.

2. Chapters 38-39, giving the occasion of Isaiah's prediction of the Babylonian Exile, thus opening the way for chapters 40-66.

II. **Glory.**—Chapters 40-66.

1. External preparation for this glory. Chapters 40-48.

The Persian king is God's agent for the external preparation.

2. Internal preparation for the coming glory. Chapters 49-57.

"The Servant of Jehovah" is the agent for the internal preparation.

3. The glory come. Chapters 58-66.

God's new heaven and new earth.

In the present article we begin with a brief study of

2. God's judgment upon the surrounding nations.—Chapters 13-23.

Like Amos (chapters 1, 2), Jeremiah (chapters 46-51), and Ezekiel (chapters 25-32), Isaiah passes in review the outside nations whose destinies affect Judah. George Adam Smith has finely said that Isaiah's message to these outside nations may be summed up in three great texts: (a) 17:12, 13, where the confusion and tumult among the nations outside Zion is pictured as a stormy ocean; (b) 14:32, where Zion is the solitary rock in the midst of the storm; (c) 19:24, 25, where we behold a new continent (Messiah's Kingdom) arising out of the water about the rock. Every nation that sets itself against God's redemptive purpose in and through Zion will be crushed to pieces, while every nation that submits will have a part in Messiah's kingdom. Among those nations that are to be destroyed because of their opposition, the prophet names Babylon (13:1-14; 21:1-10),

Philistia (14:28-32), Moab (chapters 15 and 16), Damascus (17:1-11), and Arabia (21:13-17); while Edom's fate is dark and uncertain (21:11-12). Those to be converted to Jehovah are Assyria (14:24-27; 19:23-25) after her great military power has been destroyed; Ethiopia (18:1-7); Egypt (19:1-35); and Tyre (chapter 23). It is truly remarkable that Isaiah should represent the two chief enemies in his day of God's people—Assyria and Egypt—as having a glorious and honored part in the Messianic kingdom. "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (19:24, 25).

At this point two questions press for an answer: (a) How can nations long since destroyed enter the Messianic Kingdom? (b) Why is it that Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah and Ezekiel do not agree either as to those nations who are to be saved or as to those who are to perish? The answer to both questions is to be found in the statement that these nations typify the heathen world, parts of which are to be brought into the kingdom, while other parts are finally to perish solely because of their unyielding opposition to God and His Messiah. The prophets are not interested in giving mere predictions of external events or conditions, but in setting forth moral and spiritual issues.

Back of Isaiah's conception of the future of nations outside Israel lie certain great principles that we do well to emphasize to-day. (a) God Himself is in the confusion and tumult and storm of the nations, making all nations and men and event work together for the fulfilment of His redemptive purpose; (b) Humanity is a unit, one great whole, subject to the same laws of righteousness and all lost without God's Messiah; (c) Nations will enter the kingdom willingly and consciously, not compelled by external force, but won to God by moral and spiritual means.

Having considered God's judgment upon His own people (chapters 1-12), and upon the outlying nations (chapters 13-23), we now come to the third organic cleavage in the first main division of the book, which is

3. God's judgment upon the whole world.—Chapters 24-27.

The central thought of this section is stated in 26:9, "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness."

1. The fact of a world judgment, chapter 24.

God has a right to summon the world into judgment, because it has broken the covenant He made with the world. "They have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant" (24:5, cf. Gen. 9:16).

2. Issues of this world judgment, chapters 25-27.

(a) The world will be converted to Jehovah except those who resist to the bitter end, represented by Moab, chapter 25.

(b) Israel will be resurrected from the dead (26:1-19). "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise" (26:19).

(c) Israel, having been resurrected, will be restored and re-incorporated into the kingdom of God (26:20-27:13).

Thus the nations will be won to Jehovah through a world judgment and built up into a new people of God around resurrected and restored Israel as a nucleus. This conception of a world-wide Messianic Kingdom is fully developed in the fourth division of this part of the book, which is:

4. Final result of this triple judgment upon God's people, the outside nations and the whole world will be the Messiah's kingdom—universal, righteous, peaceful.—Chapters 28-35.

Isaiah seems to erect this kingdom after the defeat of the Assyrian invasion. The whole is set before us in a series of six wonderful sermons, each beginning with the interjection, "Ho." These sermons were delivered in 701 B. C., the year of the invasion of Sennacherib. As the crisis draws nearer, Isaiah's faith mounts higher.

a. First sermon. God's purpose to chastise, but not destroy, His people with Assyria is invincible (chapter 28).

b. Second sermon. This chastisement is necessary to remove their spiritual blindness (29:1-14).

c. Third sermon. Therefore, it is folly to resist God's purpose to redeem His people through discipline (29:15-24).

d. Fourth sermon. Faith in God will carry them through the crisis (chapter 30).

e. Fifth sermon. Repentance will bring deliverance (31:1; 32:20).

f. Sixth sermon. The final result will be the kingdom of Zion (chapters 33-35).

These six sermons may be condensed into the following statement: While it is certain and necessary that God will send the Assyrian to chastise His people, yet if they repent of their sins and trust in Him He will save them with a great deliverance and will establish the kingdom of Zion.

Passing over the historical interlude in chapters 36-39 (see page 53), we come to the second main part of the book, namely,

II. The Glory; or, The Completed and Perfected Kingdom of Christ.—Chapters 40-66.

1. *External* preparation for this glory, chapters 40-48. Jehovah, Israel's incomparable God, will restore His exiled people through the instrumentality of the Persian king, Cyrus, to their own land and through them will exercise universal dominion.

a. Jehovah himself is the guarantee of the return of the exiles and their universal dominion, 40:1-43-13.

(1) Jehovah is supreme in nature (chapter 40). His supremacy in nature is seen, first, in that he is summoning into activity certain spiritual forces, unseen yet almighty, which are to work for Israel's return (40:1-11). These spiritual forces are symbolized by four voices: voice of grace, proclaiming pardon and deliverance on the ground that Israel's chastisement has had the desired effect (40:1, 2); voice of preparation, opening the way for the returning exiles (40:3-5); voice of confidence in God's word, founded on the perishableness of all human power and the stability of the divine word (40:6-8); and voice of the certainty of the return, based on God's power as a conqueror and His tenderness as a leader (40:9-11).

His supremacy in nature is seen, secondly, in that he is in-

finite as compared with the created world (40:12-17), with other gods (18-20), and with the stars (21-26). Hence Israel's manifest duty is to wait on Jehovah (40:27-31).

(2) Jehovah is supreme in history (chapter 41). First, Jehovah and the nations (41:1-7). He initiates and winds up all movements among the nations. He called Cyrus of Persia on the scene. "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I Jehovah, the first, and with the last, I am he" (41:5).

Second, Jehovah and His people (41:8-20).

They need have no fear in the Medo-Persian upheaval, for Jehovah is with them.

Third, Jehovah and the idols (41:21-29).

They are impotent, for they can neither predict any event nor bring it to pass.

(3) Jehovah is supreme in redemption (42:1-43:13).

The most illustrious example of Jehovah's redeeming power is to be seen in His removing His people's present unfitness and enabling them to fulfil their ideal calling in being the channel of God's grace to all the earth.

(a) Israel's mission in God's ideal for him (42:1-13).

(b) Israel's present unfitness (42:14-25).

(c) This unfitness divine redeeming love will remove (43:1-13).

b. The results of this triple supremacy of God (43:14-48:22).

These results are four:

(1) Certainty of Israel's deliverance (43:14-44:23). Deliverance is certain, because Babylon cannot prevent it (43:14-21), Israel's sins cannot prevent it (43:22-44:5), and the idol gods cannot prevent it (44:6-23).

(2) Jehovah's universal dominion (44:24-45:25).

Cyrus, the mighty conqueror, is merely one of the all things that Jehovah uses in the fulfilment of his redemptive purpose (44:24-28). The victories of Cyrus will bring about the universal recognition of the one true God (45:1-8). Hence, it is folly for Israel to oppose God's use of Cyrus, the effect of whose victories will be the downfall of idolatry, the deliverance of Israel, the salvation of the world, and the universal dominion of God (45:9-25).

(3) Destruction of Babylon (chapters 46, 47).

The downfall of Babylon is sure, because her gods cannot save her (46:1-7), and because Jehovah, whose purpose runs through all history, has decreed it (46:8-13). Total destruction will overtake Babylon because of her sins—her cruelty to Israel, her pride, and her trust in idols and magic and sorceries (chapter 47).

(4) Jehovah himself vindicated (chapter 48).

This chapter forms a magnificent conclusion to chapters 40-47, and closes the first main division of the second part of the book. The prophet points out four ways in which Jehovah will be vindicated: in the method of His revelation to Israel (48:1-11); in His use of Cyrus as the instrument of His redemptive purpose (48:12-16); in his chastisement of Israel (48:17-19); and in the grateful joy of a ransomed people (48:20-22).

2. *Internal* preparation for the coming glory, chapters 49-57.

Jehovah will prepare the hearts of His people for the glory that is to come by the suffering and death of His servant.

Who is this servant of Jehovah? In the first of the four famous "servant" passages of Isaiah (42:1-43:13) he is clearly identified with the nation Israel. And the nation is at present unfit to be God's servant. "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is at peace with me, and blind as Jehovah's servant?" (42:19). "Ye are my witnesses," saith Jehovah, "and my servant whom I have chosen" (43:10). In the second great servant passage (49:1-50:3) he is explicitly called Israel; for we read in 49:3, "Thou art my servant Israel in whom I will be glorified." But he must be an Israel within the wider nation of Israel, a spiritual kernel within the nation composed of a few faithful hearts, whom we might call "Spiritual Israel"; for in 49:5 the servant Israel has a mission to perform to the nation Israel. We read, "And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him." In the third and fourth famous "servant" passages (50:4-52:12 and 52:13-53:12) the servant is manifestly an individual, the personal Messiah. Thus the conception narrows from the nation to a kernel within the nation and

finally to an individual. God called the whole nation to be His salvation unto the end of the earth. But the nation failed. Then He called a remnant within the nation, and it failed. A length He called His Son, the personal Messiah, who shall not fail, but "shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand; and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (53:10, 11).

How will Jehovah's servant prepare God's people for the coming glory? The answer is three-fold:

a. By His divine commission and result for Zion—deliverance (49:1-50:3).

The servant is called, equipped, protected and commissioned by Jehovah; all of which guarantees the ultimate success of his mission (49:1-13). Therefore, every doubt of Zion's return and restoration is removed (49:14-50:3). Isaiah mentions four doubts that had filled God's people with fear: Jehovah has forsaken Zion (49:14-21); the nations will prevent Zion's return (49:22, 23); Babylon will prevent it (49:24-26); and most distressing doubt of all—the covenant relation has been broken (50:1-3). The servant of Jehovah will sweep these doubts away and bring certain and glorious deliverance.

b. By His tender compassion and result for Zion—comfort (50:4-52:12).

The servant is perfectly qualified for his ministry of consolation by his constant and intimate communion with God (50:4); by his complete surrender to the will of God (50:5); and by passing through the furnace of suffering himself (50:6-11). Hence, Zion will be comforted (51:1-52:12). The prophet names five grounds of comfort: Zion's 'small beginning (51:1-3); Zion's religion is destined to be the religion of all the world (51:4-8); a new moral and spiritual universe with Zion as the center is the ultimate goal of all God's movements in history—which has been pronounced by Duhm to be the grandest and loftiest thought before Christianity (51:9-16); Zion's chastisement is complete (51:17-23); and deliverance is at hand (52:1-12).

c. By his sacrificial death and result for Zion and the world—salvation (52:13-57:21).

Jehovah's servant will bring salvation to men and will him-

self be exalted into world-wide honor and glory only by suffering and death (52:13-15). At first men will reject and despise him (53:1-3). But at last they will come to see that he suffered for them (53:4-6) and willingly (53:7-9), and thus will be led to accept him as the saviour of sinners and the conqueror and redeemer of the world (53:10-12).

In chapter 54 Isaiah traces the results for Zion of the suffering and death of the Messiah, Jehovah's servant. These results are the expansion and growth of Zion (54:1-3); reunion with Jehovah in an everlasting covenant (54:4-10); and the beauty and safety of Jerusalem (54:11-17). "This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness which is of me, saith Jehovah" (54:17).

In 55:1-57:21 we have the great blessing that shall flow out to the world from the death of Christ. It is salvation full and free and for all on the sole condition of repentance and faith. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (55:1). All are invited to share in the Messianic blessing (55:1-5) on the sole condition of true repentance of sin (55:6-13); for nothing else can exclude any one (56:1-8). Only those who take refuge in God shall inherit the blessings of the new covenant (56:9-57:21). There is no refuge in the leaders, who are incompetent, greedy and sensual, a curse and not a blessing (56:9-57:2). Neither is there refuge in idolatry (57:3-13). Hence, Jehovah is the true and only refuge (57:14-21).

At this point we meet with one of the most interesting features in the book of Isaiah. The word "servant" is found twenty times in chapters 40-53, always in the *singular* number. In chapters 54-66 the word "servants" occurs eleven times, always in the *plural*. That is, before chapter 53 the word is in the singular; after chapter 53 it is always in the plural. Chapter 53, with its record of the death of the Saviour, is the dividing line. This change to the plural must be significant. Does it not signify that by the power of the cross the ideal of character and service and sacrifice represented by *the* servant of Jehovah is to be reproduced in each individual Christian? There is a real sense in

which every Christian is a servant of God and a Saviour of the World. *The servant of Jehovah* is not mentioned again after chapter 53. He disappears only to reappear in his servants. From the cross he went to the right hand of the Father; and we, his servants, are to carry on his work in the world.

3. *The glory come* (chapters 58-66).

This is God's new creation, His new heaven and new earth (65:17-66:22). The coming of the glory, that is, the perfected kingdom of Christ on earth, is the result of the external preparation (chapters 40-48) and the internal preparation (chapters 49-57).

The coming of the glory is set forth in three stages:

a. It will be *ushered in* by Jehovah in response to the prayers of repentant and believing Israel (chapters 58-60).

It is Israel's sin that is delaying the coming of the blessing (58:1-59:8). "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that he will not hear" (59:2). In humble confession and repentance, Israel turns from his sins and looks to Jehovah for mercy and redemption (59:9-15a). Jehovah hears, and ushers in the glories of the new Jerusalem (chapter 60).

b. It will be *mediated* to all the world by repentant and believing Israel (chapter 61:1-63:6).

Messiah himself proclaims the redemption of the people of God (61:1-3), and the supreme purpose of their redemption is that they may be the mediators and channels of salvation to all the world (61:1-62:12). "Ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God" (61:6).

And God's people, speaking in the first person, accept with joy their great mission in the earth (61:10-11). "I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation" (61:10). Moreover, they will never rest themselves, nor let Jehovah rest, until they have achieved their mission of carrying salvation to the ends of the earth (62:1-12). But the accomplishment of this mission will involve the destruction of all the enemies of God and His people (63:1-6).

c. It will be *triumphant* in answer to the prayers of God's people (63:7-66:24).

The prayer (63:7-64:12).

This is one of the most beautiful and pathetic and passionate prayers in the Bible. It begins with thanksgiving for God's past mercies (63:7-14), and then presents its earnest petition for deliverance based on the considerations that God is their Father (63:14-16); that they have been afflicted enough (63:17-19); that in the past God has always delivered those who wait upon Him in righteousness (64:1-7); and that He is their God and they are His people (64:8-12).

The answer (chapters 65, 66).

God answers their prayer by a signal act of judgment, in which He rewards His faithful people, destroys the wicked, and establishes the true religion in the earth. The nation Israel is finally cast off on account of their sins (65:1-7); but a holy seed out of the nation will be saved (65:8-12) and will have a glorious future (65:13-25), which is only for those who are of a humble heart and tremble at God's word (66:1-14). By a terrible act of judgment, Jehovah will destroy the apostates (66:15-17), manifest His glory to all the nations (66:18-21), and will make His worship the universal faith (66:22-24).

The grand finale of the book is reached in the great declaration, "And all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith Jehovah" (66:23).