us the basic meaning of the *evangelion* or good news which is, in effect, 'Your God reigns!' and it is no coincidence but a deep inner consistency that the earliest extant evangelist opens the *evangelion* with a combined quotation from Malachi and Deutero-Isaiah.

Other elements in this powerful metaphor of kingship can be studied with reference to the so-called psalms of enthronement which, *pace* Mowinckel, are best read as embodying the insights gained by the dynamic *apologia* of the Exile Prophet. Thus we have the 'new song' or enthronement hymn (Ps. 96:1; Is. 42:10) and the investiture with the royal garments, so close to the *akitu* ceremony, which survives in the metaphors of 'putting on majesty' (Ps. 93:1) or 'putting on strength' (Is. 51:9). There is also the fixing of the decree or destiny of Israel as part of this royal protocol and the giving of abundance and fertility during the new age that is inaugurated—motifs in the prophetic literature that occur so frequently.

What we have seen is only part of the achievement of this very great poet and man of God. For through him there is not only made available for the future a magnificent theological frame of reference within which alone the content and the purpose of the New Testament *evangelion* can be grasped, but it is he too, or at least another closely inspired by him, who fills in the master lines of the saving plan, of which not the glorious Cyrus but the suffering Servant is to be the central figure. Finally, where better can we find an example of a living theological idiom vitalised through contact with ritual with which myth, in the widest sense referred to above, is associated; a myth which epitomises all others in its unformulated plea for redemption? To that plea of natural man, uttered 'with sighs too deep for words' (Rom. 8:26), Christ in his church was to provide the answer.

J. BLENKINSOPP

Melchet Court

THE EMMANUEL PROPHECY AND ITS CONTEXT

The Emmanuel prophecy[1] of Is. 7:14 is reckoned among the most difficult passages of the Old Testament. This in fact seems to be the

[1] J. Coppens gives a comprehensive bibliography as far as 1951 in 'La prophétie de la 'Almah,' *ETL* XXVIII (1952), pp. 648–53, *n.* 2 and again in *L'Attente du Messie*, Bruges 1954, pp. 39–50.

Rafael Criado, S.J. brings this as far as 1959 in *n.* 1 to his article 'El valor de *laken* (Vg. "propter") en Is. 7:14,' *Estudios Ecclesiasticos*, nos. 134–5, i.e. *Miscelanea Biblica Andres Fernandez*, vol. XXXIV (1960), pp. 741–51. To the works listed in these two

only point on which all critics agree. Despite the innumerable studies devoted to it, there is as yet no agreement on who Emmanuel is, or what exactly is the sign offered to the House of David. The extreme difficulty of the passage is evidenced by the fact that of recent years some noted Catholic exegetes have abandoned the traditional direct messianic interpretation, and prefer to see in Emmanuel some contemporary of the prophet Isaias.

The vast majority of the studies that have been made of the prophecy have sought either to identify Emmanuel or determine the nature of the sign. Relatively few have considered the relation of the oracle with its immediate context or have sought full understanding of verse 15. It is intended to do this in a later paper. As a preliminary it may be useful to go over the prophecy itself once more and review some of the more important explanations that have been given to it.

The Occasion of the Prophecy

Juda reached the summit of her prosperity and power under King Ozias, or Azarias as he is also called (c. 783–742 B.C.). The prosperity was to be shortlived. After a period of weakness, during which she lost her grasp on her western vassal states, Assyria's star rose again under Tiglathpileser III (745–727). Soon after gaining a firm control on the internal situation in Assyria the monarch was on the warpath. The years 743–738 saw him by the Mediterranean seaboard repairing the damage that had been done to Assyria's prestige during her period of decadence.

In 743 he was in Palestine and in his inscriptions we find Azarias classed among the kings in rebellion against the power of Assyria.[1] Azarias himself had been leprous since 750 (cf. 2 Kg. 15:5) and his son Jotham was regent. At his father's death Jotham succeeded to the throne of Juda. During the early years of his reign he showed a certain independence of spirit as regards Assyria. By 735, however, he was replaced by his son Ahaz who was avowedly pro-Assyrian.

After the 745–738 campaign Tiglathpileser consolidated his Syrian

[1] cf. William Hallo, 'From Qarqar to Carchemish : Assyria and Israel in the Light of New Discoveries,' *BA* XXIII (1960), p. 48

bibliographies we may add : E. J. Kissane, 'Butter and Honey shall he eat (Is. 7:15),' *L'Ancien Testament et l'Orient*, Louvain 1957, pp. 169–74. P. G. Duncker, 'Ut sciat reprobare malum et eligere bonum (Is. 7:15b),' *Sacra Pagina* I, Gembloux 1959, pp. 408–12 id. 'Our Lady in the Old Testament II,' *Mother of the Redeemer*, ed. K. McNamara, Dublin 1959, pp. 13–29. E. F. Sutcliffe, S.J., 'The Emmanuel Prophecy of Isaias,' *Estudios Ecclesiasticos*, XXXIV (1960), pp. 753–65. S. Porubčan, 'The word 'ot in Isaia 7:14,' *CBQ* XXII (1960), pp. 144–59. E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. I, 2nd ed., Dublin 1961. J. Prado, 'La madre del Emmanuel,' *Sefarad*, XXI (1961), pp. 85–114 (with short bibliography).

victories by forming the cities of northern Phoenicia into an Assyrian province. The statelets that still retained some independence realised that their one chance of survival lay in the formation of an anti-Assyrian alliance. This was the line adopted by Razon the Aramaean king of Damascus and Peqah who then reigned over the northern kingdom of Israel. These two planned to make Juda join their anti-Assyrian league.

Being aware of the pro-Assyrian policy of Ahaz, their idea was to have him replaced by a more tractable puppet king, called in the Bible Ben Tabeel. It is highly probable that this implied the destruction of the reigning Davidic dynasty. According to the methods of the period this would mean the assassination of all male members of the Davidic line. The permanence of the House of David, promised by God through Nathan (2 Sam. 7:13ff.) was at stake.

By 735–734 the united armies of Damascus and Israel were already en route for Jerusalem (Is. 7:1ff.). Ahaz realised the danger and toyed with the idea of invoking Assyrian aid. This line of action ran counter to prophetic teaching and the best interests of the state. Yahweh directed Isaias to take with him his son Shear-Yashub and go to assure Ahaz of divine assistance. The efforts of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition would come to nought : ' It shall not ensue ; it shall not be ' (Is. 7:7). But under pretence of religion Ahaz refused the offer made by Isaias of a sign to confirm the truth of his message. The hypocrisy was too much for Isaias. God's designs were not to be thwarted by human malice. To Ahaz' unbelief the prophet solemnly answered :

> Hear you therefore, O House of David. Is it too little for you that ye weary men, that ye must weary my God also? Therefore, Yahweh Himself will give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat what time he shall know to refuse the evil and do the good. (Is. 7:13–15)

The word ' virgin ' of the above version translates the Hebrew word *ʿalmah*. Hebrew had three cognate words for a young woman : *betûlah*, *naʿarah* and *ʿalmah*. *Betûlah* is the technical word for a virgin in the strict sense and is widely used in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. *Naʿarah*, also a word of widespread use, is the generic name for a young woman, irrespective of marriage or virginity. *ʿAlmah* is a rather rare word, occurring some nine times in all.[1] It is the feminine form of the equally rare word *ʿelem* (1 Sam. 17:26 ; 20:22) which means a young man. *ʿAlmah* of itself does not mean a virgin : to express this idea the Hebrews would use *betûlah*. Neither, of course,

[1] Gen. 24:43 ; Ex. 2:8 ; Is. 7:14 ; Ps. 46:1 ; 68:26 ; Prov. 30:19 ; Cant. 1:3 ; 6:8 ; 1 Chron. 15:20

does the word exclude the idea of virginity. The use of the word in the Old Testament tells us little of the precise signification of *ʿalmah* except that we never find it used to designate a married woman. The most precise meaning that can be given *ʿalmah*, then, is: a young woman of marriageable age, not stated to be married and, consequently, supposed to be a virgin.

The one thing certain about the *ʿalmah* of our present passage is that she is the mother of Emmanuel. The Hebrew text has the definite article *ha-ʿalmah*: 'Behold *the* virgin shall conceive. . . .' As the exact value of the definite article in Hebrew is not easy to determine, little can be proved from its presence in this context. It seems to indicate, however, that the prophet had some particular, or well-known, *ʿalmah* in mind.

It is not easy to say why Isaias chose to use this particular rare word. Scholars vary in their views on the point. It might well be that the prophet was moved to employ it from poetic requirement. Isaias is the greatest poet of the Old Testament. What Driver[1] describes as his 'splendour of diction' is shown among other things by the variety of substantives he uses. At times he appears to be more interested in the synonyms he makes use of than in the precise meaning to be attached to them. In the context of Is. 7:14 alone, for instance, we may note how the 'son' of v. 14 is called 'a boy'—*naʿar* a rather generic term—in v. 16. His native language offered him no great wealth of terms for woman folk. He uses the rather prosaic word *'iššah*, 'woman' but sparingly: he avoids *gebîrah*, 'Queen Mother' completely.[2] Instead of calling his spouse 'wife,' in 8:3, he employs the less apt, but more poetic, word 'prophetess,' though it is generally granted she did not enjoy the gift of prophecy. To Isaias' mind, then, *ha-ʿalmah* of v. 14 may have been no more than a poetic term for Emmanuel's mother.[3]

According to the Massoretic Text it is the *ʿalmah* who gives the name to her son. The LXX understood the radicals of the Hebrew text differently and rendered as 'You (Ahaz ?) shall call his name. . . .' The Isaias text from Qumran has the third person masculine: 'He

[1] S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 5th ed., Edinburgh 1854, p. 215

[2] *Gebîrah* occurs in Is. 24:2 (with meaning of 'mistress') and the variant form *geberet* in 47:5, 7 (again meaning 'mistress'). None of the passages is proto-Isaianic.

[3] If Emmanuel is the Messias, the choice of *'almah* in 7:14 in the above view is a perfect example of the *sensus plenior*. Isaias chose it for prophetic variation; God however through the charism of inspiration moved the prophet to select this particular term because of the fuller meaning He was later to reveal it contained. cf. Leo XIII's description of inspiration: '. . . by supernatural power He so moved and impelled them to write, . . . that the things which He ordered, and those only, they first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words. . . .' *EB* 125.

shall call. . . .' The Vulgate and Syriac versions have 'His name shall be called. . . .' Since there is no mention of a father in the context, and as the oracle is addressed to the House of David, rather than to Ahaz directly, it is better to retain the reading of the MT. The more general custom in the Old Testament, in any case, was for the mother to give the name. cf. Gen. 4:25 ; 30:6 ; Jg. 13:24, etc.

The Meaning of the Name Emmanuel

The *'almah* will call her son 'Emmanuel' which means 'God (is) with us.' This expression 'God (or Yahweh) is (or be) with you' is one of the most widely used phrases in the Bible. It always invokes, or implies, the divine protecting presence and is never used in a comminatory sense. Since for the Hebrews *nomen est omen*, the name Emmanuel, in the present case can only mean that the child who bears it will be a sign of divine protection ; an assurance that God is with His people. In other words, Emmanuel will be, and is intended to be, a Saviour or Redeemer.

Butter and Honey

'Curds and honey' might be a better translation of the Hebrew. The 'curds' are still used in Eastern countries and are called *leben* by the Arabs, *yoghurt* by the Turks. 'Honey and curds' or 'curds and milk' are considered delicacies in other passages of the Bible (Gen. 18:2 ; 2 Sam. 17:29). As delicacies, however, they are served with other foods rather than by themselves. The well-known expression 'a land flowing with milk and honey' or the less common one 'streams flowing with honey and curds' (Job 20:17 ; cf. 29:6) are the classical oriental and biblical way of expressing abundance or fertility of the soil.

Authors are divided as to the meaning borne by 'curds and honey' in Is. 7:15, 21–2. One group, e.g. Feuillet, Gelin, Mowinckel, is convinced that like the common biblical phrase 'flowing with milk and honey,' 'curds and honey' must indicate prosperity. In this case Emmanuel's youth would coincide with a period of abundance rather than with one of desolation. Against this understanding of the text it has been aptly remarked that a land *flowing* with milk and honey is quite a different thing from *eating* curds and honey. Moreover, 'a land flowing with milk and honey' expresses the nomad Israelite's idea of the Promised Land and characterises the country as contrasted with the desert of their wanderings. The settled Israelite saw prosperity not in milk and honey but in abundance of corn and wine and oil (see

2 Kg. 18:32 ; Is. 24:8–11 ; 25:6 ; 36:17 ; Os. 2:8, etc.). In 7:21–2 ' curds and honey ' must imply privation, not prosperity as the whole context of these verses is one of desolation. It is better, then, to understand curds and honey of v. 15 to mean the same, i.e. implying a period of privation during which normal agricultural life will be absent and those remaining on the land will have to be satisfied with the poorer fare of curds and honey.

A third group[1] take ' curds and honey ' to be a divine food. The basis for this theory is that in Mesopotamian religion they were a cultic food. A regular feature of Greek legends, too, is the nourishment of a divine being on the same food. The Greek parallels seem to miss the point. In these we hear of a divine being having been abandoned, found by shepherds and nurtured by them on their humble fare of curds and honey, or some other similar food. The reference, then, is more to the lowly state to which the deity had been reduced than to the divine quality of the food.[2] Rather than weaken the understanding of curds and honey given above, the Greek texts seem to strengthen it.

History of the Interpretation of Is. 7:14 [3]

It is uncertain why the LXX rendered the somewhat ambiguous *'almah* of the MT by *parthenos*, the regular Greek word for ' virgin.' Elsewhere in the LXX—Gen. 23:43 apart—it is translated by *neanis*, ' a young woman ' or ' maiden.' Quite possibly it was believed at the time the LXX was made, in certain circles at least, that the Messias was to be born of a virgin.

The Jews of St Justin's day believed Emmanuel was Ezechias, son and successor of Ahaz. It appears that certain Christian scholars of St Jerome's age taught that he was none other than Maher-shalal-hash-baz, the second son of Isaias.[4] Christian tradition in general, however, has been universal and constant in affirming that Is. 7:14 is a direct prophecy of the virginal birth of Christ. Those who taught otherwise were very much the exception. Andrew of St Victor (d. 1175) defended the Jewish understanding of the text but remained without a following. In 1718 Calmet, though holding that 7:14 was directly Messianic, propounded the view that 7:15 referred to a son of Isaias. Sixty years later J. L. Isenbiehl taught that the Emmanuel prophecy

[1] E. Power, ' Terra lac et mel manans,' *VD* II (1922), pp. 52–8 ; id. ' The Emmanuel Prophecy of Isaias,' *IER* LXX (1948), pp. 299–301. Duncker, art. cit., *Sacra Pagina*, p. 412

[2] cf. S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, English Translation, Oxford 1956, pp. 112–13. Coppens, art. cit., *ETL*, pp. 663–4

[3] See Coppens, art. cit., pp. 648–52

[4] ' One of ours maintains that the prophet Isaias had two sons, Yashub and Emmanuel and that Emmanuel was born of the prophetess his wife as a type of the Lord (Our) Saviour,' St Jerome in loc., *PL* 24, 109CD. Cited by Sutcliffe art. cit., pp. 754–5.

referred neither literally nor typically to our Lord. He was censured for this extreme position by Pius VI. This, incidentally, is the only Church document on the point and shows that the Magisterium is satisfied with a theory that holds that the oracle is Messianic in only the typical sense. In the last century there were some few Catholic scholars who believed that Emmanuel need not necessarily be the Messias. The most notable of these were Corluy and Bossuet.

The direct messianic interpretation is still that most favoured by Catholics. When in 1950 J. Steinmann defended the old view that Emmanuel was Ezechias he took the majority of Catholic exegetes somewhat by surprise.[1] In general they were not impressed. Yet the difficulty of reconciling the direct messianic understanding of the oracle with its immediate context still remained an embarrassment. This led Mgr Kissane to abandon his earlier position that Emmanuel was the future Messias and opt for some contemporary of the prophet: Ezechias being the most likely candidate.[2] More recently still (1960) Fr Sutcliffe, for the same reason, has defended the view of Jerome's contemporaries that Emmanuel was Isaias' son Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

To avoid the risk of explaining *obscurum per obscurius* some prolegomena to the study of the Emmanuel prophecy may not be out of place. The first is that the text to be interpreted is that handed down by tradition in the Hebrew text and versions, principally the LXX. Any emendation of the text must be justified by textual evidence, not exegetical expediency.

A second prolegomenon is that the *ʿalmah* oracle is best studied as part of the Book of Emmanuel (Is. 6–12).[3] Within this collection of oracles we have Emmanuel mentioned again in 8:8, while reference is made to an illustrious scion of David in 9:1–7 and to a Shoot from the Stock of Jesse in 11:1ff. Though all would not agree on the point, it seems that Emmanuel is the same personnage as the one in the other two references.

A. Feuillet [4] defends the direct messianic interpretation of the oracle but considers it unintelligible in the present verse sequence. For various exegetical reasons he believes that the following was the original order of the verses of 7:14–25 : (1) 14a–16 : the immediate deliverance of Juda announced by the sign. (2) 17–20, 23–5 (cf. 8:5) : the Assyrian invasion. (3) 14b–c, 15, 21–2 : messianic liberation.

[1] J. Steinmann, *Le Prophète Isaïe. Sa vie, son oeuvre et son temps* (Lectio Divina 5), Paris 1950, p. 88. He propounds the same in the commentary on Isaias, *Bible de Jérusalem*, Paris 1955.

[2] ' Butter and Honey shall he eat (Is. 7:15),' *L'Ancien Testament et l'orient l.l.*

[3] cf. P. Cruvelhier, ' Emmanuel,' *DBS*, vol. II, col. 1043

[4] ' Le signe proposé à Achaz et l'Emmanuel, (Is. 7:10–25),' *RSR*, XXX (1940), pp. 129–51 and ' Isaïe,' *DBS*, vol. IV, coll. 657–8

This re-ordering of the verses may remove the difficulties standing in the way of a direct messianic interpretation but can scarcely be adopted owing to the complete lack of textual foundation.

(to be concluded)

M. McNAMARA

Moyne Park,
Ballyglunin,
Co. Galway

BOOK REVIEWS

The New Testament Octapla, ed. Luther A. Weigle. Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York, Edinburgh, Toronto 1962. pp. 1489, £8 8*s*.

This work presents eight English translations of the New Testament arranged in the eight quarters of each double page. The earliest of these versions is that of *Tyndale*, the first to be made from the original Greek ; it appeared in 1525 but is here represented by the revision of 1535, the GH edition. The second version is that of the *Great Bible*, which first appeared in 1539, but which is here reproduced according to the second edition of 1540. This version was the work of Miles Coverdale and Thomas Matthew (i.e. John Rogers), and owes something to Richard Taverner. It spans the period 1535–40, and unlike Tyndale's it was not a first-hand translation but based on the Vulgate and other translations. But it stands in close relationship to Tyndale through the work of Matthew, who in 1537 had published a bible by compiling the translations of Tyndale and Coverdale. It was this bible, containing a considerable amount of Tyndale, that Coverdale revised to produce the Great Bible, the first authorised English version, carrying on its title-page : 'This is the bible appointed to the use of the churches.' The third version is the *Geneva Bible*, first appearing in 1560, and represented here by the second edition of 1562. This bible had great influence on the people, though it was never authorised. It was the version used by Shakespeare and taken across the Atlantic by the Puritans. The fourth version is the *Bishops' Bible* which first appeared in 1568, here given according to the revision of 1572, as printed in 1602. This was authorised, and gradually replaced the Great Bible.

The fifth version is the *Rheims New Testament* made in 1582 from the Vulgate, and largely the work of Gregory Martin. The sixth is the *King James Version* made in 1611 and here given according to the critical edition published in 1873. It is interesting to note the assessment of the sources on which this most significant of English versions draws :