

**ISAIAH XL-LXVI WITH
THE SHORTER
PROPHECIES ALLIED TO IT**

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Isaiah XI-LXVI with the Shorter Prophecies Allied to It by Matthew Arnold

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MATTHEW ARNOLD

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THE SHORTER
PROPHECIES ALLIED TO IT**

Bible. O.T. Isaiah. English. 1875

ISAIAH

XL—LXVI

WITH THE

SHORTER PROPHECIES ALLIED TO IT

ARRANGED AND EDITED

WITH NOTES

BY

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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 promineney 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-