

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute,
OR,
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

VOL. LIII.



LONDON:

(Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W. 1.)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1921.

626TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W., ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21st, 1921,
AT 4.30 P.M.

WILLIAM HOSTE, ESQ., B.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The CHAIRMAN called on Lieut.-Colonel HOPE BIDDULPH, the acting Secretary, to read the Minutes of the previous meeting, which were confirmed and signed.

The election of Lieut.-Colonel A. H. D. Riach, R.E., as an Associate. was announced.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Lieut.-Colonel F. A. Molony, O.B.E., to read his paper on "Prophecy."

PREDICTIONS AND EXPECTATION OF THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST. BY LIEUT.-COL. F. A. MOLONY, O.B.E., LATE R.E.

IN the days of our fathers the pendulum of thought swung strongly towards the *predictive* element in prophecy.

Now that element is minimized, and sometimes its existence is denied altogether. The question before us is, whether the second swing of the pendulum has not taken it too far, and whether we have not, in Messianic Prophecy at least, very real prediction duly fulfilled.

After being cut down some trees sprout again from the roots. It would seem that Isaiah had this fact in mind when he wrote (Chapter xi): "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit." This was surely a prediction that, after the house of Jesse or David was cut down and apparently ruined, a movement should spring from it that should grow with amazing vitality because of the strength of the old root below it.

And Isaiah represented the movement as centring in a person, because he continued, "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon *Him*." It was on Scriptures like this that the Jews

based their expectation of a Messiah; the word, meaning anointed, is the same as the Greek word Christ.

I propose to show that the coming was predicted of a wise Teacher, a beneficent King, a perfect Example, an unanswerable Debater, a patient Sufferer, a Saviour from the power of sin, and a Shelter in certain of the ills of life. I propose to lay special stress upon the fact that, where it would be useful, a definite expectation was created: and to argue that the predicted one duly came in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The reason I lay special stress on the *expectation* of Messiah is this. Many learned men are telling us that the Prophets did not mean what we take them to mean. For instance, that when Isaiah wrote of the suffering servant of Jehovah he was personifying the loyal remnant of the Jewish nation. Now this really detracts very little from the evidential value of his Messianic prophecies, because the wonder of them lies in their being fulfilled, and not in their being recorded; but it has cast so much dust in the eyes of ordinary people that the whole subject appears to be tabooed in our churches, and the best way to meet the situation seems to me to show that the expectations of the Jews just before Christ came centred on a person, or at most three persons, a prophet and two messiahs, and so arguments that the predictions related to a nation are, to say the least, belated.

Permit me to give a simple illustration. Seven years ago Lord Roberts was advising us to increase our army because he foresaw that we should shortly be engaged in a serious war. People understood him to refer to Germany, and officers prepared defence schemes against an aggressor coming from the east. And it was from the east that the danger came. Now suppose a man to state that Lord Roberts referred to Brazil, and not to Germany. Should we not remark to each other that his view did not greatly interest us, and could at most only affect Lord Roberts' personal reputation for foresight; seeing that he was understood to refer to an eastern Power, men worked on that assumption, and thus the crisis was successfully met. Thus we see that the expectation created should usually be taken into account if we wish to assess the practical value of fulfilled predictions; though, as we shall see, some classes of prediction would thwart their own purpose if they created an expectation of too defined a character.

If prediction and subsequent events run on the same lines, it may still be reasonable to argue that the prediction is

misunderstood, and referred to something else. But (and this is the chief point of this paper) if we can prove that between the two there existed *expectation*, also on the same lines, it is evidently probable that this was due to the prediction, and the probability is increased that the prediction has not been misunderstood.

The rabbinic writings which authoritatively decide how the Jews did understand their Scriptures are the Targumim, the two Talmuds, the most ancient Midrashim and the Yalkut. And these are first-class witnesses, having been in the custody of those who are hostile to the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah. We are therefore sure that neither these, nor the prophetic Scriptures, have been altered so as to assist the proofs which follow.

We also have other witnesses. Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius confirm the fact that the Jews were expecting a Deliverer when Christ came; the two former expressly declaring that this was based on certain passages in the old Jewish Scriptures.

In the ninth appendix to his *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Edersheim gives a detailed list of 456 passages in the Old Testament applied to the Messiah or the Messianic times in the most ancient Jewish writings. So this was clearly a favourite topic with the Jews. There are many incidental references to the expectation of Messiah in the New Testament, and these fit in so exactly with what we have learnt above that it is impossible to suppose them to be forgeries. Moreover, nothing can be more dangerous for an author's reputation than to misrepresent what popular opinion was on any favourite topic within a century of his own time. Further, we have the following striking agreement between our witnesses of expectation. Deut. xviii, 15, in which the coming of the Prophet was particularly foretold, is *not* included in the 456 passages mentioned above; which means that the Jews did not regard it as Messianic; in agreement with which we note that the deputation to John the Baptist made a distinction between "the Christ" and the "Prophet."

Thus we have every reason to believe that the incidental allusions to the Messianic hope in the Gospels are quite accurate, and they will therefore be quoted as additional proof on some points.

It is, of course, unquestioned that the whole Old Testament was written long before Christ came, and was already translated from Hebrew into Greek.

It was foretold that Messiah would be a wise Teacher. After writing "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him," Isaiah

continues (Chapter xi), "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Surely a good foundation for a teacher.

Isa. ix, 6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor." Now a counsellor is a teacher of a high order, for whereas most men can be trained to teach one subject well, men only go for counsel to those on whose all-round judgment they can thoroughly rely.

Isa. lv, 3 and 4: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples." A witness is, of course, a teacher of those matters to which he witnesses. David having been long dead when Isaiah wrote, the reference is naturally to his posterity; the Jews read practically all such passages as referring to Messiah.

Psa. xxii, 22: "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." The name, in Scripture, stands for the qualities, and as this psalm is accepted in the Yalkut as referring to the Messiah, it was a prophecy that He would declare the qualities of God to His brethren—that is, that He would be a teacher of theology.

Deut. xviii, 15: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren." The first office of a Prophet was, of course, to teach. We have seen that the rulers of the Jews did not regard this prophecy as Messianic, but apparently some of the common people did, for Philip said to Nathaniel (John i, 45), "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

The prophecies created a definite expectation that Messiah would be a wise teacher. On Ps. cxix, 33, the Midrash remarks that there were three who asked wisdom of God: David, Solomon, and the King Messiah.

On Cant. viii, 2, the Targum has it: "I will take Thee, O King Messiah, and make Thee go up into my temple, there Thou shalt *teach* me to tremble before the Lord, and to walk in His ways."

In the Midrash on Eccles. xi, 8, it is noted that, however many years a man might study, his learning would be empty before the teaching of Messiah.

The above and similar quotations are from Edersheim. There is no evidence that they are verbally pre-Christian, but a high probability that they reflect pre-Christian opinion.

The expectation that Messiah would be a wise Teacher can be illustrated from the New Testament. The woman of Samaria said to Jesus (John iv, 25), "I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ); when He is come, He will declare unto us all things." And when Simeon had the child Jesus in his arms, he said that He would be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" (quoting Isa. xlii, 6).

These sayings show that it was expected that Messiah would be a teacher of Samaritans and Gentiles, as well as Jews.

It is universally admitted that Jesus of Nazareth *was* a very wise Teacher. The Sermon on the Mount is generally regarded as a masterpiece of teaching. What profound wisdom there was in Jesus' teaching that true greatness lies in rendering great services to the community! What practical wisdom in what He said about the settlement of personal quarrels! Consider the beauty of the parables! that of the Good Samaritan alone would entitle Jesus to be looked upon as a wise Teacher.

Confucius was a wise teacher. If the Chinese were able to prove that the coming of Confucius as a teacher had been foretold and expected, would they not argue from this that he had been sent to them from heaven? But these are the actual facts with regard to Jesus of Nazareth: so we have here a proof that certain of the prophecies were inspired by superhuman wisdom.

It was foretold that Messiah would be a King of most beneficent character. Jer. xxiii, 5: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as King and deal wisely, and shall execute judgment and justice in the land." Isa. xvi, 5, is even more relevant: "And a throne shall be established in mercy, and One shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David; judging and seeking judgment, and swift to do righteousness."

Ezekiel, however, preferred to present the coming Messiah as a Shepherd, and wrote (xxxiv, 23): "And I will set one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David." The Jews' conception of a shepherd was, of course, one who protects as well as feeds his flock. The great war has reminded us that both these are most important functions of government, and the only idea of government in the time of the Prophets was kingship.

Other interesting prophecies of Messiah as King are Gen. xlix, 10; Hos. iii, 5; Jer. xxx, 9; Amos ix, 11.

There are other prophecies of the coming King, especially if we include those which the Jews regarded as Messianic, though they may not so appear to us. For instance, the democratic 72nd Psalm, which contains five predictions that He would be particularly good to the poor and needy.

Now we need not labour over the proof that these prophecies caused an intense longing for the coming King among the Jews, for Tacitus, Josephus and Suetonius confirm this point, as we have seen. Edersheim's list of passages Messianically applied in ancient rabbinic writings includes seven out of the nine passages last quoted.

This expectation seems to have culminated about the time Jesus lived, as appears from many passages in the New Testament (Matt. ii, 2; Luke iii, 15; xxii, 67; xxiv, 21; John i, 20 and 45, iv, 25; vii, 26 and 41). It seems probable that this knowledge of the date was due to Dan. ix, 25: "Know therefore and discern that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Anointed One, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." Now it was well understood that these weeks were to be weeks of years. Lieut.-Col. Mackinlay, in his book *The Magi, how they recognized Christ's Star*, has shown that this recognition was probably due to a study of the above prophecy.

The main doubt about the meaning of the prophecy is urged on account of the break after the seven weeks. However that may be, expectation of the coming King was universal among the Jews of Christ's day. Some, like Herod, only expected a political king, but others expected a benefactor. Bartimeus cried out, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," evidently meaning, "You are the Messiah, the great Son of David, therefore I naturally look to you for help."

But how can it be said that the humble Carpenter of Nazareth was a king at all? We call men kings when they excel in any branch of the arts, or when they control the actions of large numbers of people. When before Pilate, Christ claimed to be pre-eminently King of Truth, and this claim to kingship at least is now seen to be well justified in both senses, for He excelled all others in teaching truth, and He controls the actions of large numbers of people who wish to be guided by truth in its highest and best meanings.

King Alfred of England, Queen Margaret of Scotland, John Knox, John Wesley, Elizabeth Fry, Lord Shaftesbury, David

Livingstone, General Gordon, Dr. Barnardo, Agnes Weston were Christ's subjects, and we know they are only some outstanding names in an immense list of people who have become the acknowledged benefactors of the human race, chiefly because they were trying to please Christ.

I was four years in Perth before the war, and noticed that every class of poor and afflicted people were being very unostentatiously looked after by Christ's subjects for Christ's sake; and what was true there, is more or less true of every town where our language is spoken, and of many towns besides. Thus, in a very practical sense, Christ is King, and the very sort of King whose coming was foretold. King of mercy, truth and justice. Prince of Peace. Protector of the poor. A Shepherd, defending and feeding His flock with the food most wholesome for them.

Permit me a quotation, not because the following are the the words of the King-maker Napoleon, or at least attributed to him, but because the point has never been put better.

"Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him. Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man towards the unseen that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of 1800 years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy. . . . He asks for the human heart, He will have it entirely to Himself, He demands it unconditionally, and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful. In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the Empire of Christ."

The Jews argue that Jesus of Nazareth was not a king in any sense resembling the common acceptation of the term. Before Christ's day there had been great kings and leaders like Solomon, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander and Judas Maccabees. None had permanently benefited the human race, or left any enduring empire behind. It is hard to see why Christ should be reckoned less of a king than these, seeing that He has permanently benefited the race, and created an ever widening kingdom.

It was foretold that Messiah would be a perfect Example. Jer. xxiii, 5 and 6: "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch . . . and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." Isaiah has five passages describing

Messiah as "righteous" (ix, 7; xi, 4 and 5; xvi, 5; xlii, 6), two as "beautiful" and "glorious" (iv, 2; xxviii, 5), and one as a "holy seed" (vi, 13). All the above were applied to Messiah in rabbinic writings, and Isaiah has three others not so included. No wonder that one of the rabbinic names for Messiah was "The Lord our Righteousness." In the book called 1st Enoch, written in first century B.C., there are several mentions of the righteousness of the personal supernatural Messiah.

Sceptics are agreed with Christians that Jesus of Nazareth was pre-eminently a righteous man. For Westerns—the righteous man. Rénan wrote: "Jesus remains to humanity an inexhaustible source of moral regenerations." Mill wrote: "Nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." While Lecky wrote: "The simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists."

It was foretold that Messiah would be an unanswerable Debater.

Deutero-Isaiah, writing of the servant of the Lord, said that God had "made His mouth like a sharp sword" (xlix, 2). Of course we take that figuratively, and understand that the servant was made eloquent, and His speech incisive. In the same book we read, in a passage Messianically interpreted in Jewish writings (xi, 4), "With the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." It is surely reasonable to read this as a prediction that Messiah would overcome the wicked in argument: seeing that the prophets habitually employ symbolic language. If this be the right reading, it was certainly strikingly fulfilled. We ourselves can judge of the cogency of some of the arguments by which the village Carpenter silenced the cleverest men of His learned nation, so that "no one was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

It was foretold that Messiah would be a patient Sufferer. The 22nd Psalm and 53rd chapter of Isaiah alone contain a complete word-picture of the details of Christ's last sufferings. There are also predictions of Christ's sufferings in other parts of the Old Testament, but as it is important to show that the prophetic picture can be traced without picking and choosing over a

wide range of Scripture, we will confine ourselves to the two passages mentioned above, only adding to the 53rd of Isaiah the last three verses of the preceding chapter. Of the 22nd Psalm all the first twenty verses refer to the details of Christ's sufferings, the remainder to the glories resulting therefrom. Every agent taking any part in the sufferings of Christ, from God the Father who permitted them, to the Roman soldiers who nailed Jesus to the Cross, is correctly described in this psalm, and their part assigned. To understand this we must remember that "bulls of Bashan" (verse 12) was a Jewish expression for people in high places who oppress the poor and crush the needy (see Amos iv, 1, and Ezek. xxxix, 18), a true description of the rulers of the Jews, who caused Christ's death. There is a curious change of agency in the 16th verse of the 22nd Psalm. Up to that verse it is clear that both the Sufferer and those who derided Him would be Jews. But the 16th verse reads, "For dogs have compassed me." Now "dogs" was the ordinary way in which Jews spoke of Gentiles. Let us see what it was these Gentiles were to do. The psalm continues, "The assembly of evil doers have enclosed Me, they pierced My hands and My feet, I may tell all My bones" (meaning probably that the bones would so ache that it would feel as though they could be counted), "they look and stare upon Me; they part My garments among them, and upon My vesture do they cast lots." The exact things that the Roman soldiers eventually did.

Thus agency is the key to the 22nd Psalm, but in the passage in Isaiah it would seem that the author was trying to analyse the progress of thought of those who should contemplate the sufferings of Messiah. First they regard them with bewilderment. "Many were astonished at Thee." Then as contemptible, "He was despised and rejected of men . . . as one from whom men hide their face He was despised." Then they consider the sufferings to be penal, inflicted by God for the Sufferer's own sins; "we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." Then they advance to perceiving that the sufferings are vicarious, undergone for others. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities"; and finally they perceive that the sufferings are redemptive, "With His stripes we are healed, the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It is surely noteworthy that these two prophetic passages are logically planned and orderly thoughts, rather than rhapsodies. Yet the 53rd Isaiah contains nine distinct predictions of the historical

details of Christ's sufferings, while the 22nd Psalm has no less than fifteen, making twenty-four points accurately foretold.

There is evidence that some Jews expected a suffering Messiah to be descended from Ephraim, but probably the expectation was not general. The fact that a Teacher was expected doubtless swelled the gathering which listened to the Sermon on the Mount, and Messianic expectation was probably useful to Jesus Christ in other ways, but if the Jews had already generally applied the 22nd Psalm and 53rd Isaiah to the Messiah, they would probably have killed Jesus by stoning instead of crucifixion, so as to contradict His claims to be the Messiah. Thus, lack of widespread expectation is, in this case, no detriment to the general proof of inspiration, but rather argues Divine superintendence. Thus it is clear that, it being desirable not to create general expectation, the prophecy was better veiled, provided that it could be recognized immediately after its fulfilment: and this evidently was possible, from the fact that the two disciples, by the time they arrived at Emmaus, recognized that Messiah's sufferings had been foretold.

It is interesting to note from Luke ii, 35, and John iii, 14, that Simeon and Christ Himself read the prophecies aright. There is also a very remarkable passage in Chapter ii of the Wisdom of Solomon.

For proof that the prophecies of Messiah's sufferings were fulfilled upon Jesus of Nazareth it is convenient to quote the well-known French sceptic Rénan. He can hardly have been ignorant that the sufferings were foretold, and he probably decided to trade on the ignorance of his Parisian readers and practically admit the fulfilments, because he knew that the evidence was too strong to be set aside.

The following passages are taken verbatim from Wilbour's translation of the *Vie de Jesus*, by Rénan: "Jesus preserved silence. . . . Jesus was, none the less, from that hour a condemned man. He remained during the rest of the night exposed to the ill-treatment of a base varletry, who spared Him no affront. . . . A general clamor arose, Not this one, but Jesus, Bar Rabban. . . . Pilate caused Him to be whipped. Flagellation was the ordinary preliminary of crucifixion. . . . Crucifixion was not of Jewish origin. . . . the cross was a Roman punishment. . . . The Cohort had already in reserve two thieves to be executed. . . . According to Jewish usage, the victims were offered a highly-

spiced wine, an intoxicating drink. . . . The cross was first set up, then the prisoner was fastened to it by driving nails through His hands; the feet were often nailed, sometimes merely tied with cords. . . . Jesus tasted these horrors in all their atrocity. A burning thirst, one of the tortures of crucifixion, devoured Him. He asked for drink. There was at hand a cup of the ordinary drink of the Roman soldiers, a mixture of vinegar and water called 'posca' . . . a soldier dipped a sponge in this drink, put it on the end of a reed, and bore it to the lips of Jesus, who sucked it. The thieves were crucified on either side. The executioners, to whom were ordinarily abandoned the minor spoils of criminals, drew lots for His garments, and, seated at the foot of the cross, guarded Him. . . . The passers insulted Him, He heard about Him vulgar raillery, and His death-cries of anguish turned into hateful mockeries. Ah, behold Him, said they, He who called Himself Son of God! Let His Father come now and deliver Him, if He will have Him. He saved others, it was muttered, Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. . . . He cried out, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me. . . . His head fell upon His breast and He expired. . . . Joseph, of the little village of Arimathea, went at evening and asked the body of the procurator. Joseph was a rich and honourable man. . . . Joseph and Nicodemus buried Jesus according to the Jewish custom."

The prophecies whose fulfilment is thus acknowledged by Rénan, and which are not found in the two chapters quoted above, are in Psalm lxix, 21. See also Zech. xiii, 6.

It was foretold that Messiah would be a Saviour from the power of sin, and a shelter in certain of the troubles of life. It was, of course, also foretold that Messiah would be a Saviour from the guilt of sin. Perhaps some will wonder why I do not detail these latter prophecies, or the equally notable ones that He would be Divine; but if I went on to argue from the fact that such prophecies were fulfilled, I should be begging two very important questions. I could only argue from fulfilment by assuming inspiration, which is what I wish to prove.

Isa. lix, 20, reads, "And a Redeemer shall come to Zion"; xlix, 6, "My servant . . . a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth"; 9th verse, "Saying to them that are bound, go forth"; lxi, 1,

“The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek (margin, poor), He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

Isa. lxiii is repeatedly applied in ancient Jewish writings to the expected Messiah. The close of the first verse, and the fifth verse, make it clear that Messiah would be no ordinary conqueror ; and, speaking generally, the passages relating to His warfare read more like a warfare against sin than against hostile armies.

It is curious that Edersheim mentions no record that Is. xxxii, 2, was regarded as Messianic, for it reads : “And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” This verse appeals strongly to all who have been in the desert, and may surely be taken as a prediction that Messiah would be a shelter in certain of the troubles of life.

There are also indirect prophecies to the same effect. By force of contrast the Great War should surely turn our attention to the remarkable number of salvation stories in the Old Testament. There are also the tabernacle and wilderness types, but these latter should be rather taken as indirect prophecies that Messiah would be a Saviour from the guilt of sin.

As regards expectation. Most of the verses quoted above were accepted as Messianic. From the discussion in the Talmud it appears that the Jews connected Messiah with righteousness, repentance and good works, especially care of the poor, sick and stricken. The nearest they came to expecting Him to be a conqueror, was, that they expected that His kingdom would be universal and that foreign domination would cease.

This expectation can be illustrated from the early chapters of the first and third Gospels.

Jesus of Nazareth was, and still is, a Saviour from the power of sin, and a shelter in certain of the troubles of life. For instance, the Apostles were convinced that He had saved Mary Magdalene from the power of her sins, and the Fathers were similarly assured that He saved St. Augustine from the power of his sins. It would be easy to collect evidence that many since have found like salvation. I have never heard it disputed that *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners* was written by John Bunyan. He states therein : “It was my delight to be taken captive by the Devil at his will. I had few equals both for cursing, swearing, lying and blasphemy. These things became as a second nature

to me. I did still let loose the reins to my lusts, and delighted in all transgression against the law of God." It is very well known that John Bunyan afterwards became a preacher of righteousness, and a man of most blameless life. What wrought this change? His writings show that it was the love of Christ.

The records of the Salvation Army, and such books as *Broken Earthenware*, make it clear that Christ is still a Saviour from the power of sin. And also a shelter in certain of the troubles of life, not to mention those which are the consequence of sin. All those who talk on serious subjects to patients in hospitals know that Christ does give His servants wonderful patience and peace, and does assist them to endure their sufferings cheerfully, and thus saves them from that querulous spirit which trebles suffering.

Thus we have seen that it was foretold and expected that Messiah would be a wise Teacher, a beneficent King, a perfect Example, an unanswerable Debater, a patient Sufferer and a Saviour from the power of sin and a Shelter in certain of the ills of life, and that these prophecies have now been most amply fulfilled.

It remains to examine how far Jesus of Nazareth may have fulfilled all these prophecies on purpose. No doubt He deliberately set Himself to be a Teacher, Benefactor, perfect Example and Saviour: but the point is, could He have succeeded if He had been a mere man? How many thousands have tried to be great teachers, and never been comparable to Christ. Napoleon succeeded in becoming a king, but only at the expense of forfeiting any claim to be a Saviour. Christ does not appear to have tried to become a king in any sense allowed before His day (see John vi, 15) and He never seems to have had the chance to practise debating.

But it is when we think of the extraordinary exactness of the fulfilment of the detailed prophecies of Christ's sufferings that we see immediately that any explanation that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies on purpose hopelessly breaks down; because He suffered at the hands of His enemies, who, if they remembered the prophecies, had the best of reasons not to fulfil them; seeing that they thus proved Jesus to be the Messiah, the very point they wanted to disprove!

The whole argument is strengthened by the following considerations. Other characteristics of the Messiah were foretold

and fulfilled besides those dealt with above. Though as many as three personages may have been expected, namely, a very great prophet, Messiah son of David, and Messiah son of Ephraim, all the fulfilments centred upon one personage. Most of the prophecies are gathered into a single prophetic book, that of Isaiah, and a single psalm, the 22nd. Parallel with the prophecies there went Messianic preparation, and that on several converging lines.

The simplest and most rational explanation of the whole matter is that we have here a manifest case of the working of a loving, personal God; who inspired the prophecies, and saw to their fulfilment.

I am unaware that any other coherent explanation has been put forward. Yet 250 years have passed since the famous Pascal wrote that the greatest of the proofs of Jesus Christ are the prophecies. Every other branch of Christian evidences has been controverted by sceptics. Why not this? Surely because no line of attack holds out any prospect of success.

In conclusion, may I urge you to study the prophecies that Messiah should be a Saviour from the guilt of sin, and that He should be Divine? Points of the utmost interest and importance, but beyond the scope of this paper.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN said: Colonel Molony has placed us much in his debt. He has proved his thesis up to the hilt and his paper is an encouragement to further study of the prophecies. Is he quite correct on page 92 in saying that prophecy is a branch of Christian evidences which has never been controverted by sceptics? Certainly the modernist school has attacked the prophetic Scriptures to the point of denying to them any quality of prediction. In terming this a swing of the pendulum Colonel Molony seems too kind to his opponents. A pendulum can hardly swing from affirmation to blank denial, only between degrees of affirmation or denial. I think the modernists have jammed the pendulum of their clock, but we have a better, which goes serenely well. What is the use of denying the predictive quality in prophecy? Numberless fulfilments, both adequate and accurate, regarding, for instance, Babylon, the Jews, and, as the lecturer has shown, our Lord Himself, prove the contrary.

Colonel Molony's point seems a strong one that a definite expectation was created by the prophecies in the minds of those addressed, and continued to exist until the fulfilment. The modernists, however, assert that prophecy is only the philosophy of a past history. Certainly it is not very difficult to foretell the past. We can all of us predict what the weather was yesterday. These teachers must take their public to be very ignorant of the prophetic Scriptures to ask them to believe as, for instance, Dr. A. B. Davidson does, that "In no prophecy can it be shown that the literal prediction of distant historical events is contained"; and again, "Special predictions concerning Christ do not appear in the Old Testament"; and again another, Dr. David Smith, writes, "The prophets never predict far remote events." Why this emphasis on "remote"? Is it then conceded that the prophets could predict things a month ahead? But if so, they could certainly do so a year, a decade, or, as our lecturer has shown they do, centuries ahead.

Canon Driver warns us against supposing that "Isaiah was immersed in spirit in the future, as such immersion in the future would be not only without parallel in the Old Testament, it would be contrary to the nature of prophecy"!

This is rather like a colour-blind person denying the possibility of a rainbow, as contrary to the nature of colour. I think any student of prophecy could easily find a score of instances to refute the Professor (*e.g.*, Isa. xi, 11; xiii, 17, 18; xxiii, 17; Jer. xxv, 12; Micah v, 2). Peter's description of the prophetic ministry is really equivalent to saying that "the prophets were immersed in spirit in the future" (1 Pet. i, 10-12).

Dr. A. JUKES said: In our English Bible we have no intimation as to when the Messiah was to be expected, yet there was a widespread expectation of His coming at the time of His birth.

Our English Bible is translated from the Hebrew, with their vowel pointings. The ancient Hebrew had no vowel points, which were added, I believe, about the second or third century A.D.

We have no ancient copy of the Septuagint, our MSS. being not older than the fourth century A.D., and not till 1772 was the *Codex Chisia* published in Rome, which seems to have been made before the Masoretic punctuation of the Hebrew Text, and it is stated that without the alteration of a single Hebrew letter the sense of

Dan. ix, 24 is completely altered so that instead of 70 weeks, it reads 77 weeks, which are counted by the author from the issue of the Decree of Darius in 538-9 B.C., and its fulfilment would be in 1 B.C., and the 62 weeks when the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt in 434 B.C. which would again fall due 1 B.C.

These dates are taken from *The Time of the End of the "Weeks" of Daniel*, by H. C. Emeric de St. Dalmas.

If the author of the above book is correct it would seem that in this prophecy of weeks there is a Hebrew Cryptogram, one giving the date of our Lord's birth and the other giving the date of His Death.

I do not at all agree with the author in his chronology. But if he is right in attributing to the original Septuagint the sense which he gives, it may well account for the expectation of our Lord's coming at the time of His birth.

Lt.-Col. G. MACKINLAY said: I am sure we are most grateful to Col. Molony for his subject, and also for the very helpful manner in which he has treated it. He has given us many instances of the fulfilment of the expectation of our Lord's first coming, founded on ancient prophecies. One of the most striking is that of the wise men at the Nativity (Matt. ii, 2). They had seen Christ's star in the East; so sure were they that it indicated the long-foretold time of His birth, that they undertook a long journey across the desert from their home at the time of its appearing; they came to Jerusalem, and they asked to be informed where it had been predicted that the King of the Jews, the promised Messiah, should be born.

This expectation of His coming was also shared by the chief priests and scribes at Jerusalem, though, either through indifference or through fear of Herod, they did not accompany the Magi in their search.

The followers of false religions have made predictions: some of them have been stated to have been fulfilled, and it is possible that they may have been accomplished in some measure in some instances; but, as Col. Molony tells us, the predictions of Christ in the Old Testament are absolutely unique; for we have been reminded of the numerous details connected with our Lord's death, even to the minutiae of the Crucifixion by the Romans. So full are the

statements about our Lord in the Old Testament, that a narrative of His Life and Death has been compiled from the prophecies, uttered hundreds of years before.

But, though such very full details were given, the prophecies were not understood before the event; the blending of suffering and glory on One Person was not accepted by mere worldly wisdom: it was no wonder that many Jews looked for two Messiahs, and that even our Lord's own disciples immediately after the Resurrection were puzzled and extremely downcast. When, however, our Lord Himself explained to the two on the way to Emmaus that they ought to believe all that the prophets had spoken about Christ's suffering and entering into His glory, their hearts burned within them (Luke xxiv, 32), and as He continued to explain the fulfilment of Scripture they were filled with joy (Luke xxiv, 52, 53), which was confirmed and strengthened by the coming of the Holy Spirit a few days afterwards on the Day of Pentecost.

Dr. A. WITHERS GREEN said: There is one verse in Acts ii, 23, which is a great stronghold of my faith. It goes deeper than prediction, for it pronounces the foreknowledge and pre-counselling of God concerning every detail of the sufferings of the Christ, while prediction follows after.

Concerning these three forerunners of the Passion, to me what He did *not* suffer is more remarkable than the permitted cruelties. The murderers were paralyzed as to every action that was not to be part of the sufferings of the Lamb "slain before the foundation of the world." They could pierce His feet but not His thighs, His hands but not His arms. The bones of the Great Antitype of the Pascal Lamb could not be broken. His own words were to the one who pronounced judgment, "Thou couldst have no power at all except it were given thee from above."

I cannot personally agree with the statements on pages 84 and 86 of the uncorrected proof calling our Lord "the Carpenter," even with a capital C. As such He was never predicted, as such neither did He Himself nor His apostles call Him. The name is never given to Him except by His enemies in the New Testament. Therefore we, 1900 years later, have no right to use such a name for our Lord and Master.

Jerome may testify that our Lord made yokes. Our Lord may have done many things according to His choice, so the above is but little to the point. I find there are those who *would* refuse to call Him "the Carpenter's Son" or "the Carpenter of Nazareth," but my sympathies are with those who go further and do not add to His humiliation by calling the Lord of life and glory "a, or the Carpenter."

[NOTE BY EDITOR.—It is not suggested that "a Carpenter" was a special part of Christ's humiliation. It was a calling from which Rabbis were chosen, and, we are told, was about equivalent then in standing to a barrister to-day.]

MR. SIDNEY COLLETT said: The Rev. Gosset-Tanner and Dr. Schofield have both somewhat anticipated much of what was on my own mind in regard to this paper. But first of all I feel I must raise my humble protest against an unfortunate expression used by the lecturer on page 91, where he tells us: "Christ *tried* to be a Teacher, Benefactor, Perfect Example and Saviour."

Surely, as those who must ever desire to render due reverence to the name of our Divine Lord, we could not allow such an expression to pass unchallenged. Our Lord had no need to "try" to be such. He *was* essentially a Teacher, Benefactor, Perfect Example and Saviour!

Then, I feel compelled to say that, in my judgment, the great weakness of the paper lies in the fact that the author has confused two classes of prophecy which are quite distinct the one from the other, viz., one class which speaks of Christ's *first* coming as a Saviour to suffer; and the other which tells of His *second* coming as a King to reign.

The lecturer appears to have taken several prophecies from both these classes, and has applied them indiscriminately to Christ's first coming!

For example, he has treated the 72nd Psalm in that way. Now that whole Psalm is clearly millennial in character, when "all Kings shall fall down before Him, and all Nations shall serve Him" (verse 11).

And, although there was of necessity a kingly dignity attaching to everything the Saviour said and did at His first coming, nevertheless such prophecies, if rightly understood, will be seen to refer not to His first coming, but to His second coming.

Other passages quoted by the lecturer were similarly misapplied. Such as those on page 86, where we are told in Isa. xlix, 2, "that God had made His mouth like a sharp sword"; and again in Isa. xi, 4, "with the breath of His mouth He shall slay the wicked."

Surely these prophecies cannot apply (as the lecturer would have us believe), to the manner in which Christ, when on earth, so often silenced His adversaries in debate! But rather to that Day when, coming a second time in judgment, "He will speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" (Ps. ii, 5).

I would venture humbly to add that it is quite impossible to understand or interpret Scripture aright unless we keep these two classes of prophecies, which relate to different periods and events, quite separate in our minds, and thus "rightly divide the Word of Truth."

Mr. THEODORE ROBERTS said it was one of the infirmities of the human mind, while recognizing the accomplishment of a change, to overlook the means by which it had been effected. He pointed out that the conversion of the Jews (a peculiarly difficult people to persuade) to form the nucleus of the Christian Church appeared to have been brought about by the argument from the fulfilment of prophecy. He instanced Peter's quotation in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost of Ps. xvi and cx as prophesying the Resurrection and Ascension respectively. He also mentioned Paul's quotation of Ps. ii and xvi as prophesying the Incarnation and Resurrection in his first recorded sermon and also the statements in the Acts, of Paul's use of the Scriptures at Thessalonica, and Apollo's use of them at Corinth to convince the Jews.

He referred to Professor Rendel Harris's two small volumes entitled *Testimonies* which showed the circulation in the Christian community before the Gospels were written of books bearing this name, comprising quotations from the Old Testament intended for use in controversy with Jews.

He considered we were justified in speaking of our Lord as a carpenter (Mark vi, 3), and thought it important to know that up to thirty years of age He showed Himself an example to us of working with His hands. He thought the spiritualizing of certain prophecies by applying them to the present time, from which the lecturer was

not exempt, tended to weaken his general argument and expressed the hope that he admitted a personal coming of Christ.

Mr. Theodore Roberts, in moving a vote of thanks to Colonel Molony, pointed out that Matthew's Gospel showed us that the Kingdom of Christ at the present time was in mystery, that is to say, it was only known to those who were in the secret, and was not publicly displayed, so that the prophecies of the Kingdom still await a literal fulfilment.

The Rev. JAMES GOSSET-TANNER writes: "Col. Molony's paper is valuable in showing that the prophecies of the Old Testament were accurately and minutely fulfilled by Christ at His first coming.

"But when he intimates that 'in a very practical sense, Christ is King' already, and has 'created an ever-widening kingdom,' I cannot admit that this is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. His disciples supposed that the time had come for Him to assume His kingship at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when they cried, 'Blessed be the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.' But it was not to be then. About this time, our Lord spake a parable because they thought that the Kingdom of God should *immediately* appear' (Luke xix, 11). This notion was to be checked.

"We come to a passage like Dan. vii, 13, 14: 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' Can we admit that this has in any sense been fulfilled already? Must we not be fully assured that a number of passages, both in the Old Testament and New Testament, will be as accurately and minutely accomplished at our Lord's second coming as others were at His first? As the time draws nigh, Bible students should be more carefully and diligently studying these portions, so as to be ready whenever the King really appears to claim His kingdom."

The Rev. J. E. H. THOMSON, M.A., D.D., writes: "I should wish to add my testimony to the excellence of Colonel Molony's paper

on the Evidence of Prophecy. I confess to have neglected it very much, due, I am afraid, to an unconfessed suspicion of its real cogency. The fact that the Apostles, and above all our Lord Himself, relied on the Testimony of the Prophets ought to have moved me to have a very different opinion. The Colonel's able paper has stated the argument from prophecy in a most admirable manner. The introduction of Renan and his unconscious testimony to the evidence for Christ's mission to be drawn from the Prophets, is peculiarly effective. The fact that there was about the time of the Advent, a widely-diffused expectation of a deliverer, was itself a prophecy. As Dr. Cook, the American Apologist, put it, 'Nature never makes a half joint.' If Nature, that is God, *then* implanted in man an intense desire for a deliverer, and an eager expectation that He would soon appear, that implied that the expectation would be fulfilled. I venture to think that Colonel Molony would have found some additional proofs of this expectation, and of the nature of the Messiah expected, by a study of the Jewish Apocalypses, especially of the Enoch Books. Perhaps also the pre-Christian Samaritan hymn to the Thabeb—the Samaritan name for the Messiah—would have strengthened his case. Personally, I would thank Colonel Molony very heartily for his paper, which I have read and re-read with profit."

Dr. ALFRED T. SCHOFIELD writes: "Being unable to come to-day I send a short note referring to Col. Molony's remark on the 'two Messiahs.' In St. Matt. xxi, 10, we read, 'Who is this?' and the current belief among the Jews was in two Messiahs—Messiah-ben-Joseph, the suffering servant who had to suffer and die as in Isa. liii, and Messiah-ben-David, the King of the Jews, who had to reign in glory according to Isa. xi and xxxii. To the Jews the two were irreconcilable, for they had not the missing link that alone could unite the two, *i.e.* the Resurrection. This alone makes both possible. No doubt it is to this Col. Molony refers. The paper is most interesting."

Lieut.-Col. M. A. ALVES writes:—"It is needless to say that all of these predictions respecting the First Advent must be looked for in the Old Testament prophecies, and the expectation at the time appointed in the great announcement by the Angel Gabriel in the

prophecy of the weeks in Dan. ix. We must, however, be on our guard not to read into these predictions, those which concern the coming of the King ruling all nations with a rod of iron, not of gold, when, if the just have a good time, the unjust have a bad time.

“As at that time Satan will be chained and in the abyss, and God’s Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, there will be no excuse whatever for refusing the call to repentance, and the inclination and power for righteousness.

“As an illustration of the need for caution regarding the predictions, I may mention that some ten years ago, I heard a Christian preacher, in a Good Friday sermon, speak of our Lord’s sufferings as His treading the winepress alone—see Isa. lxiii, 1-6.

“I remember, some years ago, hearing the late Dr. Bullinger say that whilst the glories of the King were sometimes mentioned, apart from any mention of the sufferings, the sufferings were never mentioned apart from the glories; and I have found no exception to this. In Gen. iii, 15, ‘IT shall bruise thy head,’ takes precedence of ‘Thou shalt bruise His heel.’ The prophecies dwell much more on the reigning King than on the suffering Saviour, who is pre-eminently taught in the tabernacle and temple sacrifices.

“Whilst many of the Old Testament prophecies might leave us in doubt as to their fulfilment in one or in more persons, Ps. xxii leaves us in little doubt, and Isa. liii in none whatever, that the Sufferer and King were to be one person. That the Prophet was to be the same person was less clear; most of those who accepted our Lord in that capacity, and also as King, were scandalized at the thought of His being the Sufferer; and when He died, they lost all hope of His becoming King—all except the penitent malefactor on the cross.

“I should rather be incined to say (see page 84, near foot) that our Lord, as Prophet, was servant of God’s Truth; it is also true that He is King of the hearts of God’s faithful people; but this, I submit, is not the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies of the King, who will not show kindness to the lion, which is cruelty to the lamb. He will know how to show mercy, but not at the expense of justice.

“There are prophecies in Deuteronomy and the Psalms, stating that the obedience of many of the Gentile nations in the millennium will be forced and feigned, not voluntary, and that a great revolt will take place (see Rev. xx) as soon as Satan is unchained.

“ I offer these few remarks in order to help in making clear the great difference in character between the first and second advents.”

Dr. C. Fox writes : “ One’s own researches in prophecy have been rather spiritual than material, for one feels it has two distinct and definite spheres. Some are sure to be most drawn to the literal and others to the spiritual in Scripture, and so in its very large and weighty sphere of prophecy, but the exceeding truth and value of this in no degree invalidates the other, or its being equally such. Only, to this the attention of each class has not been, usually, given or called.

“ Through want of cultivation of the spiritual, in so materialistic and practical an age, in fact, now the regard paid to the literal meaning of prophecy exceeds immeasurably that given the spiritual, to our great hurt. The vast majority in the Churches dwell in the Outer Gentile court, far below our privilege and our call, as brought nigh, whether or not, of outward Israel, since the case spiritually of all men is one. It were much to be desired this failure might be perceived.

“ Another trait of the prophets is that they boldly uttered much they could not have understood ; and a David, Ezekiel or Daniel must have often had this test put to their fidelity to the *Afflatus*, and nobly did they bear the trial ; for some of the most important predictions of the Saviour must have seemed irrational and the temptation been strong to omit the strange sentences *interjected*, and the comments, perhaps of ridicule and censure, by the hearers, not less than the awful acted illustration enjoined, also unswervingly and wonderfully borne. How well is it the irrelevant verses of Our Lord’s birth or death were faithfully given with what was intelligible and in sequence ! For they stand forever as priceless Gospel testimonies.”

AUTHOR’S REPLY.

Lieut.-Col. MOLONY, in reply, thanked the Chairman, Lieut.-Col. G. Mackinlay, Rev. J. E. H. Thomson, and Dr. Schofield for their kind appreciation of his paper. He agreed with the Chairman that there are numberless other fulfilments of prophecy, and said that he had always been much struck with the predictions of the Destruction

of Nineveh and Tyre, Desolation of Babylon, Degradation of Egypt and Dispersion of the Jews. He noted that Canon Driver believed in the supernatural nature of Messianic prophecy.

In deference to Mr. Sidney Collett's opinion, the word "try" is omitted on page 91, and "He deliberately set Himself to be" substituted.

Lieut.-Col. Molony stated his belief in a personal second coming of Christ, when a great and sudden extension of His Kingdom will take place; but remarked that this is no argument that Christ is not already a very great King. We rightly speak of missionaries working for the extension of Christ's Kingdom, for how can anyone extend what does not exist? Further, Pascal and others have pointed out that prophecies are often fulfilled twice over.

Lieut.-Col. Molony thought Dr. Schofield's short letter on the Resurrection very noteworthy.