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## The Literary Structure of Isaias 40-55 and the Servant Songs

THE Servant Songs problem has in recent years been mainly centred on its exegetical aspect, that is, the personality of the Servant and his mission. The literary relations of the songs with their immediate and remote contexts are either entirely passed over or very briefly and inadequately dealt with. There is today an increasing tendency to consider the songs as an integral part of the sections or chapters in which they stand (1), but no further attempt is made to place the songs in their remote and broader context and to interpret them in the light of the general context. If it is true that these songs become meaningless if they are isolated from their immediate context, it is equally true that their meaning will become greatly obscured if they are viewed apart from the general line of thought that is traceable in the rest of chh 40-55.

The inadequacy of the treatment of the literary problem appears the more clear from the many different ways of dividing chh 40-55. Thus W. Staerk divides so : 40; 41; 42, 1-44, 23; 44, 24-45, 25; 46, 1-48, 21; 49, 1-50, 3; 50, 4-52, 12; 52, 13-55, 13 (2). J. Fischer, who separates the Servant Songs from their context, proposes this division : 40 (prologue); 41, 1-29; 42, 8-12; 42, 13-44, 23; 44, 24-45, 25; 46; 47; 48; 49, 9b-13; 49, 14-50, 3; 51, 1-14; 51, 17-52, 12; 54; 55 (epilogue) (3). Kissane divides chh. 40-55 into 7 poems, each consisting of three parts and followed by a tailpiece : 40, 1-42, 12; 42, 13-44, 23; 44, 24-46; 47;

(1) C. C. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*; Edinburgh, 1928, 137-40; E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah*; Vol. II, Dublin, 1943, lxii; A. Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, III, Copenhagen, 1949, 113; J. Lindblom, *The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah*; Lund, 1951; R. U. Tournay, *Les Chants du Serviteur dans la Seconde partie d'Isaie*, Rev. bibl., 1952, 359ff.

(2) *Die Ebed Jahwe-Lieder in Jesaja 40ff*, Leipzig, 1913, 59-68.

(3) *Isaias 40-55 und die Perikopen vom Gottesknecht*; Munster i. W., 1916, 49-53, 75-78.

48; 49, 1-50, 3; 50, 4-52, 12; 52, 13-56, 8 (4). Tournay proposes this division: 40, 12-42, 12; 42, 12-14, 23; 44, 24-48, 22; 49, 1-13; 49, 14-50, 3; 50, 4-11; 51, 1-8; 51, 9-52, 12; 52, 13-53, 12; 54 (5).

This variety of division is due, to a certain extent, to a misunderstanding of the literary structure of chh 40-55. Even Torrey himself, who more than anybody else has enquired into the literary features of the several poems, has failed to discover the fundamental principles which govern the composition of the poems contained in chh 40-55. Thus in his analysis of ch 40 he distinguishes three parts: a lyrical introduction, vv 1-11, the argumentative portion, vv 12-26, and the conclusion, vv 27-31, (301). The structure of ch 50 is said to be similar, except that the argumentative passage precedes the lyrical or dramatic (p. 301). The poem contained in 42, 1-43, 7 is also considered to be similar in the manner of its composition to the one which constitutes ch 50. In both cases, says Torrey, it is evident that the structure of the poem is carefully planned (p. 323). But he fails to recognize the same plan in the other poems. Thus, for example, he breaks up the poem contained in 43, 14-44, 23, or, according to him, in 43, 8-44, 23, into two distinct poems, 43, 8-44, 5 and 44, 6-23. But the latter poem is only the argumentative portion of the poem 43, 8-44, 23, and its separation from the main body would spoil the artistic and symmetrical structure of the whole poem.

The purpose of this note is to examine more closely the literary structure of chh 40-55 with a view to laying a more solid basis for the interpretation of the Servant songs and the rest of ch 40-55. The investigation will be carried out on purely literary lines, independently of any theory or explanation of the songs and their relation to the context. The conclusions will be: 1. the Servant songs form an integral part of the context in which they stand; 2. chh 40-55 consist of two perfectly parallel groups of poems related to each other not only in their general outlook, but also in the composition and development of the several poems; 3. ch 42 is probably misplaced and should be transposed after ch 48 or at the beginning of the second group.

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(4) *Op. cit.*, xxxii-xxxiii.

(5) *Op. cit.*, 361.

Interpreters generally agree in dividing chh 40-55 into two parts: 40-48 and 49-55 (6). The first section is called 'the Yahweh-Israel hymns', because the person addressed is Israel-Jacob the other is called 'the Sion-Jerusalem hymns', because here Yahweh addresses the city not the people. The central theme of the first cycle is the approaching end of the captivity and the exiles' return to their homeland; while in the other cycle the prophet is foretelling the glorious restoration of Sion.

It is also agreed that each section is made up of a number of self-consistent poems, more or less loosely connected with each other, but dealing, in different ways, with the same subject. There is no progress in thought in the several poems of each group; the theme is always the same, the approaching deliverance and the restoration of Jerusalem, but the treatment is different. We shall now proceed to analyse the poems.

## I 40, 1-31.

The first poem extends over the whole chapter. It is a poem complete in itself with an introduction, an argumentative portion and a conclusion. Kissane makes two poems out of ch 40, but his analysis shows clearly that the two poems are in reality two parts of one poem (7).

In vv 1-11 the prophet announces the approaching end of the exile and the return of the exiled Israelites to their country. Yahweh himself will lead his people back to their homes as a shepherd leading his flock. The glad tidings are given not only to the exiles, but also to the cities of Judah. Man is perishable and cannot stand against God's purpose and thwart its execution. We have here, therefore, the *announcement* of the approaching deliverance.

Vv. 12-26 constitute the argumentative part of the poem. The exiles seem to have been slow to believe the glad tidings. The

(6) See A. Zillesen, *Israel in Darstellung und Beurteilung Deuterojesajas* (in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 1904, 275); J. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 19 and *Das Buch Isaias*, 1939, II, 6f; Fischer however divides chh 40-55 at 49, 13; Staerk, *op. cit.*, 57; Van der Ploeg, *Les Chants du Serviteur de Jahoë*, Paris, 1936, 17; A. Feuillet, *DBS*, art. *Isaie*, 693f; R. J. Tournay, *Les Chants du Serviteur dans la seconde partie d'Isaie* (in *Revue biblique*, 1952, 360).

(7) *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

prophet encourages them by emphasizing God's omnipotence and omniscience, his transcendent greatness and his incomparable-ness. Yahweh is the creator of the universe and the lord of all nations and rulers. The idols are the work of man and have no power to detain the exiles. Therefore the argument of these vv is the *assurance* of the deliverance demonstrated by the immeasurable greatness of God and the nothingness of the heathen gods.

Vv 27-31 form the conclusion of the poem. Yahweh's infinite power and wisdom are a sufficient guarantee for the fulfilment of his promises. The despondent exiles must therefore believe the prophet's message, for the deliverance will *certainly* be brought about in a short time.

Thus we have in this chapter a closely knit poem consisting of three well defined parts. God announces, assures, confirms. The transition from one part to another may seem abrupt, but the underlying thought which binds them up into one whole is apparent throughout.

## II 41, 1-29.

The main theme and the structure of this poem have often been misrepresented. If I am not entirely mistaken the poem is an elaboration, though from a different point of view, of the theme of the preceding poem, namely, the deliverance of the exiles. Torrey is hardly right when he says that 'the unfortunate hypothesis of a prophecy of the return from the Babylonian exile has blinded the eyes of our best scholars, and turned exegesis upside down' (8). I should rather say that the prominence given to the historical background has blinded the eyes of many interpreters so as not to let them see the connexion between this poem and the preceding one. True it is, the deliverance is never expressly mentioned, but everything in the poem seems to point in that direction.

Vv 1-7. The prophet begins by announcing the appearance of a personage who has been called by God to conquer all kingdoms and subdue kings to his power. Peoples will be terrified, but nothing will stop his triumphant march. The fall of Babylon is implied, and the release of the exiles is therefore implicitly *foretold*. Because the fall of Babylon is considered not as an isolated event in history, but as a part of a widespread military expedi-

(8) *Op. cit.*, p. 311.

tion which will sweep across immense regions overthrowing all kingdoms and subduing all kings. Yahweh, an eternal God, who directs the destinies of nations, will raise up this unnamed conqueror and deliver up kings and nations into his hands.

Vv. 8-20. The leading idea of this section is Yahweh's election of Abraham and his unfailling help to the Israelites. While the nations are terrified at the approach of the conqueror, Israel is assured of God's protection. The people of Israel, chosen by God and destined by him for a special mission, has nothing to be afraid of, because God is with it, and nothing can frustrate God's plans. The nations encourage and help each other, but Israel is encouraged and helped by God (8-10). As a result of this divine assistance Israel will be saved from destruction in the coming world-crisis and its enemies will be completely overthrown. The prophet is, naturally, thinking of Babylon. We have, therefore, here a clear reference to the Israelites' deliverance from captivity (11-13). God assures again the exiled Israelites, oppressed and despised, of his help by which they will not only be delivered, but will also overcome and shatter all their enemies (14-16). Despite their miserable condition they will not be forsaken by God who will lead them back to their land and bestow upon them an abundance of spiritual blessings. All this will be an indisputable proof of God's omnipotence (17-20). Therefore vv 8-20 constitute the argumentative part of the poem. God will deliver Israel because he is an almighty God, he has chosen Israel for a particular work and will ever help him until the complete fulfilment of his mission.

Vv 21-29. This section is made up of two apparently disconnected parts, vv 21-24 and 25-29. In 21-24 Yahweh challenges the heathen gods to adduce evidence of their fore-knowledge or of their power to do something. It is Yahweh, and Yahweh alone, who can foretell the future. He has foretold the victories of Cyrus, and this prediction is a sure guarantee that Yahweh's prediction of Israel's deliverance will be fulfilled as well (25-29). Therefore this section is the confirmation of God's promise of deliverance.

So we have in this poem too the three constituent parts which we have noticed in the first poem. Yahweh announces, though implicitly, the end of the exile; he demonstrates the truth of his announcement by asserting his choice of Israel, his power and his unfailling assistance to his people; he concludes by scorning the impotence and the-nothingness of the pagan gods and re-asserting his foreknowledge and infinite power.

Although the subject of this poem is substantially the same as that of the preceding one, the development is different. In the first God announces in very general terms the approaching end of the exile; in the other he also declares the manner in which deliverance will be effected. God will raise up a mighty conqueror who will overthrow Babylon and many other kingdoms, and the Israelites will be released.

### III 42, 1-43, 13.

The analysis of this poem is based upon the assumption that the Servant Song (42, 1-4) forms an integral part of the poem. Whether this assumption is right or not will appear from the analysis of the other Servant poems.

Another important question is the extent of this poem. It is generally agreed that 42, 25 is not the end of the poem, but there is no agreement as to where the poem ends. Many interpreters carry the poem to 44, 23 (9), but 44, 23 is the end of another poem planned on the same lines as the preceding ones. Torrey closes the poem at 43, 7 (10), but 43, 8 is so closely connected with 42, 18ff that it must be considered as the continuation of a poem rather than the beginning of a new one. 43, 13 is a more fitting conclusion as we shall see from the following analysis.

Vv 1-4. The prophet introduces here for the first time the Servant of God. Although the people of Israel had already been called 'the servant of God' (41, 8. 9), the Servant of this poem is an altogether different person; he is endowed with the spirit of God, he has a mission to accomplish, he will be unobtrusive in the way of fulfilling his mission. Such a description does not suit the servant of ch 41.

Vv 5-9. The mission of the Servant is described as the establishment of a covenant with Yahweh, the opening of the eyes of the blind, and the liberation of those who sit in the darkness of dungeons. Now the question arises: Is the mission of the Servant to be understood in a purely temporal sense as the deliverance from captivity or in a broader spiritual sense as the conversion of the heathen world to Yahweh? This question is connected with another question, namely, whether vv 5-9 are the continuation of

(9) Staerk, Fischer, Kissane, Tournay, Dennefeld.

(10) *Op. cit.*, p. 321-4.

vv 1-4 or a new poem independent of the preceding one. Those who stand for the latter alternative identify the mediator of the new covenant with Cyrus, the deliverer of the captive Israelites (11). Those who make 5-9 the continuation of 1-4 explain the opening of blind eyes in v 7 as a metaphor for the conversion of the Gentiles and the release of prisoners as the deliverance of the exiled Israelites (12). It is preferable, perhaps, to apply both metaphors of the blind eyes and the prisoners sitting in darkness to the nations who will receive light and deliverance from ignorance through the Servant of Yahweh (13). The prophet's conception of the Servant's mission is predominantly universalistic and in no way restricted to the exiled Jews. The Servant will establish God's law on earth (42, 4); he will bring salvation to all mankind (49, 6); he will make expiation for the sins of all men (53, 12). It is true that the prophet's description of the Servant's mission may have been influenced by the circumstances of the Jewish captives, but still the mission remains essentially universal. Viewed from this broader standpoint the Servant's mission assumes a far greater importance than the deliverance from the Babylonian captivity and enters into the plan of God's universal redemption of which both the Exodus and the deliverance from captivity were only preparatory steps.

Vv 10-13 are a brief lyrical poem called forth by the thought of God's redemptive plan.

Vv 14-17. These verses are generally taken by interpreters to refer to the deliverance from Babylon. In fact the tenses in vv 15, 16 seem to denote future events. But the deliverance from Babylon is never described as a devastation of the land and a drying up of streams and rivers (48, 20; 49, 10, 11; see also 35, 6-10). Moreover the imperfect tenses in vv 15, 16 do not necessarily denote a present or a future action, they may denote a past action, as they stand in a context describing past actions, 'these things have I done to them, and have not forsaken them' v 16 (14). Now if vv 14-16 refer to the past, there is no other event to which they

(11) A. Vaccari, *Miscellanea Biblica*, II, 1934, 222; van der Ploeg, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

(12) Dennefeld, *La Sainte Bible* (Pirot-Clamer), *Isaie*; Tournay, *Revue biblique*, 1952, p. 370.

(13) Kissane, *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

(14) G. R. Driver, *Problems of the Hebrew Verbal System*, Edinburgh, 1936, p. 141.

can be applied except the deliverance from Egypt. Therefore in vv 14-17 we have the initial stage in the great work of redemption which had to be accomplished through the instrumentality of Israel. God had elected the people of Israel in the person of Abraham, brought them out of Egypt, entered into a special covenant with them, made them his Chosen people and an instrument in the execution of his plan of universal salvation. But the people turned their back to God, fell into idolatry and thus, apparently, frustrated God's purpose.

Vv 18-25. The people of Israel, deaf to God's warnings and blind to his privileged position among the nations, was punished with the Babylonian exile. This is the general sense of these verses although the meaning of v 19 is not clear. Some critics omit 19b.d (Fischer), others omit 19c.d (Steinmann-Auvray). The word *meshullam* is translated either as a proper name (Fischer, *Isaias 40-55 und die Perikopen vom Gottesknecht*, p. 40; Staerk, *op. cit.*) or as a participle 'the covenanted one' (Kissane), 'the befriended one' (Skinner), 'der Vertraute' (Fischer, *Isaias II*), 'familier' (Dennefeld). Despite these textual and exegetical questions, the general sense of vv 18-25 remains clear, that is, the punishment of the people of Israel with the exile and consequently the frustration, at least for the time being, of God's purpose of redemption.

43, 1-8. But God's purpose cannot be frustrated. Despite its present wretchedness Israel will not perish. Yahweh will deliver it at the cost of such wealthy nations as Egypt, Ethiopia and Saba, which he will give as a prize to Cyrus. Israel is precious in the sight of Yahweh and will, therefore, be brought back to its homeland.

Vv 9-13. Yahweh corroborates the truth of his promise. He, and he alone, can foretell the future, and the people of Israel will bear evidence to the truth of God's promises and predictions.

We can now easily trace out the development of this poem and bring out the logical connexion between the several parts. The prophet begins by introducing the person of the Servant of Yahweh and describing his mission. The Servant's mission failed, but God's plan cannot be frustrated, and success is finally assured. The structure of this poem is therefore different from that of the preceding two and may be summarized thus: description of the Servant's mission, apparent failure, assurance of final success.



**IV 43, 14-44, 23.**

Vv 14-21. The prophet announces the approaching end of captivity. Babylon will be overthrown and Yahweh will bring his people back to their country in a manner that will surpass the exodus from Egypt.

Vv 22-44, 20 form the argumentative section of the poem. The argumentation consists of two parts, 22-44, 5 and 44, 6-20. Israel has no claim to God's mercy; they have sinned and deserve nothing but punishment (22-28). But God's bond with Israel stands firm and he cannot destroy the whole people; the people have atoned for their sins in the exile, God has forgiven their sins and will take them again into his favour (44, 1-5). The second argument is this: Yahweh is an all-knowing and an almighty God, he can therefore deliver his people; the pagan gods, which are nothing but the work of man, have no power to detain them (6-20).

Vv 21-23. Conclusion. Israel's sins are completely forgiven, deliverance is certain; let all the people praise God's wonderful work of redemption.

We have therefore in this poem the three parts which we have noticed in the first two, namely. announcement of deliverance, assurance of promise, and confirmation. We need not, therefore, consider 44, 6-23 as a separate poem, an elaboration of 40, 18ff and a rebuke to the people (Torrey, Kissane). The prophet's argument is not: Do not worship the idols because they are not gods; but: God alone has the power to release you, the idols are absolutely powerless. As Israel's sins are supposed to be forgiven (44, 22), there can be no reason for rebuke.

**V 44, 24-45, 25.**

44, 24-28. Before announcing the forthcoming deliverance, Yahweh introduces himself as the creator of heaven and earth, a God who has the power of directing human events in such a way as to make the predictions of the pagan soothsayers prove false and those of his prophets prove true (read 'servants' for 'servant'; Fischer, Dennefeld, Kissane, Steinmann-Auvray), a God who can rebuild Jerusalem and dry up the deep sea. This is an introduction to the announcement of the deliverance which is made in the following verses.

45, 1-8 Yahweh here introduces Cyrus, the great Persian king, as the deliverer of the exiled Jews. Cyrus has been chosen

by God as the conqueror of nations and the ruler of kingdoms in the interest of the people of Israel, that is, in order that Israel may be delivered from bondage and all the world may recognize the power and sovereignty of Yahweh, the God of the Israelites.

Vv. 9-13. The exiled Israelites, however, could hardly be brought to believe that their deliverance would be effected through the agency of a pagan conqueror. They seem to have expected a miraculous liberation as in their exodus from Egypt. To these God replies that he, and he alone, controls the destinies of man and that opposition to the divine purpose is absolutely useless. If Yahweh has decided to deliver the exiles by means of a foreign conqueror, no one has the right to thwart his plans.

Vv 14-25. Not only will the Israelites be delivered from exile, but they will also receive the homage of all nations who will recognize Yahweh as the true God. The deliverance of Israel will be followed by the conversion of the pagan nations.

The poem is planned after the usual model: God *announces* the forthcoming deliverance, *assures* the faint-hearted exiles of the certainty of the deliverance, and *confirms* the certainty of his promise extending at the same time the effects of his intervention to all the peoples.

## VI 46, 1-48, 22.

These chapters are generally considered to form three distinct and independent poems dealing with the impotence of the pagan gods, the downfall of Babylon, and the certainty of the deliverance in spite of Israel's unworthiness. I prefer to regard them as three parts of a single poem planned on much the same lines as the preceding ones, with the exception of the third, and elaborating some points that are familiar to Deutero-Isaiah. The three characteristic elements, namely, the announcement or statement, the argumentative part, and the conclusion or re-assertion of the deliverance are not sharply distinguished; they often run into each other, but the leading idea is that of the approaching deliverance, announced, corroborated, and emphatically re-asserted.

Ch 46. A contrast between the impotence of the pagan gods and Yahweh's omnipotence leading to the conclusion that Israel will soon be delivered.

Ch 47. The subject is the doom of Babylon. Babylon will be overthrown and consequently Israel will be released. It is for his

name's sake that God will intervene on behalf of his people; Babylon, the proud mistress of kingdoms, will be reduced to the condition of a slave and the enslaved Israelites will be set free.

48, 1-11. But Israel is unworthy of God's favours. How can God deliver it? Indeed, Israel, on account of its unfaithfulness, deserves nothing but punishment. God, however, is unwilling to exterminate it (9), as it deserves, but will deliver it only after having purified it by the sufferings of the exile. It is not for Israel's merits that God will save it from extinction, but for God's sake, for the honour of his name, in order that his power, which surpasses infinitely that of the pagan gods, may be revealed before all the nations. The prophet is demonstrating the possibility of Israel's deliverance in spite of its unworthiness.

Vv 12-22. Conclusion. Israel will be certainly delivered, because God is eternal, omnipotent and omniscient. He has chosen Cyrus for the execution of his plans of salvation. The present condition of the Israelites is a proof of God's punitive justice, not of his inability to save. The certainty of the deliverance is forcefully expressed by a command to go forth from Babylon and to flee away from the Chaldaeans.

We have thus seen that, although chh 46, 47, and 48 form, apparently, three distinct and independent poems, they are in reality closely related to each other forming one poem planned on lines similar to those of the other ones. Chh 46 and 47 *announce* the deliverance which is about to follow on the downfall of Babylon and her gods; 48, 1-11 *demonstrates* the possibility of the deliverance which seems to be hindered by Israel's unworthiness; 48, 12-22 *re-asserts* Yahweh's omnipotence and the certainty of the deliverance.

## VII 49, 1-50, 3.

Critics do not agree in their way of defining the limits of this poem. Fischer, followed by Dennefeld, makes 49, 9b-13 a sequel to 48, 22, or 21, v 22 being expunged as a gloss. 49, 1-9a, the second Servant song is separated from the context and the poem is made to commence at 49, 14. Tournay agrees with Fischer in making 49, 1-13 the end of the first cycle of poems and commencing the second cycle at 49, 14 (15). Kissane divides the whole sec-

tion 49, 1-50, 3 into three poems and transposes 49, 8-13 after 50, 3. Torrey closes the poem at 49, 26 and makes 50, 1-3 the beginning of another poem. How far these constructions and transpositions are justified will appear from the following analysis.

49, 1-4. These verses describe the election of the Servant and the apparent failure of his mission. The Servant responded to God's election, but all his efforts were fruitless; yet his faith in God remained unshaken. Many interpreters on rhythmical and exegetical grounds remove the word 'Israel' from v 3, but the word has the support of all ancient versions and of the Dead Sea Hebrew manuscripts of Isaiah and must therefore, from a textual point of view, be retained.

Vv 5-6. God reassures his servant of success and encourages him by the announcement of a universal mission.

Vv 7-13. This is an elaboration of vv. 5-6. The Servant will certainly deliver the exiled Jews and bring them back to their country. Success is promised and assured.

14-50, 3. Not only will the people be delivered from captivity, but Jerusalem will also be rebuilt and reinstated in her former glory. Sion is Yahweh's spouse, divorced by him on account of her infidelity and taken back again for ever. There is none who can oppose God's will or resist his power to restore Jerusalem.

The structure of this poem is similar to that of the third poem. The characteristic component elements are: the Servant's mission, apparent failure and assurance of success.

### VIII 50, 4-52, 12.

This section is generally divided into three distinct parts or poems: 50, 4-11; 51, 1-8 or, according to others, 51, 1-16; 51, 9 (or 17)-52, 12. But as we have in this section the same elements and the same plan as in the previous one, I prefer to consider the whole section as a single poem dealing with the same subject, that is, the mission of the Servant in relation to the restoration of Sion.

Vv 4-11. The poem opens on a sad note, opposition and unbelief on the part of the people and fortitude and faith on the part of the Servant. The result is failure of the Servant's mission. The faithful Israelites are encouraged to listen to the Servant's warnings.

51, 1-8. A message of hope to the exiles. As God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled, so will his promise of deliverance be

likewise fulfilled. Heavens and earth may pass away, but God's plan of salvation cannot be frustrated.

9-52, 12. Assurance of deliverance and restoration. The faithful Israelites make a fervent appeal to God for a speedy deliverance and recall God's wonderful deeds in earlier times (vv 9-11). God answers Israel's appeal, reminds it of the wonderful work of creation and assures it that its oppressors will soon be overthrown and the exiles will be released (vv 12-16). The approaching end of the captivity is again emphatically proclaimed. Sion has atoned for her past sins, and the punishment which has been meted out to her will now be reversed on her enemies (vv 17-23). The certainty of deliverance is expressed by a description of Sion putting on her best raiment, the heralds announcing the return of the exiles, and the exiles themselves marching out of Babylon in an orderly manner under Yahweh's protection.

Thus we find in this poem too the same characteristic elements of the previous one, namely, apparent failure of the Servant's mission, promise of success, and assurance of final success.

### IX 52, 13-55, 13.

Apart from certain minor differences regarding the extent of this poem (16), interpreters generally agree in dividing this section into three different poems dealing with the sufferings of the King of Sion (52, 13-53, 12), the New Sion (ch. 54) and the citizens of the New Sion (ch 55) respectively. Indeed the glamorous description of the New Sion in chh 54 and 55 contrasts so strikingly with the gloomy colours of 52, 13-53, 12 that it seems hardly possible to unite the two parts into a single poem. But their juxtaposition would have been equally impossible if the writer or editor had not seen a logical connexion between them. I think it is not difficult to prove that such a connexion really exists.

52, 13-15. The prophet states the theme of the whole poem, the abasement and the exaltation of the Servant.

53, 1-9. The Servant's mission ended, apparently, in a complete failure. He suffered persecution, and was so disfigured by pain as to become an object of aversion. Although his sufferings were not the punishment of his sins, he was put to death.

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(16) Torrey and Kissane carry the end of the poem to 56, 8.

Vv 10-13. But death was his victory. He died not for his own sins, but for the sins of others. By his vicarious death he brought salvation to many, indeed to all mankind. The extraordinary success of the Servant's mission is diffusely described in the next two chapters.

Ch 54. This chapter is closely related to the previous one in spite of its apparent disconnection. The 'many' of 53, 11.12, are the innumerable children of the New Sion (54, 1); the 'spoil' (53, 12) are the nations converted to Yahweh (54, 3); the people's sins are completely forgiven (53, 12 and 54, 4-10). Cheyne, therefore, is hardly right when he says that 'it cannot be shown that any of the characteristic ideas of ch 53 are clearly referred to in ch 54' (17). Fischer links ch 54 with 52, 7-12 on the grounds of a certain similarity and continuity of subject-matter. But this is based on his theory of the origin of the Servant Songs and their relation to the context. The whole question whether chh 54 and 55 are independent poems or the sequel to 52, 13-53, 12 is, in other words, the relation between the restoration of Sion and the mission of the Servant. It is universally admitted that the Servant's mission is not the mere deliverance from the exile and the political restoration of the Jewish nation. He had to establish God's law on earth (42, 4) and bring salvation to the extreme ends of the earth (49, 6). Now the spiritual supremacy of Israel, the conversion of the Gentiles, the restoration of the collapsed Davidic kingdom in the messianic kingdom are only very lightly touched upon in the Servant's last song. It is, therefore, preferable to consider chh 54 and 55 as a development of 53, 10-12 describing the effects of the Servant's mission. The Servant had been elected by God in order to deliver the Israelites from captivity and bring salvation to mankind; the Servant has faithfully performed his task and brought it to a successful end by his death.

If chh 54 and 55 are considered as the sequel to, and a development of, 53, 10-12, we find in this last poem the same characteristic elements of the previous Servant poems, namely apparent failure of the Servant's mission, assurance of success and certainty of success described as already accomplished in the restoration of Sion.

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This very brief analysis of Is. 40-55 has brought out these facts :

1. The several poems forming the two cycles Is. 40-48 and 49-55 are composed after a fixed pattern consisting of three different elements namely, announcement of deliverance, assurance of deliverance, confirmation of promise in the first cycle, and the Servant's mission and its failure, promise of success and assurance of success in the other cycle.

2. The Servant songs are a constituent element and therefore an integral part of the contexts in which they stand.

3. The transposition of Is. 42, 1-43, 13 and its insertion at the beginning of the second group of poems would give us two perfectly symmetrical groups developing two aspects of the same fundamental theme, namely the deliverance of Israel from the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of Sion as two successive stages in God's plan of universal salvation.

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