

**ISAIAH XL-LXVI, WITH THE
SHORTER PROPHECIES
ALLIED TO IT: ARRANGED
AND EDITED WITH NOTES**

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Isaiah XL-LXVI, with the Shorter Prophecies Allied to It: Arranged and Edited with Notes by Matthew Arnold

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MATTHEW ARNOLD

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N 13.7 [Isa]

ISAIAH

XL—LXVI

WITH THE

SHORTER PROPHECIES ALLIED TO IT

ARRANGED AND EDITED

WITH NOTES

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

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INTRODUCTION.

AT the very outset, the humbleness of what is professed in the present work cannot be set forth too strongly. With the aim of enabling English people to read as a connected whole the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, without being frequently stopped by passages of which the meaning is almost or quite unintelligible, I have sought to choose, among the better meanings which have been offered for each of these passages, that which seemed the best, and to weave it into the authorised text in such a manner as not to produce any sense of strangeness or interruption. This is all that I have attempted; not to translate or to correct independently, for which my knowledge of Hebrew, —not more than sufficient to enable me in some degree to follow and weigh the reasons offered by others in support of their judgments,—and, indeed, my resources of all kinds, would be totally inadequate; but to use the work of more competent translators and correctors, to use it so as to remove difficulties in our authorised version which admit, many of them, of quite certain correction; and yet to leave the physiognomy and movement of the

authorised version quite unchanged. Such a work of emendation may be, I hope, of a useful character, but it is certainly of a humble one; and the reader is especially begged to note that to this, and no more, does the present work aspire.

With like prominency must be set in view its provisional character. It makes no pretensions to be permanent. Persons of weight and of proved qualifications are now engaged in revising the Bible, and their revision must undoubtedly be looked to as that which, it is to be hoped, may obtain general currency. To have one version universally received is of the greatest advantage. And their corrections will, probably, be much more extensive than those attempted here, and will extend far more to small points of detail; thus aiming at absolute correctness, at perfection. A version thus perfectly correct will most justly, if successful in other respects, supersede any private and partial attempts. Such a partial attempt is mine; an attempt, not to present an absolutely correct version of the series of chapters treated, but merely to remove such cause of disturbance as now, in the authorised version, prevents their being read connectedly, with understanding of what they mean, and with the profit and enjoyment that might else be drawn from them.

The present attempt was originally planned for the benefit of school-children. It appears in this larger form, because it has been found useful by many who are not school-children, and who find the small print of a school-book irksome. But it

was intended in the first instance for the young and for the unlearned, and this its original design must not be forgotten.

The Hebrew language and genius, it is admitted by common consent, are seen in the Book of Isaiah at their perfection; this has naturally had its effect on the English translators of the Bible, whose version nowhere perhaps rises to such beauty as in this Book. Whatever may be thought of the authorship of the last twenty-seven chapters, every one will allow that there comes a break between them and what goes immediately before them, and that they form a whole by themselves. And the whole which they form is large enough to exhibit a prolonged development and connexion, and yet is of manageable length, and comes within fixed limits. Add to which, it is a whole of surpassing interest; so that, while Isaiah is styled the greatest of the prophets, the evangelical prophet, and St. Jerome calls him not so much a prophet as an evangelist, and Ambrose told Augustine to read his prophecies the first thing after his conversion, and this prophet is of all Old Testament writers the one far most quoted in the New,—while all this is so, it is, moreover, in the last twenty-seven chapters that the greatest interest is reached; inso-much that out of thirty-four passages from him which Gesenius brings together as quoted in the New Testament, there are twenty-one from these last chapters against only thirteen from the rest of the Book. Finally, not only have the last twenty-seven chapters this poetical and this reli-

gious interest, but they have also an historical interest of the highest order; for they mark the very point where Jewish history, caught in the current of Cyrus's wars and policy, is carried into the great open stream of the world's history, never again to be separated from it.

The reader, therefore, may well be glad to have these chapters put by themselves, and made intelligible to him. I have also detached from their received place, and printed as an appendix to the last twenty-seven chapters, certain earlier chapters of the Book of Isaiah:—the 13th with the 14th down to the end of the 23rd verse, the 21st down to the end of the 10th verse, the chapters from the beginning of the 24th to the end of the 27th, and the 34th and 35th chapters. These chapters are undoubtedly connected by their subject with the concluding series, and should be read in connexion with them by every student who wishes to apprehend the concluding series fully. Evidently, as both they and this series now stand in his Bible, they are baffling to him; and this is due partly to their arrangement, partly to obscurities in the translation. To shew how this is so, let us take the 21st chapter of Isaiah down to the end of verse 10. Thus it stands in our Bibles:—

THE burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

2. A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the