

menace to Judah, will be gone. "Of course," one would say, "within seven hundred years these two kings will not be living. We can be sure that they will not be living even a century from now. But they may conquer Judah long before that." The only reasonable solution to the difficulty is to consider that the prediction does not refer as a whole to one time, but that part of it deals with one period and part with another.

The element of rebuke to Ahaz, which is primary in the context, finds its fulfillment in the wonderful prophecy of Christ in verse 14. This verse cannot possibly refer to anyone who was born in the time of Isaiah. Its terminology is far too exalted to indicate the son of the prophet as some have suggested. Furthermore, both sons of Isaiah were given symbolic names utterly different in meaning from the name, Immanuel, "God with us." The suggestion that it relates to Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, proves impossible in view of the fact that he was born some years before this prophecy was given. The prediction is a wonderful prophecy of the coming of the Lord in human flesh, to supply a worthy successor to King David, and cannot possibly refer to anyone born in the time of Ahaz.

The Prophecy of the Virgin Birth

While a mere human being might conceivably be named Immanuel, "God with us," it seems far more likely that this name would designate One who was actually the incarnate Son of God. Moreover, there is, of course, the reference here to the virgin birth. Most important of all, Matthew 1:22-23 quotes this verse in connection with the birth of Christ, and declares that that is its fulfillment. In answer, those who consider it all as referring to the time of Ahaz say that the word here translated "virgin" does not really mean virgin, but simply a young woman, and might refer to the king's wife or to the wife of Isaiah. Examination of this word gives us the following facts. The word is not the regular technical word for virgin. The common Hebrew word which expresses the latter technical concept occurs many times in the Scriptures. This is a different word, which occurs only seven times in the Old Testament. It refers to a young woman and seems to