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I.

THE LITERARY HISTORY OF CALVIN'S "INSTITUTES."

THE *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin might well claim attention, merely on the score of its position in the history of Christian thinking on the themes of the Gospel, even though it were as dull and as alien from our own modes of thought as the Zend-Avesta. It is, on the contrary, however, the fundamental treatise in the development of that evangelical theology to which the Reformed Churches are committed, and it is to it that they must look back as the first serious attempt to cast into a system the body of truth to which they adhere as taught in the Holy Scriptures. And from the point of view of mere literary standing, the *Institutes* of John Calvin holds a position so supreme in its class that every one who would profess to know the world's best literature must perforce make himself acquainted with it. It is saying too little to say that, in reading this work, we are brought into contact with a great book: would we justly express its eminence, we must say that it is one of the world's greatest books—absolutely the greatest book of its class. What Thucydides is among Greek, or Gibbon among eighteenth-century English historians, what Shakespeare is among dramatists, or the *Iliad* among epics, that Calvin's *Institutes* is among dogmatic treatises. "The *Institutio* of Calvin," says Dr. William Cunningham,* to whom will be conceded a right to an opinion in such a matter, "is the most important work in the history of theological science, that which is more than any other creditable

* *Reformers*, etc., p. 295.

V.

THE MODERN HYPOTHESIS AND RECENT CRITICISM OF THE EARLY PROPHETS.*

IV. MICAH.

THE prophecy of Micah shares with that of Zechariah the distinction of having been among the first to which the modern hypothesis of postexilic expansion and redaction was applied. Stade's study on Deutero-Zechariah, wherein the author disclosed his program for the new critical treatment of the prophetic writings, appeared as the opening article in the periodical which has been edited by him since 1881, the *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, and in the next installment of the same year this was followed by his "Observations on the Book of Micah." Owing to this early presentation of the case, Stade's proposals in reference to Micah have received more elaborate and exhaustive discussion, both from his own standpoint and from that opposed to his hypothesis, than any other question brought to the front by the recent development of prophetic criticism. Apart from current articles and views expressed in works on Introduction and in the latest commentaries, the controversy has called forth two extended monographs on our subject, that of Ryssel, *Investigations on the State of the Text and the Authenticity of the Book of Micah* (1887), and that of Elhorst, *The Prophecy of Micah* (1891), the former a German, the latter a Dutch treatise. In both not merely are the points at issue examined, but likewise a full survey is given of the history of modern critical opinion up to the date of publication. Since, however, neither of these two books has appeared in an English translation, it will not be superfluous to give a brief outline of the course taken by the discussion, before we endeavor to estimate its bearing upon the contest between the old and the new conception of prophetism and of its place in Old Testament history.

Stade was not the first who denied to Micah the authorship of a considerable part of the book bearing his name. Ewald, in the second edition of his *Prophets of the Old Covenant* (1867), assigned

* This paper is the fifth in a series begun in this REVIEW, April, 1898.

chaps. vi and vii to the time of Manasseh on account of the totally different historical and religious situation reflected in them. Though admitting that the chronology does not absolutely require this, yet for reasons found in the dramatic form, the style and the language of this section, Ewald thinks that not Micah, but some other prophet is the writer. In reference to chap. ii. 12, 13, also, this critic anticipated the later conclusions by assuming that these verses are a marginal annotation either from the hand of Micah himself, or from an ancient reader, and that they are intended to illustrate the kind of false prophesying referred to in ver. 11.* While the latter view, in this specific form, was soon shown to be untenable, Ewald's opinion about a part at least of chap. vii received the support of Wellhausen. Wellhausen discriminates between vi. 1-vii. 6, on the one hand, and vii. 7-20, on the other. While not positively committing himself for or against the derivation of the former section from Micah, he finds that vii. 7-20 is plainly written from a standpoint about a century later than the time of Manasseh and presupposes the exile, and that the obvious affinity between it and Isa. xl goes to support this judgment.†

Meanwhile among Dutch critics a discussion had arisen in reference to chaps. iv and v, which in a somewhat similar manner forestalled the views subsequently developed by Stade on this section of the book. In Vol. v of the *Theologisch Tijdschrift* (1871), Oort published an article on "The Beth-Ephrathah of Micah v. 1." Attaching himself to the conjectural emendation of this verse proposed by Roorda, so as to make it read, "And thou *house of Ephrathah*," instead of "And thou *Bethlehem Ephrathah*," Oort infers from Gen. xxxv. 16 *seq.*, xlviii. 7,‡ 1 Sam. x. 2 and Jer. xxxi. 15. that there was an Ephrath in the territory of Benjamin, and that it is this Ephrath that is meant in the emended text of the prophet. He further identifies the "house of Ephrathah" with the house of Saul, and on the basis of this identification makes Micah predict the rejection of the Davidic dynasty, and the return of that of Saul to power in the person of the victorious ruler of the future. In the light of this interpretation, Oort then finds in the Migdal Eder of iv. 8 another place in Benjamin§ associated with the house of Saul, so that this verse contains the

* For earlier defenders of this view, cf. Ryssel, p. 10.

† Wellhausen, in the fourth edition of Bleek's *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1878), p. 425 (note).

‡ According to Oort, in both passages of Genesis the words "the same is Bethlehem" are due to a misunderstanding of the redactor, or are at least inserted by a later hand.

§ Cf. Gen. xxxv. 16-23; the words, "Ophel of the daughter of Zion," are made an interpolation like Lehem in v. 1.

same promise concerning the restoration of this house as v. 1. But, these two fixed points being given, it follows that iv. 8 brings the contrast to iii. 12: Zion to be plowed as a field—the Benjaminite Migdal ‘Eder to rise to royal glory. What stands between must therefore be an interpolation. Similarly iv. 11–13 breaks the connection between ver. 10 and ver. 14, and thereby proves itself foreign to the original prophecy. These two excised pieces form a continuous oracle of one of those false prophets so severely denounced by Micah. Micah’s genuine discourse consists of iii. 12, iv. 8–10, 14, v. 1 *seq.**

This hypothesis of Oort was subjected to a searching criticism by Kuenen in the next volume of the same periodical (1872). The article is written in Kuenen’s best vein, and may be cited not only as a masterpiece of that objective, incisive, luminous treatment of a difficult problem in which the author stands unrivaled, but also as one of the few instances where the arguments advanced are so final and convincing as to leave the opposing view beyond all possibility of resuscitation. The attempted exegesis and analysis are shown to be impossible as well as unfounded. Kuenen does not offer any new theory of his own. In regard to iv. 11–13 he recognizes the difficulty of reconciling the situation there presupposed with that reflected in the verses preceding. But even here he does not turn the obscurity of the connection into a plea for denying the genuineness of the passage. It is further to be observed that incidentally in his argument Kuenen quotes from the concluding section of the book as from a prophecy of Micah, which leads us to infer that at the time he had not adopted the view of Ewald.†

* Oort assumes that the combination of Bethlehem and Ephrathah had no basis in fact, but was entirely due to the postexilic scribes, who first changed the meaning of Micah’s prophecy in favor of David’s house, and then introduced the identification of Ephrathah and Bethlehem thus obtained into the Genesis-passages, 1 Sam. xvii. 12, Jos. xv. 59 (Sept.) and into the book of Ruth (*Theol. Tijdschr.*, v, p. 510.)

† On p. 273 *seq.* of the same volume Oort formally acknowledges the shipwreck of his hypothesis, but also declares that, after its abandonment, Mic. iv, v, become more of a mystery than ever. This statement is followed (p. 279 *seq.*) by some remarks of DeGoeje, proposing several emendations of the text and in general endeavoring to elucidate the connection of thought on the assumption of its genuineness as a whole. In reference to the Ephrath-question, DeGoeje suggests that it is not necessary to assume a Benjaminitic place of that name, since in Genesis after all the Judean Ephrath may be referred to, the expression כְּבֵרֶת הָאֶרֶץ “some way” (to Ephrath) being perhaps sufficiently indefinite in character to apply equally well to comparatively long as to shorter distances. A third part of the article consists of some further observations by Kuenen, who insists upon the two Ephraths and upon considering the words “this is Bethlehem” in Genesis a mistaken geographical gloss. While rejecting most of DeGoeje’s conjectures, Kuenen makes a valuable contribution of his own toward the better understanding of chaps. iv and v.

Here the matter rested for almost ten years. The controversy was renewed along the whole line by the above-mentioned publication of Stade. Although this critic from the outset confined himself to chap. ii. 12, 13, and chaps. iv, v, being evidently of the opinion that the question of the two closing chapters of the book had been finally disposed of by Ewald, yet in the course of the discussion it soon appeared that even this later section had not yet ceased, in the opinion of at least some liberal critics, to be debatable ground. In regard to ii. 12, 13, Stade undertakes to show that the symmetrical structure of the context in which these verses are placed requires their expulsion and proves the necessity of connecting iii. 1 with ii. 11. As to its contents, the passage has nothing in common with the Messianic utterances of Isaiah, but resembles rather Jer. xxxi. 8 and Isa. lii. 12. It presupposes that Israel is in dispersion and must be gathered into a flock. All this leads him to declare these verses an exilic or postexilic insertion from the hand of one who lived in the circle of ideas of Deutero-Isaiah. Stade also tries to assign a motive for this insertion. The interpolator may have referred ii. 8-10 to crimes perpetrated on fugitives from Northern-Israel, or may have desired to place his own words about the gathering of Israel from among the Gentiles in contrast with ver. 9, where the taking away of Jehovah's glory from the young children means to drive them into idolatry by ejection from Jehovah's land.

Much more complicated is Stade's hypothesis in reference to chaps. iv and v. It may be briefly stated as follows: iv. 1-4, 11-v. 4^a, 6-14 reveal their close connection by the conception of the "many nations" which they have in common. But this is a conception belonging distinctly to the post-Ezekielian development of prophecy: consequently we must assume that at some date after the exile the three pieces just named were added as a continuous discourse to the genuine work of Micah. The motive for this insertion lay in the one-sidedness of the prophecy of judgment in chaps. i-iii.* At a still later time some one who attributed the whole thus obtained to Micah wondered at the absence of all reference to the Babylonian exile, as an episode intervening between the prophet's own historical standpoint and the eschatological era to which the attack of the many nations on Jerusalem belongs. To fill this gap in the assumed perspective of

* It will be observed that this was written before Stade himself had fully grasped the new critical principle of the one-sidedness of *all* early prophecy as a prophecy of judgment pure and simple. He here still assumes that Micah appeared unique in this respect to the postexilic reader. The present idea is that Hosea as well as Amos, Isaiah almost as much as Micah, were found deficient in the element of promise and were all expanded and supplemented accordingly.

Micah, the two passages iv. 5-10 and v. 1^b, 5, were composed and inserted. The final arrangement of the inserted material was determined by the desire to make iv. 1-4 contrast with iii. 12.

From three quarters these proposals received at least a partial support, although the particular elements of the hypothesis accepted or dissented from were in each case different. First Giesebrecht expressed himself to the effect that even before the publication of Stade's views he had become convinced of the spuriousness of chap. iv, but could not agree with the rejection of chap. v.* In replying to this,† Stade endeavors to strengthen his position as regards chap. v by an extended discussion of the reference to Bethlehem in ver. 1, as well as by an attempt to show that the polemic against the Asherim and Mazzeboth in vers. 12, 13, proves this passage to be later than the reformation of King Josiah. On the former point it is interesting to observe that Stade seems unaware of the thorough manner in which the Ephrath-question had been sifted and conclusively settled once for all by Kuenen in the criticism of Oort above referred to (1872). Kuenen's presentation of the case, though written eleven years before, will serve equally well as an answer to the German critic, who infers from the identification of Bethlehem and Ephrathah that the prophecy must be postexilic, as to his Dutch predecessor, who thought that Micah, because speaking of Ephrath, must have expected a deliverer from the house of Saul,—for both contentions rest on the common basis *that in the preëxilic period only a Benjaminitic Ephrath was known*, and it was precisely this basis which Kuenen had effectually destroyed.

Second among the critics to accept Stade's conclusions was Cornill. But while agreeing with him as to chaps. iv and v, Cornill takes occasion from this avowal to revive the whole question concerning vi. 1-vii. 6, the debate on which Stade had treated as definitely closed by Ewald's and Wellhausen's arguments. In his opinion, vi. 1 reads as a justification of iii. 12, and everything in vi. 1-vii. 6, which had been applied to the reign of Manasseh, will apply equally well to the time of Ahaz, not excepting vi. 7, so that from a chronological point of view no objection can be raised against Micah's authorship. Cornill declares that the origin of the book becomes a riddle to him, if after chap. iii nothing is from the hand of the prophet, for to neutralize the pessimism of chaps. i-iii, the addition of chaps. iv and v fully sufficed, and for appending a second piece

* *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (1881), pp. 443, 444. For a later view of Giesebrecht, cf. *Beiträge zur Jesaja-Kritik*.

† *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1883), p. 4 seg

no further motive existed. In his view the book consists of three genuine parts, to each of which a later prophecy has been joined, viz., chaps. i-ii. 11, with the appendix ii. 12, 13: chap. iii with the appendix chaps. iv and v; chaps. vi-vii. 6, with the appendix vii. 7-20.*

The third, who accepted Stade's results on some points, while taking issue with him on others, was Nowack.† The agreement, however, extends no further than ii. 12, 13, whereas on almost every point of chaps. iv and v the validity of Stade's arguments is denied. The latter's analysis is found faulty: iv. 11-13 do not require v. 1-3, indeed leave nothing to be done by the Messiah; v. 2 even disagrees with the former passage in which no "giving up" is assumed; iv. 11 *seq.* similarly contradicts v. 6 *seq.*, because in the latter only a remnant appears as being saved; finally iv. 11-13 also clash with iii. 12. Consequently these verses, instead of forming a unit with iv. 1-4 and iv. 14-v. 3, 6-14, as Stade had contended, must, according to Nowack, be considered a later insertion which introduces a disharmonious element into the context.‡ Of the remainder Nowack upholds the genuineness, except of the words וּבֹאֵת עַד בָּבֶל in iv. 10, which are declared a gloss; v. 4, 5, which he considers interpolated; and iv. 5-8, in regard to which he is non-committal. The motive for inserting the gloss in ver. 10 and for adding vers. 5-8, must be sought in the contradiction which was felt to exist between Micah's prophecy of Jerusalem's conquest by the Assyrian and the actual outcome of events. As this will not apply to v. 4, 5, Nowack confesses his inability to explain the insertion of these verses. The conclusion of the article is directed against Cornill's attempt to save the genuineness of vi. 1-vii. 6.

In a brief statement immediately subjoined to Nowack's article, Stade replied to the latter's arguments, and upheld the soundness of his hypothesis. Among those who expressed dissent from the new conclusions was Reuss.§ Robertson Smith also held to chaps. i-v as a single well-connected book, with the qualification that in chap. iv. 8 the words, "thou shalt come unto Babylon," and the whole of chap. iv. 11-13, are interpolated, and that ii. 12, 13, require at least to be transposed.¶ Cheyne contented himself with

* Z. A. W. (1884), p. 88 (note).

† Z. A. W. (1884), pp. 277-291.

‡ Cf. Robertson Smith on Micah in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where the same proposal to excise iv. 11-13 had been made.

§ *Geschichte der Heiligen Schriften Alten Testaments* (1881), p. 314; cf. Z. A. W. (1883), p. 1 *seq.*

¶ *The Prophets of Israel* (1882), L. vii (Notes 4 and 6). In excising iv. 11-13. Robertson Smith follows Oort, without, however, approving of his general treatment of the context.

assuming the later origin of iv. 5-10, v. 4, 5.* A more hearty defense of the genuineness not merely of the material attacked in chaps. iv and v, but of the contents of the book as a whole, was made by Ryssel in his treatise mentioned at the beginning of this article. Here all the objections made to Micah's authorship from the various quarters of the critical side are carefully collected and exhaustively investigated. Ryssel's treatment so fully takes into account all possibilities of the problem that it may be considered the final word on the question from the conservative standpoint.

A new departure was inaugurated by Elhorst, who proposed to remove all difficulties by assuming that the prophecy was at one time written in sections forming two parallel columns on the same page. A later copyist, instead of taking first a section from the right-hand column and next one from the left-hand column, as had been the order in which the writer wished his manuscript to be read, put all the sections of the first column and all the sections of the second column together. The following table will make plain what is, according to Elhorst, the original arrangement of the prophecy, and how from it, in his opinion, the present disorder arose :

Chap. iii. 1-5.		Chap. ii. 1-5.
Chap. iii. 6-11.		Chap. ii. 6-11.
Chap. iii. 12.		Chap. ii. 12, 13.
Chap. vii. 1-6.		Chap. vi. 1-5.
Chap. vii. 7-12, 14-20.		Chap. vi. 6-16 + vii. 13.
Chap. v. 1-7.		Chap. iv. 1-4, 6-8.
Chap. v. 8-14. ◀		Chap. iv. 9-14.

It will be perceived that Elhorst does not draw chap. i within the scope of his hypothesis. He further thinks that chaps. vi and vii originally preceded chaps. iv and v, and accounts for their present position by the additional hypothesis that some copyist found the prophecy on four pieces containing chap. i, chaps. ii, iii, chaps. vi, vii, chaps. iv, v, respectively. By mistaking the sequence of the third and fourth pieces he made them exchange places. A misunderstanding on the part of still another copyist is assumed to explain the displacement of vii. 13. While in principle accepting Stade's view of a postexilic redaction of the genuine prophecy, Elhorst is much more moderate than Stade in its application.

* *The Cambridge Bible for Schools, Micah* (1882), p. 34.

Even chaps. vi and vii in their entirety are vindicated to Micah. The only piece given to the later writer is chap. iv. 9-14+v. 8. This must be postexilic, Elhorst thinks, because it predicts an attack upon Jerusalem subsequent to the Babylonian captivity.*

Between the discussions of Ryssel and Elhorst falls the appearance of Vol. ii of the new edition of Kuenen's *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek* (1889). Here Stade's hypothesis is still characterized as "a most singular opinion," the validity of his arguments derived from the universalism in iv. 1-3, from the identification of Bethlehem and Ephrathah in v. 1, from the polemic against the Mazzeboth and the Asherim in v. 9-14, is denied. At the same time the influence of Stade's criticism is perceptible in the admission that in chap. iv. 6-8 the captivity and the cessation of Israel's national existence form the point of departure of the prophecy, whilst also iv. 11-13 leave the Assyrian period far behind and remind us of Ezek. xxxviii, *seq.*, and Zech. xii, xiv. With much hesitation Kuenen concludes that iv. 9 *seq.*, 14-v. 5, 6-8, (also 9-14, in a less pronounced form than the present one) may have descended from Micah. Of a later exilic and postexilic date are iv. 6-8, 11-13, and the redaction of v. 9-14. Chaps. vi. 1-vii. 6 was written in all probability during the reign of Manasseh, but not by Micah. The close of the book, vii. 7-20, translates us into the Babylonian captivity.†

Though this position of Kuenen marks a considerable advance beyond that taken seventeen years before in his debate with Oort, it was soon rendered conservative by the steady movement of criticism toward the denial of Micah's connection with chaps. iv and v *in toto*.‡ Wellhausen in 1892 finds that ii. 12, 13, presuppose the exile and the diaspora and simply prefixes to iv. 1-v. 14 the title of appendix. The only passage in reference to which he makes serious reserve is v. 9-13. This, he admits, might without difficulty be assigned to Micah. Curiously enough even here Wellhausen seems to be non-committal in regard to the authorship of vi. 1-vii. 6; vi. 1-6, he says, fit excellently into the time of Manasseh and that Micah wrote them is not impossible. On the other hand, in vii. 1-6 marks of affinity with Malachi and the

* *De Profetie van Micha*, pp. 65-108.

† *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek*, ii, pp. 369-380.

‡ One more defender of the authenticity of the entire prophecy arose in Wildeboer (*De Letterkunde des Ouden Verbonds*, 1893, pp. 174-183). On most points this author sides with Ryssel, although showing some inclination to follow Kuenen in his rejection of the passages mentioned above. An earlier treatise of Wildeboer on Micah (1884) is not accessible to me. The genuineness of chaps. i-v was further upheld by Pont in *Theologische Studien* (1888, 1889). He assigns vi. 1-vii. 6 to the reign of Manasseh and vii. 7-20 to the postexilic age.

Psalms are pointed out. Cheyne, in the introduction to Robertson Smith's *The Prophets of Israel* (1895), thinks that "with regard to the Book of Micah, it is becoming more and more doubtful whether more than two or three fragments of the heterogeneous collection of fragments in chaps. iv-vii can have come from that prophet." Volz recognizes no more than iv. 9-10^a, 14; v. 9-14, as genuine remnants. The last-mentioned passage bears, however, at present, a different meaning from that intended by the prophet, who simply predicted the destruction of military power and of cultic objects because in these the national life was embodied, and not from any reform motive. In ver. 14 he thinks that not the Gentiles but Judah was threatened by the prophet in the original form of the verse. Volz is also willing to admit that in v. 4 *seq.* there may be hidden some genuine words of Micah, but these are now beyond the possibility of restoration. Chaps. ii. 12 *seq.*, iv. 6 *seq.*, 10^b-13, v. 6-8, are of one author and exilic: they were inserted to break the force of the genuine predictions of doom in whose neighborhood they stand, while for the same purpose v. 9-14 was rewritten. Chap. iv. 1-4 was probably added in the time of Deutero-Isaiah. A postexilic poet interpolated iv. 8, v. 1, 3, 4^a. Still later accretions are iv. 5 and v. 4 *seq.* Volz acknowledges that in regard to the details of the composition of chap. iv *seq.*, no certainty can be reached. But that the greater part does not come from Micah is absolutely certain in his view.

In conclusion of this historical review the present views of Nowack, as formulated in the volume from his hand on the Minor Prophets in the *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, should be noticed. As stated above, in 1884 this critic entered the lists against Stade, not merely in opposition to the latter's analysis, but equally to defend the genuineness of the greater part of chaps. iv and v. It is significant of the drift of present-day criticism toward the acceptance of Stade's principles that in this newest exposition of Micah all the fundamental points, which the author had contested with such skill and vigor thirteen years before, are now abandoned. To be sure, Nowack still endeavors to vindicate iv. 9, 10^a, 14+v. 9-13 for Micah, but even this is qualified and greatly weakened by a "perhaps." Besides, from a doctrinal point of view the retention of these fragments is quite unimportant, whereas the surrender of the other pieces is of far-reaching consequence. Still more significant, however, is the fact that this change of opinion is not justified by any refutation of the author's own former arguments. Apparently the difference between now and then is due to the greater force with which the *à priori* princi-

ples of Stade's method appeal to the critical consciousness of the times. The facts have remained what they were, but the relative weight of all objective data has decreased in the same proportion as the idea of development has become the predominating factor in shaping the modern views on prophetism and the prophetic literature.

We now proceed to consider the bearing of the disintegration of Micah's book on the main principles of the critical hypothesis and also the *à posteriori* grounds, which, it is claimed, justify the analysis. The discussion divides itself into three parts. Within the limits of chaps. i-iii only one passage is involved, viz., ii. 12-13. Here it is the Messianic element (whether in the wider impersonal or in the specific personal sense depends on the exegesis) whose right to a place among the ideas of Micah is disputed. Of the two following chapters scarcely anything is left intact, and the doctrinal interest at stake concerns four points: (1) The antiquity of the idea of universalism; (2) that of the fully developed Messianic hope; (3) the pre-Ezekielian origin of the eschatological idea of a world-attack upon Zion; (4) the pre-Deuteronomic date of the polemic against certain features of the popular cult. The debate about the authorship of chaps. vi and vii, finally, derives its Biblico-theological interest from the testimony which the closing section (vii. 7-20), if genuine, bears to the promissory outlook of early prophecy.

Chap. ii. 12, 13, contain the prediction of the reassembling of all Israel and their triumphant breaking forth under the leadership of their king. The grounds on which this passage is pronounced late are partly derived from the contents and partly from the connection. As to the former, it is claimed that the historical situation reflected in these verses is not that of the age of Micah, but of the exile. As to the latter, it is deemed psychologically inconceivable that the prophet himself should have passed without transition from the fierce tone of rebuke and the stern announcement of evil characterizing his previous discourse to the note of comfort and promise which is struck in these verses. It has been suggested that these objections may be removed at one stroke by finding here, instead of an expression of Micah's own hopes, an illustration of the deceitful hopes preached by those false prophets whom, according to ver. 11, the people delighted to hear. This view was held long ago by Aben Ezra, and has been revived in modern times by such writers as Roorda,*

* Roorda explained as follows: The false prophet admits that Jerusalem may be besieged, but maintains that it cannot be conquered, because the enemy will be compelled to raise the siege when numberless troops of warriors under the leader-

Ewald,* Kleinert,† and others. But according to iii. 11, the false prophets would not even consider the possibility of evil coming upon Israel: by admitting that the people were to be reduced to a remnant they would have in principle passed over to Micah's standpoint, and their further assurance that Israel would be reassembled again cannot have been quoted as a fundamental point of difference between them and the true prophets, unless we assume that the latter positively contradicted every prospect of restoration, which no one will maintain. Nor can vers. 12, 13, be said to form an illustration of the kind of prophesying referred to in ver. 11. The prophesying "of wine and strong drink" must relate to a promise of more realistic and sensual pleasures than that of the reassembling of scattered Israel.

Even if the proposed solution were not beset with all these difficulties, it would still, just as much as the ordinary exegesis, remain open to the criticism that the situation presupposed is that of the age of the exile. We must, therefore, enquire what force there is in this argument. Of the naïve form in which certain writers are wont to press it as if every literary representation of the exile as present must invariably involve its actual historical presence, we may dispose without further ceremony. It is an undeniable fact that in certain instances the prophetic consciousness projects itself into a more or less distant time so as to view future events as present or even past. The only question can be whether the starting-point for such a mental process is given in the general historical perspective of Micah. Now the prophet clearly predicts in the undoubtedly genuine portions of his book a captivity not merely of Ephraim, but also of Judah, on a no less extensive scale than that actually brought about by the Chaldeans. This is indeed denied by Robertson Smith, with whom Cheyne expresses agreement.‡ But what the latter calls a "capital argument" is very far from convincing. The text of chap. ii. 5, from which Robertson Smith infers that after the judgment the congregation of Jehovah remains, is highly obscure and uncertain; perhaps the words on which the argument hinges belong to the sixth verse.§ In ver. 4 *the whole people* are made to utter the lamentation of God Himself stream together to protect the walls and to beat back the enemy.

* Ewald assumed that Micah originally wrote the words in the margin as an example of false prophesying, and that against his intention they were afterwards put into the text by a transcriber.

† Kleinert sought to make the above interpretation plausible by rendering the closing words of ver. 11, "and were to prophesy to this people." As Ryssel shows, this rendering is excluded by the construction.

‡ *The Prophets of Israel*, 2 ed., pp. 290-292; Introduction, p. xxvii.

§ Cf. Nowack's Commentary *in loco*.

tion that their portion is removed and their fields are divided. Does not this presuppose a national captivity? In i. 16 also the subject, though not explicitly named, can be none other than the personified nation. That the nobility of Israel, "the glory," will flee to the cave of Adullam (i. 15) by no means excludes a captivity of the mass. Nothing of course can be inferred from chap. v. 1. Even if we explain the dislike to military equipment and city civilization voiced in i. 13, v. 10, 11, from the prophet's rural sympathies, it by no means gives us the right to infer that his preference for the country districts and their inhabitants must have led him to believe that these would escape from the impending captivity. In general it may be doubted whether, after Amos and Hosca and Isaiah had plainly foretold a deportation of the people *en masse*, and a sort of prophetic tradition had been formed on this point, Micah could have easily introduced a modification in regard to such a standing feature of the prophecy of judgment. If the evidence of exegesis plainly proved this, we should have to accept it; but this is far from being the case. There is no need, therefore, in order to escape the exilic dating of our passage to follow Ryssel's explanation, who maintains that the exiles are not here represented as constituting the whole of Israel, but that the "totality of Jacob," of which the prophet speaks, is the result of the reunion of the *Grundstock* which has remained in Palestine with the exiles returned from among the Gentiles. Decisive against this view is that the assembling evidently takes place in the foreign land, whence also the assembled forces march forth. Ryssel himself so conceives of it, but without reconciling this representation with the exegesis of ver. 12^a proposed by him. So far as I see, a reconciliation could be effected only by supplying the thought that the *Grundstock* first march to the foreign land to deliver their exiled brethren, and then, reunited with these, march back to Palestine as described in ver. 13. But if such had been the writer's meaning, he could hardly have failed to state it in explicit terms, since the idea, being quite novel, does not readily suggest itself.*

It must be granted then, without reserve, that the exile forms

* For the various possibilities of interpretation cf. Elhorst, pp. 43-48. Ryssel compares Hos. ii. 1, 2. But even if "the children of Israel" in ver. 10 be here referred to Northern-Israel, and the gathering together of Israel and Judah of ver. 11 be understood as taking place in Palestine, it should be remembered that Hosea's perspective, especially in the first part of his book, represents an earlier stage of prophecy than that of Micah. To him the exile of Judah had not been as clearly revealed as to the latter, so that his picture of the restoration could more easily assume the form of a bringing back of exiled Israel to Judah. In the case of Micah such indefiniteness of speech was no longer possible.

the background of the passage under review. But the critics go too far in asserting that this background must be the real historical situation of a later writer, and cannot be the imaginative situation into which Micah projected himself, and out of which he spoke his prophecy of restoration. That the exile as it actually came about fits the description ought certainly not to be used as an argument against its authenticity. Nothing appears which in any way betrays a later standpoint or acquaintance with later facts than those well within the range of vision of the eighth century. Stade indeed thinks that the words reveal affinity to Isa. lii. 15, Jer. xxxi. 8, while points of contact with genuine Messianic oracles of Isaiah are lacking. Waiving the question of the exilic origin of Isa. lii, of course taken for granted by Stade, this critic himself will not claim that the passages cited are the models upon which the writer of Micah ii. 12, 13, framed his prophecy. The similarity of thought and expression is of so general a kind that from a mere comparison nothing can be determined about the sequence of the three passages. As to Isaiah, since Stade expressed the above opinion, it has become more and more recognized that the Messianic prophecies in viii. 23-ix. 6 and xi. 1-9 have for their background the captivity of the entire remnant of Israel and the cessation of the Davidic dynasty ruling in the prophet's time. There are other utterances of Isaiah, such as x. 20, xi. 11, still more closely resembling Micah ii. 12, 13, but unfortunately these are excluded by the critics from the genuine work of the prophet.

After having ascertained that in the contents of the passage there is nothing prejudicial to its genuineness, we are qualified to determine more precisely how much weight can be attributed to considerations drawn from its connection with what precedes or follows. Of course, to show that a prophecy might have been spoken or written by Micah is not equivalent to a demonstration that he must be the author. Just as little, however, does a lack of close connection of itself prove the presence of an interpolated piece. It would seem a sound principle of criticism that, in a text where the contents are unobjectionable, three things are required to make out a clear case of interpolation: (1) it should be shown that no transition of thought is discoverable; (2) that a later writer could have some adequate motive for inserting the passage where it stands; (3) that after its expulsion from the context the preceding and following words make plausible connection. Especially the second and third of these requirements should be rigidly insisted upon. Not to do so would mean to ignore the possibility that some genuine part of a prophetic book

may have become displaced and strayed into an environment where it appears foreign to the writer's momentary trend of thought without being foreign in principle to his general circle of ideas. Now turning to the case in hand, we find that the difficulty of explaining the transition from ver. 11 to ver. 12 furnishes the whole basis of the critical contention. Granting for a moment that this difficulty is in reality as great as it is made out to be, still it is insufficient to prove the later origin of our passage unless the other two conditions are complied with. And this has not been done. First of all, no reasonable motive for the insertion can be discovered. The general explanation, that the later writers used to append their work in such places where they felt the need of taking off the sharp edge of an exceptionally severe prediction of judgment by a qualifying promise, does not apply in this instance. Ver. 11 is not the climax of a threatening passage, nor is ver. 10 sufficiently severe in its tone to have called for such a remedy. Immediately after i. 16 or ii. 5 would have been the proper place for interpolating a promise. Stade has suggested a twofold motive from which the insertion might be explained. He thinks that perhaps some reader referred vers. 8-10 to crimes perpetrated on fugitives from northern Israel, and thereby was induced to add a prediction about the gathering of the scattered Ephraimites. Or a contrast to ver. 9 may have been intended where the taking away of Jehovah's glory from the young children means to drive them into idolatry by expulsion from Jehovah's land: hence the remnant of Israel receives the promise that it will be gathered from among the *Gentiles* who serve idols. Micah, however, does not use Jacob and Israel elsewhere with specific reference to the northern kingdom. The later writer, therefore, in order to make his meaning plain would have been apt to speak of Ephraim as the subject of the promise. And as to the second suggestion, if such a subtle antithesis had been actually present to his mind, he would surely have stated in so many words that the gathering of ver. 12 was to be from among the Gentiles, and would involve the restitution of Jehovah's glory to the exiles. And after all, one cannot help asking if the later writer considered the connection of thought between Micah's words and his own sufficiently lucid, why should not Micah himself have been of the same opinion? If a contrast of this sort is actually implied, there is no reason for asserting that Micah can have had nothing to do with it, except the *à priori* one that the contrast between threatening and promise is foreign to early prophecy.

But, although no plausible motive can be assigned for an inter-

polation at this precise juncture, yet we might perhaps be persuaded to assume one, in case after the removal of vers. 12, 13, the continuity of the discourse left nothing to be desired. This, however, is by no means the case. Chap. ii. 11 does not read as if intended to close the section which begins at ii. 1 or at ii. 6. This is acknowledged by those of the critics who believe that the appended passage has been allowed to extrude the genuine conclusion. If ii. 11 and iii. 1 were to be closely connected we would expect the prophet to have more formally indicated by the use of a personal pronoun that he considered his own announcement of judgment as the direct opposite to the prophesying of wine and strong drink of the other seers.* On the other hand, if vers. 12, 13, are genuine words of Micah, the transition from them to iii. 1 by means of the simple **וְאֵכָר** is perfectly natural. As C. B. Michaelis† has well said, its force may be paraphrased as follows: "But while we are yet but too far away from the longed-for times, which have just been promised, I *say* in the meanwhile, viz., in order to complete the list of the iniquities of evil princes and teachers begun in chap. ii."

Stade has taken special pains to prove that the expulsion of the passage under review is imperatively demanded by the symmetrical structure of the remainder of chaps. i-iii, considered by him a single discourse. He maintains that iii. 1 is parallel to ii. 7 and iii. 8, inasmuch as in each of these three statements Micah defines his attitude over against the sinful rulers and the false prophets. Consequently iii. 1 ought to follow immediately upon ii. 11, just as ii. 7 follows immediately upon ii. 6 and iii. 8 upon iii. 7. There is no reason to deny that in a general sense the sequence of thought is thus correctly indicated. But the symmetry is not so perfect as Stade believes. That the obscure words in ii. 7 are spoken by the prophet and define his attitude toward the persons rebuked and threatened in the foregoing is denied by many commentators. It is perhaps even more probable that ver. 7 contains the words of the sinners instead of giving the answer of Micah. In that case the parallelism with iii. 1 would entirely disappear. And, as Ryssel has already pointed out, iii. 1 does not bring so much Micah's "*Stellungnahme*" in reference to his opponents, as rather a new description of their wickedness. Stade's synopsis of the contents of chap. ii can thus be improved upon by leaving out altogether the item of Micah's prophetic self-assertion over against the sinful rulers and seers. If ver. 7 be taken as words of the sinners, a perfect parallelism results: ii.

* Cf. iii. 8, where a similar contrast is marked by **וְאֵלֶם אֲנִי**.

† Quoted by Hengstenberg, *Christology* (English translation), i. 411.

1-2 and ii. 8-9 describe the sin, ii. 3-5 and ii. 10 announce the judgment, ii. 6, 7, and ii. 11 finally speak of the resentment which the prophecy of evil awakens in those against whom it is directed. But, as will be perceived, on this scheme Stade's conclusion that iii. 1 must have followed immediately upon ii. 11 no longer holds. It might be said, to be sure, that if ii. 6, 7, is the end of section 1, then ii. 11 ought to be the end of section 2. But as section 3, consisting of iii. 1-12 is enlarged over against the two preceding ones by the introduction of new elements, and has subjoined to itself a promissory discourse in iv. 1 *seq.*, so the prophet might well advance in section 2 beyond the limits of section 1 by appending the promise of ii. 12, 13, which in point of proportion and progress of thought places it midway between what precedes and follows.

After all, it still remains an open question whether a transition in the prophet's mind between vers. 11 and 12 cannot be made psychologically conceivable. It must be admitted that we cannot fall back upon the writer's desire to produce a rhetorical contrast, for ver. 11 coming between breaks the force of the contrast. No solution can be considered satisfactory which does not take its point of departure in ver. 11. Here we have the thought that those who make sensual delights the theme of their message find it easy to gain the popular ear. Now this thought was calculated to awaken in Micah a sense of the disadvantage under which he labored owing to the character of his own message. He had no bright prospect to hold out either for the present or the immediate future. Nevertheless he was conscious of being the herald of an infinitely higher and farther-reaching hope, the hope of salvation after judgment. What is more natural than that under the circumstances he should give utterance to this consciousness for his own relief, though fully aware that a salvation thus conditioned on previous calamity would have no charm for his hearers. There is nothing irrational or unworthy of a true prophet in such a train of thought. The expression of it becomes still more intelligible if we assume that vers. 12, 13, did not constitute part of the spoken discourse, but were added afterwards, when, in committing the same to writing, the prophet could give freer vent to his feeling.*

Passing on to the discussion of chaps. iv and v, we may again divide the objections raised against the prophecies here grouped together into two classes. On the one hand, it is alleged that the

* In reference to the various attempts to find for ii. 12, 13, another more suitable place in the Book of Micah, cf. Ryssel, p. 213. Ryssel thinks Steiner's proposal to put the verses after iv. 8 not without plausibility. Elhorst places our passage between iii. 11 and 12. On this cf. the criticism of Kusters, *Theologisch Tijdschrift* (1893), p. 251.

historical background of some of the sections cannot possibly be that of Micah, and that the several pieces presuppose entirely different situations out of which or for which they were written. On the other hand, it is believed that the connection of the fragments is so defective and clumsy as to exclude every idea of its representing a continuity of thought in the mind of a single author. The disorder is such that it can be understood only as the result of a more or less complicated process in which the earlier material passed through several hands and was increased by a number of additions or rewritten for the purpose of altering its original meaning.

The central idea of iv. 1-5, and the possibility of correlating it to the thought of the eighth-century prophets, has been dealt with in a previous article. As regards Micah in particular, the undisputed part of his prophecy offered no occasion for any direct deliverance on Jehovah's relation to the Gentile world. The only passage throwing light on the prophet's views touching this point is chap. i. 2, where all peoples, the earth and its fullness are called upon to hear God's witness against them. An attempt has been made to limit the part of the peoples, in the transaction described, to that of witnesses, so that the idea of Jehovah's exercising rule over them would not be implied.* But if the words meant, "Let the Lord God be a witness *among* you," those *against* whom the witness is to be borne would also have been named. The passage does prove, therefore, that Micah believed Jehovah concerned in the conduct and destiny of the other nations and that the presuppositions for the universalism expressed in iv. 1-5 were not wanting in his thought. But it proves more than this. If the prophet found it necessary to state at the very opening of his prophecy that the divine judgment was directed against the Gentiles as much as against Israel, is it likely that he would have allowed this conviction no further influence on the character of his message? If, as the critics believe, iii. 12 is the end of his genuine discourse, there is a remarkable incongruity as well as disproportion between the announcement of the text and the further working out of the sermon.†

Ver. 4, wanting in Isaiah, Stade considers too sentimental in its

* Cf. Koster, *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1893, p. 263.

† Koster, *l. c.*, thinks that all the passages quoted from Isaiah as bearing on this question prove no more than that Jehovah surpasses in power the gods of the Gentiles, and is able to protect his people from their attacks. Isaiah, however, not merely teaches that Jehovah can protect Israel from other nations, but also that Jehovah summons and brings these nations to execute judgment upon Israel, which is quite a different matter, and goes far beyond the theology Koster would ascribe to that prophet. And this is true of Micah as well as of Isaiah.

tone to be of an early date. He compares 2 Kings xviii. 31, Lev. xxvi. 3-5, Deut. xxviii. 1 *seq.* Waiving the question of the late date fixed by the critics for Leviticus and Deuteronomy, it is hard to believe that Micah cannot have appreciated the blessings of peace and expressed his appreciation of them in a proverbial form.

Chap. iv. 6, 7, stand in a line with ii. 12, 13, so that only a few words of comment are required. Undoubtedly here, also, the exile is presupposed, but not in any form which would imply that the author knew it from actual experience. The figure of the sheep "halting" and "driven away" recurs with the use of the same words in Zeph. iii. 19, and with the use of one of them in Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Inasmuch as these must have been familiar terms of pastoral life, their appearance wherever the figure of the shepherd and his flock appears is perfectly natural. Even if the application of this figure by these prophets to the gathering of Israel proves literary dependence, which we do not believe, there is no reason why the original should not be recognized in Micah. The prophet's discourse abounds in figures derived from his rural surroundings (cf. ii. 12, 13; iv. 3, 4, 12, 13; v. 6, 7; vi. 15; vii. 1, 2, 4, 14, and the original way in which the idea of the shepherd is brought in connection with the pastoral antecedents of David as the type of the Messiah in v. 1, 3).^{*} Attention has also been called to the technical use of *שְׂאֵרִית*, "a remnant," in ver. 7.[†] Standing parallel with "a strong nation," this expression, it is said, must be a title of honor and promise. There would be something strange in this only if we did not know that with Isaiah already the term *שֶׁאֵר* had obtained a fixed meaning in which it was associated not merely with the judgment of the present, but likewise with the restoration of the future. Still further, exception is taken to the idea of Jehovah's kingship as dependent on Zech. xiv. 9. To this the answer has been given that this idea is protected by its prominence in Isaiah. Since this kingship was identified with Israel's national existence, the restoration would naturally assume to the prophet the form of a renewal of Jehovah's rule over His people, which had been suspended by the captivity.

In vers. 8-10 little is found by the critics to which suspicion can attach. In fact, vers. 9, 10^a are the one fragment of chap. iv in reference to whose possible or plausible genuineness a certain consensus has begun to form itself. As may be seen from the historical survey given above, Oort, Kuenen, Nowack, Volz, concede it

^{*} Cf. Nowack, *Z. A. W.*, 1884, p. 280.

[†] Kos'ers, *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1893, p. 264.

to Micah; even Wellhausen is not positive in expressing the contrary opinion. Against ver. 8 Stade advances the trite argument that "the *former* dominion" presupposes the cessation of the Davidic kingdom. Nevertheless Stade himself considers vers. 8-10 from one hand; in ver. 9 on his own interpretation the later writer artificially transports himself backwards into the time of Micah as his apparent present and out of it projects himself into the Chaldean crisis as his ideal present. Why then, supposing always that Micah could imagine a restoration at all, should we deem him incapable of going through the same mental process in the opposite direction? In ver. 10 those critics who uphold the genuineness reject the words, "and shalt come even unto Babylon," as a gloss added *ex eventu*. In so far as this opinion results from anti-supernaturalistic bias it would be useless to argue against it. That there is nothing external to mark the clause as a gloss is shown by the fact that other critics, like Stade, who treat the whole context as a *vaticinium ex eventu*, find nothing objectionable in it and treat it as of one piece with the rest. A difficulty is further found in Jer. xxvi. 19, where the destruction of Jerusalem predicted in Micah iii. 12 is represented as referring to the Assyrian crisis under King Hezekiah, and as having been averted by the repentance of people and king. But, as Ryssel and others have shown, whatever may have been the prophet's own meaning or the ultimate divine intent of the prophecy, it was quite possible for Micah's and Jeremiah's contemporaries to connect the idea of deportation to Babel with an Assyrian invasion. It would be rash, therefore, to conclude that in Jeremiah's days either the whole prophecy of chap. iv. 9, 10, or at least the words referring to Babylon were not known.*

With vers. 11-13 we reach that part of the chapter in the denial of whose genuineness the recent critics, however varying their views in other respects, are unanimous. As vers. 9, 10^a are recognized as the one fragment which may perhaps be from Micah, so this piece is before all others recognized as the one that must be late. A difference is, however, to be observed, as to the ground

* Though there is nothing about the disputed clause to suggest its spuriousness, it should not, on the other hand, be allowed to prejudice against the genuineness of its surroundings those who find it unacceptable on *à priori* grounds. The three words can be taken out without destroying the sense of what remains. "Thou shalt dwell in the field; there shall Jehovah redeem thee," would on this view mean that the daughter of Zion must be reduced to a state of helplessness and utter exposure, symbolized by the open field as over against the fortified city. This thought is in full harmony with Micah's judgment on fortresses and cities elsewhere. Hosea ii. 16 would be a parallel. Cf. Kuenen, in *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1872, p. 29⁸, against a proposal of De Goeje to include in the alleged gloss also the following words up to ver. 11.

on which this judgment is based by the several critics. While Stade proceeds on the principle that the whole idea of an attack of many nations upon Zion is post-Ezekielian, most of the others take the position that, while the contents of vers. 11-13 *in themselves* admit of Micah's authorship, yet the contradiction between them and what immediately precedes renders it psychologically impossible that both should be from the same writer. Undoubtedly Stade's view has the advantage of greater consistency. In the consciousness of the early prophets as at present defined, there is hardly a place for a prediction of this type. For not merely are the defeat and the destruction of the Gentile nations that attack Zion foretold, but in ver. 11 their hostility is represented as inspired by the desire "to profane" her, *i. e.*, to prove by the conquest of Zion that her claims to special sacredness and inviolability are unfounded.* We have here, in fact, the same thought which underlies Ezekiel's prediction of a world-attack upon the holy city, and those unwilling to believe that the early prophets ascribed such a sanctity to Zion should follow Stade in rejecting the verses on their own merit, altogether apart from the question whether they can be reconciled with what precedes or not.

But this observation in reference to ver. 11 also points out the way, we believe, in which the deeper harmony between the two apparently conflicting utterances here placed together must be sought. Evidently the point of view from which the prophet approaches the conflict of the world-power with Judah is a two-fold one. In so far as this conflict is viewed as a matter between Jehovah and the people and as intended for the punishment of Israel's sin, it must result in captivity. In so far as it is viewed as a matter between the nations and Zion in its religious significance, the issue must be destruction for the Gentiles, because in Zion they attack Jehovah.† We know how in Isaiah these two modes of viewing the conflict and of forecasting its issue go side by side from almost the beginning until the end of his ministry, and that the recent critical attempts to eliminate this dualism from Isaiah cannot be considered successful. Why, then, should the appearance of the same phenomenon in Isaiah's contemporary Micah make us despair? The harmonizing of Micah iii. 12 and iv. 11-13 is precisely as difficult and no more difficult than the harmonizing of Isa. iii. 26, v. 13, vi. 12, on the one hand, and viii. 9, 10, x. 5-19, on the other hand. That in Micah the two repre-

* Cf. Keil's Commentary *in loco*.

† That this is actually the point of view from which the whole prophecy of vers. 11-13 wishes to be understood may be seen from the closing words of ver. 13; the gain and substance of the nations are devoted to Jehovah, *i. e.*, to His sanctuary, because they attempted to rob Him and to defile His dwelling-place.

sentations stand in closer proximity than in Isaiah should not prejudice us against their genuineness, because we need not assume that they occupied the same relative position in the prophet's oral discourse.* The historical facts to which this mode of viewing the conflict and of anticipating its outcome might attach itself were given to both Isaiah and Micah in the expedition of Sennacherib, of the year 701. The developments of this crisis offered a striking illustration of the principle here proclaimed as having validity for all time. Thus we can maintain that the prophecy preserves its contact with the history of the people of God in the prophet's own age, while yet through the clearly realized typical import of these contemporary events it is made to extend beyond these and to cover the remote future.

In chap. iv. 14-v. 4, several things are believed to indicate a later date than the age of Micah. As stated above, Stade has renewed the objections at one time raised by Oort against the association of Bethlehem and Ephrathah and against the description of Bethlehem as "little to be among the thousands of Judah." The data of this controversy are as follows: Jer. xxxi. 15 and 1 Sam. x. 2 prove that Rachel's grave was situated not far from Ramah on or near the border of Benjamin. Now it is inferred from Gen. xxxv. 19 (cf. xlviii. 7) that Ephrath lay in the neighborhood of the sepulchre of Rachel. Consequently it cannot be identical with Bethlehem, and the words in Genesis making this identification must be a gloss. The explanation of Nöldeke and Dillmann, to the effect that there may have existed two grave-pillars of Rachel, one near Ramah and another near Bethlehem-Ephrath, and that, E in Genesis refers to the latter, whilst Jeremiah and the author of 1 Sam. x. 2 have in mind the former, is rejected by Stade, because E in his narrative is supposed to deal exclusively with localities on the border of the two Rachel tribes—Joseph and Benjamin.† Further, there could not have existed a grave-pillar of Rachel in Bethlehem because the inhabitants of that place did not trace their descent from Rachel. But, if the testimony

* Another way of removing the conflict is to take the two prophecies as referring to different times. Thus Hengstenberg finds in vers. 9, 10, the Babylonian captivity predicted; in vers. 11-13, the Maccabean conflict; in ver. 14 the Roman oppression. Others, like Caspari and Keil, while not assuming a precise chronological succession, yet insist upon placing the event of vers. 11-13 as an eschatological episode between the exile and the Messianic developments described in ver. 1 *seq.* The weakness of this exegesis lies in its rendering of עַתָּה in ver. 11 as "then," whereas in vers. 9 and 14 it obviously means "now" and designates the writer's real or ideal present. Since the three "nows" are correlated they must be rendered alike in each case.

† This would not apply to Gen. xlviii. 7, which is assigned to P, but Stade gives everything after עַתָּה to the redactor who copied from the passage in chap. xxxv.

of E for the identity of Bethlehem and Ephrathah falls away, there is reason to examine critically the other passages in which the two are associated. These are: (1) 1 Sam. xvii. 12, where Jesse is called "that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah." This verse, Stade thinks, has been so seriously meddled with by a later hand that its beginning is entirely out of joint: הָיָה must at all events be removed, and, this being so, the preceding אֶפְרַתִּי may as well be thrown out as a redactorial addition. (2) Ruth i. 2, iv. 11: these passages are claimed to prove nothing because the Book of Ruth is postexilic. (3) Three passages in 1 Chronicles, chaps. ii. 19, 50, and iv. 4: here Ephrathah appears as the wife of Caleb and the mother of Hur, and is explicitly connected with Bethlehem. Stade maintains, however, that Bethlehem's connection with the clan Caleb does not rest on ancient tradition and both form and contents of the passages belong to the postexilic period. He also appeals to the fact that the adjective אֶפְרַתִּי means, in all passages except 1 Sam. xvii. 2, "the Ephraimite," which renders it probable that the place called Ephrath known in preëxilic times as the grave of Rachel lay on the border of Benjamin, *i. e.* still in Ephraim. The conclusion of the whole is according to Stade that Micah v. 1 appears to stand on a level with Ruth and Chronicles, two postexilic products.* In regard to the other point, the smallness predicated of Bethlehem, he refers to Neh. vii. 26, where the men of Bethlehem and Netophah are given as 188, a small number,—so that this feature likewise would point to a post-exilic writer.†

In answering all this the one essential point should be kept distinct from the accessory questions which have clustered around it in the course of the controversy.‡ This one essential point is

* Z. A. W., 1883, p. 4 *seq.*

† Z. A. W., 1884, p. 293.

‡ Thus the question whether the words הוּא בֵּת־לַחֶם in the Genesis passages are a gloss is entirely immaterial. We do not believe this assumption necessary. De Goeje's explanation, given in a previous note, seems quite satisfactory. It is significant that neither in Jeremiah nor in 1 Sam. x. 2 is the name Ephrath mentioned in connection with Rachel's grave. But even if the disputed words are a gloss and express a mistaken identification of Bethlehem-Judah with the Ephrath near which Rachel was buried, the glossator could not have made the mistake unless Bethlehem had been called Ephrath in his day. The whole question, therefore, reduces itself to this,—whether this designation as it was then current reached back into ancient time or was a novel usage. Equally immaterial is the question whether the original reading in Mic. v. 1 is Beth Ephrathah or Bethlehem-Ephrathah. According to Koorda the first Hebrew text was בֵּית אֶפְרַתָּה and the original rendering of the Septuagint corresponding to this οἶκος Ἐφραθᾶ. Then בֵּית לַחֶם was written in the margin of the Hebrew in explanation. A copyist took this to mean that בֵּית should be read בֵּית לַחֶם and made the change. Thus originated the present Hebrew text. A comparison of the original Septuagint with it suggested as a compromise Βηθλὲμ οἶκος Ἐφραθᾶ, which is the present Greek text.

whether it can be proven that Bethlehem had nothing to do with Ephrath or Ephrathah in the time of Micah. But how can this be established? Let us suppose for a moment that Stade is justified in throwing out the "Ephrathi" in 1 Sam. xvii. 12,* and in declaring Ruth postexilic. This by no means settles the question. It only yields the negative result that there remains no preëxilic passage from which we can prove that Bethlehem was in early times associated with Ephrathah. This is something quite different from furnishing the positive proof that such an association cannot have existed. Still further, though Chronicles is postexilic and Ruth is considered so by modern critics, at any rate they bear witness to the fact that in that period Bethlehem sustained a close relation to Ephrathah. This being so, what right have we to assume that not only the usage but the origin of the usage must be postexilic, and that it cannot reach back into the eighth century B.C.? In one case only could such a conclusion be justified, viz., if it were possible to explain from well-known, specifically postexilic data how the association or identification arose, or, what amounts to the same thing, to assign a definite motive for the interest of the writers of Chronicles and Ruth to bring the two names together. This has not been done nor can it be done. To quote the words of Kuenen: "It will not easily enter into the head of any man that the Chronicler's statements concerning Ephrath and her children are explainable from any subtendency.† On this point the Chronicler gives us simple facts in a genealogical form chosen by himself." Oort's hypothesis offered at least the advantage of explaining what interest the postexilic writer had in transferring the name Ephrath from the house of Saul to that of David, but this hypothesis has been so entirely overthrown by Kuenen that even the author would not think of reviving it at the present day.‡

As has been stated, Stade contends further that the smallness predicated of Bethlehem can be understood only from the stand-

Roorda's conjecture may possibly be correct. It is equally possible, however, that the Septuagint text contains an explanation of the Hebrew as it now stands. In that case the latter may well be original. Cf. the combination Bethlehem-Judah.

* There is more reason to believe that אפרת' belongs to the original text (whatever may be the truth about יָה) and that the words כִּנְיָהּ לָחֶם were added either by the writer or by a later hand to guard against the misinterpretation of אפרת' as "Ephraimite."

† Kuenen, of course, makes 1 Chron. ii, as a whole, a tendency-piece. Cf. *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1872, p. 49.

‡ No weight can be attached to Stade's argument, based on the constant use of אפרת' = Ephraimite, because this adjective may well have borne a double meaning. Indeed this must be assumed on Stade's own theory, since the word must have belonged to both the place Ephrath and the larger territory of Ephraim.

point of a postexilic writer. Though it is true that the men of Bethlehem and Netophah appear in Neh. vii as among the least numerous of the contingents there enumerated, yet we have no certainty that this relative smallness of the family resulted from the exile. It may have existed before. The writer of Micah v. 1 had a special motive for emphasizing this smallness. Obviously the thought was in his mind that the house of David when giving birth to the Messiah would be reduced to the former state of insignificance, naturally resulting from its numerical smallness, in which it existed before David's elevation to the throne gave it the highest rank among the families of Judah. In other words, the description of Bethlehem in Micah v. 1 serves the same purpose which is served by the peculiar phrase, "the stock of Jesse," in Isa. xi. 1.*

In two other respects, v. 1-3 have been declared out of harmony with their surroundings. Nowack, in criticising Stade's analysis, remarks that in iv. 11-13 there is no room for the conception of a Messiah since the total destruction of the Gentiles leaves nothing to be done by Him. And v. 2 is out of agreement with iv. 11-13 because in the latter passage no "giving up" is expected. Both difficulties are met in principle by our remarks made above on iv. 11-13. If the perspective here opening up before the prophet is determined by the antithesis between Jehovah and the Gentiles, and has its historical background in the Sennacherib-crisis, we at once understand why the idea of Israel's surrender to the nations and the figure of the Messiah find no place in it. But, although in the nearer fulfillment of this prophecy the Messiah plays no part and Zion appears as yet untouched by the profaning hands of the Gentiles, this by no means excludes its also finding a fulfillment in later developments which presuppose the deliverance from exile and the appearance of the Messiah on the stage of history.

Chap. v. 4, 5, are said to be inconsistent with the preceding context because they make no mention of the Messiah, whose place is here rather taken by the "seven shepherds" and the "eight principal men." Stade, who raises this difficulty, has himself suggested the solution, viz., that these verses do not describe

* Cf. Volz, p. 67, who admits that an indirect polemic against the Davidic nobility must be implied. Elhorst thinks he has discovered a way in which the identification of Bethlehem and Ephrathah may be postexilic and yet Micah the author of v. i. Reading Beth-Ephrath, he suggests that David's family, though residing in Bethlehem, came originally from Ephrath, near Ramah, and was for this reason called Ephrathite. A postexilic copyist then would have made the mistake of identifying Bethlehem and Ephrath. The difficulty about this is that Micah, a Judæan prophet, would hardly have designated the royal house by a name recalling its Ephraimite descent. Cf. Kusters, *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1893, p. 263.

the beginning of the Messianic period, but an episode during its course. The shepherds and principal men are servants of the Messiah. This simple explanation cannot be discredited by forcing the meaning of the words, "and this shall be peace," as if these of necessity must introduce a description of the opening of the Messianic era, which description would then differ from the one contained in vers. 1-3.

Next we briefly notice the contradiction discovered between v. 6 and iv. 11-13, in so far as in the former passage a mere remnant of Jacob is saved out of the judgment, whereas in the latter the daughter of Zion as such is promised victory over the many nations assembled against her. By abandoning the genuineness of v. 1-8, and placing it on a line with iv. 11-13, Nowack has himself implicitly acknowledged that the inconsistency is merely apparent. The late writer to whom he attributes vers. 6-8 knew, of course, that the daughter of Zion, who was in the future to destroy the many nations, consisted of the remnant of preëxilic Israel.

A still further lack of agreement has been pointed out between v. 6-8 and iv. 11-13, on the one hand, and the universalistic prophecy, iv. 1-5, on the other hand. The first two passages breathe a spirit of hostility against the Gentiles, whereas the last is inspired by a sentiment of peace and good-will toward all nations. If the point of comparison in the figure of the dew and rain in v. 7 be the refreshing and fructifying influence to be exerted by the remnant of Jacob upon the peoples, the writer must have thought that these two attitudes could go together, since they are placed in close proximity here as represented by the figures of ver. 7 and ver. 8 respectively. If the other exegesis be adopted, which finds the points of comparison with the dew and the rain in the prospective numerousness of the remnant and their sole dependence on Jehovah, even then ver. 8 does not exclude the ultimate realization of the ideal expressed in iv. 1-4.

The last point in chap. v we must touch upon concerns vers. 9-14. These verses contain a prediction that the objects of idolatry and the implements of war will be taken away from Israel. It is conceded by Stade, Wellhausen and others that as a whole the prophecy fits into the age of Micah. But it has become generally accepted among adherents of the modern view that the prophetic opposition to the Mazzeboth and Asherim *in particular* dates from the time of the Deuteronomic reform. The Isaianic reform under Hezekiah, so far as it is historical, aimed only at the abolishment of images. Josiah in his day still found an Asherah in the temple at Jerusalem as well as at Bethel. The fight against Mazzeboth and Asherim did not begin until the Bamoth were made an object of attack. From Hosea iii. 4, x. 1, 2,

Isa. xix. 19, Stade endeavors to show that in the estimation of the early prophets Mazzebah is — altar, no better, no worse. Isa. xvii. 8 proves nothing to the contrary, because the style is unworthy of Isaiah and the contents do not fit into the circle of his ideas. The manner in which the author of Micah v. 9–14 throws together into an indefinite category “graven images,” and “Mazzeboth,” and “Asherim,” betrays that he does not speak from experience, whereas the author of Deut. xii. 3 still stands sufficiently near the old cultus to distinguish sharply between its various objects.

Those who are at one with Stade in their general conception of the origin of the Deuteronomic movement, and would yet uphold the genuineness of our passage, have replied to this reasoning that the principles of reform enforced in that movement must have had a previous history and found earlier isolated defendants, and that nothing hinders us from counting Micah among the number of these. Although Isaiah did not oppose the Mazzeboth and Asherim, Micah shows himself independent enough of his great contemporary to warrant the surmise that in this point he may have differed from or advanced beyond him.* But this reply does not meet the real difficulty. As Stade has been quick in pointing out, the condemnation of Asherim and Mazzeboth in chap. v. 12 is not introduced as something new and unprecedented. The passage becomes intelligible only if we can place back of it a long polemic against the objects whose extermination is here predicted. This leaves us no other choice than either, with Stade, to find this earlier opposition in the Deuteronomic movement, which means to deny the passage to Micah; or to assume it in the prophetic labors of the men who preceded Micah, which will mean that the prophetic attitude on this point was from the very first in harmony with the principles of the reform under King Josiah. The passages in the early prophets which mention the Mazzeboth are Hosca iii. 4, x. 1, 2, Isa. xix. 19. The Asherim occur in Isa. xvii. 8 only where they are named in conjunction with the Hammanim or “sun-pillars.” Besides this a reference to the Asherah has been found in Hosca iv. 12, where Jehovah complains that His people ask counsel at their stock and that their staff declareth unto them, since the spirit of whoredom has caused them to err, and they have gone awhoring from under their God.† Of these

* Nowack, *Z. A. W.*, 1884, p. 284; Elhorst, p. 52.

† Pont finds in Mic. i. 7 an allusion to the immoral significance of the Asherim. This possible allusion would become an explicit reference if, with Wellhausen, we were to change אֲשֵׁרִיָּה in אֲהַנְיָה, a conjecture which has much in its favor; the term “hires” appears strange between “graven images” and “idols,” and the “burning with fire” goes well with the Asherim which it is proposed to substitute.

we must leave out of account Isa. xvii. 8, since this verse is considered by recent critics an interpolation. That in Hosea iv. 12 יָוָה alludes to the Asherah is not impossible, but far from certain.* From Hosea iii. 4 many writers have inferred that Hosea took no *special* offense at the Mazzebah because it is here placed on a line with sacrifice as such, and with the two other pairs of king-prince, ephod-teraphim. That this conclusion is unwarranted appears from the fact that Hosea elsewhere openly condemns all images, and must, therefore, have opposed the teraphim on this principle alone if for no other reason. The sense of the passage is simply that all the representative forms of civil and religious life will be taken away from Israel. Whether these forms are in the prophet's view legitimate or illegitimate is not stated. In an indirect way we learn, however, that they must have been partly of the one, partly of the other category. For ver. 4 gives in literal terms what ver. 3 expresses in terms of the figure. Now the figure implies two thoughts: (1) That Hosea's wife shall be separated from her lovers; (2) that she shall be separated from her legal husband also. If ver. 5 is to correspond to this, the same two elements must be included in it, and the prophet must have conceived of some of the things mentioned as illegal. Of course it is not possible to go further and prove from the words themselves that the Mazzeboth in particular fell under his disapproval. Chap. x. 1, 2, speak of the Mazzeboth after a condemnatory fashion, and place them on a level with the many altars. It is significant that not the multiplication of the Mazzeboth, but the building of them as such is reflected upon. And inasmuch as the multiplication of the places of worship was certainly connected by the prophet with the paganizing influences at work among Israel, this passage rather favors the conclusion that he considered the Mazzebah likewise an adjunct of the Baal-cult and for that reason opposed it.†

The total silence of the early prophets on the Asherah (apart from Isa. xvii. 8 and our passage in Micah) deserves attention. That we have no right to construe it as implying approval or indifference is plain. Otherwise Jeremiah might with equal warrant be quoted in favor of the Asherah, since he never names it explicitly and the Mazzebah only in chap. xliii. 13.‡ The probable explanation is that the Asherim were so closely associated

* Kusters, *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1893, p. 267, suggests that the reference may be to the use of Teraphim, and that the Asherah cannot be meant, because the latter had nothing to do with the giving of oracles.

† By making Isa. xix. 19 late, the critics admit that the interpretation of the Mazzebah here as a symbolic stone must be allowed.

‡ Jer. ii. 27 is no more decisive or explicit than Hos. iv. 12.

with pronounced and avowed idolatry as to require no special condemnation beyond that included in the general polemic against the latter. Stade has indeed objected to this on the ground that by several passages the connection of the Asherah with Jehovah worship is placed beyond question, and has even gone to the length of denying the existence of a goddess Asherah, with whom the wooden Ashera would have been associated, except in the imagination of the later writers.* But this last position has been made untenable by the testimony of the El-Amarna letters. A goddess Asherah more or less closely identified with Ashtoreth did exist.† Of course this does not disprove that the ignorant idolatrous mass of the people also brought the wooden Asherah into connection with Jehovah, but it makes it at least highly probable that the prophets whose perception of the specifically pagan element in the popular cult was unquestionably keen would have been aware of the derivation of the symbol from the goddess, and consequently opposed it. Hosea's opposition to the use of the title Baal for Jehovah furnishes an analogy.‡

The contents of vers. 9-14, apart from the reference to the Mazzeboth and Asherim, fit better into the eighth century than into any other period. This is true especially of the announcement that the horses and chariots and fortified cities, *i. e.*, all warlike implements, will be done away with. The condemnation of witchcraft and images also has its most striking parallels in Isaiah. It is the recognition of this by such critics as Kuenen and Wellhausen that has given rise to the double-faced hypothesis that vers. 9-14 in their original form are from Micah and that the Deuteronomistic condemnation of Mazzeboth and Asherim was introduced by a later redactor of the piece. This proves that in all other respects the passage bears the impress of the time of Micah. No literary signs of redaction whatever are discoverable. This

* *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, i, pp. 184, 460. Cf. also Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, p. 248.

† Cf. Wolf-Baudissin in Herzog's *Real Encyclopædie*, 3d ed., 2d Vol., Art. "Astarte" and "Aschera," p. 158; Tiele, *Geschiedenis van den Godsdienst in de Oudheid*, i, p. 286.

‡ The critics have all the more reason to take the view given above regarding the prophetic silence on the Asherah, since their J and E of the Hexateuch, assigned to this same period, are supposed to have changed the Mazzeboth into memorial stones for the purpose of obliterating their original meaning. Since no such attempt is made in reference to the Asherim, J and E must have either thought that these were more innocent than the Mazzeboth, which is impossible to believe, or must have thought them too inherently pagan to admit of a similar idealization. If then the silence of J and E is to be explained from the utter disapproval of the Asherah, why cannot the silence of the early prophets be construed in the same manner?

part of the hypothesis simply serves to get rid of an obnoxious element in an otherwise unobjectionable context.

We must now briefly review the difficulties found by the critics in the concatenation of the various pieces that compose chaps. iv and v. The first seam is located in iv. 5, where the כ' causes difficulty. Stade thinks the connection effected by means of it presupposes in the writer's mind the reflection that the foregoing prophecy had not been fulfilled. That is to say, if we understand Stade aright, the sentence introduced by כ' was intended by a later writer to give the reason for the *unexpressed* thought of that writer that vers. 1-4 had not yet come true. Whatever may be thought of the possibility of this exegesis, it is certainly not the most plausible one. If we place the emphasis of the verse on the last words, "for ever and ever," it will be seen to affirm the truth of the foregoing prophecy and to yield a perfectly natural connection. This promise will surely be fulfilled, because Israel is the only nation which will not need to change its God.* After this statement has brought the prediction of universalism to a fitting close, the transition to vers. 6-8 as to another aspect of the eschatological hope is easily effected by the general term, "in that day." In regard to vers. 9-14 *seq.* everything depends on the interpretation of the three "nows" in vers. 9, 11, 14. Undoubtedly the first, עתה, marks a contrast to the opening phrase of both ver. 7 and ver. 6, inasmuch as the prophet returns from the remote future to the nearer present. This contrast, however, need not be pressed to the extent of limiting the עתה to the writer's historical present; it rather comprehends everything this side of the coming age. Why עתה should not be allowed this wider sense when by common consent of the critics the phrase ביום ההוא is indefinitely used of the whole eschatological future, is hard to see. The only question is whether Micah could so use it, and this depends ultimately on whether the conception of the Messianic age had made a sufficiently deep impression on his mind to compress all preceding developments for his perspective into one scene. On this view of the matter the three visions relating to the pre-Messianic history stand between the two eschatological prophecies of iv. 1-8 and v. 1-8. The grouping of the three is not determined by chronological reasons, but by the natural sequence of the main thoughts embodied in each. The promise of the restoration of the kingdom to the daughter of Jerusalem suggests the previous departure of this kingdom, the ensuing exile and the deliverance from Babylon. By force of contrast the prospect of the indignity and pain to be inflicted by the world-power upon

* Cf. Kuenen in *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, vi, 290.

the daughter of Zion calls up the vision of vers. 11-13, where Zion appears victorious over the nations. In the third scene, iv. 14-v. 8, the same contrast between humiliation and victory is worked out with special reference to the present ruler and the future Messianic king, and thus the discourse returns to its point of departure in iv. 8, but enriched by the personal Messianic element. Nobody will deny that this is at least a plausible development of thought. That the material might have been distributed as well, or perhaps to better advantage from the point of view of logic or historical sequence, does not prove that its present arrangement would have been unnatural or impossible to the prophet. To this must be added that there are several recurring phrases and constructions which closely link together the various pieces. Foremost among these is the repetition of the words, "many nations," which has already induced Stade to ascribe the three pieces in which these occur to one author. Further, "Mount Zion," or "Zion," is common to iv. 1-5 and iv. 6, 7, and "the daughter of Zion" to iv. 8, 10, 13; *עֲלֶיךָ* in iv. 11 points back to *בֵּת צִיּוֹן* in ver. 10; *וְאַתָּה* opens the sentence in both iv. 8 and v. 1; the address, "be in pain and labor," in iv. 10, is entirely like that in ver. 13, "arise and thresh;" the phrase, "the name of Jehovah," appears in iv. 5 and v. 3; *מִשָּׁל* in iv. 14 points back to *מִמְשָׁלָה* in iv. 8; the coincidence in the figure of the shepherd between iv. 6 and v. 3 has been already commented upon. In ordinary cases these resemblances would be considered sufficient to make out a strong case for unity of authorship. As it is, the critics have to explain them on the assumption that the later writer or writers purposely assimilated their work to the older material they wished to enlarge upon. But, if in a matter of form they exercised such care, the question becomes all the more pertinent why in the more weighty matter of the harmony and connection of thought they could be so artless and careless as the critical view implies. It is much easier to believe that the prophet himself used this freedom in the grouping of his scenes than that the later redactors or interpolators, who professedly wrote in order to harmonize his work with extraneous data either of history or of hope, should have failed to obliterate as much as possible all discrepancies of representation.*

* This point has been rightly insisted upon by Elhorst, pp. 46-48, 54-58. Elhorst has also shown that neither Stade nor Kuenen succeeds in making out a much better continuity of thought than exists at present. Stade's iv. 1-4, 11-v. 3, 6-14 is hardly more rational than the text as it stands. Especially *עֲלֶיךָ* and v. 2 cause difficulty on Stade's view. Kuenen's hypothesis does not explain what was the motive for the insertion of iv. 6-8, and the removal of these verses leaves the subject addressed in ver. 9 in doubt. Nowack finally and Volz do not make clear

In chap. v the second verse is the only one which requires comment in this connection. Volz believes that it breaks the continuity between ver. 1 and ver. 3, and must have been inserted at an even later date than the already postexilic piece, v. 1, 3, 4^a. His reasons for this opinion are the following. While Jehovah is the speaking person in ver. 1, He is spoken of in the third person in ver. 2. Or, if ל' be referred to the writer, the incongruence remains between the subjects of יצא and יתנם. Further, according to ver. 2, the Messiah is born in exile, whilst according to ver. 1 He comes out of Bethlehem. Ver. 2 does not place the figure of the Messiah sufficiently in the foreground. The writer of vers. 1 and 3 does not look forward to a long period of oppression by the Gentiles. לכן in ver. 2 is meaningless. Neither the suffix in תנם nor the conception of the ילדה finds explanation in the context. The interpolation rests on Isa. vii. 14, and perhaps on Isa. ix. 5, and is due to a desire to account for the delay in the Messiah's appearance.

The first of these reasons may be disposed of by a reference to such passages as Isa. iii. 1, 4; Micah vii. 18-20. Ver. 2 does not state anything about the Messiah's birthplace, but simply makes His birth, or rather activity, the *terminus ad quem* of Israel's surrender to the Gentiles. The interpolator could not have possibly meant to say with ver. 1 before him that the Messiah was to be born in exile. If ver. 2 is a mere definition of time, we do not expect it to dwell on the figure or work of the Messiah. That the writer of vers. 1, 3, knows nothing of a period of "giving up" is indicated by nothing. לכן makes perfect connection: it states as the reason why the Messiah must come from Bethlehem that the present royal state of the house of David shall come to an end through exile. Finally יתנם is without antecedent only if vers. 1-3 are violently torn out of the context and placed by themselves. In the text as it stands the antecedent is given in iv. 14, 11, 9, etc. That the verse presupposes Isa. vii. 14 or ix. 5 is no argument against its genuineness for those who maintain the Isaianic origin of these passages.

Chap. v. 9-14 have been objected to on the ground that, while from their present position the import of these verses ought to be promissory, it is, in point of fact, of a minatory character, it not being said that Israel will voluntarily relinquish the objects specified, but that Jehovah will exterminate them.* This over-

how the words which they tentatively concede to Micah could have existed in or been reduced to their isolated fragmentary state, nor do they make intelligible the process through which this nucleus passed so as to attain its present size and composition.

* Kusters, *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1893, p. 265.

looks that in ver. 13 the voluntary relinquishment on Israel's part is implied in the words, "thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands." The ideal Israel is here addressed, who over against the wicked mass would consider even the violent extirpation of idolatry and of the implements of war a blessing. It should also be noticed that according to ver. 15 this act will secure Israel's safety in the judgment which is to come upon the nations.

The last section of Micah's book in which we are interested, chap. vii. 7-20, does not call for such extended discussion as it seemed necessary to give to chaps. iv and v. Although the promise in this case follows quite abruptly on the denunciation of vii. 1-6, yet it is carefully adjusted to the latter by the statement that a severe punishment must precede its fulfillment. Only over against "the enemy," the world-power, Israel is righteous. Now the question is, whether the standpoint of the speaker is the exile of reality or the exile anticipated in imagination. It should be observed that the writer does not speak for his own person, but in the name of the people. This self-identification with Israel may have made it easier for him to forget his actual present and to enter into the spirit of a future situation. So far as we know, nothing has been pointed out inconsistent with this interpretation of the piece. On the other hand, the critical exegesis has been quite uncertain in defining the situation of the writer. At first it was thought that the exile satisfied all the requirements. But the omission of all reference to Babylon in ver. 12 is decidedly unfavorable to this view. Hence, and in order to explain the broad contrast between Zion and the Gentile world, it has been found necessary to bring the prophecy down to the postexilic period.* But here again ver. 11 forbids to go beyond the time of Nehemiah when the walls were built. Was it as natural at that time to predict the return of the exiled people in the terms of ver. 12 as it was from the standpoint of Micah? The same applies to the prayer for the restitution of Bashan and Gilead in ver. 14, inasmuch as the depopulation of these regions must have been fresh in the memory of the prophet. The words, "as in the days of old," explain themselves from the fact that not so much the possession, as the passing of these regions into the possession of Israel, is uppermost in the writer's mind. Cf. ver. 15, "as in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of Egypt," etc. Nowack renders ver. 14^b, "which dwell solitarily in the wilderness in the midst of fruitful fields," and thinks that this proves the writer's standpoint to be postexilic, because Israel is here represented as returned from exile but in possession only of the waste

* Cf. Giesebrecht, *Beiträge zur Jesai-Kritik*, p. 217.

and infertile places, whilst all around the fruitful regions are occupied by the enemies. Apart, however, from the uncertainty of the exegesis, there is evidently a progress in the discourse between ver. 12, which predicts the return, and 14, which pictures the situation in which the returned exiles will find themselves. This situation is explained by ver. 13: when they come they will find the land desolate; hence the further prayer that the ancient conditions may be restored. Thus it is unnecessary to give ארץ in ver. 13 the sense of "earth," a rendering which makes the statement come in very abruptly.*

The closing part of Micah's book, if its genuineness can be vindicated, will be seen to have an important bearing on the origin of the monotheism of the early prophets. According to the critical hypothesis, in its most widely accepted form, the monotheistic tendency of these writers was a correlate of the conviction that Jehovah would deal with Israel on the principle of strict justice. Specifically *as* the God of righteousness pure and simple, Jehovah appeared unique among the gods, therefore the only God. Micah vii. 18-20 formally reverses this reasoning. Jehovah is unique not because He refuses but because He delights to exercise grace: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, and have compassion upon us; He will tread our iniquities under foot: and will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

PRINCETON.

GEERHARDUS VOS.

* Ryssel has already called attention to the following points of contact between vii. 7-20 and the other parts of the book: מִי עוֹלָם in ver. 14 cf. v. 1; מִי עוֹלָם in ver. 13 cf. ii. 7 and iii. 4; the contrast between Zion and the world is conceived of in vii. 10 after the same manner as in iv. 11-13; בּוֹא עַר, ver. 12 cf. iv. 8^b; the shepherd-figure of vii. 14 recalls iv. 6 and v. 3. Little can be built on the play in ver. 18 on the name of Micah ("who is a God like unto Thee?"). The critics might make use of this to explain how the later prophecy came to be put on the name of Micah.