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ART. III.—CHAPTERS I. AND II. OF THE "POLY-
CHROME ISAIAH."

THE appearance last year (1898) of the "Polychrome Isaiah" in England must have given a shock to many lovers of the Bible. They could not but ask, "If this is the result of 'the ripest biblical scholarship of the present generation,' what will the next generation do?" Only a fraction of Isaiah is left as belonging to him; will that fraction be taken away too? Chapters and paragraphs are mixed up in quite a different order from that of the old Bible; yet the author thinks he has not done enough, and excuses himself that "the ancient collection of Isaiah's prophecies have not been entirely broken up and their contents redistributed" (p. 209, ll. 29, 31). Hence, even the dates which are given by the author to some portions do not follow one another in a strictly chronological order; and the author says, "A strict adherence to the chronological principle would not have been in the interest of the reader" (p. 209, ll. 31, 32). It would have been interesting if he had given some reasons not for what he left unchanged, but for the changes he did introduce, and for calling so many parts "post-exilic," and declaring so many others "imperfect" or "not in their original state;" but scarcely any are given. I purpose, therefore, to examine the first two chapters of Isaiah as a test, hoping to show that the result of a more careful study will not be further to diminish or confuse Isaiah, but rather to restore what was condemned before, and that the true chronological principle is not altogether guess-work, but is founded upon history which can be traced for nearly every part of Isaiah, and agrees well with the order of the Bible, and not of the Polychrome.

CHAPTER I.

The first alteration that meets us in the Polychrome, and for which no reason is given, is its pushing chap. i. out of its place to be the sixteenth prophecy, calling it "Preaching of repentance during Sennacherib's invasion before the siege of Jerusalem (701 B.C.)," and making chap. ii. 5, etc., prophecy 1, dated "soon after 740 B.C." The latter would be in the time of Uzziah, after the conquest of Arpad by the Assyrians. But the first time we find God commanding Isaiah to write anything is in the reign of Ahaz, as recorded in chap. viii. 1. The Syro-Ephraimitic confederacy was then threatening a second invasion of Judah, when Ahaz conceived the plan of inviting the Assyrians to his help. Isaiah wished to prevent this unholy alliance with Assyria, and had an interview about

it with Ahaz. But this interview only caused him great disappointment and grief. Then, I say, God told him to write a great roll "with a human pen concerning Speed spoil, haste booty." It would weary the reader of this if I tried to dispute other men's interpretations of these words. I therefore only say that the natural meaning of them is that God commanded Isaiah to write a large volume in human language upon the subject of "Speed spoil, haste booty." On the face of it, this information of Isaiah is evidently of the nature of an apology made with a feeling of diffidence as to his writing so large a volume for the first time at the command of God. What, however, was the beginning of this great "speed spoil, haste booty" volume? The Polychrome thrusts chap. i. away to Sennacherib's invasion. The argument in the author's mind probably turns upon the description of the desolation of the country. But does not this description fit at least equally well to the time I mentioned, *i.e.*, the time after the first invasion of Judah by the northern confederacy? The country could never have been more desolate and sick from head to foot than when 120,000 were killed in one day, and 200,000 women and children were taken captive (2 Chron. xxviii. 6-8). But the reason which compels us more particularly to consider this the fittest time for chap. i. is because it was the time after Isaiah's grievous interview with Ahaz about the Assyrian alliance; and this chapter, which contains evidences that it was written with a heart still burning with vexation and grief, may, from the nature of its contents, be called a lecture to those citizens who supported Ahaz in his mad policy of inviting the Assyrians. Then chap. ii., also, does not belong to the time of Uzziah, or "soon after 740 B.C.," as stated in the Polychrome, but follows suitably chap. i. For it is addressed to the Ephraimitic kingdom, pleading with them to desist from the second invasion of Judah which they were threatening, and which was the cause of the intended *mésalliance* with Assyria.

Another direction in which the author of the Polychrome thinks he has not done enough to discredit Isaiah is in the way of glosses. For he even begs the student (p. 209, ll. 32-34) not to "be startled if he does not find all insertions which have the nature of glosses relegated to the foot of the page." But I humbly think that very many Hebrew students will agree with me that it is the other way. We are not startled at the small number of footnotes, but at the great number of them, which we think altogether unnecessary. We find here, in what is less than a chapter, that there are no less than five instances of sentences and words treated in this manner, and we can see no reason for any of them.

The first instance is particularly unfortunate. In ver. 7 not only are the words "and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers" omitted from the text, but also in the footnote they are altered into "And it is desolate, like the ruined land of Sodom." But, in the first place, the words are not a gloss at all. If they are only literally translated and properly understood, they form an integral part of and give an impressive finish to the preceding description of the state of the country. Isaiah says, "And the desolation is as the overthrow of strangers," meaning that though Judah till then has not suffered by war so much as other nations have, especially at the hands of the Assyrians, now, after the first invasion by the northern confederacy, its desolation is very much like theirs. In the next place, it is easily seen that the correction by the addition of the word "Sodom," to which the author was tempted because the original word for "overthrow" is always connected with Sodom, not only makes no improvement here, but also spoils the sense.

The next instance is in vers. 16, 17 of the two sentences, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." I confess I know no cogent reason why these sentences must be retained, neither am I critical enough to see any reason for their removal from the text.

The third instance is in ver. 21, of the clause "and now full of murderers." But the mistake began with translating the preceding sentence in the past tense, when it is in the Hebrew in the future. The two parts together should be "Righteousness should dwell in it, but now there are murderers." The prophet laments that the city which was betrothed to Almighty God is committing adultery by courting foreign allies who are murderers.

The fourth instance is that of the words "weakened with water," in ver. 22. But here other words, "a thick juice" are substituted in the text. Again I plead not being critical enough to see any reason for these changes.

The last instance is that of the words "JHVH Sabaoth," in ver. 24.

Other changes in this chapter are, first, taking over the last two words from ver. 12 to ver. 13. This is right enough. But the translation should be, "Treading My courts, bring no more vain gift offerings. It is incense of abomination unto Me." The prophet seems to rebuke a custom then prevailing of bringing cheap gift offerings in order to have an opportunity of promenading the temple courts. It seems to have been the same custom which the prophet Jeremiah in later years so well used as an opportunity for publishing his prophecies among the people (Jer. xxxvi. 5, etc.).

In ver. 23 two sentences are transposed. I see no valid reason for it.

Vers. 27, 28 are called a "Post-Exilic Appendix." Why, again?

Vers. 29, 31 are torn away from this chapter, and put down as "a fragment" of the eighth prophecy, entitled "Against tree worship." But the prophet says nothing about worshipping trees. He speaks of trees and gardens figuratively for the Assyrians and the Assyrian country, and prophecies of the people's future repentance at having invited the Assyrians to their help. Ver. 29 should be translated thus :

"For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired,
And which ye shall dig out of the gardens which ye have chosen."

Such a prophecy cannot well be separated from the preceding part of the chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The prophecy vers. 2-4 is rightly called a "Messianic Appendix." But it is also marked "Post-Exilic," and is said probably to have "exactly filled up the space taken by a passage of Isaiah's prophecy which had become illegible" (Note 4, p. 147). Then, apparently because the first verse ascribes this Appendix to Isaiah, this verse is removed from its proper place to the next paragraph, and is coloured light blue as a mark that it also does not belong to Isaiah, but to a redactor. Now, in the first place, the story about the illegible passage does not hold, because the last three verses, as we have seen, are not a "fragment" of a prophecy "against tree worship," but a suitable finish to the preceding address. Then, it is a great mistake to attach this first verse to the next paragraph after the Appendix. For in that paragraph the prophet begins to address the ten tribes, both pleading with them to desist from invading Judah again, and warning them of the coming of the day of the Lord; whilst this verse speaks distinctly of a vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It seems hardly credible that a redactor would make such a mistake, and that a post-Exilic Jew would correct it in this novel way of inserting after the verse a prophecy which is concerning Judah and Jerusalem, but which belonged to another writer, not to Isaiah.

The original place, then, of this verse must be before this prophecy; and if it was not written by Isaiah originally with the usual motive of testifying that he had this vision from God, or that he had it concerning Judah and Jerusalem, there must have been a special motive for writing it afterwards, which was to testify that Isaiah was the first writer of it, and no one else. For this prophecy must have appealed to the

people's mind with wonder and joy, and must have been much pondered and talked about, till it became as familiar as an oft-repeated creed, and was quoted and rehearsed on all hands, even as Micah did (Mic. iv. 1-3), without preface or apology, so that its origin was nearly forgotten. Then, I say, this verse must have been written in order to recall to the minds of all that Isaiah alone was the first author of it. But, then, even for that purpose it is not necessary to suppose a redactor to have done it. Isaiah himself might have inserted this verse at a revision.

We have, then, further to prove that the prophecy vers. 2-4 is what the first verse testifies concerning it, viz., not post-Exilic, or Micah's, but Isaiah's own. Micah himself shows clearly in his fifth verse that his own thoughts were not in harmony with it, or that he quotes it with popular additions which did not originally belong to it, and therefore he was not the original author of it; whilst Isaiah proves his own paternity by kindred prophecies, as chap. xix. 18-25.

But there are other internal evidences in the prophecy itself that it is Isaiah's. First it contains a vision of the elevation of Mount Zion. Though, concerning this vision, the Polychrome (p. 147, ll. 40, 41) says, "This strange idea (the physical elevation of Jerusalem) is only Exilic and post-Exilic," it gives only two references — Ezek. xl. 2, and Zech. xiv. 10—and of these references the first says only that the Lord brought the prophet in a vision to the land of Israel, and led him to a very high mountain. This, therefore, has no elevation of Jerusalem in it at all. But even in the second reference the idea is not quite the same. For the depression of the country round about Jerusalem is a different thing from the elevation of the mountain of the Lord, *i.e.*, Mount Zion. Is, then, the mere similitude of a thought found in the books of an earlier writer, and of one or two later ones, a good reason for saying that it can only belong to the time of the later writers, and therefore must be an interpolation in the earlier one? To maintain this, I humbly think, is to maintain a much stranger notion than that Isaiah, who in one vision (chap. vi.) saw the temple so exalted and amplified that it contained the throne of God and the hosts of heaven, should see in another vision Mount Zion elevated above the surrounding hills, which undoubtedly meant to be figurative of its spiritual exaltation. Besides, the authenticity of this verse ought to be sufficiently defended by its being both a very apposite vision, as it were, of the other side of the picture of chap. i. 11, etc., and a congruous preliminary to the next prediction, the conversion of Gentile nations to Jehovah; and also by its being suitable for the time when

King Ahaz sacrificed on high places and hills in preference to Mount Zion.

As regards the next prediction, the conversion of Gentiles, the Polychrome again says (p. 147, ll. 42-44), "From Jeremiah's time onwards the religious future of the nations preoccupied the minds of the prophetic writers." But I have already alluded to cognate prophecies in Isaiah. Should not these prophecies prove that his mind, too, was preoccupied with the same subject, perhaps more than the minds of the later prophets? I may further say that for this prediction, too, there could be no more suitable time or place than the time of Isaiah, and immediately after the last chapter. It was the time when the servants of God, and especially Isaiah himself, felt themselves compelled to resist Gentile alliances; and it is the place in the book after a notable instance of Isaiah's opposing such an alliance. Here, therefore, he suitably adds this prediction, opposing that unholy alliance, as it were, with a future one of a much better kind—an alliance not for war and destruction, but for brotherly love and the common worship of the great Jehovah.

Then there is the second part of this Appendix, predicting that war shall be abolished among nations. Can this be post-Exilic at all? What Jew in post-Exilic times was likely to care whether the Gentile nations were destroying one another or not? If he had written a prophecy about war at all, it would have been to the effect that the Jews should not be harassed by war any more, or, rather, that the Jews should conquer the nations. Therefore, again, only in Isaiah's time, and especially by Isaiah himself—who in a great part of his writings manifests much sympathy with Gentile nations, when they were ruined and destroyed by the Assyrians—was such a prophecy likely to be written.

Vers. 5 and 6^a.—The Polychrome, with regard to these one and a half verses, is ambiguous. In the text it puts them together in light blue, as belonging to a redactor or editor, and in Note 4, p. 147, it speaks of a "complete change of subjects in ver. 6," and connects ver. 5 with the preceding prophecy, saying, "Probably vers. 2-5 exactly filled up the space taken by a passage of Isaiah's prophecy which had become illegible." But we have proved already that the prophecy belongs to Isaiah only, and is not post-Exilic; and, besides, ver. 5 does not belong to the preceding but to the following.

Now, the author not only marked these one and a half verses as belonging to an editor, and not to Isaiah, and speaks in the above note of "the awkward transitions in ver. 5 and the opening words of ver. 6," and says in another note (Note 2,

p. 132) that "the opening words of ver. 6 (due, like ver. 5, to the editor) . . . take the place of something which has been lost. For the prophecy or poem which follows is certainly imperfect. Probably it is made up of more than one poem, relative to JHVH's judgment upon all human glory, especially that won so recently by Uzziah (778-736) for the kingdom of Judah"—but he also inserts the name of JHVH in ver. 6^a as the person addressed. But all these statements and manipulations of the text are mistakes caused by the faulty translation of the passage. In the present translation there certainly are "awkward transitions" both here and further on, and even the insertion of JHVH does not improve them, but rather confirms them. But let the translation be mended, and the awkward transitions will disappear; and it will be seen that Isaiah does not address the Lord in 6^a, or even in ver. 9^b, but all through, from ver. 5 to the end of this second composition, the "House of Jacob," *i.e.*, the ten tribes, concerning their hostility to Judah in the time of Ahaz. In ver. 6^a he says: "For thou, O house of Jacob, hast forsaken thy people," *i.e.*, they have forsaken Judah, and joined themselves to Syria.

Ver. 6^b.—No fault can be found with the rendering, "And with foreigners they strike hands in agreement." Only it should be understood that the foreigners were the Assyrians.

Ver. 7.—"Israel" is not in the original, and has no right to be in the translation. Isaiah, like the prophet Oded (2 Chron. xxviii. 9), whilst pleading for Judah, has also much to blame them for. He began to do so in ver. 6, and he continues it in vers. 7, 8; and the things he charged them with are also alluded to by other prophets, as Hos. 1. 7; Mic. v. 9.

Ver. 9^a.—Still continuing to speak about Judah, the prophet confesses their entire humiliation. Therefore, the word "mankind," which the Polychrome puts for "man," is not suitable.

Vers. 9^b, 10.—Isaiah does not say, "And thou canst not forgive them. Go into the clefts of the rock," etc. But he adjures the Israelites, "By the fear of the Lord and by the glory of His Majesty," not to make Judah's condition still worse, or, in Isaiah's own words, not to suffer them "to go into the clefts," etc.

Further, ver. 10, when thus understood, does not admit the insertion of the sentence, "When he ariseth," etc. This sentence is right enough in vers. 19 and 21; but here it would only spoil the sense, and break up the connection of the passage.

Ver. 18.—Why is this verse not translated, but marked as a corrupt and unintelligible passage with lacunæ after it? The prophet only says, "And as for the idols, they shall utterly pass away."

Vers. 20-22.—Why are these verses banished to the foot-notes? Isaiah only predicts that, in the day of the Lord, “shall a man cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold which they shall have made for him, that he may bow down to moles and bats when entering into the clefts of the rock.”

The last verse is a final persuasive appeal to the ten tribes to leave poor Judah alone. A similar appeal was probably made to them by the prophet Oded after the first invasion of Judah, with the happy result that they released the captives whom they had taken (2 Chron. xxviii. 9, etc.).

In conclusion, it is impossible within the limits of this paper to notice everything the author of the Polychrome said and did in these two chapters. But, considering the great scholarship that is arrayed against Isaiah, I feel exceedingly grateful to Almighty God that, by His grace and by more correct and more literal translation, I have been able to vindicate the truth so much as I did. I am confident that many unbiassed Hebrew students will deem it enough to show two things. First, it shows that all glosses, interpolations, omissions, corruptions, etc., which this Book of Isaiah is supposed to contain entirely disappear when the Hebrew is properly understood. Secondly, it shows that a good rendering of Isaiah is yet wanting.

E. FLECKER.



ART. IV.—LANDMARKS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

“REMOVE not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set” (Prov. xxii. 28). Thus spoke Solomon the Wise; and we members of the Church of England would do well in these days of change and impulsiveness to attend to his advice, and not hastily allow our Church’s doctrinal landmarks to be thoughtlessly altered or wilfully ignored.

There are few things more remarkable in Scripture than the care with which God fixed bounds and limitations. In all God’s arrangements there is *exactness* and *definiteness*: the alternation of day and night, the succession of the seasons, the Divine restraint over the restless billions of the ever-aggressive sea (Jer. v. 22), His interposition even in the matter of national boundaries, “when he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deut. xxxii. 8), to say nothing of the countless instances when tribal and family boundaries were settled by direct Divine guidance (for the word translated here “bounds” occurs fifty times in the Book of Joshua), all assure us that order and restraint are principles of perpetual obligation and universal utility.