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ART. I.—*The Union of Church and State in the Nicene Age, and its Effects upon Public Morals and Religion.* An Historical Essay.

THE name of Constantine the Great marks an important epoch in the history of Christianity. With him the church ceased to be a persecuted sect, and became the established religion of the Roman Empire. Since that time the church and the state, though frequently jarring, have remained united in Europe, either on the hierarchical basis, with the temporal power under the tutelage of the spiritual, or on the cæsaro-papal, with the spiritual power merged in the temporal; while in the United States of America, since the end of the eighteenth century, the two powers have stood peacefully but independently side by side. The church could now act upon the state, but so could the state act upon the church; and this mutual influence became a source of both profit and loss, blessing and curse, on either side.

The martyrs and confessors of the first three centuries, in their expectation of the impending end of the world, and their desire for the speedy return of the Lord, had never once thought of such a thing as the great and sudden change, which meets us at the beginning of this period, in the relation of the Roman state to the Christian church. Tertullian had even held the Christian profession to be irreconcilable with the office of a

Henceforth none but the persecuted parties from time to time protested against religious persecution; being made, by their sufferings, if not from principle, at least from policy and self-interest, the advocates of toleration. Thus the Donatist bishop, Petilian, in Africa, against whom Augustine wrote, rebukes his catholic opponents, (as formerly his countryman, Tertullian, had condemned the heathen persecutors of the Christians,) for using outward force in matters of conscience; appealing to Christ and the apostles, who never persecuted, but rather suffered and died. "Think you," says he, "to serve God by killing us with your own hand? Ye err, ye err, if ye, poor mortals, think this; God has not hangmen for priests. Christ teaches us to bear wrong, not to revenge it." The Donatist bishop, Gaudentius, says, "God appointed prophets and fishermen, not princes and soldiers, to spread the faith." Still we cannot forget, that Donatists were the first who appealed to the imperial tribunal in an ecclesiastical matter, and did not, till after that tribunal had decided against them, turn against the state-church system.

ART. II.—*An Introduction to the Old Testament, critical, historical, and theological, containing a discussion of the most important questions belonging to the several books.* By SAMUEL DAVIDSON, D. D., LL. D. 3 vols. 8vo., pp. 536, 492, and 492. 1862—3.

UPON the appearance of the tenth edition of Horne's Introduction, six years ago, we felt called upon to notice particularly the volume relating to the Old Testament, which was prepared by Dr. Davidson. At the conclusion of that notice we remarked: "The principles avowed or covertly insinuated in this volume will legitimately lead much further than the extent

lianists with evident approbation: "Etiam mundi principes ita hanc sacrilegam amentiam detestati sunt, ut auctorem ejus cum plerisque discipulis legum putlicarum ense prosternerent."

to which they are actually pursued. There is no logical consistency in going so far as Dr. Davidson does, and stopping there." The volumes before us amply justify this language. Almost every page might be cited in evidence that the author has found his old position of compromise between orthodoxy and unbelief to be untenable, and has exchanged it for another more consistent with his radical principles.

It is not so much our present purpose to subject the merits or demerits of this treatise to examination, as to deduce from it a few illustrations of the processes and results of the "higher criticism," as practised by our author and the school to which he has addicted himself. In order to accomplish this in the most coherent and intelligible manner, we shall restrict ourselves to his discussion of a single book of Scripture. And with this view we have selected the prophecy of Isaiah, both from its intrinsic interest and from its affording a fair specimen of the whole.

In 1856 we were told that the entire book which bears the name of Isaiah was the genuine production of the prophet, not excepting the four historical chapters, xxxvi—xxxix., which, though not incorporated with his prophecies by himself, were extracted from another work written by him. Now we are informed, that out of the sixty-six chapters but twenty-three, together with a few scattered verses, have proceeded from Isaiah. At the former date, Dr. Davidson tells us in his preface, "he had not reached his present maturer views. He did what he could under the circumstances and with the knowledge he had at the time." "The circumstances in which he was placed," *i. e.*, as Professor of Biblical Literature in an Independent College, "were averse to the free expression of thought. A man under the trammels of a sect, in which religious liberty is but a name, is not favourably situated for the task of thoroughly investigating critical or theological subjects." "Harsh-minded theologians," he adds, "who have inherited a little system of infallible divinity out of which they may excommunicate their neighbours, will not understand such development." We are glad to be thus expressly excluded at the outset from a class, which our author so violently and repeatedly reprobates, for we fancy that we do understand his develop-

ment exactly, and, assuming his point of departure, we think it the most natural thing in the world.

We lay no stress upon his having previously attributed the first chapter "to the reign of Hezekiah," whereas he is now "inclined to refer it to the reign of Ahaz." And it is of slight consequence that adopting, as before, the hypothesis that the passage common to Isaiah, (ii. 2—4,) and to Micah (iv. 1—3,) was borrowed by both from an older prophet, he now retracts his former confident assertion, "that older prophet was not Joel," and thinks it a "probable" "conjecture that he was Joel." His change of mind in regard to the sixth chapter is more deserving of note, on account of the reason upon which it is professedly based, and which reveals the secret of more considerable and serious alterations yet to come. He had formerly said, "The sixth chapter is ascribed in the first verse to the year of Uzziah's death, and there is no reason with various critics for supposing it to have been written later. The most natural interpretation is that which refers it to the very commencement of the prophet's entrance upon office, as describing his original inauguration." Now he says, "It refers to the inauguration of the prophet, but was not composed at the time; for he could not then know that his addresses would only tend to aggravate the guilt of the people, because they would be treated with neglect. The experience of the prophet in his intercourse with his fellow-countrymen had made him acquainted with their stubborn unbelief; and the reflection of such experience appears in the composition. Hence we must assume an interval of time between his induction into office and the writing of the prophecy."

There is more involved in this language than might at first sight appear. It is not purely a question whether a given chapter was committed to writing a few years earlier or later; it concerns the integrity of the prophet and the possibility of prophetic prediction. If the reason given is valid against the writing of the vision in the year that king Uzziah died, it is equally so against its being received at that time. Isaiah's word is discredited, he is charged with declaring that a vision was granted him upon his inauguration to the prophetic office, which he could not possibly have had; and this when his origi-

nal auditors were still able to testify whether or no they had heard it from his lips at that early period. And the decisive argument is, "he could not then know" what had not yet taken place.

We do not here care to argue with the Doctor that even upon his own principles the honesty of the prophet might have been spared. Thus he admits, ii., p. 464, that "certain events in the immediate future are sometimes foretold with great confidence, so that the prophets must have been sure they would take place without doubt, in precise harmony with the announcement. Authentic oracles of this nature, though rare, (?) are an evidence that an influence superior to human sagacity pervaded the spirits of the prophets." Again we read, iii., p. 69: "The Old Testament seer never projected his vision into the far distant future, so as to be able to predict events there, or describe persons beforehand with infallible certainty. . . . The near, not the remote, was the limit of prophetic foretelling. This is now acknowledged by all who understand the genius of prophecy." The reception of the prophet's message by his countrymen, certainly belongs to the near and not to the remote future; and if he allows, as he says that he does, the possibility of a revelation which may disclose the former before it becomes apparent to the unaided human understanding, why may not this have been included within "the limit of prophetic foretelling?" Whence then his certainty that this could not have been known in advance of experience?

In fact even upon a lower theory of prophecy than this, the correctness of his conclusion might be disputed. Even if the prophets' "allusions to the future were the product of human wisdom," and their "experience" "enabled them to glance correctly into the future, because they drew from the past and present the proper materials for their survey," a view which he pronounces "untenable" and "defective in leaving out the divine element," ii., p. 464, why might not the past and present obduracy of the people have been such, that the prophet could confidently anticipate its continuance in the future?

Waiving all discussion of the point at issue, however, we simply wish two things to be distinctly observed as exhibited in the case before us, as well as in all that are to follow. First,

it is upon his own avowal fundamental to the higher criticism, as Dr. Davidson understands and practises it, that no prophecy can have been uttered prior, or none at least long prior to the event to which it relates. The dogma of the impossibility of prediction, in its strict and proper sense, is decisive of the date of every alleged prophecy, irrespective of all other considerations. Secondly, his confident and often-repeated assertions that there are in fact no real prophecies in the Old Testament, are wholly based upon a logical circle. Thus ii., p. 460: "Wherever definite predictions having special details occur, particularly in relation to times, it can be shown that they are supposititious, or that the whole prophecy is spurious." And p. 462: "In no place or prophecy can it be shown that the literal predicting of distant historical events is contained." Fix the date of each prophecy in detail, on the assumption that prediction is impossible, and the general conclusion will inevitably follow. He might in the same way have demonstrated any other principle, that he set out to prove, no matter what it was.

The next six chapters also exhibit traces of "development," which are here referred to, not so much from their inherent consequence, as from their betraying a general tendency. Chap. vii. retains the date formerly assigned to it in the invasion of Judah, during the reign of Ahaz, by the confederate kings of Ephraim and Syria. "The date of the piece is about 742, hardly later." Chaps. viii.—xii., from being "only about three-quarters of a year later," "though committed to writing some time after they were spoken, *when the prophetic announcements began to be confirmed,*" have come to be distributed along from B. c. 741 to 722.

We have now seen how those prophecies are managed, whose accomplishment took place during the prophet's life. The critical dictum to which our author bows, is satisfied by shifting them to such times in his ministry that they shall appear to have been spoken, or at least recorded, after or near the events predicted. But when Isaiah utters predictions, the fulfilment of which was reserved to a future age, this method will no longer answer. Where it fails, however, two artifices yet remain: one in the domain of criticism, and the other in that

of interpretation. The former requires the summary and violent process of denying Isaiah's authorship either of the entire prophecy, or at least of its obnoxious portions. What unvarying tradition has ascribed to him, and what is rightfully his by all external evidence, as well as by the strongest internal considerations, is unhesitatingly pronounced spurious, and attributed to some nameless writer of such date as will satisfy the critical dictum. Where this is impossible, or only partially successful, the remaining resort is to empty the prophecy of its meaning, either distorting it by a forced exegesis, or in some way obscuring its correspondence with the event, and thus converting it into a vague expression of patriotic hopes, or of devout anticipations, which were never actually realized. False theories of inspiration cannot maintain themselves beside the facts which lie upon the very face of the Scriptures. The denial of prophetic foresight has as its inevitable concomitant a destructive criticism and an unfair interpretation.

Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It is the word of Him who knows the end from the beginning; and instead of being limited in its disclosures, as Dr. Davidson would have us believe, to "the immediate future," the most distant events may be revealed as readily and distinctly as those nearer at hand. They are alike known to God, and he can make them known to his servants to whatever extent he sees fit.

His revelations of the future are not, however, made indiscriminately nor at random. Just that is disclosed which is needed at the time for the instruction, warning, or guidance of the people of God. The purpose of God respecting Judah embraced especially two particulars lying beyond the lifetime of Isaiah, at different degrees of remoteness, with which it was important that the people should then be made acquainted. One belonged to his work of judgment, the other to his plan of grace. The first was the Babylonish captivity, involving calamities so unprecedented and distressing to the hearts of the pious, that they needed to be schooled in reference to it, and taught its meaning and issue. The second was the person and work of Messiah, with the blessed results which should

thence follow to them and to the world. Intervening or extraneous events were comparatively of small consequence to Isaiah's contemporaries. And, in fact, these still continued to be the great themes of prophecy until this heavy judgment had burst over Jerusalem. The burden of Jeremiah's instructions were the approaching exile and the coming Saviour. No foresight of the long succession of events which lay between was granted to him. It was not until the exile had actually begun, that a new vista was opened to Daniel, the interval to Messiah's advent measured, and the succession of worldly empires as well as the varying fortunes of the kingdom of God fore-shown.

The judgment to be wrought by Babylon and upon it, accordingly occupies a prominent place among the predictions of Isaiah. Every thing relating to this subject, Dr. Davidson's critical dictum declares to be spurious; for how could this prophet know what would take place one or two centuries after his death? On the other hand, every thing Messianic is either converted into an indefinite rhapsody, or declared to have no reference to Christ at all.

Those who have never concerned themselves about critical questions, will accordingly have little difficulty in determining in advance what Dr. Davidson admits to be genuine, and what he rejects, by the simple criterion just afforded. If they ever mistake, it will be from a difference of judgment between him and them as to the question whether a knowledge of the Babylonish oppression is presupposed in a particular chapter or paragraph. That this is not only a sure test of the suspected chapters, but that it furnishes the real cause of their being suspected, will appear from an examination of them individually.

The burden of Babylon (ch. xiii. xiv.) belongs as a matter of course to the spurious chapters. "It did not proceed from Isaiah, but from a prophet living near the end of the Babylonian exile." In order to establish this conclusion, he tells us "Isaiah lived during the supremacy of the Assyrian, not the Chaldean empire. He could therefore refer to the future Chaldean one merely in its commencement. His historical standpoint could not be in it: nor, according to the analogy of prophecy, could he transfer his position at once into the distant

future, disregarding the political horizon of his own day. In making this statement, neither prophetic foresight nor inspiration is denied. The prophets did occasionally predict future events. They did not, however, cease to make their own time their starting point, out of which they surveyed the approaching future. Thus the charge made by Alexander and others against those who take our view of the nature of prophecy, resolves itself not into a denial of the possibility of prophetic inspiration, but a denial of their opinion respecting such inspiration. We do not reject the thing, but only their hypothesis, which is an arbitrary and an erroneous one."

No other reply to this seems to be necessary than that furnished by himself in 1856: "It has been assumed by many critics that xiii. 1, xiv. 23, proceeded from a much later writer than Isaiah, one living towards the termination of the Babylonian captivity. Their arguments, *if such they can be called*, in favour of this hypothesis, have been well refuted by Hävernicks and Alexander: The chief cause which has led so many astray here is *the erroneous view of prophecy* they take. As long as prophetic foresight is limited to the gropings of human sagacity, without any supernatural element, such prophecies as the present will be totally misunderstood."

His other arguments, "if such they can be called," against the genuineness of these chapters, are in like manner proved futile out of his own mouth. Thus the allegation that "the tone and spirit of the prophecy are unlike Isaiah's," is met by the counter declaration, "When it is said that the spirit and views are foreign to Isaiah, the assertion is radically incorrect." "The style and diction are unlike those of Isaiah," is controverted by the express statement, "the style and diction are by no means dissimilar." He also formerly asserted, what he now denies, that "the ideas, images, and expressions in these chapters" are such as are found elsewhere in Isaiah, and are characteristic of him. His assertion, that "the unknown author has made use of several prophets later than Isaiah," is reversed by his previous assertion, based on the very same data, that the "using" was all the other way: "Later prophets have imitated and used the chapters under consideration." The only thing in his argument which is not anticipated by himself and contra-

dicted in express terms, is a list of words which he alleges to be of later origin than the time of Isaiah, but which is as unfortunate a selection as he could well have made. His first example, *רָפָה רָפָה* xiv. 7, is peculiar to Isaiah, occurring four times besides in his writings, and nowhere else. His second example, *רָפָה* xiv. 3, occurs five times in the ancient book of Job, while its verbal root occurs not only in other parts of Isaiah, which Dr. Davidson himself admits to be genuine, but even in the book of Genesis. *רָפָה* xiv. 16 is found only in Ps. xxxiii. 14, and in the Song of Solomon, both written long before the time of Isaiah. *רָפָה* xiii. 16 appears in Deut. xxviii. 30. *רָפָה* occurs in the same sense, Gen. xxiv. 32, as in Isa. xiv. 17. *רָפָה* has the same meaning in Lev. xvii. 7, as in Isa. xiii. 21.

He even yet admits that "the authenticity of xiv. 24—27 is unquestionable;" this being so, the genuineness of the entire prophecy is established upon his own showing. For he tells us in his former work, "to separate the verses in question from the preceding prophecy," the very thing which he now does, "is quite arbitrary."

The next prophecy of Babylon's overthrow is contained in ch. xxi. 1—10: this, of course, shares the fate of its predecessor, and is declared not to belong to Isaiah himself, but to "an unknown author living towards the close of the Babylonian exile." Respecting this view he held the following language in 1856: "The considerations advanced respecting both pieces are the same, and *proceed on the same false view of the nature of biblical prophecy*. Their authenticity, however, is amply attested by the inscriptions which cannot be arbitrarily rejected; by the fact that several succeeding prophets, who appeared before the exile, present reminiscences and imitations of them; by genuine Isaiah-ideas and linguistic peculiarities." He here again reverses his own words almost sentence by sentence, and yet is so outraged by Dr. Alexander's ascribing the suspicion of spuriousness to the very source to which he had formerly traced it himself, "the fundamental principle of unbelief," that he hurls upon him the charge of "dogmatism, ignorance, and uncharitableness," "compensating for the absence of argument by railing." We can hardly refrain from saying

that Dr. Davidson affords the best possible illustration of his own words.

Chapter xxii., relating to Jerusalem, is admitted to be a genuine production of Isaiah, but then "the prophecy was not fulfilled." "The prophet merely uttered what he expected to happen." "Alexander has recourse to his not unusual hypothesis of a generic prediction, a picture of the conduct of the Jews in a certain conjuncture of affairs which happened more than once. This is a convenient subterfuge under the pressure of difficulties like the present." And yet in his previous work he not only admits the substantial fulfilment of the prediction, but in relation to the very next chapter affirms that view of prophecy which he here scouts as a "convenient subterfuge." He there says: "Hence there is reason for the view of Alexander, who regards the prophecy as generic, not specific, a panoramic picture of the downfall of Tyre from the beginning to the end of the destroying process, with particular allusion to the siege by Nebuchadnezzar."

Chap. xxiii. passes under the ban, because the Chaldeans are spoken of, ver. 13: "We dare not alter *Chaldeans*; else the difficulty could be obviated." He formerly said: "None of the arguments advanced against the Isaiah-authorship are sufficient to overthrow it."

Of ch. xxiv.—xxvii. he says: "The prophecy was not written by Isaiah, because the historical standpoint is in the Babylonian captivity." Yet every objection which he now adduces was formerly answered by himself in detail, and the prophecy declared to be "an authentic production of Isaiah."

The same thing is repeated in ch. xxxiv. xxxv.: though here, not satisfied with contradicting, sentence by sentence, what he had formerly written, he comes into collision with his existing theory. The writer of these chapters lived, as he has ascertained, "during the Babylonish captivity, probably about the middle of it." "We date the oracle about B. C. 555." He adds further, "It is not improbable that he was acquainted with ch. xl.—lxvi., though a different person from the author of those chapters." "The mind of the prophet before us was full of the ideas, and sometimes the diction of Isa. xl.—lxvi." This is said on p. 29. On turning to p. 45, we are informed

that ch. xl.—lxvi. were written from “B. c. 542 and onward till the eve of Babylon’s conquest.” Thus we have the ideas and diction of one composition reproduced in another several years before the first was written! Again, on p. 26, we are told that “the spirit of bitter hatred against the Edomites,” and against “the heathen generally, argues a later period” than that of Isaiah. Whereas, on p. 39, one of the proofs that ch. xl.—lxvi. were written long subsequent to the time of this prophet is, that “the tone is tenderer, and more uniformly evangelical than that of Isaiah,” and “the destruction of the Gentile nations is not dwelt upon with fierce rejoicings over it.”

Chapters xl.—lxvi. are also pronounced spurious with as much confidence as a few years ago he declared them to be genuine. He adduces nothing on this subject, in the volumes before us, which he did not present in his former publication. But here again we meet with the singular phenomenon, that not only is his general conclusion respecting the genuineness of these chapters the opposite of what it was before, but he has changed sides in regard to the validity of each individual argument. Every thing is stringent now which was worthless then, and *vice versa*. Nothing can be plainer than that it is not the array of arguments from style and diction, etc., etc., which determine his mind. His conclusion is reached quite irrespective of any such considerations. As long as he admitted the possibility of the foresight of the distant future, the book of Isaiah was genuine. Now he holds that the prophet can see nothing beyond his own political horizon; and there is much in Isaiah which cannot be squared with this theory, unless the dissecting knife of criticism is applied.

That the whole strain of argumentation by which the endeavour has been made to set aside the genuineness of parts of this book, rests on the dogmatic basis of unbelief, no one saw more clearly, or stated more strongly than Dr. Davidson himself. Thus, he says (Horne’s *Introd.* II., p. 853): “Incorrect views of the nature of biblical prophecy lie at the basis of much that is here set forth. . . . The prophets were not confined to their own times. Their vision stretched beyond contemporary events and influences *into remote periods.*” And yet when Dr. Alexander says, in his commentary on Isaiah,

what is not only true by Dr. Davidson's former confession, but is demonstrably true, as we have shown, in his own case: "The fundamental principle of the higher critics is the impossibility of inspiration or prophetic foresight," he vents his spleen by denouncing this as an exhibition of *odium theologicum*.

After mangling the book in this manner, and converting it into "a collection of oracles belonging to different times, and proceeding from different prophets," it is not surprising that he complains of the absence of any principle of arrangement. Upon his theory it is indeed a singular jumble, and presents a phenomenon to which it might not be easy to find a parallel in literary history. We have here a book which was regarded as a standard authority from its first appearance, and was guarded with the most jealous care by a people who counted the very letters of their scriptures, in their anxiety to preserve them from error, and which yet has been interpolated and enlarged by spurious additions, without the slightest suspicion of the fact ever having been awakened. These spurious passages, moreover, compose the largest, most striking, and most important portion of the whole. And yet their several authors, though confessed to be prophets of rare genius and influence, and living by the hypothesis almost at the end of the exile, very near the time, therefore, when the canon was gathered and reduced to its permanent and final form, were wholly unknown to the collectors of the canon and to their contemporaries. And this, though there is not another instance of an anonymous prophecy in the Old Testament. The brief books of the minor prophets, such even as Obadiah and Nahum, though belonging to a former age, are preserved distinct, and referred each to its proper author. Yet not only were the names of these supposed writers lost, but their very existence was unknown to their own contemporaries; and their writings, in spite of their recent origin, were attributed to another, who lived two centuries before, and whose prophecies had been familiar from the time when they were first uttered. And these fresh additions to the volume of Isaiah's writings were not simply appended at the end, but inserted here and there at intervals, and so intermingled with the genuine portions that

nothing but the elaborate criticism of modern times could ever have separated them.

And what is yet more strange, there is nothing in the circumstances of the case to account for this remarkable literary error. There is no inherent similarity between these later passages and the writings of the prophet, with which they have been thus unaccountably confused, such as might have led to the mistake of attributing them to the same author. On the contrary, there is such a wide and palpable difference in subject, ideas, style, language, and general character, that modern critics distinguish them without difficulty, in the absence of all external evidence, and even in the face of it. Though, strangely enough, while the critics are unanimous in deciding that these passages are so unlike the genuine Isaiah that they cannot possibly be his, they cannot come to an agreement upon the question whether they agree with or differ from each other, and what number of distinct writers must therefore be assumed.

But what is perhaps most extraordinary of all, this odd jumble of the genuine and the spurious, this confused mixture of prophecies from various authors, belonging to different ages, forms a symmetrical whole. This heterogeneous mass of unconnected and discordant materials, thrown together without any system, presents nevertheless a most orderly arrangement. It is only to the merciless critic that there is any appearance of disorder. His violent sundering of what belongs together, obscures to him that consistent plan and method which pervades it. Admit this book to be what it claims, the record of one continuous prophetic ministry, and it unfolds regularly from first to last, and bears the stamp of consistent unity, completeness, and appositeness to the time and circumstances.

The prophets of the Old Testament whose writings are preserved to us, are grouped about the Assyrio-Babylonish judgment; the meaning of which it was their province as authentic interpreters of the will of God to explain, and the providential or gracious ends of which it was their mission to labour to secure. The several ministries of the different prophets derive their shape and character from the particular stage of this great disciplinary process at which they were raised up, and the par-

ticular aspect or portion of the divine plan which they were severally directed and enabled to present.

Isaiah witnessed the first flood of invasion by the Assyrians under Sennacherib, and his miraculous overthrow; this was an important crisis in his prophetic ministry. Another stroke of judgment preliminary to this, and standing in an intimate relation to it, was the invasion of Judah in the reign of Ahaz, by the combined forces of Syria and Ephraim; this formed another crisis in Isaiah's ministry, as it did likewise in the history of Judah. These two events, which mark the principal epochs in the prophet's life, and which are turning-points in the divine dealings with Judah, divide his ministry into three portions, and suggest a corresponding distribution of the book in which his ministry is recorded.

1. Chapters i.—vi., before the invasion by Syria and Ephraim.

2. Chapters vii.—xxxvii., between this and the Assyrian invasion.

3. Chapters xxxviii.—lxvi., after the Assyrian invasion.

Whether the chronological arrangement is strictly maintained throughout the book, as Hengstenberg has shown to be probable, or whether this is for special reasons departed from in some minor details, is a matter of small moment. The great periods of the prophet's ministry are undoubtedly preserved distinct, and succeed each other in their proper order. Each of these has a character of its own, determined by the particular exigencies of the time, and the spiritual necessities of the people. Each differs from the others in its general tone, in the scope of its revelations, and in its disclosures respecting the Messiah.

The first period belongs to the reigns of the pious Uzziah and Jotham. The prophet was called to confront a corrupt and wicked people, "drawing iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope," v. 18; but yet who were outwardly prosperous; "their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots," ii. 7. And, as a consequence, they were carnally secure, and incredulous of the divine judgments. They said, v. 19, "Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of

the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it." This obduracy, which only grew more obdurate under the prophet's warning voice, it was the purpose of God to break by a succession of heavy judgments, vi. 9—13. Accordingly the prophet's ministry during this first period is one of denunciation and woe. He is perpetually pointing forward to the coming judgment, and exhibiting its necessity and certainty. The four prophecies of this period, chap. i.,* chap. ii.—iv., chap. v., and chap. vi., are so many arguments of the approaching doom, plied with growing distinctness and severity, until in the last the climax is reached in that sublime vision, in which the Lord of Hosts appears in awful majesty, to pronounce sentence in person, from his lofty throne in the temple, upon the transgressing people.

The prophecies of Isaiah in this period offer little that is cheering. He has no promises whatever for the proximate future, either of a positive or of a negative kind. He neither holds out the prospect of benefits to be directly communicated to Judah, nor gives them any assurance of the overthrow of their enemies, present or prospective, by whom they were then threatened, or from whom they were afterwards to suffer. The only blessings of which he speaks belong to the distant Messianic future. And these, so far from detracting from the severity of the threatened evils, tend rather to aggravate it; for it is only through the purgation of terrible judgments, which shall remove the dross of the people, and wash away their filth, that this blessed period can be reached.

Moreover these promises are not only limited to a far distant period, serving by contrast rather to enhance the intervening gloom, but the space devoted to them is comparatively brief. They occupy but a few verses, while there are whole chapters of denunciation. It is likewise to be observed that the Messi-

* The general plan of the book is unaffected by the question whether chap. i. is the earliest of Isaiah's prophecies, and appears in its proper chronological place, or whether it belongs to a later period, and is prefixed as a suitable introduction to the whole. It is therefore needless to enter upon this discussion here, which, so far as it is capable of being decided, depends upon the view to be taken of versês 5—9. Upon the former hypothesis they are predictive, upon the latter they are descriptive.

anic future is here merely spoken of in general terms. No mention is made of the person of the Messiah, except in an enigmatical phrase, descriptive of his divine and human nature: "the Branch of the Lord and the Fruit of the earth," iv. 2. And the blessings of this glorious period are presented, not so much in the way of a positive development of their proper character and fulness, as negatively by way of contrast with the existing character and condition of the people. Their present guilt and unfaithfulness should then be exchanged for a purity befitting the people of God, and corresponding with their true ideal; and the evils from which they suffered, or were shortly to suffer, should be removed or reversed. Jerusalem shall then be purged from her crimes, and be made holy, i. 25, etc., iv. 3, 4. The nations shall flow to her, not for hostility, but for instruction; they shall not give law to her, but she to them, ii. 2, 3. Wars, of which she and the world at large have had and shall still have such terrible experience, shall cease, ii. 4. Her degradation and losses shall be made up by the sublimity and beauty of "the Branch of the Lord and the Fruit of the earth," iv. 2. And God, who now resolved upon her humiliation, abandons her to her foes, or brings her foes upon her, shall then afford invincible protection and glory, iv. 5, 6.

The second portion of Isaiah's ministry extends from the invasion by Syria and Ephraim in the reign of Ahaz to the invasion by Assyria in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. The vision of chap. vi. was seen "in the year that king Uzziah died." Whether this be understood to mean before or after Uzziah's death, it must be reckoned to the reign of Jotham, who administered the kingdom during the leprosy of his father, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. Chap. vii. transports us at once to "the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah." Whether Isaiah received no divine communications during the remainder of the reign of Jotham, being like Ezekiel xxiv. 27, xxxiii. 22, dumb for a season as to the exercise of his office, or whether his prophecies, being substantially repetitions of those already uttered, presented nothing to be recorded for the permanent use of the church, we have no means of ascertaining. We only know of his ministry, as it is here reproduced. The King, the Lord of Hosts has himself pronounced sentence on

the people. God has spoken, and the prophet's voice is hushed. He adds nothing to this sublimely awful utterance, until the Lord himself breaks the impressive silence, speaking not by words but by deeds. The decree of desolation to be effected by successive strokes of judgment enters upon the first stage of its providential accomplishment, and the prophet is then directed to enter upon his work afresh.

One heavy woe has come; another and heavier was not far distant. The ministry of Isaiah now alternates between judgment and mercy. The themes upon which he dwells are speedy deliverance from the present distress, the necessity and certainty of yet severer suffering to subdue their unhumbled hearts, the miraculous overthrow of the future great oppressor, the fall of minor foes, and the blessed results to the covenant people and the world when the judgment shall have done its work. The person of the Messiah is now repeatedly brought to view in his kingly office as the secure pledge of his people's preservation and their deliverer from every oppressor and from every form of evil.

This section of the book, like the preceding, consists of four parts, viz.

1. Chapters vii.—xii., a prophecy or prophecies occasioned by the first act in the predicted drama of judgment, the invasion by Syria and Ephraim. Deliverance is promised from this, but a sorer calamity is threatened in the future.

2. Chapters xiii.—xxvii, the prophet's vision takes a wider scope, unfolding the purpose of God in these coming events with reference to the world at large. The same storm which impended over the covenant people in the invasion of the great Asiatic empire had a commission to perform in respect to heathen nations, and would burst over them likewise. The nations should be trodden down, the oppressor should be broken, but this temporary humiliation should prepare the way for an ultimate experience of the blessings of salvation.

3. Chapters xxviii.—xxxv, prophecies called forth by the near approach of the second act of judgment, the Assyrian invasion, whose miraculous defeat is promised.

4. Chapters xxxvi., xxxvii. record the invasion itself, the min-

istry of the prophet in that critical juncture, and the catastrophe which followed and by which this period was closed.

The first of these divisions contains a closely connected prophecy, or series of prophecies, which may be again divided into five parts, viz.

1. Chapter vii. details the circumstances of, and promises deliverance from, the existing invasion, but upon the presumptuous incredulity of the king threatens a severer one by Assyria.

2. Chapters viii. 1—ix. 7, both from this present and that future distress Immanuel is a pledge of protection to them who truly fear God.

3. Chapters ix. 8—x. 4, Ephraim, the foe of the present, shall perish.

4. Chapter x. 5—34, Assyria, the foe of the future, shall likewise perish.

5. Chapters xi., xii., the blessings of Immanuel's reign.

The three Messianic passages, which occur in the course of this prophecy and at its close, form a climax both in length and fulness. In the first, Immanuel, the virgin's child,* is a pledge of the deliverance from Syria and Ephraim. In the second, the child born, who is nevertheless the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace, honours afflicted Galilee by his presence, gives joy to his suffering people, multiplies their diminished numbers, breaks the rod not only of Assyria but of every oppressor, and puts an end to war itself. In the third, he fills the world with the knowledge of the Lord, and restores the harmlessness of paradise; the Gentiles shall flock to the standard of the son of Jesse, and the dispersed outcasts of Israel be regathered from the four corners of the earth. In the present peril from Syria and Ephraim, and in the future and still greater one from Assyria, and after that peril and all others are surmounted, Immanuel is the star of hope, the sign

* Dr. Davidson admits, what it is impossible to deny, that the evangelist Matthew applies this prophecy to Christ. "But," he adds, "Matthew is not an infallible expounder of the prophecy, especially since he represents Jesus Christ to have been born of a virgin, and all the circumstances of his birth to have taken place in order that this very prediction might be fulfilled." "It is possible also that the first two chapters of Matthew may be unhistorical. Rothe believes so." So true is it that he who barter away his faith in the Old Testament must give up the New Testament likewise.

and pledge of safety. Ahaz need not fear the threatened overthrow of his royal house, though the foes leagued against him have already named his successor, (vii. 6,) for the virgin's son is yet to be born, and till then Judah and the house of David must be preserved. Assyria may fill the land of Immanuel with his armies, and flood it till the swelling waters reach the neck, viii. 8; and other enemies may combine against him only to be themselves broken in pieces, verse 9. Whatever miseries may be in store for the covenant people, and especially for the unfaithful portion of them, however many "may stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken," the Wonderful, the Counsellor, shall yet sit upon the throne of David, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end. The mighty Assyrian forest shall be hewn down, (x. 33, 34,) and the branch out of the roots of Jesse shall spring up. Every opposing power shall be removed out of the way, and the peaceful reign of the Son of David shall be universally established.

One function of the Assyrio-Babylonish empire has now been explained. It is to be a scourge divinely sent upon Judah. Is this the whole of its mission? Or is there any other work to be performed by it or upon it in the grand scheme of providence? The answer to this question is afforded by the next division of this section, (chapters xiii.—xxvii.) which sets the events already considered in their true relation to God's universal plan. This consists of a series of ten burdens or denunciatory prophecies, culminating in a judgment upon the whole world, and followed by the triumph of the Lord's people, whose foes have all been destroyed.

1. Chapters xiii. 1—xiv. 27, the burden of Babylon.
2. Chapter xiv. 28—32, the burden of Palestina, (Philistia.)
3. Chapters xv., xvi., the burden of Moab.
4. Chapters xvii., xviii., the burden of Damascus.
5. Chapters xix., xx., the burden of Egypt.
6. Chapter xxi. 1—10, the burden of the desert of the sea, (Babylon.)
7. Chapter xxi. 11, 12, the burden of Dumah, (Edom, Idumea.)
8. Chapter xxi. 13—17, the burden upon Arabia.

9. Chapter xxii, the burden of the valley of vision, (Jerusalem.)

10. Chapter xxiii., the burden of Tyre.

Chapter xxiv., the visitation upon the whole world.

Chapters xxv.—xxvii., the triumph of God's people.

Dr. Davidson argues from these prophecies against foreign nations, that the title (i. 1) which ascribes the entire book to Isaiah could only have been intended to embrace the antecedent chapters, which accordingly must have been published by themselves in the first instance, and which constitute the only part free from spurious additions. "The inscription does not suit the whole book, because it is said, 'which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem,' words inapplicable to chapters xiii.—xxiii. Hence it refers to an original collection of Isaiah's prophecies, to chapters i.—xii., and may have proceeded from the prophet himself." But why does he not on the same ground exclude the denunciations of Ephraim and of Assyria in chapters ix. and x. from the "original collection"? If the title is applicable to those chapters it is equally applicable to these burdens.

The predictions relating to foreign nations concerned Judah and Jerusalem as well. They were not intended for the benefit of the nations immediately affected. They were not even as a general rule made known to them. They were designed for the instruction, warning, or comfort of the chosen people. And that this is particularly the case here, appears from the intimate relation of these prophecies to the foregoing, as this has been already exhibited, seeing that they disclose the bearings which events of such special interest to Judah had upon the wider circle of the nations around, and upon the whole world. But further, the nations here named had been guilty of offences against the theocracy, and Judah was specially interested in knowing that these could not be perpetrated with impunity. That Arabia and Tyre form no exceptions to this statement, appears from 2 Chron. xxi. 16; Joel iii. 4; Amos i. 9. In six of the burdens, whence the inference may be extended to the remainder, the motive of the punishment is drawn from the attitude in which they stood to the chosen people. The humiliation of Egypt was in order to remove an object of idolatrous

trust, xx. 6. Babylon, xiv. 1, 2, 25; xxi. 10; Philistia, xiv. 32; Moab, xvi. 1—6, and Damascus, xvii. 14, are sentenced for the avenging of the cause of God's people, and their deliverance from oppression or vexatious treatment. It was surely a vision concerning Judah, when the prophet foresaw that Babylon would be laid low, that the captive people might be set free.

The structure of these burdens is remarkably symmetrical. If they be divided into two series of five each, the first series will exhibit a striking correspondence with the second in several particulars. The first burden of each series is directed against Babylon, which, although at that time but a dependent province, was destined to become the seat of empire. Isaiah had predicted, chapters i.—vi., the total desolation and exile of Judah, and had described the instruments of the judgment, v. 26—29, in general terms, indicative of their remoteness and the rapidity of their conquests, but had mentioned no name. This had in all probability not yet been revealed to him or to any contemporaneous prophet. In chapters vii.—xii. he showed that this would be effected neither by Syria nor by Assyria. It is here for the first time declared, xiv. 1, 2, as Micah iv. 10 also hints, that Babylon should be the real agent of Judah's downfall. Hence the prominence accorded to it, not only of being named first among these hostile nations, but of being the subject of two distinct burdens, the first in each series. The rest of the burdens are directed against nations subjugated by Assyria or Babylon, and found in that subjugation their partial or complete accomplishment. For these were in reality not so much two distinct empires, as one continuous empire with a simple change of the seat of authority, and they are here viewed together as fulfilling one common function, and experiencing a like overthrow. The aggregation of nations under a common head was substantially identical, only the dominant people was in the one case the Assyrians, in the other the Chaldeans. This ideal combination is further shown by the fact that the fall of Assyria is included in the burden of Babylon, xiv. 24, 25.

The second and third burdens of both series have relation to minor powers in the vicinity of Judah, the third in each case concluding with a declaration of the time when the fulfilment should take place, measured by "the years of an hireling," *i. e.*,

years accurately reckoned; an expression peculiar to these two passages. The fourth members of the two series have as their subjects the two branches of the covenant people; for though the first of these names Damascus in its title, it passes almost immediately, xvii. 3, to a denunciation of Ephraim or the ten tribes, who had allied themselves with Syria in the attack upon Judah. The fifth and last members of each series are directed against the two most prominent nations of that time, who were not under the domination of Assyria, viz., Egypt and Tyre. Here again dates are given; there is this difference, however, in the two cases, that the number of years designated in the first series, xx. 3, points to the entrance of the judgment, that in the second, xxiii. 15, 17, to its duration and the period of its removal. Possibly these numbers, found in burdens on either side of those directed to the two branches of the covenant people, may have been intended for them as well as for the particular nations to which they nominally belong. And if so, it is doubtless significant, that while the period of the coming of the judgment is fixed for Ephraim, but no prospect is held out of its removal, it is intimated that the duration of Jerusalem's judgment shall be but seventy years, xxiii. 15. At any rate, there would seem to be some relation between this seventy years of Tyre's humiliation by Babylon, and the same term of Jerusalem's humiliation by the same power, subsequently predicted in express terms by Jeremiah, xxv. 11, 12; xxix. 10.

A more remarkable correspondence in the burdens, with which each series closes, may be found, however, in the promises which they contain. The merchandise of Tyre shall be "holiness to the Lord," the very inscription worn by the high priest himself. Exod. xxviii. 38. And Egypt should be all that Israel had ever been, standing in the same relation to God, alike rendering him worship and service, and equally the recipient of his glorious salvation. Moreover the blessings here recited are not to be restricted exclusively to these individual nations, as though they were to be solitary instances of the Divine favour to the heathen, but they are rather to be regarded as examples and representatives of the whole, so that what is expressly granted to them belongs in like manner to all. This appears not only from their position at the end of each of the

two series, implying a relation to all of the foregoing, but also from the explicit though incidental mention of Assyria, xix. 23—25, and Ethiopia, xviii. 1, 7, as included within the circle of the divine mercy, which Jeremiah extends with equal explicitness to Moab, xlvi. 47, but especially from xxiv. 13—16, where it is predicted that God's praise shall ascend from the remotest parts of the earth, as a consequence of his universal judgments, the terms being strikingly conformed to the language used respecting Israel himself, xvii. 6.

The inflictions upon these several nations are also set forth, not as isolated facts, but as component parts of God's universal work of judgment, comprehending all the displays of his punitive justice, both in the course of the world's history, and in the catastrophe which is to mark its close. That this is the import of the burdens is suggested by their number ten, the symbol of completeness, which can no more be fortuitous than the seven denunciations with which the book of Amos opens. It is more explicitly shown by intimations both at the beginning and end of the series. The convulsions of nature which are to occur in the final judgment are in ch. xiii. 6—13, connected with the overthrow of Babylon as parts of a common subject, just as they are for the same reason linked with the destruction of Jerusalem in our Lord's discourse, Matt. xxiv. And the universal purport of these judgments is declared in express terms, ch. xiv. 26: "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations." The burdens are also at their close expanded into a judgment upon the world at large, ch. xxiv., the terms of which are universal in their character, and should be interpreted with the utmost latitude both of time and place.

Then follows chs. xxv.—xxvii., the triumph of Judah redeemed from every foe, which both in length and fulness of meaning is an advance upon that which concludes the preceding division, and which celebrated the overthrow of Assyria.

This brief exhibition of the plan of this division, and the mutual correspondences of the several burdens, supplies us with a fresh test of Dr. Davidson's higher criticism. In spite of these clear evidences of a carefully considered structure, or

rather not seeming to suspect their existence, he deals with the burdens as though they were a congeries of disconnected and unrelated fragments, disposed without any principle of order, instead of a symmetrical series, no member of which can be sundered from the rest without a mutilation. He would have us believe that some of them were written by Isaiah, and the others, without any reference to the preceding, by a prophet or prophets a century and a half later, and that these were by some accident huddled together. Though here again he cannot escape his inveterate vice of self-contradiction. After carefully pruning from these prophecies every thing relating to Babylon, and pronouncing such passages manifestly spurious, he makes an admission on p. 47, which completely undoes his own work. He is endeavouring to discredit the genuineness of chs. xl.—lxvi., and in the course of his argument he says, “Former prophecies of Isaiah had come to pass; therefore those now uttered should be likewise verified. The older prophecies referred simply to the punishment of Babylon by a hero raised up and divinely commissioned, the new ones to its complete overthrow.” Where are these former prophecies of Isaiah referring to the punishment of Babylon, unless in these very burdens, whose genuineness he impugns?

The lessons of this period have now been fully exhibited. But as the time for the Assyrian invasion approached, it was necessary to reiterate these words of warning and of consolation, that presumptuous sinners might be shaken out of their carnal security, and the pious comforted in the trial which was coming upon them. This is accordingly the aim of the next division, chs. xxviii.—xxxv. The denunciatory address, “Wo!” is characteristic of these chapters, as the denunciatory title “burden,” of the preceding. After being five times directed against the covenant people, chs. xxviii. 1, xxix. 1, 15, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1, it is at length, ch. xxxiii. 1, turned against their foes. The prophet begins by predicting the overthrow of the kingdom of the ten tribes by the Assyrians, and the protection which would be vouchsafed to Judah. He then reproaches Judah for his sins, which would bring this same scourge upon himself, his breaches of God’s law, the hypocrisy of his external services, his disregard of admonitions, his presumptuous contempt of

threatened judgments. These rebukes are blended together and repeated in various forms. And they are again and again interrupted by interjected promises of the sudden and complete overthrow which awaited the Assyrians, and the deliverance to be wrought for Judah, these promises expanding constantly in length and fulness until at length they are poured forth in an almost unbroken stream of mercy to Judah and judgment on his foes. Christ's coming and kingdom are from time to time wrought into this picture of the future good; and the full glories of that kingdom form, as in previous divisions of this section, the fitting termination of the whole. The hope of the Messiah is the brilliant background in every prophetic representation of the future. Inferior good things are set forth as types and earnestings of the greater. And these are so intermingled, the one shading off gradually into the other, and the expressions used being often aptly descriptive of both, that it is frequently impossible to separate them.

This entire section of the book and of the prophet's ministry is wound up by that providential event to which much that preceded had reference. Chapters xxxvi., xxxvii. record the actual invasion by the Assyrians, the prophecy uttered by Isaiah at the time, and the signal miraculous deliverance granted in fulfilment of this and previous predictions. These, and the two historical chapters which follow, the Doctor tells us, p. 32, "were not composed as they are by Isaiah himself." The decisive reason is given as follows: "Some mythic and marvellous things would not have been written by Isaiah; but the plain facts as they occurred. Thus it is related in xxxvii. 36, that the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand, which were all found dead corpses early in the morning. Here the influence of tradition is visible in giving a particular form to natural events. Such definite prediction of future events as we find in xxxvii. 7, . . . xxxviii. 5, . . . are contrary to the nature of prophetic foresight. They are too exact and precise to be predicted; and must therefore have been written after the things mentioned were known and past." This is another instance of the author's "development." When he wrote the second volume of Horne's Introduction he was of

the opinion that the narrative given almost in identical language in the second book of Kings was characterized by "historical fidelity and accuracy," p. 848.

The Doctor gives us a specimen of his characteristic looseness in argument in relation to these same chapters, on p. 61. He assumes that these chapters of Isaiah, and those corresponding to them in Kings, were both extracted, with certain verbal and other changes, from a genuine work of Isaiah, now lost, in which the acts of Uzziah and of Hezekiah were recorded. 2 Chron. xxvi. 22; xxxii. 32. Then arguing from this assumption, as if it were an ascertained fact, he thus triumphantly disposes of Isaiah's authorship of the book which now bears his name: "Is it likely that the prophet would revise his own composition in chapters xxxvi.—xxxix.? Will the believers in an infallible inspiration maintain this? Infallibility revising itself! The idea is absurd, for infallibility does not admit of degrees." But if infallibility does not, nonsense does, as the foregoing clearly evidences. There is nothing in the strictest view of inspiration to require that Isaiah, in repeating in a new connection and for a new purpose, what he had previously written with a different design, should adhere scrupulously to every word and letter which he had used before. The same inspiration which preserved him from error in the original draught, was competent to guide him in the copy, however freely it might be modified, whether in unimportant verbal changes, or in more serious alterations of form and character, to adapt it more precisely to its new position. No one surely need tremble either for the prophet's truthfulness or his authority, when he learns the real character and extent of the variations which occur in the two passages. They are such as "strange waters," 2 Kings xix. 24, for "water," Isaiah xxxvii. 25; "hearkened," 2 Kings xx. 13, "was glad," Isaiah xxxix. 2; "is it not if," 2 Kings xx. 19, "for," Isaiah xxxix. 18; also the omission in Isaiah of Hezekiah's message of submission to the king of Assyria, 2 Kings xviii. 14, and the insertion, Isaiah xxxviii. 9, etc., of Hezekiah's psalm of praise, which the account in Kings omits.

Two woes are now past; but a third is yet to come. The direful vision of chapter vi. demands a future accomplishment.

The obduracy there foreshown is not at an end, and its predicted train of consequences must follow. A desolation still more complete awaits the land; and the surviving remnant of the people must undergo another diminution. A better prince than Ahaz now sat upon the throne; and to the public deliverance just experienced was added the individual mercy of a restoration from mortal sickness. And yet when the people were once again tried in their monarch, Hezekiah showed that he had not escaped the taint of the prevailing corruption. His vainglorious exhibition of his treasures to the messengers of the king of Babylon led to the crushing announcement by the prophet, "Behold the days come that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord."

This fearful prospect gives shape and character to what yet remains of the prophet's ministry. He no longer deals in words of terror, but in words of consolation. This section of the book is devoted to the work of comfort, which is no longer administered in limited passages or in solitary chapters joined with gloomy denunciations, but forms the great staple of all that follows. It was so terrible and unprecedented a disaster that the theocracy should be broken up, the atoning sacrifice abolished, the mediating priesthood deprived of its functions, God's dwelling-place reduced to ruins and his people carried away from the land which he had given them, to the heart of a powerful heathen empire, that the righteous were in danger of falling into utter despair and imagining that God had abandoned so unfaithful a people for ever. And this is doubtless one of the reasons why the comfort designed for those times is furnished not only by contemporary prophets, but by one belonging to a former age, just as subsequently Daniel was sent with consolations for the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. Judah needed to be thus prepared for it, and schooled with reference to it in advance. And it was important that when it actually came, they should recognise in it the hand of God, and look upon it not as an unforeseen and unexpected thing, but what had been revealed and provided for long beforehand. The prophet accordingly assures the people, that although this calamity

must come, it shall have an end. The oppressor shall be overthrown, the instrument for this purpose shall most certainly be raised up, as a pledge of which he is already designated and named, and Israel shall be restored, be blessed, and be a blessing.

In conformity with this prospective design of these closing chapters, they are not broken up into distinct discourses like the previous sections, but form one continuous and connected composition. They were not prepared to suit the varying circumstances of the present, and with reference to public delivery on separate occasions, but were adapted to a great necessity of the future, which naturally impressed upon them more uniformity of character. This, too, accounts largely for those differences of style, so far as they really exist, between this and preceding portions of the book, which the higher criticism has made the pretext of its unwarrantable conclusions. The uninterrupted treatment of a theme so animating and absorbing, lent its influence in producing those flowing sentences and fervid periods, by which this section of Isaiah is so eminently characterized.

This period of the prophet's ministry, like each of those which preceded it, has its own peculiar Messianic revelations. He does not now look forward merely to the period of the Messiah in general, as in chs. i.—vi., nor does he contemplate Messiah as a king, as in chs. vii.—xxxvii., but under an aspect more appropriate to his present theme, as a prophet and a sufferer, the antitype and head of his people. He is united with Israel in the commission to enlighten the world, and he will secure the accomplishment of it. And in the execution of this commission he is joined with them in a suffering which shall avail for the good of others, and shall issue in a glory which all that is glowing in human speech is summoned to describe.

The comfort, which the prophet is instructed to address to Judah in the prospect of these overwhelming calamities, is mainly drawn from the mission and destiny of the chosen people. This may accordingly be stated to be the general theme of these chapters. God had made choice of Israel that all families of mankind might be blessed in him. It was his mis-

sion to spread the true religion over the earth and to save the nations. This commission had never been and never would be revoked. The purpose of God made it infallibly certain that Israel would effect all that he had been raised up to do. No adverse circumstances must be suffered to cause discouragement or despondency. His own unfaithfulness should not baffle or frustrate God's designs. And the sufferings, which were to befall him on account of it, would further the accomplishment of his task instead of obstructing it, while they would be succeeded by the richest blessings for him and for the world.

The exhibition of the mission of the covenant people would be very incomplete, if it did not include the work of the Messiah, who was to be of them according to the flesh, and in whom all God's purposes of mercy were to meet their fulfilment. Israel was nothing without the Messiah. It was with reference to him that Israel was made the Lord's people; their whole history was a preparation for his coming; every thing about them pointed forward to him. He was the goal of their hopes; all their expectations centred in him. They waited anxiously for his appearing, and looked forward to it as the bright and blissful era in which every thing should reach its true ideal. From every present sorrow they were taught to turn for comfort to the happy future which he would inaugurate. The oppression of the heathen made them sigh for him who would break every yoke. He was to redeem Israel out of all his troubles, achieve his unperformed task, and fulfil his unaccomplished destiny. Zion should one day give law to the world; all men should worship the God of Israel; universal peace should be established, sin and woe be banished, and death itself destroyed; but it was in Messiah's days, and by him, that these results were to be effected. The Messiah was thus linked with every devout aspiration of those who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, and for the coming of the kingdom of God. And he was either explicitly or implicitly the centre or the background of every prophetic picture.

And yet notwithstanding all this, Dr. Davidson can say, on p. 35, that Isaiah could not "predict a far distant personal Messiah, consistently with the analogy of prophecy. Such leaps

into the future are unknown." And on page 69, "That the Messiah cannot be intended by the prophet, we argue, first, because it would be contrary to the nature of prophecy. The Old Testament seer never projected his vision into the far distant future so as to be able to predict events there, or describe persons beforehand with infallible certainty."

We had supposed it to be universally confessed, that if there was anything that the prophets did predict, it was the Messiah; and if there was anything consonant to the analogy of prophecy, it was such predictions. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" from first to last and at all times. If the Doctor had claimed that such predictions were fanatical, or that they were not really fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, his position, however untenable, would at least have been intelligible. But to say that such predictions were not made, and that it is inconsistent with the analogy of prophecy to predict a far distant personal Messiah, evidences an ignorance or an assurance utterly unfathomable. And yet upon occasion he admits the existence of such prophecies, as on p. 81, where he allows that ix. 6, 7, is correctly referred to Messiah. But if Messiah is described in these last chapters of Isaiah, there is such a minuteness and exactness in the description as might overturn the Doctor's favourite view of the impossibility of predicting what lies remotely in the future. He is described "with infallible certainty," and hence a reference to him must be denied at all hazards and at every cost.

For the reasons already stated, the prophet in unfolding the mission of Israel includes under it all that was to be wrought by Israel's great descendant. This latter is in fact the ruling idea; the work of Messiah is really the main thing, and overshadows every thing else that Israel was to do for the glory of God and the salvation of man. This union between the church and her great Head is laid by the prophet at the basis of the comfort appropriate to the coming trial. It results from her connection with him, it is part of her likeness to him, that she is called to perform her work in the midst of shame and suffering, and to win her way through it to glory and honour. Messiah is identified with Israel in his work, his humiliation, and his glory. It is in view of this identification that the pro-

phet includes them both under one common name, "the servant of the LORD." This expression strictly denotes one whom the Lord employs to execute his will. It is accordingly applicable to any person whom God raises up to perform some important work, as Moses, Deut. xxxiv. 5; David, 1 Kings xi. 13; Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xxv. 9. But in this connected prophecy it is appropriated to Israel as a people divinely chosen to accomplish the salvation of the world—to Israel, that is, not exclusive of the Messiah, but including him, inasmuch as he was to spring from this people, and was really and in the highest sense to accomplish the work, with the performance of which Israel was charged. The servant of the LORD, of whom Isaiah speaks, is, therefore, a complex person, embracing Christ the head, as well as his church, the body.

This explanation of the term, first propounded by Dr. Alexander, is not only recommended by its simplicity and naturalness, and by its ready applicability to all the passages in which it occurs, but by a number of scriptural analogies both in the Old and in the New Testament. Thus, "the seed of the woman," Gen. iii. 15, "the seed of Abraham," Gen. xxii. 18, "the son of David," 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, "the prophet," Deut. xviii. 18, ideal "man," Ps. viii., and the "righteous sufferer," in the typical Psalms, have both a collective and an individual sense. These several terms embrace the entire body of those whom they properly describe, including Christ, and indeed with predominant reference to him as the most important and prominent of all. So Israel embraces Christ by the law of natural descent, and Christ is linked with Israel by the eternal covenant of union, and by the vital power of his indwelling spirit.

The intimacy of the union subsisting between Christ and his people is abundantly set forth in the New Testament, both by literal statement and under the most expressive emblems. In fact, the name "Christ" is in one passage of the New Testament used with such latitude as to include the church of Christ along with Christ himself. 1 Cor. xii. 12, "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." The inspired authority of the New Testament may also be claimed

in favour of this interpretation, not only from its direct application of passages in Isaiah, which speak of "the servant of the *Lord*," both to Christ, in repeated instances, and to members of his church in at least two passages, Acts xiii. 47, comp. Isa. xlix. 6, and 2 Cor. vi. 2, comp. Isa. xlix. 8; but also by its use of the term *παῖς*, which is evidently the עֶבֶד יְהוָה of Isaiah, to denote both Israel, Luke i. 54, and Christ, Matt. xii. 18, Acts iii. 13. Jeremiah too, xi. 19, applies language to himself which Isaiah liii. 7, uses of "the servant of the *Lord*," showing that the people of God, as well as the Messiah, are to be included under that term.

Of this view of Dr. Alexander's, so strongly recommended by its appropriateness and the weighty considerations which may be urged in its favour, Dr. Davidson sneeringly says, p. 73, "The hypothesis is plausible. It is very convenient, too, because of its flexibility; for wherever the head does not suit, it is supposed to recede into the background, and the body to become prominent. Thus in xlix. 5, the idea of the head predominates over that of the body; whereas the reverse is the fact in xlii. 20, 21. Even so, however, the hypothesis cannot be carried out in practice, for the complexity of the person has occasionally to be laid aside, and either the head or body exclusively assumed. . . . In the fifty-third chapter, the body is entirely excluded. . . . The absurdity to which this interpretation leads, appears from the fact, that though the servant is a complex person, including Messiah and his church, things are predicated of Israel, or the body, totally adverse to the Head. They are even inconsistent with it. Thus we read in xlii. 19, 20, 'Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the *Lord's* servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.'"

This flippant and contemptuous rejection of the interpretation, which we have been considering, will by analogy prepare the reader for the statement that it was once accepted and defended by Dr. Davidson himself. Thus in his former treatise he says, p. 865, "Since the appellation before us is used in two ways, both in reference to one person, who is none other than Christ, and collectively of Israel; neither the one nor the

other can be adopted exclusively. Indeed the one does not necessarily exclude the other. The Messianic interpretation is consistent with the collective use of 'servant of Jehovah,' because the latter denotes Christ and his church, the head and the members of his spiritual body. . . . This interpretation, as Alexander justly remarks, 'agrees exactly with the mission both of the Redeemer and his people, as described in Scripture, and accounts for all the variations which embarrass the interpretation of the passages in question upon any more exclusive exegetical hypothesis.'"

The "absurdity," which Dr. Davidson now attempts to fasten upon this interpretation, will not be apt to impair its credit, so long as the usages of ordinary speech continue what they are. Precisely the same variety of application, which he ridicules, attaches to all general terms. They are constantly employed, not only where respect is had to every particular that they properly include, but also where the mass is regarded, and some individuals are left out of sight, or even where the mass is lost sight of, and one or more prominent particulars are alone regarded. And every intelligent reader or hearer instinctively makes the restriction, which the circumstances of the case demand. Thus, if we speak of the apostles as chosen by Christ, all are intended; if we speak of them as holy men, we predicate something of the body of the apostles, which is "totally adverse" to Judas, and "even inconsistent" with his character; if we speak of their writings, those who are included among the sacred penmen "become prominent," and the rest "recede into the background." So when we say that man is the creature of God, we refer to him as a complex being made up of soul and body; when we say that he is mortal or that he is immortal "the complexity" is laid aside," and either the soul or body exclusively referred to; when we speak of his appetites, both parts of his nature are affected, but the idea of the body predominates over that of the soul. We may properly speak of our being indebted to the Greeks for the Iliad and the Parthenon, though Homer wrote the one, and Calliocrates built the other.

The third section of the book of Isaiah, chapters xxxviii.—lxvi., is like each of those which precede it, divisible into four

parts. The first, chapters xxxviii., xxxix., is introductory. It explains the occasion of the succeeding prophecy by detailing the circumstances that led to the prediction of the Babylonish captivity, which forms the starting point of all that follows. At the same time it links, as Isaiah is careful to do from first to last, the judgment with that blindness and obduracy, which in the gradually unfolding vision of chapter vi. was its predicted cause. Upon the entrance of the first in the train of woes the prophet was sent to Ahaz with a promise of speedy deliverance. The infatuated king, in this reflecting only too faithfully the heart of the people, preferred to rely upon Assyria for aid rather than upon God, and in so doing chose the Assyrian invasion, which was plainly set before him as the consequence of this fatal course. And it is not without a purpose, that the seemingly trivial, though not altogether casual circumstance is recorded, that the Assyrian general Rabshakeh, sent by Sennacherib against Jerusalem, stood and delivered his insolent speech, xxxvi. 2, "by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field;" this is the very place, vii. 3, where Ahaz was met by the prophet, and where he exhibited his guilty unbelief. And then relief is scarcely experienced from this second disaster, before Hezekiah's vain display of his treasures takes the initiative in bringing on the third and worst calamity of all. The whole is thus concatenated together; and it is shown how each descending step to Judah's ruin is self-induced, flowing directly from his own acts of folly and of sin.

The prophet observes no strict method in the treatment of his theme in the last twenty-seven chapters, and no logical division is therefore possible. But a formal division is suggested by the recurrence of the same verse at the close of chapter xlviii. and chapter lvii.: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked." This may be regarded as an emphatic termination of distinct paragraphs or sections, declaring that the wicked should be excluded from participation in the blessings therein announced. And the book ends, lxvi. 24, with the yet more awful declaration, that besides this negative exclusion, the wicked are reserved for the worm that dies not and the fire that is not quenched. Three portions are thus indicated of

nine chapters each, chapters xl.—xlviii., chapters xlix.—lvii., chapters lviii.—lxvi. These groups may be distinguished by the prominence given in each to a particular event of the future, without, however, their being in any case exclusively occupied with it. In the first, the leading theme is deliverance from the Babylonish exile; chapter xlv. may be regarded as the characteristic chapter of this division. Babylon and Cyrus, who are here so conspicuous, are nowhere named after these first nine chapters; the captivity and restoration from it being only the starting-point of this great prophecy, from which it rises to the contemplation of the entire future in reserve for the people of God. In the second division, the vicarious sufferings and consequent exaltation of the Messiah are introduced, chapter liii. being the characteristic chapter. In the third division, the future glory of the people of God is dwelt upon, the characteristic chapter being chapter lx.

Perhaps the suggestion of Hahn is not altogether fanciful, that this triple division is already shadowed forth in the triple comfort with which the prophecy begins. The prophet is instructed, xl. 2, to cry unto Jerusalem that her warfare, her definite period of toilsome service, is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned; that (not *for*, as in the common version) she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins; not double punishment, as if she had suffered twice as much as her sins deserved, or twice as much as the Lord had intended to inflict, but double blessings, notwithstanding all her sins, or even for all her sins; divine grace abounding even beyond her multiplied transgressions, and repaying her offences with mercies twice as great. In unfolding this triple comfort, the prophet may then be supposed to dwell successively upon those conjunctures in the future which would afford the most striking exemplifications of its several phases. The promise of an end to Zion's warfare is illustrated by pointing to the certain termination of the sore evil then impending, the Babylonish exile. The second comforting assurance of the pardon of their sins, finds its basis and pledge in the vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer. And the third word of comfort, the double blessing from the hand of the Lord, shall find its fulfilment in the triumph and glory which await the church.

The first impression which the book of Isaiah makes upon the ordinary reader, probably is, that the prophecies uttered by him are here put together without any special regard to their order or arrangement. The rapid and inadequate survey which we have now taken of it, will be sufficient, we trust, to show that this is a very superficial view. Underneath all this appearance of isolated and detached predictions there is a regular plan constantly pursued from first to last, and all the more striking, when discovered, from its not having been immediately obvious. This methodical arrangement, this careful selection of appropriate materials, and judicious distribution of them, is of itself an effectual bar to all those critical theories, which assume a jumble of unrelated prophecies, and account for it by the accidental confusion of the independent productions of various authors belonging to different ages. With Dr. Davidson's oft-paraded preference for German ideas and German modes of thought, it may be a fact of consequence in his esteem, that there are instances of German critics of no mean standing among their learned countrymen, who have professed themselves convinced of the integrity and genuineness of the whole book of Isaiah, by the single consideration of its structure and methodical arrangement.

We are willing at least here to rest the question, whether the Doctor was not nearer the truth when he said, "Isaiah greatly excels in all the graces of method, order, connection, and arrangement," (Horne's *Int.* ii., p. 868,) than he is now in saying, p. 61, "the present book of Isaiah is an aggregate of authentic and unauthentic pieces, accumulating by degrees to its present extent and disposition," and p. 4, "no definite, well-ordered plan can possibly be discovered."