

Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah," covered by Isaiah's ministry, which is thrown by these monuments into the strongest relief. Formerly it was possible to trace outlines—now we have practically a new book to place alongside the Bible, which throws a flood of light on the details of the picture, and makes Sargon and Sennacherib as familiar to us as if they were kings of the last century. Besides adding to our knowledge of the historical situation, this new-found lore enables us to fix the chronological arrangement of Isaiah's prophecies with a precision not hitherto attainable. Along the whole line of the political development, oracle can be fitted to event with great approximate accuracy.

The beginning of Isaiah's ministry carries us back to the eighth century before Christ. It was towards the close of the long reign of Uzziah, one of the ablest and most competent rulers who had sat on the throne of Judah. The latter years of the king's life were shadowed with the cloud of leprosy, but the government did not suffer in the hands of his vigorous son Jotham, who well sustained the traditions of his father's rule. Under these monarchs the kingdom rose to the highest point of external prosperity it had attained since the days of Solomon. But as often happens when rulers bend their energies to the strengthening of a state politically, without due regard to its moral growth, there had been going on unseen a process of deterioration which to a prophet's eye was of the most serious importance. With wealth had come luxury; with luxury, pride and dissoluteness; with this, the casting off of the fear of God, oppression of the poor, and a general loosening of social ties. It was amidst such conditions that Isaiah, then a young man, received

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recorded in the sixth chapter of his book. Mr. Smith's treatment of this vision and of Isaiah's early life generally is an excellent specimen at once of the merits and weaknesses of his volume. Rarely have the sublimities of the Divine holiness, man's sense of sin, and the experience and effects of