STUDIES IN ISAIAH

KEMPER FULLERTON
OBERLIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

I. On Is. 2:5 and Mi. 4:5

Is Is. 2:5 a call to repentance or an exhortation to enjoy a privilege? It has usually been taken in the former sense. The reason for this is the desire to explain the כִּי of vs. 6: the call to repentance is necessary because the people at present are *not* walking in the light of the Lord but quite the contrary, as is shown by vs. 6 ff.[1] But this connection cannot be original; the transition to vs. 6 ff. is altogether too abrupt and harsh. The next step is therefore to hold that vs. 5, which is supposed to establish this faulty connection with what follows, is a gloss.[2] But the interpretation of vs. 5, upon which this critical conclusion is based, is false. Vs. 5 is not expressed as a call to repentance. We would expect in that case the use of the verb שׁוּב[3]. Vs. 5 is an exhortation to enjoy a privilege, and its connection is with what precedes.[4] The thought does not rest upon the logical antithesis that the House of Jacob may not be enjoying the privilege. It rests upon the positive thought of the privilege to be enjoyed.[5] The author is not thinking of the darkness in which they *are* walking but of the light in which they *may* walk.

But vs. 5 lies outside the most probable strophical scheme of the poem in vss. 2-4, i. e. three stanzas of six lines each.[6] Accordingly vs. 5 is probably to be regarded as a later comment upon the poem. Was it added by the editor who is responsible for the

[1] Cf. Ges., Hitz., Di.

[2] Cf. Duhm.

[3] It is interesting to note how Gesenius and Hitzig insert the words *wenden* (Ges.) or *bekehren* (Hitz.) in their paraphrases.

[4] For the connection with what precedes cf. Ew. Ch. Marti, though in none of these writers is the exact force of the verse adequately brought out.

[5] Cf. Rejoice in the Lord alway, etc., Phil. 3:1.

[6] Cf. Duhm and J. M. P. Smith at Mi. The five stanzas of four lines (Marti and Gray) require an unnatural stanza-division in the middle of vs. 3 and also the addition of Mi. 4:4.

present position of the poem in Isaiah? Probably not. If the editor of Isaiah had tinkered with the poem at all it would have been in the direction of adding to it some sort of a connecting link to adjust it to what follows, but this is exactly what he has not done.

Is Mi. 4:5 a call to repentance or an exhortation to enjoy a privilege? It is neither. Is it the record of a vow or the statement of a fact? The verse is not quite unambiguous in its mode of expression. It we work back from לעולם ועד we might argue that נלך is to be translated either by *will* or *shall* (*wollen* or *werden*). In that case vs. 5b will be either the record of a vow or the statement of a *future* fact. But if נלך is to be given the force of a future, it is natural, because of the parallelism, to assign the same force to ילכו.[7] But what then is the precise purpose of the statement that all the peoples will hereafter walk, each in the name of its god? It is difficult to say unless it was intended to contradict in express terms the statement of the prophecy in vss. 1-3. Vss. 1-3 state that in the future many nations will turn to Jahweh, vs. 5 would state that in the future all nations will walk in idolatry. It is not advisable to posit a contradiction as aggressive and violent as this would be unless there is some compelling reason to do so. If we take ילכו as a present and vs. 5a as the statement of a fact in the present, and work forward, then, because of the parallelism, it is most natural to assign to נלך the same force. We would then have two contrasted statements of *present* fact. The nations walk in the name of their gods and we walk in the name of ours.[8] But what then of לעולם ועד?

[7] So Hitzig.

[8] Cf. Well. and Nowack for the present force of the two tenses. It has been objected that if it were desired to express a present fact, a participle would be used. That the participle would be an appropriate mode to describe the present situation is of course recognized, but that the imperfect can be used with equal propriety is equally certain; though admittedly the imperfect is less frequent. Cf. Jer. 9:3, Job 9:11; Is. 1:23, Ps. 99:6, 1 K. 17:6 (in these three cases in parallelism with the participle) and especially 1 S. 11:5a and Jer. 6:4b. In the two latter cases the frequentative idea of the imperfect is almost lost. But at Mi. 4:5 this frequentative idea is probably present, in which case the interpretation of the tenses as present is absolutely normal. Since the imperfect as well as the participle can certainly be used of the present, the question as to its force in any passage is purely a matter of [illegible]. *Heb. Tenses*, secs. 32, 33; König, *Syntax*, sec. 160.

This must be regarded as a slight afterthought and as reflecting back upon נלך a secondary reference to the future: We walk [now and will continue to walk] for ever and ever.[9] Thus, while Mi. 4:5 allows of several interpretations so far as its tense values are concerned we have certainly neither a call to repentance nor an exhortation to enjoy a privilege and probably neither a vow nor a description of a future condition but rather a statement of a present fact. This conclusion is borne out when we come to examine the relationship of vs. 5 to its context. Here there can be no question that it is to be connected with what precedes because of the כי. But what is the force of this conjunction? The commentators have too often failed to explain it.[10] Wellhausen, so far as I have observed, has made the only suggestion that is worthy of consideration. According to him the verse will say: Every nation has its own god, only we have the true God to whom *therefore* all nations will hereafter come. This explanation may do for want of a better but no one would claim that the thought here suggested is naturally expressed. Paraphrased the thought on this interpretation runs thus: Many nations will come to Jahweh hereafter because (כי) all nations at present are idolaters but we Jews worship the true God. It is clear that the first clause in vs. 5b is introduced in the most awkward way if it is the intention of the writer to express the thought suggested by Wellhausen. The simple statement of the present antithesis between the religion of the heathen and the religion of the Jews is not in itself an adequate explanation for the future conversion of the heathen. It could be just as easily, or rather more easily, a reason for the future destruction of the heathen. Further, when one examines into vs. 5 more carefully it is seen that in thought and temper it differs too widely from vss. 1-3 to be regarded as an explanation of these verses. In vss. 1-3 breathes a spirit of universalism and magnificent tolera-

[9] Cf. Caspari long ago.

[10] Hitzig holds that vs. 5 is the delayed reason for the change from the threat of chap. 3 to the promise of chap. 4! Ewald translates by *Wenn . . . so wollen wir*, and so also J. M. P. Smith: *Though . . . yet we will*, but the latter scholar neither justifies nor explains this translation. Nowack translates by *denn*, but explains the verse really as an antithesis: *Jetzt ist es noch nicht so wie eben geschildert.* Marti omits all explanation. Caspari made an honest attempt to explain the connection but was able to do so only by reading into the passage a whole series of dogmatic ideas.

tion almost unrivalled in the Old Testament.[11] In vs. 5 there is the spirit of post-exilic Jewish exclusiveness. The emphatic אנחנו, to which commentators do not pay sufficient attention in estimating the peculiar quality of the verse, will contrast the privileges and piety of Judaism with the obstinacy and idolatry of the heathen. It is therefore after all highly improbable that vs. 5 was intended to be an explanation of vss. 1-3. Accordingly it must be regarded as an explanation of vs. 4 or all connection with what precedes must be given up. Here it is necessary to consider the probable meaning and connection of vs. 4. In the first place vs. 4 is expressed individualistically (איש), not nationalistically. It is each individual, not each nation, that is here thought of. This at once raises the question whether vs. 4, in spite of the seemingly appropriate liturgical conclusion of vs. b, is really the original conclusion of the prophecy in vss. 1-3. In the next place we have seen that on the most probable strophical analysis of the poem vs. 4 would be excluded. But what then is the purpose of this accretion? In the third place it has often been noticed that the statement of vs. 4 is applied elsewhere to Israel (cf. 1 K. 5:5 and Zech. 3:10). This at once suggests that vs. 4 really has Israel rather than the nations in mind.[12] This suggestion at once confirms the suspicion that vs. 4 is a gloss and explains its purpose. It will show how the international peace prophesied in vss. 1-3 will redound especially to the advantage of Israelites. If vs. 4 is thus interpreted the relationship of vs. 5 to it at once becomes apparent. The reason why we Jews will dwell safely is not so much because war in general will be no more, but because we walk in the name of Jahweh while the other nations are idolaters. Vss. 4 and 5 taken together are thus seen to be, not an explicit contradiction of what precedes as they would be if the tenses in vs. 5 were construed as futures, but certainly a qualification of what precedes in the interest of Jewish exclusiveness.

Are vss. 4 and 5 by the editor who assigned the prophecy, vss. 1-3, to its present position? To this question no conclusive

[11] Duhm's attempt to weaken the universalism of the passage in order to save it to Isaiah cannot be regarded as successful.

[12] For the limitation of vs. 4 to Israel cf. even Keil as well as later critical scholars, Well., Du. (*Theologie der Propheten*, p. 181), Bertholet (*Stellung d. Isr. zu d. Fremden*, p. 97), Now.,

answer can be given. But since it is unwise to assume complicated critical processes where there is no obvious reason for doing so, it is fair to assume that the editor and the glossator were one and the same. This assumption may possibly be confirmed by two considerations drawn from the immediate context. The purpose of placing 4:1-3 in its present position was to nullify the terrible threat of total destruction of the temple found at the end of chap. 3. In other words the purpose of locating the prophecy just here and not somewhere else has a certain apologetic bias which well agrees with the Judaism of vss. 4 and 5. Again the temper of 4:11-13 agrees with the temper of vss. 4 and 5.

The critical conclusions which have thus far been obtained are the following. 1. Is. 2:5 is an editorial comment or exhortation based upon the old poem vss. 2-4, but this comment was not made by the editor of Isaiah who placed this prophecy in its present place in Isaiah. It was found by him already attached to the poem. 2. Mi. 4:4 and 5 are editorial comments or qualifications of the same poem added to it by the editor who placed the poem in its present position in Micah. The relationship of the respective editors of Isaiah and Micah to Is. 2:5 on the one hand and to Mi. 4:4 and 5 on the other is different. The editor of Isaiah found 2:5 already attached to the poem. The editor of Micah added 4:4 and 5 himself.

We are now prepared to examine the question, so often discussed, of the relative originality of this celebrated poem in Isaiah and Micah. I assume without further debate that neither Isaiah nor Micah could have placed this prophecy in the positions which they now occupy. The connections of the prophecy in both cases are manifestly secondary. The question concerns the relationship of editors, not of original authors. What, now, is the relationship between Is. 2:5 and Mi. 4:5? The condition to which Is. 2:5 exhorts to attain is affirmed by Mi. 4:5 to already exist.[13] It is hardly possible to think of these two verses as absolutely independent of each other. But if related, on which side does the dependence lie? Marti urges that Is. 5 depends

[13] This is recognized with increasing clearness by Marti, Gray and J. M. P. Smith. Contrast Che, *Intro.*, p. 14, where the real difference between the two verses is ignored.

upon Mi. 5. Is. 5 exhorts to the fulfilment of the claim (Versicherung) made in Mi. 5. The reason given for this view is that Is. 5 is shorter than Mi. 5 and looks like an intentional abbreviation.[14] But as Gray rightly points out, if the intention was to abbreviate, why is *Oh House of Jacob* added in Isaiah? He also calls attention to the fact that the *Come and let us walk* of Isaiah is in much closer agreement with the language of the prophecy than is the *We walk* of Micah. But what force is there, after all, in an exhortation to achieve a result that is described as already existing. *When once the exact meaning of the two forms of the verse is clearly recognized it will be seen that Mi. 5 must be a correction of Is. 5.* What Is. 5 exhorts to is affirmed by Mi. 5 to exist. The whole trend of the revision of the earlier documents also favors the view that Mi. 5 is a correction of Is. 5. One of the great tendencies in the post-exilic development of Judaism is at work in this correction, namely the emphasis of the contrast between Judaism and the heathen world. We therefore conclude that the editor who placed Mi. 1-3 in its present position and added vss. 4, 5 depends upon Is. 2:5, that is, he found the prophecy with vs. 5 already attached to it. But did the editor of Micah borrow it from its present position in Isaiah? This is not so clear. We saw that Is. 5 was probably attached to the prophecy *before* it was adopted into Isaiah's prophecies. But further, would it be likely for the editor of Micah to ascribe this prophecy to Micah if he had found it already ascribed to Isaiah with the explicitness, the unusual explicitness, with which this is done in Isaiah (cf. Is. 2:1)? To my mind this is very unlikely. We are therefore driven to conclude that the view which holds that both the editors of Micah and Isaiah derived this prophecy quite independently of each other from an older source, is the correct view. In that case the prophecy was no doubt anonymous and relative to the time of the two editors it was also old. Its anonymity coupled with its supposed age will most naturally account for the fact that it was ascribed to two different prophets of the early pre-exilic period.

[14] Cheyne, *Intro.*, p. 14 f., likewise holds that Is. 5 is an abbreviation of Mi. 5. The statement of Cheyne's position in Gray p. 48 seems to be a mistake.

II. On Is. 7:7-9

Vss. 8 and 9 are intended to confirm positively what was stated negatively in vs. 6. Two things in these verses demand attention, the meaning of vs. 8a and vs. 9a and the genuineness of vs. 8b. 1. The clauses vs. 8a and 9a are obscure. The simple historical statement that Damascus is the capital of Aram and Reṣin the ruler of Damascus, and that Samaria is the capital of Ephraim and Ben Remaliah the ruler of Samaria, affords, in itself, no intelligible basis for the promise of encouragement preceding. This statement must therefore be supposed to suggest something which it does not definitely express. But what does it express? To modern commentators many things. *a*. The usually assumed *implicitum* is that neither Damascus nor Samaria will be able to enlarge their territory at the expense of Judah.[1] Damascus is the capital of Aram and will remain so. Neither Reṣin nor the son of Remaliah will rule over any wider territory than they now possess. On this view we have a fact stated (the names of the capitals and of the chiefs of the two kingdoms opposed to Ahaz) and a prophecy implied (these kingdoms will not extend their power beyond their present borders). The encouragement would therefore consist not in the stated fact but in the implied prophecy. This is very singular. We would naturally expect that the thought upon which the whole meaning of the passage depends would be formally expressed. Does the statement that Damascus is the capital of Aram really suggest that it is to remain *only* the capital of Aram? *b*. Hence others have tried to find the ground of encouragement only in the stated fact. There is no cause to fear, for these nations "are only the well-known neighboring peoples with capitals over which the Davidic dynasty has already ruled and with kings who have been robbed of their dignity."[2] The bare mention of these capitals and kings ought, it is assumed, to be sufficient to remind Ahaz of their impotence. But would they? Would they not suggest the very opposite? Ahaz was in a panic (vs. 2). The simple mention of Aram and Ephraim

[1] Cf. Ges., Di., Gray.

[2] So Du., and also Marti, after Hitzig. That the Davidic dynasty of that time had already developed a tradition of a one-time sovereignty over Damascus is incidentally more than doubtful.

might suggest comfortable thoughts to a critic complacently sitting in his study three thousand years after the war, but they would suggest to Ahaz' terrified imagination a very different train of thought, I fancy. If Isaiah sought to cure the fear of Ahaz by suggestion he certainly took a very strange way to do it.[3]

From the foregoing it is clear that vs. 8a and vs. 9a, when taken by themselves, are not sufficiently definite to serve as a basis for the encouragement in vs. 7. They need some further qualification in order to show in what sense they are to be taken. Ahaz needs a more definite assurance than these clauses are able to convey. If we now turn to vs. 8b we immediately find something definite. Ephraim is to be destroyed within a certain time. This is a statement Ahaz can grasp. He does not need to be an exegete in order to fathom its meaning. Vs. 9a read in the light of vs. 8b now becomes intelligible. Ahaz is panic-stricken at the thought of a coalition between Aram and Ephraim. These two powers loom large in his imagination. Vs. 9a is not the cryptic promise of the prophet; it voices the fear of Ahaz. Vs. 9a and similarly vs. 8a are really what Ahaz is forever timorously repeating to himself and vs. 8b is the prophet's answer to these fears. But this interpretation would necessitate placing vs. 8b *after* vs. 9a. This leads us to a consideration of vs. 8b. 2. We wish something definite, but vs. 8b overdoes it a bit. Both because of its position and the singularly definite but quite inappropriate time element in the clause it has been rejected by practically all modern scholars. The detailed statement of the grounds for the deletion need not be rehearsed. I am quite prepared to admit that if we must choose between accepting vs. 8b in its present position and in its present textual form or rejecting it I should join the general chorus and delete it as a gloss. But is this the only alternative? We have seen that some such clause as vs. 8b is really necessary to the proper understanding of vs. 9a, only it should stand after

[3] Marti refines somewhat upon the second interpretation. The clauses, according to his view, were intended to suggest that Resin and Pekah were alone in their attack upon Judah, the other nations holding themselves aloof from the coalition. But it is difficult to read this idea out of the words and it is more than doubtful if Isaiah could have intended such an idea since it would not have corresponded with historical fact.

vs. 9a instead of before it. But if vs. 8b is once placed after vs. 9a the real gap in the passage immediately becomes apparent. We would expect a parallel clause referring to the destruction of Damascus in the position now occupied by vs. 8b. But further, since the sixty-five years of vs. 8b is an impossible terminus, we must suppose that this definite time-limit has taken the place of the more indefinite time-limit originally assigned by Isaiah in harmony with the prophetic chronology in 7:14, 16, and 8:4.[4] When the present date was substituted for the original vaguer date in order to make it agree with a crisis in the fate of the people of Northern Israel in which some scribe had a special interest, the reference to the time of the destruction of Damascus was lost as not agreeing with the new date, and by an accident vs. 8a was transposed to its present position. The passage, if the above suggestions are adopted would read somewhat as follows:

For (while)[5] the head of Aram is Damascus
And the head of Damascus is Reṣin
[Within . . . Damascus shall be destroyed.]
And (while) the head of Ephraim is Samaria
And the head of Samaria is Ben Remaliah
[Within . . . Damascus shall be destroyed.]
shall not be a people.

[4] This suggestion was advanced by Bredenkamp and Delitzsch.

[5] I have felt justified in inserting 'while' since Isaiah is really expressing the thoughts of Ahaz to which his prophecy is set in an implied antithesis. Ewald rejected vs. 8a with Ges. and Hitz. but correctly felt that vs. 8a and vs. 9a by themselves were incomplete. He conjectured a line after vs. 9a: "But Judah's head is Jerusalem and Jerusalem's head is Jahve"!