

TEN

MY PEOPLE, MY CHOSEN¹

An holy people unto the Lord thy God.²

The 'chosen people'—but chosen for what? Not for pleasure, surely, nor for power. No religion is an acceptance of the present condition or a warrant for terrestrial happiness. If happiness comes, it is incidental to the performance of function, or, in more solemn language, of mission; and the human situation, spiritual as well as material, is never so satisfactory that it should not, and can not, be bettered. The 'choice' of a people means the acceptance by them of a specific vocation; and in this case the nature of the vocation is indicated clearly from the first: it is to practice and exemplify a new way of living.

Men have always resented instruction, however indirect; and the greater their need of it, the greater is their resentment. The Servants of all peoples, in all ages, and in all countries, are brought invariably to contempt and suffering.

Adam, Seth, Enosh; Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared; Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech; Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

. . . Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah; Eber, Peleg, Reu; Serug, Nahor, Terah; Abram (the same is Abraham).³

Abraham thy friend.⁴

When he was but one I called him.⁵

¹Isa. 43: 20.
²Deut. 7: 6.

³1 Chron. 1: 1-4, 24-27.

⁴2 Chron. 20: 7.
⁵Isa. 52: 2.

For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement.¹

And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau, and Israel.²

Israel, whom I have chosen.³

Israel, my son, my firstborn.⁴

Israel was holiness unto the Lord, the firstfruits of his increase.⁵

For the Lord's portion is his people;
Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

He found him in a desert land,
And in the waste howling wilderness;
He compassed him about, he cared for him,
He kept him as the apple of his eye:
As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
That fluttereth over her young,
He spread abroad his wings, he took them,
He bare them on his pinions:

The Lord alone did lead him,
And there was no strange god with him.⁶

I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples: for all the earth is

¹Gen. 18: 19.

²1 Chron. 1: 34.

³Isa. 44: 1.

⁴Exod. 4: 22.

⁵Jer. 2: 3.

⁶Deut. 32: 9-12.

mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,
and an holy nation.¹

I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you
a God.²

The people which I formed for myself, that they might
set forth my praise.³

Ye that know righteousness, the people in whose
heart is my law.⁴

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called
my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went
from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned
incense to graven images.

Yet I taught Ephraim to go; I took them on my
arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew
them with cords of a man, with bands of love.⁵

To love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and
with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.⁶

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one:
and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine
heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And these words, which I command thee this day,
shall be upon thine heart: and thou shalt teach them
diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them
when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest
by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou
risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon
thine hand, and they shall be for frontlets between

¹Exod. 19: 4-6.
²Exod. 6: 7.

³Isa. 43: 21.
⁴Isa. 51: 7.

⁵Hos. 11: 1-4.
⁶Deut. 30: 6.

thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.¹

This day the Lord thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and judgements: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and that thou shouldest walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgements, and hearken unto his voice.

And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be a peculiar people unto himself, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.²

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayst live, thou and thy seed: to love the Lord thy God, to obey his voice, and to cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.³

Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in the midst of thy camps, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldest enter into the covenant of the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may

¹Deut. 6: 4-9 (M).

²Deut. 26: 16-19.

³Deut. 30: 19-20.

establish thee this day unto himself for a people, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he spake unto thee, and as he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.¹

And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.²

For he established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which he commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children:
That the generation to come might know them, even
the children which should be born;
Who should arise and tell them to their children:
That they might set their hope in God,
And not forget the works of God,
But keep his commandments.³

This thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.

But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.

¹Deut. 29: 10-15.

²Isa. 59: 21.

³Ps. 78: 5-7

Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they did worse than their fathers.¹

Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes unto your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land? Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land?²

Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?³

Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem: Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite; the Amorite was thy father, and thy mother was an Hittite.⁴

And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; and Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. . . . Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth: and

¹Jer. 7: 23-26.

²Ezek. 33: 25-26.

³Amos. 9: 7.

⁴Ezek. 16: 3.

put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. . . . And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive you your transgression nor your sins. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord.

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.¹

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen.²

Thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend; thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away.³

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgement in truth.

¹Josh. 24: 2-4, 14-15, 19-22.

²Isa. 43: 10.

³Isa. 41: 8-9.

He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgement in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.¹

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples, from far: the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name: and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me; and he hath made me a polished shaft, in his quiver hath he kept me close: and he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified. But I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity: yet surely my judgement is with the Lord, and my recompence with my God.

And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him: (for I am honourable in the eyes of the Lord, and my God is become my strength:) yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest 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, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.²

All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.³

Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Like as many were astonied at thee, (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,) so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall

¹Isa. 42: 1-4.

²Isa. 49: 1-6.

³Isa. 52: 10.

shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, yet he humbled himself and opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea, he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgement he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living? for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.¹

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted.²

I, even I, am he that comforteth you.³

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.⁴

I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the wilderness.⁵

In his love and in his pity he redeemed them.⁶

Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship; because of the Lord that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.⁷

He hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.⁸

¹Isa. 52: 13-53: 12.

²Isa. 54: 11.

³Isa. 51: 12.

⁴Isa. 66: 13.

⁵Jer. 2: 2.

⁶Isa. 63: 9.

⁷Isa. 49: 7.

⁸Hos. 6: 1.

I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.¹

Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.²

Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I send? who is blind as he that is at peace with me, and blind as the Lord's servant? Thou seest many things, but thou observest not; his ears are open, but he heareth not. It pleased the Lord, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify the law, and make it honourable. But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes.³

Remember these things, O Jacob; and Israel, for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.⁴

And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say, We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I be king over you.⁵

I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.⁶

Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord.⁷

¹Isa. 43: 1-2.
²Isa. 6: 9.

³Isa. 42: 19-22.
⁴Isa. 44: 21.

⁵Ezek 20: 32-33.
⁶Lev. 10: 3.

⁷Isa. 52: 11.