

latter view. But these may be poetic license for what was undoubtedly an event of first magnitude to the prophet. And therefore, since the context following refers to the return from Babylon, we shall so interpret this section also. We do not deny, of course, a return from the diaspora, but only that to base it upon this passage is unsafe. The section 43:8-13 seems to be inconclusive, but 43:14-21 is very obviously a poetic and exalted description of the fall of the Chaldeans (now named for the first time in this section as Israel's captors) and Israel's return.

There follows another section not clearly Messianic, nor referring at all to the return from captivity. It is doctrinal rather than predictive. There is an arraignment of Israel set over against God's forgiveness, 43: 22-28. Then follows another passage promising God's care to "Jacob my servant", 44: 1-8. Those that worship idols are said to be of a different stripe, worshipping nothing but vanity, 44: 9-20. On the basis of this robust theism comes the exhortation to Israel to rejoice, for God brings deliverance through Cyrus His shepherd.

The Cyrus prophecy need not detain us long, because it has already been the subject of many and fruitful investigations. The difficulties are again not in exegesis but in criticism. As far as the exegesis is concerned, Cyrus is presented as the one who shall command the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the temple, and who will freely let God's exiles go because God will give him a favorable heart. It may be noticed that the same words 77Y7
~~"cause to rise up" and "in righteousness"~~ P T S, are used both here (Is. 45:13) and in 41:2, which prophesies the righteous one from the east. There are no serious exegetical difficulties, as we have said, but we should notice carefully what a tremendous event it was in the prophet's (and in God's) eyes.