

the third is 50:4-11. In the first and third of these the servant of the Lord is speaking. In the middle section God is answering Zion's complaints. Beginning with the first mention of the servant of the Lord, in chapter 42, we have frequently noticed references to this great theme. It has often been suddenly interjected, and has occupied our attention for a verse or two, or, occasionally, for a somewhat longer passage. Now we find the theme considered in a passage which is longer than any that we have read so far.

In verses 1-12 it is very clear that the servant is speaking. This is made evident by the use of the word "servant" in verses 3 and 5-7, and also by the repetition in verses 8 and 9 of some of the phrases used in reference to the servant in Isaiah 42:6-7.

The identity of the servant might seem to be made clear in verse 3: "And he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (American Standard Version). (The King James Version inserts the word "O" which does not occur in the Hebrew). It is here said that the speaker is God's servant, Israel. Yet as we look further we find the speaker sharply differentiated from Israel. Thus we read in verse 5 that he has been called "to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him." The verse continues, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious." Again in verse 6 he quotes God's words: "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles." Thus the servant is clearly differentiated from Israel, for we are told these three times that he is the one who is to restore Israel. How can we explain the fact that here the servant is both called Israel and differentiated from Israel?

In the light of the previous chapters, the interpretation is simple. Israel has been called to perform the work of the servant and to be a light to the Gentiles. This work Israel is unable to do because Israel is weak and sinful and has been sent into captivity as a result of its wickedness. Nevertheless, the work is to be performed by Israel, so the one who is to do the work must be one who is of Israel and who represents Israel. The personal phrases and expressions used