

12 ISAIAH 1-6

turns his vision back to the terrible sin of the people of his day. Certainly there is an important dividing point in the book of Isaiah between 2:5 and 2:6. The latter verse begins a long passage of denunciation of the people for their wickedness and sinful pride, including many declarations of the punishment God will send on account of this sin. The passage ends with a terrible denunciation of the daughters of Zion for their wantonness and their forgetfulness of God. From 3:16 through 4:1 the prophet is describing the pride of these women who look entirely to personal adornment for their pleasure, instead of looking to spiritual blessing, which God is so ready to pour out.

It is hardly necessary to pause here to note that in 3:18 the words "the Lord will take away ... their round tires like the moon" had nothing to do with the tire shortage of World War II as some then suggested, but simply refer to some article of women's apparel. "Tire" is here used in the King James Version in a sense common in the seventeenth century, but obsolete today.

The Hebrew word which is translated in this verse by the phrase "round tires like the moon" is found in two other passages in the Hebrew Bible and in both of them is translated simply "ornaments." One of them, Judges 8:21, refers to ornaments on the necks of camels, and the other, Judges 8:26, refers to ornaments worn by Midianite kings. There is, of course, no reference to anything similar to automobile tires, which were unknown when the King James Version was made and are unrelated to the thought of the Hebrew word. The American Standard Version translates it "crescents" in all three passages.

In this passage Isaiah declares that a day is coming when God will bring to nothing the pride of the daughters of Zion, so that all their beautiful ornaments will disappear and in place of them will be only that which is unattractive and loathsome. This will be accompanied by a time of war, so that the men will fall by the sword and the women will be left alone. The terrible devastation which war is to bring is vividly portrayed in 4:1, where it is said that so few men will be left that seven women will take hold of one man and ask for the use of his name while living at their own expense.