

II. The Prophecies Concerning Babylon.

Among the prophets of the earlier or Assyrian period there is scant reference to Babylon. Of the six ~~minor~~ prophets who wrote during this period¹ Micah alone mentions Babylon. But there, in Mic. 4: 9-13, the whole of Isaiah's prophecies concerning Babylon are condensed. Zion is pictured in travail, she shall go even unto Babylon, there will she be rescued according to the wonderful counsel of Jehovah, and thereafter will she be triumphant. The lack of other reference to Babylon is not surprising. The silences of Obadiah and Jonah count for nothing since they ~~speak~~ only of Edom and Nineveh. Hosea, Joel, and Amos also can be excused for their silence, because they were occupied chiefly with northern Israel, which, of course, was not concerned with Babylon. Also these prophets lived in the day when the next great enemy was Assyria, whereas Isaiah certainly lived to see the pride of Assyria humbled. Whether or not Isaiah lived to see the beginning of Babylon's rise to her former eminence is a matter of conjecture. We believe it to be quite possible that he did. But at all events Isaiah had got around the corner and would be expected more than the others to turn his gaze toward Babylon.

Besides, let us consider the character of the prophet, and we shall see that he of all is the most far-sighted, and is therefore more than the rest to be concerned with Babylon. Dr. Naegelsbach's commentary is very suggestive on this subject: "Thus, therefore, it is a threefold conflict in which Isaiah sees the theocracy placed: that with Ephraim-Syria, Assyria, and Babylon. One develop~~es~~ out of the other . . . When it was reported in

1. I.e., the first six of the twelve. We shall assume this conclusion as consistent with ~~the~~ orthodox scholarship. The argument is not affected if Obadiah, for instance, is thought to be later.