**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 1; CHAPTER 12. ONE ISAIAH**

BY PROFESSOR GEORGE L. ROBINSON, D.D., MCCORMICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

"For about twenty-five centuries no one dreamt of doubting that Isaiah the son of Amoz was the author of every part of the book that goes under his name; and those who still maintain the unity of authorship are accustomed to point, with satisfaction, to the unanimity of the Christian Church on the matter, till a few German scholars arose, about a century ago, and called in question the unity of this book." Thus wrote the late Dr. A. B. Davidson, Professor of Hebrew in New College, Edinburgh, (Old Testament Prophecy, p. 244, 1903).

**THE HISTORY OF CRITICISM**

The critical disintegration of the Book of Isaiah began with Koppe, who in 1780 first doubted the genuineness of chapter 50. Nine years later Doederlein suspected the whole of chapters 40-66. He was followed by Rosenmueller, who was the first to deny to Isaiah the prophecy against Babylon in chapters 13:1-14:23. Eichhorn, at the beginning of the last century, further eliminated the oracle against Tyre in chapter 23, and, with Gesenius and Ewald, also denied the Isaianic origin of chapters 24-27. Gesenius also ascribed to some unknown prophet chapters 15 and 16. Rosenmueller went further, and pronounced against chapters 34 and 35; and not long afterwards (1840), Ewald questioned chapters 12 and 33. Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century some thirty-seven or thirty-eight chapters were rejected as no part of Isaiah's actual writings.

In 1879-80, the celebrated Leipzig professor, Franz Delitzsch, who for years previous had defended the genuineness of the entire book, finally yielded to the modern critical position, and in the new edition of his commentary published in 1889, interpreted chapters 40-66, though with considerable hesitation, as coming from the close of the period of Babylonian exile. About the same time (1888-90), Canon Driver and Dr. George Adam Smith gave popular impetus to similar views in Great Britain.

Since 1890, the criticism of Isaiah has been even more trenchant and microscopic than before. Duhm, Stade, Guthe, Hackmann, Cornill and Marti on the Continent, and Cheyne, Whitehouse, Box, Glazebrook, Kennett and others in Great Britain and America, have questioned portions which hitherto were supposed to be genuine.

**THE DISINTEGRATION OF "DEUTERO-ISAIAH"**

Even the unity of chapters 40-66, which were supposed to be the work of the Second, or "Deutero-Isaiah," is given up. What prior to 1890 was supposed to be the unique product of some celebrated but anonymous sage who lived in Babylonia (about 550 B. C), is now commonly divided and subdivided and in large part distributed among various writers from Cyrus to Simon.

At first it was thought sufficient to separate chapters 63-66 as a later addition to "Deutero-Isaiah's" prophecies; but more recently it has become the fashion to distinguish between chapters 40-55, which are alleged to have been written in Babylonia about 549-538 B.C., and chapters 56-66, which are now claimed to have been composed about 460-445 B.C. Some carry disintegration farther even than this, especially in the case of chapters 56-66, which are subdivided into various fragments and said to be the product of a school of writers rather than of a single pen. Opinions also conflict as to the place of their composition, whether in Babylonia, Palestine, Phoenicia, or Egypt.

**RECENT VIEWS**

Among the latest to investigate the problem is the Rev. Robert H. Kennett, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew and Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, whose Schweich Lectures (1909) have recently been published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1910. The volume is entitled, "The Composition of the Book of Isaiah in the Light of History and Archaeology", and is a professed "attempt to tell in a simple way the story of the book of Isaiah." The results of his investigations he sums up as follows (pp. 84-85): (1) All of chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 20 and 31, and portions of chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 22 and 23, may be assigned to Isaiah the son of Amoz. (2) All of chapters 13, 40 and 47, and portions of chapters 14, 21, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 48, may be assigned to the time of Cyrus. (3) All of chapters 15, 36, 37 and 39, and portions of chapters 16 and 38, may be assigned to the period between Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great, but cannot be dated precisely. (4) Chapter 23:1-14 may be assigned to the time of Alexander the Great (332 B.C). (5) All of chapters 11, 12, 19, 24-27, 29, 30, 32-35, 42, 49-66, and portions of chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 23, 41, 44, 45 and 48, may be assigned to the second century B.C. Dr. Kennett thus assigns more than one-half of the book of Isaiah to the Maccabean Age.

Prof. C. F. Kent, also, in his "Sermons. Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets," 1910, makes the following noteworthy observations on. the prophecies of the so-called "Deutero-Isaiah." He says: "The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. ... afford by far the best approach for the study of the difficult problems presented by Isaiah 40-66. ... Chapters 56-66 are generally recognized as post-exilic. ... In Isaiah 56 and the following chapters there are repeated references to the temple and its service, indicating that it had already been restored. More-over, these references are not confined to the latter part of the book The fact, on the one hand, that there are few, if any, allusions to contemporary events in these chapters, and, on the other hand, that little or nothing is known of the condition and hopes of the Jews during this period (the closing years of the Babylonian exile) makes the dating of these prophecies possible although far from certain. ... Also the assumption that the author of these chapters lived in the Babylonian exile is not supported by a close examination of the prophecies themselves. Possibly their author was one of the few who, like Zerubbabel, had been born in Babylon and later returned to Palestine. He was also dealing with such broad and universal problems that he gives few indications of his date and place of abode; but all the evidence that is found points to Jerusalem as the place where he lived and wrote. ... The prophet's interest and point of view center throughout in Jerusalem, and he shows himself far more familiar with conditions in Palestine than in distant Babylon. Most of his illustrations are drawn from the agricultural life of Palestine. His vocabulary is also that of a man dwelling in Palestine, and in this respect is in marked contrast with the synonyms employed by Ezekiel, the prophet of the Babylonian exile" (pp. 27, 28).

That is to say, the two most recent investigators of the Book of Isaiah reach conclusions quite at variance with the opinions advocated in 1890, when Delitzsch so reluctantly allowed that chapters 40-66 may have sprung from the period of Babylonian exile. These last twenty-seven chapters are now found to have been written most probably in Palestine rather than in Babylonia, and are no longer claimed to speak primarily to the suffering exiles in captivity as was formerly supposed.

**THE PRESENT STATE OF THE QUESTION**

The present state of the Isaiah question is, to say the least, complex, if not chaotic. Those who deny the integrity of the book may be divided into two groups which we may call moderates and radicals. Among the moderates may be included Drs. Driver, G. A. Smith, Skinner, Kirkpatrick, Koenig, A. B. Davidson and Whitehouse. These all practically agree that the following chapters and verses are not Isaiah's: 11:10-16; 12:1-6; 13:1-14:23; 15:1-16:12; 21:1-10; 24-27; 34-66. That is to say, some forty-four chapters out of the whole number, sixty-six, were not written by Isaiah; or, approximately 800 out of 1,292 verses are not genuine.

Among the radicals are Drs. Cheyne, Duhm, Hackmann, Guthe, Marti and Kennett. These all reject approximately 1,030 verses out of the total 1,292, retaining the following only as the genuine product of Isaiah and his age: 1:2-26, 29-31 2:6-19; 3:1, 5, 8, 9, 12-17, 24; 4:1; 5:1-14, 17-29; 6:1-13 7:1-8:22; 9:8-10:9; 10:13, 14, 27-32; 14:24-32; 17:1-14 18:1-6; 20:1-6; 22:1-22; 28:1-4, 7-22; 29:1-6, 9, 10, 13-15; 30:1-17; 31:l-4. That is, only about 262 verses out of the total, 1,292, are allowed to be genuine.

This is, we believe, a fair statement of the Isaiah question as it exists today.

On the other hand, there are those who still defend the unity of Isaiah's book, e.g., Strachey (1874), Naegelsbach (1877), Bredenkamp (1887), Douglas (1895), W. H. Cobb (1883-1908), W. H. Green (1892), Vos (1898-99), Thirtle (1907) and Margoliouth (1910) (Compare also the writer's "The Book of Isaiah," Y.M.C.A. Press., N.Y., 1910.).

**THE PRIME REASON FOR DISSECTING ISAIAH**

The fundamental axiom of criticism is the dictum that a prophet always spoke out of a definite historical situation to the present needs of the people among whom he lived, and that a definite historical situation shall be pointed out for each prophecy. This fundamental postulate underlies all modern criticism of Old Testament prophecy.

This principle on the whole is sound, but it can easily be overworked. Certain cautions are necessary, for example:

**(1)**. It is impossible to trace each separate section of prophecy, independently of its context, to a definite historical situation. Besides, the prophets often speak in poetry, and poetry ought not as a rule to be taken literally.

**(2).** It is not necessarily the greatest event in a nation's history or the event about which we happen to know the most, that may actually have given birth, humanly speaking, to a particular prophecy. Israel's history is full of crises and events, any one of which may easily be claimed to furnish an appropriate, or at least a possible, background for a given prophecy.

**(3).** The prophets usually spoke directly to the needs of their own generation, but they spoke also to the generations yet to come. Isaiah, for example, commanded, "Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples" (8:16); that is, preserve My teachings for the future. Again in 30:8, he says, "Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come forever and ever." And also in 42:23, "Who is there among you that will give ear to this? that will hearken and hear for the time to come?"

**ALLEGED EXTERNAL EVIDENCE AGAINST UNITY**

Recently certain writers have appealed to the author of 2 Chronicles to prove that chapters 40-66 existed as a separate collection in his age. Whitehouse in the New Century Bible ("Isaiah", Vol. I, p. 70), says: "This is clear from 2 Chron. 36:22 ff, in which the passage Isa. 44:28 (that Cyrus would cause the temple to be built) is treated as the word of Jeremiah. The so-called 'Deutero-Isaiah' (chs. 40-66) must at that time (c. 300 B.C.) have been regarded as a body of literature standing quite apart from the Isaianic collection or collections which then existed." But the evidence obtained from this source is so doubtful that it is well-nigh valueless. For it is not the prediction concerning Cyrus to which the chronicler points as "the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah," but "the three-score-and-ten years" spoken of in verse 21 of the same context which Jeremiah did predict. cf. 2 Chron. 36:21. On the other hand, the order of the prophets among the Jews of antiquity was (1) Jeremiah, (2) Ezekiel, (3) Isaiah, and (4) The Twelve; accordingly, any portion of any of these prophecies might be cited as belonging to Jeremiah, because his book stood first.

In any case, to seek for external evidence in behalf of the dissection of the book is indicative!

**THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE BOOK**

When or how the Book of Isaiah was edited and brought into its present form is unknown. Jesus ben-Sirach, the author of Ecclesiasticus, writing c. 180 B.C., cites Isaiah as one of the notable worthies of Hebrew antiquity, in whose days, "the sun went backward and he added life to the king" (Ecclus. 48:20-25; cf. Isa. 38:4-8); and he adds, who "saw by an excellent spirit that which should come to pass at the last, and comforted them that mourned in Zion." Evidently, therefore, at the beginning of the second century B.C., at the latest, the Book of Isaiah had reached its present form, and the last twenty-seven chapters were already ascribed to the son of Amoz.

Furthermore, there is absolutely no proof that chapters 1-39, or any other considerable section of Isaiah's prophecies ever existed by themselves as an independent collection; nor is there any ground for thinking that the promissory and Messianic portions have been systematically interpolated by editors long subsequent to Isaiah's own time. It is quite arbitrary to suppose that the earlier prophets only threatened.

**CERTAIN FALSE PRESUPPOSITIONS**

Certain false presuppositions govern critics in their disintegration of the Book of Isaiah. Only a few examples need be given by way of illustration.

**(1).** To one, "the conversion of the heathen" lay quite beyond the horizon of any eighth-century prophet, and consequently Isa. 2:2-4 and all similar passages should be relegated to a subsequent age.

**(2).** To another, "the picture of universal peace" in Isa. 11:1-9 is a symptom of late date, and therefore this section and kindred ones must be deleted.

**(3).** To another, the thought of "universal judgment" upon "the whole earth" in chapter 14:26 quite transcends Isaiah's range of thought.

**(4).** To still another, the apocalyptic character of chapters 24-27 represents a phase of Hebrew thought which prevailed in Israel only after Ezekiel.

**(5).** Even to those who are considered moderates the poetic character of a passage like chapter 12 and the references to a return from captivity as in 11:11-16, and the promises and consolations such as are found in chapter 33, are cited as grounds for assigning these and kindred passages to a much later age. Radicals deny in toto the existence of Messianic passages among Isaiah's own predictions.

But, to deny to Isaiah of the eighth century all catholicity of grace, all universalism of salvation or judgment, every highly developed Messianic ideal, every rich note of promise and comfort, all sublime faith in the sacrosanct character of Zion, as some do, is unwarrantably to create a new Isaiah of greatly reduced proportions, a mere preacher of righteousness, a statesman of not very optimistic vein, and the exponent of a cold ethical religion without the warmth and glow of the messages which are actually ascribed to the prophet of the eighth century.

**THE WRITER'S PERSONAL ATTITUDE**

More and more the writer is persuaded that the fundamental postulates of much criticism are unsound, and that broad facts must decide the unity or collective character of Isaiah's book. To determine the exact historical background of each individual section is simply impossible, as the history of criticism plainly shows. Verbal exegesis may do more harm than good. Greater regard must be paid to the structure of the book. When treated as an organic whole, the book is a grand masterpiece. One great purpose dominates the author throughout, which, as he proceeds, is brought to a climax in a picture of Israel's redemption and the glorification of Zion. Failure to recognize this unity incapacitates a man to do it exegetical justice. The prophecies of the Book of Isaiah simply cannot be properly understood without some comprehension of the author's scheme of thought as a whole. There is an obvious, though it may be to some extent an editorial, unity to Isaiah's prophecies. But there is as true a unity in the Book of Isaiah as is usually found in a volume of sermons. To regard them as a heterogeneous mass of miscellaneous prophecies which were written at widely separated times and under varied circumstances from Isaiah's own period down to the Maccabean age, and freely interpolated throughout the intervening centuries, is to lose sight of the great historic realities and perspective of the prophet. In short the whole problem of how much or how little Isaiah wrote would become immensely simplified if critics would only divest themselves of a mass of unwarranted presuppositions and arbitrary restrictions which fix hard and fast what each century can think and say.

Accordingly, the writer's attitude is that of those who, while welcoming all ascertained results of investigation, decline to accept any mere conjectures or theories as final conclusions. And while he acknowledges his very great debt to critics of all latitudes, he nevertheless believes that the Book of Isaiah, practically as we have it, may have been, and probably was, all written by Isaiah, the son of Amoz, in the latter half of the eighth century B.C.

**ARGUMENTS FOE ONE ISAIAH**

It is as unreasonable to expect to be able to prove the unity of Isaiah as to suppose that it has been disproven. Internal evidence is indecisive in either case. There are arguments, however, which corroborate a belief that there was but one Isaiah. Here are some of those which might be mentioned:

**1.** **The Circle of Ideas** is strikingly the same throughout. For example, take the name for God which is almost peculiar to the Book of Isaiah, "the Holy One of Israel". This title for Jehovah occurs in the Book of Isaiah a total of twenty-five times and only six times elsewhere in the Old Testament (one of which is in a parallel passage). It interlocks all the various portions with one another and stamps them with the personal imprimatur of him who saw the vision of the majestic God seated upon His throne, high and lifted up, and heard the angelic choirs singing: "Holy, Holy, Holy is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of Thy glory" (Chapter 6). The presence of this Divine name in all the different sections of the book is of more value in identifying Isaiah as the author of all these prophecies than though his name had been inscribed at the beginning of every chapter, for the reason that his theology is woven into the very fiber and texture of the whole book.

The title occurs twelve times in chapters 1-39, and thirteen times in chapters 40-66; and it is simply unscientific to say that the various alleged authors of the disputed portions all employed the same title through imitation. (Isa. 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37: 23. Also, 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14. Compare 2 Kings 19:22; Psa. 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Jer. 50:29; 51:5.)

Another unique idea which occurs with considerable repetition in the Book of Isaiah is the. thought of a "highway". cf. 11:16; 35:8; 40:3; 43:19; 49:11; 57:14; 62:10.

Another is the idea of a "remnant". cf . 1:9; 6:13; 10:20, 21,22; 11:11, 12, 16; 14:22, 30; 15:9; 16:14; 17:3,6; 21:17; 28:5; 37:31; 46:3; 65:8, 9.

Another is the position occupied by "Zion" in the prophet's thoughts. cf. 2:3; 4:5; 18:7; 24:23; 27:13; 28:16; 29:8; 30:19; 31:9; 33:5, 20; 34:8; 46:13; 49:14; 51:3, 11; 52:1; 57.13; 59:20; 60:14; 62:1, 11; 65:11, 25; 66:8.

Still another is the expression, "pangs of a woman in travail." cf. 13:8; 21:3; 26:17, 18; 42:14;54:1; 66:7.

All these, and many others which are less distinctive, stamp psychologically the book with an individuality which it is difficult to account for if it be broken up into various sections and distributed, as some do, over the centuries.

**2. Literary Style.** As negative evidence, literary style is not a very safe argument, for as Professor McCurdy says, "In the case of a writer of Isaiah's endowments, style is not a sure criterion of authorship" ("History, Prophecy and the Monuments," II, p. 317 n.). Yet it is remarkable that the clause, "for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it", should be found three times in the Book of Isaiah, and nowhere else in the Old Testament. cf. 1:20; 40:5; 58:14.

It is also singular that the Divine title, "the Mighty One of Israel," should occur three times in Isaiah and nowhere else in the Old Testament. cf. 1:24; 49:26; 60:16.

And it is noteworthy that the phrase, "streams of water," should occur twice in Isaiah and nowhere else. cf . 30:25; 44:4. And most peculiar is the tendency on the part of the author to emphatic reduplication. cf. 2:7, 8; 6:3; 8:9; 24:16, 19; 40:1; 43:11, 25; 48:15; 51:12; 57:19; 62:10.

Isaiah's style differs widely from that of every other Old Testament prophet and is as far removed as possible from that of Ezekiel and the post-exilic prophets.

**3. Historical References.** Take for example, first, the prophet's constant reference to Judah and Jerusalem, 1:7-9; 3:8; 5:13; 24:19; 25:2; 40:2, 9; 62:4. Also, to the temple and its ritual of worship and sacrifice. In chapter 1:11-15, when all was prosperous, the prophet complained that the people are profuse and formal in their ceremonies and sacrifices; in chapter 43:23, 24, on the contrary, when the country had been overrun by the Assyrians and Sennacherib had beseiged the city, the prophet complains that they had not brought to Jehovah the sheep of their burnt offerings, nor honored Him with their sacrifices. In chapter 66:1-3, 6, 20, not only is the existence of the temple and the observance of the temple ritual presupposed, but those are sentenced who place their trust in the material temple, and the outward ceremonials of temple worship.

As for the "exile", the prophet's attitude to it throughout is that of both anticipation and realization. Thus in chapter 57:1, judgment is only threatened, not yet inflicted: "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come." That is to say, the exile is described as still future. On the other hand, in chapter 3:8, "Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen"; while in chapter 11:11, 12, "the Lord will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant ... from the four corners of the earth." To interpret such statements literally without regard to Isaiah's manifest attitude to the exile, leads only to confusion. No prophet realized so keenly or described so vividly the destiny of the Hebrews.

**4. The Predictive Element.** This is the strongest proof of the unity of the Book of Isaiah. Prediction is the very essence of prophecy. Isaiah was pre-eminently a prophet of the future. With unparalleled suddenness he repeatedly leaps from despair to hope, from threat to promise, from the actual to the ideal. What Kent says of "Deutero-Isaiah" may with equal justice be said of Isaiah himself: "While in touch with his own age, the great unknown prophet lives in the atmosphere of the past and the future" (cf. "Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets", p. 28).

Isaiah spoke to his own age, but he also addressed himself to the ages to come. His verb tenses are characteristically futures and prophetic perfects. Of him A. B. Davidson's words are particularly true: "If any prophetic book be examined ... it will appear that the ethical and religious teaching is always secondary, and that the essential thing in the book or discourse is the prophet's outlook into the future" (Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, article, "Prophecy and Prophets").

Isaiah was exceptionally given to predicting: thus,

**(1).** Before the Syro-Ephraimitic war (734 B.C.), he predicted that within sixty-five years Ephraim should be broken in pieces (7:8); and that before the child Mahershalal-hash-baz should have knowledge to cry, "My father" or "My mother", the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria should be carried away (8:4; cf. 7:16). There are numerous other predictions among his earlier prophecies. (cf. 1:27, 28; 2:2-4; 6:13; 10:20-23; 11:6-16; 17:14.)

**(2).** Shortly before the downfall of Samaria in 722 B.C. Isaiah predicted that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, and that after the end of seventy years her merchandise shall be holiness of Jehovah. (cf. Isa. 23:15.)

**(3).** Likewise prior to the siege of Ashdod in 711 B.C., he proclaimed that within three years Moab should be brought into contempt (Isa. 16:14), and that within a year all the glory of Kedar should fail (Isa. 21:16).

**(4).** And not long prior to the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 B.C., he predicted that in an instant, suddenly, a multitude of Jerusalem's foes should be as dust (Isa. 29:5); that yet a very little while and Lebanon should be turned into a fruitful field (Isa. 29:17); that Assyria should be dismayed and fall by the sword but not of men (Isa. 30:17, 31; 31:8). Furthermore, that for days beyond a year, the careless women of Jerusalem should be troubled (Isa.« 32:10, 16-20); and that the righteous in Zion should see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, and return and come with singing (Isa. 33:17-24; 35:4, 10); but that Sennacherib on the contrary should hear tidings and return without shooting an arrow into the city (Isa. 37:7, 26-29,33-35).

In like manner after the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, 701 B.C., the prophet continued to predict; and, in order to demonstrate to the suffering remnant about him the deity of Jehovah and the folly of idolatry, pointed to the predictions which he had already made in the earlier years of his ministry, and to the fact that they had been fulfilled. For example, he says:

In chapter 41:21-23, 26 ff.: "Who hath declared it from the beginning that we may know, and beforetime that we may say, He is right?"

In chapter 42:9, 23: "Behold the former things are come to pass and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."

In chapter 43:9, 12: "Who among them can declare this and show us former things? [i. e., things to come in the immediate future.] I have declared, and I have saved and I have showed."

In chapter 44:7, 8, 27, 28: "Who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it? \* ... The things that are coming and that shall come to pass, let them [the idols] declare. Have not I declared unto thee of old and showed it? And ye are My witnesses. ... That saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, she shall be built; and of the temple, thy foundation shall be laid."

In chapter 45:1-4, 11, 21: "It is I Jehovah, who call thee by thy name, even the God of Israel. ... I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known Me. ... Ask of Me the things that are to come. ... I have raised him [Cyrus] up in righteousness, and he shall build My city, and he shall let My exiles go free."

In chapter 46:10, 11: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; ... calling a ravenous bird [Cyrus] from the east, the man of My counsel. ... Yea, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass."

In chapter 48:3, 5: "I have declared the former things from of old, .. and I showed them, suddenly I did them, and they came to pass. ... I have declared it to thee from of old; before it came to pass I showed it thee; lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them."

And again in chapter 48:6-8, 14-16: "I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things; ... before this day thou heardest them not, ... yea, from of old thine ear was not opened, … Who, among them hath declared these things? ... I even I have spoken; yea, I have called him; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret." To which long list of predictions the prophet adds by way of lamentation: "Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments [including predictions]! then had thy peace been like a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (48:18).

**CYRUS A SUBJECT OF PREDICTION**

From all these numerous explicit and oft-repeated predictions one thing is obvious, namely, that great emphasis is laid on prediction throughout the Book of Isaiah. "Cyrus" must be considered as predicted from any point of view. The only question is, Does the prophet emphasize the fact that he is himself predicting the coming of Cyrus? or, that former predictions concerning Cyrus are now in his time coming to pass?

Canon Cheyne's remark upon this point is apropos. He says: "The editor, who doubtless held the later Jewish theory of prophecy, may have inferred from a number of passages. especially 41:26; 48:3, 6, 14, that the first appearance of Cyrus had been predicted by an ancient prophet, and observing certain Isaianic elements in the phraseology of these chapters may have identified the prophet with Isaiah" ("Introduction to the Book of Isaiah," p. 238). Why not regard "the editor's" inference legitimate?

Dr. George Adam Smith likewise allows that Cyrus is the fulfillment of former predictions. He says: "Nor is it possible to argue as some have tried to do, that the prophet is predicting these things as if they had already happened. For as part of an argument for the unique divinity of the God of Israel, Cyrus, alive and irresistible, and already accredited with success, is pointed out as the unmistakable proof that former prophecies of a deliverance for Israel are already coming to pass. Cyrus, in short, is not presented as a prediction but as a proof that a prediction is being fulfilled" (Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, art. "Isaiah", p. 493). Further, he says: "The chief claim, therefore, which chapters 40 ff. make for the God of Jehovah is His power to direct the history of the world in conformity to a long predicted and faithfully followed purpose. This claim starts from the proof that Jehovah has long before predicted events now happening or about to happen, with Cyrus as their center" (Idem, p. 496).

Hence in any case it must be allowed that Cyrus is the subject of prediction. It really makes little difference at which end of history one stands, whether in the eighth century B.C. or in the sixth, Cyrus, to the author of chapters 40-48, is the subject of prediction. Whether, indeed, he is really predicting Cyrus in advance of all fulfillment, or whether Cyrus to him is the fulfillment of some ancient prediction does not alter the fact that Cyrus was the subject of prediction on the part of somebody. As was stated above, the whole question is, which does the prophet emphasize, (1) the fact that he is predicting? or, (2) that former predictions are now before his eyes coming to pass? The truth is, the prophet seems to live in the atmosphere of both the past and the future. This is true of Isaiah, who in his inaugural vision (ch. 6) paints a scene which Delitzsch describes as "like a prediction in the process of being fulfilled". The same is presumably true of chapters 24-27. There the prophet repeatedly projects himself into the future, and speaks from the standpoint of the fulfillment of his prediction. This was an outstanding characteristic of Isaiah. At one time he emphasizes the fact that he is predicting, and a little later he seems to emphasize that his predictions are coming to pass. Accordingly, if a decision must be made as to when Cyrus was actually predicted, it is obviously necessary to assume that he was predicted long before his actual appearance.

This is in keeping with the Deuteronomic test of prophecy, which says: "When a. prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:22).

There is a similar prediction in the Old Testament: King Josiah was predicted by name two centuries before he came. (1 Kings 13:2; cf. 2 Kings 23:15, 16.)

Dr. W. H. Cobb, in the "Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis", 1901 (p. 79), pleads for a "shrinkage of Cyrus", because Cyrus figures only in chapters 40-48, and is then dismissed. Dr. Thirtle in his volume entitled, "Old Testament Problems" (pp. 244-264), argues that the name "Cyrus" is a mere appellative, being originally not Koresh (Cyrus), but Horesh (workman, artificer, image-breaker), and that chapter 44:27, 28 is therefore a gloss. But in opposition to these views the present writer prefers to write Cyrus large, and to allow frankly that he is the subject of prediction; for, the very point of the author's argument is, that he is predicting events which Jehovah alone is capable of foretelling or bringing to pass; in other words, that prescience is the proof of Jehovah's deity.

Isaiah lived in an age when prediction was needed; cf. Amos 3:9. Political events were kaleidoscopic and there was every incentive to predict. But Jehovah's predictions alone were trustworthy.

That Isaiah's prophecies contain wonderful predictions is attested both by Jesus ben-Sirach in Ecclus. 48-20-25, which was written about 180 B.C., and by Josephus in his "Antiquities" XI, I, 1, 2, dating from about 100 A.D.

Why should men object to prediction on so large a scale? Unless there is definiteness about any given prediction, unless it transcends ordinary prognostication there is no especial value in it. The only possible objection is that prediction of so minute a character is "abhorrent to reason". But the answer to such an objection is already at hand; it may be abhorrent to reason, but it is certainly a handmaid to faith. Faith has to do with the future even as prediction has to do with the future; and the Old Testament is pre-eminently a book which encourages faith.

The one outstanding differentiating characteristic of Israel's religion is predictive prophecy. Only the Hebrews ever predicted the coming of the Messiah of the kingdom of God. Accordingly, to predict the coming of a Cyrus as the human agent of Israel's salvation is but the reverse side of the same prophet's picture of the Divine agent, the obedient, suffering Servant of Jehovah, who would redeem Israel from their sin.

Deny to Isaiah the son of Amoz the predictions concerning Cyrus, and the prophecy is robbed of its essential character and unique perspective; emasculate these latter chapters of Isaiah of their predictive feature, and they are reduced to a mere vaticinium ex eventu, and their religious value is largely lost.