

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PROPHETIC CALL, AND THE EXTENT OF THE PROPHETIC PERIOD.

THE raising up of the prophets, and fitting them and calling them to their work, is a subject replete with interest, but need only be briefly treated here.

1. In many cases we can glean nothing about the early life of the prophets or about their call to the prophetic office. How little we know of Enoch; but he stands out as a unique figure in the pages of sacred history. The case of Abraham is very different. We gather from later parts of his story that he had frequent communications with the Most High, some of which were appearances like those subsequently vouchsafed to Moses. His was a call to action rather than to speech. He was not a preacher, but an heir of certain promises which involved him in special responsibilities. Joseph was a dreamer from his youth, and soon recognised that dreams might enshrine messages from God. He, like Abraham, was called to action, that he might preserve life. Accordingly, the Latin Vulgate translated his Egyptian name by the title *Salvator mundi* (comp. Gen. 41.45; 45.7; 50.20). Moses was an old man when he received his final call, but there can be little doubt that he had been previously stirred, through providential circumstances, to take a saving interest in his people. Samuel was a child when the voice sounded so clearly in his ear that he thought it was Eli who was calling him, but the boy was ready. Elisha was engaged in ploughing when Elijah threw his mantle over him, but he understood the signal. Doubtless God had prepared him. Daniel was a youth, perhaps not more than thirteen, when he became one of a little band of total abstainers from polluted food and drink. His call to become an interpreter soon followed, and his story presents many points of analogy with that of Joseph. Isaiah must have been quite young when he saw his first vision, for he probably lived on into the reign of Manasseh, whose captivity in Babylon supplied the foreground for the greater captivity (2 Chron. 33.11). Jeremiah felt himself a mere child when the Word of the Lord came to him. Ezekiel was in his 30th year when his eyes were opened to behold visions. Amos was following the flock when the Lord took him and told him to prophesy. John the Baptist, like Jeremiah, was marked out for special work before he was born. The same was the case with St. Paul (Gal. 1.15), though the conscious call to Christian service was much later.

In every case which we have specified, the call can be traced, not to personal ambition, but to Divine influence, and usually to the sound of an inner voice. It was not a matter of gradual education. The unwitting preparation might be long, but the call to act or speak was sudden. It did not come after a series of failures, but sprang into being full-grown.

2. Reviewing the subject historically, we are led to enquire when the prophetic spirit first showed itself. According to the Biblical narrative, our first parents had free communication with Him by whose *fiat* they had been brought into existence. Abel's faith and righteousness, to which such striking reference is made in the New Testament, may have been fostered by messages from the Most High. We have no reason to believe that Enoch was the first of the prophets. The "sons of God" may have been a prophetic line. The patriarchal period was prophetic; then followed waves of prophetic energy in accordance with the needs of Israel. At some times prophets were numerous, at others the gift was in abeyance. When Samuel was a child the Word of God was precious or scarce; subsequently it

flowed in a narrow stream until a period which extends from the reign of King Uzziah onwards. When Old Testament history closes, *i.e.* 400 years before Christ, the prophetic spirit waned. There were no prophets in the Maccabean period, which began about 150 B.C., and the Books of the Old Testament seem to have been regarded as a complete collection 100 years earlier (see 1 Macc. 4.46; 9.27; 14.41; Ecclus. prologue). According to the Jewish tradition deliberately affirmed by Josephus in his controversial work against Apion (i.8), the prophetic Scriptures were closed in the time of Artaxerxes, *i.e.* in the days of Nehemiah and Malachi. At last the 400 years of silence that followed came to an end, and the spirit of prophecy reasserted itself at the time of the birth of John the Baptist and of the Lord Jesus. In the Pentecostal Age there was a great outflow of prophecy, both in the wider and narrower sense as the Acts and Epistles testify.

If it is difficult to fix the beginning of prophecy, so it is with regard to its end. When the generation which succeeded that of the Apostles died out (circ. A.D. 150), the gift was waning, it not actually expiring. There might still be special cases of insight and foresight. There were men and women whose faith was strong, and whose prayers were specially effectual, so that signs and wonders were wrought by their hands. But well-attested instances become rare. The fostering care needed by the infant Church seems to have been gradually withdrawn, and Christian communities and individuals were left to the more ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit. No books were regarded as authoritative except those that left the hand of the Apostles and Prophets, on whom the Church was founded, and of whom St. John was probably one of the last. By general though not universal agreement, these Books stood alone. It is true that the early Church had its Montanists, and in later times there have been Mystics, Quakers, and others who have protested against the imposition of too narrow a limit on the working of the prophetic Spirit. This protest we are bound to respect; but for practical purposes we have good reason for believing that the main body of truth outlined in the New Testament is a sufficient guide to life, and that any attempt to supersede the Scriptures will land us in formidable difficulties. The Holy Spirit operates still, but not in the same way, perhaps even not to the same extent, as of old.

3. It may be well before closing this chapter to exhibit in outline the chain of prophetic men to whom reference is made in Scripture. Doubtless there were many others whose names are not recorded, and perhaps some may have been accidentally omitted from the lists. The men in question had the gift of prophecy in the wider sense, though the power to predict may not have been given to all.

The list of the Prophets may be classified and arranged as follows:--

A. *In the Antediluvian Age* (Gen. 2-9) we may detect a line of prophetic influence from Adam onwards through Enoch, Lamech, and Noah.

B. *In the Patriarchal Age* (Gen. 11-50) the gift comes out in the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Enquiry of the Lord is first referred to in Gen. 25.22.

C. *In the Mosaic Age* we have Moses himself. The seventy who "prophesied" probably had no special gift of prediction. The Urim and Thummim are established; and enquiry of God is carried on, apparently in the sense of learning the path of duty (Exod. 17.15). Joshua was a prophet in the sense of being in direct communication with God (Josh. 5.14; see also 6.27).

D. *In the Age of the Judges* enquiry of the Lord was frequent (chaps. 1.1; 18.5; 20.18,27). We read of the angel of the Lord appearing (chap. 2.1,20), of a prophet in the time of Gideon (6.8), of a divine message in the time of Jephthah (10.11), and of an angel or man of God in the time of Samson's parents (13.6). Samson was probably contemporary with Eli.

E. *In the Age of Samuel and the United Kingdom*, Hannah, Samuel's mother, may be regarded as a prophetess; a man of God is referred to in 1 Sam. 2.27; Samuel becomes a prophet (chap. 3.), and is regarded through the Old and New Testaments as the head of the Prophetic Order. Enquiry of the Lord was frequent in those days. David himself was a prophet of special stamp, as we can gather from the Psalms and from the references to them in the Gospels and also in the Acts (see 2.30). Nathan and Gad were also prophets in those days, and united with Samuel in providing the materials for the history of David's reign; whilst Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo did the same for Solomon (see 1 Chron. 29.29,30; 2 Chron. 9.29). They also had to do with the arrangement of the musical services in their time (2 Chron. 29.25).

F. *The Divided Kingdom*.--Rehoboam's biographers were Shemaiah and Iddo (2 Chron. 12.15). Abijah's biographer was Iddo. Jehoshaphat's life was written by Jehu the son of Hanani (2 Chron. 20.34); Uzziah's and Hezekiah's by Isaiah (2 Chron. 26.22; 32.32); Manasseh's were in the chronicles of the Seers (2 Chron. 33.19); and Jeremiah probably had to do with the history of the later kings (see 2 Chron. 35.25; 36.12,21). This illustrates the fact that the Old Testament historians were prophetic men. All the way through this period prophets were found in both kingdoms. Thus, Ahijah the Shilonite and Shemaiah have to do with Jeroboam as well as with Rehoboam (1 Kings 11.29; 12.15; 15.29), and the man of God crosses from the Southern Kingdom into the Northern (1 Kings 13). Jehu the son of Hanani has to do not only with Jehoshaphat, but with Baasha (1 Kings 16.1,7,12). There are other prophets of that period, viz. Oded and his son Azariah (2 Chron. 15.1,8), also the prophet mentioned in 1 Kings 20.13-23, a man of God in v. 28, a son of the prophets in v. 35, and Micaiah in chap. 22.8. The period covered by Elijah and Elisha is thus ushered in, together with the prophecies of Jahaziel (2 Chron. 20.14), Eliezer the Morasthite (2 Chron. 20.37), and another Jehu (2 Kings 10.30; 15.12). It must not be forgotten that Elijah not only spoke, but wrote (2 Chron. 21.12). We thus come down to the age of Joash, when there were prophets (2 Chron. 24.19), including Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (2 Chron. 24.20), whilst Jonah is said to have written to Jeroboam II. of Israel (2 Kings 14.25). In Amaziah's time there was a man of God and a prophet (2 Chron. 25.7,15). We thus reach the galaxy of prophets--Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, and perhaps Joel; we have also Zechariah's vision (2 Chron. 26.5), and the words of Oded to Pekah (2 Chron. 28.9). In Josiah's time and the closing years of the Kingdom we have Huldah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; whilst later on we have Haggai and Zechariah, and Malachi closes the prophetic period of the Old Testament.

Reviewing the list, we find a chain of prophetic speakers and writers covering the whole period from Samuel to Malachi. With regard to the earlier ages our materials are not sufficient to enable us to complete the chain, but indications point to the probability that Prophecy was granted at all critical stages of human history.

## CHAPTER VII

### PROPHETIC FORMS OF THOUGHT.

THAT which makes the language of prophecy so vivid and yet so difficult is that it is always more or less figurative. It is poetry rather than prose. It abounds in peculiar words and expressions which are not usually to be found in prose writings of the same date. It is rich with allusions to contemporary life and to past history, some of which are decidedly obscure. The actions recorded in it are sometimes symbolical, sometimes typical. The present, the past, and the future, the declaratory and the predictive, are all combined and fused into one. The course of individuals, the rise and fall of nations, the prospects of the world at large, are all rapidly portrayed in realistic language.

As we read we ask ourselves whether the figures which thus pass over the page in such quick succession are to be interpreted literally or ideally. How much are we to deduct as oriental and Israelite? and what of the *residuum*? When God said to Jeremiah (6.26), "Gird thee with sackcloth," did the prophet go and put it on? Was Ezekiel really carried to Jerusalem by a lock of his hair (Ezek. 8.3)? Did Hosea actually marry an abandoned woman? The best way of dealing with all these questions and others of the same class is the inductive method. Treat the passages as members of a series or parts of a body of Truth, and interpret them accordingly.

Let us begin by taking certain words which are constantly recurring in prophecy.

1. One of our first difficulties lies in the simple word "EARTH." Does it usually stand in prophecy for the land of Israel? or for the whole world? The Hebrew word leaves the matter open, for it is equally applicable to either. Take, for example, the opening of Isai. 24, "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty." At first sight we are inclined to take the English word in its widest sense; but after a detailed examination of the chapter we fall back on the more restricted sense; and yet we feel that there may be a residuum in the prophecy which is world-wide in its bearing. In every such case we fly to the context and to the passages which most nearly resemble the one before us. Sometimes poetical parallelism helps us. Where earth is used in distinction from heaven we take it in the wider sense; where it is distinguished from the Gentile world we take it in the narrower. Sometimes we interpret it of the then known world, as in Gen. 6-9; whilst the covenant with Noah made in these chapters calls for the use of the word in the widest sense. Neither the Authorised nor the Revised Version has noted the fact that in Gen. 12.1 the word translated "land" means "earth," whilst in the 3rd verse the word translated "earth" means "land." In later passages where the English is the same, the Hebrew is not so.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty recurs in some prophetic passages in the New Testament.

2. We pass from earth to EARTHQUAKES; see, e.g. Isai. 13.13, and 24.19. Are these commotions local? physical? political? The history of the past helps us to some extent. There were literal earthquakes at the giving of the Law and at the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. We can well understand that physical convulsions may be timed to take place alongside of national and spiritual upheavals. A combined interpretation thus seems reasonable, though it cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> See *Old Testament Synonyms*, chap. xxiii., on the different Hebrew terms.

pressed. The passages concerning earthquakes in Hag. 2.6,21 are interpreted literally in Heb. 12.26-28; and the earthquake of Zech. 14.4, etc., is given in such detail that one can hardly regard it as figurative.

3. THE SEA sometimes stands for a multitude of people, as when Jeremiah (51.42) says, "The sea is come up upon Babylon." The RIVER is used in a similar sense. Thus Isaiah (8.7) says, "Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, even the king of Assyria." It does not follow, however, that the sea and the river are never to be taken literally. We read of the coming King, "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth (*i.e.* land)." These words occur both in Ps. 72.8 and in Zech. 9.10, and refer to the literal boundaries of the Promised Land. The two seas being the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, the River being the Euphrates, and the ends of the land being the south-west border of Palestine (comp. 1 Kings 4.21). The words, "There was no more sea" (Rev. 21.1), are capable of both a literal and spiritual interpretation.

4. THE SAND of the Sea is frequently referred to as a standard of measurement, as in Gen. 22.17 and Hos. 1.10; it is not absolute, but stands for a very large number. Thus it is used of the population of Israel in 1 Kings 4.20, and of the Midianite camels in Judg. 7.12.

5. THE STARS OF HEAVEN are referred to in the same way, both in promise (Gen. 15.5; 22.17), and in history (Deut. 1.10). See Heb. 11.12.

6. THE DARKENING OF THE SUN, and consequently of its reflector the MOON, and the falling of the STARS (whether planets or meteors) are referred to several times in Scripture, e.g. Isai. 13.10; 34.4; Joel 2.10,31; 3.15; Ezek. 32.7; Matt. 24.29; Rev. 6.12. In some of these cases there may be a real darkness, as there was at the time when our Lord died; but in others the words may represent national or world-wide catastrophes, as when we read of dimness and darkness in connexion with captivity (Isai. 8.22).

On the other hand, extra brightness and brilliant atmospheric effects indicate a good time, as when we read, "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days" (Isai. 30.26). In Isai. 60.19,20 we have what would present an utter inconsistency if the words were translated literally--first, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee"; secondly, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself"; but in each case there are words added which unify the sense--"The Lord shall be thine everlasting light"; and the two similar passages in the Revelation (21.23; 22.5) enforce the great truth that when God is our spiritual light, the need of physical light is only a secondary matter.

The destruction of the earth alone would be a very little thing in the universe; but any catastrophe befalling the sun would ruin our planetary system. Life would cease on earth long before the sun became a dark ball. The diminution of the sun's heat, which some astronomers tell us is already going on or to be expected, would speedily enlarge the glacial zone, and all earth's contents would be frozen up. Even an eclipse of the sun, a sirocco, or a period of darkness in which "Neither sun nor stars appeared in many days" (Acts 27.20) would fill the mind with gloom.

7. FIRE is a frequent image; but of what? God Himself is called a consuming

fire (Deut. 9.3; Heb. 12.29). When He lets the fire of His anger burn up the ungodly, none shall quench it, *i.e.* none shall stay His hand until His purpose is accomplished (Isai. 1.13; 66.24; Jer. 4.4; Mal. 4.1; Matt. 3.12). In Mal. 3.2 the fire is purgative rather than retributive and may refer to the testing of men's faith by the fire of persecution and affliction (1 Pet. 1.7). The baptism with fire indicates the special energy of the Holy Ghost, who produces spiritual warmth and ardour in the soul. In 2 Pet. 3.7,12 literal fire is apparently predicted, and some such process as that which caused the so-called igneous rocks to be formed may be referred to.

8. THE NORTH in Biblical times pointed in a somewhat north-easterly direction. It sometimes stands for Assyria (Zeph. 2.13), sometimes for Babylon (Jer. 46.10), sometimes for the Medo-Persian Empire (Jer. 50.9). In Dan. 11.6-40 the King of the North seems to be Syria or the Power which holds Syria, and the King of the South is Egypt or the Power which holds Egypt. In Ezek. 26.7 Nebuchadnezzar the king of kings is brought from the North; but in chap. 32.30 the Zidonians are called Princes of the North; and in 38.6,15 the people of Togarmah, *i.e.* the Turcomans, are described, being associated with Gomer, *i.e.* the Cimmerians, and with Gog, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, *i.e.* with the Powers now represented by Russia. The fact that the peoples and events mentioned in chaps. 38 and 39 reappear at the close of the Revelation (19.17,18; 20.8) invests them with peculiar interest.

9. BETROTHAL and MARRIAGE stand for unity and covenant alliance, whilst DIVORCE marks spiritual separation in consequence of unfaithfulness, which is frequently described as whoredom and adultery. The time of restitution is regarded as re-betrothal. See Hosea, chaps. 1 and 2. Illustrations from marriage are frequent in all parts of the Bible, and the "Marriage of the Lamb" appears in the closing scenes of Revelation (chaps. 19.7-9; 21.2,9). It is difficult to spell out the meaning of these joyful passages; but the union betwixt Christ and His true Church, which Christians have been aiming at and feeling after for many centuries, will then be accomplished; and its accomplishment will have a far-reaching influence.

The foregoing nine words are samples of what may be called prophetic forms of thought. We have constantly to remind ourselves that sacred truth can only come to us through the medium of human faculties, and largely through human terminology. Experience gives wider and deeper force to language. When we leave our present life we shall leave many things behind us, and perhaps amongst them our language, together with all the troublesome results of the confusion of tongues. In the spirit-world modes of communication may be utterly different from those with which we are now familiar. Meanwhile we study the Biblical words as so many lights and illustrations, pointing to something better, though in themselves inadequate to convey the whole truth.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RECURRENT PROPHETIC FORMULÆ.

THERE are numerous expressions traceable through the prophetic Books which become almost the technical language of prediction. Some of them are connected with our highest hopes as Christians. The following are the most noteworthy:--

1. *"Ye shall know that I am the Lord."*--This expression springs out of the Book of Exodus (6.7; 16.12). It reappears in 1 Kings 20.28, and again in Joel (3.17), and is a favourite expression with Ezekiel. It implies a fresh and deeper knowledge of the truth about the Lord Jehovah. The meaning of His Name is only gradually being unfolded in the course of ages. Our convictions are reconstructed and re-interpreted in the light of advancing experience. So it will ever be. There can be no finality in our knowledge of the infinite God, though there may be a great advance (1 Cor. 13.12).

2. *"In the last days."*--A day is a period and may be of any length--a year, a generation, a thousand years. The last days are the latter or later days<sup>2</sup> as compared with the present, and we must not restrict them to one fixed period. Jacob's blessing on his sons (Gen. 49.1) had to do with a time which is now long past, and Balaam's utterance (Num. 24.14) must have been shortly fulfilled. The time referred to may be very far off, as in Deut. 4.30, which refers to a return after a dispersion (comp. chap. 31.29). When we reach the Books of the Prophets the expression seems to point to a more definite period, viz. the time of Restitution, as in Isai. 2.2; Mic. 4.1; Hos. 3.5. In Jer. 48.47 the expression refers to Moab, the prophecy of Balaam being taken up, but it gives a hope for Moab which Balaam's words did not offer. Compare the case of Elam (Jer. 49.39). In Dan. 10.14 the fulfilment extends through a long period, and in the case of Ezek. 38.8,16 it may be yet in the future. The expression recurs in the New Testament. See especially 2 Tim. 3.1; Jas. 5.3; 2 Pet. 3.3, all of which apparently refer to the future. The expression "the last day," used by the Lord in John 6.39,49,44,54, manifestly refers to the period of Resurrection, which may synchronise with the Restitution.

3. *"The day of the Lord."*--This is the time of the manifestation of some special attribute or purpose of God. In Isai. 2.12 it marks a judicial crisis; in Ezek. 13.5 a day of battle; in Amos 5.18 it is pointed out that the day will prove very different from what some people expected. In the New Testament it refers to a time then (if not now) future--a bright and happy day, a time of salvation and of manifestation. See especially 1 Cor. 1.8; 5.5; 2 Cor. 1.14.

4. *"The day of the Lord is at hand."*--The R.V. substitutes "near" for "at hand." This expression had to do with the fall of Babylon (Isai. 13.6), with the punishment of Egypt (Ezek. 30.3), and with the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem (Joel 1.15; Zeph. 1.7,14,18). Similar expressions which refer to temporal judgments may be noted in Isai. 13.9; Joel 2.1; and Zech. 14.1. These passages throw light on kindred utterances in the New Testament, and justify us in looking upon the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) as a special manifestation of the day of the Lord; though the full force of the expression is yet in the future.

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2 Some students have drawn a distinction between "latter" days and "last" days; but this is hardly justified by the Hebrew or Greek expressions.

5. "*The Lord cometh.*"--The expression may be as old as Enoch (Jude 14). It refers to various visitations and actions of God, Who is always regarded in Scripture as the Judge of all the earth. He comes to punish (Isai. 26.21), to save (Isai. 40.10), to visit His temple (Mal. 3.1), and to visit Zion (Isai. 59.20). The words imply something providential, but not necessarily a visible apparition. There is often something sudden and startling about it, and there may be external manifestations in connexion with it which exceed all that we can conceive in sublimity and glory. The suddenness is exhibited by the word "quickly" (*i.e.* suddenly); see Rev. 3.11; 22,7.20; and the visitations are sometimes compared to a snare, to lightning, or to the inroad of a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5.2; 2 Pet. 3.10; Rev. 3.3; 16.15). Those, however, who watch need not be taken unprepared (Luke 12.39; 21.34; 1 Thess. 5.4).

The second coming of Christ is sometimes spoken of as an *Epiphany* or Manifestation, like the first (Heb. 9.26,28); sometimes it is denoted by the word *Parousia* (παρουσία), which means either presence or coming. This word is not found in the LXX. except in the Second Book of Maccabees; but it is used four times in Matt. 24, and several times in the Epistles of St. Paul, St. James, St. Peter, and St. John, generally in connexion with the Lord's second coming. The attendant circumstances have to be gathered from the context.

There are other expressions allied to those which have been touched upon, *e.g.* the Day of the Lord's Vengeance, the Day of Judgment, the Day of Visitation, and the Last Day. Also most of the prophets use the expression "In that day." An examination of the passages where this phrase occurs will incline us to the belief that it stands for a period rather than for a point of time, as is the case with similar expressions. In some passages the time referred to is already past; in others it appears to be still future. Isaiah is particularly fond of speaking of "that day," as in chap. 19, which refers to Egypt, and chap. 24.21, which refers to the Restitution. In Matt. 7.22 our Lord uses the words with reference to the future, when the destiny of all men shall be decided.

6. "*The turning of the Captivity*" is first referred to in Deuteronomy. The going into captivity in consequence of wrong doing had already been predicted (chap. 28.41). The subsequent turning of the Captivity, *i.e.* liberation and restoration, is promised to those who turn to the Lord with all their heart (30.3). The thought is reproduced in Hos. 6.11; Joel 3.1; and Amos 9.14. It frequently occurs in the Psalms (14.7; 53.6; 85.1; 126.1,4), and is taken up again by the Captivity prophets--Jeremiah and Ezekiel, *e.g.* Jer. 30.3 and Ezek. 39.25. The passages referred to were partly fulfilled in the restoration under Zerubbabel, but the prospect held out in some of them was never fully realised. The expression is also used of the restoration of foreign nations, *e.g.* Moab and Ammon and Egypt (Jer. 48.47; 49.6; Ezek. 29.14).

There is no difference in Hebrew between turning, returning, conversion, and being restored. Sometimes the word "return" is used in conjunction with another word in the sense of "again." Thus, in Hos. 3.5, we read, "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord." This does not mean that they shall first return to their land and then seek the Lord, but simply that they will seek the Lord again. So in Dan. 9.25, the words "to restore and to build Jerusalem" mean "to re-build Jerusalem."

The Return or Restitution in a national and territorial sense is perhaps best

illustrated from Lev. 25.10. In the year of Jubilee every one returned to his possession and to his family. It was a time of liberty (v. 10), such as is pictured up in Isai. 61.1,2, which the Lord Jesus claimed as being fulfilled in His day. The trumpet sounded through the land (Isai. 27.13) to announce the acceptable year of the Lord. The Restitution passages are numerous in Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah, and other prophets. Their fulfilment is not yet completed. The Apostles asked our Lord about it on the day of His ascension. Probably they expected it at once (Acts 1.6); at any rate, they saw shortly afterwards that Restitution in its full sense could not be accomplished till the Lord's return. The heavens must receive Him (*i.e.* must retain Him) until the times of the Restitution of all the things whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets from old time<sup>3</sup> (Acts. 3.21).

7. "*The remnant shall return.*"--This is the meaning of the Hebrew name Shear Jashub (Isai. 7.3). The word *shear* signifies "what is left," like the gleaning of grapes. It is translated "posterity" in Gen. 45.7, where the R.V. has rightly put "remnant." In this passage and in later utterances a second word is associated with it (פליטה), which signifies "those that escape." The words are used under varying circumstances, being applied not only to Israel, but to Syria, Ashdod, Ammon, etc. In the age of Hezekiah and Manasseh, Israel was already regarded as a remnant (2 Kings 19.4; 21.24); but though a remnant, they were cared for by God, and though they must needs go into captivity, yet there should always be a *residuum* of the Tribes in whom God would fulfil His ancient promises. So we read (Isai. 10.21.22), "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea (yet only) a remnant of them shall return." We can trace the promises to the remnant through Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, and onward through Jeremiah and Ezekiel to the days of Zechariah and of Nehemiah (11.20). In Rom. 9.27 and 11.5 the idea is taken up. There is still a remnant according to the election of grace.

It is curious to trace the numerical proportion of the remnant to the main body of Israel. When the spies went to Canaan two were faithful and ten unfaithful. In Elijah's time 7,000 of the people of the Northern Kingdom were loyal to God. In Isai. 6.13 the remnant to return is a tenth (comp. Amos 5.3). In Ezek. 5 the people are divided into three thirds: one dies of pestilence and famine; one falls by the sword; one is scattered and slain; but a very small number are preserved, their preservation being symbolised by a few hairs from the prophet's head being bound up in his flowing sleeves.

8. "*All nations.*"--It is a question sometimes what amount of universality is to be given to this expression. In Gen. 10.32, we read, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations, and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood." This passage seems to be referred to in Deut. 32.8: "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel." In other words, the arrangement of the nationalities was determined with a view to the special requirements of Israel (comp. Acts 17.26). In Gen. 12.3 "All the families of the land" are to receive a blessing in Abraham. In chap. 18.18 they are described as "all the nations of the earth;" comp. 22.18. The promise reappears in Acts 3.25. It can hardly be narrowed down to the tribes of Canaan or the neighbouring nations. It looks world-

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<sup>3</sup> why the Revisers retained the strange English exaggeration "since the world began" it is hard to conceive.

wide. Sometimes, however, the expression is limited in the context, as in Deut. 30.1,3, where the nations are those among whom Israel was to be scattered. The same may be said of Luke 21.24, which declares that Israel should be led away captive into all nation. The promise, "I will set thee on high above all nations of the earth" (Deut. 28.1), looks unlimited as to space, though it might be restricted as to time. It is difficult to put restrictions on a number of passages in the Psalms and Prophets, e.g. Ps. 22.27, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee"; comp. Ps. 72.11,17, and 86.9. See also Isai. 2.2, "all nations shall flow unto it." In Isai. 66.18,20 the words seem to be in a more restricted sense. In Dan. 7.14 we are told that "all peoples, nations, and languages" shall serve the Son of Man. Here the expression looks unlimited; but the very same words are used in chap. 6.25 of the population of the Medo-Persian Empire. A similar limitation is implied in Acts. 2.5. But what are we to say of Joel 3.2,12, and of the somewhat corresponding passage, Matt. 25.32? In Matt. 24.14 the Lord Jesus says that "the Gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations." This is surely world-wide, and helps us to solve more obscure passages. Sometimes the expression may stand for all the nations who happen to be existing at some particular crisis; and this is the view held by some in connexion with the so-called parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25).

The expression "many nations" occurs in some passages in a world-wide sense, e.g. Isai. 52.15, "he shall sprinkle many nations"; comp. Zech. 2.11, "many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day." In Gen. 17.4 we are told that Abraham's family was to become "many nations," or as it is in chap. 28.3, "an assemblage of peoples" (comp. 48.4). Each tribe practically became a "nation" in the sense in which the Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites were nations.

9. *"The Tabernacle of God is with men."*--When Moses received instructions to make a Tent or Tabernacle it was to be a place of meeting between God and man. In Exod. 29.42 God says of the Tabernacle of the congregation, there "I will meet you to speak unto thee," the same root supplying the words used for "congregation" and "meet." Hence the Revisers have rightly substituted "meeting" for "congregation"; but we have to remember that the word means *a meeting by appointment*.<sup>4</sup> The passage proceeds (v. 45), "and I will dwell among the children of Israel and be their God." The word here translated "dwell" is the origin of the word *Shekinah*, which simply means dwelling-place, and is specially associated with the idea of a tent. The word has found its way into Greek and other languages, and is used in John 1.14, where we are told of the *Logos* that He pitched His tent among us. When the Temple was dedicated Solomon felt that God could not really be contained within the compass of a Temple built with hands (1 Kings 8.27); but God promised, "I will dwell among the children of Israel" (1 Kings 6.13). The thought recurs in Ezek. 37.27,28, "My tabernacle shall be with them--My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Later on we find the same truth in Zech. 2.10,11, "I will dwell in the midst of thee," and chap. 8.3, "I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem"; and the Book of Revelation closes with the accomplishment of this significant promise (Rev. 21.3), "Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them."

In many of these passages another promise runs alongside of the first, viz.: *"I will be their God and they shall be My people."* We find the two in juxtaposition in Lev. 26.11,12, also in Jeremiah and Ezekiel and elsewhere. When

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<sup>4</sup> See *Old Testament Synonyms*, chap. 19.

Israel was chosen to be a people of God, it was as a sample nation (Exod. 19.5); but the promise was not absolutely restricted to them. St. Paul takes Ezekiel's words and applies them freely to the Corinthians (comp. Ezek. 37.26,27, with 2 Cor. 6.16, etc.), and so it is in the passage quoted from the Book of Revelation, above. The Divine intention towards man can never be completely realised until the union between God and a considerable selection, if not the vast mass, of human beings is an accomplished fact.

10. "*The end of the world.*"--The English word "end" stands for various Hebrew words. It sometimes means a purpose, sometimes a closing period, sometimes a final act. In Gen. 6.13 we read "The end of all flesh is come before Me." It was as if the life of man upon earth were about to close, as if human beings were to become an extinct species. In Num. 23.10 Balaam expresses the wish that his "last end" may be like that of the upright. Probably the "final condition"--the condition after death--is here referred to. In Ezek. 7.2 the prophet says concerning the land of Israel, "An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land; now is the end upon thee." This was not an absolute end, but a temporary close of national prosperity and a time of judgment and retribution. This is the key to the whole of this striking chapter.

Turning to the New Testament we find the same variety of meaning in the use of the word "end." Our Lord draws certain distinctions in Matt. 24 when replying to the questions of His disciples. After speaking of wars He says (v. 6), "The end is not yet;" but when the Gospel has been preached to all nations, "Then shall the end come." In 1 Cor. 15.24, when St. Paul says "Then cometh the end," he refers to the putting down of all enemies under Christ's feet, of which the closing act is the resurrection of the dead. It is clear that "the end" spoken of in such passages may be national or world-wide. It has to do with what we ordinarily call a dispensation. There was an Israelite dispensation which closed with the fall of Jerusalem. There is a Gentile dispensation now running on. There is another dispensation in which Gentiles and Jews will rejoice together. What shall the spiritual restoration of Israel be in that day but "life from the dead" (Rom. 11.15). This may be the period spoken of in Dan. 12.13: "Go thou thy way till the end; for thou shalt rest, and thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

In the New Testament it is noteworthy that the expression "*the end of the world*" is only found in St. Matthew (13.39,40,49; 24.3; 28.20). It signifies the consummation or completion of the age. It is a great time of decision and discrimination. The expression in Heb. 9.26 is slightly different, the word for "world" being in the plural.

11. "*The Kingdom of God.*"--The idea of God as king comes to the front in Exod. 15.18, and again in 1 Sam. 12.12. The appointment of an earthly king called for the assertion of the Royal position of the true King of kings. The Psalms abound with references to it, and it is the underlying thought in many of the prophets (see, e.g. Isai. 6.5). The Lord was to reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem before His elders gloriously (Isai. 24.23; Mic. 4.7; Obad. 21). The fulfilment of this passage is dated by Micah as "in the latter days," when the Remnant would become a strong nation. It was evidently to be something definite and demonstrable; something far different from what has ever been seen in Jewish history. In the 7th of Daniel the Kingdom of God thus anticipated is more fully described. The kingdom is given to the Son of Man (v. 14) and to the saints (vv. 18,27). The period of this kingdom is marked to some extent by being associated with the final break up of the sub-divided Fourth Empire, and the downfall of a

special power which should spring up from the ashes of that empire. It thus stands over unfulfilled as yet.

On turning to the New Testament we are confronted with the appearance of this kingdom as "at hand," and yet when St. Paul's Epistles were written, and when the Book of the Revelation was written, it was in prospect at some time not clearly revealed. The king had come, and seeds of the kingdom had been sown, subjects were being accumulated; but the coming of the Son of Man in His Kingdom, so graphically described in St. Matthew, was still in the future. Even when we strip the passages concerning the kingdom of all that is earthly, national, and political, it is clear that we must look ahead for the fulfilment of the promise.

12. *"The glory of God.*--In Exod. 16.6,7 we read, "At even, then ye shall know that it is the Lord who hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of God." There was to be a practical demonstration of God which should appeal to their senses. The fulfilment of the promise was realised in the gift of bread from heaven. In chap. 24.16,17, "the glory of the Lord" was like a consuming fire on the top of the mount. This was an appeal to the eye, and the grandeur of the sight would impress the mind with a sense of awe. The time of Restitution is associated with the glory of the Lord in Isai. 35.2: "They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God." So in chap. 40.5: "The glory of the Lord shall be unveiled, and all flesh shall see it together." There was evidently to be a great manifestation of the Divine excellencies at a time then future. In John 1.14 this manifestation is said to have been effected in Christ, the only-begotten Son. It was specially exhibited, however, not so much in startling effects as in free grace and in truth. Even the Apostles desired a further demonstration of God, but they were taught to see in Him, as their Master, all that heart and conscience could desire (John 14.9-12). As the recall of Lazarus was a special mark of God's glory (John 11.40), so the resurrection and ascension of Christ, together with the outpouring of the Spirit, constituted a proof that God had glorified His Son (Acts 3.13). The return of Christ "without sin unto salvation" will be the crowning demonstration of the majesty, power, and goodness of God.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FUTURE EXPRESSED IN TERMS OF THE PAST. NOTE ON "THE SON OF DAVID."

IN examining the forms of prophetic thought in Scripture we find none so common as the expression of the future in terms borrowed from the historic past. This is done either formally, by direct comparison, or indirectly by allusion or mystical identification.

i. The following are the most notable illustrations of events narrated in the Pentateuch, and utilised by the prophets for predictive purposes:--

1. *Creation.*--The fact that God created the heavens and the earth is laid down as a fundamental truth in Scripture, though no attempt is made to explain the process. In Isai. 65.17 and 66.22 the promise of a new creation of heaven and earth is laid down with equal clearness. St. Peter appeals to this promise (2 Pet. 3.13), giving further details; and in Rev. 21.1 the work of re-creation is regarded as accomplished. As the first creation was practically such a renovation of the earth's surface as made it habitable for man (Ps. 104.30), so the new creation may be a fresh adaptation of earth for the requirements of the risen race.

2. *Paradise.*--In Gen. 2.8 we find man placed in the Garden of Eden or Paradise. The Tree of Life is in the midst, and the Water of Life flows thence into the outer world. In Isai. 51.3 we have a direct comparison: "The Lord will comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places: He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the Garden of the Lord" (comp. Zech. 1.17, where the first part of this utterance is taken up). In Rev. 2.7 we have a mystical identification of the Tree of Life with the source of spiritual sustenance in the world to come. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." See also chap. 22.1,2.

3. *The Deluge.*--The reference to the waters of Noah in Isai. 54.9 is a direct comparison. In 2 Pet. 3.5 it is the same; but instead of "water," the destroying agent is "fire." Comp. chap. 2.5.

4. *The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.*--This is taken as a type or sample of God's dealing with the ungodly. See Deut. 29.23; compare 2 Pet. 2.6. In Isai. 1.9,10 Israel's fate is first compared with that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and then the people are called by the names of these cities, as rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah. In Rev. 11.8 the dead bodies of the two witnesses are "in the street of the great city which is spiritually (*i.e.* mystically) called Sodom and Egypt, where also the Lord was crucified." Comp. Jer. 23.14, "They are all unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah." The nature of the sin of Sodom is described in Ezek. 16.49; and in the 53rd verse (strange as it may seem) a hope is held out even for the restoration of these evil cities. Compare Matt. 10.15 and 11.24--passages in which our Lord throws a hopeful light on the condition of those who had died in their sin under the older dispensation.

The passages concerning the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 19.20, etc.) are expressed in language borrowed from the physical fate of the cities of the Plain (Gen. 19.24). Comp. Ps. 11.6 and Ezek. 38.22. The going up of the smoke (Rev. 14.11, etc.) may be attributed to the same scene, as it is described in Gen. 19.28;

it is also spoken of in Jude 7 as "eternal fire." In such cases the terms must not be pressed too literally. It seems best to dwell on the moral and spiritual aspects of the case, without, however, forgetting that as there is a physical side to sin, so there is appointed a physical side to retribution.

5. *Egyptian bondage.*--In Deut. 28, after warning Israel that the plagues of Egypt would be visited upon the people in case of their disobedience (vv. 27,60), Moses says, "The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee (saying), Thou shalt see it no more again, and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." Taken literally these words seem a collection of paradoxes; but confining our attention to the first part of the utterance, it is important to notice that Hosea takes up the thought. He says, in chap. 8.13, "They shall return to Egypt"; chap. 9.3, "Ephraim shall return to Egypt"; verse 6, "Egypt shall gather them up . . . Memphis shall bury them." But in chap. 11.5 the literal interpretation receives a direct negative--"He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king." (Comp. Jer. 16.14,15.)

We saw above (§4) that Jerusalem was spiritually or mystically called both Sodom and Egypt. Why the latter? Not because Israel was an oppressor, but because the people were liable to the plagues of Egypt in consequence of their sin. See Amos 4.10,11 where Egypt and Sodom are named together in this sense: "I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt . . . I have overthrown some of you as God overthrew Sodom." The reappearance of the Egyptian plagues in the Apocalypse is noteworthy.

6. *The Exodus.*--The crossing of the Red Sea dryshod is referred to in Isaiah, who foretells the destruction of the tongue of the Egyptian sea, so that men may go over dryshod (Isai. 11.15). The passage, however, is not to be taken literally, for the next verse says that it is the return of the remnant from Assyria (not from Egypt) which is thus described. The song of praise which follows is based on Miriam's Song (comp. Isai. 12.2 with Exod. 15.2). So says Hosea (2.15), "She shall sing . . . as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." In Isai. 27.12,13 the Exodus from Egypt seems again to furnish materials for describing the return from Assyria. Compare Zech. 10.10,11, which takes up the language of Isaiah and Hosea concerning Assyria and Egypt, though really other nations must be here referred to as the oppressors of Israel.

7. *Wilderness life.*--The pillar of fire and cloud (the same pillar being luminous by night, but non-luminous by day) presents a picture of Divine overshadowing presence in Isai. 4.5. Streams in the desert furnish part of the graphic description of Israel's redeemed life in Isai. 35; comp. chap. 43. The giving of the Law at Sinai becomes suitable clothing for the appeal of Isai. 64; and the valley of Achor is once more to be a door of hope, according to Hos. 2.15.

It is remarkable that it is mainly to the Pentateuch that the prophets look for illustrations of the future; though there are occasional comparisons with events in the days of the Judges and Kings. See Hos. 9.9; 10.9; and Isai. 28.21, compared with 2 Sam. 5.20,25.

ii. As future events are clothed in language borrowed from the past, so it is with persons, some of whom occupied a specially representative position in ancient times.

1. The first case to consider is that of ELIJAH. This prophet had produced a profound impression on his own times. Some four centuries after his rapture, the Prophet Malachi utters these words, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." But was he literally to return? If not, in what sense is the passage to be understood? The scribes in our Lord's time seem to have taken the words literally; and the Jews still put a place for him at the Paschal supper, and open the door for him. When John the Baptist was to be born, the Angel Gabriel said that he was to act in the spirit and power of Elijah (in some such sense as Elisha did), and so to be his representative and carry on his work. Accordingly, when John was asked if he was Elijah he answered, No; and yet the Lord Jesus claimed John as the promised Elijah (Matt. 11.14). With regard to the time of the predicted appearance, it was to be before "the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." This expression takes us back to Joel 2.31, where it is associated with the outpouring of the Spirit; and this association is supported by John himself, whose baptism was to lead up to the baptism with the Holy Ghost. But the words of Mal. 4.5 cannot be read apart from those of Mal. 3.1; and these are claimed as fulfilled in John--"Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me." This utterance again takes us back to Isai. 40.3, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." We thus possess a chain of thought, exhibited in Isaiah, reproduced with further definiteness in Malachi, and embodied in the mission of John. Perhaps there is yet an unfulfilled *residuum* in the prediction.

2. There is thus clearly established the idea of the appearance of a representative man whose mission was reproduced in later ages by one who is mystically identified with him. This leads us to look with favour on the thought that others may be in some degree representative. There are two men who were actually named long before they were born, JOSIAH and CYRUS, one a reformer and the other a deliverer, and each may be taken in some degree as representing far greater work than they actually did in their own persons. JONAH was representative also. His wonderful deliverance seems to give form to Hosea's utterance, "After two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up (Hos. 6.2). He became a representative afterwards in the matter of preaching repentance, and the Lord Jesus takes the strange and unheard of event which befell him as something to be realised in His own case. ELIAKIM (Isai. 22.15-25) was also in this sense representative or typical. The key of the house of David which was put upon his shoulder as a sign of government reminds us of a greater Governor (Isai. 9.6), and the position is claimed for Christ, together with the words that follow, in Rev. 3.7.

JESHUA and ZERUBBABEL are also typical. The one is the Prince of David's line, and the other the high priest. Both are deliverers and Temple-builders, and so types of Christ (Hag. 2; Zech. 3,4,6).

3. Lastly we come to DAVID, whose case demands more careful consideration. There is a promise made to David which is of a very definite character. It is to be found in 2 Sam. 7 and 1 Chron. 17, and in a poetical form in Ps. 89. It is referred to more than once in the Historical Books, and in various Psalms, e.g. Ps. 132. Sometimes the promise in question is spoken of as destined to be realised in the Seed, the Branch, which God would raise up, or cause to grow up, out of the root of Jesse. Sometimes David himself is spoken of. Belonging to the first class are such passages as Isai. 9.7, where the Prince is described as sitting on David's throne; see also Isai. 11.10, when the root of Jesse is to be sought after by the Gentiles. Comp. chaps. 16.5; 55.3; Amos 9.11; Jer. 23.5; Zech. 12-7-10.

The other class of passages will include Hos. 3.5, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king"; Jer. 30.9, "They shall serve the Lord and David their king whom I will raise up to them"; Ezek. 34.23,24, "They shall have one shepherd . . . . My servant David"; chap. 37.22-25, "One king shall be king to them all . . . . and David My servant shall be king over them . . . . and My servant David shall be their prince for ever."

Interpreting the second class of passages in the light of the first, we see that the promised king in these passages is really not the literal, but the ideal David, the mystical head of a re-united people with whom the Gentiles should be associated. He is one of the House of David, and claims the name of Son of David; and certain promises made to David are fulfilled in Him.

Turning to the New Testament we have the record of One whose genealogy is traced back to David, who is frequently claimed as Son of David; in whom are fulfilled passages ascribed to David, e.g. Pss. 2,16,22,89,110,118, and other passages referred to above. Of Him we read, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1.32,33). Later on these words are put into His mouth, "I am the root and the offspring of David" (Rev. 22.16).

We thus get a chain of promise and fulfilment covering a period of a thousand years, and unfolding the prospect of an ideal and permanent Davidic kingdom. It may be asked what there was in David which should make him such a conspicuous figure. The answer seems to be that in certain points of character, position, and action, He who should come would fulfil and realise and (may we say?) idealise what we see presented in rude outline in the literal David. Students may draw out these points differently; but it is clear that the man who was in some respects after God's heart, and who should in some slight degree do all God's will (Acts 13.22), is thrown altogether into the shade by another who was absolutely after God's own heart, and who came into the world to do all God's will.

iii. Before passing on to the next chapter it ought to be pointed out that not only individuals, but nations, were largely representative. Dr. Arnold's view of prophecy was that it is the inspired utterance of God's purpose that good shall triumph over evil. Certain nations, he thought, represented certain principles or characteristics, and we can read the history and destiny of modern nations in their light. Thus Babylon might represent worldliness, Egypt pride, Edom the unbrotherly brother, Tyre and Sidon commercial enterprise. This view certainly deserves consideration, though it hardly satisfies all the requirements of the prophetic passages.

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**Note.--In what sense is it true that Jesus was the Son of David?**

1. The genealogies contained in Matt. 1 and Luke 3 sufficiently establish, and on independent grounds, that Joseph was the lineal descendant of David; and they make it probable, if not certain, that if the throne of David were to be re-established Joseph would be the person on whose head the crown would be placed. Accordingly he is called the Son of David both in Matt. 1.20 and in Luke 1.27.

2. It is equally clear from Matt. 1 and Luke 1 that Joseph was not literally the father of Jesus, though Mary was literally His mother. Joseph, however, acted the part of father to him. The child was born under Joseph's protection, and grew up under his guardianship; and as Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses as her son, so Joseph adopted Jesus as his son. He is called in Luke 3.23 the reputed father, and in this sense Mary speaks to Jesus, saying, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing;" and the two are called his "parents."

3. To what tribe Mary belonged is not absolutely certain; but her kinship with Elizabeth does not preclude her from being a Judean, intermarriage between the tribes of Judah and Levi being traceable back to the time of Aaron. The words in Luke 1.32, "the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David," seem hardly consistent with any other view than that Mary was of the lineage of David, and no difficulty on this score seems to have occurred to her mind. Whether she was summoned to Bethlehem because she was an heiress in her own right, or whether she shrank from separation from Joseph at this critical moment, or whether she received direction from God in the matter, is not told us. All three views may be true.

4. The Evangelists, however, never discuss the genealogy of Mary. They consider it enough to establish the claim of Joseph. Peter and Paul in preaching about Christ say that the Lord Jesus was "raised up" unto David as his seed (Acts 2.30; 13,22,23,33; comp. Luke 1.69). In the Epistles He is said to have "sprung" from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7.14), and to be of the seed of David according to the flesh (Rom. 1.3), being the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5.5), and the root and offspring of David (Rev. 22.16).

5. We are thus led to the conclusion that our Lord's position as Son of David was established, humanly speaking, by the action of Joseph in adopting Him, rather than by the fact that Mary was in all probability of David's descent. Succession in the kingly line was not altogether by birth, but by appointment. Solomon was appointed to succeed David both by Divine direction and by David's own decree. When we read that Jeconiah begat Shealtiel (Matt. 1.12) we are not to understand that Shealtiel was literally the son of Jeconiah, but that he was his genealogical successor. So in other cases. If Joseph had been asked on whom among his possible heirs the crown of David should be placed, there seems no doubt as to what his answer would be.

## CHAPTER X

### THE PREDICTIVE ELEMENT IN THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM.

FROM the earliest times worship has found its expression in ritual. Bodily actions, such as the lifting up of the hands, or the bending of the knees, or the prostration of the whole body, have symbolised spiritual needs and a sense of dependence on the Unseen. In sacrificial feasts and offerings there has always been more or less clearly expressed the thought of what was due to God, and the desire for communion with Him and with one another. Primæval and patriarchal ritual was simple, but tended to become more complicated, especially when the Mosaic system was ordained. Technical words and ceremonial ordinances were freely introduced; and whilst some part of the Levitical system were sanitary and social, others had to do with the mode of approach to God on the part of His imperfect and unworthy children. It is noteworthy that Moses gave no instructions about prayer. The people's attention was mainly directed to offerings, almost all of which involved the death of victims. Our business is now to inquire whether these rites were in any sense predictive as well as symbolical.

1. First, it is noteworthy that the whole Levitical system claims to be a revelation; it purports to have been given through Moses, but was not invented by him. This prepares us for the possibility that some at least of the ordinances might be a foreshadowing of a future event which should bridge over the painful and mysterious gulf which exists between man and God.

2. Secondly, we are told over and over again that Moses was to make all things according to the patterns or types showed him in vision (Exod. 25.9,40; comp. 1 Chron. 28.12,19). He saw heavenly things and was instructed to represent them by earthly objects and rites (Heb. 8.4,5).

A special sacredness thus attached itself to such objects as the altar, the tabernacle, the veil, and the sanctuary; they had been constructed according to type, and were to be regarded as shadows of better things. This accounts for some expressions in the Psalms and Prophets, and prepares the way for the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of the New Testament generally. By the light of these books we learn that the House of God points to a spiritual house, built of living stones; the moveable sanctuary teaches that the Lord's Body would be constantly present, yet capable of being taken down and built up again; the veil between the Holy and Most Holy symbolised that the way to God was barred in some degree under the old system; but it is done away in Christ. The Jewish writers Josephus and Philo are fanciful in their interpretations, but both see that there was a hidden meaning in the old ritual.

3. Again, there were certain sacred persons for whom we English happen to have no corresponding word, so that we borrow one from another department and call them priests, *i.e.* presbyters. These *Cohens* or priests were privileged persons who had a special right of access to God. They had various functions, civil and medical, as well as religious; but their most noteworthy function was the sprinkling of the life-blood of certain victims on the altar, a task which in patriarchal days was performed by the head of each family or clan. The choice of the House of Aaron as the priestly house was confirmed in a special way by the great Resurrection type (Num. 3.7,8); and the budding, blossoming, and fruit-bearing rod was to be preserved alongside of the tablets of the Law and the jar of

manna, with the intention of fixing its meaning on the mind of generations to come, when the Law should be fulfilled in Christ, and He should become the Bread of Life and the High Priest of His people. Meanwhile priesthood is no longer confined to a family. All Christians have the right of access to God in Christ.

4. The instructions in Leviticus concerning the offerings and sacrifices are very minute, and abound in technicalities which are usually lost in translation, as in our Authorised and Revised Versions.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in the first chapter of Leviticus the offering is turned to vapour (not "burnt," in the sense of being "burnt up") and so ascends; this indicates the acceptance of the worshipper, who has identified himself with it and appropriated it by the laying on of hands. The remarkable rites of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) stand in contrast with all others; and the victims represent certain stages of atonement. First, there is death, then liberation, then ascension. The first provides cleansing blood and justifies God in dwelling amongst a sinful people; the second typifies the resurrection--for the escape-goat, according to the ritual, goes off free into the desert, the two goats representing two stages in one event; the third is the burnt-offering, which illustrates the ascension. The meaning of these rites could not be read at the time. They stood as enigmas; but we Christians have not to strain the text unnaturally to see in them the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

5. Among periodical rites attention may be called to the first-fruits. In Lev. 23 we read of the handful of first-fruits artificially ripened and waved before the Lord on the third day, *i.e.* the morrow after the Pashcal Sabbath (comp. 2.12,14). This is what is called "The first of the first-fruits" (Exod. 23.19). Fifty days later came the natural first-fruits, on the Day of Pentecost. The periods exactly tally with the time of the resurrection of Christ, Who was the first-fruits in one sense (1 Cor. 15.23), and the outpouring of the Spirit on the first believers, who became the first-fruits of the Christian community in another sense (Lev. 23.15,16; Num. 28.26).

6. It is not surprising that Levitical and sacrificial language should be used in a spiritual and prophetic sense in the later Books, the worship of the future being expressed in them in a general way without calling for rigid literal interpretation. Thus, In Isai. 56.7 outsiders are regarded as being brought to God's House of Prayer, and their sacrifices as being accepted on His altar (comp. 60.7); so Gentiles are to be taken for priests and Levites, and there is to be worship on new moons and Sabbaths (Isai. 66.20,23). Jeremiah's words are very strong in chap. 33.18, etc., "The priests the Levites shall not want a man before Me to offer burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, and sacrifices." The covenant made with them shall not be broken, and they shall be innumerable. It is to be observed that the same thing is said of the seed of David in the context, so that the expressions must be interpreted together. Similarly in Ezek. 43.19 and 44.15, "the priests the Levites of Zadok's seed" are regarded as engaged in their duties in the ideal Temple. Once more, in Mal. 3.3, the sons of Levi are to be purified that they may offer an offering in righteousness instead of the polluted offering of chap. 1.7; whilst Gentiles are described in chap. 1.11 as offering incense and an unpolluted offering.

Without dogmatising on such passages we are led by the considerations put forth in previous chapters to interpret most of them in the light of the Epistles;

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<sup>5</sup> See the discussion of the leading technical words here referred to, in *Old Testament Synonyms* (Nisbet).

and we may fairly point to the offering of the Gentiles (Rom. 15.16), to the living sacrifices of the Christian (Rom. 12.1), to the spiritual sacrifices acceptable through Christ (Heb. 13.15,16; 1 Pet. 2.5), and to the kings and priests of the new covenant (Rev. 1.6), as being foreshadowed in the prophetic word.

All the way through the Old Testament ceremony was counted as important, but mere ceremonialism was regarded as hateful to God. In the parting speeches of Moses, in the words of Samuel, in the 51st Psalm, and in the 1st of Isaiah, the spiritual side of worship comes out strongly, and it is evident that no amount of perfunctory offerings would take the place of a spiritual approach to God.

The 53rd of Isaiah seems to lift the ceremonial veil. It uses certain technical words to indicate that something pointed to in the Old Covenant was to receive its full significance in the time to come, and was to be embodied in the sacrificial death of "the Servant." Eight out of its twelve verses are quoted in the New Testament, and always with reference to Christ. The Christian interpretation of the chapter is undoubted. But the question may be asked, What has a sacrifice to do with kingship? What right have we to combine these very distinct ideas in one person? The answer seems to be that the true sovereignty of Christ is in the first place a supremacy over men's hearts, and that it is effected not by His being of the lineage of David, but by His sacrificial sin-bearing on the Cross. This is the Gospel for the Jew and Gentile; this is what draws all men to Christ; this is the secret of living and loving allegiance to Him; on this truth the loving appeal of God to all the world is based.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PROPHETIC USE OF NAMES.

THE origin of names as presented in Scripture is a very interesting one. There is probably more than at first appears in the statement that Adam gave names to the animals. The names answered to certain characteristics in the various creatures, and what Adam saw he represented by certain sounds. In the case of human names it is striking that some in very early days marked not only the circumstances or characteristics of the person named, but some expectation connected with him. Of the first kind would be such names as Adam, Eve, Cain, Seth, and Isaac; of the second, such as Noah (Gen. 5.29) and Abraham (Gen. 17.5). Jacob's name, and his additional name of Israel, are highly significant; so are the names of Jacob's sons. In many of these cases there is a play on the name, two Hebrew roots rather like one another being brought together in the interpretation. When Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian name it was official rather than personal. The translation of it in the Latin Vulgate, *Salvator Mundi*, is not far from the mark. The name of Moses may really be Egyptian, but it admits of a Hebrew explanation (Exod. 2.10). Some names are interesting from a linguistic point of view, as they preserve Hebrew roots which would otherwise have been lost. This is the case with Abraham's name.

It is in the prophetic Scriptures that the force of names comes out most clearly; and the expression "His name shall be called" becomes a formula. Several instances of it are to be found in the writings of Isaiah. In chap. 7.3 the prophet is instructed to take with him his son, probably a mere "child" (or lad), as he is called in v. 16; but he has a notable name, Shear Jashub, *i.e.* a remnant shall return (comp. chap. 10.21,22). Before he came to years of discretion something special was to happen, which is described in v. 16. But Isaiah has another son, and before this second lad is old enough to speak, certain other events were to take place, and he is named accordingly. These two sons are called signs and wonders, because they embodied certain promises in their very names (8.18). There is a third son spoken of, who is to be called Immanuel, *i.e.* "God is with us" (Isai. 7.14 and 8.8,10). Whose son is this? and when is He to be born? He is not a son of Isaiah, but is associated with the House of David; He is to be born of a virgin; He is to represent the presence of God with His people. The prophet recurs to his marvellous Being in chap. 9.6: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." He was to be wonderful in counsel, as God was (comp. chap. 28.29); He was to be the mighty God (comp. chap. 10.21); He was also to be the Father or Spring of immortality and the Prince of Peace, and He was to sit on the throne of David for ever. It is impossible to separate these chapters from one another; they are Messianic. No one fulfilled them in their main elements until "the Word was made flesh," born of a woman, emptying Himself of His glory, and being made in the likeness of man. The entrance of Jesus into human life was the fulfilment of the prophecy in all its parts (comp. Matt. 1.18-25 with Luke 1.26-37). This Being was to be called the Son of God and the Son of the Highest (Luke 1.32,35). He was also called Jesus, *i.e.* Joshua (Jehovah Saviour), because He was to come on a saving mission. He is further described as the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23.6; comp. Isai. 45.25 and 46.13).

Another person who was named beforehand was John the Baptist (Luke 1.60); his name signified "the grace of the Lord." The names of his father and mother also seem significant, the one meaning "the Lord remembers," and the other "the oath of

God." The roots of both were introduced in Hebrew into the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1.72,73).<sup>6</sup>

Other names, local as well as personal, have a prophetic sense, as Jezreel, Ammi, lo-Ammi, Ruchamah, and lo-Ruchamah (Hos. 1.4,6,9); Hephzibah and Beulah (Isai. 62.4); Baalie and Ishi (Hos. 2.16). These are usually explained in the context. There are also prophetic utterances condensed into names, e.g. "the way of holiness" (Isai. 35.8), "the city of righteousness" (Isai. 1.26), "the border of wickedness" (Mal. 1.4), "the city of truth" (Zech. 8.3), "the repairer of breaches" (Isai. 38.12). The name of Solomon (Peaceable) has special interest attached to it because it was ordered beforehand by God (see 1 Chron. 22.9). He is evidently regarded as foreshadowing the greater Son of David who should be the Prince of Peace and King of Salem.

In several passages in the Prophets the Messiah is called "the Branch" (*i.e.* the offshoot) of David. One of the Hebrew words thus used is *Nester* (נֹצֵר), which is retained in the name of Nazareth or Branch-town. St. Matthew naturally sees significance in this fact; and certainly it is remarkable that the Lord was called a Nazarene all through His ministry, that the name was put on His cross, and that Christians to this day are called Nazarenes by the followers of the False Prophet.

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<sup>6</sup> I take it for granted that this and other songs were originally in Hebrew.