

In plate xviii. of the papyrus, which illustrates ch. xci., we have a remarkable vignette,—Ani standing at the door of the tomb, and Ani's shadow accompanied by his soul (*ba*), and the rubric reads: 'If this chapter be known, Ani shall become like unto a shining being (*khu*) fully

equipped in Amenta in the underworld (Amenta). He shall not be stopped at any door of the underworld from going in and coming out millions of times. What, then, was the reward of the triumphant one (*makheru*) who became a shining one (*khu*)?'

## Hebrew Prophecy and Modern Criticism.

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### X.

'All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.'—MATT. vii. 12.

THE argument from prophecy may be said to involve three questions—(1) What did the prophets predict? (2) How and to what extent were their predictions fulfilled? (3) What bearing has their fulfilment on the evidences for the truth of Christianity? The first of these questions would, at first sight, seem very simple. And it may be thought that in my former papers an undue proportion of time has been taken in discussing it. But we have constantly found it necessary to reckon with an old system of interpretation which more scholarly methods of study have shown to be misleading. We have now to consider the second question.

But first let me summarise briefly the results of our former inquiry. A populous nation of Jews and Israelites united in one body politic, in a prodigiously fertile country, living in godliness and righteousness, with all that constitutes outward prosperity, under a perfect King, who is the head of a world-wide empire, in the centre of a world-wide Church. Such a description is a rough outline of the golden age to which the prophets pointed. Each prophet, it is true, dwells with a special emphasis on one or another of the different parts which make up the picture; each fills up the outline in his own way, and throws something of his own character and feeling into his description. But there is no part of the picture which does not, in one form or another, occur frequently in the prophetic pages. Now, did the event justify the prophets' expectation? If we take the whole picture as I have drawn it, we are bound in honesty to answer 'No.' There may have been periods of great agricultural prosperity. There certainly were times, as in the

Maccabæan wars, when the prowess and the success of the Jews in battle seem all but miraculous. But these, great as they were, were very much less than what the prophets' language must have led men to hope. From a purely political point of view, it must be confessed that the Maccabæan struggles ended in failure. The final resort to Roman protection was the deathblow to that national greatness which the prophets loved to depict. As for the perfect king who was to bring all nations into subjection to Judæa, where are we to look for him in Jewish history? The nearest approach is to be found in the priest-princes of the Asmonean line; but even the most successful of these, Hyrcanus, hardly extended the subject territory beyond the limits of Solomon's empire. Still less can we look for the prophets' Messiah in the Herods. What would the Prophet of the Captivity or Malachi have felt, could they have risen from the dead, to behold an Edomite reigning as king of Judæa? <sup>1</sup>

Have we any right then to say that these prophecies have been fulfilled? This is the question which the apologist must candidly answer. It will be perfectly useless to contend that something else was fulfilled which sceptics will never be got to believe that the prophets predicted at all. I think we must begin by candidly and unreservedly admitting that the prophets were mistaken in all of what we may call the outward aspects of their Messianic hope. We do not, of course, include under this heading the purely imaginative settings of some of their prophecies. But leaving them out of the question, we have no reason to think

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxiii. 1-6; Mal. i. 2-5.

that they made any distinction between what was external and what was internal. In all probability they believed in the fulfilment of the one quite as much as of the other. But, on the other hand, we acknowledge that, taking the prophets as a whole, the inward and spiritual side is dwelt upon with greater earnestness, and as of far greater importance. Looking back, we, at anyrate, can separate the outward and the spiritual; and while we admit, without hesitation, that the first has not been fulfilled, we can say that that does not of itself preclude the claim for the fulfilment of the second.

But before we proceed to consider this claim, there is a further point which cannot be overlooked. It may be urged that although these, so to speak, temporal and political prophecies were not literally fulfilled, they were fulfilled spiritually. That is to say, that the outward aspects of the prophecies were types or figures bearing some analogy to Christian antitypes. I need hardly say that it is very important to distinguish clearly between an (in this sense spiritual) interpretation of a prophecy and a prophecy in itself treating of the spiritual life. Now it cannot be reasonably denied, to take a striking example of the former, that it is a great help to us Christians in giving shape to our religious conceptions, to think of the Church as a kingdom under the government of our Priest-King; and we have the authority of Christ Himself for the use of such metaphors, but not for pressing them too far.<sup>1</sup> And the same no doubt may be said, more or less, of many other spiritual, or, as they are sometimes called, analogical interpretations. But that is not the real question at issue. What we have to ask is not whether certain ideas are beautiful or helpful in themselves, but whether, regarded as fulfilments of prophecies, they have any evidential value. If they have any, it must be very small compared with that of an argument derived from the direct fulfilment of prophetic expectation. For example, we may perhaps feel justified in explaining the reference of the words, 'I called My son out of Egypt'<sup>2</sup> to Christ by the theory that Christ in a sense represents the whole spiritual Israel, of which the literal Israel was

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to notice how very few of the parables of the kingdom bear out the analogy which their title would lead us to expect. A conquering king, the chief element of the prophets' Messianic kingdom, is conspicuously absent. The very idea of an external kingdom is, perhaps, positively contradicted in Luke xvii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Hos. xi. 1.

a type; but it would be quite unjustifiable to quote these words of Hosea as a proof that the prophet was possessed of supernatural foresight. Supposing again that a sceptic were to say this, 'Isaiah plainly foretold a great earthly king, to say the least, far surpassing all the kings that were before him in earthly power and moral goodness, but such a king never came,'—what is our answer to be? Shall we say, 'Yes, Isaiah's prophecies were fulfilled; the king came, but He was a spiritual king, ruling over the hearts of men.' To us that is true enough. But can we imagine the sceptic being the least convinced. He would inevitably say, 'I do not the least believe that Isaiah meant anything of the kind.' What we want are not defences to cover our retreat, but weapons to carry into the enemies' camp, or rather, should I not say, that power of enforcing belief which can only come out of a thorough and honest conviction of our own.

Now, as distinct from the so-called spiritual fulfilment of temporal prophecies, what do we mean by the inward and spiritual predictions of the prophets? Let us avoid at all cost mere vague generalities. We mean, then, that the Jewish prophets were the pioneers in religion. While they showed sin in its true light, they put forth a standard of moral goodness and religious purity far before their time. Their religious prophecies, in the narrower sense of the word, were in close connexion with their whole attitude with regard to religion. They moulded a religion which for spirituality and depth has surpassed every other which the world has ever known, except one other, if indeed it can be called another. It is difficult in a moment to appreciate the full force of this fact. For (1) an uncritical study of the Old Testament has, by antedating so much of the religious ideas of the nation, tended to obscure the spiritual work of the prophets. It must make a very great difference in our estimate of their work, if we have once realised that the Book of Deuteronomy is the impulse of a great religious awakening, parallel with that outburst of prophecy, which marked the golden age of Jewish literature. (2) What is more important still, the lofty spiritual teaching of the prophets and psalmists has by long habit of thought become completely blended with the Christian teaching of the New Testament. And so it is extremely difficult for us to realise, if I may so put it, how much Christianity there was before the time of Christ. But it is of the utmost

importance to grasp this fact, if we can, to do justice to the great saints of the Old Testament. Though the light was shining in darkness, it was even then lightening every one according as he had the power of receiving it. Christian apologists, naturally enough, make a great deal of the fact that there was among the Jews an expectation of a personal Messiah. But after all it is of infinitely greater importance to bear in mind that the seeds of a deeply spiritual religion, sown by the prophets and watered by the psalmists, had been growing in the hearts of the more pious Jews; and that when Christ came it could be said of some, even of those who though outside the pale of Judaism were not altogether outside its deeper influences, that they were white already to harvest.<sup>1</sup> The growth of the Logos doctrine has a theological interest which I do not wish for a moment to underrate; but how much more important would it be for the history of religious thought and feeling if we could enter fully into the mind and character of a Simeon or an Anna.

It would be an almost impossible task to attempt to show in detail how the Old Testament saints anticipate the teaching of Christ and His apostles. All that I can attempt to do is to mention a few great leading thoughts which will be sufficient to explain my meaning, and possibly serve as an outline for others to fill in for themselves. (1) The first thing that strikes us is the lofty conception of God Himself. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that of such splendid thoughts as find expression in Faber's hymn, 'My God, how wonderful Thou art,' there is not one to which we could not find a parallel in the Old Testament. The spiritual nature of God is nowhere perhaps more forcibly expressed than in Ps. cxxxix., its moral beauty than in Isa. lv. We may, indeed, reasonably believe that the spirit of the psalm is more real to us than it could have been to those who first knew it. But that is just because Christianity has so frequently enforced the truth which the psalmists felt as, so to speak, a personal inspiration. On the other hand, some thoughts of God, His absolute greatness, His 'awful purity,' appear to have been even more keenly felt by some of the inspired Jews than by certainly the great bulk of Christian saints. For is it not a patent fact, however much we may rightly deplore it, that our familiarity—I know

no other word to express my meaning—our familiarity with Christ has tended to obscure the absolute greatness of God? And yet the latter is obviously in accord with the best teaching of Christianity. The fault then is clearly not due to any failure of Christianity to react the lofty religious ideal of the prophets and psalmists in this respect, but to the failure of many Christians to maintain the full teaching of Christianity itself. (2) To take another point, the soul's sense of the need of spiritual communion with God. Where in Christian literature is this more forcibly expressed than in Ps. lxxiii. 1-4: 'O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee, in a dry and weary land, where no water is.' Or again, in Ps. xlii. 1, 2: 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' (3) Take again the sense of sin as a separation from God. Where can we find this more deeply felt than in Ps. li.? Or (4) again, the converse of this, purity of life as an essential condition of communion with God? With what an eloquent simplicity is this truth enforced in Ps. xxiv. 3-5: 'Who shall ascend into the hill of Jahweh? and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, and hath not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from Jahweh, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.' It is a remarkable fact how in every age of Christianity, men have found in the Psalms the most perfect expression of religious devotion.

And yet this intrinsically religious character of the Psalms may be turned into an objection to our argument. It may be said that such expressions as I have quoted describe the existing religious feelings of the several writers at the time when they wrote; they are not prophecies of a religion to come. This is true, no doubt. Though we might have quoted many somewhat similar passages from the prophets, especially from Isaiah, we certainly do find the deeper expression of religious feeling more frequently in the Psalms. But the objection misses the point. What is here contended is, that the prophets were, humanly speaking, the source and mainspring of such religious feelings. At a time when religion in its best and truest sense was all but dead, and com-

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 35.

mon morality was hardly known, the prophets put before men ideals of personal religion as things both possible and worth aiming after. More than this, every now and then, in flights of religious hope, they confidently asserted that the time would come when these ideals would be realised. Look, for example, at Jer. xxxi. 33, 34 : 'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jahweh : I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Look again at Ezek. xi. 19, 20 : 'I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh : that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them.'

But a more serious objection to our argument is that it proves too much. If the Psalms are as a whole, as critics say, later than the Prophets, it may be argued that we have in the Psalms already the fulfilment of the prophecies. We have no need, therefore, to look for it to Christianity. This is, no doubt, so far true that we must admit a certain degree of fulfilment in the spiritual religion to which the Psalms testify. But can it be seriously denied that there was a more perfect fulfilment in the teaching of Christ? For (1) in the Psalms we find expressions such as the deprecations of enemies, which fall far below the Christian standard. In some cases it may be that they belong to pre-prophetic Judaism, but in many it is extremely improbable. For example, the spirit expressed in the phrase, 'Let the praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand,'<sup>1</sup> is specially suited to the fierce religious patriotism of the Maccabæan era. (2) Again, absolute unselfishness is a duty which finds no place in the Psalter, and yet it was with respect to this doctrine of all others that Christ claimed that His teaching was a fulfilment of Judaism : 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them : for this is the law and the prophets.' The so-called law of Moses, and still more the prophets, by insisting on a kindly feeling towards the poor and the oppressed, paved the way for the more perfect teaching of Christ. We can thus fairly say that the prophets set forth a religious standard which was not perfected before the time of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxlix. 6.

And when we pass from the moral and devotional side of Christianity to its more distinctive theology, we find the same thing. Hosea had indeed taught the fatherly love of God, but chiefly with reference to the nation as a whole; with Christ it first becomes an abiding influence in the religious life of the individual. So, too, with the Incarnation. It would be an anachronism to say that the prophets predict an incarnate God, but they did certainly lead men in the way of feeling after it. We see indications of this, no doubt, in the kingly, the priestly and, perhaps we should add, the prophetic Messiah of the prophets, which show a tendency to connect the highest hope of the Jews with a unique personality. But we see them more evidently in those prophecies which show the yearning and the promise of the presence of God among men. For what the prophets have to tell us is not so much the form which Christianity was to take as its renovating power.

And so again with the Atonement. It may not be true that the prophets and psalmists contemplated a suffering Messiah, as I pointed out in my last paper, but at anyrate they set forth an ideal of innocent suffering as a power in the regeneration of man. This ideal is undoubtedly connected with the Jewish nation in Isa. liii., and probably also in Ps. xxii. But the personification in both cases made it easier to see that the suffering Christ was a unique fulfilment of the ideal : 'He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.' How can Christians help seeing in such language words infinitely truer of Jesus Christ than of any other?

And the same is also true of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It may be extremely difficult to say what was the precise meaning which prophet or psalmist attached to the phrases, 'the Spirit of God' and 'the Spirit of holiness.' But such language at anyrate shows that they realised the divine character of that inward power which makes for holiness and truth. 'Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not the Spirit of Thy

holiness from me.'<sup>1</sup> 'And now the Lord God hath sent me, and His Spirit.'<sup>2</sup> 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jahweh of hosts.'<sup>3</sup> In such passages as these, we can see the germ of the fuller Christian thought.

But what of the other distinctive doctrines of Christianity, and especially those of the resurrection from the dead and life everlasting? We surely cannot, in the light of modern scholarship, say confidently that the writers of the Old Testament predicted these. But if they did not predict them, they were, as it were, feeling after them. We may have great uncertainty about the meaning of Ezek. xxxvii. or Isa. xxvi. The resurrection of Israel may in either case be, and in Ezekiel probably is, nothing more than a poetical figure. We may have grave doubts about the nature of Job's great hope.<sup>4</sup> But when we come to the Psalms, we begin to find expressions, which are most naturally explained, of some kind of belief in a future state: 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness;' 'The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;' and above all, that marvellous flight of religious hope, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one (or holy ones) to see the pit. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'<sup>5</sup> In the time of the Maccabees we find what had been the exceptional effort of faith becoming the settled conviction of, at least, the most pious Jews. Probably it was the persecutions of those troublous times which especially tended to develop it. And the distinct belief in this doctrine at that time helps to explain the language of the Psalms. The growth of religious thought among a people is like the growth of speech in a child. There is a time in his life when his cries are quite inarticulate. A little later, and there are sounds which to the mother's ear alone seem like the first efforts after certain words. A little later still, and a few intelligible words can be clearly distinguished, and thus prove that the mother was right. Just in the same way the more developed thought of later Judaism shows us that in phrases which seem at first sight vague and ambiguous, the Psalmists were endeavouring to give expression to a half-conscious

hope that communion with God would not be altogether cut asunder by death.

We see a still more striking example of the true relation between prophecy and fulfilment in what bears upon the rejection of the Jews and the admission of the Gentiles. That many of the prophets contemplated the admission of the Gentiles into the Jewish Church is abundantly evident. But it is also true that it was almost always connected with some sort of subordination of the Gentiles to Israel. No prophet, for example, more clearly recognised that all nations were under God's sovereignty than Amos. And yet, when Israel has been sifted by punishment, the prophet expressly promises the possession of Edom, and of all the nations which are called by God's name.<sup>6</sup> We cannot, then, suppose that the prophets seriously contemplated the rejection of God's people in favour of the Gentiles. But there is no real difficulty in this, if we believe that the outward aspects of the prophecy were dictated by the same patriotic spirit which loved to picture a Jewish king ruling over a Jewish world. The germ of such prophecies lies in the feeling after the thought that the one religion of the future was to break down all distinctions of race. It is the spirit in which St. Paul uttered that noble hyperbole: 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one [man] in Christ Jesus.'<sup>7</sup> And besides, is it quite correct to speak of the rejection of the Jews? As for those Jews who rejected Christ, was it not their own act of faithlessness to their own creed? We may say, 'But does not St. Paul speak of the Jewish apostasy as part of a providential dispensation?' Yes, but we must also remember that to St. Paul the final salvation of the Jews was an essential corollary of his argument. It is not fair to accept the one and to ignore the other.

To sum up briefly what I have said, we may say that prophecy is fulfilled in Christianity in the following ways:—(1) Christianity enforced the best religious teachings of the Prophets and Psalms. (2) It gave them a more perfect and complete development. (3) Christ brought into the world a new potent force, by which it became more possible for man to receive them, and live by them. (4) That in Christ the religion of a nation became potentially at least, the religion of a world.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. li. 11.      <sup>2</sup> Isa. xlvi. 16.      <sup>3</sup> Zech. iv. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Job xix. 25-27.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. xvii. 15, xlix. 14, xvi. 10, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Amos ix. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Gal. iii. 28.

These facts are in principle coming to be recognised more and more by Jewish writers themselves. Listen, *e.g.*, to what Graetz says, in his *History of the Jews*:<sup>1</sup> 'The time had come,' he writes, speaking of the Christian era, 'when the fundamental truths of Judaism, till then only thoroughly known and rightly appreciated by profound thinkers, should burst their shackles, and go freely forth among all the peoples of the earth. Sublime and lofty views of God and of holy living for the individual as well as for the state, which form the kernel of Judaism, were now to permeate among all nations, and to bring them a rich and beneficent harvest. Israel was now to commence in earnest her sacred mission; she was to become

<sup>1</sup> Eng. trans. vol. i. p. 141.

the teacher of nations. The ancient teaching about God and religious morality was to be introduced by her into an immoral and godless world. Judaism, however, could only gain admission into the hearts of the heathens by taking another name and assuming other forms.' If Jews are willing to admit such a strong argument as this for Christianity, Christians need not shrink from admitting what Christ Himself insisted on: 'Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.'<sup>2</sup> It was not of any real or fancied foreshadowings of His person or His work that Christ uttered these words, but of the eternal, but gradually revealed, truths of religion and morality.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. v. 17.

## At the Literary Table.

### THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

(The Prices of the Books mentioned below will generally be found in the Advertisement pages.)

#### II.

LECTURES ON PREACHING. BY W. BOYD CARPENTER, D.D., D.C.L. (*Macmillan*. Crown 8vo, pp. 254.) Why is it that the best preachers are always chosen to deliver lectures on preaching? It does not follow that the man who can do a thing best, knows best how it ought to be done. It is even said that the worst preachers make the best professors. But no doubt there is reason in it. For a popular preacher is at least likely to be pleasant to listen to and easy to read, and that is an earlier necessity than that his counsels should be profitable to follow. So the Cambridge Committee chose wisely enough when they chose the Bishop of Ripon. What the living voice may have made these lectures we cannot tell, but it scarce seems possible that they could have been more lively and impressive than they are on the printed page.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION. BY E. M. CAILLARD. (*Murray*. Crown 8vo, pp. xvi, 267.) More things are wrought by the binding of books than even some publishers dream of. The millionaire who gave the order that his library should be filled with well-bound volumes, was as human in

that as he was patriotic when he rejected the suggestion that any of them should be bound in russia or morocco. So this book will sell for its binding as well as its own considerable merits. It is a clever book, and its cleverness is given to Christ. Not to the Christ of commonplace certainly, the Christ of a merely inherited creed, and a comfortable thoughtless orthodoxy. It is the Christ of St. Luke, however, the Christ who *began* at Moses and all the prophets, and opened up the Scriptures in order. It is the Christ who made a difference between what was said to them of old time, and what 'I say unto you.' The essays that make up the book were found already by most of us in the pages of the *Contemporary*, and we followed *their* progress there with very great interest. But the volume makes a better impression.

THE STORY OF THE STARS. BY GEORGE F. CHAMBERS, F.R.A.S. (*Newnes*. 12mo, pp. 192.) This is a new departure for the proprietors of the *Strand Magazine*, and as welcome as it is new. Small cheap books on science and general topics, if they are authoritative and attractive, as these are, can never be published in vain. Then Messrs.