**Isaiah 13-27**

The material in these chapters can be divided into two parts. In its first eleven chapters, passages of varying length are frequently introduced by the phrase: "the burden of . . . ." Its last four chapters (24-27), which no longer use this introductory phrase, are sometimes called "The Isaiah Apocalypse," because in them the prophet draws aside the veil and gives a glimpse of the wind-up of our age. They contain some of the Bible's most important statements about the resurrection of the just and the end of the age, and they have marked similarities to Daniel and the Revelation. It is a pity that they are not more widely understood, for they include some of the finest treasures in the Book of Isaiah.

The first of the two parts of our present section seems to many readers to be a portion that may well be skipped over in haste. They think of it as consisting merely of denunciation of nations that disappeared long ago, and that are now of interest only to students of "musty volumes of forgotten lore." The impression many people have of them is compared by George Adam Smith to that of a man trying to hack his way through a jungle.

When we examine these chapters we find that this superficial impression is far from being true. Although careful study of contemporary history is needed to gather the full meaning of some of them, even the most casual reader is sometimes surprised and pleased to find in them unexpected gems of religious thought, just as vital today as when they were first written.

## Isaiah 13-23

This section contains headings which divide it into twelve parts. Nine of these are introduced by such a phrase as "The Burden of Babylon," or "The Burden of Tyre." In one, the word "burden" occurs in the introductory sentence. The remaining two are passages of woe upon Ethiopia, alone or in association with Egypt. Thus it would not be at all wrong to call the whole section "The Burdens."

Since so many of these chapters consist of declarations of woe or misery to come to ungodly nations, it would be natural to assume that a "burden" means a curse, or a declaration of