

33 The Symphonies Structure

half of this section of Isaiah, a considerable amount of attention is given to condemnation of idol worship.

In our day idolatry seems like a relic of past times, yet we must recognize that the majority of those now living worship something other than the true God. All that is said against idolatry in our passage is highly relevant to our present situation if we substitute for the idol those other objectives or ideals to which modern men give the honor that is due the Creator.

Another theme that is important in this section of Isaiah is the theme of God's ability to predict the future. This important fact is stressed more in these chapters than almost anywhere else in the Bible.

In the early part of chapter 41 a new theme appears, that of "the Servant of the LORD." This theme is introduced so incidentally that it seems at first to be merely a part of other themes. Yet as the chapters go on, it is developed and stressed until eventually it becomes the most important element in this entire section of Isaiah.

As we examine succeeding chapters, we shall note many sudden transitions. Particularly sharp ones occur toward the end of chapters 42 and 43. Each of these chapters has a passage declaring God's promise to send great blessing (42:21; 43:19-21). In each case this is followed by a passage expressing great disappointment with His people and strongly criticizing them (42:22-25; 43:22-28). Then, as if the Lord feared that the words of condemnation might make His suffering people fall into utter despair, they are immediately followed by beautiful promises of indescribable blessing.

Without recognition of the importance of the symphonic structure, these chapters might seem like a patchwork of colors arranged in helter-skelter fashion. Once the underlying structure is recognized, they appear instead as a beautiful tapestry, with sections logically arranged in such a way as to convey great thoughts forcibly and yet tactfully.