

data, we should form a theory, and then see if the data will fit together under this theory. We should definitely consider it as a theory or a guess until we have made sure that the data actually agree with it. Only then are we ready to take it as a standpoint upon which we can step forward to make further gains in our understanding of the subject.

There are three standpoints which might be considered in relation to Isaiah 13-14:

*1. That it is a specific prophecy of the future of Babylon, given at the time of Isaiah*

This certainly is the most obvious and natural interpretation. The attempt should be made to fit this interpretation with the facts, before any great amount of consideration can rightly be given to any other interpretation. Yet it proves to be very difficult to fit this interpretation with the facts. We have already noticed how strange it seems for Isaiah simply to put Babylon at the head of the list of foreign nations toward which he is declaring God's judgment, and to omit Assyria altogether from the list. We have also noticed that there are many things in the description of the city of Babylon and of the king of Babylon, which do not seem to fit the actual situation. While the prediction of the future desolation of the city of Babylon was literally fulfilled of most of the area where it had stood, the words about a sudden overwhelming destruction do not fit the historical facts about the conquest and later slow decline of the great city itself, and the description of the fate of the king does not even partially correspond to the fate of any known king of that city.

If we could think of no other proper hypothesis, it would be worthy of consideration whether discovery of further historical evidence might eventually prove that the picture of a king of Babylon in these chapters is after all a correct one, and that our other historical information is in error. It seems very unlikely that enough entirely new material would turn up to necessitate such a great revision of the known history, and when it comes to the predictions of the fate of the city and also of the king it is extremely hard to see how new discoveries could overturn the evidence that is already