

She says, "The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me."

The predictions given in our present section of Isaiah are so astounding and overwhelming that the prophet needs to explain them little by little. Only gradually can it dawn on the hearer exactly what is the full import of these wonderful promises. The revelations given to Isaiah contain a depth of meaning far beyond what can be immediately grasped. Much in them which becomes crystal clear in the light of the actual fulfillment in the New Testament must have been extremely difficult for the people who originally heard it to grasp.

In view of this it is no wonder that Zion should recur to her old complaint of incredulity and despair. She fears that everything is at an end for her. She is in bondage, in suffering, in exile far from home.

In Isaiah 49:15-50:3 God answers the complaint of Zion. Before we examine His answer it is necessary that we note exactly who it is that has made the complaint. Literally, Zion indicates the southeastern bill of Jerusalem, on which David's palace was built. The term is often extended to stand for the entire city of Jerusalem. In the passage before us, however, it is easy to see that the complaint does not represent the despair of a bit of ground, or of the earth or rock which formed the hill on which David's palace stood. The complainant is not a city, but a people described under the figure of a city.

We note further that this people which is here represented as complaining is not the entire nation of Israel. In earlier portions of Isaiah the prophet has often addressed the entire people of Israel, and declared to them God's rebuke for their sin and His declaration of the inevitable punishment. Very frequently such passages were followed immediately by verses in which the prophet's attention was turned away from the nation as a whole, and directed instead to the little group of the godly who were trying to follow God and to do His will. The mass of the people have no right to complain that the Lord has forsaken them. They know only too well that they are suffering the just deserts of their deeds. The little group of the godly recognizes that it, as part of the nation, is implicated in the sin into which the nation has fallen, and deserves punishment; it tends to give way to despair as it