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ART. I.—*Lectures on Metaphysics.* By Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, Bart. Edited by the Rev. H. L. Mansel, D. D., Oxford, and John Veitch, M. A., Edinburgh. William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London. MDCCCLIX. 2 vols, 8vo.

It seems to us, that no other man in the history of letters lived so exclusively in the pursuit of truth for its own sake, and strove with such untiring energy, and such vast designs, to elevate the intellectual dignity of his country, as Sir William Hamilton. His whole life, from his earliest years, was governed by intellectual ambition. It will afford us an instructive lesson, to review the life of a man of such lofty aims.

Sir William was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on the 8th of March, in the year 1788. He was of aristocratic lineage; being the twenty-fourth male representative of the second son of Sir Gilbert, the founder of the noble house of Hamilton in Scotland. The ancestor, from whom he inherited his baronetcy, received his title in the year 1763, for the services of his father at the battles of Dunbar and Worcester. There is still to be seen, at Prestonpans, a noble ruin of the feudal residence of the family, which, by its massive towers and projecting battlements, serves to show, that the Hamiltons of Preston took their part in the fierce struggles, political and religious, that, for a

ART. III.—*The Old Testament Idea of a Prophet.*

THE books of the prophets form a large and most important part of the Old Testament. They contain a revelation of the Divine will made to Israel, during a succession of centuries, which is still in its essence universally obligatory; they exhibit to us in the spirit which they embody, and the duties which they inculcate, the religion of the former dispensation, and in the doctrines which they unfold, the theology of that dispensation in its most advanced stage; particularly they contain the clearest and fullest disclosures, made prior to his appearance, of the coming and work of the great Redeemer, thus holding him up as the object of faith and hope to their own generation, carrying forward the work of preparation for his advent, and furnishing the materials for his recognition when he did appear; and they further supply us with a most powerful argument for the divinity and truth of our religion, by the evidence of supernatural foresight afforded by the fulfilment of their predictions.

In order to a just appreciation of the labours of the prophets, and a correct understanding of their writings, it will be necessary to institute a preliminary inquiry as to their proper character and functions. What then is the true idea of a prophet under the Old Testament?

This may be learned, 1. from the formal definition furnished by Deut. xviii. 9-22, which is the classic passage upon this subject. The terms, in which the promise of the prophet is made, indicate with sufficient explicitness, the nature of that which is promised. The application of the language of this passage to Christ by the Apostle Peter, in Acts iii. 22, 23, does not prove that it was spoken exclusively of him. It rather embraces all the prophets whom God would successively raise up for his people, including Him who was the last and greatest of the series, the seal of the prophets, the prophet by way of eminence, in whom the promise finds its highest and most complete fulfilment. In fact the ministries of the prophets who preceded the advent, form, in a sense, part of Christ's own

prophetic work. It was his word that they spake. It was his Spirit that was in them, (1 Pet. i. 11,) that inspired them, and spake through them. And a prediction of Christ as a prophet, to be complete, must naturally comprehend all that he was to do in this character under both dispensations. Whatever interpretation be given to this passage, however, it is equally adapted to our present purpose. Whether it be understood generically of all the prophets, or specifically and individually of Christ as the prophet in the highest sense, it in either case teaches what a prophet is. And this it does both positively and negatively.

The positive definition is found, verse 18, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." It hence appears (1) that he must be one of the chosen people. It was from among their brethren that the prophet was to be raised up. Immediate communications of the Divine will, made directly by God himself, had so much of terror about them, that, at the people's request, the Lord promised henceforth to speak to them through the instrumentality of men. And as one of the principal objects for which Israel was selected to be the Lord's people was that they might be for the time the theatre of Divine revelation, it was quite in accordance with this design that the revelations of God to them should come through an Israelitish channel. Balaam is no exception to this rule; though, if he were, his would be an isolated case. He is called a prophet, 2 Peter ii. 16, but in a connection which shows that it was given to him only in an improper sense. He is nowhere so called in the Old Testament. He was a soothsayer, Josh. xiii. 22; he used enchantments, Num. xxiv. 1; and it was in this capacity that his aid was sought by Balak, for his messengers departed to fetch him, having the rewards of divination in their hand, Num. xxii. 7. It was hoped that his potent influence could charm away Jehovah's protection from Israel. The Lord made use of him to serve a purpose of his own, by making the chosen refuge of his people's foes speak their own discomfiture, just as he afterwards made use of the witch of Endor, to foretell the ruin of the apostate king by whom she was consulted. But in so doing he neither sanctioned their wicked

arts, nor constituted them his prophets. Divine communications were also made to Abimelech, Gen. xx. 3; to Pharaoh, Gen. xli. 1; to a man in the host of Midian, Judges vii. 13, 14; to Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. ii. 1; but these, like the prophecies of Balaam, delivered to the king of Midian, were designed to accomplish some end on behalf of the chosen race, and were confined to the extraordinary circumstances which called them forth. None of these were prophets.

The prophet is further (2) made such by direct Divine agency. The Lord says, "I will raise them up a prophet." He is not to intrude into this office at his own will, therefore, nor to receive it by lineal descent, nor by human appointment, but by the sovereign choice of God, who raises him up when and where he will, guided solely by his good pleasure, and the exigencies of that scheme of grace which he is conducting. The expression, "I will raise them up," however, probably includes more than the simple investiture with the office. It is not as though the Lord found men ready to his hand, so to speak, and simply designated them to this work. God raises up the men, as well as makes them prophets, and both their original needful endowments, and the preparatory providential training by which they were severally fitted for their respective tasks, are promised here. And so he says to Jeremiah, i. 5, that he was set apart and ordained before his birth to be a prophet. Comp. Isa. xlix. 1, 5. The Lord first prepared, on each occasion, an instrument suited to the end he had in view, and then engaged him in his proper work. The supernatural agency of God, it must be borne in mind, did not eradicate nor supersede, but guided and employed, the natural capacities and characteristics of the prophets. (3) "I will put my words in his mouth." The prophet was inspired of God, and this not merely in the sense of elevating, clearing, and assisting his native powers, so that he could see the truth himself, but in the sense of a direct impartation of definite instructions. (4) He was charged with the authoritative communication of Divine messages to others, which they were bound, under the severest penalties, to receive and to obey. "He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him; and it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require

it of him." One other characteristic remains, viz., (5) likeness to Moses. It should be as if the great lawgiver were revived or perpetuated in the persons of these his successors, who would carry forward the work which he had begun, and in the same spirit. The prophets were consequently not to be isolated phenomena, springing sporadically, so to speak, from the supernatural soil of the old economy, but having no vital connection with each other, or with the revelations that preceded them. They belong to one closely related scheme, initiated by Moses, and continued by them in likeness to him. Their teachings must accordingly not only harmonize with, but be built upon his, containing the same essential principles further unfolded, and with fresh applications. Combining these particulars, a prophet is defined to be one from among the chosen people, who, raised up by God for the purpose, and acting under his inspiration, delivers his messages to the people, his work being engrafted upon or unfolded from that of Moses, and of like tenor with it.

The prophet is in this passage further described negatively, by being set in opposition to two classes who profess somewhat similar functions to this, but with a total contrariety of character. (1) Heathen diviners and prophets of idols. These, of which several varieties are here enumerated, sought to prognosticate the future, or to discover the unknown by their respective arts based upon the observation of omens, or by the pretended inspiration of false deities, after the manner of the responses of the ancient oracles. This mode of prying into secrets and of consulting the Divine will, is denounced as heathenish, and strictly prohibited to the covenant people as an abomination to the Lord. (2) False prophets, professing to speak in the name of the Lord, but who have not been commanded so to speak, who in the language of other Scriptures prophesy out of their own heart, Ezek. xiii. 2, Jer. xiv. 14, xxiii. 16, 21, 26. The two tests proposed here and elsewhere for distinguishing false prophets from the true, are first, the non-fulfilment of their predictions, Deut. xviii. 22, 1 Sam. iii. 19, 20, Jer. xxviii. 9; and, secondly, teaching idolatry or error, Deut. xiii. 1-3: so in 1 Kings xiii. 18, the falsehood of the old prophet in Bethel to the man of God from Judah was sufficiently evidenced by its

contrariety with the charge already received by the latter, verse 9. In like manner the test of false teachers given in the New Testament was inconsistency of doctrine with that already received upon Divine authority. Gal. i. 8, 9; 1 John iv. 6; 2 John verse 10.

Idolatrous diviners were of heathen origin and were introduced into Israel from abroad, from the ungodly nations by which they were surrounded. False prophets were of native growth, the caricatures or apes of the true. The former are met with more frequently in the earlier stages of the people's history, before the Canaanites were quite extirpated, or while the influence of contiguous pagans was powerfully felt in the life and spirit of Israel. The latter sprang up, or at least were most prominent, at a later period, enticed by the consideration and influence, which the true prophets enjoyed, and courted by a degenerate people and their rulers as prophesying "smooth things."

2. The Old Testament idea of a prophet of the Lord may be gathered from the names and epithets applied to them, and by which they are characterized. These are of three sorts, viz. such as describe them (1) absolutely, (2) relatively to God, and (3) relatively to the people. The first class comprises the names נָבִיא prophet, and הַנָּחֵם or רֹאֵה seer, and הַרְבֵּיחַ spiritual man. Their most common designation is נָבִיא, to whose root נָבַע the best authorities attribute the same radical signification with its cognate נָבַע to bubble out or pour forth as a spring or fountain pours forth water. Then if the noun be taken in the active sense of the root, as most Hebraists prefer, it will signify one who pours forth or utters (נָבַע in this sense, Ps. lxxviii. 2, cxix. 171, cxlv. 7); or if it be taken in a passive sense, it will signify one upon whom is poured *i. e.* the Spirit of God (נָבַע in this sense, Prov. i. 23); or both may be virtually combined by adhering to the strict force of the figure of the root, one who pours forth under the influence of an inward excitation, as a spring impelled by a hidden internal force pours forth water. The proper signification of the word is particularly evident from Exod. vii. 1, where the Lord says to Moses, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron, thy brother, shall be thy prophet." Here it plainly

means one who speaks on behalf of another, or utters what is communicated to him by another. In its emphatic and technical sense it must therefore mean, one who is the mouth-piece of God to men.* It seems most probable that this is also the original import of its Greek equivalent *προφῆτης* as employed both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament. This, it is true, is commonly explained as though *πρό* in composition meant beforehand, and *πρόφημα* were simply to predict; but the primary sense of *πρό* appears to be not temporal but local, and this may be retained here, as it certainly is in some other compounds, one who speaks before or in the presence of another, as his messenger and interpreter. "In this sense it is applied by classic authors to the official expounders of the oracles, and to poets as the prophets of the muses, *i. e.* as speaking in their name, at their suggestion, or by their inspiration." Alexander on Isaiah, p. ix.

Seer, *רֹאֵה* or *חֹזֶה*, designates not the mode of the Divine communications to him who was so called, as though he were a recipient of visions, for this was not always, perhaps not usually the case; but it implies the possession of the faculty of sight in a higher degree than belongs to ordinary men. The seer had an inspiration which enabled him to see what lay hid to others. This name, descriptive of the Divine illumination of the messengers of God, is said, 1 Sam. ix. 9, to have yielded to "prophet" in current usage, when the function of the public utterance of the will of God came to assume a new regularity and prominence.

The spiritual man *אִישׁ הָרוּחַ*, lit., man of the Spirit, used as a synonym of prophet, Hos. ix. 7, designates one who is characterized by his possession of the Spirit of God, who is controlled by this indwelling Divine agent, and acts and speaks under his influence. These names are applied to false as well as true prophets, inasmuch as the former claim to be what the latter truly are. Micah iii. 5, 7; Hosea ix. 7.

The second series of names describes the relation of the prophets to God. They are men of God *אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים*, 1 Samuel ii. 27, servants of the Lord, *עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה*, 2 Kings xvii. 23, the Lord's

* So Virgil *Æn.* iii. 358, 359 uses *interpretes Divinum* as the equivalent of *vates*.

messengers, מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16, since they wait upon God ready to be employed as he may require them, are engaged in doing his work, and in bearing his messages. These titles, unlike the preceding, are from their nature inapplicable to those acting in the service of false gods, or to mere pretenders to an agency on behalf of Jehovah with which they have not been entrusted. They have, however, in their generic sense a much wider extent of meaning, and are consequently not restricted in their application to the specific form of service discharged by the prophets, but may be used of those who are employed by God to do any work relating to his earthly kingdom, or even who do his bidding in his providential administration of the universe. Thus Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xxv. 9, and the material universe, Ps. cxix. 91, are called God's servants; and the angels are his messengers; this is in fact their common name in both Hebrew and Greek.

The third class of epithets describes the functions of the prophets relatively to men. They are watchmen. This is the English equivalent of different Hebrew words, which vary somewhat in their primary signification, מַגִּיד, Isa. xxi. 6, lii. 8, those who are set upon a lookout to descry distant objects, and שֹׁמֵר, Isa. lxii. 6, guardians stationed upon the walls, or going about the streets of a city, to detect and give warning of existing or impending evils. The prophets are thus set to watch for the earliest indications of the Divine will, Hab. ii. 1, or to sound the alarm to the wicked of the threatened penalty of their sins, Ez. iii. 17. They are shepherds, רֹעֵה Jer. xvii. 16, appointed to protect, guide, and feed the flock of God, a designation which they share with the rulers and the priests, Jer. xxiii. 1; Zech. xi. 8. They are the people's interpreters, מְדַבֵּר, Isa. xliii. 27, the medium of communication to explain to them the otherwise unknown or unintelligible will of God. Combining these various names we arrive again at the definition of the prophet, as one who, possessed of the Spirit of God, sees and utters what is undiscoverable by others, under a commission received from God, for the welfare and instruction of men.

3. The true idea of a prophet under the Old Testament may still further be gathered from the expressions currently em-

ployed respecting them. (1) Their Divine call and commission is declared when it is said that God raised them up, Amos ii. 11, took them from other occupations and bid them prophesy, Amos vii. 15, sent them, Jer. vii. 25, and that not barely in the general, but on special errands, 2 Kings ii. 2, 4, 6, and commanded them, Jer. xxiii. 32. (2) Their inspiration is taught by such statements as that the Spirit of God came upon them, 2 Chron. xv. 1, xxiv. 20 (lit. the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah,) fell upon them, Ezek. xi. 5, rested upon them, 2 Kings ii. 15, the pouring out of God's Spirit upon men makes them prophets, Joel ii. 28; and the powerful nature of this Divine influence appears from such language as the hand of the Lord was upon them, Ezra i. 3; fell upon them, Ezra viii. 1; was strong upon them, Ezra iii. 14; Isa. viii. 11; the spirit within them constrains them, Job xxxii. 18; they are full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, Micah iii. 8. (3) Divine communications are made to them; the Lord speaks to them, Isa. viii. 1, 5; 1 Sam. xvi. 7; answers them, Hab. ii. 1; shows them what to do, 1 Sam. xvi. 3, and what will happen, 2 Kings viii. 10; makes himself known to them in visions, and speaks to them in dreams, Numb. xii. 6; wakens their ear to hear, Isa. l. 4; reveals himself to them, 1 Sam. iii. 21; reveals things in their ears, Isa. v. 9, xxii. 14; reveals his secret to them, whatever he designs to do, Amos iii. 7; his word comes to them, Hos. i. 1; is in them, Hosea i. 2 (word of the Lord *דבר יהוה* lit. in Hosea); they hear God's speech, Hab. iii. 2; hear him speaking to them, Ezek. ii. 2; hear a rumour from the Lord, Ob. ver. 1; hear the word at God's mouth, Ezek. iii. 17; have understanding in the visions of God (lit. in seeing God,) 2 Chron. xxvi. 5; find visions from the Lord, Lam. ii. 9. (4) They are God's agents in making known his will; they stand before God, i. e., are in an attitude of readiness to do his pleasure, 1 Kings xvii. 1; speak in the word of the Lord, 1 Kings xiii. 2; in the Lord's message, Hag. i. 13, i. e., as commanded and sent by him; they are as the mouth of the Lord, Jer. xv. 19; he speaks by (lit. by the hand of) them, Isa. xx. 2; uses similitudes by their ministry, Hosea xii. 10; gives them a tongue to speak, Isa. l. 4; they prophesy in the name of the Lord, Jer. xxvi. 20, i. e., by his authority and as his representatives, and are contrasted

with the false prophets who speak a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord, Jer. xxiii. 16; they declare what they have heard from the Lord of Hosts, Isa. xxi. 10; give warnings from him, Ezek. iii. 17; inquire of the Lord for others, Jer. xxi. 2; in consulting a prophet the people inquire of God, 1 Sam. ix. 9, Ezek. xiv. 7, xx. 1, 3; their utterances are the word of God, 1 Sam. ix. 27, the voice of the Lord, Jer. xxxviii. 20, the answer of God, Micah iii. 7; and are constantly prefaced or followed by such phrases as "thus saith (וַיֹּאמֶר) the Lord," Amos i. 3, etc., saith (אָמַר) the Lord, Isa. xiv. 22, the Lord hath spoken it, Isa. xxii. 25, the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, Isaiah i. 20: what they say the Lord speaks, Isa. vii. 10; not hearkening to them the people are charged with not hearkening to God, Jer. xxv. 7, and not hearing his words, Jer. xxv. 8. In the light then of these constantly recurring expressions which grow out of and interpret for us the radical idea of an Old Testament prophet, he is a man who, raised up and commissioned of God and inspired by him, receives revelations of his will and authoritatively declares it to others. And with this agree the current representations as well as the explicit statements of the New Testament, e. g., 2 Peter i. 21. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

It will be perceived that the three several definitions reached by these different methods are essentially identical. A prophet is an inspired revealer of the will of God; and in so far as he belongs to the scheme of Old Testament revelation he must, as we are taught by Deut. xviii., be one from among the chosen people, and build upon the foundation which Moses has laid.

We are now prepared to estimate aright the various erroneous conceptions which have been entertained upon this subject. 1. The inspiration of the prophets was not the mere product of native genius, or of exalted holiness. It will not satisfy these repeated scriptural statements which have been recited, to regard them simply as enlightened and holy men, who were so far lifted above the mass of their contemporaries, and of mankind generally, as to discern truths which lay hid to others, and to make their views and apprehensions a standard author-

ity for the rest of men. They had a direct Divine commission, received immediate communications from heaven, were the mouth of God speaking to men, and their words the very words of God. Their teachings are not simply an approximation to the will of God, as those of any human teacher, however excellent, must be; they are the absolute expression of that will. They deliver not what they have had the ability to discern, but what has been supernaturally imparted to them. The prophets were indeed holy men, and many of them highly gifted; for it would have been incongruous had the immediate messengers of heaven been otherwise. But their inspiration was a thing entirely distinct from their sanctification. There was no necessary connection between them, and neither had any inherent tendency to beget the other, as is shown by the case of Balaam, who, though a heathen seer, and a godless man, was inspired for a particular occasion, Numb. xxiii. 16, xxiv. 2; by the case of Saul also, and his messengers, sent to take David, who prophesied, 1 Sam. xix. 20-24; though the character of the former was such as to give rise to the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" and by the analogy of miraculous powers, which is another form of the direct supernatural agency of the Spirit of God, and may be possessed by unsanctified men, Matt. vii. 22, 23. Such, at least, is the conception which the prophets themselves had of their own inspiration, and which is perpetually presented throughout the sacred writings. This cannot be evaded without bringing against them the charge of enthusiasm, if not fanaticism, in fancying themselves to have a Divine commission, which they really did not possess. But this charge would be in the face of all the evidences of the supernatural character of the Old Testament revelation, and is contradicted by the nature of many of the prophetic disclosures of the future, and their exact fulfilment.

2. The prophets were not a power in the state, nor were their aims political and patriotic. Their acts and words are not to be viewed as having simply a political aspect, nor can they be estimated at all from this point of view. It is true, that we find them at times confronting kings and rulers, haranguing them or the people touching public affairs, opposing contem-

plated measures, and pointing out the ruin which would ensue upon their adoption. Elijah came into repeated conflict with Ahab. Elisha sent a young man of the prophets to anoint Jehu for the overthrow of his ungodly house. Hosea and Isaiah denounced the entangling and dangerous alliances with Assyria and Egypt. Jeremiah opposed the fatal policy of Zedekiah and his princes. But in all this they were acting the part not of politicians, but of religious teachers and ambassadors of God. They never sought to build up a political party; they neither possessed nor desired official power or station; they were not demagogues in a bad nor in a good sense. What they opposed was not on the ground of impolicy, but sin; what they maintained was for the sake of the honour and the law of God. It must here be borne in mind, that the government of Israel differed from that of any other people which ever existed. It was, in the true sense of the word, a theocracy. God was their king, and governed them, not indirectly merely, but by direct and constant manifestations of his will. God gave them laws, appointed their rulers, who were simply his vicegerents, while he reserved the supreme jurisdiction to himself. This gave a religious complexion to all their national affairs. The idolatry of Ahab's house was a violation of the fundamental constitution of Israel as the covenant people of God, and called for the interference of the prophets as the immediate representatives of the Most High. Alliances with the heathen, and a dependence upon them which should be reposed in the Lord alone, were crimes against God, and are dealt with as such by the prophets; and the evils which they predict as following them, were not held up as inevitable political consequences, but as the just judgment of God. And when they were consulted by rulers in difficult circumstances, and their advice solicited touching public affairs, their response is not directed by political wisdom and forecast, but by the direct revelation of the will of God.

3. The prophets were not reformers, much less antagonists to the Mosaic law. The only colour to this misrepresentation is derived from their opposition to false glosses put upon the law, and to prevailing evils whose advocates sheltered them-

selves behind perversions of its language. Just as our Lord, who came not to destroy the law but to fulfil, swept away in his discourses the accumulated pharisaical traditions without touching the substance of the law itself. When Ezekiel says, xviii. 20, that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, he does not contradict the declaration of the law, *Exod.* xx. 5, that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. He is opposing the false interpretation put upon it by his contemporaries as though descendants suffer for the crimes of their ancestors, irrespective of their own character and conduct, whereas the law expressly says that this imputation occurs only in the case of them that hate him. Those who perpetuate from generation to generation an organized rebellion against God, justify the evil deeds of their predecessors and are rightfully answerable for their crimes. But the righteous children of ungodly parents enter into no such combination, and are not answerable in the true intent of the law, as the prophet shows by appealing to and partially quoting *Deut.* xxiv. 16: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

Again when the prophets, as *Isaiah* i. 11-14, *Jeremiah* vi. 20, vii. 21, 22, declare the worthlessness of the ceremonial observances of the people, and assert in spite of their outward conformity to the statute that they are wholly unacceptable in the sight of God, they are not aiming at an abolition of the ritual and seeking to substitute a more spiritual form of worship. It is the profane spirit of heartless formality, joined with ungodly living, which they rebuke. Sacrifices which were acceptable when expressing true devotion and accompanying lives of obedience, became insufferable when offered as the price of lives of sin, and in a spirit at variance with all that the law required.

The prophets were divinely commissioned reformers of the people, but the law needed no correction. With a uniform voice they recall their hearers, like *Isaiah* viii. 20, to the law and to the testimony: and bid them, like *Malachi* iv. 4, remember the law of Moses which was commanded him in Horeb for

all Israel. They, throughout, base their instructions upon the law, and incorporate its language in their discourse to an extent which will astonish those who have not made this point a subject of distinct and careful study.

An opposition on the part of the prophets to the divinely revealed laws of Moses, which was fundamental to the covenant character of the people, and to their existence as the people of God, is entirely insupposable and impossible. The prophets, as has already been seen, were contemplated in the law, and one of the prime qualities of a true prophet, as there defined, is his likeness to the great lawgiver in spirit and in work. The revelation of God, conducted by Moses and the prophets, was one self-consistent, closely related scheme.

4. The prophets were not mere predictors of the future. This incorrect or partial notion has been and is much more prevalent than any of those before referred to. The Fathers* define a prophet to be one who foretells future events; and this is an idea very generally entertained upon the subject. Its error consists in mistaking a part for the whole, and a means for the end. Their disclosures of the future form so remarkable and important a part of their communications, that they have come to overshadow the rest, and the constant aim of these disclosures has been lost sight of beside their own inherent grandeur. But (1) it is observable that the foretelling of the future does not enter into the definition of a prophet, as that is furnished by the Old Testament in the various ways above exhibited. However conspicuous a place this may hold in their work, therefore, it cannot be essential to it. They were inspired to reveal the will of God, and bear his messages

* Basil Comment. on Isa. ch. 3, Προφήτης μὲν ἔστιν ἡ κατὰ ἀπικάλυψιν τοῦ πνεύματος πραγμαζομένη τὸ μέλλον; a more comprehensive, but still a defective statement, is made in the preface to this commentary: Ὅρκοι δὲ εἰ προφῆται οὐ τὰ μέλλοντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν παρίσταν τὰ λαμβάνοντα. Chrysostom, Hom. 2, on Is. vi. 1: Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλο τί ποτέ ἐστι προφητεία, ἀλλ' ἢ τῶν μελλόντων πραγμάτων πραγματώσεις. Synopsis Scrip. Sacr. Ὡστερ γὰρ τὰ μυστέα γενόμενα καὶ ἀφανῆ ἔτι τυγχάνοντα, προφητείας ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν, οὕτω τὰ γενόμενα μὲν, κεκρυμμένα δὲ τῶν χρόνῶ, ταῦτα ἀνακαλύψαι καὶ εἰς μέσον ἀγαγεῖν τῆς ἰσῆς χάριτος ἐστίν. Ambrose de Benedict. Patriarch. II. 7, Prophetia enim annuntiatio futurorum est. Isidore Hispalensis, Etymolog. vii. 8. 1, Quos gentilitas vates appellat, hos nostri prophetas vocant, quasi præfatores, quia porro fantur et de futuris vera prædicant.

to men, whatever the substance of the communications made to them might be, and whether they had relation to the present, past, or future. (2) The revelations of the prophets do not in fact concern the future exclusively. Disclosures of things past or present, beyond the reach of their natural faculties, furnished an equally clear evidence of prophetic power. So when Samuel spoke to Saul of the loss and the discovery of his father's asses, 1 Sam. ix. 20; and blind old Ahijah detected the disguise of the wife of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 6; and Elisha told Gehazi where he had been, 2 Kings v. 26; or told the king of Israel words spoken in the king of Syria's bedchamber, 2 Kings vi. 12; and Ezekiel in Babylon announced the siege of Jerusalem upon the very day that it began, Ezek. xxiv. 2; and Daniel repeated to Nebuchadnezzar his dream, Dan. ii. 28, etc. Such an uncovering of secrets, however, present, past or future, as was falsely pretended to by heathen diviners, and really possessed by the Hebrew prophets, does not comprise the whole of the functions of the latter; it does not even include that which was the main and characteristic feature of their work. They were divine guides and instructors of the people. It was not to satisfy the curiosity, promote the material interests, or excite the wonder of men that they brought to light what was unknown, but to further moral and religious aims. When they gave responses about inferior matters, it was for the sake of higher ends to be answered by so doing, or to give proof of their possession of the spirit of prophecy. Their great function was to maintain in its integrity the covenant relation of the people to God, and to conduct them towards the end for which that relation was established, the coming of Christ, and his great salvation. Accordingly, their writings are chiefly occupied with the duties which the people owe to God, and the ultimate blessing which it was his design to bring upon them, and upon the world by means of them. The prospective nature of their work, as of the dispensation to which they belonged, gave prominence naturally to the predictive element in their discourses. But all that their inspiration taught them of the future was blended with lessons drawn from the present and the past, and brought to bear upon the reli-

gious training of the people.* (3) To regard the prophecies simply in the light of predictions designed to authenticate the Divine commission of those who uttered them, by affording evidence of supernatural foresight, would be to exalt a subordinate and incidental at the expense of the direct and principal end. Many of them would thus lose their meaning and value for the prophets' contemporaries, inasmuch as the evidence was not complete until after their fulfilment; others would be of doubtful weight, in consequence of their obscure and enigmatical character; and this aim would be frustrated entirely in the case of others still, by the failure of God's providence to preserve any authentic record of the events.

It will serve to define still more precisely the idea of the Old Testament prophets, if we consider them not only absolutely and by themselves, but relatively to their position both in the theocracy and in the general scheme of Divine revelation. We shall thus have to inquire how they stand related, in the first place, to other contemporaneous sacred orders, and, secondly, to antecedent and subsequent forms of Divine communication.

The priests, like the prophets, were by virtue of their office mediators, acting between God and men. But the priests acted on men's behalf before God, while the prophets were employed on God's behalf with men. And from this radical diversity spring their several peculiarities of functions and character. The priests became such by hereditary descent from a particular tribe and family selected as representatives of the rest; they constituted an organized body with gradations of rank, carrying the representative principle to its highest extent in the high priest, the head of their order; and they were supported by a legal income from those on whose behalf they acted. The prophets were without regular succession, organization or stipend; they were called to their office by the immediate agency of the Spirit of God, who selected them by no other rule than his sovereign pleasure. They might accordingly be taken from any tribe, and any part of the land, even Galilee, as appears

* The word *prophesy* is in the New Testament used in the triple sense of predicting the future, John xi. 51, revealing what had already occurred but was unknown, Matt. xxvi. 68, and inspired discourse irrespective of its relation to time, Luke i. 67.

from the case of Nahum and Jonah, notwithstanding the taunt of the Pharisees (John vii. 52,) from any rank and from either sex. Miriam (Exod. xv. 20,) Deborah (Judg. iv. 4) and Huldah, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 22,) were prophetesses. Comp. in the New Testament, Anna (Luke ii. 36) and the daughters of Philip, Acts xxi. 9. Descent from a prophet, while it was not essential, was, however, no disqualification, as appears from the case of Azariah, the son of Oded, the prophet, 2 Chron. xv. 1, 8, and Jehu, the son of Hanani, the seer. 2 Chron. xvi. 7, xix. 2. The main function of the prophets was to declare to the people the will of God; that of the priests, to obtain for the people the remission of their sins. And yet through their common mediatorial character it came to pass that each exercised to a certain extent both functions. It was, in a subsidiary sense, the province of the priest to teach the people the law (Mal. ii. 7,) and to declare the will of God in doubtful cases (Deut. xvii. 8, 12;) and it would appear from John xi. 51, that the gift of prophecy was a permanent prerogative of the high priest's office. It was also a subsidiary province of the prophet, in virtue of that familiar access to God with which he was favoured, to intercede with him on behalf of others (Gen. xx. 7; 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6; Isa. xxxvii. 4; Jer. vii. 16;) only they did this by the free offering of prayer, and the priests by the regularly prescribed symbolical ritual.

The judges were like the prophets the immediate representatives of God: and hence they too were called by the direct agency of the Spirit and were limited to no tribe, family, rank or occupation, and to neither sex. Judges vi. 4. The functions with which they were invested, however, were executive and administrative. They were extraordinary leaders or magistrates, possessed of unlimited powers, raised up in cases of special need for the deliverance and the defence or for the government of the people. They may be called divinely appointed dictators. The prophets on the other hand were teachers and expositors of the will of God, and for the most part exercised none of the powers or functions of the magistracy.

But while the prophets thus stood side by side with other divinely constituted classes of men in the theocracy, both ordinary and extraordinary, and had their own proper work distinct from

the rest, their office might be so extended as to comprehend all others. Inasmuch as they were the immediate representatives of God, their powers were limited only by their particular commission received from Him. The position which they occupied before the people implicitly involved from its very nature the right to perform any function or exercise any authority which the occasion might demand. Whenever the emergency required it, prophets might therefore act as priests and judges. This was the case, for example, in the degeneracy of all orders which marked the days of Samuel, and in the separation of the ten tribes from the true sanctuary and their open heathenism during the ministries of Elijah and Elisha. The ordinary officers of the theocracy, the priesthood and the magistracy, abdicated their trust or were virtually suspended from its legitimate exercise, and the prophets assumed their functions by right of the extraordinary powers with which they were clothed. Sacrifices were offered by Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 9, 17, x. 8, xiii. 8, etc., and by Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 30, etc.; the first fruits were brought to Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 42, comp. Deut. xviii. 4; and he was resorted to on Sabbaths and new moons, 2 Kings iv. 23. Samuel took the supreme direction of the affairs of the commonwealth, acted as judge, 1 Sam. vii. 15; anointed Saul and made him king, 1 Sam. x. 1, etc; then deposed him, 1 Sam. xv. 28; and anointed David, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. Abijah gave Jeroboam authority to become the ruler of the ten tribes, 1 Kings xi. 29, etc. Direction was given to Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 15, 16, to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jchu to be king over Israel. This was subsequently performed by Elisha, 2 Kings viii. 13, ix. 1, etc.; thus not only deposing and setting up rulers of the theocracy, but of heathen states likewise, as ambassadors of that God who is the supreme Governor of the whole world.

It only remains to consider the position occupied by the prophets among the methods of Divine communication. There is a growing fulness and nearness in the modes by which God reveals himself to men, just as there is in the extent to which his successive revelations are made, and in the contents of those revelations. The first method employed was the theophany, which is characteristic of the patriarchal period. God then personally and directly made known his will to such as he

designed to have informed of it. He spake by audible voice from heaven, as to Abraham at the offering up of Isaac; he spake in dreams, as to Jacob, Abimelech and Laban; or face to face in human form, as to Abraham under the oaks of Mamre. When the flood was to be sent on a guilty world, or a storm of destruction to overwhelm the cities of the plain, no human messenger was sent as God's herald, commissioned in his name to announce them, and to take a visible part in their production. God declared and sent them himself without the employment of any human agency.

When the seed of the patriarchs had swelled into a nation, and the will of God was no longer to be made known to individuals merely, but to a numerous people, a new mode of Divine revelation was needed and was afforded, viz., through the medium of prophets. The Spirit of God descended upon particular individuals, and made them the depositaries of Divine power and knowledge for the benefit of others. God no longer stood aloof and out of connection with men, so to speak, except as he appeared to them in the occasional visits of the preceding period. Divine virtue is now made resident in men; God no longer acts directly by himself; but if miracles are to be wrought or revelations made, it is through the instrumentality of these his accredited agents and messengers. In the language of Amos iii. 7: "The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." In the solemn transactions of Sinai, when the fundamental covenant was to be ratified between himself and Israel, God spake once more by his own voice from heaven in the audience of all the people. But all his farther communications with them were made through Moses, and through prophets raised up like unto him. And so with the mighty works; the plagues of Egypt were sent and removed at the bidding of Moses, the Red Sea was divided at the lifting of his rod, at his word manna was sent and water given from the rock. The drought in the time of Ahab came and went at the word of Elijah. The host of Sennacherib was destroyed, but not until Isaiah had first foretold it.

This second or prophetic stage of revelation, while it is an advance upon the theophany, is not, however, the ultimate

and highest form of Divine communication. 1 Cor. xiii. 8-10. Like the economy of which it formed a part, it was preparatory to and emblematic of the future. All the gifts and offices of the theocracy were, as respects their outward form, temporary, but in their essence they were types and pledges of better things to come. The ideas, which they embodied, were destined to have a more complete realization, and that in a two-fold form, the one individual, the other universal.

The prophetic idea found its consummation in the first place in Christ. He is the Prophet of God in the highest sense. Deut. xviii. 18; Isa. xlii. 1, etc., xlix. 1, etc., lxi. 1. etc. In him God reveals himself to men by becoming himself a man and dwelling amongst us. He now acts no longer remotely in heaven, nor merely selects ordinary men as the depositaries of heavenly gifts, to be through them dispensed to others, but comes himself in human nature, as a man amongst men, with all the plenitude of his infinite power, wisdom, and grace, to instruct and bless mankind. The infinite distance, which in the patriarchal period appeared in all its awfulness, and in the Mosaic dispensation was but partially closed up, is thus completely bridged; the ladder of Jacob is realized. The prophets were thus prognostic or typical of Him, who was to succeed them, and who would do perfectly that of which they might suggest the idea, and awaken the expectation, but which they could not adequately accomplish.

Again, the idea embodied in the prophets was destined to an universal realization in the entire body of the people of God. The prophetic office was not the inherent and original prerogative of those invested with it, to the exclusion of others, nor was it given to them, or exercised by them, for their own sakes. The prophets were taken from amongst their brethren; they belonged to the people; they possessed no inherent superiority over them. The office was established for the good of the people at large, though for the advantage of the whole its exercise was temporarily confined to a few. The Spirit belonged not to the prophets alone, but to all Israel. And when Moses devoutly wished, Numb. xi. 29, that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them, his wish was directed to a result of which he already

beheld the type and the pledge; and its fulfilment is the second form in which the idea of the prophets reaches its final consummation. The ultimate form of Divine communication is, when God not merely speaks to individuals, as in the case of the patriarchs, nor to his people through the medium of a few, whom his Spirit has made his organs to the rest, but when he shall come and abide as a teacher, no less than a sanctifier, in all of a regenerated world. Joel, ii. 28, predicts the day when God's Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, and sons and daughters, old men and young men, servants and handmaids, shall alike prophesy. And Jeremiah, xxxi. 34, declares that the time is coming when they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know him from the least of them unto the greatest of them. Then the necessity of all prophetic instruction shall be superseded, and the prophetic order itself be swallowed up in the indwelling of the Spirit in all believers.

ART. IV.—1. *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.*

By JAMES SEATON REID, D. D., M. R. I. A., Professor of Ecclesiastical and Civil History in the University of Glasgow. Continued to the present time by W. D. Killen, D. D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Pastoral Theology for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. London, 1853. 3 vols. 8vo.

2. *Historical Sketch of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.*

By Rev. THOMAS WITHEROW, Maghera. Belfast, 1858. pp. 48. 12mo.

3. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, held at Dublin, 1859.* Belfast, 8vo.

SEVERAL causes have conspired of late to fix attention on the Presbyterian church in Ireland. The great awakening of the present year, though not confined to that communion, seems to have originated in it, and to be still instrumentally promoted chiefly by the labours of its ministers and members. But