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ARTICLE I.—*The State of the Country.*

THERE are periods in the history of every nation when its destiny for ages may be determined by the events of an hour. There are occasions when political questions rise into the sphere of morals and religion; when the rule for political action is to be sought, not in considerations of state policy, but in the law of God. On such occasions the distinction between secular and religious journals is obliterated. When the question to be decided turns on moral principles, when reason, conscience, and religious sentiment are to be addressed, it is the privilege and duty of all who have access in any way to the public ear, to endeavour to allay unholy feeling, and to bring truth to bear on the minds of their fellow-citizens. If any other consideration be needed to justify the discussion, in these pages, of the disruption of this great confederacy, it may be found, not only in the portentous consequences of such disruption to the welfare and happiness of the country and to the general interests of the world, but also in its bearing on the church of Christ and the progress of his kingdom. Until within a few years there was no diversity of opinion on this subject. It was admitted that the value of the union of these states did not admit of calculation. As no man allowed himself to count the worth of

publishers on the fly-leaf, a journal of apparently similar spirit, after a warm laudation of these writers: "Their doctrine is, that the race is a collective man, to outgrow, in time, the regulative discipline of childhood, and be moved by the Spirit within, and not subject to authority without; that the Bible is not a book of plenary inspiration, or Christianity a universal religion, specially authenticated in Palestine; but that God inspires men ever and everywhere; that there is only one kind of inspiration, and all good men have it, as well as prophets and apostles; and that the doctrines of the church, such as the Trinity and the Fall of man, are to be held in the light of a 'philosophical rendering.'"

ART. IV.—*The Fulfilment of Prophecy.*

THE predictions uttered by the prophets were real disclosures of future events, and must therefore of necessity always be accomplished. Luke xxiv. 44. The denial of this rests upon a radical misconception of the nature of prophecy. If it were of merely human origin, no fulfilment in any proper sense could be expected. Even if there should be a fortuitous correspondence with the future, this would not be the necessary completing of the word which was spoken. Prophecy, however, came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. i. 21. It proceeded from Him to whom the future, equally with the past and the present, is naked and opened, and whose word cannot return unto him void. Isa. lv. 11. This removes it entirely out of the region of vague anticipations, the forebodings of hope or fear, shrewd conjectures, calculations from existing causes, fictions by which actual history was clothed in a prophetic dress, or frauds giving that out as prediction which was written after the event. It is evident, too, that there is no antecedent necessity limiting the range of a prophet's vision. It need not be confined to what has been called his own politi-

cal horizon, to events of the proximate future, of which there were indications already discernible. The omniscient Spirit can with equal ease reveal the remotest future, and describe what was to occur in far distant ages, with the same precision and accuracy as what was close at hand. The only restriction upon the extent or the definiteness of prophetic revelations is that which arises from the will of God in general or in each individual case.

As the prophet is not omniscient, and discerns the future not by any inherent faculty, but only as it is made known to him, he cannot disclose everything that shall take place hereafter, nor even all that relates to the events of which he actually speaks; but simply what is divinely revealed and as it is revealed to him. And inasmuch as these revelations form part of a Divine plan having for its end the training of the people, their nature and extent must of course be conditioned by this design. It is not, therefore, to be expected that prophecy will furnish such a record of the future as history does of the past. Their respective aims are quite different. It is not the knowledge of the future, as such, which prophecy seeks to communicate. In fact, there would be manifest objections to such a disclosure of the future as would interfere with the freedom of the actors in the events predicted, and as might lead the enemies of the truth to combine to defeat the prediction, or give them occasion to say that its fulfilment was brought about by the designed agency of its friends. It uses the future, and that not of one, but of all periods, for the instruction of the present. It hence contemplates the future from its own particular point of view, and with a definite design, by which it is guided both in its choice of materials and its mode of presenting them.

Prophecy may be compared to the view of a landscape taken from some prominent position, whence its principal features can be discerned. The objects seen, the relation in which they appear to stand to each other, their respective prominence and magnitude, will be greatly influenced by the point of view selected. Sketches taken from different points of the same landscape will differ widely from each other; and all will differ from the topographical survey, which may serve to represent history, and in which things are not contemplated from a dis-

tance, but the comparative size, distance and direction of every object carefully noted, by passing over the ground with the chain and the compass. The sketches are as true a representation of the country as the survey, and they answer better than it could do their own particular end. Such is, however, the difference in their plan and construction, that they are anything but precise counterparts, and neither could be constructed by the sole aid of the other. Nay, even he who has them both may be obliged to study long and carefully before he can discover in all its details that exact correspondence which does in fact obtain between them. The identity of the prominent features would perhaps be readily made out. But a very prolonged examination might be necessary in the subordinate details, before he could discover the precise object in the survey which answered to each particular in the sketch; and it would not be surprising, if in certain cases this could not be satisfactorily determined, and the identification should be doubtful or impossible.

It is thus with prophecy and its fulfilment in history. They cover the same territory and exhibit the same objects. There can be no discrepancy between them; but there may be, and there is, a very wide difference in the mode of their representation. Prophecy surveys its objects from its own definite point of view. History sets each in its proper position in respect of time and of attendant circumstances. It casts no reflection, therefore, either upon the accuracy or the value of a prophecy, to say that it is not possible by its sole aid to construct the future in which it shall find fulfilment. It may, nevertheless, give a very correct and intelligible picture of the subject which it represents, and may have an end which is answered irrespective of the recognition, upon the map of history, of the precise events predicted. And even with this map spread out before the students of prophecy, there may be great diversity of judgment in regard to the identification of some of the objects foretold; others, perhaps, it may be quite impossible to identify satisfactorily in the present state of our knowledge. But this cannot render doubtful the recognition of those leading objects in which its fulfilment is readily perceived, nor can it disprove the exactness of the correspondence even in those details which

are most difficult to recognize, for this is a difficulty which the nature of the case leads us to anticipate, and which fuller information might enable us to solve.

This divergence of the prophetic from the historical mode of representation is regarded by Hengstenberg, Fairbairn and others, as a sequence from the revelation by vision. But this view is open to several objections. 1. The vision does not necessarily involve a departure from the forms of history, or forbid the exhibition of the objects revealed in their historical order and relations. The communications made to Abraham in vision, (Gen. xv. 13—16,) and that to Daniel, (xi. xii.,) contain events and dates, just as they might be supposed to be recorded after the occurrence. The reason given is, therefore, inadequate. 2. It is likewise unfounded. It rests upon a theory which, to say the least, is insecure—that the prophets received all their revelations in the state of ecstatic vision, and while their ordinary consciousness was suspended. The same departure from historical forms characterizes those prophecies in which there is no appearance of a vision, as those in which there is. 3. It is unnecessary. There is a better mode of accounting for the phenomenon in question. The mode of prophetic representation may be *illustrated*, as has been seen, from the sense of sight; but this is only an illustration, not the actual rationale of the process. The true key, as has been shown already in the general, and as will be exhibited hereafter in detail, is to be found in the peculiar design of prophecy leading to the contemplation of the future from its own particular point of view. 4. It is superficial. Even if the prophets received no revelations except in vision, and the peculiarities found in prophecy were necessarily involved in that mode of communication, the important question would still remain unanswered—Why was that mode of revelation selected which led to this peculiar form of representation? The answer to this question will show that instead of being a defect, a disadvantage necessarily attendant upon prophetic disclosures, as this theory tacitly assumes, it is a striking feature of their adaptation to their end. It was impressed upon them because they would thus more effectually subserve the purpose of the people's instruction.

The prophetic differs from the historical mode of representation chiefly in two respects. The first concerns the time, and the second the form of the events predicted. There is in prophecy very commonly a neglect of the relations of time. It was not for the most part necessary, in order to the lesson to be drawn from future events, that anything should be known as to the time of their occurrence, their precise duration, or the intervals which were to separate them. Such knowledge might minister to a vain curiosity; but instead of furthering the ends of prophetic instruction, might tend rather to contravene them. It was accordingly withheld. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Time is not an element to be regarded in the consideration of his plans. What he will bring to pass in distant ages reveals his present purposes and the existing features of his government as really as though it were just at hand. But while the time is thus unessential to the lesson to be conveyed, the revelation of it might defeat the design of the lesson itself. That which is remote, or which will be long in maturing, loses its effect in spite of its truth and importance. Thus a future judgment of God, however distant, is in its proper nature a warning to transgressors; and yet the knowledge that it was still far off, and especially the revelation of the precise manner of its occurrence, might convert it for the present into a temptation to carnal security. Prophecy, therefore, eliminates this disturbing element. It presents the objects themselves without regard to qualities so unessential and variable as distance and duration. They can thus be contemplated more in their true character and with a greater likelihood of their producing their proper effect. No false statement is ever made in regard to the time of an event predicted; there is no error in the prophecy, nothing which needs correction. The time is simply not revealed. As the Saviour said to his inquiring disciples, Acts i. 7, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." It is necessary for him who would trace the fulfilment of prophecy upon the pages of history to bear this in mind, lest he involve himself in the error at the start, of imposing restrictions upon it which are foreign to its nature.

In certain cases, indeed, where any important end was to be answered by it, the time was definitely revealed. Thus to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13, the four hundred years of the oppression of his seed; to Isaiah vii. 8, the sixty-five years within which Ephraim was to cease being a people; xvi. 14, the three years to the humbling of Moab, qualified as the years of a hireling, to denote the exactness of their measurement; xxi. 16, the one year to the reduction of Kedar; xxiii. 17, the seventy years of Tyre's depression; to Jeremiah xxix. 10, the seventy years of the captivity in Babylon; to Habakkuk i. 5, its occurrence in the lifetime of his hearers; to Daniel ix. 24—26, the seventy weeks to Messiah's coming. In other cases, where the precise time was not important and was not made known, it was nevertheless desirable to give some idea of relative duration. This may perhaps be the case with the three hundred and ninety and the forty days representative of the guilt or punishment of Israel and Judah, Ezek. iv. 5, 6; with the seven years that Israel shall be burning the weapons, and the seven months that they shall be burying the dead of the host of Gog, Ezek. xxxix. 9, 12; and in the book of Revelation, the three years and a half of the humiliation of the church, the three days and a half of the triumph of antichrist, and the thousand years of the reign of the saints. These are sufficient to show that prophetic disclosures of time, whether with absolute or relative exactness, are not impossible. The Divine purpose and foreknowledge embrace the times of all events as well as the events themselves. Eccl. iii. 1. And there is nothing in the nature of prophecy to prevent this from being made known, whenever the aims of the revelation may require it.

Generally speaking, however, as has been observed already, the relations of time are disregarded. This may be done in four different ways, which may be respectively denominated the logical, the complex, the apotelesmatic, and the generic. 1. The logical method is when events are grouped agreeably to their affinities or their relation of cause and effect, irrespective of their chronological position. Thus a denunciation of the penalty may follow immediately upon a charge of sin, because these are indissolubly linked together, whatever interval of time may separate them. And any event in the progress of God's plan

of grace may be set in connection with the ultimate result to which it looks, and of which it is a necessary or important antecedent. The curse upon Canaan, Gen. ix. 25, did not enter upon its accomplishment until ages after it had been uttered. The promise to the patriarchs, Gen. xxvi. 4, was that they should have a numerous posterity, possess the land of their sojournings, and all nations should be blessed in them. The salvation of the world is here joined with the multiplication of their descendants and their settlement in Canaan, and there is no intimation that the events may not be simultaneous or immediately successive. The last two events were important steps in the Divine plan of preparation for the first; they were links in the chain of causes by which it was to be brought about. It is true that many other links were necessary to complete the chain. Thousands of years must elapse after Joshua has given the tribes their inheritance, before the ultimate issue is accomplished. But the necessary connection still holds good, and the word of the prediction puts those things together which in the purpose of God are so joined. So too Habakkuk, in the midst of a prediction of the fall of Babylon, introduced the statement, ii. 14, that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This is not because the world was to be converted on the instant of Babylon's overthrow, but because the destruction of that great oppressing power was one of the necessary antecedents to the perfect triumph and the universality of the kingdom of God. This hostile heathen empire was an obstacle that must first be removed out of the way before the destined end could come. The intervening ages, however great to human view, are a mere point of time to the eternal God, and cannot break that sure connection which the Most High has established.

It is also quite usual with the prophets to present events in classes according to their respective characters, instead of being governed by the accidental order of time. Thus Joel in his prophecy throws together all the evils to be experienced by the chosen people under the symbol of the ravages of locusts; then the blessings they were to experience; and finally, the judgments upon their foes. The logical order here pursued is not to be mistaken for the chronological. They were not first to

suffer all the evils that were ever to come upon them before a single blessing was enjoyed; nor were all their blessings to be received before any portion of the deserved punishment was meted to their foes. These are intermingled in various proportions throughout the entire course of history, but they are here arranged according to their respective affinities, for the sake of more distinct presentation. Isaiah, also, in the foresight of Sennacherib's invasion, chap. x. 11, promises the fall of that oppressor, and the coming and kingdom of Messiah; and in the foresight of the Babylonish captivity, chap. xl. 66, blends the deliverance by Cyrus with the salvation by Christ. In like manner Jeremiah, chap. xxxiii., connects the coming of the Messiah with the return from Babylon; and Zechariah, ix. 8, 9, connects it with the protection from Greek invasion. And in fact, as a general rule, the Messiah is included in every prophetic picture of the coming good. This is not because Christ was to appear immediately upon the occurrence of the inferior blessings with which he is thus associated, but because in every representation of the good things in reserve, he claimed a prominent place. The prophets may not have known, and the people probably did not know, the length of the intervening periods; they may indeed not have suspected the existence of any interval whatever. It may, for example, have been imagined, until Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks prevented such misapprehension, that Christ would come immediately upon the termination of the exile. This inference might have been drawn from the prophecies; but that it would be so, is nowhere stated. They did not reveal the time of his first coming, any more than the prophecies of the New Testament do that of his second. And it may have been designed for wise reasons, that the Jewish church, like the Christian, should be kept in constant expectation of the appearing of the Lord.

2. In foretelling events which occupy long periods in their performance, and which advance by successive stages to complete accomplishment, the prophets sometimes adopt the complex method of representation. Instead of confining attention to some one epoch, and describing the event as it then appears, they present a more comprehensive view by condensing the whole into a single picture. The characteristic features which

it assumes in different periods, belong still to one common subject, and are properly included in its complete delineation. Thus, the fall of a great empire is commonly not accomplished in a moment, but by a long succession of reverses and a gradual wasting away of its strength. The heavy blow which initiates this process of decline, may be separated by centuries from the complete ruin by which it is concluded. The prophets, however, give to the whole its proper unity and connection by exhibiting it in a single scene. Thus Isaiah, xiii. 17—22, links the capture of Babylon by the Medes with its final and utter desolation. True, it continued to be a great and flourishing city long after the time of Cyrus. But its decline then began; and the eye of the prophet was enabled to look forward from its beginning to its termination, and to foresee what lay so far beyond the reach of human calculation that it required ages for its development. So too, God's work of judgment is one. It is one continued exercise of his punitive justice which inflicts deserved punishment upon his enemies in the course of this world's history and at its final consummation. The prophets often bring this connection into view by linking Divine judgments upon particular nations with the final judgment upon the whole world. Thus Isaiah, chap. xiii., in depicting the fall of Babylon, connects with it, verses 6—13, the day of the Lord in which the sun and stars shall be darkened, the world shall be punished for its evil, and the earth removed out of its place. This did not occur when Babylon was overthrown. But its fall is here set in its place in the grand drama of judgment, whose closing scene shall involve convulsions of nature such as are there described, and inflictions of wrath upon the entire world of transgressors. In the same way, and for the same reason, our Lord, in Matt. xxiv., links the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Zechariah, ix. 9, 10, speaks in the same breath of the King of Jerusalem riding upon an ass, and exercising a dominion from sea to sea, because the work of Christ, embracing both his humiliation and his exaltation, is viewed in its totality. So Joel, ii. 28—32, connects the effusion of the Spirit upon all flesh with which the new dispensation opened, with the turning of the sun into darkness and the moon into blood, with which it is to close. Both charac-

teristically belong to the Messianic period, which is here presented in its unity. This same method is sometimes poetically employed in descriptions of the past, as in David's retrospect of God's goodness in his own previous history, Psalm xviii., in which he blends together all the deliverances of his past life; and in his review of God's mercies shown to Israel, Psalm lxviii., which are contemplated in the aggregate: different expressions are suggested by individual acts of grace in different periods, but these are regarded not by themselves so much, as component parts of one continued course of gracious dealing.

3. In dealing with the same class of objects as that already referred to—viz., those which require long periods for their mature development, the prophets sometimes employ another method. Instead of blending the separate phases of its progress in a single scene, they describe one to the exclusion of the rest. And as the best adapted to their purpose, they select the last—that in which the object spoken of reaches its consummation, and appears in its completed form. Its true nature is in this most fully unfolded, and most distinctly seen. This may be called the apotelesmatic method. It is such a method as a naturalist might employ in describing a plant or an animal: he would speak of it, not as it was in the earlier stages of its growth, but after it had reached its maturity. And a political philosopher who desired to convey a distinct idea of the constitution of a state or empire, would speak of it, not as it was when imperfectly organized and only partially formed, but when it had attained to its most complete condition. It is thus that the prophets most frequently speak of the kingdom of Christ. Without delaying upon the feebleness of its inception, the slow degrees by which it was to win its way, or the centuries which would elapse before it had done its work, they hasten upon the first mention of it to describe its triumph and glory. And this is the exhibition best suited to give correct ideas of its character. It is not by its period of struggle, its times of oppression from without and corruption within, that it is to be judged, but by what it shall be when all opposition has been vanquished, and it is allowed, without restraint or foreign commixture, to put on its own proper form and adequately reveal its true nature. Hence, the prophets no sooner speak of Mes-

siah's coming, than they describe the period of universal peace and holiness which he shall inaugurate, the glory of his dominion, and the submission of all nations beneath his sway. In Isa. xi., the coming forth of the rod out of the stem of Jesse is followed by the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid. In Dan. ii. 44, the mention of the setting up of the kingdom of heaven is connected with the breaking to pieces of all opposing kingdoms.

4. The last method is that of generic prophecies. These are predictive not of individual events, but of a series of events, in each of which they have a separate fulfilment. They are commonly such as reveal a particular principle in the Divine administration, which secures a fixed result from given antecedents. As often consequently as the prescribed conditions exist, so often the predicted consequence will follow. Our Lord announced this rule in the case of his own predictions, Matt. xxiv. 28, Luke xvii. 37, when interrogated by his disciples as to their accomplishment, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." The threatening, Deut. iv. 25, etc., of punishment at the hands of the heathen in case of transgression, and the accompanying promise of returning mercy in case of repentance, were fulfilled again and again throughout Israel's entire history; the book of Judges is from beginning to end a record of their repeated accomplishment in the period to which they relate. The voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," Isa. xl. 3, was fulfilled in various instruments who by calling the people to forsake their sins, prepared the way for God's gracious visits, before John the Baptist preached repentance as the forerunner of his personal appearing. The outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh promised by Joel ii. 28, belongs not only to the day of Pentecost but to every age of the Christian church. As prophecies of this description contemplate a succession of events, which, though they are alike exemplifications of the same general law, may differ widely in every other feature, it is manifest that they cannot be accurately adapted to all the circumstances of every one. Three courses were here possible; and they have been severally adopted in different cases. The prophetic description might in the first place be made to coincide precisely

with one of the events, that, for example, which was most important in itself, or in which the common idea of the whole was to be most fully realized, without any note being taken of the divergence, in less essential points, of others which were of less consequence, or in which the idea found a less complete embodiment. Or, secondly, it might be partially accommodated to them all, or to several of them, instead of exactly representing any one by borrowing individual traits from different events and blending them together. Or, finally, the prophecy may be restricted to what is common to them all, every allusion to points in which they differ being excluded, or at least the description couched in such terms as by the varying extent of their signification are capable of being applied alike to all. Thus the prediction, Deut. xviii. 18, is generic, and contemplates the entire prophetic order culminating in Christ. The expressions employed are applicable to all, but find their highest application in him. Again, the prediction, 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, of the perpetual royalty of the seed of David, is, of course, generic, and embraces all his descendants who sat upon the theocratic throne, including the last and the greatest who now holds the kingdom. Some of its expressions are conformed to one, others to another of the subjects to which it was intended to apply. "He shall build a house for my name," is spoken of Solomon's material structure and of Christ's spiritual temple. The threatened chastisement in case of iniquity belongs to Solomon and his merely human successors. The stablishing of the throne for ever took place in the person of Christ. "I will be his father and he shall be my son," was, in a limited sense, true of Solomon and the mortal race of kings descended from him; in its strict and proper sense it belongs exclusively to Christ. Heb. i. 5. Isaiah employs in his later prophecies the title "the servant of the Lord" in a double application at once to the chosen people and to the great Redeemer who was to arise from amongst them. They had the common commission, though fulfilled by them in very unequal measure, to perpetuate and spread the true religion; and in the execution of this task both would be exposed to injurious treatment and severe suffering, issuing in a glorious reward. That Israel has a part in these predictions, is shown by his very name being given to the

servant of the Lord, xlix. 3, and by the unfaithfulness with which he is charged, which could only apply to him: xlii. 19. And yet the part of the Messiah so outweighed that of Israel in intrinsic moment, and the appellation, "servant of the Lord," belongs to the Messiah in so much higher a sense, that the terms of the prediction are throughout conformed to his fulfilment of it, and that even in things so exclusively true of him as his vicarious atonement. Ch. liii. The fulfilment by Israel falls within the territory covered by the prediction, and, so far as it goes, corresponds with the inspired description. But the work of the Messiah is precisely coincident with it, accomplishing it in every particular.

The double or multiple sense of prophecy, as far as that has any foundation in fact, finds its explanation in what has just been stated. This does not denote a mystical or hidden sense of the words used, or that they are employed in any other than their ordinary and proper import. But the expressions of certain prophecies were so framed under the guidance of the Spirit, whether with or without the knowledge of the original writer and readers, as to apply with more or less exactness to distinct subjects. The same fact or principle which is represented in the one, appears likewise in the other, but in greater perfection; and the prophecy is so drawn as to cover both, in its more limited and lower sense answering to one, in its larger and higher sense to the other. This may be done not only where both events lie in the future, but where one is already past. Thus the Messianic Psalms have a partial application to experiences in the life of David or Solomon, or, as Ps. viii., to man in general; but the terms employed would be extravagant, if nothing more was intended by them. There is no other adequate explanation of them but their additional reference to Christ.

It may be remarked here, that while some prophecies are manifestly and in their primary intent generic, having in the strict and proper sense repeated fulfilments, there is a generic element more or less involved in all prophecies. Even when the original reference is exclusively to individual facts, these nevertheless represent general laws in God's providence or plan of grace. The facts may not occur again in that precise form,

but the laws are permanent, and will have other exemplifications. And these, though not comprehended within the direct and immediate scope of the prophecy, are demanded by its spirit. This is the explanation of the fact that later prophets, in adopting the language of their predecessors, not infrequently make a new application of it. This is mostly more than an arbitrary accommodation of familiar words to a different subject. The new application is really involved in the old, being only a fresh exhibition of the same essential principle. When Jeremiah (xlviii. 43, 44) repeats in application to Moab what Isaiah had said of the whole earth, (xxiv. 17, 18,) or repeats of himself (xi. 19) what Isaiah had said of Messiah, (liii. 7,) or when Nahum (i. 15) employs that language of Nineveh's overthrow which Isaiah (lii. 7) had used of a different subject, it is each time only another instance of the working of the same general law. And when the book of Revelation resumes the ancient prophecies respecting Babylon in its denunciations of Antichrist, the apostle would thereby intimate that the fundamental idea of those prophecies is still in force, and that the same reasons grounded on the attributes and purposes of God which accomplished the fall of the chief foe of the Old Testament church, certify a like destiny to its New Testament counterpart.

It has now been seen in what various ways prophecy may neglect the element of time, and how it may depart from the chronological arrangement of the facts predicted, for the sake of substituting other modes of grouping them better adapted to its purpose. It may in like manner and for similar reasons, present future objects under another than their strictly historical form. The design of this, as of the preceding peculiarity of prophecy, is twofold—viz. the partial obscuring of the events revealed, and the greater distinctness and force of the lessons conveyed. It was not the will of God to make the future known with exactness beforehand, or to enable men precisely to anticipate the disclosures of history. Too great distinctness might, as has been before observed, have frustrated or interfered with the very end for which the future was revealed at all. It was his purpose rather to awaken general expectations, and furnish such a description of events as might readily be recognized after, not before, they actually occurred. It was his purpose

likewise to instruct the people by these revelations in his plans of grace and of providential administration. But this did not make it necessary to reveal the precise mode in which future events would take place, or the exact shape which they would assume, any more than it required a disclosure of the time of their occurrence. It might, and it did in fact, really contribute to render these lessons more intelligible and impressive to their original hearers, that they were dressed in familiar and striking forms, which nevertheless truly represented the essential ideas and principles involved, in place of employing the unknown and more prosaic form to be assumed when they should come to pass in actual history.

This departure from historical forms was grounded in no antecedent necessity. No limitation can of course be put upon the foreknowledge of God, and there was nothing in the nature of prophecy, or in the mode of its communication, to prevent the disclosure of any of the details of future history which the Most High chose to impart. Indeed, the practicability is set beyond question, by the fact that this was actually done with as much frequency and to as great an extent as was deemed needful or desirable. The subjugation and dispersion of the Jews, the overthrow and desolation of Babylon, Tyre, and other ancient states, the Babylonish captivity and the restoration by Cyrus, whose very name was predicted more than a century before his birth, Isa. xlv. 28, as that of Josiah, had previously been, and for a much longer time beforehand, 1 Kings xiii. 2, the succession of the four great empires, with such details as Israel was particularly concerned to know, the birth of Christ of a virgin at Bethlehem, his entry into Jerusalem on an ass, his sufferings and rejection by the covenant people, are instances of prophecies in which the future is to a greater or less extent literally and precisely described.

When, however, prophecy departs from the historical form, one of two methods may be adopted; the identity of the object predicted may be retained with a mere diversity of form, or another similar object may by a figure be substituted for it.

1. The former is the case when an object of the future is spoken of, not as it shall actually be at the time of the fulfilment, but as it is at the time of the prediction. Those who

were acquainted with the thing only under its existing form and name, would gain a readier and more accurate idea of what was intended, if it were spoken of as they knew it, than if a novel nomenclature were adopted, or it were exhibited in a strange dress, however exactly these might correspond with the actual future. Thus objects common to the two dispensations, as a general rule, are called by their Old Testament names, and wear their Old Testament forms, even though the period contemplated by the prophecy is that of the new dispensation. The time had not yet come to reveal the changes which would be brought about at that eventful epoch. Thus, the people of God are constantly called Israel, their habitation Canaan, and the seat of God's worship, or his dwelling-place, Jerusalem, Zion, or the temple. To indicate the conversion of the heathen to the true religion, they are represented as engaging in the ritual worship, erecting altars in their land, Isa. xix. 19, offering incense and pure oblations in every place, Mal. i. 11, keeping the feast of tabernacles, Zech. xiv. 16, paying annual or even monthly and weekly visits to Jerusalem, Isa. lxvi. 23, and enrolled amongst the Levitical priesthood, Isa. lxvi. 21, although at the time to which these predictions refer, this particular mode of worship would be abolished. The outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh is described in forms peculiar to prophetic inspiration, Joel ii. 28, though that spiritual influence was in fact to manifest itself in the way of sanctification, rather than of immediate supernatural revelation. Names of nations hostile to the kingdom of God, are used to designate those in whom this hostility is perpetuated, though at the period spoken of, these nations no longer exist in their individuality; e. g., Egypt and Edom, Joel iii. 19; the Assyrians, Micah v. 5, 6; the Philistines, Moab, and Ammon, Isa. xi. 14. The unity of the people of God under the Messiah, is represented by the healing of the breach between Judah and Israel, although this particular form of division and schism had ceased before his appearing. Isa. xi. 13; Jer. iii. 18. Messiah is said to sit upon the throne of David, although the theocratic kingdom has in his hands entirely changed its form. Isa. ix. 7. It is carrying this same principle into the realm of figure when Messiah is called David, Ezek. xxxiv. 23, Hos. iii. 5, and his forerunner is

called Elijah, Mal. iv. 5, by which is meant not their personal reappearance, but their revival, so to speak, in the persons of others. This usage of prophecy is the more intelligible to us, as it has been perpetuated to a considerable extent in the current religious language of the day. Though the forms of the ancient dispensation have long since passed away, Israel, Zion, and Canaan, are as familiar to the most unlettered believer, in their application to the present and the future, as their modern equivalents.

It is to be observed here that no false or inaccurate statements are made by the prophets in the cases now under consideration; there is not even the figurative substitution of one object for another to which it bears an analogy, but simply there is no disclosure made of the changes to be effected in the administration of the plan of grace. The two dispensations were not to be confused. Everything was not to be made known then which is revealed now; just as everything is not made known now that is to be revealed hereafter. The communications respecting the future state in which the present dispensation is to be swallowed up, are few and scanty. Glimpses are given, which impart some vague idea of the eternal world, but there is no such clear and connected account of it as would enable us to image to ourselves precisely what it is. And the language employed about it is borrowed from objects in the present world. What new and unimagined forms are hidden beneath these expressions, none can tell. In like manner, while the old economy lasted, God did not see fit to lower its sacredness by untimely anticipations of the important changes to be made upon the introduction of the new economy. Limits were therefore set to the prophetic revelations, which they were rarely suffered to overstep. Glimpses were granted of the most distant future, not merely of the beginning, but of the end of the present dispensation, of the awful convulsions accompanying the final judgment, and of the new heavens and the new earth which are to succeed it. Still these were only glimpses. No complete view was afforded them of the precise state of things when these events were to occur. From these momentary glimpses they invariably return to the representation of the future under forms then existing. Isaiah connects

with the new heavens and the new earth, chap. lxxv. 17, etc., building houses and inhabiting them, planting vineyards and eating their fruit, and, lxxvi. 22, etc., the observance of new moons and sabbaths. Joel iii. 17, etc., and Zechariah xiv. 16, speak of what is to occur after the final overthrow of the enemies of God, in terms borrowed from the old theocracy and the Levitical service.

The questions relating to what has been called the literalistic controversy, find here their true solution. Those who style themselves literalists, maintain that the predictions respecting Israel, Jerusalem, and Canaan, in the days of the Messiah and the establishment of his kingdom in Zion, are to have a national and local fulfilment. The great body of sound interpreters, on the other hand, affirm that all which is demanded by these prophecies will be met, if these Old Testament terms be understood in a New Testament sense, and the local and national restrictions temporarily imposed upon the dispensation of grace be removed. This subject cannot now be discussed at length. It is sufficient at present to call attention to the principle underlying the whole matter, which is much more comprehensive than the particular cases in dispute. It must also be insisted upon, that the prophecies are in this respect to be interpreted consistently, and upon some settled method—not arbitrarily, and at the caprice of the expositor. There is no propriety in demanding strict literality as the only possible sense when it chances to suit a preconceived theory, and quietly departing from it when it does not. And yet this is what all literalistic interpreters do, and are in fact compelled to do, if they are not prepared to defend the most incredible and extravagant opinions.

2. The other way in which prophecy may depart from the historical form of the objects predicted, is by the employment of figures in place of the real things intended. These answer the double purpose, which, as has been abundantly seen already, attaches to all the departures from the historical mode of representation. They tend both to concealment and to illustration. There is a vagueness and ambiguity attendant upon their use, which allows a general notion of the future, but forbids any exact anticipation of its actual events in their proper forms and

minute details. At the same time there is a vividness and force imparted to the prophetic lessons, which is quite independent of the shape which will belong to these events when they come to be converted into history. The truths respecting God's providential designs, or his plans of grace, which are to be conveyed, are fully contained in the figures employed, these being divinely selected representations of the facts themselves. They can be understood, therefore, and appreciated, as well before the facts occur as after; by him who has no clear conception of what the facts shall be when verified in history, as by him who knows every particular of the fulfilment.

The figurative form may consist in figures of speech or in symbols. Both are quite frequent. When Isaiah predicts, ii. 2, "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills;" or xxxv. i. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;" or xxix. 17, "Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest," the words strictly taken denote physical changes, but, without doubt, moral changes of an analogous nature are the real things intended.

Symbolical prophecies are those in which one class of objects is used as representatives of another; in which, accordingly, there is not merely the illustration of one thing by another, but an actual substitution. The symbol may be (*a*) presented to the senses, as in Zech. vi. 11, the high priest Joshua, crowned with silver and gold brought from Babylon, symbolizes Messiah as both priest and king, to whom all in distant lands should lend their aid. All the symbolical actions of the prophets are instances of the same kind. Or, (*b*) it may be exhibited in vision or in a dream, as the temple and its worship, Ezek. xl., etc. Symbolical of the future state of the theocracy, the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Dan. ii., and the four beasts, ch. vii., signifying the four great empires of the ancient world, the ram and the he-goat, ch. viii., representing the Medo-Per-sian and Greek empires, and the man upon the red horse among the myrtle trees, Zech. i., denoting the angel of the Lord as the guardian of Israel. Or, (*c*) it may be simply described and

thus partake of the nature of allegory, as the locusts, Joel i. 2, representing the foci of the covenant people; the marriage of Hosea to an unfaithful wife, Hosea i. iii, representing God's relation to transgressing Israel; the eagles and the cedar of Lebanon, Ezek. xvii., representing the monarchs of Babylon and Egypt and the royal family of Judah; the adulterous sisters, ch. xxiii., representing Judah and Israel.

The difficulties connected with the interpretation of the symbolical prophecies are confessedly great. But this does not justify, on the one hand, the entire neglect with which they have sometimes been treated, as though the difficulties were insurmountable, and the time and labour bestowed upon them were simply thrown away. For these, too, are part of the revelation of God, and are profitable for instruction. Nor does it, on the other hand, justify the capricious treatment which they have so often received from those who have professed to expound them, and who have attributed to them significations at random, without any intelligible reason or consistent method. Anything can thus be made of them that the interpreter pleases. They thus become mere riddles, at which every one is at liberty to guess, but which no one can be sure of having solved. If there is to be any certainty in the interpretation, it must be conducted upon consistent and well established principles; it must be based not upon random guess work, but upon a careful investigation of their meaning, and a faithful use of all the aids by which this may be ascertained. These aids are of three sorts, viz.

1. The prominent qualities or associations of the symbol itself afford an indication of the thing signified. Things are chosen to represent others as symbols, which bear a resemblance to them in some marked respect, or which are commonly connected with them, and consequently are fit emblems of them, or naturally suggest them. It is true that symbols may be purely arbitrary and conventional. In this sense the letters of the alphabet may be said to be symbols of the sounds which they respectively represent. But there is no resemblance between the sign and the thing signified, and no natural association which links them together; it is purely conventional. It does not appear that there are any symbols of this sort in the

Scriptures, and especially in the writings of the prophets, with which we are at present concerned. All which are there found are naturally suggestive, by reason of some likeness to the thing signified, or an established connection with it; many of them are so appropriate and striking that they at once explain themselves. Thus, locusts devastating a land, Joel i., are a natural emblem of foreign invaders; filthy garments, Zech. iii. 4, of sin; reaping a harvest, Joel iii. 13, of cutting down those who are ripened for destruction or for ingathering; eating a book, Ezek. iii. 1, of inwardly receiving its contents; a stream flowing from the temple, xlvii. 1, and healing the Dead Sea, of saving influences, reaching the most hopeless; crowns, Zech. vi. 11, commonly worn by monarchs, are a fit symbol of royalty; fat kine and full ears of corn, of years of plenty; and lean kine and thin ears, of years of famine, Gen. xli. 26, 27, with which they are respectively associated.

2. The resemblances and associations which obtain amongst different objects are so various and multiplied, however, that there would be great uncertainty in the interpretation of symbols, if these were the only guides to their meaning. This may be remedied in some measure by having recourse to the second of the aids referred to, viz. established usage. Symbols must have a uniform signification, if they are to be an intelligible medium of communicating ideas. If the same symbol may have a different sense every time that it is employed, it ceases to be a vehicle of thought, for it will be impossible to tell which signification is to be attached to it in any given case. It is, indeed, conceivable that symbols, which bear an equally decided resemblance to distinct objects, might upon occasion be employed to represent more than one, its particular signification being each time determined by the connection in which it stands; just as words may have different senses, and yet all ambiguity be removed from them by the mode of their employment. The brazen serpent of Moses, Num. xxi. 8, if explained according to the hypothesis of some eminent interpreters, will afford an illustration. This serpent, to which Israel was to look for healing, cannot, it is argued, represent the destroyer of the race, as in Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2, a meaning derived from association with the tempter of Eve. Its sense is accordingly

gathered from the symbolism of Egypt, where it was used to denote healing, as it was also in the worship of Æsculapius among the Greeks and Romans. The most formidable objection to this ingenious hypothesis is its departure from the established meaning of the symbol. And upon this ground it is more natural to conclude, either that the serpent-form is not in this case symbolical, or else that it retains its constant signification, and the serpent exhibited to view, transfixed and harmless, indicates a victory over the destroyer. Although a diversity of meaning is perhaps possible in the symbols, therefore, it is not to be assumed without necessity, nor beyond the limits of that necessity. The strong presumption, in the absence of clear evidence to the contrary, is that each symbol has its own fixed and invariable sense. Consequently the usage of a symbol once ascertained must, in most cases, if not in all, be held to determine its meaning wherever it occurs.

A number of the symbols of prophecy are borrowed from the Levitical institutions. These had the advantage of being familiar, sacred, and significant of the very truths, with which prophecy was mainly conversant. They are uniformly used in the signification belonging to them in their original connection; and if any modifications of the essential idea were to be expressed, this is done by varying the form of the symbol. Thus the cherubim, chap. i., and temple, chap. lx., of Ezekiel, and the candlestick of Zechariah, chap. iv. When the symbols are drawn from other sources, they are still, if possible, to be illustrated by parallel scriptural usage. In the absence of this, welcome light may sometimes be cast upon their meaning by the symbolical use of the same object among other ancient nations, especially those with which Israel was brought into contact. It is not improbable that the prophets may have adopted symbols from the Babylonians, as Moses did from the Egyptians. And it is no more prejudicial to their inspiration to employ the language of symbols, which they found in vogue among the heathen, than the use of the Greek language, also borrowed from a heathen people, is to the inspiration of the apostles. It is simply the medium of communicating ideas which is adopted in either case, not the ideas themselves.

3. In addition to the aids already mentioned, another, which

leaves nothing to be desired where it is actually afforded. is the authoritative explanation of the symbols furnished by inspiration. This is sometimes directly given by the prophet himself, who, after having stated the symbol, adds the interpretation; as Daniel, of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, chap. ii.; and Ezekiel, of the two eagles and the cedar, chap. xvii.; or receives it from the Lord, as Jeremiah, of the visions of the almond-tree and seething-pot, etc., and the baskets of figs, chap. xxiv. 5; or from an angel, as Zechariah, or Daniel, of the visions of the four beasts and of the ram and the he-goat; the explanation itself being sometimes enigmatical or designedly obscure, e. g. Zech. iv. 14. Or the needed commentary may be afforded in some later book of Scripture, and especially in the New Testament, by our Lord or the apostles. Thus all doubt is precluded as to the meaning of the "Son of Man" in Daniel's vision. chap. vii. 13, by our Lord's constant application of the expression to himself, and especially by his citation of this very passage before Caiaphas, Matt. xxvi. 64; and so the meaning of the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast, chap. vii., is settled by Paul's commentary upon it, 2 Thess. ii. 3, etc. Or the explanation may be indirectly given, by mingling literal language with the description of the symbol. The thing signified is so blended in the prophet's conception with the sign, which is in its real meaning identical with it, that language appropriate only to the former is frequently applied to the latter, thus affording a clue to what is actually intended. This mingling of the literal and the symbolical is sometimes even carried to the extent of introducing literal objects along with the symbolical, or in the place of them, although this is chiefly confined to incorporeal beings, who, while retaining their identity, assume corporeal forms; e. g. the Angel of the Lord, and Satan. Zech. iii. 1. The general scope of a prophecy, and the connection in which a symbol stands, may also indirectly afford a key, by suggesting the true interpretation of that which would have been obscure had it stood alone.

It is further necessary to the just interpretation of symbols, to observe, that all the subordinate details contained in the description of them need not have a separate significance in the thing represented. The use of one object as the symbol of

another, implies certain prominent features of resemblance. But the similarity is of course limited by the nature of the case, and it is neither necessary nor possible that it should extend to every minor feature, and that the two objects should be in all respects precise counterparts. There will always be particulars, therefore, which belong to a full account of the symbol, but which stand in no direct relation to the thing signified, and consequently possess no distinct significance. These may be introduced into the description, and they have their force in the more graphic portraiture of the symbol as a whole, but are entitled to no separate part in the interpretation. The rule for distinguishing what is separately significant from what is not, is sufficiently simple in theory, whatever difficulty or embarrassment may attend its application in actual practice. It is that the sense of the entire symbol must first be ascertained. Whatever, then, really belongs to the likeness of the objects, is to be held to be significant. Whatever does not do this, or can only by forced and unnatural interpretations be brought into harmony with the main intent of the whole, belongs merely to the filling up of the symbol, but not to its significant portions.

Mr. David N. Lord, who has written more largely and earnestly upon the subject of the figures and symbols of prophecy than any other person in this country, has done a valuable service by calling increased attention to the importance of the subject, the necessity of fixed rules and principles of interpretation, in order to exclude caprice, and to substitute certainty for wild conjecture, and the duty of gathering these principles from the Scriptures themselves. The laws of symbols, as deduced by him from scriptural usage, are the six following,* viz. 1. The symbol and that which it represents, resemble each other in the station they fill, the relations they sustain, and the agencies they exert in their respective spheres; that is, agents represent agents, not acts or effects; acts represent acts, not agents; effects stand for effects, and conditions for conditions. 2. The representative and that which it represents, are of different species, kinds, or ranks, in all cases where the symbol is of such a nature or is used in such a relation that it can pro-

* "The Coming and Reign of Christ," by D. N. Lord, p. 41, etc.

perly symbolize something different from itself. 3. Where the agents or events to be represented are of a nature, or are to appear in conditions, that no symbol of a different order can properly represent them, they appear in the visions as their own symbol. 4. When the symbol and that which it represents differ from each other, the correspondence between them extends to their chief parts, and the general elements or parts of the symbol denote corresponding parts in that which is symbolized. 5. A single agent, in many instances, symbolizes a combination and a succession of agents. Times, also, such as days, months, and years, represent combinations of days, and successions of months and years. 6. The names of symbols are their literal and proper names.

It is not our purpose here to enter upon the detailed examination or discussion of these rules. In the main they are undoubtedly correct, and yet in certain minor respects we conceive them to need, if not modification and correction, at least explanation. Thus for instance we should wish it to be understood, under the first rule, that the agents symbolized by agents need not be actual persons, but may be also personifications; as when the omniscience of the angel of the Lord is represented by couriers coming from all parts of the earth to render up their report, Zech. i. 8—11, and war, famine, and death by the horsemen in the second, third, and fourth seals, Rev. vi. 4—8. And under the second and third rules, we would be disposed to claim that the sacred writer, and not the interpreter, is to be the judge whether a particular object can properly be represented by a symbol of a different nature from itself or not. These rules, however, and those propounded by the same author with regard to figurative language, supposing them to be admitted and accepted, do not have the sweeping consequences which he attributes to them, as though they settled at once and for ever all controverted questions upon prophetic subjects. His mistake consists in supposing that all questions of interpretation can be determined by mechanical rules with mathematical exactness, and that all exercise of discretion and judgment on the part of the interpreter may thus be entirely superseded, and that no need can exist of qualifying the results by the analogy of faith, the scope of the

context, or the light of parallel passages, and that nothing need be left to be determined by the actual fulfilment.

A most important question here arises—How can those prophecies which adhere to the historical form of future events be distinguished from those in which it is departed from? Both extremes of error have here led to the most serious results. The Jews, by a literal interpretation of what is figurative, deny the Messiahship of Jesus, because he failed to satisfy their carnal expectations of a temporal kingdom and a political deliverance. Modern unbelievers, by a figurative interpretation of what is literal, fritter away the evidence of Divine foreknowledge, and convert everything into vague anticipations. In Mr. Lord's opinion this is a very simple matter, and may be readily determined in every case by the application of his rules of figurative language. But neither these nor any other rules enable any one, from the bare inspection of the terms of individual prophecies, irrespective of other aids, and especially of the fulfilment, to determine what was literal and what figurative in the predictions which have been already accomplished, such as those respecting the Messiah or the nations of antiquity. They cannot, consequently, be accepted as a safe and adequate solution in the case of those which are yet unaccomplished.

The following suggestions embrace all that we conceive essential upon this subject.

1. In prophecies which have been already accomplished, the surest criterion is to be found in the fulfilment. This is the authoritative explanation by God, in his providence, of what he intended in his word. Thus, that Christ should rise from the dead before he saw corruption, Ps. xvi. 10; that his garments should be parted, and lots cast upon his vesture, Ps. xxii. 18; that vinegar should be given him in his thirst, Ps. lxix. 21; that thirty pieces of silver should be paid for his betrayal, Zech. xi. 12; that he should enter Jerusalem upon an ass, Zech. ix. 9, are shown by the event to have been literally intended. The drying up of the river of Egypt, Isa. xix. 5, exalting the valleys and making low the mountains and hills, Isa. xl. 4, the coming of Elijah, Mal. iv. 5, are shown to have been figurative. In the application of this criterion, however,

care should be taken to ascertain whether the prophecy is entirely fulfilled. For, if there be a residuum still awaiting accomplishment, that which is only figuratively true of past fulfilments, may be destined to come to pass literally hereafter. Thus the darkening of the heavenly bodies, Isa. xiii. 10, is figurative, if the prophecy is not intended to reach beyond the fall of Babylon; but if it have relation likewise to the end of the world, it may be literally meant.

2. The comparison of other prophecies in the Old or the New Testament, relating to the same subject, affords a valuable criterion. The figures of one passage may be shown to be such by the literal statements, or by the figures of another with which they would be incompatible if literally understood. Thus the conversion of the heathen is represented in some passages by their building altars and offering sacrifices in their own land, Isa. xix. 19, 21, and that in all parts of the earth, Mal. i. 11; in others, by their going up to Jerusalem to worship, Isa. ii. 3, Zech. xiv. 16. Joel iii. 18, says that a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim. Ezekiel xlvii. 1, etc., makes it a river running into the Dead Sea. According to Zech. xiv. 8, only half the waters flow into the Dead Sea, and the other half into the Mediterranean. These accounts are inconsistent if an actual stream is described, but quite harmonious if it is a symbol. In Ezek. xxxviii. 2, Gog is the prince of the land of Magog; in Rev. xx. 8, Gog and Magog are both nations. The heathen are sometimes spoken of as destined to be destroyed in the days of Messiah by immediate Divine judgments, Joel iii. 11, etc., sometimes as subjugated by Israel, Isa. xi. 14; sometimes as yielding not a coerced, but a voluntary service, Ps. lxxii. 11, Isa. xlix. 22; and sometimes as leagued with Israel on terms of equality, Isa. xix. 24, 25. Ammon was to be blotted from existence, Ezek. xxv. 7, 10, and yet to be an object of future mercy, Jer. xlix. 6. It is in one place declared that noxious animals shall be extirpated, Ezek. xxxiv. 25, and in another that they shall change their nature, Isa. xi. 6. These various statements are in mutual conflict, if literally understood, but perfectly consistent as figures. Care must be taken in the application of this rule also, not to be misled by apparent dis-

crepancies which are not really such. There is no conflict, for instance, between the predictions of Messiah in his humiliation, and in his glory; both may in succession be literally fulfilled.

3. It is the doctrine of the New Testament that the restrictions of the old economy, with its peculiar theocratic and ceremonial institutions, are now abolished. The ceremonial services were weak and beggarly elements, Gal. iv. 9, suited only to the childhood of the church, a system of restraint imposed during its minority but now removed, a yoke of bondage which it is inconsistent with Christian freedom to reimpose, Acts xv. 10, a shadow of good things which has given place to the gospel substance, Heb. x. 1. Henceforth the people of God are his temple, and it is no longer requisite to worship in Jerusalem. John iv. 21. The wall which separated Jews and Gentiles is thrown down, Eph. ii. 14, etc. Christ's unchangeable priesthood leaves no room for priests on earth, nor his perfect atonement for other sacrifices. The apostle expressly declares, Heb. x. 2, that as soon as a complete expiation for sin is accomplished, sacrifices must cease to be offered. Consequently if any prediction speaks of these obsolete forms in connection with Messianic times, it must be understood, not according to its letter but according to its spirit. In all that is said of the temple and the ritual and pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and the entire circle of objects associated with these legal services, those things must have been regarded by the spirit of inspiration which now occupy their place and have the same essential meaning.

4. The figurative character of a prophecy is often stated or suggested: as when Daniel appends an explanation to his symbolical visions, ch. vii. 8. Ezekiel xxxvii. 11, declares the resurrection of the dry bones to mean the restoration of Israel. Joel employs expressions, ii. 4, 5, 20, implying that the locusts which he describes were hostile armies. Zechariah says, x. 11, he shall pass through the sea affliction, (not *with* affliction, as in the English version,) showing that he did not mean a literal sea, but affliction represented under that figure. The wine-cup of which the nations were to drink, is explained, Jer. xxv. 15, to be God's fury.

5. Where the terms of a prediction stand in evident relation to the past history of the chosen people, or to typical events and institutions, there is reason to suspect that these may be figuratively employed. It is a common thing with the prophets to represent the past as repeated in the future: not because it is to occur again in precisely the same form, but because the same Divine attributes or the same principles of the Divine administration which were therein exhibited, shall be again displayed with equal power and clearness. Thus they foretell a second miracle of dividing the Red Sea, Isa. xi. 15; a fresh leading through the wilderness, Ezek. xx. 34—38; bringing water from the rock, Isa. xlviii. 21; the pillar of cloud and fire, Isa. iv. 5; raining fire and brimstone as once on Sodom, Ezek. xxxviii. 22; the renewal of the harmless estate of Paradise, Isa. xi. 6—8; lxv. 25. These represent deliverances, trials, blessings, and judgments, of like character and equally conspicuous, but not necessarily of the same form which is here described.

6. If the literal explanation would involve physical impossibility, or a manifest incongruity, this is a clear index of the figurative character of a prediction. Thus Ezekiel shows that he did not intend a literal temple by assigning to it such measures, that Mount Moriah would not be large enough to afford it a site, xlii. 16; the apostle John does the same in regard to the new Jerusalem, by declaring that its height should be twelve thousand furlongs, equal to its length and its breadth, Rev. xxi. 16; Joel shows the locusts to be figurative, by making the same swarm perish in two different seas, ch. ii. 20; and in the prophecy respecting Gog, the extravagance of the time devoted to burning their weapons and burying their dead, is designed to give an intimation of its figurative character. Ezek. xxxix. 12.

7. The general character of a prophet may afford some hints as to the way in which a particular passage occurring in his writings is to be understood. The more largely he deals in figures, the greater the probability of their employment in any given case. So the general character of a prophecy, whether literal or figurative, may throw light upon the proper mode of understanding its individual portions.

8. In prophecies yet unfulfilled, it must often be left to the developments of Providence to distinguish what is literal from what is figurative. How could it have been known in advance of fulfilment, that the prophetic appellations, Josiah, 1 Kings xiii. 2, and Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 1, 4, were to be real names, and Immanuel, Isa. vii. 14, was not? or that the predicted coming of Elijah, Mal. iv. 5, was not to be the personal reappearance of the prophet? As it is only by the event that the line can be unerringly drawn in the case of prophecies already accomplished, it seems plain that we must wait for the fulfilment, before we can attain positive certainty in the case of others also.

9. The line between figurative and literal prophecies is not to be too sharply drawn, as though these formed quite distinct classes. The same prophecy may be intended and fulfilled in both senses; e. g. Isa. xxxv. 5, opening the eyes of the blind and unstopping the ears of the deaf, was fulfilled literally in the miracles of Christ, and figuratively in the blessings of the gospel dispensation. Haggai ii. 7—9, predicts that the silver and the gold of the heathen should be brought to adorn God's house, which is verified both in the material and the spiritual temple. Messiah's coming to Jerusalem riding upon an ass, Zech. ix. 9, was fulfilled, not only in his public entry into the city in that manner, but in his possession of the character which that act symbolized. The convulsions of material nature, so frequently described by the prophets in connection with the fall of particular empires, had a figurative fulfilment then, and await a literal accomplishment at the end of the world. These different modes of fulfilment are so far from inconsistency or mutual interference, that the literal sometimes serves to identify the subject of the other. Thus, that John came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Matt. iii. 1, was an external sign of the fact that he was the voice spoken of by Isaiah, as crying in the spiritual wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." That the bones of Christ were not broken upon the cross, John xix. 36, was a literal mark of similitude, identifying him as the true paschal Lamb.

Prophecy has thus its own modes of representing the future, growing out of, and adapted to, its special ends. The task of the prophet was not to write history beforehand, but, while

giving some foreshadowing of God's great designs, to draw from them instruction for his own and every succeeding age. Accordingly, the study of a prophecy is quite a distinct thing from the study of its fulfilment. The student of the prophecy is occupied with its terms, with the meaning of its words and expressions, with the picture of the future precisely as it is there presented. It has thus its value and importance as a part of the revelation of God, quite irrespective of the question how or when it has been or will be fulfilled. The study of its fulfilment raises the inquiry, how it has been, or may be expected to be, realized in actual events. This will require the elimination of its peculiarities in respect to time and form already exhibited, and the reduction of all to the style of history. It may be likened to the conversion of a picture into a map of the future.

Two directions are important in the study of the fulfilment of prophecy. It should, in the first place, be preceded by a thorough and careful study of the prophecy itself. If it were proposed to identify the objects in a picture of an extensive landscape, with their proper equivalents in the landscape itself, the first step would be to scrutinize the picture, discover its plan and the point from which it was taken, and to become acquainted with the objects as there represented: then an examination of the landscape would, it might be hoped, show where they were to be found. So in this case it must first be ascertained, by the direct study of the prophecy, what it is precisely that has been predicted, and then, by an inspection of the pages of history, what events will answer to these given requisitions. This order has not infrequently been inverted, and has led to the most extravagant results. Where the attempt is to adapt the prophecy to some previously selected passage in history, instead of gathering from the prophecy what it is that is to be sought in the history, nothing can be expected but preposterous interpretations. Some of the old Dutch interpreters found in the Old Testament prophecies all the events of the Thirty Years' war. Some in more recent times have discovered predictions of the taking of Sebastopol. And no matter what may have been the theory which any expositor has entertained of the book of Revelation, he has, in

his own judgment at least, succeeded in making it conform to the facts to which he has thought proper to apply it.

A second direction equally obvious and essential is, that the student should proceed from the plain to the obscure, from the fulfilled to the unfulfilled. In the case of the picture and the landscape, before supposed, there might probably be certain leading objects which could be identified at once. These would afford fixed points as the basis of further investigation. By the aid thus furnished, others could be made out, and so progress might be made from point to point until the whole was satisfactorily determined. The opposite course of hastily concluding upon some obscure and doubtful points first, and settling all the rest upon this basis could only lead to confusion and error. So if a person had several pictures of different landscapes, and he had access only to some of the scenes represented and not to others, the proper method would be to begin with the former class, and the skill obtained by comparing these with the scenes from which they were taken, would prepare him better to image to himself the scenes portrayed in the rest. When engaged upon prophecies which are clear, or where the fulfilment is before his eyes, the student is in less danger of error, and may correct his results by the Divine exposition afforded by the event. Having tested his methods thus, and adjusted them into conformity with these more evident cases, he may adventure prudently and cautiously into that which is more difficult, or whose fulfilment lies yet in the future. This is the only way to attain reliable and trustworthy results. To begin with the enigmas of prophecy without the previous preparation indispensable for their solution, or even feeling the need of it, is only to give way to profitless conjecture, and may end in the adoption of the wildest vagaries. .

The study of the fulfilment of prophecy has many important uses. Among these the most noteworthy are its practical and its apologetic use. The practical use of this study lies in the light which it sheds upon duty and the incentives and encouragements which it supplies to its faithful performance. It is by tracing the connection between the disclosures of God's word and the unfoldings of his providence, that we come to

understand in their true nature the events which are taking place around us, to refer them to their true position in the Divine plan, and to comprehend the lessons which they read to us, as well as the tasks to which they summon us. It is thus that the Jews should have been taught to recognize in Jesus the Messiah; thus the early disciples, when they saw Jerusalem compassed with armies, were warned to save themselves by flight; and we should be stimulated to labour zealously and hopefully for the universal spread of the gospel, by observing how that has been fulfilled and is fulfilling which was predicted in regard to it.

The apologetic use of this study belongs to it as a branch of the evidences of revealed religion. There is no clearer proof of Divinity than that afforded by infallible foreknowledge of the distant and contingent future. The prophets predicting events beyond the reach of human calculation or conjecture, are thereby demonstrated to have been the immediate messengers of God, and all their communications bear in consequence the impress of heavenly authority. The force of this argument is not destroyed by the peculiar difficulties of the subject, arising from the obscurity of many of the prophecies, some of which were dark even to the prophets themselves, Dan. viii. 26, 27, xii. 8, 9, or the peculiarities of the mode of depicting events which has been seen to characterize prophecy in general. There are enough that are plain and have been unambiguously fulfilled; so many, in fact, that the strength of the argument could not be increased by the addition of more. The alleged obscurity is also often greatly exaggerated; or, very frequently, where it existed originally it is removed by the event, and then the argument is the stronger for its having been dark and hard to be understood before.

To the question, whether all the prophecies of Scripture have been or are to be fulfilled, a negative answer has been returned by two very different classes of interpreters, and on essentially different grounds. Many believers in the inspiration of the prophets have contended that certain prophecies contain implied conditions upon which their fulfilment or non-fulfilment, according to the tenor of their announcement, is suspended. The Socinians held it to be inconsistent with the liberty of free

agents that their acts should be foreknown or certainly determined beforehand: all predictions relating to the free acts of men must, consequently, upon this theory, be contingent or conditional. The schoolmen distinguish three sorts of prophecies—*prophetia prædestinationis*, *prophetia præscientiæ*, and *prophetia comminationis*. The prophecy of predestination is when the event depends wholly upon God's will, without any respect to the will of man, as the prophecy of the incarnation of Christ; the prophecy of prescience is of such things as depend upon the liberty of man's will; and the prophecy of commination denotes God's denunciations of heavy judgments against a people. The first and second rest upon the Divine decree and foreknowledge, and they always take effect; the third is a simple declaration of what is deserved, and, in the existing state of things, is to be expected, but which need not follow if the antecedent conditions are altered. Stillingfleet* remarks upon this point, "Comminations of judgments to come do not in themselves speak the absolute futurity of the event, but do only declare what the persons to whom they are made are to expect, and what shall certainly come to pass, unless God by his mercy interpose between the threatening and the event. So that comminations do speak only the *debitum poenæ* and the necessary obligation to punishment; but therein God doth not bind himself up as he doth in absolute promises; the reason is, because comminations confer no right to any, which absolute promises do; and therefore God is not bound to necessary performance of what he threatens. . . . Predictions concerning temporal blessings do not always absolutely speak the certainty of the event, but what God is ready to do, if they to whom they are made continue faithful to him." Fairbairn† likewise maintains that predictions of coming good or evil are always conditional, never absolute; for the assumption implied in their being absolute, that the spiritual state of the subjects of it would undergo no change, nullifies the very design of the delivery of the prophecy, which is the production of a spiritual effect.

The decisive objection to this view, on whatever footing it

* Origines Sacræ, book ii. chap. 6.

† Fairbairn on Prophecy, part i. chap. 4.

is placed, or by whatever grounds it is defended, is that the inspired criterion for distinguishing true from false prophets, is the accomplishment of their predictions, Deut. xviii. 22. This test would be practically rendered nugatory if predictions of specific events, expressed in absolute terms and with no intimation of any condition, might fail of fulfilment, and yet be true prophecies. And that Jeremiah xviii. 7—10, had no intention of nullifying this test, appears from his appeal to it in his contest with Hananiah, Jer. xxviii. 9. The righteous dispensations of God towards men are indeed conditioned by their character and conduct, so that a change in them is followed by a change in his dealings with them, which the Scriptures, employing the language of men and speaking according to the outward appearance, often describe as a change in the Divine mind. But God's eternal purpose never changes. His foresight of the future is not conditional, but absolute, and he may, if he pleases, reveal it absolutely. When a specific good is unconditionally promised, therefore, it is because it is certain to the Divine mind that his mercy will not be taken away from the object of his favour. When a specific evil is similarly threatened, it is with the certainty that they who are thus doomed are incorrigible and will not repent. Even where this is the case, as in Isa. vi. 9, etc., the prophecy is not useless, as Fairbairn objects. It still serves two important purposes. It is a witness on God's behalf and against the obdurate offenders, that judgment did not come upon them without just cause, or without antecedent warning; and it may be the means of leading individuals to repentance and salvation, though the unbelieving mass persist in going on to ruin. There may be no claim upon God, *ab extra*, to fulfil his threatenings, but the reasons of his acts are in himself, and his inviolable truth and justice stand in the way of his revoking them. Whenever the moral effect of a prophecy required that it should be conditional, it is made so in express terms. Or, the same end may be answered by leaving it indefinite, announcing some general principle of the Divine administration, without specifying when or how it shall go into effect, or at least, leaving the time undetermined. But whatever is absolutely declared by the prophet, is to be absolutely understood. The most plausible exception is that derived from the

case of Jonah. Nineveh continued to stand, notwithstanding his having been sent of God with the declaration, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But, as Hengstenberg has well said, we have only this general statement respecting Jonah's preaching there, not the preaching itself. No doubt this was such as to indicate that the only hope of escape lay in a timely repentance. It was at least, so understood by the Ninevites, and they acted accordingly. Jonah's displeasure at the sparing of the city cannot be urged in proof of the unconditional character of his prophecy; for there is reason to believe that this did not arise from the fear of his being discredited as a prophet, but rather from his distress at seeing the mercy of God transferred from obdurate Israel to their penitent foes. Jer. xxvi. 18, 19, to which Caspari* appeals in proof of the conditional character of Micah's prophecy, iii. 12, is still less to the point. It simply repeats the opinion of certain elders, without vouching for its correctness. The prediction in question relates to an event whose time was not defined by the prophet, although intimated, iv. 10, and it was fulfilled to the letter.

On the other hand, unbelievers in the inspiration of the prophets allege that several of their predictions failed of accomplishment, thereby showing that they had no certain knowledge of the future. Thus De Wette:† "Jer. xxii. 18, etc. xxxvi. 30, appear not to have been fulfilled, comp. 2 Kings xxiv. 6; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. The following are not fulfilled: Amos vii. 11; Hosea ix. 3, xi. 5; Isa. xxii., xxix., xvi. 14; xxiii.; Jer. xliii. 8, etc., xlix. 7, etc.; Ezek. xxxv., xxix., xxxviii., etc.; not accurately fulfilled, Isa. vii. 17, etc., viii. 4, xiv. 23, xvii. 1—3, xxxiv. 9, etc." But even if we were not able to prove that these particular prophecies have been accomplished, this would not affect the argument of inspiration from

* Caspari on Micah, p. 160.

† Einleitung in die A. T. § 204. In the translation of this work by Theodore Parker, the translator has mistaken his author's meaning, when he makes him say, 'The definite predictions of Ezekiel xii. xxiv. 25, 26, xxxiii. 21, 22, seem not to have been fulfilled.' De Wette merely alleges these as instances of the prediction of specific events, without denying their fulfilment, this being too plain to be questioned.

the remainder, many of which have been most signally and undeniably fulfilled. This is sufficient, likewise, to show that we should be slow to admit the non-fulfilment of any prophecy uttered by those who are so clearly attested as the messengers of God. Nothing but the plainest and most undeniable evidence can justify such an admission. But so far from this being afforded, an examination of the passages adduced by De Wette, will show that his denial rests in every case upon a false interpretation of the passages themselves, a want of historical knowledge, or the groundless assumption that the prophecies contemplate only the immediate future. Amos vii. 11, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,' is not the language of Amos, but words which Amaziah slanderously puts into his mouth, to make him odious to the king. The real words of Amos were, vii. 9, 'I will rise against the *house* of Jeroboam with the sword,' which came to pass, 2 Kings xv. 10. Ezekiel's prophecy respecting Gog, chaps. xxxviii. xxxix., relates to events still future. Isaiah, ch. xxxiv., blends the final judgment with the judgment upon Edom. Isa. vii. 17, the invasion of Judah by the king of Assyria; Isa. xiv. 23, the utter desolation of Babylon; and Jer. xlix. 7, etc.; Ezek. ch. xxxv., that of Edom, have been fulfilled to the letter, and the length of time which intervened between the predictions and their accomplishment, only enhances the evidence of prophetic foresight. According to 2 Kings xv. 29, xvi. 9, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria (not the city, but the kingdom) were taken away before the king of Assyria within the time predicted, Isa. viii. 4. That Damascus was in consequence temporarily desolated, Isa. xvii. 1—3, is as credible as the desolation of Samaria and Jerusalem in their respective captivities. In regard to Isa. xvi. 14, the overthrow of Moab within three years, Isa. xxiii., the humiliation of Tyre for seventy years, and its subsequent revival, and Jer. xliii. 8, etc., Ezek. xxix., Nebuchadnezzar's subjugation of Egypt, the sole difficulty arises from the deficiency of historical records. We know nothing of Moab's history except from the incidental references occasionally made to it in the Old Testament. But it was, in all probability, devastated by the Assyrian armies, which so often invaded Palestine. It is

well known that Tyre was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar for thirteen years, and there is good reason to believe successfully, although the fact of its capture does not happen to be mentioned in express terms. It cannot, at any rate, be disproved; neither can his conquest of Egypt, which is, moreover, asserted by Josephus, *Antiquities*, x. 9, 7, who quotes Megasthenes and Berossus to the same effect, *Antiquities* x. 11, 1. These positive statements are certainly sufficient to outweigh the silence of Herodotus and Diodorus. The indignities threatened to the dead body of Jehoiakim, Jer. xxii. 18, etc., xxxvi. 30, are not discredited by 2 Kings xxiv. 6, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, for there is no conflict between these passages and the prophecy. Nor is there any reason to question Josephus's explicit testimony to its fulfilment, *Antiq.* x. 6, 3, notwithstanding its rejection by De Wette. The difficulty in Isa. xxii. 29, is not so much to discover a fulfilment, as to decide between different events which have a claim to be so regarded. The invasion of Sennacherib seems to have been more immediately regarded in both cases. Elam and Kir, chap. xxii. 6, denote troops from those nations in the Assyrian army; and the sudden and miraculous defeat, xxix. 5, etc., is that of the host of the Assyrians. But with this is blended the foresight, in chap. xxix., of other trials and deliverances; and perhaps, in chap. xxii., of the later sieges by Esar-haddon and Nebuchadnezzar. Hos. ix. 3, "Ephraim shall return to Egypt," and xi. 5, "he shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king," are mutually contradictory, if regard be had merely to the letter and the form of expression. In thus affirming and denying the same proposition, the prophet must, if he is to be absolved from the charge of inconsistency, have intended it in different senses. Two explanations are possible, either of which is satisfactory. He may mean, Ephraim shall return to an Egypt, i. e., he shall be reduced again to a servitude like that which he formerly experienced in that land—not in the literal Egypt, however, but in Assyria. Or he may mean some of the people shall return to Egypt, fugitives from Assyrian invasion; the mass, however, shall be carried not to Egypt, but to Assyria. Upon either of these hypotheses, the language of the prediction accords with the event. And these explanations will still hold

good, though xi. 5 be translated with De Wette, interrogatively, Shall he not return into the land of Egypt? There is no note of interrogation in the Hebrew, however, so that the declarative form, adopted in the common English version, is to be preferred.

ART. V.—*Conference on Missions held in 1860 at Liverpool.* Including the Papers read, the Deliberations, and the Conclusions reached, with a comprehensive Index, showing the various matters brought under Review. Edited by the Secretaries to the Conference. Tenth thousand, revised. London: James Nisbet & Co. 1860.

IN bringing this interesting and important volume to the notice of our readers, we are influenced by the momentous character of the questions it discusses, and the valuable light it sheds upon them. No interest of the church, or department of Christian labour, towers above missions to the heathen. When, at the beginning of this century, the mind of Protestant Christendom awoke from its lethargy on this subject, and commenced its labours of foreign evangelization, the field was new and untried, at least in modern experience. While the great principles which underlie and shape the missionary work are laid down in Scripture, yet those details of practical development and organization, which are conditioned by the difference between present circumstances and those of the apostolic church, and which can only be determined by actual experience, remained to be evolved by the future working of missions. Great questions have thus been emerging in regard to various matters connected with the conduct of missions, which have tasked the wisdom of missionaries, and of missionary boards and managers, while some of them have agitated the mind of the church at large. In this exigency, it has been felt to be desirable to collect the lights of experience from those who have personal knowledge of the operations and effects, the difficulties and perplexities, that have shown themselves in the practical working of modern missions. The most obvious