

advent. It rests both events on the infinite counsel of God. We shall therefore include in in this section as do most commentators, and begin afresh with chapter 41.

The prophecy in chapter 41 returns to the first subject of deliverance from Babylon. ~~So~~ We begin to see the alteration of which Alexander so correctly spoke. The scene here presented is an idol-judgment court. God has a controversy with the heathen. We are not to suppose that these addresses are for apologetic value for Isaiah's time. To do so would of course militate against their Isaianic authorship. The argument is carried on in a supra-mundane sphere. And besides, if they were by a late exilic author who sees Cyrus on the horizon, the apologetic value would not be realized until after the prophecy were fulfilled. Critics therefore suppose that the purpose of the author here is not apology but comfort and exhortation. Very true. The avowed purpose of this second section is consolation. But is it not significant that his exhortations were founded upon what in every case came true? And if this be because of the hand of God upon him, could not God have given this message earlier? There is no reason why Isaiah could not have given these prophecies earlier except that it is said he lacked the situation. But we maintain he did not. He saw the wickedness of the first part at least of Manasseh's reign uncured by the Assyrian chastisements. Well he knew that the wages of sin is death. Micah had prophesied a captivity of Jerusalem in Babylon (Mic.4:10).¹ Isaiah himself had done so. (Isa.39:5-8). What is then more natural than that Isaiah's meditating on these things in seclusion during Manasseh's days, and perhaps even

1. Critics of course do not need to be informed here that a ready escape from this argument may be had by calling this section of Micah exilic also. Wade, Westminster Commentaries, in fact does hold that Micah 4:9-10 are from Zedekiah's reign.