

**THE SERVANT OF THE LORD IN  
ISAIAH XL.-LXVI.: RECLAIMED  
TO ISAIAH AS THE AUTHOR  
FROM ARGUMENT, STRUCTURE,  
AND DATE**

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The servant of the Lord in Isaiah XL.-LXVI.: reclaimed to Isaiah as the author from argument, structure, and date by John Forbes

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**JOHN FORBES**

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THE SERVANT OF THE LORD



# THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

IN ISAIAH XL.—LXVI.

RECLAIMED TO ISAIAH AS THE AUTHOR

FROM

*Argument, Structure, and Date*

BY

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## PREFACE.

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It is with feelings of the deepest and most sincere gratitude I give thanks to Almighty God, that health and strength have been granted me, at the advanced age of eighty-seven, to complete at length my Commentary on Isaiah's Last Prophecy of the "Servant of the Lord" in chaps. xl.-lxvi., and to reclaim for Isaiah its authorship, now denied by almost every biblical scholar on this side of the Atlantic, Dr. Debitzsch no longer forming an exception.

Knowing from my own experience how difficult it is to overcome long-cherished opinions, I cannot expect those who have arrived at an opposite conclusion after careful examination to assent to my views; but I do cherish the hope that the arguments adduced for the genuineness and authenticity of the Prophecy as a writing of the time of Isaiah will be found sufficient to convince younger scholars, who approach the question without prepossession, of the utter untenableness of the prevalent opinion that the Prophecy is the work of an author who wrote at the time of Cyrus; and to prove that, so far from being a "desultory composition, often interrupted and obscured by retrocessions and resumptions," as even Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander affirms, the Prophecy forms a continuous and most symmetrically arranged whole, in every respect worthy

of the great and most highly gifted writer to whom from the earliest times it has been ascribed.

One of the fairest and most successful attempts I have seen to trace the line of argument in what, for shortness' sake, has been designated II. Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah, is that of Rev. Canon S. R. Driver, in his *Isaiah: his Life and Times*. I am happy to find substantial agreement between his analysis of the argument and that given in the following pages. He has avoided the fatal error of explaining away whatever seems at first sight contrary to his views, as *interpolations* (e.g., chaps. lvi.-lviii.; see Ewald and Prof. Cheyne, pages 21, 22) or as *omissions* (see Prof. Cheyne, page 23). We must accept and account for *all* the elements of the problem laid before us.

Let us, then, strive to realize to ourselves as clearly and vividly as possible the point on which, in the first great division or book of the Prophecy (chaps. xl.-xlviii.), the decision is rested as to *Who has a right to the title of Godhead—Jehovah, or the gods of the idolators?* This is distinctly stated by Canon Driver: "Here the prophet imagines a judgment scene. The nations are invited to come forward and plead their case with Jehovah. The question is, *Who has stirred up the great conqueror Cyrus? Who has led him on his career of victory?*"<sup>1</sup>

As the attainment of the truth on the important question now before us—of the authorship of II. Isaiah—must be the desire of every sincere and impartial inquirer, I have now to confess, when too late to make any alteration (as the greater part of my volume is already in the hands of the printer), that I see I have

<sup>1</sup> *Isaiah, his Life and Times*, by Rev. Canon S. R. Driver, page 139.

fallen into a similar mistake to that of our modern critics, in not fully recognizing the force of the arguments for the opposite opinion. I have attributed too exclusively to *Isaiah* the credit of supporting the faith and hopes of Israel under the severe trial to which they must have been put by their sojourn and oppression in Babylonia, without adverting to the rejoinder the modern critics might make, that *Jeremiah's* prophecies, limiting the duration of their exile to seventy years, were those that sustained their faith. This now explains to me what before had puzzled me to understand, how intelligent men could regard as a *prediction* of a *future* event the utterances (*Isaiah* xli. 2-4 and 25) of an author whom they considered to be writing at the time the event was taking place. But, as predicted by *Jeremiah*, the assurance that Israel's exile would terminate at the end of seventy years would undoubtedly tend in part to "comfort" them under their afflictions.

Yet we must guard against resting satisfied with this as a sufficient explanation of the difficulties of the problem before us. For to what, at best, do the revelations made by *Jeremiah* amount but to the assurance, "Though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, I will not make a full end of thee" (*Jer.* xxx. 11)? There was nothing new in *Jeremiah's* predictions (except what related to the duration of the time) that had not been foretold by *Moses* more than a thousand years before in the Song which he left as his dying legacy to his people, warning them that after his "death they would utterly corrupt themselves . . . and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger" (*Deut.* xxxi. 29). This Song he enjoined them, in the name of the LORD, to "command