PART TWO

THE THIRD ISAIAH

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXEGESIS OF CHAPTERS 56-66

Virtually all modern scholars apart from ‘conservative evangelicals’ 1) agree in the separation of chapters 40-66 from chapters 1-39, 2) but there is a much wider division of opinion concerning chapters 40-66 than is sometimes realised. Some still regard 40-66 as a unit, notably W. F. Albright 3) and Fleming James 4). They place the whole section as a unity in the years 540-522 B.C. There is also C. C. Torrey 5) who regards all references to Cyrus and to Babylon as interpolations. He holds that 34-35 and 40-66 ‘form a homogeneous group and are the work of a single hand’ (p. 53). He holds that these chapters consist of twenty-seven successive poems, written in Palestine, probably in Jerusalem, close to the end of the fifth century B.C. They have nothing to do with any return from a Babylonian captivity which is wholly fictional, but have to do with the hope of the gathering in of the Dispersion. This position is in the main supported by G. Dahl (1929) and much of it by G. A. Barton (1938). Others who maintain the unity of 40-66 are König (1926, all from the exile) and Glahn (1934: 40-55 is before and 56-66 after the Return).

The majority of scholars follow Duhm (1892) and K. Marti (1892) who held that the Second Isaiah wrote in Babylonia and that another prophet, the Third Isaiah, wrote chapters 56-66 in Palestine as late as 457-445 B.C., dates which place him after Ezra’s arrival (accepting, as they did, the earlier date for Ezra) and before Nehemiah arrived. So also Littmann (1899), Zillesen (1906), Box (1908), Elliger (1928), Odeberg (1931) and Sellin (1930). Hölscher (1914) believed that 56-66 like 40-55 were written in Egypt. Some think in terms of one person as the author of 56-66, but find a closer association

1) Herzog (1915), Lias (1915 and 1918), Kaminka (1925), Allis (1950).
2) There is a great deal to be said for adding chapter 35 to chapters 40-55 and 60-62.
5) The Second Isaiah (1928).
than others with chapters 40-55 by saying that the Third Isaiah was a disciple of the Second Isaiah. Elliger (1928 and 1933), for instance, held that not only was the Third Isaiah a disciple of the Second Isaiah, but that, besides being responsible for 56-66, he was also responsible for the revision and publication of 40-55. This view is supported by Meinhold and Sellin. Both Elliger and Sellin envisage the Third Isaiah as expanding the work of his master and perhaps incorporating within 40-55 something of his own, notably 52: 13-53: 12. All of this, as Weiser rightly points out, makes the Third Isaiah a contemporary of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8. The period 457-445 B.C. is rather too late for the activity of such a man: that is, supposing him to have been an actual face-to-face pupil of the Second Isaiah. The period 457-445 B.C. involves a man of the next or third generation whose mission was to interpret the Second Isaiah to his own generation who certainly needed whatever comfort and consolation could be brought to them.

There are many variations among scholars in their opinions as to the date and authorship of these chapters 56-66. Bleek (1859) thought that in chapters 58 onwards, but certainly in 63-66, we have prophecies written by the author of 40-55, but at a later date. On the other hand, Stade (1888) held that 56: 9-57: 13a; 58: 13-59: 21 and 62-66 could scarcely be from the hand of the Second Isaiah in their present form. Budde (1891) thought that 56-59 and perhaps 61 and 63-64 were later than other elements in 40-66, whilst Kuenen (1889) made 50-51 and 54-66 later than the rest. And so we come to the positions held by many scholars that 56-66 are not all by the same author, and indeed may be by many authors: Cheyne (1901), Kosters (1896), Cramer (1905), Budde (1909), Buttenwieser (1919), J. Marty (1924), Levy (1925), Abramowski (1925), Volz (1932), Lods (1935), Eissfeldt (1934, etc.), Kittel (1898), Weiser (1961), Gressmann (1898), Cornell (1900), Zillessen (1904), Mowinckel (1925), Oesterley and Robinson (1934), Rowley (1950) and others. Pfeiffer (1941) finds innumerable affinities between 40-55 and 56-66, and thinks in terms of ‘one or more authors’ dominated in thought and diction by the author of 40-55. He says that it is the less attractive features of the Second Isaiah’s style that are copied and intensified. Possibly here he means the nationalistic elements rather than literary style.

Attempts have been made to date particular sections of these 56-66 chapters. Eissfeldt allocates 56-66 as a whole to the years 520-516 B.C., but places 57: 1-13 before 587 B.C.; 63: 7-64: 12 (Heb. 11) soon