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Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah

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Recent discussions of Biblical hermeneutics have displayed a new, although cautious, interest in typology as a means to, express the Biblical understanding of history.¹ Usually typology is regarded as a way to understand the dramatic unity of the Scriptures, on the supposition that events of the Old Testament, seen from the angle of Christian faith, foreshadow and point beyond to the decisive event of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. just as every stage of a drama moves toward the final denouement, so the events of the Old Testament are held to be types or images which anticipate the greater fulfillment in the time of the new covenant, when the sacred history of God's dealings with men reaches its climax. From the early centuries of the Church typology has been used to 'interpret the Old Testament; and this kind of interpretation is deeply rooted in the New Testament itself, as shown by Leonhard Goppelt in his study *Typos: die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen* (1939). Whether this ancient interpretive method is relevant today, when historical criticism has thrown new light on the original significance of Biblical passages, is a moot question. Typology is regarded, even by those who stress the unity of the Bible, as a

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¹ See the summary in H.J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (1956), pp. 432-440. For a perspicacious re-evaluation of typology, see the article by Walther Eichrodt, "Ist die typologische Exegese sachgemässe Exegese?" in *Suppl. VT, IV* (Volume du Congrès, Strasbourg, 1956), pp. 161-180. Also G.W.H. Lampe and K.J. Woolcombe, *Essays in Typology*, SBT, 22 (1952).

“dangerous exercise.”² When employed to show the Christocentric unity of the Bible, it may— and often does— impose an artificial unity upon Scripture and frequently results in an overinterpretation of the Old Testament.

It may be helpful to take another look at this question by turning away from the problem of the unity of the Bible. This fact deserves emphasis: typology is fundamentally a mode of historical understanding. It does not deal in the first instance with the relation between the canons of the Old and the New Testaments. Whether it is suitable to the New Testament depends upon the prior question of the relevance of this mode of interpretation to the Christian proclamation of God’s historical action in Jesus Christ. Therefore, I propose to reconsider typology as a mode of historical interpretation by concentrating on a small area of Scripture which has had a profound influence upon the New Testament, namely, the poems of Second Isaiah found in Isa. 40-55.

I

To begin with, it is necessary to draw a distinction between allegory and typology, particularly with regard to the ontology which each presupposes. To be sure, neither of these terms is found in the Old Testament; but the possibilities of historical understanding for which each term stands were available to Israel, as evidenced by the long struggle between the prophetic (or “historical”) and pagan (or “mythological”) views of existence. Allegory presupposes a view of existence which depreciates, if not abolishes, the meaningfulness of concrete, historical time. According to this view, man encounters reality by freeing himself from time and history and relating himself to that which is timeless and eternal. Concrete history is not the realm of reality; therefore, there is no remembrance of a past which shapes the present or no hope for a future of fulfillment. His-

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torical events move in a cycle of eternal recurrence and, at best, are only temporal embodiments of timeless truths. This historical understanding is summed up in Goethe’s words: “*Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis.*”³ It is not surprising that allegory

² G.E. Wright, *God Who Acts*, SBT, 8 (1952), p. 66. In his *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Vol. II (1960), Gerhard von Rad gives an excellent discussion of the relations between the Testaments (pp. 329-424), including a fresh treatment of typological interpretation (pp. 375-387).

³ “Everything temporal is only a similitude.” The opening lines of the final ode of Faust (Part II, Act V). I am indebted to my colleague Will Herberg for this quotation and for helping to sharpen in my mind the distinction between allegory and typology, as set forth in these paragraphs.

flourished in Greek culture, especially under the influence of Plato, who provided philosophical sanction for the ontology presupposed in the ancient mythological view of existence.⁴

Under Hellenistic influence the Church has resorted to allegory from time to time in order to find scriptural similitudes for the eternal meaning of Christian doctrines, held to be timelessly true even though revealed at a point in time. Thus the allegorist moves away quickly from the literal meaning of a passage to the spiritual meaning that is articulated in the doctrines guarded by the Church. By and large, the Reformers rejected allegory as a hermeneutical method and returned to typology, with its emphasis upon the historical pattern of God's saving deeds. But since the Enlightenment, allegory has returned through the back door, so to speak--disguised in the interpretation of the Bible as the record of man's discovery of "timeless truths" and "abiding values." To be sure, this modern view is characterized by a greater historical realism and relativism than prevailed in Hellenistic times. It is important for the critic to recover the historical matrix of ideas and to understand the social and personal dynamic which brought them to birth; but "the historical occasion, once it is past, is more or less irrelevant *except for the purposes of illustration.*"⁵ Here we find ourselves on Goethe's ground: Biblical teachings are similitudes of rational truths. From this standpoint, Second Isaiah may be regarded as "a thinker and a poet, rather than a prophet," who "formulated religious and theological principles of universal

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validity" and thereby "endowed his words with permanent significance."⁶ So regarded, his contribution was that he freed Israel's religion from the particularities of Israel's history and set forth ideas and principles whose validity is independent of the historical circumstances through which they were mediated.

Typology, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with history. Events are not symbolic of eternal truths or timeless principles but disclose in their concreteness and temporality that which is ultimately real. According to this view, man's concern is not to free himself from time and history, but rather to realize the meaning of history, through the remembrance of the past, participation in history's drama *in the present, and facing the

⁴ See Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Harper Torchbook, 1954), pp. 34-35.

⁵ The quotation is from C. R. North, *The Old Testament Interpretation of History* (1946), pp. 153-154. North vigorously criticizes the presuppositions of this approach. Italics are mine.

⁶ R.H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (rev. ed., 1948), p. 471.

future in hope. Specifically, man understands himself in relation to a “crucial event,” the significance of which he shares and confesses as a member of a community of faith (cf. Dt. 26.5-10). Viewed from this point of vantage, previous events are seen to be an anticipation of the decisive event; and subsequent events are understood as the consequences which flow from it, pointing toward an even greater fulfillment.

Typological thinking is not a peculiarity of the Biblical faith. It may be found in any historical community, such as the American, within which men remember a decisive event whose meaning was anticipated by a previous history and is being fulfilled in the course of subsequent history. This kind of thinking, however is peculiarly intense in the Bible owing to the witness that the ultimate meaning of human life is bound up with events in which God has revealed himself and has formed a special community for the realization of his historical purpose. And such thinking is found pre-eminently in Second Isaiah. For him, history was not the matrix of ideas which the interpreter can separate from their historical occasion, as the husk is removed from the pure grain; rather, Israel's history, with its center in crucial historical moments like the Exodus from Egypt, was the sphere of the action of God to inaugurate a new age which would include Israel and the nations.

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II

In the development of Second Isaiah's eschatological message, one of the dominant themes is that of the new exodus. Previous prophets, to be sure, had appealed to the memory of the Exodus.⁷ But it was Second Isaiah who, more than any of his prophetic predecessors, perceived the meaning of the Exodus in an eschatological dimension, “The conception of the new exodus,” writes Professor James Muilenburg in his superb commentary, “is the most profound and most prominent of the motifs in the tradition which Second Isaiah employs to portray the eschatological finale.”⁸ In this respect he goes beyond Isaiah of Jerusalem, with whom he shares the themes of the New Jerusalem, the covenant with the Davidic dynasty, and the kingly rule of the Holy One of Israel, although transforming these themes in his own way. To this royal theology he adds the Exodus traditions, almost wholly ignored by Isaiah of Jerusalem. His expectation of Yahweh's coming to inaugurate his eschatological rule was shaped according to the pattern of the Exodus from Egypt, the crucial event of Israel's past.

⁷ Hos. 2.14-15 [H 2.16-17]; 11.1; 12.9, 13 [H 12.10.14]; 13.4-5; Am. 2.9-10; 3.1-2; 9.7; Mic. 6.4; Isa. 10.24, 26; 11.15-16; Jer. 2.6-7; 7.22, 25; 11.4, 7; 23.7-8 = 16.14-15; 31.32; 32.20-22; 34.13-14; Ezek. 20.5-10.

⁸ IB, V (1956), p. 602.

While there are numerous linguistic echoes of the Exodus tradition throughout the poems of Second Isaiah, the theme of the new exodus is the specific subject in several passages.⁹

1. 40.3-5 The highway in the wilderness.
2. 41.17-20 The transformation of the wilderness.
3. 42.14-16 Yahweh leads his people in a way they know not.
4. 43.1-3 Passing through the waters and the fire.¹⁰
5. 43.14-21 A way in the wilderness.

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6. 48.20-21 The exodus from Babylon.
7. 49.8-12 The new entry into the Promised Land.
8. 51.9-10 The new victory at the sea.
9. 52.11-12 The new exodus.
10. 55.12-13 Israel shall go out in joy and peace.

The historical setting of Second Isaiah's prophecy is the Babylonian Exile— Israel's captivity, which the prophet likens to the oppression in Egypt. But already, with the rise of Cyrus of Persia, events with far-reaching implications were taking place. Behind and within these events the prophet perceived the activity of Yahweh, the Creator of the ends of the earth and the sole director of the course of human history, who was revealing himself in a glorious theophany. He had chosen Cyrus as the instrument of his purpose (44.28; 45.1) in order to overthrow Babylon and to set Israel free. The fall of Babylon would be followed by a new exodus, more marvelous than the Exodus under Moses, and by the restoration of Zion. This new event would prompt the whole world to recognize that Yahweh is God alone: and that his salvation extends to the ends of the earth. It is significant that Second Isaiah's prophecy begins (40.3-5) and ends (55.12-13) with the theme of the new exodus. Indeed, the poems as a whole are largely variations on the Exodus tradition.

The Exodus, of course, was not an isolated event in Second Isaiah's memory and imagination but, as in the early confessions of Israelite faith (e.g., Dt. 26.5-9; cf. Jos. 24.2-13), was part of a sacred tradition or *Heilsgeschichte* which extended from the

⁹ See Johann Fischer, "Das Problem des neuen Exodus in Isaias c. 40-55," TQ 110 (1929), pp. 111-130; also Alfred Zillesen, "Der alte und der neue Exodus," ARW, VI, 4 (1903), pp. 289-304.

¹⁰ The allusion to the Exodus is more indirect in 43.1-3 than any other passage listed above (but cf. Ps. 66.12); 52.3-6 is listed by Zillesen, (*op. cit.*, pp. 291-292), but this passage has difficulties and is probably an insertion. Ch. 35, whose theme is the new exodus, has strong affinities with Second Isaiah.

patriarchal period to the occupation of the Promised Land. The following outline summarizes the motifs of the sacred history which Second Isaiah reinterpreted eschatologically:

a. The promises to the fathers.

1. The birth of Israel is traced back to Abraham whom, when he was but one, Yahweh called and blessed (41.8; 51.1-2).
2. Even though Israel's subsequent history was marred by the sin of Jacob, the "first father" (43.27; cf. Hos. 12--3), the blessings given to the patriarchs will be continued in his descendants. These blessings, which Israel had forfeited

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(48.18-19), include the gift of the land, the miraculous fertility of "barren" Israel (49.19-21; 54.1-3; cf. Gen. 28.14), and the mediation of saving benefits to other nations (42.6-7; cf. Gen. 12.2-3).

a. The deliverance from Egypt.

1. Yahweh delivered his people from bondage "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm" (cf. 40.10; 51.9; 52.10) His "glory" (*kabod*), seen only by Israel in the old exodus (Ex. 16.7 etc. in P), will ultimately be seen by all flesh (40.5), for all nations will behold the miracles of the new exodus.

(a) There is no specific allusion to the plagues on Egypt, nor any reference to the Passover (but see the statement in 52.12 that Israel shall not go out "in haste" cf. Dt. 16.3; Ex. 12.11).

1. During the Exodus Yahweh was Israel's "rear guard" and "went before" his people (52.12)— an allusion to the protecting and guiding pillar of fire and cloud (cf. Ex. 13.21-22; 14.19-20).
2. Like a man of war (42.13; cf. Ex. 15.3), Yahweh fought for his people (Ex. 14.25) and won the decisive victory at the Sea of Reeds (51.9-10). He caused "chariot and horse" to lie down, never to rise again (43.16-17; cf. Ex. 14.28; 15.10, 21) and in a like fashion he will overcome all of Israel's oppressors (49.24-26; 51.22-23; cf. 52.3-6).
3. The new exodus will be accompanied by a victory song, like Miriam's song after the deliverance at the sea (42.10-13; cf. Ex. 15.2 1).

a. The journey through the wilderness.

1. Yahweh prepared a way (*derek*) through the wilderness and led his people toward their destination (40.3-5; 42.16; 43.19; cf. 11.16; 35.8-10).
2. Along the way he supplied his people with food and drink (41.17-20; 43.19-21; 49.10); he made water to flow from the rock (48.21; cf. Ex. 17.2-7; Num. 20.8). In the time of the new exodus the wilderness will be marvelously transformed (49.9-11; 55.13; cf. 35.6-7).
3. Second Isaiah does not mention the journey toward Sinai, but the revelation of the law is presupposed (42.21, 24; 48.17-18; cf. 51.7). The new exodus also is accompanied

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by a new covenant, although different from the Mosaic covenant (55.3; cf. 54.10); 55.1-2 echoes the tradition of the covenant meal (cf. Ex. 24.11).

a. The re-entry into the Promised Land.

1. Yahweh guided his people through the wilderness to Zion, where the land was apportioned among the tribes (49.8).
2. The New Israel will consist of a tribal confederation, gathered together from Babylon and the Dispersion to Zion, the "holy city" (52.1).¹¹

From the above summary it is clear that Second Isaiah's eschatological perspective is profoundly shaped by the main outline of Israel's *Heilsgeschichte* although, as indicated above, this has been supplemented with the theology of the Davidic tradition (cf. 55.3). The prophet's historical retrospect, however, reaches back before the patriarchal period and, like the Yahwist, includes the *Urgeschichte*. He remembers "the days of Noah" when Yahweh established an everlasting covenant after the divine judgment of the Flood (54.9-10; cf. Gen. 8.21-22; 9.11-17). He alludes to the tradition of the marvelous fertility of Eden to depict the eschatological transformation of nature (51.3; cf. Ezek. 28.13). And above all he harks back to the time of the Creation, when Yahweh stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth (40.12-31; 42.5; 44.24; 45.9-13, 18; 48.13; 51.13,16). In an apparent reference to priestly tradition concerning creation out of chaos (45.18-19), he declares that it is not Yahweh's purpose to allow the earth to lapse back again to pre-creation chaos (*tohu*, as in Gen. 1.2).

Thus Second Isaiah knew a historical tradition which reached back before the patriarchal period to the Creation. In every case, however, the primeval traditions have been drawn

¹¹ Gerhard von Rad suggests that the reference to the restoration of the tribes (49.5-6) may mean a reconstitution of the old tribal confederacy, i.e., the formation of a new Israel after the ancient model.

into the prophet's eschatological perspective. This is true, for instance, in his references to Yahweh's sovereignty as Creator. Never does the prophet think of Creation out of relation to history. Frequently he appeals to Yahweh's creation to support faith in his power to redeem his people and to accomplish his world-

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embracing purpose (40.21-31; 44.24-28; 45.12-13). But more significantly, in some places he links creation and redemption so closely together that one is involved in the other. Yahweh's creative acts belong to the history of salvation, whether performed in the *Urzeit* (51.9) or at the time of the new creation (45.8; 48.7; cf. 42.9). His redemptive acts are acts of creation; and his creative acts are acts of history.¹² Thus in Second Isaiah's prophecy *the Urgeschichte*, especially the Creation, is inseparably bound to *Heilsgeschichte*, the crucial event of which was the Exodus. The new exodus, which he regards as the counterpart of the old exodus, is portrayed in the mythopoeic colors of creation (51.9-10). Of these eschatological events he can say: "they are created (*nibr'e'u*) now, not long ago" (48.7; cf. 41.20).

III

Prophetic eschatology is based upon the premise: *Endzeit gleich Urzeit*.¹³ The end-time will correspond to and parallel the beginning-time, even though it will be far more wonderful. Second Isaiah, of course, did not devise this eschatological pattern. He inherited it from prophetic tradition, although transforming it according to his own insights and the historical situation of his time. In particular, he viewed the events of his day—the rise of Cyrus, the imminent fall of Babylon, and the expected release of exiles—as a new exodus, corresponding to the exodus under Moses. The emphasis upon a parallelism between the old and the new exodus, anticipated as early as Hosea (2.14-18 [H 16-20]), was one of his major contributions to eschatology.¹⁴

In the first part of Second Isaiah's prophecy (chs. 40-48) the prophet often juxtaposes the "first things" (*ri'shonoth*) and the

¹² See Gerhard von Rad, "Das theologische Problem der alttestamentlichen Schöpfungsglaubens," *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments*, BZAW 66 (1936), pp. 140-142; also *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, I (1957), pp. 144-157.

¹³ Cf. Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (2nd ed., 1921).

¹⁴ Cf. Joachim Begrich, *Studien zu Deuteroseaia*, BWANT, 25 (1938), pp. 101-102. For a general discussion of this eschatological perspective, including the new exodus, see N.A. Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes* (1941), pp. 38-42.

“new things” (*hadashot*) or the “things to come” (*ba’ot, ’otiyiyot*).¹⁵ The following passages develop this theme: (a) 41.21-29; (b) 4-0.6-9; (c) 43.8-13; (d) 43.14-2 1; (e) 44.6-8; (f) 45.20-21; (g) 46.8-11; (h) 48.3-8; (i) 48.14-16 (45.9-13 could be included also, but the text of vs. 11 is uncertain). What does the prophet mean by the “former things” and the “new things”?

Before venturing an answer to this question, it is important to consider the theological context within which these passages are placed, namely, Second Isaiah’s argument from prophecy. He scorns the idols of the nations because they cannot foretell an event and bring it to pass, that is, they have no sovereignty in history. Products of men’s artifice, they are imprisoned within the change and transience of the times. They lack the two major traits of deity: wisdom which fathoms the past and the future, and power to realize their will and purpose. In a great rib or legal proceeding (cf. Mic. 6.1) they are brought to trial, and the verdict is rendered that they are not gods at all (41.21-29; cf. 43.8-13; 45.20-21). Yahweh, on the other hand, is the true and only God, the Creator of heaven and earth and the ruler of history. His deity is shown by his wisdom, which comprehends times past and times to come, and by his power to bring to pass the purpose which he has announced to his prophetic servants. While the idols can produce no witnesses, the people of Israel, out of their historical experience, stand as witnesses to Yahweh’s sovereign wisdom and power, to his sole and absolute deity (43.8-13).¹⁶

In accordance with ancient cosmology, Second Isaiah can speak of divine transcendence in spatial imagery (40.22); but more effectively and significantly he speaks of transcendence in temporal terms. Yahweh is the “first” (*rishon*) and the “last” (*’ah^aron*) (44.6; 48.12; cf. 41.4); before him there was no god, neither shall any come after him (43.10). As the only, eternal God, incomparable in majesty, he declares “the *end* (*’ah^arit*)

from the beginning (*mere’shit*),” and “from ancient times” (*miqqedem*) things not yet done (46.10). History, therefore, is not capricious. The rise of Cyrus was not an accident or an unexpected event; it was part of the plan of Yahweh, who calls the generations “from the

¹⁵ Cf. Franz Feldmann, “Das Frühere und das Neue,” *Festschrift for Eduard Zachau* (1915), pp. 162-169; C.R. North, “The ‘Former Things’ and the ‘New Things’ in Deutero-Isaiah,” *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*, H.H. Rowley, ed. (1950), pp. 111-116.

¹⁶ On the motif of the witness, see James Muilenburg, “The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations,” *VT*, IX (1959), pp. 347-365, especially pp. 354, 359-360, 363-364.

beginning” (*mero’sh*) (41.4). According to Second Isaiah the whole course of history, from beginning to end, is set within the purpose of the eternal God, the Creator and Sovereign.

Clearly the “new things” are the tremendous events that are about to take place in the wake of the rise of Cyrus: the overthrow of Babylon, Israel’s return from exile, and the restoration of Zion—in a word, the new exodus. It is more difficult, however to determine the “former things.” At the very least it is clear that they were events that had been foretold and had already come to pass (42.9; 48.3, 5). But when did they occur? It has been argued that in some cases they were events of the relatively recent past, namely, the early victories of Cyrus, and that these fulfilled prophecies were made by Second Isaiah himself.¹⁷ Admittedly, the time indications do not in themselves settle the question, and their meaning must be determined by the context. For instance, the expression *me’az* in 48.3, 5, 7 does not necessarily have to refer to events of remote antiquity; and in its immediate context vs. 16 apparently intends to emphasize that Yahweh’s purpose had attended and prospered Cyrus from the moment he appeared on the world scene: “From the beginning (*mero’sh*) I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be (*me’et h^ayotah*) I have been there” (cf. also 41.25-27). Yet the passages concerning the “former things”, must also be interpreted in the light of Second Isaiah’s argument from prophecy which dominates all of these contexts. No mere appeal to the immediate past would support the prophet’s proclamation that Yahweh alone is the sovereign of history and that his purpose embraces the times from beginning to end. He announced his purpose “long ago” (*miqqedem*), declared it “of old”

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(*me’az*) (45.21). Israel is to remember “the former things of old” (*ri’shonoth me’olam*), for Yahweh is the only God, declaring “from ancient times” (*miqqedem*) things not yet done (46.9,10).¹⁸ Indeed, the prophet, speaking to a generation that experienced the claim of the nations’ gods, insists that Yahweh foretold the “former things” long ago, when there was no “strange god” among the people (43.12), lest they should say: “My idol did them” (48.5). Even though Israel has been blind and deaf, the people are called as witnesses to a sacred history which reaches back to the beginning when Yahweh first announced

¹⁷ This view is challenged by Feldmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 165- 169, and is reaffirmed by North, *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*, *loc. cit.* The latter believes that 41.21ff, 43.8ff, and 48.3ff refer to the victories of Cyrus before the fall of Sardis in 547 BC, although he admits that other passages refer to a more distant past.

¹⁸ In the emended text of 44.7 (followed by RSV), it is said that Yahweh announced “from of old” (*me’olam*) the things to come., cf. vs. 8: “from of old” (*me’az*) he declared it.

his purpose and fulfilled it in decisive deeds. Probably the announcement “from of old” is to be identified with the promises to the patriarchs (so Muilenburg on 44.7); the “former things,” then, are the events of Israel’s *Heilsgeschichte*, pre-eminently the old exodus.

In one passage it is eminently clear that “the former things” belong to the *Urzeit*. In 43.16-19 the prophet harks back to the decisive moment in the Exodus story: the miracle at the Sea of Reeds. Even this dramatic event, however, will be overshadowed by the greater wonder of the new exodus, for Yahweh is about to do a “new thing.” The prophet says, “Remember not the former things (*ri’shonoth*), nor consider the things of old (*qadmoniyyoth*.)” These “things of old” were Yahweh’s saving acts, performed long ago when Israel “went down at the first (*bari’shonah*) into Egypt” (52.4). In the prophet’s mind the Exodus, the classical instance of Yahweh’s act of redemption, is typical of the deliverance from Babylon, “the furnace of affliction” (48.10)— a phrase often applied to bondage in Egypt. It is significant that mention of the “former things” occurs in contexts dominated by the motif of the new exodus.

IV

Thus Second Isaiah interpreted what was happening in his day in the light of a historical memory which focused upon the

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events of Israel’s sacred history. From the “crucial event” of the Exodus flowed consequences which, in his eschatological faith, were on the verge of reaching their consummation.

Two elements of this historical typology deserve special attention. First, the prophet discerns a correspondence between the events of the *Urzeit* and the *Endzeit*, between the “former things” and the “new things.” There is a meaning common to the old exodus and the new. This parallelism, however, is not based upon mere poetic analogy: it is an expression of the unity and continuity of history in Yahweh’s purposive and dynamic will. For this reason the gods of the nations are challenged to make known the “former things” so that men may know their meaning (lit. “take them to heart”; 41.22b), may know their *’ah^arit* or outcome; for the goal of history is understood in the light of the crucial events of the past in which the divine purpose was disclosed.

Moreover, the Exodus is a guarantee that Yahweh will redeem his people, for that event demonstrates that he has the wisdom and power to accomplish what he purposes. Second Isaiah spoke to a people in exile, in despair about the meaningfulness of their history and about Yahweh’s power to give them a future. The prophet’s intention is to awaken their confidence by proclaiming that Yahweh is the only Lord of history, for he

accomplishes what he announces. Israel's redemption will surely come, for Yahweh's historical purpose runs consistently from the remote past to the present and on to the future which is yet to be just as in olden times he announced events before they happened and his word accomplished his purpose, so now his word accomplishes that which he purposes (55.10-11). Past prophecies which have already been fulfilled guarantee that Yahweh's announcement of the new exodus will become a historical reality; indeed, the first signs of the new era are already evident, like the streaks of dawn that herald a new day (43.19; 48.7). The rise of Cyrus, when viewed in the perspective of the events of the old exodus, is evidence that Yahweh has spoken: "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose" (46.10; cf. 41.25-27; 48.14-16).¹⁹

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According to ancient mythological thought, a correspondence existed between terrestrial and celestial things. Babylonian cities had their celestial archetypes and temples were constructed after models believed to exist in heaven. The Old Testament preserves an echo of this pagan typology in the instructions to Moses (P) that he should construct the tabernacle and its paraphernalia according to the "pattern" (*tabnit*; the LXX renders *typos*) shown to him on the sacred mountain (Ex. 25.9,40; cf. 1 Chr. 28.19). In Israel's tradition, however, a radical change took place: typology was shifted from a vertical celestial-earthly plane to a horizontal historical one.²⁰ Here the correspondence is between two temporal termini: the first things and the last things, protology and eschatology. From the standpoint of faith, a consistent purpose runs through history from first to last, undergirding the present with meaning. Thus Second Isaiah, in whom this theology of history is most profoundly articulate, shapes his vision of the eschatological finale according to the imagery of the old exodus.

Secondly, in Second Isaiah's typology of the old exodus and the new there is a *Steigerung* or heightening, like the shift of music into a new key as it crescendos to a climax. It is erroneous to assume that the new exodus is the same as the old, as though the end-time were a return to primeval time. The prophet is conscious of a heightening of historical meaning. During the old exodus and wilderness journey Yahweh delivered his people with a mighty hand, drove back the waters of the Reed Sea, led his people through the trackless wilderness, and sustained them with food and water. But in the new exodus, historical conditions will be marvelously transformed: Yahweh will bare his holy arm before all the nations, will conquer the waters of the Deep as at the time of

¹⁹ Cf. Feldmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.

²⁰ Cf. Gerhard von Rad, "Typologische Auslegung des Alten Testaments," *EVT XII* (1952-53), pp. 17-33; also Eliade, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-11.

creation, will prepare a supernatural highway through the wilderness, and will convert the desert into a garden like Eden. To be sure, the traditions of the old exodus had already been heightened in the process of transmission and cultic usage, so that a *doxa* or glory enhanced the original events. Ex. 1-15, for instance, may reflect a cultic

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legend which is concerned not with recounting the factual events of the Exodus but with reciting and reliving the sacred history which is the basis of Israel's relation to God. In the repetition of this cultic legend through the ages, the tradition was given an ever new meaning, surpassing the original historical experiences.²¹ Second Isaiah, however, does not merely heighten the tradition a few degrees more: he transposes, the whole sacred story into a higher key as he announces the good tidings of salvation. The new exodus will be a radically new event. It will surpass the old exodus not only in wonder but also in soteriological meaning, as evidenced by the theme of divine forgiveness which runs through the whole of his prophecy, or by the extension of salvation to include all nations.

The new event not only surpasses the old; it supersedes it in many respects. Thus the prophet traces elements of contrast between the old and the new exodus. In Moses' time the fugitives had to celebrate the Passover in haste (Dt. 16.3: *b^ehippazon yatsa'ta*; cf. Ex. 12.11), but of the new exodus it is said: "you shall not go out in haste" (*lo' b^ehippazon tetse'u*, Isa. 52.12); for Israel shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace (55.12). Unlike the old exodus, there will be no terrors or dangers along the way, and the people, instead of murmuring, will march with a faith that breaks forth into hymns of praise, the music of which will be taken up by the mountains and the hills. The new exodus will be accompanied by a new covenant, but not like the old contractual covenant of Moses. Second Isaiah avoids mention of the Mosaic covenant (cf. Jer. 31.31-34) and instead, with a theocentric emphasis, turns to the "everlasting covenant" (*b^erit 'olam*) made with David (2 Sam. 23.5; cf. Ps. 89.29), a covenant of grace with no conditions required. Here, however, the *b^erit 'olam* is not made with a member of the house of David, but with Israel (55.3), and is analogous to the permanent covenant made with Noah after the Flood (54.9-10).²² The discontinuity between the old exodus and the new is so signify-

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²¹ Cf. Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, III-IV (1940), pp. 401-415. This view is accepted with modification by Martin Noth, *Ueberlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (1948), pp. 70-77.

²² Cf. Begrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

cant that in one place (43.18-19), speaking with necessary paradox (cf. 46.8-11), the prophet urges the people not to remember the “former things,” for Yahweh is doing a “new thing” which will overshadow and supersede the old.

In this typology, then, there are elements of both continuity and discontinuity, of tradition and novelty. It is a misunderstanding to regard this kind of thinking as an expression of the pattern of cyclical repetition current in the ancient Near East.²³ Although there is a correspondence of meaning between the first things and the last things, the new exodus is not a return to the old in a great historical cycle. It is a new event, a new creation.

From this time forth I make you hear new things,
hidden things which you have not known.
They are created now, not long ago;
before today you have never heard them,
lest you should say, “Behold, I knew them” (48.6-7).

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Another approach to this subject is proposed by Scandinavian scholars who emphasize the prevalence of mythological patterns of thinking throughout the ancient Near East. Ancient religions of Babylonia, Egypt, and Canaan were based upon the rhythmic cycle of the annual death and regeneration of nature, mythologically represented in the cultic drama of the death and resurrection of the god. In the Babylonian New Year festival, for instance, the cult myth recounted the primordial victory of Marduk over Tiamat, the goddess of watery chaos, and his enthronement as king for another year. In the cult drama this myth was re-enacted or reactualized, at which time the cycle returned to the beginning, to the “first things.” It has been argued that a similar festival was celebrated in Israel. The enthronement Psalms (Pss. 47, 93, 95-99) are said to reflect an Israelite cultic occasion on which Yahweh’s primeval victory at creation was rehearsed and he was reacclaimed king.²⁴

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This ancient mythology is echoed in various passages of the Old Testament. Often the sea is spoken of as a restless power, hostile to Yahweh’s sovereignty and held in check

²³ As does Rudolf Bultmann, “Ursprung und Sinn der Typologie als hermeneutischer Methode,” TLZ, 75 (1950), cols. 206-212.

²⁴ Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien, II* (1922).

by his creative power (e.g., Ps. 104.5-9; Pr. 8.27-29).²⁵ It is possible, too, that the mythological conversion of the fertile land into a desert has influenced Israel's tradition here and there.²⁶ But there is no convincing evidence that Yahweh was ever regarded as a dying-rising god and that pagan mythology was appropriated wholesale. Indeed, Israel's historical faith demanded a radical break with *the* patterns of pagan mythology and their metaphysical presuppositions. For the drive behind the cultic repetition of a mythological drama was the abolition of historical time, and it was precisely this flight from history which was at odds with Israel's faith.²⁷ What characterized Israelite worship was the remembrance and rehearsal of a real past. And when, under Canaanite or other influence, mythological forms were used, they were brought into the context of history and demythologized.

The historification of mythological motifs is clearly evident in Second Isaiah. In 51.9-11 he cites the old creation myth about the victory over the chaos monster, Rahab, in primeval time (cf. Isa. 27.1; Ps. 74.13).

Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of Yahweh;
Awake, as in the days of old (*y^eme qedem*),
the generations of long ago (*doroth 'olamim*)!
Was it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces,
that didst pierce the dragon?
Was it not thou that didst dry up Sea,
the waters of the great deep (*t^ehom rabbah*),
that didst make the depths of the sea a way
for the redeemed to pass over?

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In a most revolutionary manner, the prophet identifies the mythical time of the conflict with the watery chaos with the historical time of the Exodus, when Yahweh prepared a way (*derek*) for his people through the Sea of Reeds. Here the prophet has in mind the typological correspondence between the old exodus and the new. Elsewhere, too, he accommodates the chaos mythology to Israel's history. Yahweh makes a way in the sea,

²⁵ In addition to Gunkel's work, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, see Otto Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Aegypten, Ugarit und Israel*, BZAW, 78 (1959); also H.G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, 'Many Waters,'" JDL, LXXIV (1955), pp. 9-21.

²⁶ Cf. Alfred Haldar, *The Notion of the Desert in Sumero-Accadian and West Semitic Religions* (1956).

²⁷ Cf. Eliade, *op. cit.*; Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, SBT, 27 (1960).

a path in the mighty waters (*mayim 'azzim*, 43.16). He says to the Deep (*tsula*, probably the watery chaos, *t'hom rabba*, cf. 51.10), "Be dry," in order to effect Israel's release through Cyrus (44.27). By his rebuke he dries up Sea (*yam*; see 51.10), and makes the rivers a desert (50.2), showing that his hand is powerful to redeem. Thus Second Isaiah employs mythological motifs in his elaboration of the typology of the old and the new exodus. Although he may have been familiar with the cult myth of the New Year festival, he has given it an eschatological meaning consonant with Israel's historical faith. He does not think of the new exodus as a return to the beginning, a repetition of the events of primeval time, but rather as "the absolutely New" which fulfills and completes the meaning of the old exodus.²⁸

In summary, the prophecy of Second Isaiah represents a kind of historical interpretation which is completely different from those views, ancient or modern, whose axis is vertical: the relation between the heavenly and earthly, between eternity and time, between rational, timeless truths and historical illustrations. A faith which takes history with radical seriousness is expressed in a typology that juxtaposes "first things" and the "new things," the beginning and the end. Second Isaiah's eschatological hope is shaped by images drawn from Israel's *Heilsgeschichte*, particularly the crucial event of the Exodus, from which flow consequences reaching into the present and on into the future. The Exodus, then, is a "type" of the new exodus which will fulfill in a more wonderful fashion, with a deeper soteriological meaning, and with world-wide implications, Yah-

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weh's purpose revealed by word and deed in the beginning.

It is not surprising that the New Testament, which has received the legacy of Israel's historical faith and is deeply dependent upon the eschatological good news of Second Isaiah, should also understand the relation between the old and the new in terms of historical typology.²⁹ There also we hear the good news that God, whose purpose was revealed in the events of Israel's history, has acted decisively in Christ: "the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5.17; cf. Rev. 21.5).

²⁸ See Aage Bentzen, "On the Ideas of 'the Old' and 'the New' in Deutero Isaiah," *ST*, 1, 1-2 (1948), pp. 183-187.

²⁹ See Harold Sahlin, "The New Exodus of Salvation According to St. Paul," in *The Root of the Vine*, Anton Fridrichsen, ed. (1953), pp. 18-95.