

come through baptism (Heb. 12:21f.). But it belonged to the Johanne tradition to offer us the description of this New Jerusalem, the Church, the Spouse of the Lamb. For the Apocalypse, the Church here on earth is already this city, trampled, it is true, by the nations (Apoc. 11:2). But the day will come when God manifests her full glory :

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband . . . , having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. . . . And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall all the nations walk, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it . . . (Apoc. 21:2-27).

In spite of her unrestrained ambition, never could the earthly Jerusalem have dreamed of so exhilarating a reality. How true it is that God is able 'to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think' (Eph. 3:20). Glorious things had been spoken of God's city, they have all come true through Jesus Christ in whom all the promises of God find their Yes (2 Cor. 1:20).

P. SIMSON

*St Edward's College,
Totteridge*

THE EMMANUEL PROPHECY AND ITS CONTEXT—III

In the former articles¹ we have considered the historical context of the Emmanuel prophecy and have passed in review the various identifications of Emmanuel that have been put forward through the centuries. Despite its abandonment, even by some Catholics in recent years, the traditional view that Emmanuel is none other than the future Messiah seen by Isaias in prophetic vision still seems the most acceptable. Apart from being the traditional understanding of the oracle it seems the one that suits best the context of the Book of Emmanuel (Is. ch. 6-12). The Messias-Emmanuel of 7:14, then, is the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace of 9:6 and the Shoot from the Stump of Jesse of 11:1.

It must be admitted, however, that the immediate context offers a serious difficulty to this view. In v. 14 the Prophet said to the House

¹ cf. *Scripture*, 1962, pp. 118-25 ; 1963, pp. 19-23

of David: 'The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold the Almah shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel.' How, it is asked, could the birth of the Messiah some seven hundred years later be a sign to Ahaz or the House of David in 735 B.C.? The following verses, particularly v. 15, create a more serious difficulty still, as they seem to imply an immediate fulfilment of the prophecy. In the more generally accepted translation v. 15 reads: 'He shall eat curds and honey when (or until) he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.' And v. 16 continues: 'For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good the land . . . will be deserted.' It is immaterial for our present purpose which land—Ephraim-Syria or Juda—is intended in v. 16 as v. 17 threatens Ahaz and his people with devastation and Emmanuel's youth seems to be connected with this.

Proponents of the traditional theory in general believe they find a solution of the difficulty in prophetic perspective. Isaias sees both immediate desolation and the birth of the Messiah in the same vision. He affirms both without asserting or denying their contemporaneity. Other defendants of the same opinion are less happy about this solution. In his commentary in the Pirot-Clamer Bible, for instance, Dennefeld gets over the embarrassment of v. 15 by excising it as a gloss. We have seen how Feuillet postulated an entirely different order for the verses 14-25: 14a, 16; 17-20; 23-5; 14b-c-15; 21-2. The problem was already felt by Calmet in the eighteenth century when he considered Emmanuel the Messiah but thought v. 15 referred not to Emmanuel but to a son of Isaias.

In the first edition of his commentary¹ on Isaias Mgr Kissane felt the difficulty. Though defending the traditional understanding of v. 14 he considered the language of v. 15 to be figurative: 'Emmanuel will not actually subsist on butter and honey. The figure (like the stump of 11:1) is intended to describe the lowly state to which the house of David will be brought in consequence of the policy of Ahaz.' Because of the close connection between v. 14 and vv. 15-16 he later² found it impossible to maintain the traditional view and came to consider 7:14 messianic only in the typical sense. The opinion presenting least difficulty, he then held, was that Emmanuel was Ezechias. The number of Catholic exponents who, with this great exegete, see in Emmanuel some contemporary of Isaias seems to be increasing.

All this is sufficient proof that 7:15 is a real *crux interpretum*. Yet the verse is in all versions and we have not the slightest textual grounds for excising or transposing it for exegetical expediency. If a

¹ *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. I, Dublin 1941, p. 91

² 'Butter and Honey shall he eat' (Is. 7:15) in *L'ancien Testament et l'Orient*, Louvain 1957, p. 173: *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. I, 2nd ed., Dublin 1961, *in loc.*

choice has to be made, it seems better to abandon the traditional view than alter the traditional text. But perhaps it is not necessary to do either. The purpose of the present essay is to study Is. 7:15 in detail and see if it really is a stumbling block to the traditional understanding of 7:14. For this purpose we confine ourselves to a study of v. 15 alone. Nothing is said of the nature of the sign offered in Emmanuel. This would require a paper to itself.

‘*That he may know*’ or ‘*Until he knows*’ ?

The Douay rendering of 7:15, representing St Jerome’s Vulgate, is ‘He shall eat butter and honey *that he may know* to refuse the evil and choose the good.’ ‘*That he may know*’ of the above is Jerome’s rendering of the Hebrew *l^eda^eatô*. Since it is not at all apparent what connection there could be between eating butter and honey, and choosing between good and evil, most moderns prefer to give to *l^eda^eatô* a temporal rather than a final sense. The modern authors who consider butter and honey a divine food will naturally retain the final sense. These however are in a minority. The context seems to require a temporal sense. There is also sound textual ground for this, as both the ancient versions of the LXX and the Aramaic Targum translated whatever Hebrew text they had before them as ‘before he knows to reject the evil and do the good.’ ‘Before he knows’ does not suit the context too well. Modern versions vary in their choice; some opt for ‘until’; others for ‘when.’

The reason for the divergence is not far to seek. The Hebrew *l^eda^eatô* is composed of *l^e*, with *da^eat*, the infinitive construct of *yada^e* ‘to know,’ and *ô* the masculine singular suffix. The precise form *l^eda^eatô* is a *hapax* in the Hebrew Bible. *L^e* with the infinitive construct, however, is of very common occurrence and its normal function is to express finality. St Jerome, then, good Hebrew scholar that he was, merely obeyed the laws of Hebrew usage when he translated as he did. Even those who give *l^eda^eatô* a temporal sense must admit that there is no *exact* equivalent of such use of *l^e* with the infinitive construct in Hebrew.¹

¹ See e.g. J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters I–XXXIX* (CBSC) Cambridge, 1900, p. 57; P. G. Duncker, ‘Ut sciat reprobare malum et eligere bonum’ (Is. 7:15b), *Sacra Pagina* I, Gembloux 1959, p. 409. In the examples often cited as parallels (Gen. 24:63; Ex. 14:27) *lipnôt boqer*, *lipnôt ‘ereb*, ‘in the morning,’ ‘in the evening’ (lit. ‘at the return of morning,’ ‘at the return of evening’) the force of *l^e* and the infinitive construct is lost. 2 Sam. 18:29 *lišloah ‘et-‘ebed ham-melek Yô‘ab . . .* ‘When Joab sent the king’s servant . . .’ (lit. ‘With Joab’s sending the king’s servant . . .’) would be a true parallel if *lišloah* were the original reading. Neither Driver (*Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Samuel*, Oxford 1913, pp. 332–3) nor Kittel (*Biblia Hebraica*, 8th ed. Stuttgart 1952), however, scruple to read *lišloah* or *kišloah* for *lišloah* of the MT.

It is quite possible that our present Hebrew Text is defective and that neither the LXX nor the Targum translators had *l'eda'atô* in their Hebrew Text. In the *apparatus criticus* to the *Biblia Hebraica* of Kittel it is surmised that the original reading may have been *'ad da'atô*: 'until he knows.' This makes good sense. Unfortunately, it will not explain our present Hebrew text nor the LXX and Targum renderings. Both these, as we said, seem to have read, or heard read, some word which they understood as 'before he knows.'¹

If we postulate an original Hebrew *'ad l'eda'atô* all our difficulties are solved. The composite *'ad l'* bears most of the meanings of the simple *'ad* 'until.' What is more important, it is used with the infinitive construct to express time, e.g. *'ad liklôt* 'until it is finished' (1 Chron. 28:10); *'ad l'hašib* 'till it be averted' (Esd. 10:14). Though this composite form *'ad l'* is found chiefly in the post-Exilic writings of the Chronicler, i.e. Chronicles-Esdras-Nehemias, it appears in one early (ninth-century) writing at least: 1 Kg. 18:29: *'ad la'alôt ham-minḥah* 'until the offering of the oblation.'² It is possible then that Isaiah also used it. It is a form that did not survive in later Mishnaic Hebrew. This would explain how some later scribe substituted our present *l'eda'atô* for it. It is also conceivable how the rare *'ad l'* was mistaken for the Hebrew *'ad lô*³ or the Aramaic *'ad lā*, both of which mean 'ere yet' or 'before' to give us the LXX and Targum renderings.

If *'ad l'eda'atô* was the original reading, Is. 7:15 refers to the eating of curds and honey until Emmanuel knows how to reject the evil and choose the good, i.e. until he come to the use of reason. What the exact original reading was, whether *l'eda'atô*, *'ad da'atô* or *'ad l'eda'atô*, is, of course, only of secondary importance. The context of Is. 7:15 requires that whatever word was there, it be understood in a temporal sense. The preposition 'until' seems more suited to the context than the adverb 'when.'

'Curds and Honey will he eat' or 'Curds and Honey will be eaten'?

The real *crux*, however, is 15a with its reference to Emmanuel's eating curds and honey, i.e. experiencing a period of privation. It is

¹ *prin* (ἐ) in the LXX; *'ad lā* in the Targum. The LXX renders *'ad* of the HT as *heôs*, never as *prin*. It is very unlikely the LXX would in consecutive verses translate Hebrew words so different as *'ad*, 'until' and *beferem* (v. 16) 'before' by the same Greek word *prin* (ἐ).

² cf. Brown-Driver-Briggs *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 725, s.v. *'ad*

³ *'ad lô* is a hapax in the Hebrew Bible: Prov. 8:26 in parallelism with *beferem*. The LXX translates both by *pro tou* . . . 'before,' and the Targum by *'ad lā*. The Targum, too, renders both (*'ad*) *leda'atô* and *beferem* of Is. 7:15-16 by the same word, *'ad lā*.

this half-verse that, in the opinion of many commentators, excludes any direct messianic interpretation of 7:14.

The Hebrew text for 'Curds and honey will he eat' is *hem'ah úd^ebaš yo'kel*. No objection can be taken to the translation which takes *yo'kel* as an active verb. This is how all ancient and modern translations take it.

It is well to remember that our present vowelled Hebrew text is the work of the Masoretes of the eighth to tenth centuries A.D. Before that time the Hebrew text was written without vowels. Certain vowels of Hebrew words can also vary with the position of the word in a sentence. To take the verb *yo'kel*. This exact form, with final vowel *e*, is what is known as the pausal form, and occurs only when the verb in question comes at the end of a sentence or of a clause, as it does in our case. If the verb came before its object *hem'ah úd^ebaš*, for instance, the form would be *yo'kal*, with final vowel *a*, not *yo'kel*. We have this form *yo'kal* in v. 22a of the present chapter, *yo'kal hem'ah*. It could be that in 7:15 also the form was once *yo'kal*, not *yo'kel*.

Yo'kal is the active imperfect qal form of the radicals 'kl, 'to eat,' and is then rightly translated 'he will eat.' It can also be the passive imperfect qal form of these same radicals and can thus be translated 'it will be eaten.' The ordinary way to express the passive of qal in Hebrew is by using the Niphal form, which in origin is reflexive but in usage mostly passive. The regular passive form of qal is very rare in Hebrew. It exists, nonetheless, for some few verbs and the most notable of these is 'kl 'to eat.' In the perfect the passive form of 'akal is 'ukkal. A number of such perfect forms 'ukkal have been identified by lexicographers.¹ The grammarians give no example of the imperfect form of this verb. If it did exist, however, its primitive form would have been *yu'kal*.² According to the laws of the language this in Biblical Hebrew would have become *yo'kal* which, as we said, is the same as the active form of the same verb.

The argument may appear far-fetched. In any case the Masoretes in pointing *yo'kel* in 7:15 almost certainly took the verb as active, not passive. We must recall that the original text had no vowels. Our word had then only the consonants, which can be vocalised in various ways. We can vocalise them as *ye'akel*, i.e. the regular passive Niphal form. In other words, either by accepting the regular vocalisation *yo'kal*, or changing it to a Niphal, Is. 7:15a can be rendered: 'Curds and honey, (it) will be eaten.' It may appear anomalous to have a verb in the singular: *yo'kal* or *ye'akel*, 'it will be eaten,' with the composite subject 'Curds and honey.' But this is quite permissible in

¹ See the Grammars of Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley §52c; Jöüion §58a

² On the imperfect passive of qal see Gesenius §53u; Jöüion §58a

Hebrew, and examples of this occur when the predicate precedes the composite subject. In Is. 7:15a the composite subject 'Curds and honey' precedes the predicate. In such a case, we less rarely find the verb in the singular. It is, however, possible especially when the composite subject contains but one single idea and is such that it can be taken *per modum unius*.¹ Is. 51:3 is a good example. We propose then that Is. 7:15 be rendered: 'Curds and honey shall be eaten until he [i.e. Emmanuel] knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.' In this understanding of the passage it is the people or land that will be in tribulation until Emmanuel, or the Messias-Liberator, come and save them.

The new rendering and the immediate context

The new understanding of the text is no mere lexical possibility: it also fits in admirably with the immediate and general context of Isaiah and with the Messianic prophecy of Micah. As the introductory particle 'because' indicates, vv. 16-17 are explanatory of the preceding verse. 'Curds and honey' will be eaten because the land will be desolated by the Assyrian invasion.

Some authors think that vv. 18-25 are not a natural continuation of the preceding verses and were not spoken by the prophet on the occasion of the Emmanuel prophecy at all. They are an 'errant block inserted in an alien context' in the words of Fr Sutcliffe. The weight of probability seems to favour those who hold they are in their proper context. The subject matter of vv. 18-25 is an explication of the threat contained in vv. 15-17. The reference to eating curds and honey we find in v. 22 seems to connect this latter passage directly with the Emmanuel oracle. Verses 18-25 describe the devastating effect of the foreign invasion. Death and deportation will turn the rich land of Judah into briars and thorns. Men will return to the semi-nomadic way of life, living by the bow and arrow. 'In that day a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep, and because of the abundance of milk which they give, he will eat curds: for everyone that is left in the land will eat curds and honey' (vv. 21-2). This abundance of milk is evidence of the scarcity of inhabitants rather than of the richness of the soil.

'He will eat curds' of the above passage is to be understood impersonally, i.e. curds will be eaten by anyone left in the land.² The idea is then the very same as that of v. 15a as we have understood it.

¹ See Joüon §150p; and cf. Gesenius §146e

² As noted by S. Porubčan, 'The Word 'ot in Isaiah 7, 14' *CBQ* xxii (1960), p. 151, notes 13-14

New rendering and messianic teaching of Isaias and Micheas

Verse 15, as understood above, is completely in line with the prophetic and messianic message of Isaias. From the moment of his vocation the burden of his message has been that Judah will be left a desolation, its cities lying waste without inhabitants, its houses without men (6:11-13), and aliens will devour the land (1:7f., cf. 5:9ff., 24ff.). Fr E. Power has well expressed this point when arguing against a theory that would make Emmanuel a contemporary of Isaias, 'Emmanuel would then reach the age of reason shortly after the devastation of Samaria and Damascus in 733 or of Judah in 701. Thus the prophecy would determine erroneously the time of Emmanuel's advent and would contradict 6:11-13 according to which the Messianic age will be preceded by the devastation of Judah, the deportation of its inhabitants and the further purification of the survivors.'¹ For Isaias salvation and liberation comes through the Messiah. It is the Wonder-Counsellor and the Prince of Peace who will make afflicted Zebulon and Nephthali glorious (8:23-9:7). The Shoot from the Stump of Jesse, i.e. from the humiliated house of David, will slay the wicked (11:1-4).

In the theory proposed above, Is. 7:15 is not merely in conformity with the message of Isaias : it is also an exact parallel of the Messianic teaching of Micheas 5:1-3. The prophet Micheas was a contemporary and fellow countryman of Isaias. Certain of the oracles in the book that bears his name are denied him by some present-day exegetes. Among such disputed oracles there are exegetes who would class our present text. For our purpose here it is of small import whether the passage comes from the prophet of Moresmeth-Gath or from one of his post-exilic disciples. There seems to be no solid reason, however, for denying its Michaeic authenticity. The way in which it parallels Isaias argues contemporaneity.

The historical context of the oracle appears to be Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. when, in the words of the Assyrian monarch, Ezechias was hemmed in within his city 'like a bird in a cage.'² The Hebrew text of our book is not too well preserved. The meaning to be attached to the opening verse 5:1a (4:14a in the HT) is not quite certain. The verses following on it, however, are clear. 'Now you [i.e. Jerusalem] are walled about with a wall ; siege is laid against you : with a rod they strike upon the cheek the ruler of Israel. But you, O Bethlehem Ephratha, who are little to be among the clans of Juda, from you shall come forth to me one who is to be

¹ In *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, London 1953, §426c

² *ANET* p. 288

ruler in Israel whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore He [i.e. God] shall give them up until she who is in travail has brought forth and the rest of his brethren shall return to the people of Israel. . . . [v. 5a] He shall be our peace. . . . [v. 6b] He shall deliver us from the Assyrian when [or if] he comes into our land and treads within our border.’¹

The teaching of Micheas in the above passage parallels that of Isaias on a number of points. The Messiah-Ruler from Bethlehem is the child whose authority is upon his shoulder, the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:5). ‘She who is in travail’ is clearly the mother of the Messiah from Bethlehem. Some² consider this ‘woman in travail’ a personification of Bethlehem or Jerusalem rather than an individual. The Michaeic context and the parallelism with Isaias indicate an individual. She is then none other than the *Almah* of Isaias 7:14. While in both cases there is mention of her being with child, in neither is there any reference to the child’s father. One is naturally led to believe that both prophets expected a miraculous birth.

The exact strength to be attributed to ‘therefore’ in Mic. 5:2 is uncertain. The thought probably is that the Messiah is to be born of the house of David, reduced to its humble Bethlemite origins. Before his birth and the liberation of his people Juda must *therefore* be brought low, i.e. Yahweh will first hand them over to tribulation at the hands of the Assyrians. The Messiah-Ruler from Juda of Micheas is then the Shoot from the Stem of Jesse of Is. 11:1. The period of tribulation is expressed by Isaias as the eating of curds and honey (Is. 7:15).

The prophet from Moreshet announced that the tribulation was to continue until the birth of the Ruler from Bethlehem: ‘. . . they shall be given up *until* she who is in travail has brought forth.’ In the proposed emendation, Is. 7:15 expresses the very same idea in slightly different words: ‘Curds and honey shall be eaten *until* he [Emmanuel] knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.’ This has already been noted by Mgr Kissane in the first edition of his commentary: ‘Knowing to refuse the evil and do the good’ expresses, substantially, the same idea as the birth of the Messiah in Micheas, though Isaias insists rather on his arrival at the age of discernment. In this way he may have wished to contrast the Messiah’s action with Ahaz’ evil choice’ (p. 92).

¹ vv. 5b–6a—omitted in the above citation—refer to a liberation from Assyria through the agency of seven shepherds and eight princes of men, i.e. abundant help. The meaning of the verses is not certain. Some transpose them after 6b. This gives a better sense. But, even in their present position, it is the Messiah who will deliver from Assyria according to 6b. There is no textual foundation for changing ‘he’ of 6b (i.e. the Messiah) into ‘they’ (the shepherds).

² cf. J. Coppens ‘La prophétie de la ‘Almah’, *ETL* xxviii (1952), pp. 672–3

From a comparison of these two seventh-century prophets then, we may deduce that both refer to an oracle according to which (a) Yahweh's people will be in tribulation until (b) there is born miraculously from a woman without the agency of a human father (c) the Messiah who will liberate them.

Some thirty-five years after the *Almah* Prophecy¹ Micheas still considered it not fulfilled. The general opinion seems to be that this latter seer makes explicit reference to Isaias' words. We think, however, that P. Boylan² is right in maintaining that the prophecy is actually pre-Isaianic. Isaias would then simply have invoked an already well-known prophecy in his solemn rejoinder to the House of David. This explains his use of the definite article before '*Almah*'. The casual way in which Micheas refers to the oracle indicates that it is already well known to his readers.³

If we accept this view of the texts we will see that St Matthew's use of the Isaianic passage is far from accommodation. The Angel's words to Joseph are in the true spirit of the original oracle. "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins". Now all this came to pass that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled; "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel"; which is interpreted, "God with us" (Mt. 1:21-4).

M. McNAMARA

Ballyglunin

JOHN MARK : A RIDDLE WITHIN THE JOHANNINE ENIGMA

There has recently been a renewal of interest in the person of John Mark (Ac. 12:12, 25; 13:13; 15:36-9; Col. 4:10; Phm. 24:2; Tim. 4:11). Serious and interesting attempts have been made to identify him as *the* John, the beloved disciple and evangelist,⁴ or as John the Presbyter to whom the editing and publishing of the fourth gospel is due,⁵ rather than as the son of Zebedee. Neither of these

¹ Or much later if the passage is not from Micheas

² 'The Sign of Isaias' *ITQ* VII (1912), p. 212. See also Kissane, *The Book of Isaias*, vol. I, Dublin 1941, p. 90

³ cf. S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, Eng. tr. Oxford 1956, pp. 115f.

⁴ P. Parker, 'John and John Mark', *JBL* LXXIX (1960), pp. 97-110; J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, 2. New York 1959, pp. 787-8

⁵ J. N. Sanders, 'Who was the disciple whom Jesus loved?' in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (ed. C. H. Dodd), London 1957, pp. 72-83; and, more recently, 'St John on Patmos' *NTS* IX (1963), pp. 75-86