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ART. I.—*Eloquence a Virtue; or, Outlines of a Systematic Rhetoric.* Translated from the German of Dr. FRANCIS THEREMIN, by WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD. With an Introductory Essay.

*Demosthenes und Massillon, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beredsamkeit.* Von Dr. FRANZ THEREMIN. Berlin, 1845.

*Elements of the Art of Rhetoric.* Adapted for use in Colleges and Academies, and for Private Study. By HENRY N. DAY.

THE design in placing the titles of these books at the head of our article is not to prepare the way for an elaborate critique of the volumes which bear them, but rather to call attention to them as containing in substance, and that in its best expression, what of value has been said in systematic form on the general subject of which they treat. They are plain books, and easily accessible, and we therefore cheerfully leave the vindication of this our statement regarding them, the thorough testing of which we bespeak, to a careful examination of the works themselves, by those interested in the increase and elevation of the oratorical power of the pulpit; merely premising that “Demosthenes und Massillon” is the presentation of the abstract principles of “Eloquence a Virtue” in concrete shape, or as

are often in the last degree vague and sometimes contradictory. His performance is just the reverse of its pretensions, and is inaccurate, superficial, and unsound. Whatever may be his creed—which he has carefully concealed—his want of candour in dealing with his authorities, his presumption, and his rashness, deserve the severest censure. That his book should have obtained the suffrages of any members of the Church of England, is melancholy evidence of their slight acquaintance with their faith and their Bibles. . . . Happily, there is a vast body of educated men who are better informed, and while error is perpetually changing its form and is only born to die, the grand truths of Christianity are passed on with accelerated impulse from generation to generation. They were never more in the ascendant than now; and there is this good, at least, in the assaults of adversaries, that they promote inquiry and help to establish the revelation they were designed to overthrow.”

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ART. VII.—*The Hebrew Prophets, translated afresh from the original with regard to the Anglican version, and with illustrations for English readers.* By ROWLAND WILLIAMS, D. D., Vicar of Broad-Chalke, Wilts, formerly Fellow and Tutor of King's College, Cambridge. Vol. I.—The Prophets of Israel and Judah during the Assyrian Empire. 8vo. pp. 450. London and Edinburgh. 1866.

THIS book has no particular claim to attention from any novelty in its contents, its methods or results. It is, however, noteworthy as marking a fresh stage in the process which has for some time been going forward, and which bids fair to transfer to our own religious literature, if not to our own shores, the battle which has been waging in Germany from the beginning of the present century.

The English and American churches are accustomed to contests with avowed opposers, with philosophical deists who deny the reality of revealed religion, and frivolous scoffers who mock

at sacred things and point their profane jests at the inspired word of God. These have assailed not the essence of Christianity, but its evidences. The ponderous blows which were given or received, and the poisoned arrows which were discharged or warded off, did not affect the contents of the Scriptures so much as their claims upon men's credence and obedience. Friend and foe alike united in the confession that this volume professed to be a supernatural communication from God, and that it contained a definite system of doctrines and precepts propounded to men as a divine rule of faith and duty. By deist, infidel, and Christian, the Bible was understood substantially alike. The question in dispute was not what it claimed to be, nor what it taught; but whether its claims were valid, and its teachings true and authoritative.

At the opposite extreme from these battles with the open antagonists of all revealed religion, lay the controversies on points of doctrine with which our churches were familiar among themselves. Here the divinity and authority of the Scriptures did not come into question. Whatever skirmishing there might be over minor and unessential details, or however the dispute might wax hot over weighty and momentous doctrines vital in their bearing on evangelical religion, the foundations were left untouched. To the combatants on either side, the Bible was the word of God and contained a system of truth divinely authoritative.

A far subtler and bolder form of attack than either of these indigenous species of warfare has, however, been developed abroad. It proceeds not from professed foes outside the church, but from men who call themselves Christians, and who resent as unfounded and malignant the charge of heresy or unbelief,—who occupy prominent positions in evangelical communions and fill noted theological chairs,—men in some cases of immense and varied learning, who make the Scriptures the study of their lives, and are enthusiastic in their admiration of the sacred writers. And these men fortified by their position in the church, by their extensive research and their unquestioned ability, as well as by their professions of candour and of respect and veneration for the Scriptures, direct their assault not merely at the external evidences of revealed religion, nor

at particular doctrines of the word of God which may be more or less important, but by a dexterous use of criticism and philology they undertake to explode all that has been most surely believed from the days of the prophets and apostles. The entire supernatural view of religion is simply a stupendous mistake and misunderstanding; and nothing more is needed to demonstrate this than a careful study of the volume which Christendom has made the basis of its faith. The inner mechanism of these books sufficiently explains their true character. There was no miracle, no prophecy, no immediate revelation in the case. Before a fair and candid interpretation and an intelligent criticism all mystery disappears, and the literary products of Palestine are to be classed with those of Greece and Rome and other lands. The inspired men, the psalmists and the prophets of the Hebrews, were simply sages, poets, and orators, admirable for their genius and penetration, their eloquence and poetic fire, but in no other sense the messengers of God or the interpreters of his will, than the same classes are among every people and in every age.

As remote though not uninterested spectators, we have been wont to look serenely on this scene of strife, congratulating ourselves on our safe distance and our sheltered position. We have been affected by it much as we used to be by the clangour of transatlantic arms before these last few terrible years, while we securely trusted that the shock of war could never reach ourselves. From these vain dreams we were rudely roused by the breaking out of the late rebellion. It was not an affair with the Indian tribes menacing our outposts, which the despatch of a few regiments might quell. It was not a mere question of policy to be settled peacefully at the polls. It was a desperate struggle for the nation's life against those who had sworn to support the Constitution, but who hoped by a bold *coup d'état* to seize upon the government, possessing themselves of the national forts, supplies, and ammunition, turning our own guns upon us, and beleaguering the capitol.

The warning notes of preparation for a like struggle over the essentials of the Christian faith are already sounding in our ears; and its friends and defenders must equip themselves thoroughly for it. Hitherto it has been chiefly the light

skirmishes that have appeared upon the field, but the tramp of the heavy armed legions is close behind them.

German opinions and conclusions have been imported piecemeal, and sometimes even ludicrously and unskilfully urged after they had been abandoned by their authors, like foreign fashions thrown upon the market after the commodities had ceased to be saleable at home. German books of the destructive sort have been translated and circulated among us, but as these were prepared for another public, and presupposed a very different state of popular opinion and a widely variant taste, they had little influence on the general mind. There were those, however, to whom these novelties proved welcome, and by whom their startling conclusions were eagerly embraced. This number has been steadily increasing, and as a consequence these ideas are becoming naturalized; they are cast into the forms of English thought, wrought into shapes more captivating to English minds, and native centres created for their wider and more vigorous dissemination. Writers in leading Quarterlies, and even in influential daily journals, have put forth these views in laboured articles and in sprightly paragraphs. Men of eminence in letters and science, and dignitaries of the church, have tacitly assumed their correctness or entered the lists in their defence. The only Introduction to the Old Testament from an English pen, which makes any pretension to represent the existing state of Biblical learning, is wholly in the same interest, the awkward and ill-digested, but learned and copious treatise of Davidson. And now in the volume under consideration a beginning is made at new translations and commentaries, from which the idea of a supernatural revelation is carefully excluded, and every occasion seized to scout the notion as the offspring of bigotry and prejudice, or the remnant of an antiquated superstition.

The author, Rowland Williams, D. D., is well known by his paper on Bunsen's Biblical Researches, in the famous "Essays and Reviews," by a volume of sermons in the same vein, entitled, "Rational Godliness," by his *Christianity and Hinduism*, and other minor publications.

The estimate which he puts upon the prophets will appear from such expressions as the following: "The words were

spoken by the prophet after the measure of his own age, with its limitation of horizon and of feeling." P. 6. "Prophecy is not a delegation of the Divine omniscience, but a foreboding from trust in the Divine justice, tinged possibly by passion, limited certainly by circumstance." P. 40. "The eternal power of the prophets springs ever fresh, not from whatever gift of prediction they may extraordinarily have possessed, but from that which they have in common with ourselves, their sight of God, their hatred of tyranny and hypocrisy, their courage in denouncing wrong, their awe-stricken prayerfulness, their poetical fire, their manly generosity." P. 216. Again he speaks of "the prophet's own mind impelled by presentiment, as by something divine, as we ourselves in some vast calamity, or amidst organized wrong veiled by falsehood, forebode by faith in God that it cannot be for ever." P. 339. And of "fervent forebodings, which have a tinge of prediction, though not in the external sense commonly conceived." P. 355.

The prophets, then, were under no extraordinary Divine influence. What they uttered was not the immediate communications of God's Spirit, but the forebodings of their own minds. It follows from this that they could have no infallible prescience of the future; and there cannot in strictness have been any such thing as a fulfilment of their predictions. This conclusion he does not pretend to evade, but explicitly draws and undertakes to establish it in detail.

He says, indeed, p. 96, "With God no prediction can be impossible;" and again, p. 150, "No religious mind, least of all my own (whatever may have been polemically imputed), would deem it impossible for God to foretell the captivity a century before it happened."

It is here confessed that the clear foresight of the future, however distant, is not in itself incredible. There is no *a priori* necessity forbidding it. God certainly foreknows what will come to pass; and if he has chosen, he may have communicated that knowledge to the prophets. No man is authorized to declare that the prophets can have uttered no real predictions. Whether they have done so in actual fact, must be determined by an unbiassed examination of their writings. To such an examination our author confidently makes his appeal, and pro-

fesses himself willing to abide its issue. He boldly avers that all the books of the prophets do not afford a single instance of supernatural foresight. The method by which this conclusion is reached, is as extraordinary as the conclusion itself.

Of Hosea he alleges, p. 91, that no proof can be given that any event absolutely future, when the writing was published, was therein foretold. Even if this were really so, it is a palpable evasion of the point at issue. We may leave out of view the Messianic predictions, which are disposed of by a very summary process; and we may allow it to be an open question, whether Hosea survived the fall of Samaria, and published the book of his prophecies after that event; and yet, if Hosea uttered predictions which were afterwards fulfilled, it is as fatal to the theory as if they had been from the first committed to writing.

Here is the record of a ministry covering the last sixty years of the existence of the kingdom of the ten tribes, the ever recurring burden of which, from first to last, is the destruction of this ungodly kingdom, and the exile of the people. This prediction is further set in combination with the announcement of the future fate of the house of Jeroboam, which occurred in the outset of his ministry, and with arguments, expostulations, and exhortations, which imply that the kingdom was still standing, and space was still allowed for repentance. Now the people amongst whom Hosea laboured for the space of nearly two generations, must have known whether his ministry was really such as is herein described; whether he had really announced, as he here claims, the fall of Jeroboam's house, and at the same time and thenceforward the overthrow and captivity of the ten tribes. If he had not, and it was, as it must have been, well known to the people that he had not, how did this book ever gain credence, or its author attain any other reputation than that of an impostor instead of a prophet.

But apart from the esteem in which it was held, it is apparent from its whole spirit, style, and structure, that it belongs not after but before the Assyrian captivity began. The indignant rebukes, the impassioned entreaties, the moving appeals, which are based upon the predictions and mingled with them, which presuppose at the same time that they justify them,

would be without an object, would be wholly insupposable after the kingdom was actually overturned and the people exiled. From the very tenor of these utterances they must have been first made before the things predicted in them had come to pass. Whether they were committed to writing prior to the fulfilment or not, is a matter of no consequence, since we have in the popular reception of the book the same confirmation of its being a truthful record as in the credit attached to any history of recent and well-known events.

But there is a further peculiarity of this prophetic announcement which affords a demonstration not only that the prediction was uttered before the event, but that it was recorded substantially as it had been uttered, and that no change was made in its form to adapt it to what actually took place. Prophecy is not history; and although real and exact in its correspondence with history, it has nevertheless its own peculiar and distinctive character. Its modes of representation and forms of expression, though justified by the event, are often manifestly such as would not have been employed after the event. This divergence of method arises out of the difference in the ends at which prophecy and history respectively aim, and in the point of view under which they contemplate the same territory. One of its incidental results is the demonstration of the genuine predictive character of the former, and that it is not a *vaticinium ex eventu*.

Thus the fact of the coming overthrow of the ungodly kingdom of the ten tribes and the exile of the people is repeatedly declared, and with all distinctness. But there is a singular obscurity clouding the locality of the exile. The prophet says at one time that they shall be carried into Egypt (viii. 13, ix. 6); at another, that they shall be carried into Assyria, (x. 6); at another still, that they shall be carried into both Egypt and Assyria, (ix. 3, xi. 11); and once again, that they shall not be carried into Egypt but into Assyria, (xi. 5). This variety of statement is seized upon to disparage the prophecy and point the charge of vacillation and mistake. It is, however, apparent at once that this allegation is inconsistent with the other, that the book was written after the things predicted had come to pass. Both cannot be true. And in point of fact neither is.

Such sentences could not have been written after it was known from the event that the exile was in Assyria. And on the other hand, the assumption of vacillation and error is gratuitously made. If we will deal with the language of the prophet, as we would with that of any other respectable author, we will scarcely believe that he has thus grossly contradicted himself almost in consecutive paragraphs; we shall suspect that beneath the literal inconsistency there is some consistent meaning. And it will require little penetration to discover that the whole is capable of being readily harmonized. And the same process which will reconcile these superficially divergent statements with one another, will likewise reconcile them all with the actual fact. Egypt is the ideal name of a land of bondage. To carry Israel back into Egypt was to reduce them to the same condition in which their fathers had been in that ancient empire. But, as the prophet himself explains, the Egypt to which they were to return was not the literal territory so called, but the Assyrian should be their king; just as we speak of Vandals and of Hessians in an another than the strictly ethnic sense.

Perhaps also the words of the prophet may find a further justification in the not improbable assumption that while the great body of exiles were led away to Assyria straggling bands may have been taken into Egypt, or have fled thither to escape Assyrian oppression, as was the case at a later period with the Jews when the mass of the people were carried to Babylon. In any event the prediction is amply verified, and yet its terms are such as to preclude any other supposition than that it was really a prediction. It must have been uttered in this form if not actually committed to writing, before the issue could be divined by human sagacity.

The subterfuge thus ineffectually resorted to in the case of Hosea may serve as a sample of the mode of dealing with those predictions which were fulfilled in the life-time of the prophets who uttered them. The bald suspicion or the confident assertion that the prophecies have been modified so as to adapt them to the event after it occurred and create the appearance of a foresight which did not exist, is counted sufficient to set them aside. No proof is offered to sustain this gratuitous conjec-

ture. No pains are taken to free it from the difficulties by which it is pressed. No explanation is given of the mode in which these spurious prophecies could gain credence in the circumstances supposed, or how the people could be induced to believe that events had been foretold, not to their fathers but to themselves, of which they had never heard until they took place; or how such bad faith is consistent with the character of the prophets, whom Dr. Williams represents as sincere, upright and God-fearing men; or how his hypothesis can be reconciled with the internal evidence to the contrary afforded by the structure of the prophecies in question.

His eagerness to rid himself of predictions by making the writings of the prophets posterior to the events to which they refer, occasionally leads him to conclusions which put even the critics of Germany to shame. Thus Nahum's prophecy of the fall of Nineveh is converted into a retrospect of her doom by the magic of a few prophetic preterites and the vividness with which the overthrow of that mighty city is pictured. "The first impression," he says, (p. 434), "left by a dispassionate perusal of our prophet, is that of contemporaneousness or subsequence to the events which he narrates. The defenders are fallen, the assailants hasten to the wall, the siege-screen is set fast, the city is taken, her daughters moan as doves, her people refuse to rally, she becomes a pool of waters. This impression need not be removed by the subsequent reflection, with which in his closing epode the prophet travels back into the counsels of eternity for the causes of the event over which he exults." What Dr. Williams here calls "travelling back into the counsels of eternity" is just the prediction of an event which is plainly represented as not having yet occurred, but as certain to take place in the future. It is not the past of Nineveh, but her coming fate which is set forth and pronounced inevitable, its grounds exhibited, and a striking example adduced to confirm what in itself appears so incredible. It is manifest that this is either a prediction, or that its author designed that it should be regarded as a prediction. And in either case the vivid pictures of the preceding chapter cannot have been intended to be understood as a description of what is already past.

The fact is, as the mass of the readers of this book have

believed from the beginning, and as modern critics of all schools concede, the prophecy of Nahum contains indubitable evidence of having been uttered at or near the time of Sennacherib's disastrous defeat, which is treated as prophetic of the ultimate overthrow of this proud oppressing empire. This is confirmed by the position of the book in the collection of the minor prophets. And, as Dr. Williams observes, "Josephus distinctly places Nahum a hundred and fifteen years before Nineveh's fall."

Under these circumstances, to imagine that the date of the prophecy is settled adversely to all internal and external considerations, by saying "that the prophet of God meant what he said when he affirmed Nineveh to have been captured," is as intelligent as it would be to sever from its context some passage in which a historian makes use of the present tense in speaking of the past, and infer from this the contemporaneity of the author with what he describes.

The methods already described of escaping the evidence of supernatural foresight are freely employed in such cases as the foregoing. But when the fulfilment took place after the prophet's death, and no chronological hypothesis can bridge the interval, another and more summary process becomes necessary. The obnoxious prophecies are disposed of by the critic's knife; and whatever it might be inconvenient to retain, since it would contravene the point to be established, is unhesitatingly rejected as spurious.

It is astonishing that a clearheaded Englishman can be deluded by such a palpable circle as that involved in this destructive criticism, or that even under the pressure of a foregone conclusion he can be induced to resort to it. As a matter of course the critic finds exactly what he wishes to find. He sets out with the prepossession that there is no real prediction to be found in the prophets. Every prediction, that can be disposed of in no other way, is consequently alleged to have been written after the event. Then having arranged the dates *ad libitum* in detail, he turns round and claims that inasmuch as all these prophecies were written after the event to which they refer, there is among them no real prediction.

If this method is allowable there is no difficulty in proving

anything that a man may undertake to prove. If Dr. Williams had been so disposed he might have shown with equal ease that the Israelites were never under a kingly government, and that the existence of royalty among them is merely a traditional blunder. The critical process would be simply this. Inasmuch as there were no kings in Israel, the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, which profess to record their history, must be spurious; they were written doubtless sometime after the exile, when the Jews, chafing under foreign domination, sought to gather credit to their own nation by asserting that they too had had a race of kings. All the scattered passages in other books which allude to or presuppose the existence of kings, must likewise be culled out and referred to the same origin. After this expunging process has been completed, it can then be claimed that no reference to kings or a kingdom is to be found in the entire genuine literature of the nation; and consequently the existence of a regal government in Israel is a figment and a chimera.

Nothing in the history of opinion is susceptible of a readier demonstration, as has often been shown, than that the extravagance of modern criticism is the offspring of disbelief in a supernatural revelation. However this may be disguised or disclaimed, nothing is more certain than that the so called rational grounds of this criticism are uniformly subordinated to the doctrinal principle from which the whole has proceeded. The alleged diversities of style and diction and range of ideas and mode of conception, which are paraded as evidences that certain books of the Bible, or parts of books, cannot belong to the authors to whom they are traditionally referred, were never thought of as involving any such conclusion until the necessity was created for it by the exigencies of modern unbelief. And that this conclusion still rests upon its original premises, and not upon the other arguments by which it is professedly sustained, is apparent from the fact that these latter are deemed conclusive by those who urge them only when the doctrinal consideration co-exists with them; and that in spite of all disagreement among themselves as to the state of the argument or the literary aspects of the case, the critics uniformly agree in their conclusions, so far and only so far as the rejection of

every passage involving the supernatural, which cannot otherwise be evaded or explained away.

Dr. Williams himself, with all his professions of impartiality and freedom from doctrinal bias, finds one passage in Isaiah to be spurious on account of "the spirit of charity" which it breathes. P. 335. And others on the directly opposite ground of desiring "revenge upon oppressors," which he alleges to be "the spirit engendered by the sufferings of the exile, and expressed in the poems subsequent to the return." P. 401. Though vague assertions of difference of style are made to disprove the genuineness of certain passages, the resemblance in others may be so close that he can scarcely distinguish between them, and yet the conclusion is the same, as on p. 292, where, after urging that "the greatest masters of Hebrew criticism" deny the style of certain chapters to be that of Isaiah, he adds, "I would not be understood, as if the difference of verbal colour in style appeared to my own ear sufficient alone to justify the dissociation of this chapter from Isaiah. Many both of the thoughts and phrases appear to me so remarkably like, that if the author is not Isaiah, he imitated Isaiah." Elsewhere, with all his literary arguments in full force, he is willing to admit the suggestion of genuineness, provided it is not allowed to make in favour of prophetic foresight. Thus, pp. 354, 5: "The moral horizon of the chapters is such as to suit the period of the Babylonish captivity. . . . Such is substantially the view of most critics. . . . If any one prefers making Isaiah the author, he may either call the entire piece predictive, or he may easily imagine dealings with the Assyrian in the less fortunate days of Ahaz or Hezekiah, to which parts of the picture will, not quite perfectly, correspond."

On p. 37 he propounds what he calls "a grave critical question." "There are scattered at the end of several scriptures, both in the Psalms and prophetic books, little pieces not always accordant with the main theme, but singularly appropriate to the exile or the return from Babylon." Do these form an integral part of the productions in which they are found, or were they added during or after the exile? Of this he says, p. 38, "An impartial answer to this question is, that we have no such evidence of the former state of the books as

would render such addition impossible; nor yet proof of its having actually taken place. We shall never quite know, how far the labours of Ezra, or of those to whom his name has been given, extended in arranging as well as editing the canon."

It is strange that Dr. Williams does not see that the very magnitude of the hypothesis here suggested must destroy it, and that it is hopelessly encumbered instead of corroborated by the number of interpolations which he is obliged to assume. Anticipations of the exile of varying distinctness are found scattered through all the preëxilic books from the writings of Moses downward; and this not only at the end of psalms or prophecies, but in the body of them as well, and in varying magnitude from a single verse or paragraph, to sections of many continuous chapters. All these must be interpolations purposely inserted, or fragments from anonymous authors, accidentally blended with writings otherwise genuine. In the former case the intelligence of the people and the good faith of the custodians of Scripture are gratuitously impugned, and their reverence for the inspired word insulted, notwithstanding Dr. Williams's singular notion that such additions were possible, and are not likely to have been thought wrong. In the latter case it must be accounted for that, while such brief books as Obadiah, dating from the earliest period of written prophecy, are preserved distinct and assigned to their proper authors, the writers of these added passages, some of which are much longer and belong to the most striking and important parts of the Old Testament, and which exerted a powerful influence in the exile, were wholly unknown to the collectors of the canon, although they lived almost, if not quite, in Ezra's own days. Nay, they had not only themselves dropped completely from sight, but the knowledge of their writings as distinct productions was lost, so that they were innocently attached to, or promiscuously mingled with, writings of a former age, so widely separate in subject and in character that critics at the present day can infallibly sunder them.

And what is still more remarkable, in this unheard of falsification of the entire national literature, it so happens that there is scarcely an interpolation or a suspected passage, which is not a prediction of the exile or of something connected with

the exile. Now if, as Dr. Williams would have us believe, this is purely a literary question to be determined apart from all doctrinal bias, which is the more natural and credible supposition, that the entire literature of the nation has been tampered with to this extent, nobody knows by whom, or how, or when, or for what purpose,—or that this idea of the exile of an unfaithful people was before the minds of the sacred penmen from the beginning, and gained clearness and consistency as time advanced? If their anticipations were justified by the event, and the accuracy of their foreshadowing was such as to show that they were enlightened by the Omniscient Spirit of God, should this be allowed to alter the conditions of the problem in its purely literary aspect? Can Dr. Williams in fairness claim that it does, after affirming that “there can be no harm in believing prophecy; but great harm in distorting Scripture to create it.” P. 214.

But criticism is only one of the weapons which our author has at command to rid himself of obnoxious predictions. Where this fails, or he is indisposed to resort to it, he can make an equally effective use of interpretation. It may not always be convenient to locate a prophecy after its fulfilment; and at any rate some variety of method will relieve the tedious monotony of an uniform process. Accordingly upon occasion predictions are so explained as to divert attention from their actual fulfilment, and thus conceal the evidence of supernatural foresight. Sometimes they are made to be a mere presentiment or vague anticipation. Thus (p. 22), “The idea of foretelling future events with articulate prediction (as distinct from devout or hopeful forebodings) is not intended here.”

Or a sense may be put upon them which they do not really contain, and then it can easily be made to appear that they were not fulfilled. Thus (p. 40), “Amos’s denunciation was fulfilled, though neither in the time nor by the instruments which he expected.” The proof of mistake in the time is given on p. 63: “The prophet, like a puritan or early Quaker or the sterner friars of the 12th century, answers wrathfully, and denounces on his mitred opponent calamities of which we have no record whether they came to pass; or whether God, whose thought is larger than our thought, overruled the too

fervid zeal. We know that Jeroboam died in peace, though Amos, *if he is reported truly by Amaziah*, meant differently." Now it is as plain upon the face of the passage (vii. 9, 10) as can be, that Amos was not truly reported by Amaziah. The former had said that the Lord would "rise against *the house of Jeroboam* with the sword." Amaziah perverts this into "*Jeroboam* shall die by the sword." Where is Dr. Williams's candour then, when he represents the denunciation of Amos as unfulfilled (p. 39), because it did not come to pass "in the reign of Jeroboam, against whose house no sword came from abroad until domestic conspiracy overthrew his son;" where it is moreover to be observed, that the words "from abroad" are gratuitously inserted, not being warranted by the prophet's own language.

The allegation that Amos indicates the wrong instruments for the judgment which he foretells, has no other foundation than a downright mistranslation of iii. 11. Ashdod and Egypt are summoned (iii. 9) to behold the iniquities of Samaria, in order, if possible, to shame this guilty city out of practices base enough to astonish the very heathen. By an unauthorized change of text they are represented as besieging and spoiling the city. The real executioners of the woe here denounced are hinted at, though not named, by the prophet, when he declares (v. 27) that the captivity would be more remote than Damascus.

Again, (p. 299), he says of Isaiah, chap. xiii., "The desolation of Babel, which he expects to follow, is an anticipation, destined in long ages to find fulfilment, though not in the hour or manner conceived by a man, to whom (as the words of the Lord Jesus may teach us) God had not made known the times and the seasons." The fact is that the prophet does not profess to define either the hour or the manner in which the finishing stroke is to be put to the desolation which he so accurately portrays.

Our author, it further appears, is not always particular in the choice of his methods, provided the end is attained of doing away with prediction in the proper sense. On p. 353, he allows the alternative of explaining a passage as "vague presentiment," or supposing it to have been "subsequently filled

in." On p. 332, the prophet "expected" what never took place, or else "uttered a general anticipation," which he admits to have been afterwards verified.

In spite, however, of both criticism and interpretation, cases occur, in which it is impossible not to acknowledge that the words of the prophet have come true. But even this does not disturb our author's serenity. "Prescient inferences from faith in the moral order of God's world have often come true. So the great reformation of the church and the revolution of France were felt due, long before they came." P. 40. Of the overthrow of Sennacherib's host, agreeably to the word of Isaiah, he says, (p. 222), "I incline to consider this a remarkable instance of faith justified by the event; but hardly find it demonstrable that the expectation went beyond foreboding, or that the result transcended the limits of a marvellous providence." His suggestion of an adverse conclusion from "the circumstance that the disaster took place not in Palestine, (Isaiah xiii. 1), but in the Egyptian desert, (Herod. ii. 141)" is sufficiently neutralized by his statement (p. 328) that we do not know "whether it happened in Egypt or in Palestine."

The prophecies respecting Christ, as was to be expected, are dealt with as the rest. Here criticism would be of little avail, and interpretation must do the work. The process of solution is disclosed, pp. 154—7. "What did the prophets mean? Did they predict a Messiah, one anointed with the Holy Spirit, who should be priest, prophet, and king, the glory of Israel, and Saviour of mankind; suffering, yet triumphant; man in form, God in power." . . .

"We have seen in the prophets preceding Micah such glowing anticipations of a brighter future, as fancy loves and faith in God does not disapprove. . . . We have seen also aspirations of the patriot stamp, earnest enough to take the form of predictions, that Jehovah would have mercy on his people Israel, protect their border, restore their exiles, and transmit their inheritance to their children. . . . No one of these prophets hitherto has presented the picture of a hero deliverer, national or spiritual, such as we conceive the Messiah.

"Proceeding to Micah, we still find the general anticipation of good to come and the national hope, both of which are

strikingly combined in the splendid fragment which commences the 4th chapter. . . . Considering how the prophet connects his hopeful fragment with what goes before and after, *i. e.*, first with the destruction which bad teachers would bring upon Zion; secondly, with the triumph which Zion was to win over Assyrian invaders; we can but trace so far a hope of temporal deliverance, and a hope which in some of its features Providence did not see good to fulfil; since the kingdom of the ten tribes did not return to Migdal-eder by Bethlehem or to Jerusalem. We are now at the heart of the question; for if we connect the latter-day fragment, as we ought, with the birth from Bethlehem-Ephratah, a few verses lower, it becomes no longer possible to avoid the conclusion that Micah is speaking of some one being born, or sitting already on Judah's throne, and destined, as he hoped, to consolidate the divided kingdom; certainly he is not speaking of any distant Messiah, earthly or heavenly. . . . It will result that we shall be obliged to consider the citation in our first Gospel, ii. 6, as an adaptation of ancient words instead of an authoritative allegation of prediction; and opinions will differ widely as to the degree of historical justice or fanciful ornament shown in the adaptation.

“Any reader, who is convinced that in this famous passage of Micah, we have no divine prediction of Jesus as the Messiah born in Bethlehem, will be prepared for a similar falling of the scales from his eyes, when he examines other passages.”

This long quotation sufficiently reveals how unshrinkingly the theory is carried through, and the process by which it is done. Messianic predictions are resolved in one or other of two ways. First, the prophets' hopes are fixed on some one then living, and they give utterance to their fond expectation of what Hezekiah perhaps, or another descendant of the royal house of David, would do or would become. The prophets, it is true, do not in these connections name Hezekiah or this hopeful prince, whoever he may be. They never say that the wonderful personage of whom they speak, and who is to introduce so blessed an era, is a contemporary. But since there are no real predictions, they must mean that, if they mean anything. At any rate Dr. Williams so assumes. He is satisfied of the fact whether others are or not.

These expectations of the prophets may never have been fulfilled in the person whom they had in mind. They may have been in their terms chimerical and extravagant to the last degree, as applied to an ordinary prince or to any mere man. But Dr. Williams does not consider himself responsible for this any more than he is bound to reconcile the expressions in Virgil's fourth Eclogue with sober history. The hopes of the prophets were disappointed, and their predictions failed in their original intent. Thus these sacred words came to be transferred to other objects and to others still, each fresh disappointment serving but to push them farther into the future, until at length stripped of everything local and material, and receiving a spiritual sense such as the prophet never dreamed of, they were applied to Christ.

If this is so, the Jews are certainly a most extraordinary race of men. The non-fulfilment of his prediction is generally thought to discredit a prophet. But with them, it appears, it is different. The more grossly they are deceived, the greater credit they attach to the fraud. The clearer the evidence of falsehood, the more pertinaciously they will cling to it. Their hope of a Messiah, which has been their one outstanding characteristic for ages, is built upon predictions which were falsified over and over again before their eyes, and which, moreover, were uttered by men who never had any solid claim to the prophetic character.

And, besides, the history of interpretation is exactly the reverse of what the Doctor would have us believe. The steadfastness of Jewish traditions is a universal by-word. Now, as far back as it is possible to trace them, the passages in question were understood of the Messiah. This is their original ancestral faith. It was only after they had in their blindness rejected the Saviour when he came, and these prophecies were turned against them by Christians, and the accuracy of their fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth was shown, that they bethought themselves of other and inferior applications. It is the reference to Hezekiah, not that to the Messiah, which is the afterthought.

The second solvent of Messianic predictions transmutes them into undefined hopes of a blissful future, the good time ever

coming, which men in uneasy circumstances long for, and inextinguishable hope paints as in prospect. This is their ideal for the Jewish people and the Jewish state, the glory, perpetuity, and triumph of the kingdom, the peaceful security of the inhabitants and every form of temporal blessedness; and "can only by some inversion of the prophet's own meaning be applied to Christianity."

But if these prospects of good and imaginings of a happier future are so natural, how comes it to pass that while continuous and uniform with the Hebrew prophets, they were in all the ancient world confined to them. The Greek and Roman poets sang of a golden age in the past, but they never dreamed of one to come. The only exceptions in the whole range of classic literature are a few scanty passages, which, like Virgil's ode addressed to Pollio, betray their origin by expressions and ideas manifestly derived from the Jewish Scriptures.

These foreshadowings of the blissful future were not mere vague and misty aspirations. They were connected in the prophets' minds with a definite era, of which they had formed a clear and consistent image. And although the period is sometimes spoken of merely in the general, without explicit mention in each passage or by each prophet of the person of the great Redeemer, still the current belief of the nation and the unambiguous language of other passages and other prophets, compel to the conclusion that this expected person was the centre about which all their hopes clustered, and that they looked to his coming to introduce the blessings which they describe.

That the prophecies, whether of Messiah's person or of the period to be ushered in by his advent, were cast in the forms of the Old Testament, does not detract from the reality of their inspiration nor the exactness of their fulfilment. This follows necessarily from the preparatory character of the former dispensation. In the intention of God these outward material forms were symbols of higher spiritual things. The people of Israel were placed under the tutelage of the former, that they might be trained to a proper comprehension of the latter. This Dr. Williams substantially admits, apparently not discerning that in so doing he concedes a principle which carries every-

thing else with it that the most fervid supernaturalist can desire.

Thus, p. 29, "If history repeats itself by fresh instances of eternal principles . . . the old description may become a new prophecy. . . . And if a holy organization on a spiritual type takes the place of old Israel in God's favour, it may be argued that the threatenings and promises of the old were typically intended of the new; intended not by the prophet, but by the Providence which wields nations, patriots, tyrants, and their destinies, painting in the past the picture of the future."

Again, p. 158, "We need not exclude from the region of devout metaphysics a speculation, how far the dread Being, to whom our thoughts are known long before, may have calculated the impulses of his ancient worshippers and their expression, so that things spoken of old might become applicable again; the songs of Zion become hymns of the church, the praise of King David be transferred to a mental king, the prayer for Solomon, the sorrow of Jeremiah, possibly the birth of Hezekiah repeated in the greatest (we must not say 'the only') Christ."

And, p. 169, "We may even find a pleasure, which if not severely logical, is yet not altogether mystical in turning memory into hope, and in saying to ourselves, though God did not see fit to build up the kingdom of Hezekiah, as Micah expected, He has given that hope a glorious transfiguration by building up a spiritual dominion of One who was the Son of David in figure and poetry—whether in flesh we hardly know. Though the twelve tribes have not found a reunion, which as a thing local and national would not affect any spiritual faith, the hearts of men in distant nations may be knit together by the free Spirit which once spoke narrower, and now speaks wider hopes. The Holy Land is wherever God is. The prophets are wherever free men worship in truth." Once more, p. 224. "Some portions are so local and temporal as the exaltation of Mount Zion above other mountains, that our own Master, Christ, the only infallible interpreter, has reversed them by his doctrine, and taught his followers that the fulfilment of such things lies in their expansion; hence they fulfil

in such a sense as that in which the forest of to-day fulfils the acorn of a millenium ago."

Here is a confession that in the orderings of God there is a correspondence between the utterances of the prophets wrapped in the temporary forms of the ancient economy and the spiritual and enduring realities of the gospel. The whole Old Testament is thus one vast prophecy of the New, of which the verbal predictions of the Messiah are but the culminating points. And the more attentively this correspondence between the Old and the New in God's kingdom is studied, the more conviction will ripen into certainty that we are not in the region of accident or human caprice, but of Divine foreordination. And the more narrowly we inspect the coherence of this great preparatory scheme in the Old Testament the more thoroughly we shall be satisfied that the Messianic predictions are not isolated phenomena, nor accidents in the scheme, but component and important parts of it; that these utterances must have been shaped by the Divine prescience as truly as the whole scheme was prearranged of God; and that in the Divine intention these utterances carried from the first those ideas which we now find to be involved in them. And if God designed them, who shall prove that men did not in a measure comprehend them? That the prophets themselves, and the people to whom they were addressed, did not, to a greater or less extent, penetrate to their real meaning?

After the evidences, which have been given, it might well be thought superfluous to accumulate further proof of how completely Dr. Williams denies the presence of anything supernatural in the prophets. They have a mission from God in no other sense than all men of great and pure ideas, conscious of the truth and value of what they utter. It will, however, contribute to a juster understanding of the rigour with which he presses his fundamental principle, to state in a word how completely he rates them as men on a level with other men. The association of Sophocles, Cicero, and St. Paul (p. 37) finds repeated parallels in the combination of the prophets with the bards and philosophers of other lands, and even with Turkish dervishes, Popish confessors, and enthusiasts generally. Their sentiments though often commended are sometimes represented

as less liberal and just than those found elsewhere. They are spoken of as under the influence of human passion, frequently vindictive and governed by a narrow and contracted patriotism. When they enter into the region of politics they mistake their sphere and give injudicious advice, such as princes were justifiable in declining to act upon. "It is the old quarrel," he says, p. 366, "between the unseen and the seen, faith and flesh, the prophet and the soldier, the preaching Covenanter and counselling Cromwell, the simplicity which asks for prayers against cholera, and the statesmanship which recommends the removal of dirt." The false prophets and the true are put upon a level, and the strife between them is made the ground of a charge that there were factions in the prophetic order.

After what has been said it will surprise no one to hear that he speaks contemptuously of a book-revelation, and denies the reality of miracles. These are disposed of either by naturalistic explanations, or by denying the trustworthiness of the records in which they are found. In regard to the resurrection of Christ he holds the following hesitating and non-committal language, pp. 426, 427 :

"Who can read the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, and say that the evidence of a community, summed up by St. Paul within thirty-five years of the event, leaves no stronger assurance on the mind than we possess as to the addition of fifteen years to Hezekiah's life, specified in 2 Kings xx., we know neither when nor by whom, and transcribed in this appendix (Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix.) some years, we know, after the hymn of Hezekiah had existed as a separate fragment? That Christ rose bodily from the grave on the third day, rests historically on the belief of the hundred and twenty men, who met in the upper chamber (Acts i. 15—22). The most natural account of their belief is that it had a correspondent fact; this is enough to strengthen the hope of believers in Christ. If the evidence from the first day to our own has satisfied friends without satisfying foes, and so wants the compulsory force of demonstration (*as there are signs of its passing through an oral stage*) this may show it was not meant to be a foundation, but a confirmation of the faith which enters within the veil. To those who receive Christ as the Son of God, his death seems far more miraculous

than his resurrection. Those who acknowledge him but as the Son of Man, must feel his teaching to be an element of credibility in the subsequent story. The worthiness of the occasion, the dignity of the person, the nearness of the attestation, the importance to mankind of the immortality involved in the event, and the ever recurrent necessity of belief in this or some kindred pledge of our destiny, remove Christ's resurrection out of the category to which the specification of Hezekiah's fifteen years and the return of the shadow on the dial belong. It may be of God's goodness that He would not rest our faith absolutely on display of power in the past, lest learning should avail more than piety, and scholars believe more immediately than the meek of heart; He may give adequate assurance as a reward to those who without seeing have loved, yet not change the idea of faith, which is to endure as seeing the unseen; at any rate, the event best attested in the New Testament, the most sacredly associated with our hope, and most important, *if we hold it*, in all history, deserves a nobler use than polemical employment to bias interpretation elsewhere."

His attitude upon some of the questions now agitated in church and state, may be inferred from the following passage, pp. 217, 218, with which we shall conclude our notice of this volume.

"The extent to which Isaiah interposed in the policy of his times, resembling in that respect Ambrose and the more statesmanlike of the Fathers, renders it natural to ask, what would have been his judgment on some of the questions of our age. We can hardly imagine the developments of our commerce, our colonies on every sea, our boundless luxury, with abject poverty by its side, as entering into his conception. Yet the sentiments in which his large genius would have indulged, are too clear from the expressions which he used of Tyre and her merchant princes; we may fear that much explanation from our economists would have been needed to reconcile him to some of our social inequalities. We may be too sure, no explanation would have induced him to tolerate such laws of entail, as transmit encumbered and unimproved estates, with an inheritance of debt, while by logical necessity they render the tiller of the soil little better in physical well-being than the serf, sometimes

in moral aspiration, than the cattle which he drives. This remark should not be understood as if we were bound in the light of the gospel and of reason to consider the arrangements of Providence exhausted by the economy of Palestine; only if arrangements change, moral principles are permanent; at least it would be well, amidst professions of devotion to the Bible, not to close the eyes of our mind altogether to what the sacred writers would have said, had they been writing of ourselves. Again, as regards provision for the external maintenance of religion, nothing is clearer than that whatever theory excludes religion from the commonwealth, leaving men to guess what should be right in their own eyes, would have seemed to the prophet national atheism. By divine right he would have parliaments or presidents, no less than princes, govern and be governed, and the priest's lips keep knowledge. He would not have expected the living coal from the altar to touch the lips of crazy volubility in preference to those of a rightful officer. Yet no system which hardened itself in a tradition of forms or suppressed fresh truths and confessed itself a stranger to inspiration, and incapable of profiting by experience, could have satisfied him. He might, in an historically descended society, have borne articles but few and not inconsistent with each other or with their adjuncts; prayers he would probably have had fixed, but not without elasticity of provision for circumstances and for creative devotion; whatever creed he had beyond a promise to fear the living God, could have been neither a forgery, nor have contained malediction. Most alien of all from his own mind, would have been an ecclesiastical system without faith in the unseen, or one which broadens religion by depriving it of all which breathes life. He would as little understand the claim of a majority, as that of a priesthood, to decide what only God can make true."