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A table of contents for *Scripture* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_scripture-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_scripture-01.php)

God with large measure of natural talent, of piety and learning, will follow you in the same praiseworthy apostolate.

You are closing your study-week on a day hallowed by the memory of the glorious triumph of Him, whose sacred person hovers over all the pages of the Bible. Its different parts, like so many converging rays, focus their light on His radiant figure, the promised, the long-expected One, who at the appointed time came to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of all mankind for life eternal. His proffered gift was peace—peace with God, the Father of all. This, too, is the burden of Our daily prayer, the aim of all the toil and sufferings of the Church. When all men have sought and found peace with God, they will have come a long way to enjoy the blessings of a true peace between nations.

May the peace and joy of the risen Christ fill your own hearts and the hearts of those who are near and dear to you.

After that, His Holiness walked round speaking to each in turn. He asked them about their work and showed great interest in their activities.

A photograph was taken at the end of the audience and in this the place of honour beside His Holiness appears to be taken, at the Pope's express wish, by the small daughter of one of the professors attending the meeting.

It would not be too much to say that the whole visit to Rome made a profound impression on those taking part, and the significance of the meeting, the first of its kind to be held there, did not escape the participants.

## THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

### VALUE OF THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE

**I**N the January number of *SCRIPTURE*, Father C. Lattey, S.J., gave a brief commentary on the questions and answers issued by the Biblical Commission about the book of Isaiah together with a few notes on some of the more relevant problems of the book, such as the Servant songs and the Emmanuel prophecy. As regards the fourth and fifth answers, Father Lattey rightly says that 'plurality of authors is not absolutely excluded' (p. 3).

Now the question arises: Supposing we are able one day to demonstrate conclusively that the book of Isaiah has been written by two or more authors, how are we to account for the unanimous tradition which

ever since the second century B.C. has recognized the prophet Isaiah as the author of the whole book? In other words: How shall we reconcile the established data of literary criticism with the Jewish and Christian tradition of unity of authorship?

E. J. Kissane in his commentary on the book of Isaiah (Vol. I, 1941; Vol. II, 1943) has tried to reconcile the conflicting data—internal evidence and external evidence—by distinguishing between author and editor. Isaiah, he says, is the author of chapters i-xxxv, which were collected and arranged in their present order by an editor who lived in the exile, who is also responsible for the insertion of chapters xxxvi-xxxix and for some slight alterations (Vol. I, pp. 26-37). Chapters xl-lxvi, which modern criticism ascribes to an unknown author conventionally called Deutero-Isaiah or Second-Isaiah, were written by the same compiler or editor who collected his material from the oral tradition which preserved, fresh and intact, Isaiah's teaching. So that these chapters, though written one century and a half after the death of the great prophet, really represent the doctrine of Isaiah and must be regarded as his work in the same way as the Letter to the Hebrews must be considered as the work of St Paul, though perhaps written by a different person. The ideas are Isaiah's, or Paul's, but the literary form is the work of another (Vol. II, pp. 56-61).

The comparison between the supposed composition of Is. xl-lxvi and the Epistle to the Hebrews reveals the weak point and the improbability of Kissane's theory. Paul must be considered as the author of *Hebrews* because the letter, if not actually written by him, was certainly conceived by him, written under his direction and finally approved by him. The case is different with Is. xl-lxvi. According to Kissane's theory these chapters contain Isaiah's teaching but were neither written under his direction nor with his approval. Isaiah, therefore, can hardly be considered to be the author of chapters xl-lxvi, and one fails to see how this theory can claim to have reconciled the internal evidence with Jewish tradition.

A similar theory has recently been proposed by P. Auvray and J. Steinmann in their joint translation of the book of Isaiah (*La Bible de Jérusalem*, 1951). The two translators suppose that there existed, in the time of Isaiah, and long after, a group of the prophet's admirers, imbued with his teaching and animated by his spirit, a group of followers that may be called Isaiah's disciples. To those of his disciples who lived in the exile are to be attributed chapters xl-lxvi and some chapters of the first part (pp. 12-15).

It is difficult to see how the traditional view of Isaian authorship can be maintained in these theories. Nobody can be said to be the author of a book because it simply expresses his ideas and teaching. If Isaiah is to be held the author of the book which bears his name, something

more than a mere affinity between his teaching and the doctrine of the book is required. But before establishing this closer affinity between Isaiah and his book, it is absolutely necessary to examine the grounds upon which tradition is based.

The earliest Jewish tradition is represented by the author of Ecclesiasticus, by the LXX version and by the New Testament writers. The author of Ecclesiasticus writes of the prophet Isaiah: 'With a great spirit he saw the things that are to come to pass at last, and comforted the mourners in Sion. He showed what should come to pass for ever, and secret things before they came' (48, 27f). As this passage contains clear references to Isaiah Part II (cf. xl, 1; xli, 22f; li, 12; lii, 9), it is generally inferred that the author of Ecclesiasticus, who wrote about 190 B.C., expressly attributed chapters xl—lxvi to Isaiah. Thus R. Cornely writes: 'It is commonly agreed that at the time of Ben Sira the second part of Isaiah was attributed to Isaiah' (*Historica et Critica Introductio in U. T. libros*, Vol. II, 2, p. 345; see also Cornely-Merk, *Compendium Introductionis in S. Scripturae libros*, 1929, p. 547). The same view is held by J. Goettsberger (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1928, p. 291), Höpfl-Miller-Metzinger (*Introductio in V. T.*, 1946, p. 422) and by many others. The same conclusion, namely that the second part of the book of Isaiah was attributed to Isaiah during the second century B.C., is drawn from the fact that the Septuagint Greek version, which was very probably made in the beginning of the second century, reads the book in its present form. Two centuries later, the New Testament writers quote the second part of the book attributing it expressly to Isaiah, thus Is. xl, 3=Matt. iii, 3; Mark i, 3; Luke iii, 4; John i, 23; Is. xliii, 1=4-Matt. xii, 17; Is. liii, 1, 4, 7=John xii, 38; Matt. viii, 17; Acts viii, 28; etc.

It is very precarious, however, to infer from all these references and quotations that the author of Ecclesiasticus, the translator of Isaiah and the New Testament writers expressly attributed the second part of the book to Isaiah. The only legitimate conclusion is that all those passages are taken from a book or a collection of oracles that was expressly attributed to Isaiah. It is the whole collection, not a part of it, that is expressly attributed to Isaiah. The division of the book of Isaiah into two distinct parts is the result of modern criticism, but was unknown to early readers and editors. At the time of Christ and two centuries earlier the oracles of Isaiah, whether they were written on one or more scrolls, were considered as one literary unit or one work containing the present sixty-six chapters. Therefore from whatever part or chapter a quotation is made, its value as a witness for the origin of a book cannot be restricted to that part or chapter alone, but must be extended to the whole book or collection. It follows that such words as: 'For this is he that was spoken of by Isaias the prophet saying: A voice of one . . .'

(Matt. iii, 3 ; Mark i, 3 ; Luke iii, 4 quoting Is. xl, 3) can only mean that the quotation is taken from a collection of oracles attributed to Isaiah, and consequently that the *whole* collection or book is expressly recognized as the work of Isaiah.

If this is the value of the scriptural evidence in favour of the Isaian origin of the whole book, it will be admitted that both the author of Ecclesiasticus and the New Testament writers recognize Isaiah as the sole author of the whole book irrespective of our way of dividing it into parts. This recognition must, of course, be taken in a general sense and does not necessarily imply that Isaiah has written every single sentence ; it is not, therefore, inconsistent with the presence, in the book of Isaiah, of additional or editorial matter which, however, does not affect the general authorship of the book. As in the case of the Pentateuch the Biblical Commission has declared that the Mosaic authorship must be understood in the sense that Moses is the author of at least the substance of the Pentateuch (26th June 1906, question 4, and the letter of the Biblical Commission to Cardinal Suhard in A.A.S., 1948, 45-8), in the same way the Isaian authorship of the book of Isaiah must not necessarily be extended to every single sentence or even chapter. In course of time some slight alterations may have been made, some passages may have been adapted to the changed conditions of the people, whole sections may have been expanded or recast. If these changes and additions do not affect the substance of the book, Isaiah will still be regarded as the author of the latest, revised and enlarged, edition of his work as much as of the original one. Consequently, if a quotation is to be made from the additional or editorial matter, it has to be made under the name of Isaiah, the only recognized author of the book.

In order to realize how changes and additions can be made without affecting the general authorship of a book, one must try to visualize the manner in which books, especially the prophetic books, were produced. Books were written on strips of leather or papyrus of different sizes. It is not probable that the larger books of the Old Testament were written on a single strip or scroll. It is more likely that the prophets wrote down their discourses in parts, as occasion arose. If the Greek writers and scribes found it convenient to divide their works into any number of scrolls of moderate size, there is every reason to believe that the Hebrew writers of an earlier age, when the art of book-making was less developed, adopted the same method of dividing their works into a number of scrolls of smaller size. Therefore, what we now call the book of Isaiah was originally a loose collection or a bundle of smaller scrolls of a more or less uniform size, preserved in a chest or jar. There is ample evidence that the book of Jeremiah was written in this manner, partly by the prophet himself and partly by his scribe Baruch. A book written in this way was, naturally, more liable to editorial manipulation. The

several scrolls could be easily misplaced, others could be re-written and new ones could be added developing some of the fundamental doctrines of the original author. The following is only a tentative reconstruction of the gradual formation of the book of Isaiah. Chapters i to v and vii to xii form two separate collections of discourses in two separate scrolls with chapter vi transposed from the beginning of the first collection on account, perhaps, of the chronological sequence. Chapters xiii to xxiii, containing the prophecies against the nations, formed originally another collection and a separate scroll. Chapters xxiv to xxvii, describing the world-judgment, formed another unit or scroll. Chapters xxviii to xxxiii are a collection of poems which may be called the 'Woe collection' as each poem or discourse commences with the exclamation 'Woe!' The historical appendix 36-39 was certainly added later to the original collection of Isaiah scrolls. In the second part of the book we move on a more slippery ground. Very probably Isaiah had predicted not only the exile, but also the deliverance of the people, the restoration of Sion and the beginning of a new era which, in the prophet's perspective, merged in the Messianic era. Isaiah's prediction of the exile was fulfilled, and this fulfilment was a sure guarantee that the prediction of the deliverance will likewise be fulfilled. An unknown prophet of the exile may have developed this latter point, namely the certainty of the deliverance, describing it with new colours and making it to fit in God's plan of Israel's election and mission. Chapters xl-lxvi are, therefore, an expansion of Isaiah's original predictions of restoration and, as such, must be regarded as Isaiah's own work. This elaboration of Isaian matter accounts for a certain affinity of language and ideas between the two parts of the book, as well as for the omission of a new title at the beginning of the second part.

All this reconstruction of the composition of the book of Isaiah is, of course, highly hypothetical, but it affords, I dare hope, a satisfactory explanation of the peculiarities of the second part of Isaiah and a happy reconciliation of tradition with the established data of literary criticism.

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