

CHAPTER XII

THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

THERE are about 600 quotations from the Old Testament to the New, besides constant allusive references. These have been examined and discussed from various points of view, but the question now before us is simply this: Is there a definite and consistent view of Old Testament prediction taken by the teachers and writers of the New Testament? In answering this question we have to remember that the subject lies within narrow limits. Numbers of personal and national prophecies are never referred to in the Christian Books. We have chiefly to do with predictions concerning Christ and His Church and His nation. We must also bear in mind that a certain unity of teaching is to be expected, owing to the fact that our risen Lord explained to His followers the nature of the testimony borne to Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms (see Luke 24.27,45).

On surveying the quotations and references as a whole, we shall be led to the following conclusions:--

i. The historical events narrated in the Old Testament are regarded as facts, not as myths, in the New.

ii. Stress is frequently laid on the actual words in which these narratives are clothed, as accurate, and in some cases peculiarly expressive.

iii. The Old Testament, though a work of sundry writers and many ages, is regarded as one whole, like many members in one body, all animated and ordered by one spirit.

iv. The doctrinal and theological principles of the Old Testament are regarded as true and authoritative, and of universal application. The human heart and the needs of man are the same in all ages. There is the same God, with the same character, the same hatred of wrong-doing, and the same method of approach. Hence the laws, promises, and warnings, given to Israel, are applicable to all time. The way of justification, the duty of holiness, the relative weight of pride and humility, of self-assertion and meekness, of Divine sovereignty and human responsibility, stand unaltered.

v. The history of Israel is regarded as illustrative and prophetic of the need and nature of Divine intervention. Salvation is always finally from the same source, though its nature and the means of its attainment may vary. Israel is thus a representative or typical nation, in its origin, its history, its bondage, and its deliverance. Its story is prophetic, inasmuch as it is the key to the philosophy of all history. It is also provisional, and there is an anticipation running through it which is fulfilled in Christ.

vi. The attributes and function of Jehovah may legitimately be regarded as realised and embodied in the Only-begotten Son.

vii. The enemies of Israel are the enemies of God, and the words used of them may be used of the enemies of Christ.

viii. The sufferings and the glory to follow, the *penseroso* and *allegro* of

the prophets, are to be traced in the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, and in the persecution and final blessedness of His people.

ix. The persecution and martyrdom of God's faithful servants, the prophets of the Old Testament, point to the suffering of Christ for the sin of the world, and illustrate the position of His followers in relation to suffering.

x. The rites in connexion with the Tabernacle prefigure or illustrate the mode of man's approach to God in Christ, sometimes in the way of analogy, and sometimes in the way of contrast.

xi. Zion, Jerusalem, and the Temple illustrate the position of the redeemed community which is being gradually built up of living stones on the One Foundation of Christ.

xii. It should be added that familiar and striking words of the Old Testament are sometimes adopted, on the principle of accommodation, in a sense which has but a faint analogy with their original purpose, and that in such cases they are not pressed as an argument.

To illustrate these twelve canons of interpretation adopted by Christ and His followers would be to write a book. The enumeration of them is based on a careful study of all the known quotations.¹

We are brought to the conclusion that there was one uniform method commonly adopted by all the New Testament writers in interpreting and applying the Hebrew Scriptures. It is as if they had all been to one school and had studied under one master. But was it the Rabbinical school to which they had been? Was it to Gamaliel, or to Hillel, or to any other Rabbinical leader that they were indebted? All attainable knowledge of the mode of teaching current in that time gives the negative to the suggestion. The Lord Jesus Christ, and no other, was the original source of the method. In this sense, as in many others, He had come a light into the world. It should be observed, however, that the later Old Testament writers frequently made a similar use of the writings of those prophets who had gone before them and applied their words in much the same way.

Reverting to the predictive element in the quotations, it is important to notice that identity of phrase does not necessarily imply absolute identity of meaning. We have seen this in studying prophetic forms of thought in the Old Testament (see chap. VII.); and this is specially observable in the case of the Apocalypse. Thus, we naturally compare the two witnesses of Rev. 11.4 with the two witnesses of Zech. 4.14. The two olive trees are here said to be (*i.e.* to represent) "the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth"; whilst in the Revelation they are called "two olive trees and two candlesticks which stand before the God of the whole earth." The latter passage further brings out the analogy of the two witnesses with Moses and Elijah; for they can turn water into blood, and can shut the heaven so that it does not rain. The two passages thus present strong analogies, and point to a kindred solution in both cases, though the interpreter is not pledged to the conclusion that the persons referred to are identical.

¹ These are exhibited in a compact and convenient form for the student in Gough's *New Testament Quotations*, a book which might well be reprinted.

Again, the four coloured horses of Zech. 6.1-4 are reproduced in Rev. 6.1-8, the vision in the later case being woven upon the threads of the former; but they point to different, though analogous, events.

Taking the Apocalypse as a whole, there is hardly a figure or vision in it which is not contained in germ in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, or Zechariah. Probably the study of these Books in his old age had prepared the seer for the visions which had to do with the near or the far future.

Passing over the Messianic passages which have been referred to in previous chapters, attention may be called to the utterances which have to do with the Christian community. St. Paul and St. Peter are sometimes criticised for spiritualising certain passages of Isaiah and other prophets, and are accused of stealing away the promises which belong to the nation as such, and of leaving the threats behind. But Israel, whilst it was a nation was also a church, and the position assumed in the second part of Isaiah is that men were to look forward to a time when there should be a Gentile graft on an Israelitish stock. This seems the only key to the prophecy as a whole, and it is this view which is taken by the writers of the New Testament. The lineal Israel was not necessarily the spiritual Israel (see Rom. 2.28,29), but there was a spiritual Israel, which doubtless contained representatives of all the Tribes, and which became the basis of the Church of Christ, and it is to this community that all nations flow.

CHAPTER XIII

CHRONOLOGICAL PROPHECIES. NOTE ON THE JEWISH YEAR.

IT is sometimes said that predictions are only general forecasts, and are not intended to convey definite information as to dates. It may be so in some cases, but a considerable number exhibit either fixed periods within which certain events will come to pass, or else a sequence of events which will be fulfilled in their order. It is proposed in this chapter to give an outline of both of these series of predictions.

I.

(a). In Gen. 6.3 we read, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." Putting aside the question of translation, let us confine ourselves to one point: Does the verse refer to the extent of the time during which the longsuffering of God waited before bringing in the Flood on the ungodly (1 Pet. 3.20), or does it refer to the abridgment of man's longevity? Josephus took the latter view; Onkelos, in the Targum, the earlier, saying, "A term of one hundred and twenty years will I give them, if they may be converted." St. Peter's words fall in naturally with this view. If this is the true interpretation, then Noah was four hundred and eighty years old when the Divine decision was declared, and Lamech had one hundred and fifteen years yet to live, and both must have known what was shortly to come to pass.

(b.) In Gen. 15.13 (Acts 7.6,7) we have a term of four hundred years, or four generations, given in a notable revelation of the future. Abraham was now about eighty-five, yet he is told that he should inherit the land (Gen. 13.14-17). His child is yet unborn, but his seed is to go into bondage. The place is not specified, but the period is. After four hundred years (in round numbers) the seed should be brought forth. One cause of this delay concerning the inheritance is said to be that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet filled up (comp. Matt. 23.32); but at the close of this long period it would be full. Turning to Exod. 12.40 we are told that the sojourn of Israel in Egypt had been four hundred and thirty years. The passage is so worded that it seems written with reference to the old utterance in Genesis, though chronologists are not all of one mind as to the interpretation of the verse, partly owing to the rendering of the LXX. Many believe that the promise to Abraham starts from the date of the original utterance. If so, it takes us first to the death of Joseph, which gives a period of about two hundred and ninety years. Four generations might be taken as either four hundred years or four hundred and eighty years (one hundred and twenty years being then, perhaps, an average of life), and at this reckoning the four hundred and thirty years of Exod. 12.40 would come in the midst of the fourth generation. This seems to be the view taken by St. Paul in Gal. 3.17, where he says that the Sinaitic covenant was four hundred and thirty years after the Abrahamic; and according to it the actual period of affliction from the time of Joseph's death to the Exodus would be about two centuries, inclusive of eighty years from Moses' birth to his call. Although interpreters are not sure as to the dates referred to, yet the prophecy is manifestly chronological in its intent.

(c.) Num. 14.33, "Your children shall wander in the desert forty years." This period was fixed in connexion with the forty days spent in searching the Land

of Canaan. The postponement to Israel was a prolongation of opportunity to the Canaanites, and probably fitted in with the invasion of Palestine by the hornet, *i.e.* perhaps by Egypt.² The prediction in this case was clearly fulfilled.

Passing over the prediction of the fall of Jericho on the seventh day (Josh. 6.5), and the addition of fifteen years to Hezekiah's age (2 Kings 20.6), we turn to the Prophetic Books.

(d.) Jonah 3.4, "Within forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed."--The number forty is of frequent occurrence as a round number. But in this case the very book which tells us of the prediction tells us also that it was not fulfilled (see *supra*, chap. IV.). God was not slack concerning His threat, but He gave heed to the national (even though sadly superficial) repentance; and the judgment was postponed.

(e.) Isai. 7.8, "Within sixty-five years Ephraim shall be broken."--This was uttered in the reign of Ahaz; and sixty-five years after the first year of Ahaz the Captivity of the Northern Kingdom was completed.

(f.) Isai. 16.14.--Three years were allotted to Moab. Compare Isai. 20.3, where three years were given as a sign to Egypt and Cush; and Isai. 21.16, where one year was given to Kedar.

(g.) Isai. 23.15-17, "For seventy years Tyre shall be forgotten."--Subsequently it was to be restored. No date is given. Seventy may be a round number; in fact, a generation, for generations had dwindled down to threescore and ten years.

(h.) Ezek. 29.11-13.--Egypt was to be desolate forty years, and then restored. The date of the utterance is fixed (circ. B.C. 487). The language is clear and definite. Perhaps some historical illustration of it may yet be forthcoming.

(i.) Jer. 25.11,12.--Seventy years are allotted to the Babylonian domination over Judah and its neighbours, who were to be destroyed (*i.e.* brought low).

(j.) Jer. 29.10.--Seventy years were to be the term of Judah's Captivity. The letter enclosing this prediction was sent to Babylon after the second captivity, *i.e.* that in which Ezekiel was carried away (circ. B.C. 600-598), but the reckoning in years is generally taken from the first captivity (B.C. 606). The period of what may be called seventy years penal servitude was fixed by the number of neglected sabbatical years during the whole time of the kings (Lev. 26.34,35; 2 Chron. 36.21); and when the seventy years had run out, Daniel, who had been in Chaldea and Persia all the time, prayed for the fulfilment of God's promise (Dan. 9.3).

(k.) The prophecies in Daniel are highly chronological. In Dan. 4.16,23,25,32 we have reference to a period of "seven times." This expression is sometimes taken by students as parallel with Lev. 26.18, etc., but this view can hardly be accurate; for in Leviticus the word שבע means simply "seven," *i.e.* seven-fold; but in Daniel the Chaldee expression signifies "seven periods," whether

² The bee was the hieroglyphic sign of Lower Egypt; and the hornet may have been substituted for it in the enigmatical language of prophecy.

days, months, or years. The fulfilment of the prediction came a year later, *i.e.* "at the end of twelve months" (v. 29); and "at the end of the days" the king's reason returned to him. Why do commentators always suppose that the "times" in this passage were years?

(l.) In Dan. 7.25 and 12.7 we have reference to "a time, times, and a half time," the former of these passages is in Chaldee, and the latter in Hebrew, but the word for "time" in both passages stands for "an appointed period." In the one case the period marks the duration of the affliction of God's people at the hand of the eleventh Power (the little horn), and in the other the same period is described as "the scattering of the holy people." It is followed by the Judgment.

This period is reproduced in the Book of the Revelation in three forms. First, we have the expression "a time, times, and half a time" (Rev. 12.14), where it refers to a period of wilderness life or desolation for the "woman." Secondly, it is put into days (1,260) in verse 6, in the same context; and we find the same period appointed for the prophesying of the two witnesses (chap. 11.3). Lastly, it appears as forty-two months in chap. 11.2, and is applied to the treading down of the Holy City. It seems clear that 1,260 days are the same as forty-two months of thirty days each, and that they make up three and a half years. And the sense of these passages so fits in with the two in Daniel mentioned above that we naturally take the whole series together as representing one period, without determining whether the days are literal days or whether each day stands for a year, as in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. 4.4-9).

(m.) Dan. 8.14.--Here the period of treading down and desolation or wilderness life is called 2,300 days, but the Hebrew word used for day is a compound one, signifying "evening-morning." The vision in this chapter is distinct from the rest, and may refer to a different historical event. Some students think that the compound word points to literal rather than ideal days; but this view is not usually taken.

(n.) In Dan. 12.11,12 we have a period of 1,260 days which begin with the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation; also there is an additional thirty-five days, which gives what has been called the *ne plus ultra* of prophecy, nothing more being revealed as to time. If these days are years, and if the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation is to be associated with the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans (comp. Matt. 24.15 with Luke 21.20), then the prediction will not be fulfilled for four more centuries.

(o.) The chronological prophecy of Dan. 9 stands over for consideration. It deals with a period of seventy weeks. But the word translated "week" does not necessarily mean a week of days, and the word "day" does not occur in the prophecy. The passage is very condensed, and some points in the translation and application are open to question. It naturally attracted the attention of Sir Isaac Newton, and his interpretation deserves respectful study. A period of seventy times seven was "determined" (*lit.* "notched") in the mind of the Eternal. From the restoration of the City (not the Temple) to Messiah the Prince was to be seven times seven and sixty-two times seven. It is natural to take these as "sevens" or "weeks" of years, *i.e.* 483 years, because if they had been weeks of days they would probably have been called so (see chap. 10.2). Here, then, we have a determined period which began long after Daniel's death, and must be fixed by Neh. 2 as circ. B.C. 444. The Julian method of computing years was not in use then; but according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, the period here indicated would run out in about A.D.

25, when, according to Mark 1.15, the Lord Jesus proclaimed, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn nigh."³ Compare Gal. 4.4, where the fulness or fulfilment of the time is again referred to.

There is a period of seven years still standing over to complete the seventy times seven years. This seems to include the time from the Messiah till the fall of Jerusalem. But we see, as a matter of history, that it was protracted; for while the Lord died and rose again at the half week, *i.e.* circ. A.D. 29-30, the other half, which would naturally have closed about A.D. 33, was extended till A.D. 70. This prolongation was not slackness, but mercy. It was a gracious extension; but alas! the mass of the people remained unchanged; and the city fell. There was a terrible three and a half years later, however, in connexion with the great rising under Bar-Cochab (A.D. 130). Hippolytus (circ. A.D. 200) considers that this three and a half years will come at the end of the present age, when antichrist will be manifested and destroyed. (See his work on *Christ and Antichrist*, §43).

(*p.*) In the New Testament there are a few chronological prophecies, notably those that predict the resurrection of Christ in three days. The period is said to be analogous with that of the entombment of Jonah (Matt. 12.40). This remarkable event accounts for the expression in Hos. 6.2: "After two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up"; for Hosea lived shortly after the time of Jonah (comp. 2 Kings 14.25 with Hos. 1.1). As the three days and three nights in our Lord's case were shortened, so it may be that Jonah's entombment was shorter than we naturally suppose. The anticipation of Hosea concerning Israel was fulfilled in Christ, as was the case with an earlier stage of Israel's history (comp. Hos. 11.1 with Matt. 2.15).

(*q.*) In the Apocalypse we have not only the passages concerning the three and a half years already referred to, but also the vision of the thousand years (Rev. 20.2-7). The fact that this long period is mentioned six times gives it a certain fixity and definiteness, and thus distinguishes it from the ideal and comparative expression of Ps. 90.4 and 2 Pet. 3.8. It apparently points to the truth that the period so often looked forward to as "the Day of the Lord" is measured out as an actual thousand years. This was the conviction of the early Church, but that community could not possibly tell how long a period was to come first--a period obscurely intimated by St. Paul in 2 Thess. 2, and by the Seer of the Apocalypse under the expression "a time and times and half a time"; nor could they decide how long a period would come after the thousand years.

II.

The above are the most notable of the direct measuring of the distance of future events; and we have now to consider the indirect chronological prophecies, *i.e.* those that have to do with the sequence of events rather than with the fixed number of years which those events involve.

(*a.*) Gen. 49.10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor one who issues decrees from between his feet (*i.e.* from his family) until Shiloh comes; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."--The explanation of the Targums is: "Kings shall not cease from the House of Judah . . . until the time that the King

³ See note at the end of the chapter on the Jewish year.

Messiah shall come, Whose is the kingdom, and to Whom all the kingdoms of the earth shall be obedient." The first point to notice is the implied prediction that the sceptre was to get into the hands of Judah. This did not take place till the time of David. From his time onward, in spite even of the Captivity, Judah remained the ruling tribe and Jerusalem the metropolis; moreover, the Davidic dynasty was kept up through the kingly period, and is traceable onward through Zorobabel, and reappears in Joseph, the adopted and reputed father of the Lord Jesus. But the prophecy gives also a *terminus ad quem*. What should happen *after* Shiloh came? We know what did happen. Jerusalem was destroyed, Judah was desolated, and the Jews were scattered. The only sense in which Judah has held the sceptre is in the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ, "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5.5), Who is still winning the obedience of the people. These broad facts stand out clear, and relieve us of the necessity of discussing too narrowly the original meaning of the word Shiloh. Spelt as it stands in Hebrew it may signify the Rest-giver (comp. Matt. 11.28,29); but by changing the last letter from *h* (ה) to *v* (ו) we are reminded of Ezekiel's words (chap. 21.27), which may be a reference to the prophecy (with a slight play upon the words), "Until He comes whose right it is."

(b.) Isai. 8.4, "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry father and mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria."

Compare Isai. 7.16, "For before the child shall have knowledge to refuse the evil and to choose the good, the land by whose two kings thou art agitated shall be forsaken."

The first of these passages refers to Isaiah's second child, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, and the second to his first child, Shear Jashub. The two must be interpreted on the same lines; and we can see the fulfilment by comparing 1 Kings 16 with 2 Chron. 28. But they are associated with the promise of a virgin-born Son to the House of David, whose name should be Immanuel, and whose functions are further described in Isai. 9 and 11. The group of chapters from the 7th to the 12th are to be taken together, and form an excellent illustration of the intermingling of foreground and background. It is strange to see the restlessness of some students under the words uttered concerning the virgin-born Being Who was to combine the natural and supernatural in His birth as He did certainly in His life. The LXX. found no difficulty in the word "virgin," and there is nothing in the six other passages where the word occurs to justify the difficulty. The highly wrought imagination of those who think that the forthcoming son might be Hezekiah is shattered by the plain fact that Hezekiah was at least ten years old at the time! Nor is there anything in the nature of things which should render the fact disclosed in the prophecy unfitting. The law of fertility imposed on our first parents did not apply to their own origin; and if there was a special provision or a special generative act in the case of the First Adam, who after all was only a man, why should it be thought incredible that there should be something special in the case of the Second Adam, who, according to all New Testament teaching, came from above, though born of a woman?

(c.) Joel 2.--The order in this chapter is important because of the use made of it in the New Testament. After describing the locust-hordes, the prophet urges the people to call upon the Lord; then He drives away the enemy; the land rejoices; faith revives; afterwards (v. 28) the Spirit is poured out; signs and portents accompany or follow; the great and terrible day of the Lord, to which Malachi

subsequently refers (4.5), comes; there is deliverance in Zion and among the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

(d.) Amos 9.8.--The sinful kingdom is to be destroyed, but not utterly. In that day (*i.e.* after the dispersion) the house of David is to be re-established (Acts 15.16,17) and the people restored for ever.

(e.) Micah 3.12 and 4.1,2.--Jerusalem and Zion are to be ruinous heaps; but the latter days will usher in a time when Jerusalem and Zion become a centre of light and peace among the nations. The remnant becomes a strong nation and the Lord reigns over them for ever. And who is to be the actual ruler? One born at Bethlehem (5.2); and in Him the old promises made to Abraham will be fulfilled (7.20).

(f.) Dan. 2.--There is an orderly sequence of world-empires: Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman. Each of these grew up out of its predecessor and occupied common ground to a large extent, though with a westward tendency. The stone falls on the feet, *i.e.* on the subdivisions of the Roman Empire. This, as Dr. Pusey points out in his work on Daniel, is yet to be accomplished.

(g.) In Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, we have three accounts of our Lord's programme with regard to the future of Jerusalem and His own coming (in one sense; see *supra*, chap. VIII.); and we are told (Luke 21.24) that Jerusalem was to be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and it may fairly be implied that when those times are fulfilled there would be an uprising of Jerusalem and a national restoration, which should be as life from the dead. This utterance fits in with several passages in the Old Testament. As there are three or four definite references to Daniel in the Lord's programme, we naturally turn to Daniel to see if we can find light on this matter. In chap. 8.13,14 the question is asked "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation to give both the sanctuary and the host (*i.e.* the people) to be trodden under foot?" And the answer is given, "Unto two thousand three hundred evening-mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." It is at least possible that we have here the duration of the times of the Gentiles. If we take these evening-mornings as days, the period would amount to a little less than seven years. This view does not adjust itself to anything. If we take them as years, we see that the prediction covers a long period which has not yet run out.

(h.) Luke 21.32, "This generation shall not pass till all be fulfilled."--This prediction is not of universal bearing, but must be limited to its subject-matter, which is the coming of the Lord to visit Jerusalem for its sins, and to inaugurate the times of the Gentiles. There were some young people standing round the Lord who would see both the treading down of Jerusalem and the spread of the Kingdom of Christ far and wide.

(i.) Rom. 11.25, "Partial blindness has befallen Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel (*i.e.* Israel as a whole) shall be saved, or restored."--This is both a national and spiritual Restitution. Compare Acts 3.19-21, where St. Peter calls on Israel to repent and return that their sins might be blotted out, and so the Lord might send forth Jesus the Messiah, Whom the heavens must retain until the times of the Restitution of all the things of which the prophets had spoken from of old.

(j.) 1 Cor. 15.23.--Here we have a distinct order with regard to the Resurrection, "Christ the First-fruits." That is past. Then "those that belong to Christ at His coming." "Then the end"; that is the final dispensation which has been looked forward to for so long a time. The last and crowning triumph of Christ is the overcoming of death. After this Christ will be seen not as a King, but as a Son Who has been acting throughout in obedience to His Father.

(k.) 1 Thess. 4.14-17.--Another order connected with the Lord's appearing. The Lord comes down; the dead in Christ rise; then the saints who have not died are caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air, and to be ever with the Lord.

(l.) 2 Thess. 1.6-9.--Tribulation is to come to the troubler, and rest to the troubled; and these events synchronise with the revelation of the Lord Jesus, whose work "in that day" is two-fold. He will both take vengeance on the disobedient and be glorified in His saints.

(m.) 2 Thess. 2.2, etc.--Some thought that "the day" had set in already (see R.V.). This was a mistake. There must first be the Apostasy, the revelation of the man of sin, and a period of deception, lying wonders, and evil influences. Then the way would be opened for the bright coming of the Lord to destroy this evil one, whom St. Paul regards as an embodiment of Satan.

Note on the Jewish Year.

A solar year is about 365¼ days. A lunar year is about 354 days. This was pointed out by the celebrated Julius Africanus (circ. A.D. 220) when discussing the seventy weeks. The ideal year used in Dan. 7.25 and 12.7, also in Rev. 11 and 12, is 360 days. The last is generally supposed to be the Chaldean and Assyrian year. It was perhaps originally the Israelite year also; and from this we have derived the division of the circle into 360 degrees. Our ordinary chronology for ancient times follows the arrangement ordered by Julius Cæsar (B.C. 45), who made the sun's course the standard. His twelve months were alternately thirty and thirty-one days, except February, which was twenty-nine. This, however, gets us a day wrong every 130 years. Pope Gregory XIII. rectified the existing error by deducting ten days from October 1582, and thus bringing the vernal equinox back to March 21. In order to avoid further errors he ordered that the last year of each century, though naturally divisible by four, should not be a leap-year in the case of three out of every four centuries. Hence it came to pass that the year 1900 was not a leap-year. England adopted this new style in 1752. The Mohammedans have a better system than ours, and by it an error of a day can only be made in the course of 5,000 years.

The Jewish year is partly lunar, for it consists naturally of twelve months, of which half have thirty days each, and the other half twenty-nine. The year starts from the first appearance of the moon in Nisan. Being, however, so far behind the solar year, to which it had to adapt itself for the purpose of the season-feasts, an additional month is thrown in once in every three years, and is called *Ve-adar*, i.e. an additional (month of) *Adar*. Julius Africanus said that in his time the Jews inserted three intercalary months every eight years. A good deal of our ancient Eastern chronology must be affected by the question of the length of the year in vogue; and perhaps some of the dates will need considerable correction. For example, 1,260 of the years which reckon 360 days to a year if compared with the same number of Julian years shows a difference of about eighteen years; and 475

Julian years make 490 lunar year. A comparative calendar of ancient times is a sore *desideratum* for historical and prophetic students.

It has been pointed out that the years from Nehemiah to Christ, if reckoned on the Jewish calculation of 354 days to a year, bring us to about A.D. 25. But this calculation ignores the intercalary month which the Jews have to throw in once in three years. If we added in those months the date of the manifestation of the Messiah would be a few years later. But it is doubtful if the Jewish calculators would take in these additional months. At any rate, the period given in Daniel runs out in the age of the mission of Christ, and there must have been some studious Jews who were looking for Him just at the time in which He was manifested.

Dr. Anderson, in his *Coming Prince* (2nd ed., 1882, p. 127), works out the problem thus:--"What was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of Messiah the Prince, *i.e.* between the 14th March B.C. 445 and the 6th April A.D. 32? The interval contained exactly, to the very day, 173,880 days, or seven times sixty-nine prophetic years of 360 days, the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy." By the public advent of the Prince, Dr. Anderson understands the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. His view of the date deserves consideration, though it varies by two or three years from the views of others. The materials for fixing exact dates seem hardly yet in our hands.

The "year-day" theory, as applicable to parts of Daniel and the Revelation, and perhaps to other prophecies, is tacitly accepted by most prophetic students. Elliott discusses it at length in the 3rd volume of his *HoræApocalypticæ*

Whether an "hour" is to be taken as a twenty-fourth part of a year-day is not quite so clear (see, *e.g.* Rev. 9.15). The Rev. W. Girdlestone, in his *Observations on Daniel* (1820), says, "I have deviated from a calculation of Bishop Newton, who considers an hour as the measure of fifteen days or the twenty-fourth part of a year, supposing that the Jews divided their day as we do into twenty-four hours; but the fact is that their nights were measured by watches, and their days, or the space between sunrise and sunset, by hours, which were twelve; a prophetic hour then is the 12th part of a prophetic day, and is consequently a month."

For convenience in studying the history of the past in connexion with prophecy a list of the most noteworthy historic dates is given on pages 102-103.

CHAPTER XIV

METHODS OF STUDYING PROPHECY, NOTE ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

THERE is no royal road to the scientific study of prophecy. We have to begin with words and sentences before we launch into ideas. We are dealing with a Semitic tongue, with Oriental illustrations, usually with poetry which abounds in brevities, obscurities, and rarities of expression, and above all we have before us not the story of the past, but the revelation of the future. As we face the text and pore over its words we ask ourselves how they would have been understood at the time, and on what ground we modify or enlarge their meaning. For example, Who were the "saints" in the days of Daniel, and who are the "saints" in the Revelation and kindred books? Is there anything in the Christian system answering to the "daily sacrifice" which Daniel describes as to be taken away? How far is the language of hyperbole, so frequent in Isaiah, to be toned down by the accommodating spirit of St. Paul, and how far will it yet receive a literal fulfilment in accordance with the pictorial language of the Apocalypse. The New Testament adopts the older prophecies to its needs, but does not profess to absorb them. The time of Restitution which all the prophets had in their minds has not yet come (see Acts 3.21). Christians by virtue of their union with Christ become fellow-heirs with Israel; but they must not filch away the old promises which belong to the children of Abraham and leave them nothing but the threats. The chapter-headings in the Authorised Version have a good deal to answer for, and some of our expositors have followed in their wake; and this undoubtedly has caused much soreness in the mind of the Jew.

In a word, watchful care and accuracy in dealing with words, fidelity to the text, thorough study of the historical books which set forth God in Providence, an honest determination to be led by the Spirit of Truth and not by a foregone theory--these are the requirements of the man who would deal thoroughly and loyally with the prophetic Scriptures.

In entering upon his task the scientific student of Biblical prophecy has two methods before him. He may take each Book separately and examine and analyse its contents sentence by sentence; or he may trace certain subjects through the Bible as a whole. It seems wisest to study Books first and subjects afterwards.

I.

In dealing with the Books the question of their date has to be considered, for they have to be studied, so far as possible, in chronological order and in connexion with the history of the times in which they were written. Indications of the writer's date were usually given at the beginning of his Book; and in the longer Books several of the special utterances are dated. Occasionally where no date is given we may find some clue to the writer's age in his language, his allusions to current events, or the use he makes of his predecessors' works. Speaking generally, the dated Prophetic Books of the Old Testament (putting aside the Psalms) fall into three groups. First, there are the men of Hezekiah's age, including Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. Secondly, there are the men of Josiah's age, including Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The first of these

periods covers the captivity of Israel, and the second the captivity of Judah. The third group covers the age of the Restoration, including Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah. The prophecies of Obadiah, Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk are undated, but probably come between the first and second periods. Daniel, being partly historical and partly prophetic, and being (as a Book) anonymous, is associated in the Jewish arrangement of the Bible with the later histories. It covers the ground from the Captivity to the Restoration. Malachi is generally supposed, on traditional and internal grounds, to be contemporary with Nehemiah.

Those who reject the definite predictive element in Scripture have their own methods of elimination and explanation, which are not under discussion here. Undoubtedly at first sight there would seem reasons for bringing down the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah into the second of the groups named above, and for pushing back some of the later chapters of Zechariah into the first group; but in both cases if we had a little more knowledge of the times we might see cause to adhere to the traditional view, in favour of which the last word has not yet been said. The references in Zechariah to Assyria do not necessarily imply that the Assyrian rule was then dominant over the East any more than the references in the Revelation to Babylon imply the same of the Babylonian Empire. The future is expressed in terms of the past (see chap. IX., *supra*). Reverting for a moment to the case of Isaiah, we have to remember the old Hebrew tradition that the prophet was slain in his old age by order of Manasseh, and that Manasseh himself was carried captive to Babylon under Esarhaddon. Even in Hezekiah's time Babylon was a power to be considered, but it was still more conspicuous in Manasseh's time. The magnificent and stirring chapters of which we speak, and which are theological rather than political in their atmosphere, may have been written, perhaps from prison, in the light of coming national troubles and in the prospect of the time promised as far back as Lev. 26, when the people should bear the punishment of their iniquity and should be restored. This would be the "foreground," while the "middle-distance" has to do with the rise of Christianity, and the "back-ground" or "horizon" is occupied with the prospect of the new heavens and the new earth.

Having thus got a general idea of the date of the writer, we naturally consider the subject-matter and characteristics of each Book, and its main subdivisions; disregarding the divisions into chapters in some cases (see, e.g. Dan. 10 and 11); we study the Book in portions according to the nature of their contents. In some cases, e.g. Haggai, each prophecy has its own date, and we can read it in the light of contemporary history, but in others, e.g. Joel, we hardly know whether we have a single utterance or a group of two or three messages. The groups in Isaiah are fairly discernible, and are in fairly consecutive order, but this is not the case in Jeremiah.

Having mastered, so far as possible, the history of the age in which each prophet lived, and the leading subjects of his Book, our next course is to read it by the light of the quotations which it makes from its predecessors, and of the use made of it in the later Books of the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament. To study the prophets without reference to Christ seems as unscientific as to study the body without reference to the head. The Spirit of Christ was in the Prophets all the way through (1 Pet. 1.11), and each Book is to be read as part of a great whole.

Pursuing our investigations we give ourselves more carefully to the detailed utterances of the Book in our hands, asking various questions as we read, e.g.:

- i. What part is historic, and what predictive?

- ii. What part is visionary, and what real?
- iii. What is figurative, and what literal?
- iv. What utterances are conditional, and what absolute?
- v. What parts have been fulfilled since the prophecy was written, either sooner or later, and what still remain unfulfilled?
- vi. What belongs to the Northern Kingdom, and what to the Southern?
- vii. What is for outside nations, and what for the world at large?
- viii. What is earthly, and what is heavenly?
- ix. What is, in a more or less definite sense, Messianic?

Every student will see the advantage of studying the fulfilled before the unfulfilled, the easy before the obscure, the foreground before the background. He thus builds on a sure foundation, advancing from step to step, distinguishing the shadows from the substance, and detecting the main outlines of what is still future by the aid of his accurate study of the past.

II.

Passing from Books to Subjects, it may be noted that there are certain chapters which may be regarded as keys to prophecy, either because they present a prophetic scheme in outline, or because they call special attention to subjects of surpassing interest. The following may be enumerated, though each which is named suggests kindred chapters calling for attentive study:--

- Gen. 12, The original promises made to Abraham and his seed.
- Gen. 49, Containing the Blessing of the Tribes by Jacob.
- Lev. 26, and Deut. 28, Containing the promises and threats set before the people when they were about to enter Canaan.
- Deut. 32, The prophetic song, which gives the scheme of Israel's fall and rising again through all time.
- Isai. 13,14, The fall of Babylon and the restoration of Israel.
- Isai. 24-27, The Restitution of all things.
- Isai. 53, The Sin-bearer.
- Ezek. 38,39, The troubles of the latter days.
- Dan. 2,7, The rise and fall of Empires.
- Dan. 9, The seventy weeks.
- Zech. 12-14, The downfall of the adversaries of Jerusalem.
- Matt. 24,25, The Lord's utterance concerning His coming.
- Rom. 9-11, The prospects of Israel.
- Rev. 20-22, Closing scenes in the world's history.

It will be observed that these prophecies of Scripture, of which those just enumerated are special samples, have to do with persons, with dynasties, with nations, and with the world. Among them we find predictions which concern Abraham, Joseph, the Baptist, and the Messiah. So there are predictions which concern the dynasty of David and the line of Jehu. There are prophecies concerning Syria, Edom, Arabia, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Zidon, Philistia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, as well as Israel. Lastly, there are the utterances concerning the second coming of Christ to save and to judge the world, and those which announce the resurrection of the dead and the establishment of a new order of things.

In the remaining chapters of this book, only a few of the most notable of

these topics will be touched upon, with a view of determining, so far as possible, the best method of dealing with them. No attempt is made to give a complete and detailed interpretation of prophecy, and perhaps more questions will be raised than can be answered; but the statement of problems is sometimes instructive and leads the way to further detailed but cautious enquiry.

Note on the Structure of the Apocalypse.

This Book is made up of a series of visions usually introduced by the formula "And I saw." They are closely related to one another, the earlier frequently referring by anticipation to the later. With regard to their arrangement the question constantly rises whether some of the visions are descriptions of contemporary events, being narrated one after the other through the necessity of language, as in the narratives concerning contemporary kings of Israel and Judah, or whether they are consecutive; and, if the latter is the case, whether allowance is to be made for the possibility of long gaps between some of the visions, as in the case of the visions of Daniel.

The English historical school has been ably represented in modern times by such men as Elliott, Garratt, and Guinness, who see in the visions associated with the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, an outline of God's dealings with the Church and with Israel till the "time of the end," which we are rapidly approaching, though they differ from each other in some particulars.⁴ The Preterist school consider that the larger portion of the Book received its fulfilment in the earliest ages of the Church; whilst the Futurists hold that the Book as a whole refers to the time of the end.

Considering how much of the groundwork of the Book is due to the writings of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, we see the impossibility of regarding it as an absolutely independent production. The visions granted to St. John were evidently presented in figures taken from the writings of these four great men which the Seer had no doubt studied enthusiastically either before or during his time of seclusion in Patmos.

One notable feature of the Book is the reiteration of the mystical number *Seven* in it. The word occurs over fifty times. It is applied to lamps, *i.e.* churches; to torches, *i.e.* spirits; to stars, *i.e.* angels; to seals; to heads, *i.e.* mountains; to eyes, *i.e.* spirits, also to trumpets, thunders, thousands, crowns, plagues, vials, kings. This phenomenon is the more remarkable owing to the fact that the number *Seven* is never so much as named in St. John's Gospel or in any of the Epistles at all, except in Heb. 11.30, which is a purely incidental reference. Some of these sevens can be traced in the Old Testament; for we have seven-fold vengeance (Gen. 4.15; Lev. 26.18), seven trumpets blown before the fall of Jericho (Josh. 6.4, etc.), seven shepherds (Mic. 5.5), seven eyes (Zech. 3.9), and seven lamps (Exod. 37.23; Zech. 4.2).⁵

4 See Birks' excellent summary on the Structure of the Apocalypse written after fifty years' study of the subject in his *Thoughts on Sacred Prophecy* (Hodder, 1880).

5 The expression "Seven Stars" of Amos 5.8, A.V., is not a case in point. The Hebrew word כִּימָה simply means a heap or cluster, and the Pleiades are referred to. See R.V.

It is remarkable how little "local colouring" there is in the Book. If we had not been told that it was written by an exile in Patmos, we should not have found it out, though the references to the sea-shore might have struck us as noteworthy. There is nothing clearly indicative of a date, and it is still open to conjecture whether the Book was written in the age of Nero or of Domitian, though the testimony of early writers is so strong for the later date (circ. A.D. 95) that it may be regarded as still in possession. Had the great blow fallen upon Jerusalem, or had it not? Had "the woman" fled into the wilderness? Were the Apostles still living, or had other personages stepped into their place? It seems as if the letters to the seven Churches afford the only materials for enquiry into these questions; and the references in them to false teaching and evil practices appear to point to a later rather than an earlier date.

Even the authorship of the Book is wrapped in mystery. The fragments of Papias would lead us to suppose that there were two notable Johns at that time, John the Apostle and John the Presbyter. The writer of the Gospel and of the first Epistle (which is a practical application of the Gospel) never names himself, but we know who he was. The writer of the Second and Third Epistles of St. John calls himself the Elder. The writer of the Apocalypse calls himself John the servant of the Lord; but there is an apostolic atmosphere about him, and in spite of the verbal peculiarities of the book (which may best be accounted for by consideration of the subject and of the Old Testament materials which were used) there seems to be no sufficient reason for doubting that the author is the disciple⁶ whom Jesus loved, which was the view of the early Church.

The whole Book claims to be a faithful report of what John had actually seen in vision. The events recorded were to come to pass quickly (1.1-3, and 22.6,7). The Book was written to a little cluster of Christian Communities in the west of Asia Minor, though doubtless intended to be spread far and wide. The needs of these seven Communities are primarily considered, and the threats and promises announced are in terms most of which are explained in later parts of the book. After this preliminary and solemn call on the Churches to listen, the Revelation proper begins with a glimpse of the spirit-world and the unrolling of the seven-sealed book by the Lamb. As the seals are opened one by one, a time of warfare, with its usual accompaniments, together with persecution and its due recompense, is portrayed, whilst the "sealed" of Israel and of the Gentile world enter into their rest and joy. As soon as the last seal is broken the whole Book of Revelation may be regarded as unfolded before the Seer's eye, and he proceeds to tell what he saw. It appears from what he saw that a series of judgments would follow the trumpet sounds of the seven angels, the last of which would indicate the end (11.15). The events portrayed seemed at first sight to be consecutive, both in order and in time, but they are broken into, first by an intervening series which John was forbidden to write down (10.4), and secondly by the times of the Gentiles (11.2, etc.), so that the *Parousia*⁷ which had been speedily anticipated is delayed.

At this stage, *i.e.* at the end of the 11th chapter, the first great scene or series of scenes presented on the complete opening of the Book appears to be

6 It is strange that the word "disciple" only occurs in the Gospels and Acts. The history of the word "apostle" is still more remarkable. It is only found once in the first, second, and fourth gospels; frequently in St. Luke and Acts, habitually by St. Paul. The references in Rev. 2.2; 18.20; 21.14 are interesting.

7 This word does not occur in the Revelation, but it is implied in chap. 11.15, &c.

brought to a close. Looking, however, in another direction, the Seer perceives the desolation of Israel during the times of the Gentiles, together with the persecution of the Christian community, all carried on under the instigation of Satan through the agency of the imperial Beast and his clever and deceptive ally or representative (chaps. 12 and 13). Words of encouragement are uttered to those who suffer for Christ in those evil times (14.1-13), and attention is afterwards called to the vision of judgment on the persecuting and ungodly power (14.14-19.21). Then follow the Millennium and the subsequent outbreak (20.1-10), together with the post-millennial judgment.

Here the second great phase of the Future draws to a close. But there is yet a third series of visions or scenes included in the opened book; it is the vision of the Bride--a vast spiritual community gathered from Jewish and Gentile sources forming a great living edifice (comp. Eph. 2.19-22; 1 Pet. 2.4-10). Amongst other remarkable things uttered concerning the community, we read that the nations of the saved shall walk in the light of it (21.24), while the unclean and abominable and the liar are excluded from its benefit (21.27; comp. 22.15). It is not so easy to decide whether this picture refers to the condition of the saints during the Millennium, or to the final condition of things after the establishment of the new heavens and new earth subsequent to the General Judgment. The latter is the natural view, but there are difficulties in it. These are discussed and in part removed in Birks' *Outlines of Unfulfilled Prophecy*. Perhaps what would be true in the one case will also be true in the other in some measure. The language is highly figurative, but the impression produced on the mind is the ultimate and final banishment of evil from God's universe.

Such is a *prima facie* view of this marvellous Book. Taking the analogy of the Book of Daniel it is natural to believe that it refers in part to events following closely on John's time, *i.e.* on the beginning of the 2nd century, and that it furnishes at least some light on the centuries which should intervene before the Consummation. Certainly, it has kept hope alive in the hearts of many during the ages of persecution, whether imperial or ecclesiastical, and will do so till the end.

CHAPTER XV

PROMISES TO ABRAHAM AND DAVID FULFILLED IN CHRIST.

THE Bible almost begins with a promise (Gen. 3.15), and it certainly ends with one (Rev. 22.20), and the ultimate fulfilment of the first will adjust itself to the accomplishment of the last. The great historical series of promises lies midway between them, and is ushered in at the call of Abraham. There were three promises made by God to Abraham, whether through the medium of vision or by some direct communication.

First, there was the promise of the *land*. When the patriarch arrived in Shechem, in the plain of Moreh, the Lord appeared to him and said, "Unto thee will I give this land." The boundaries were set forth in a covenant made some twenty years later, when Abraham was ninety-five, as extending from the river of Egypt (Wady el Arish) in the south-west to the great River Euphrates in the north-east. Some four or five hundred years later Abraham's family, now grown into a nation, found themselves at the entrance of this land (Deut. 1.7,8 and 11.24), and they were instructed to read the Law in the plain of Moreh, the very place where Abraham had seen his first vision in Canaan (Deut. 11.30). In another five centuries we come to the time of Solomon; and he actually reigned over the land thus described (see 1 Kings 4.21,24). Many a time afterwards the land was invaded and desolated and depopulated; and now in this 20th century after Christ the descendants of Abraham have only a small and perilous footing in it. This little land, however, has played a great part in the world's history, and perhaps it will yet be the scene of wonderful events.

Secondly, there was the promise of numerous *offspring*. The family of Abraham were to become as the stars of heaven for multitude, and as the sand which is on the sea-shore (Gen. 22.17). Five hundred years later we find this promise fulfilled (Deut. 1.10; 10.22), the fighting men of Israel being then 600,000. Again, in Solomon's time (1 Kings 4.20) the people were as the sand of the sea. They had indeed become a company of peoples (Gen. 35.11; 48.4), and Abraham had become a father of many nations. There are now about ten million of his descendants in the world, scattered among the other nations, and there are no signs of the people dying out. Some 50,000 of them are now in Jerusalem, whereas in 1860 there were only about 7,000 there.

Thirdly, there was a promise that in one of Abraham's seed *all nations of the earth should be blessed* (Gen. 12.3; 22.18). This remarkable promise was passed on, with the other two, to Isaac and Jacob, and the fulfilment of it must be looked for somewhere within the families of the Twelve Tribes. But we search the Old Testament in vain to find anyone becoming a blessing to the world at large. The Psalms and the Prophets, however, have various references to something which was to be done for the benefit of both Jew and Gentile. Accordingly we turn to the New Testament, and in Acts 3.25,26, we find the old promise brought forth from its resting-place, and the Jews are plainly told that it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Comp. also Luke 1.55,70; 2.32. Moreover, the nature of the blessing which the Lord Jesus bestows on all nations is pointed out by St. Paul. It is primarily the gift of the Holy Spirit, though other blessings were to follow.

Guided by the light thus obtained, we look back to the older Scriptures to enquire whether they contain definite promises concerning the outpouring of the

Spirit and the call of the Gentiles.

The action of the Spirit of God on the inner man is an occasional topic in the Old Testament, from Gen. 6.3 and onwards, and we learn that the special inspiration of the Spirit was exhibited not only in the prophet, but also in the artificer, the warrior, and the singer. But as the third great promise made to Abraham was to include some special gift or manifestation of the Spirit, who would on this account be called "the Spirit of promise" (Luke 24.49; John 15.26; Acts 1.4; Eph. 1.13), we should naturally expect to find some prophetic intimation of it in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Turning to Isai. 32.15 we find that the outpouring of the Spirit is spoken of in this Messianic chapter as the first step to the reign of righteousness. In Isai. 44.3 we read, "I will pour water upon him who is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on thy seed and My blessing on thine offspring." Here we have the promised blessing identified with the gift of the Spirit; and we are forcibly reminded of the invitation of the Lord Jesus to the thirsty soul, and of St. John's comment thereon (John 7.37-39). Again, in Isai. 59.19-21 there is the promise of the Spirit in connexion with the new covenant; whilst in chap. 61.1 we get the true Messianic idea, viz. the anointing of the Divine Messiah or Servant, not with literal oil, but with the Holy Ghost; and then follows an enumeration of the blessings which should flow from Him both on Jew and Gentile. Compare Acts 10.38, where St. Peter says that "God anointed the Lord Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with power, and that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." Our Lord's mighty and loving works were thus testimonies to the fact that He was really the Lord's Anointed; and in consequence of this He is commissioned to pass on "the anointing" to His followers (1 John 2.27), and to baptize them with the Holy Ghost.

To these passages from Isaiah we should add the notable one in Joel 2.28, etc., which St. Peter quoted and applied in his first speech, where he says that the Lord Jesus, having been filled and anointed with the Holy Ghost, "shed forth the Spirit" upon those who believed in Him (Acts 2.33). This was the long promised blessing. This was what John the Baptist had spoken of so often, and what the Lord Jesus had announced so plainly in St. Luke 24, St. John 14, and Acts 1. On carefully examining the passage in Joel, we find that the promise was to be fulfilled between the time of the people's repentance and the time of the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. The three thousand who repented and were baptized on the Day of Pentecost doubtless obtained the blessing--not necessarily the outward sign, but the inward reality, the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ--and became the first inheritors of the promise; but the expression "all flesh," which occurs in this promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, seems to be world-wide; that is to say, it includes Gentiles as well as Jews; those that were afar off as well as those that were near. Certainly it is generally used in this large sense; comp. Gen. 6.12,13; Num. 16.22; Ps. 65.2; Isai. 40.5,6; Jer. 32.27; and other passages. It is thus parallel with the words in the original promise concerning "all the families of the earth," who were to be blessed in the seed of Abraham. The inclusion of the Gentiles in the blessings to be brought by the Messiah is frequently referred to in the Old Testament. The word גוֹיִם, translated "Heathen," "Gentiles," or "Nations," gradually assumed a technical sense in the days of Moses; and in Deut. 32.43 the Song of Israel closes with the prospect of blessing, not for the Jew only, but also for the Gentile. This is one of the passages singled out by St. Paul (Rom. 15.9,10) as indicating that the promises in Christ were for the Gentiles. The thought is taken up by David in Ps. 18.49 (2

Sam. 22.50), and in other Psalms (see Pss. 47.8; 67.2; 72.11; 86.9).

Isaiah frequently refers to this bright prospect and introduces it into Messianic prophecies; see, e.g. Isai. 2.2, where "all nations" are spoken of as sharing Israel's blessings; chap. 11.10, where the Gentiles flock to the standard of the Son of Jesse; 42.1,6, where the Messiah brings forth judgment to the Gentiles; 49.6, where Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles (comp. Luke 2.32 and Acts 13.47). Similarly, the later prophets, Zechariah and Malachi, speak of the Messiah as speaking peace to the Gentiles (Zech. 9.10), and of God's name being great among them (Mal. 1.11). A careful study of the passages in Isaiah points to the truth that the Gentiles would be associated with Israel in a special sense in the days of the Messiah. There would be a Jewish or Israelite nucleus and Gentile adherents, or, as St. Paul puts it, an Israelite tree and Gentile grafts.

In the New Testament this subject is only occasionally spoken of during our Lord's lifetime, e.g. in Matt. 8.11 and 21.43. But our Lord's post-resurrection commission to preach and testify to all the nations was gradually understood and acted upon, first by St. Peter and subsequently by St. Paul; and it is to St. Paul that we owe it, under God, that Christianity, instead of being the religion of a Jewish sect, became a world-wide faith, so that in this last past century--to take the latest and brightest example--the gospel has been preached to nations speaking four hundred languages and covering a very large portion of the world. Thus it is that the blessing promised to Abraham is being wrought out in Christendom under our very eyes, and, it may be, in our own experience.

We now come to a fourth promise, made many centuries after the time of Abraham, though indicated by Jacob in his parting blessing (see *supra*, chap. XIII.). David is now the Messiah, the anointed of the Lord. As such he fights Israel's battles, conquers their enemies, and organises their kingdom. In addition to his other labours he desires to build a permanent Temple in place of the Tabernacle; but a message comes to him from God, saying, that the honour of building a Temple is not for him but for his son. Then a promise is added which fills David's heart with wonder. It was that his kingly dynasty was to be permanent. In spite of all their failures and defects God would never take away His mercy from the line of David (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17). According to this promise we trace the dynasty of David up to the Captivity and on to the Restoration--though the kingdom, as such, was never restored. Then the Old Testament fails us, but the New Testament gives two genealogies which lead on to Joseph, who is called the son of David (Matt. 1.20; Luke 1.27), and into whose family Jesus, the Son of the Virgin Mary,⁸ was adopted. In this wonderful way God "raised up seed" to David (Luke 1.69). Every pious Jew must have been waiting for a king for five centuries, since the time of Zorobabel.

At last He had come, having been "born King of the Jews." Meanwhile, the Messianic idea, which was simple enough at the outset, had been widened and deepened in consequence of a series of prophetic utterances during the three great

⁸ It has been pointed out in a previous chapter that though it is not definitely stated that Mary was of the tribe of Judah, it was more than probable that she was. Her child was to sit on the throne of David His father, and of His kingdom there was to be no end (Luke 1.32). The two genealogies are manifestly Joseph's; and if the crown of David had been put on any head it might have legitimately come to Joseph. Jesus was Joseph's son by adoption (formally or informally) and Mary's son by Divine Grace. Mary's father may have been akin to Joseph and her mother to Elizabeth.

prophetic periods. In the first, Hosea had declared that David (*i.e.* the Son of David, see *supra*, chap. XI.) would be the bond of union among the Tribes; Amos had said that David's tent, which had fallen down, should be set up again; Micah had promised that the remnant of Israel should become a strong people, and the Lord should reign over them; he had also pointed to Beth-lehem as the birthplace of the Son of David; and Isaiah had spoken of the virgin-born Child who should occupy David's throne for ever, and should be a root of Jesse to whom the Gentiles should come. In the second great prophetic period the days were degenerate, and the Books abound in serious warnings and exhortations, but promises are not lacking. Jeremiah and Ezekiel point to the re-establishment of the kingdom under one Shepherd and King, who should be David (*i.e.* the Son of David); and Daniel tells wonderful things concerning the Son of Man Who should become Ruler over the nations. Then come the later prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, who speak of One who was destined to be the great Temple-builder, and in that sense a true Son of David.

All these and many other passages point to a coming King, raised up into the family of David, ruling over the house of Jacob, and supreme over the nations. This is the Messianic idea. But, guided by the light of the New Testament, we find that another idea had to be combined with it. In order to see what this was we must step back a little. Israel was always taught that God was the true King of men, ruling them, judging them, saving them. But God had been rejected, and the people had determined to have an earthly king such as the surrounding nations possessed. Saul, the tallest and finest of men, was selected; and after him David was selected, though he had neither stature nor position to boast of. The anointing of the kings marked that God delegated His authority to them, but reminded them that they were to use that authority for Him and not for themselves. But the kings failed. Even the best of them--Hezekiah and Josiah--did not bring men's hearts back to God. The Divine supremacy must therefore be re-asserted in some way which would win men back to their true allegiance. How could this be done?

All the way through human history there had been a great need. The Law of Moses had not created it, but had intensified it, though unable to relieve it. The system of atoning sacrifice and priest gave no satisfaction to the conscience, but it pointed upward to God's willingness to forgive, and forward to some possibility in the future. What should be done? Supposing that sacrificial feast and burnt-offering and meat-offering and sin-offering were done away, could something better take their place, and could some One better take the place of the priest? It is here that such passages as we have in the 40th and 110th Psalms come in, also the 53rd of Isaiah. They seem to answer to the desire of the human conscience--"If only One would come from heaven and do something for us and in us which would make us good and acceptable to God, then we should fear no evil." Perhaps no one ever put the thought into such words as these, but God, who recognised human needs better than man himself knew them, has answered the mute sighing of the world.

Accordingly, we find that the Messianic idea gradually combines itself with, and to some extent and for a time becomes subordinate to, the sacrificial one. In the Gospels we learn of One who comes from heaven to do His Father's will, and who suffers all the indignities which human sin can devise, bearing them because they represented to Him the world's failure to do right, and tasting the death which is the natural outcome of evil. Then He rises supreme over corruption, the grave, and earth itself, and sits on the throne of God awaiting the day of a glorious manifestation of the Divine sovereignty and supremacy founded upon love.

This view of the Divine purpose was only dimly adumbrated in the Old Testament, and the Lord Jesus barely refers to it in His teaching; but when once men had come to believe in Jesus as the person marked out to be the King of men, the sacrificial side of His work was freely taught, as we see from the writings of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Paul. This, in fact, became the most notable element in that Gospel of Peace which was the power of God unto salvation.

This then is the Divine order. First the King is revealed; then He poured out His soul unto death and bare the sins of many; then He blesses men with His Holy Spirit, whilst His ministers proclaim His message to the world. Meanwhile He is building up His Temple, which is made of spiritual stones, Jewish and Gentile; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the community which He is constructing. The everlasting Kingdom of God is thus being established under a Divine Priest-King to whom all judgment is delegated. In this way the political aspect of the Mission of Christ gives way to the spiritual, the Jewish to the world-wide, the seen and temporal to the unseen and eternal. Then will come the final triumph.

The Old Testament programme concerning the Messiah is fragmentary. It is like a puzzle-map of which the pieces are discovered in Books written in many different centuries and under varied circumstances. But Jesus appears in the fulness of time. Little by little His adherents begin to put some of the pieces together and find them fulfilled in Him. Still something was wanting. He died, and all seemed confusion again; but shortly afterwards He Himself expounded the Scriptures concerning Himself, pointing out that the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms testified to the fact that He must first suffer and afterwards be glorified. Then all became clear. But it will be clearer still hereafter when men's eyes shall behold the King in His Beauty and Glory, exercising functions compared with which all that we associate with the idea of kingship will seem as nothing.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TEN TRIBES.

IN spite of occasional jealousies and contentions the Tribes or Clans of which Israel was composed held fairly together until the end of Solomon's reign. But in the age of Rehoboam and Jeroboam the kingdom was split into two. Henceforth we read of two Houses (Isai. 8.14), two Families (Jer. 33.24), two Nations (Ezek. 35.10). The one of these is ordinarily called Judah, and with it there was amalgamated the whole of the Tribe of Benjamin, the greater part of Simeon, and a considerable portion of Levi, including the House of Aaron. The other is called Israel, or Ephraim, or the House of Joseph. The metropolis of the one was Jerusalem or Zion, and of the other Samaria. From Jeroboam's time onward the word Israel is used in two senses, standing either for the Twelve Tribes or for the Northern Kingdom. Up to the time of the Captivity of the Ten Tribes the word is generally used in the latter sense, though not always. It appears that the kindred expression "House of Jacob" stands generally for the Twelve Tribes as a whole, and frequently as if represented in Jerusalem (see Mic. 3.9; Obad. 17; Isai. 58.1).

There were two stages of the captivity of the Northern Kingdom, which are represented in the following passages:--

i. "In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon and Abel-beth-maachah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria" (2 Kings 15.29). It will be observed that this deportation affected the north and east, and left Samaria itself untouched. There is a reference to it in Isai. 9.1 (see. R.V.).

ii. "Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Hoshea, and Hoshea became his servant and gave him presents." Subsequently the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison; "and the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria (Sargon) took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in Halah and in Habor (by) the river of Gozan and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 17.3-6). In a further account of the later captivity (2 Kings 18.10,11,12) the words used are exactly the same; and the reason for the affliction is given in a condensed form, viz., "Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded," a passage which shows that the Northern Tribes ought to have regarded themselves as still under the Mosaic covenant.

At first sight we might suppose that the Ten Tribes were now blotted out, with the exception of those who were deported into the Median cities, and whom it is the fashion to describe as "lost." But this can hardly have been the case. Whilst "Samaria and its cities" were now largely occupied by foreigners (2 Kings 17.24), including Babylonians, there must have been a considerable *residuum* of Israelites in the land. It was not entirely depopulated, as is clearly shown from what took place in the days of Josiah. This godly and zealous king considered it his duty to purge the cities of Samaria as well as the Judean cities, following therein the example of Hezekiah, and seeking spiritual, if not political, reunion as Hezekiah had done (see 2 Chron. 30 and 31). Accordingly he purged the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon even unto Naphtali, and cut down all the idols

throughout all the land of Israel (2 Chron. 34.6,7). In his eighteenth year there was a great collection of offerings from Manasseh and Ephraim "*and all the Remnant of Israel*" (chap. 34.9), as well as from Judah and Benjamin. This passage shows us that all the Tribes were regarded as having an interest in the repair of the Temple. We are told, further, that Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel and made all that were present in Israel to serve the Lord (chap. 34.33). And all were instructed by the Levites and were united in keeping the Passover (chap. 35.2,18).

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that at the beginning of the kingdom there was a nucleus of most, if not all, the Tribes under David's special leadership (1 Chron. 12), and that Jerusalem, having been metropolis of all the Tribes before the secession, would probably be a refuge and rallying-place through the period that followed (see 2 Chron. 23.2; 24.5,16; 28.23).

Turning to the prophecies, we may lay it down as a general rule that wherever Judah and Israel are contrasted (as in Hosea 1.6,11; 4.15; Amos 2.4,6), the latter title refers to the Northern Kingdom; but that wherever "Israel" is seen to be parallel with "the House of Jacob," the reference would be to the Twelve Tribes, who were evidently regarded as conserved and represented in the land in spite of the great deportation to Media. So it came to pass that the Southern Kingdom, after the fourth year of Hezekiah, was not only part of Israel, but represented the interests of Israel as a whole, and that prophecies concerning "Israel" would then be naturally understood as referring to the "Remnant," whose headquarters would be Jerusalem, though they might be found also in sadly diminished numbers scattered throughout all parts of the land.

In accordance with this view we read that "*all Israel* were carried to Babylon" (1 Chron. 9.1), and that apparently on their return there dwelt in Jerusalem not only children of Judah and Benjamin, but of Ephraim and Manasseh (v. 2), and that *the Remnant of Israel* were in all the cities of Judah (Neh. 11.20). This explains the offering of twelve bullocks and twelve he-goats for all Israel (Ezra 8.35; comp. chap. 6.17-21; 7.10; 9.11; 10.5,23). It has been estimated that at least a quarter of those who returned from captivity were of the Ten Tribes. Whether this view be accepted or not, there cannot be any reasonable doubt that from the time of the Restoration until the final fall of Jerusalem, at the hand of the Romans, all the Tribes were regarded as represented in the land of Israel, though many families of all the Tribes were also to be found in the neighbouring countries. (See Acts 2.7-11).

The conclusion to be arrived at is that as a *Kingdom* the Ten Tribes were done away with, but some of them remained as part of the original stock of Israel and Jacob; they were thus included in "the Remnant of Jacob" at the time of the Restoration; even then they had one Head (Zerubbabel), and the two sticks were once more one (see Ezek. 37).⁹

The general course of events thus indicated had been a matter of prediction as far back as the time of Moses. See Lev. 26 and Deut. 27-29. The prophets of the age of Hezekiah are full and free in their utterances concerning the impending doom of the Northern Kingdom as such in contrast with the Southern. "I will not

9 Since these pages were written I have seen Mr. David Barron's *The Ancient Scripture and the Modern Jew*, in which the same line is taken as against the theory that the Ten Tribes were "lost."

more have mercy on the House of Israel, but I will utterly (*i.e.* surely) take them away; but I will have mercy on the House of Judah and will save them" (Hos. 1.6,7). Yet God is loth to give them up, and urges them ere it is too late to seek Him. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel?" (Hos. 11.8). "Thus saith the Lord unto the House of Israel, seek ye Me and ye shall live" (Amos. 5.4). God would not lightly cast away any of the Twelve Tribes. In spite of all their sins Isaiah and Hosea announced that a Remnant should return. The children of Judah and the children of Israel should be gathered together and apoint themselves one Head and shall come up out of the land, *i.e.* out of the land of captivity (Hos. 1.11). The children of Israel should return and seek the Lord their God (*i.e.* shall seek Him once again) and David their king; and should fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days (Hos. 3.5). The Tribes as represented by these remnants would thus be amalgamated. When the captivity of treacherous Judah and Jerusalem, including the backsliding Israelite remnant, was impending, the Lord still besought them to return; and Jeremiah took up the touching words of Hos. 14.4: "I will heal your backslidings." This call was to go to the North, *i.e.* to the most distant regions of the Captivity; and the promise was made that if they did return to God, even though it were only one of a city or two of a family, He on His part would bring them back to Zion (Jerusalem being regarded as their headquarters), "and in those days the House of Judah shall walk with¹⁰ the House of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land which I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers" (Jer. 3.6-22).

Still, however, the promise stood and was reiterated. "I will bring again the captivity of Israel and Judah. I will cause them to return. . . . It is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. . . . They shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jer. 30.1-9). Thus the promise made through Hosea is taken up and pressed home by Jeremiah: it affects both the Israelite and the Judean remnant, and reunion is definitely promised. "The watchmen on mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn. . . . They shall come and sing in the height of Zion. . . . Israel and Judah shall be re-sown, and the new covenant shall be established with the two Houses, and the seed of Israel shall never be cast off" (Jer. 31; comp. chap. 33). This reunion and return is timed in chap. 50.4 as contemporary with the downfall of Babylon. "In those days and in that time the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping, they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten" (Jer. 50.4,5; comp. chap. 51.5).

From these utterances it is clear that the Remnant of the two Houses which had been taken to Babylon and the north, both Judean and Israelite, was to return under one head, who should be a representative of the House of David. This promise was fulfilled in a measure when the people returned under Zerubbabel, and when Zion became, as we have seen, the centre of worship to representatives of all the Tribes, though the Remnant that returned was sadly small.

Ezekiel, Jeremiah's contemporary, prophesies to the same effect. After

10 In the margin (A.V. and R.V.) we read "to" for "with"; but see Exod. 35.22, where the same Hebrew preposition (ל) is used,--"Both men and women" lit. "men to women"; similarly, the text above might be translated "Both the House of Judah and the House of Israel."

convicting "the shepherds of Israel" of shameful neglect, God promises to bring the lost sheep back to their own mountains and to set up one Shepherd over them, even "My servant David." "He shall feed them and shall be their Shepherd" (chap. 34.23). The whole House of Israel is to be brought forth as if from the grave, to be breathed upon by God's Spirit, and the two branches of the children of Israel are to be made one, under one king, and not to be two kingdoms any more, "and David My servant shall be king over them," and God would make an everlasting covenant with them (chap. 37). Again, in the closing vision of the Book, all the Tribes have their share in the land, Joseph having two portions as before (chap. 47.13).

One has to keep reminding oneself that these prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel were uttered before the seventy years' Captivity was completed, and that the Return under Zerubbabel was the first fulfilment. This was "the foreground," at any rate, though there is a Messianic background.

The ambiguity of the word "Israel" has led to much discussion concerning the so-called "lost Tribes." But none of the Tribes were "lost" in the sense in which this expression is generally used, though all of them were "lost" in another sense; see Matt. 10.6. The Israel of the magnificent prophecies of Isaiah is the amalgamated Remnant which, and which alone, from his time onwards, represented all the Twelve Tribes.¹¹ Some of them returned in the days of Zorobabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and some remained in the far East. Later dispersions from the centre followed, but all were one Body, as in the days of the Lord and His Apostles (see Luke 22.30; Acts 26.7; James 1.1).

The distinction between the Ten Tribes and the Two is non-existent in the New Testament. As both sets of Tribes were under the Old Covenant, so both were invited to share in the blessings of the New (see Jer. 31.31-34, compared with Heb. 8.8-12). Judah is included in Israel in some passages and Israel in Judah in others.¹² The two are one, and the middle wall of partition which existed between them from the days of Rehoboam till the days of Hoshea exists no more.

Nothing is more clear than that as Israel was originally one family, so they were to become one again. The only serious questions are these: Have the numerous prophecies uttered before the return from Babylon been fulfilled? Did the common disaster and the common hope blend the Tribes into one? Did one ruler lead back the representative remnant of all the Tribes when Cyrus issued his edict? and did those who failed to return keep more or less in touch with their more loyal brethren so as to be one nation, though dispersed? The passages referred to above seem to give an unqualified affirmative in reply to these questions. As Zion was the headquarters of the representative remnant before the Captivity, so it was afterwards. In this sense only can we understand the prediction in the Book of Joel, that the prosperity of *Zion* is the guarantee that God is in the midst of *Israel* (chap. 2.27). In this sense we understand the blended references to Zion and Israel in the second portion of Isaiah (chaps. 40-66); comp. also Zeph. 3.13-15. This representative remnant, perhaps at a later stage of its existence, is spoken of in Zech. 8.13, where we read, "As ye were a curse among the heathen, O House of Judah and House of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a

¹¹ In Ezekiel (chaps. 8, 9, 11-14, 18-22) the House of Israel is regarded as still centred at Jerusalem, but destined to go into captivity in Babylon.

¹² Probably long before New Testament times the word "Jew" was used not for men of the Tribe of Judah only, but for Israel as a whole. See Esth. 8.9, which speaks of the "Jews" as to be found from India to Ethiopia. The word was then what the word "Hebrew" was in far more ancient days.

blessing."

Comparatively few prophetic passages have to do with the subsequent history of those of the Ten Tribes who were deported by the Assyrians. The apocryphal passage 2 Esdras 13.40 is of no authority. The God of Israel preserved the Remnant in the way above detailed, and that was enough. Many passages which speak of Judah speak of it as containing the nucleus of all the Tribes. The blessings connected with the return from Captivity were for the godly and willing remnant of all the Tribes. All, doubtless, were represented when Christ and His followers went among "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and when the Spirit descended on the Day of Pentecost. The New Covenant was for all, and the outpouring of the Spirit was not restricted in any way. There seems, therefore, to be neither room nor necessity for that view of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" which lies at the basis of the Anglo-Israel theory.

At the same time it is quite within the bounds of possibility that representatives of the Northern Kingdom may have lived on for centuries in the far East, broken away from the true Remnant and yet not amalgamated with other nations. The existence of the Falashas in Abyssinia, the Afghan tradition, the relics of Khae-fung-foo, and the travellers' tales concerning the Beni-Rediab make such a view quite reasonable.