

descendants, springing up as willows by the water courses; "one shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob."

This presentation of God's plan for the future inevitably raises in the minds of the listeners the old, and yet ever important question, how do we know that God is able to perform this? Consequently, verse six declares once more His omnipotence and the fact that He alone is God. In verses seven and eight He brings forward as proof of this the fact of His omniscience; His ability to predict the future, as we have seen, is stressed more in this part of Isaiah than anywhere else in the Bible, ~~as proof of His existence and of His power.~~

In verses nine to twenty we revert to the familiar theme of the vanity of the idol worship. Vividly the prophet points out the folly of worshipping something that man himself has made. How absurd it is (verse fifteen) to use part of a tree as fuel for a fire with which to warm oneself, to use another portion for baking bread, and out of still a third portion to make a god and to worship it! Even in our own day this passage has been of use to missionaries to convert worshippers of idols.

In verse twenty-one the prophet turns to his servant Israel and exhorts him to remember the vanity of idol worship. We have just been reading how the heathen formed their gods. Here in contrast it is stated that God Himself has formed Israel. Verses twenty-two and twenty-three declare that God will bring to an end the cause of all of Israel's suffering. He is going to blot out their transgressions.

Cyrus Predicted by Name

In verses twenty-four to twenty-eight we have a poem constantly accumulating in strength and emphasis, stressing the omnipotence and especially the omniscience of God, and reaching its great climax with the declaration that God will rebuild Jerusalem, that He will destroy the Mesopotamian power (which He indicates by the statement "dry up thy rivers"), and that He has raised up Cyrus as His instrument