

The Ninetenth Chapter of Isaiah.

One of the most interesting parts of Duhm's *Jesaja* is that which relates to chap. 19. In many respects I venture to disagree with him, but I am thankful for his rejection of the Isaianic authorship of verses 16—25. May I mention two other points on which I have arrived at conclusions which approximate in some degree to his own? The date of my own results is May 1892; they were reached in the course of my preparation for a critical introduction to Isaiah, the appearance of which is delayed by various causes, and not least by the publication of Duhm's very valuable work. The first part of the following note is quoted verbatim from my manuscript, and the whole supplements statements in an article of condensed results in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for July 1892 (pages 562—570).

«Upon any hypothesis it calls for an effort to realise the meaning of the epilogue. I think that the writer probably took the 'hard lord' and the 'fierce king' of verse 4 to be the cruel captor of Sidon and oppressor of the Jews Artaxerxes Ochus, whose savage conduct produced such a deep impression both upon his contemporaries in general and upon Jewish religious writers in particular. Only thus can we account for his attaching verses 16—25 (or 18—25) which, as we shall see, contain a reference to the Jewish settlements in Egypt in the early Greek period, to a prophecy which he undoubtedly attributed

to Isaiah. His interpretation was, we may venture to say, a perfectly natural one. If we require an exact fulfilment of the threat of verse 4, it is probably in the treatment of Egypt by Ochus in B. C. 343 that we may best find it. For 65 years Egypt had gallantly struggled to maintain its hardly won independence, and in the third campaign of the bloodthirsty Persian tyrant it had finally to succumb. The conqueror filled the land with Persian garrisons, razed the walls of cities, plundered the temples, lavished insults on the sacred animals. The cup of injuries out of which Cambyses and Xerxes had already made the Persians drink, Ochus filled to the brim. The spirit of the old Egyptian people was broken, and we can well understand that when the young and gracious overthrower of the Persian colossus appeared, he was hailed in the Nile-valley as a deliverer. Artaxerxes Ochus, then, is to the author of the epilogue the instrument of Jahve's vengeance upon Egypt, just as Nebuchadrezzar had been to the prophet Ezekiel. But if any one prefers to suppose either that all the three Persian invaders of Egypt together (Cambyses, Xerxes and Ochus), or the two former alone, were in the mind of this early interpreter of Isaiah, I have no objection; I think indeed that there is much reason for the first opinion».

My own view, as formed (or at least modified) in May 1892, is that verses 1—4 and 11—15 (or 17) are Isaiah's work, and belong to the time of Sargon, who might fitly be called a "hard lord" (cf. 14, 29). Sargon did not indeed invade and conquer Egypt; this was left for Esarhaddon (672) and Assurbanipal (662). But in 720 he inflicted a crushing defeat on Shabaka at Raphia, and from 20, 4 we learn that in 711 Isaiah fully expected an Assyrian invasion of Egypt. If however, Isaiah's authorship be rejected on stylistic grounds (which are not wholly devoid of weight), then I think that the claims of Assurbanipal to be the tyrant of verse 4 have to be considered. Prof.

Sayce (*The Times of Isaiah*, 1891, p. 35) states that Isaiah foresaw this king's vengeance on Thebes and the other circumstances of his invasion in prophetic vision. This view appears to me inconsistent with settled facts of Biblical theology. But it is not impossible to hold that the writer of verses 1—4 and 11—15 (or rather 11—17) lived in the time of Assurbanipal.

My second point relates to verses 5—10 and here I will again quote from my manuscript. "I think that these verses probably fill the place of a genuine passage of Isaiah's work which had become illegible. That they came from the hand of Isaiah must at any rate be denied. The charge of 'proximity' which Ewald brings against the entire chapter can be fully substantiated with regard to this little section. The connexion is certainly improved by its omission, and all the striking Isaianic parallels refer to the verses which precede and follow it. The details of which it is composed have nothing to do with the prophetic burden; they are such as would occur to a feeble rhetorician of a more literary age than Isaiah's". I then proceed to quote the undoubtedly non-Isaianic words in the passage, which I need not repeat here, and next refer to the scanty evidence which may be plausibly offered for an Isaianic or at any rate pre-Exilic origin. Thus in verse 6 we have יְאִרִים and קָמַל, the former of which occurs again in 7, 18; 33, 21, and the latter in 33, 9 (nowhere else). Chap. 33, however, as was clear to me before Duhm's work appeared, is a late writer's "imaginative reflexion of history, half poetic, half prophetic in style", and the geographical definitions in 7, 18 may very well, as Duhm has pointed out, be editorial insertions (they make it very difficult to maintain the unity of date of all the component parts of this very strange 7th chapter). Then there is קָצוּר (ver. 6), which occurs again in a disputed Isaianic passage (37, 25 = 2 K. 19, 24). But it would

of course be just as easy for a later writer to adopt this rare form from Isaiah (if the passage be Isaiah's) as for that later prophetic writer whose work is attached to the prophecies of Micah (see Mic. 7, 12). It is also true that verse 5 closely resembles Job 14, 11, and has generally been thought to be the original of that passage. On rhythmical grounds, however, I venture to hold a different opinion, Job 14, 11 being a trimeter among trimeters, whereas the rhythm of Isaiah 19, 5—10 is irregular in the extreme. Altogether, I am very certain that verses 5—10 cannot be from the hand of Isaiah, but nothing hinders me from admitting that the passage has a certain fitness where it now stands (cf. Ezek. 29, 11, and see W. R. Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 335). The editor was not unintelligent, nor did he act at random when he gave this melancholy passage of quasi-prophetic description a home in the 19th chapter of Isaiah.

T. K. Cheyne.