

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

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The Prophecies of Isaiah by J. M. Rodwell

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J. M. RODWELL

**THE PROPHECIES
OF ISAIAH**

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PROPHECIES OF ISHAH.

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PROPHECIES OF ISAAH.

Translated from the Hebrew

BY

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1886.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE,

Prime Minister of England,

THIS TRANSLATION

IS (BY HIS PERMISSION) DEDICATED

WITH SINCEREST RESPECT

BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

ERRATUM.

Page 96, line 15, punctuate and read—

'Protect this city.' (And Isaiah said: 'Let them
'bring a cake of figs, and let them bind to the boil,
'that he may live.' For Hezekiah said: 'What is
'the sign that I shall go up to the house of Yahveh?')
'And this the sign, &c.'

PREFACE.

THE object of the translator, in the following pages, is to present the utterances of the Prophet Isaiah in a form as nearly as possible identical with that in which they met the eye of those to whom they were originally addressed. He has therefore aimed on the one hand to be strictly literal and faithful to the Hebrew text, even at the cost of occasional roughness and baldness of expression, while, on the other, he has retained the parallelisms which are a distinguishing feature of all Hebrew poetry, and which, by the expansion of a primary idea into two or more varied forms, enable the writer not only to emphasize his statement, but to a great extent to become his own interpreter.

The translator has adhered throughout to the common Masoretic text with reference both to the order of the chapters and to its readings, with the exception of an occasional preference of the *Keri* to the *Chethib*, but without adopting in any case the conjectural emendations of modern scholars. It must, however, be admitted that the chapters admit of an arrangement more closely in harmony with the events which occurred during the reign of the various princes under whom Isaiah wrote, between the last year of Uzziah in B.C. 758, and the accession of Manasseh in B.C. 698. Judging from the analogy of other prophetic writings, it would seem as if the Book of I-

Isaiah would more naturally commence with the introductory vision of chapter vi., while chapters xiii., xiv. 1—27, xix., xxi. 1—10, should follow, instead of preceding, chapters xxiv.—xxvii. At any rate, it is agreed by critics, both foreign and English, that the existing order of the prophecies is not strictly chronological, although the deviations from accuracy are not considerable. It will be sufficient in connection with this point to observe that some commentators, as Havernick, Gesenius, and Dr. Davidson, have proposed to divide the whole Book into four smaller portions, *viz.*, (1) chapters i—xiii : (2) chapters xiii—xxiii : (3) chapters xxiv—xxxv, treating the historical and prose chapters, xxxvi—xxxix as a kind of appendix, adopted and incorporated with certain modifications from the national chronicles : and (4) chapters xl—lxvi : while other critics, as Ewald and Delitzsch, subdivide the Book to a still greater extent, and suppose the existence of several authors and editors, at different periods. To prosecute, however, this difficult and thorny subject, would be wholly inconsistent with the necessary limits of a preface, as well as with the translator's main object as above stated. It will be sufficient here to remark that chapters xl—lxvi have been assigned to another writer than the Isaiah of the previous prophecies, principally on the ground of difference of style and expression as well as of subject matter.

A translation will naturally take much of its tone and colour from the views which the translator himself may happen to entertain of prophecy in general, and of the extent to which he regards the writings of any particular prophet as penetrated by the Messianic idea. He

might thus be able to translate according to some preconceived theory or bias, and often to stamp his own theological views on the very front of his version. If, for instance, he should be persuaded that the Prophecies of Isaiah, down to the minutest particulars, have immediate and primary reference to *passing* events, and at the same time contain implied references to *coming* events in the history of the Jewish people and of humanity at large—that whatever was spoken by Isaiah of Jerusalem—of the Righteousness, or righteous and faithful dealings of God with Israel, resulting in national *Prosperity*, as in ch. lxii. 12—of their *Salvation*, or deliverance from Babylon—of *Cyrus* as its instrument—of the *Goel* i.e., Vindicator, Liberator or Redeemer, as one who ransoms, brings back into freedom, and so restores, a lost inheritance—of the *Servant* or *servants* of God as prophetic announcers of deliverance—not only admits of application to the Christian dispensation at large, but was so intended—he would naturally translate in accordance with his prepossessions, believing that words which to Isaiah himself must have been little more than a dim intuition, assume the proportion of divine enlightenment when taken in connection with the Evangelic History. At the same time he would find himself burdened with the difficulty of doing justice to this twofold aspect of his author, and in danger of bringing either the Present or the Future into undue prominence by his choice of words and renderings.

A translator, moreover, may see in the Prophecies of Isaiah nothing more than the utterances of a pure patriotism, vague but lofty hopes of a brighter future,