

ahead: after dealing with the deliverance of the people from exile he moves forward to the time after their return.

There is a remarkable similarity in the style of all parts of the Book of Isaiah, despite the differences in subject matter. Isaiah's style is unique, and strikingly different from that of most portions of the Old Testament. It is difficult to believe that two authors would have styles so strikingly similar, and the difficulty is greatly increased by the suggestion that this was true of three or more authors.

### **The Symphonic Structure**

This continuous passage from Isaiah 40 to 66 is not like a history or an address given at a banquet. Its style may be compared with that of a musical composition such as a symphony. Different problems are before the writer and different themes occur. These themes are dealt with one by one. After one has been discussed, the minds of the prophet and the listeners are temporarily satisfied on that point, but then a second problem comes to mind. The prophet launches into discussion of this second problem; then he goes on to a third problem, or perhaps back to the first. It is like a great piece of music in which different moods are dealt with. Thus solutions are brought to various problems, one after another, in a psychological rather than a logical manner. This phenomenon will become clearer as we look at the details of the chapters.

### **Isaiah 40: The Prelude**

Isaiah 40 forms a unit somewhat distinct from those that follow. It contains no word which in itself gives a specific historic background. The chapter is like a prelude or an overture to a musical composition. It touches upon a number of the themes that will be prominent in what follows. It does not aim to deal with precise situations but rather to evoke certain needed emotions. The result is that we do not find that chapter 40 (like Isaiah 7, for instance) makes specific predictions which relate exclusively to one time or another, but rather that it presents emotional attitudes which can apply to various situations. God is declaring to the people