ILLUSTRATIONS OF
FULFILLED
PROPHECY.

BY

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Illustrations of fulfilled prophecy

John Robinson Gregory
"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."—Genesis xlix. 10.
THE chapters which compose this book were written originally for a popular illustrated periodical. This fixed the method to be adopted: prophecy and its fulfilment were to be contrasted as plainly and simply as possible and so as to allow of pictorial illustration. This work had already been done effectively and elaborately by Dr. Keith; and successive editions of his Evidence of Prophecy had laid the most recent travellers and explorers under contribution. It would have been mere affectation to refuse to avail myself of materials ready to my hand. Therefore I have not scrupled to use the quotations in Dr. Keith's fortieth edition. I have, however, verified them wherever possible, and have selected only those which seem to me fairly apposite. But many of the testimonies adduced to the present condition of cities and countries the destiny of which the prophets pronounced
are not to be found in Dr. Keith's work. My arrange-
ment, too, differs considerably from his.

At the outset I had to decide the important question
whether any notice should be taken of the effect of
modern historic criticism upon the argument from
prophecy. Such notice, I found, could not be taken
without altering the whole character of the book. But I
have kept the matter in my mind, and in the Introduc-
tion and the chapter on the Messianic prophecies I
have referred to it briefly.* Generally I have accepted
without defence the ordinary interpretation of the
predictions; for even if it be that all the commonly
received fulfilments cannot safely be employed in argu-
ment with the sceptic or rationalist, they all have their
use in confirmation of a faith once formed.

I should state very distinctly that this book addresses
itself to the general reader, elder scholars, and thoughtful
men with little leisure for reading and none for learned
discussion rather than to professional students of the
Written Word.

BRISTOL, August, 1883.

J. R. G.

* The reader who wishes to enter more thoroughly into the subject will
find some of these questions discussed in articles now appearing in
the Homiletic Magazine entitled, The Argument from Prophecy in the
Light of Modern Criticism.
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Illustrations of Fulfilled Prophecy.

INTRODUCTION.

THE true King of Israel was Jehovah. Whatever man bore that title, he was in reality Jehovah's viceroy. He might be obedient or disobedient, faithful or rebellious, but legally he was never more than deputy-ruler of the land of which God was the supreme governor. It follows that God must have some means of communicating to the earthly monarch His directions and His judgement upon his conduct, whether it pleased or displeased his Suzerain. Sometimes God spoke to the king immediately Himself, but generally He employed the prophets as His mouthpiece. Thus when David had sinned in numbering the people, the Lord appointed him his punishment through the seer Gad.

Often God desired to speak not to the king only, but to the whole people. Again He delivered His message through His servants the prophets. Thus Jeremiah remonstrated with the king, with the nobles, with the entire city of Jerusalem concerning their resistance to the King of Babylon.

The prophet then was the living representative of
God, commissioned to utter words in Jehovah’s name. He professed to receive his message from God; he preaced it with “Thus saith the Lord.” Each utterance of his was received separately from his Master; that is to say, he was not established a permanent monitor to reprove, rebuke, exhort, as his own reason, however cultivated and pious, might dictate; he required fresh inspiration for every new demand. Usually the prophet once called retained his office till death, though with longer or shorter intervals of silence. Sometimes a prophet was commissioned, apparently, to deliver a special message, and having discharged that duty, returned to his own pursuits. He might belong to some school of the prophets or he might be summoned from secular business. Jehovah chose His own messengers and authorised them for such period and such work as seemed good to Himself.

Thus every inspired speaker may be regarded as a prophet, i.e., he was one who spake by the authority of God. A suggestive use of the word “prophet” occurs in Exod. vii. 1. To Moses Jehovah says, “See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.” Aaron acted simply as the spokesman of Moses, he had no authority to promise or threaten except as Moses gave it to him. The prophets acted simply as the spokesmen of Jehovah; they had no authority whatever of their own. It was their office as channels of communication between God and man which constituted them prophets. It is important that we rid ourselves of the notion that the special, the principal function of the prophets was to predict. When Eldad and Medad prophesied,* they certainly did not foretell

* Num. xi. 24—30.
things to come. And when Moses wished, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!" he desired not predictors, but those who should speak under the influence of the Spirit of God. Of this character were the prophesyings of the early Church,—inspired outpourings of exhortation, prayer, or praise.* Even the English word had at one time a very similar sense, for Jeremy Taylor employs the phrase, "liberty of prophesy-ing," for the right to expound the Scriptures according to the individual conscience. Milton hopes that England may soon become "a nation of prophets," by which he means preachers and interpreters of the Written Word.

The Hebrew prophet stood ever a witness for truth and right and God. He addressed himself to his own generation. To lead his fellow-countrymen to a close observance of the law of God, to make clear to them that external observances were of little worth in God's eyes except as they indicated hearts devoted to Him, to bring them to repentance when they had erred and to return from their backsliding when they had forsaken the Lord, to teach them to serve Him sincerely and perfectly—these were the great objects at which the prophets aimed.

We may see easily how prediction sprang out of these duties, especially if we remember that the remonstrances, exhortations, encouragements of the prophets came direct from God. Jehovah threatens Israel with punishment for some sin—for idolatry, for instance. To make the threatening sufficiently impressive, it is necessary to state what the punishment will be. Here you have a prediction both in form and in fact. If Israel does not repent and so the warning is executed, you have at

* 1 Cor. xiv. 24, etc.
once a clear instance of foreknowledge, which the people that come after can mark. When Moses threatens his nation with calamities, with dispersion among the Gentiles as the meed of apostacy, he has the good of the Israelites in view. His prophecy belonged to his own time, and exercised its immediate influence; nevertheless there is in it a distinct element of prediction. This observation evidently stands true of all prophecies concerning the destiny of the Jewish people.

The prophecies about heathen nations, Moab, Assyria, etc., are related only less intimately to the moral and spiritual education of Israel. The Jews must be taught to perceive that the chastisements inflicted by heathen hands originated with Jehovah, that the idolatrous conquerors were simply His instruments. Almost always when heathen armies invaded Judaea, they professed themselves devoted servants of their own deities and enemies of the God of Israel. It was necessary that the Israelites should be made to understand that Jehovah was not the local god of the land they lived in or the national deity; He was the God of the whole earth, before whom the idols were but vanities. These lessons could not be declared more forcibly than by prophecies announcing the injuries the heathen should do to Israel and the punishments God would measure out to them for their opposition to Himself and their general wickedness and violence. Of course this is not a full explanation of the moral ground of the prophecies against the heathen and their effect upon those who heard and read them. Babylon, Assyria, Edom, etc., are symbolic of the foes of God, and their destruction sets forth the overthrow of everything that exalteth itself against Him. Apart from this fact, much of the
phraseology the prophets employed cannot be accounted for.

Prophecy prepared the way for the Christ. The promise of a Messiah necessarily took the form of prediction. To Him the faith and hope of Israel were directed. Unless His Person and His work had been indicated, the whole object for which God chose for Himself a people would have been defeated. The existence of Israel was bound up inseparably with the Messianic hope; the religious life of Israel had its foundation in the faith that God would send the Healer of all spiritual diseases, the Righteous King of the wide world, the Atoning Sacrifice who should put away sin. We might well expect that prophecy would busy itself especially about Him; without it the religion of Israel could not possibly have been sustained.

The connection of prophecy with the times in which it was delivered, the benefit of prophecy to those in whose ears it was originally spoken, should be borne in mind carefully and persistently. One of the most dangerous rationalistic objections to “the argument from prophecy” derives nine-tenths of its force from regarding prophecy as an isolated phenomenon, without reference to the period and people of its origin. Abundant ridicule is poured forth upon the imaginary spectacle of men uttering predictions of no value to their own age, for the sole benefit of the ages to come. This picture is not true to life: the prophets spoke to their own contemporaries, and their predictions were for the instruction of the then generations.

A moment ago I used the phrase “the argument from prophecy.” What does it mean? What is it worth? How ought we to use it? I will try to answer these
questions very plainly, and at the same time to show how it agrees with the view of the nature of prophecy just given.

We have seen that of necessity prediction sometimes constitutes part of prophecy. Sentence is pronounced upon a nation. By-and-bye it is executed. Can any one help putting the two—the prediction and the event—together, noticing how one answers to the other, and thinking this could not have been foreseen and foretold and brought about except by supernatural power? This, in small compass, is "the argument from prophecy:" only God could have foretold these events, therefore the man who foretold them must have been inspired by God. If there are prediction and performance at all, this use of them is natural and inevitable. Suppose a false prophet to arise and to give forth predictions, how were the people to decide between them except by observing whose forecast was justified by the event? In like manner could they distinguish between the deliverances of the heathen oracles and the predictions of Jehovah. "Announce ye the things that are to come hereafter, that we may take notice that ye are gods," is God's challenge to the idols. Of Himself He says, "The former things, behold! they have come, and new things do I announce: before they shoot forth I tell you of them." He is the God "that bringeth to nought the signs of the praters, and maketh the diviners mad.... that maketh His servants' word to stand, and accomplisheth the counsel of His messengers."* It is plain that God intended us to compare prophecy and history, and to draw certain conclusions from the comparison.

Many of the predictions give details of the method

* Isa. xli. 21—23; xlv. 25, 26. The translation is Mr. Cheyne's.
of their future accomplishment or specify minute particulars in connection with it. By rationalist and semi-rationalist strenuous efforts are put forth to explain these away. The chief reasons assigned for this are two—first, that inspiration could at best but stimulate the human faculties and enable them to make the most of the knowledge they possessed; and, second, that these specific incidents could be of no service to the generation to which they declared. The first reason arbitrarily limits inspiration, and assumes the very point to be proved. We can therefore dismiss it from our thoughts. The second overlooks an obvious consideration. A prophet foretells a certain event as from God. If he describes it in vague and wide terms, his auditors might doubt whether he was not speaking merely from his own heart. If he has seen a vision, he will know more about it than its dim outline, which may belong to half-a-score similar events. At any rate, the mention of particular circumstances would go far to impress his listeners with a conviction of the genuineness of his word. But we must not limit the aim of such specification to the effect upon the original hearers of the prophecy. God, Who knew that the prediction would be recorded for future generations, could not but have foreseen and designed the result of the verifications of all the parts of the prediction upon those who observed them. It is an illustration of Divine wisdom that prophecy possesses this twofold usefulness, to neither branch of which may we close our eyes.

In order to employ the argument from prophecy, we must ascertain the meaning of any given prediction. We must then examine history to discover if it has been accomplished. Then let us satisfy ourselves that no
human foresight could have pre-announced the event or series of events. If we are convinced that the oracle has been performed, and that its fulfilment was beyond human ken, we may infer safely that the prediction has proceeded from God, that the prophet who delivered it really spoke in God's name, and hence that we must believe all his words.

One would think that the sole way to invalidate this argument would be to prove (1) that the prophecy was not delivered before the event, or (2) that it was not fulfilled, or (3) that the sagacity of man was competent to descry the event in the distance. Upon the second and third of these heads the reader must satisfy himself as he compares the statements of the Bible with the facts, some of which are set forth in the following pages. Upon the first head, all that I can say here is that, in the great majority of instances given in this little book, no one denies that the prophecy preceded the history, and that even when such denial is uttered, the overwhelming mass of evidence testifies that it is without foundation.

A fourth objection is urged with much earnestness. It is said that we are bound to confine the meaning of any prophecy to that which its speaker understood by it. Then it is reasoned that he could not have meant that which we think his prediction signifies. But this is manifestly unfair, I had nearly written absurd. What we have to do is to see what it is that the prophecy says; for the time being we may forget who delivered it. If it is true that the prophet did not always understand fully his own prophecy, and we may admit quite freely that he did not, we conclude that God, from Whom it sprang originally, meant more than He revealed to
INTRODUCTION.

His messenger. If the meaning is in the words, does it not seem rather foolish to assert that it cannot be there because the prophet did not know it?

This book contains only a few specimens of the correspondence between prophecy and facts. The reader should compare the predictions of the doom of one heathen city or empire with those that relate to another. They are not indiscriminate forecasts of destruction. The second chapter of Zephaniah affords a compendious illustration of the differences. The sea-coast of Philistia shall be given over to shepherds and their flocks; the ruins of Moab shall be desolate, yet not altogether barren; in Nineveh shall be both flocks and wild birds and beasts, and it shall also be “dry like a wilderness.” Contrast again the doom of Babylon with that of Nineveh; it shall not be “dry,” but covered with water. Or compare once more the total destruction pronounced against Nineveh and Babylon with the milder judgement of Egypt, “it shall be the basest of the kingdoms.” The reader may be left to find other illustrations for himself. He will notice how much these differences increase the force of the argument in favour of a foreknowledge not less than Divine.

One word more should be said with regard to the Messianic prophecies. An objector often tries to weaken them by showing that they may have referred primarily to another than the Christ. Nevertheless they are fulfilled in Christ. This double fulfilment, if it exists, serves but to heighten the wonder, as it involves the foresight of two distinct chains of events. Prophecy may describe a type in terms that point onwards to an antitype. It is enough for us to observe that the prophecy does not exhaust itself in its first accomplishments.
ILLUSTRATIONS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY.

But the object of these pages is not controversy, not the defence of prophecy as an argument, but the illustration of its fulfilment as a matter of fact. The doubter might acknowledge in the coincidences displayed the evident presence of a Divine Hand; the Christian will certainly admire the manifested wisdom of God.
THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL.

The Bible contains only two prophecies concerning Ishmael and his descendants. Both were spoken by God—one when Hagar had fled from her mistress, the other in answer to Abraham's prayer, "Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!" The predictions declare that "he will be a wild man; his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him;" that "he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren;" that God would multiply him exceedingly, and "make him a great nation;" and that he should beget twelve princes (see Gen. xvi. 12; xvii. 20). The promise to make Ishmael a great nation was repeated afterwards to Hagar, when her son seemed about to die (Gen. xxi. 18).

The Book of Genesis itself informs us that Ishmael had twelve sons, who were princes. After each of them a town or castle was named (see xxv. 13—16).

Expositors differ as to the meaning of the sentence about Ishmael dwelling in the presence of all his brethren. Possibly it referred to the indefinite extent of Ishmael's territory, so that he could not be confined within specified limits, but seemed always before his brethren's eyes; or to the settlement of his descendants not far from Palestine, though their wandering habits might have led to a vast and permanent migration. On either interpretation, the prophecy proved true.
The Arabs are generally regarded as the children of Ishmael, but this does not accord accurately with the fact. A portion only of them trace their origin to Abraham, the remainder claiming their descent from Joktan (see Gen. x. 26—29). The distinction is important, because certain sceptics point to the cities built and dwelt in by the people of Southern Arabia as contrary to part of the prophecy about Ishmael. The Southern Arabs, however, sprang from Joktan.

"I will make of him a great nation." Certainly this promise has received abundant accomplishment. It would not be improper to point to the large numbers of the Arabs even at this day as fulfilling the prediction. But it met its most complete performance in the great Saracenic empire. From Arabia came Mohammed. The Mohammedan conquests covered more than half the known world.

The most remarkable prophecy, however, is that which foretells the character and habits of the children of Ishmael. The words "He will be a wild man" are literally, "He will be a wild ass man;" and the description of the wild ass in Job xxxix. 5—8 is strikingly applicable to the genuine Arab: "Who hath sent out the wild ass [or the Arab] free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass [or Arab]? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing." The Arabs still pitch their tents in the same wilderness in which Ishmael wandered thirty-seven centuries ago. They "scorn the city." They boast a wild freedom, and are masterless, as the wild ass's colt. Moving constantly
with their vast flocks and herds, "the range of the mountains is their pasture," as they spy out "every green" spot in the sandy desert.

Travellers and historians are alike agreed that the character and habits of the Arabs have been unchanged from the very earliest times. Like the wild ass, they are untamable. Many of the greatest conquerors of antiquity in vain attempted their subjugation. The Egyptian Sesostris could do little more than erect a barrier against them, as the Romans did with the Picts and Scots in our own country. Cyrus the Persian made an alliance with them, finding conquest impracticable. They refused to submit to Alexander the Great, and death prevented his carrying out a projected invasion of their land. Even the Romans were fain to content themselves with inflicting heavy chastisements upon them for their predatory raids upon Syria and other Roman provinces. But the punishment was scarcely over before the raids began afresh. They have never bowed their necks to a foreign yoke.

Their hand is against every man, and consequently every man's hand is against theirs. Gibbon pronounces them "armed against mankind." They live by plundering; with them robbery is no disgrace, and a daring theft brings the highest distinction. They attack every caravan that is not too strongly guarded; they sweep down upon every cultivated glen that is not kept by force of arms. It would be easy to fill page after page with extracts from the writings of ancient and modern travellers in the East, all telling the same tale, all bearing the same witness. Dr. Kitto says, "We have seen something of Arabs and their life, and have always felt the word 'wild' to be precisely that by which we should choose to characterize
them.” Mr. Hepworth Dixon, accounting for the poverty and want of energy and enterprize of the peasantry in the Holy Land, says:—

“When they have stripped a valley of its herbage and drained the well of its water, they rove into another and another valley, eating up the grass on No-man’s-land, and when that fails them, breaking into the fenced pieces and the open plains. They come like locusts, and so depart. Orchard, garden, meadow, pasture, vineyard, every green patch of ground is the same to these hungry herds. In two or three days a peasant’s whole substance is devoured; his house sacked, his field mown, his well emptied, his cattle stolen, his garner swept. Every year the harvests of Sharon, Shefelah, and Esdraelon, tempt these marauders from beyond Jordan, just as the harvests of Kent and Mercia used to bait the Saxon vikings and the Danish jarls. Every year sees the peasant fly from the face of his destroyer, leaving his garden unplanted, his field untilled, his tank uncleaned. The soil falls out of cultivation; thorns sprout among the orange trees and apple trees; dòur, cactus, and prickly pear take the places of dates and figs. The luxurious place becomes a desert. But when the peasant is gone, and his hut has become a heap, his garden a brake, his well a puddle, the Arabs, finding no prey in that quarter, cease to go near it. Then the husbandman is tempted to return, to replant his orchard, to rebuild his house, until the green crops, the fruit trees, and the fresh water in the well shall again bring the Bedaween upon his labours; and the peasant, after struggling for a season to buy their good-will, relinquishes the spoil. From more than half the rich plain of Esdraelon, the garden of Syria, the peasants have been driven by the Bedaween raids.
"No government, not even that of Rome in imperial days, has ever been able to stop these inroads and prevent these depredations. Gideon checked them for a moment, and Ibrahim checked them for another moment; but just as the Beni Kadein returned to Esdraelon after Gideon, the Beni Sakhr returned after Ibrahim. How to drive back these nomadic races, confining them to the mountains and plains beyond Jordan, is a problem which has always occupied and always baffled the wit of civilized men."

Is not the correspondence—a correspondence perpetuated for four thousand years—between prophecy and fact a clear proof that the promises to Hagar and Abraham were really given by God? And may we not reason from this to the Divine origin of the document in which the prediction is recorded? Nothing can explain the coincidence between forecast and event except the perfect knowledge of God. Even if the climate and the rough and inhospitable character of the country, and their seclusion from more polished nations, could account for the persistent condition of the Arabs, it would scarcely detract from the wonder of the prophecy. But these causes are utterly insufficient to explain the phenomena, as Dr. Keith forcibly points out:—

"It cannot be alleged, with truth, that their peculiar character and manner, and its uninterrupted permanency, is the necessary result of the nature of their country. They have continued wild or uncivilized, and have retained their habits of hostility towards all the rest of the human race, though they possessed, for three hundred years, countries the most opposite in their nature from the mountains of Arabia. The greatest part
of the temperate zone was included within the limits of the Arabian conquests; and their empire extended from India to the Atlantic, and embraced a wider range of territory than ever was possessed by the Romans, those boasted masters of the world. The period of their conquest and dominion was sufficient, under such circumstances, to have changed the manners of any people; but whether in the land of Shinar, or in the valleys of Spain, or on the banks of the Tigris or the Tagus, in Araby the Blessed or Araby the Barren, the posterity of Ishmael have ever maintained their prophetic character: they have remained, under every change of condition, a wild people; their hand has still 'been against every man, and every man's hand against them.'
MOAB AND AMMON.

MOAB was ever the consistent and deadly enemy of Israel. At the original invasion of Canaan by the Hebrews, Moab was left unmolested in accordance with the command of Jehovah: "Distress not the Moabites... for I will not give thee of their land for a possession." Nevertheless Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel and to tempt them—only too successfully—to sin. The country of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh lay conterminous with Moab, and in the time of the Judges and the first King of Israel there was continual hostility between the peoples. David conquered the Moabites, and they remained tributary to Israel till the reign of Ahab; then they revolted and obtained their independence. Very soon after the first captivity the Moabites possessed themselves of the territory of Israel on their side the Jordan. When Jeremiah prophesied against Moab, he included in his denunciations cities which had been formerly in the Kingdom of Israel. But when earlier prophets foretold the judgement of God upon their own nation, they referred to these cities in their predictions. Thus the present condition of parts of Moab illustrates two sets of prophecies. In this chapter we will confine
our attention to the prophecies that speak of Moab, i.e., of Moab proper, or of the once Israelitish cities that belonged to Moab when the predictions against Moab were uttered.

The principal oracles against Moab are contained in Isaiah xv., xvi., and Jeremiah xlviii., the predictions of the first being delivered a full century before those of the second. They are highly poetic, and much of them is to us obscure. We do not know by whose hand the prophecy was accomplished, "In a night Ar of Moab is laid waste, is destroyed," nor can we tell what enemy they fled from when "the daughters of Moab" were "as a wandering bird cast out of the nest at the fords of Arnon;" but we have ample evidence that the foretold destruction took place.

The multitudinous ruins now found in Moab witness to the former prosperity of the country; and the very threatenings of the seers bear the same testimony. They speak of "the pride of Moab," of her "glory," of hay and grass and stores in abundance, of fruit harvests and joyous vintages. They mention city after city by name. If we take the names of the cities whose fall Isaiah foretells, Kir of Moab, Nebo, Medeba, Elealeh, etc., we can say of every one, so far as they have been identified, it is in utter ruin. Dr. Keith declares, and his statement is most abundantly supported, "The most populous and fertile province in Europe (especially any situated in the interior of a country like Moab) is not covered so thickly with towns as Moab is plentiful in ruins, deserted and desolate though now it be." Truly Moab is spoiled; its foundations are surely stricken.

Recently a traveller with his Bible in his hand has
journeyed through those parts of Moab which appertained originally to Israel, and which Jeremiah particularises in his oracle concerning Moab. He has marked the correspondence between the present facts and the ancient prophecies. Subjoined are specimens of his statements on the subject:—

"Bozrah was one of the strongest cities of Bashan; it was, indeed, the most celebrated fortress east of the Jordan during the Roman rule in Syria. . . Roman Bozrah, or Bostra, was a beautiful city, with long straight avenues and spacious thoroughfares; but the Saracens built their miserable little shops and quaint, irregular houses along the sides of the streets. One sees the splendid Roman palace and gorgeous Greek temple and shapeless Arab dukkān side-by-side, alike in ruins. . . We extended our walk one day to the suburbs on the north and west, where there are remains of some large and splendid buildings. We then proceeded to the west gate, at the end of the main street. . . The open gate revealed heaps of rubbish, and piles of stones, and shattered walls. . . The desolation of the plain without was as complete as that of the city within. Never before had I seen such a picture of utter, terrible desolation, except at Palmyra; and even there it was not so remarkable. That city of the desert might rise and flourish for a season, while the tide of commerce was rolling past it, and while it stood a solitary oasis on the desert highway uniting the Eastern and Western worlds; but on the opening up of some other channel of communication, it might naturally decline and fall. Bozrah is altogether different. It was situated in the midst of a fertile plain, in the centre of a populous province. It had abundant resources, fountains of water, an impregnable fortress. Why should Bozrah become
desolate? who would have ventured to predict its ruin? It surely was no city to grow up in a day and fade in a night! It surely did not depend for prosperity on the changeable channel of commerce! Something above and beyond mere natural causes and influences must have operated here. We can only understand its strange history when we read it in the light of prophecy. Then we can see the impress of a mightier than human hand. We can see that the curse of an angry God for the sin of a rebellious people has fallen upon Bozrah, 'and upon all the cities of the land of Moab far and near' (Jer xlvii. 24)."

The same traveller, Mr. Porter, ascended to the top of the castle of Salcah, itself a deserted city, with some five hundred houses still standing, and most of them suitable for immediate occupation. He describes the view from the summit of the tower: "Wherever I turned my eyes, towns and villages were seen. Bozrah was there on its plain, twelve miles distant. The towers of Beth-gamul were faintly visible far away on the horizon. In the vale immediately to the south of Salcah are several deserted towns, whose names I could not ascertain. Three miles off, in the same direction, is a hill called Abd-el Maaz, with a large deserted town on its eastern side. To the south-east an ancient road runs straight across the plain as far as eye can see. About six miles along it, on the top of a hill, is the deserted town of Maleh. On the section of the plain between south and east I counted fourteen towns, all of them, so far as I could see with my telescope, habitable like Salcah, but entirely deserted! From this one spot I saw upwards of thirty deserted towns! Well might I exclaim with the prophet, as I sat on the ruins of this great fortress, and looked over that
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mournful scene of utter desolation, 'Moab is spoiled, and
gone out of her cities... Moab is confounded; for it is
broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon that
Moab is spoiled. And judgment is come upon the plain
country... upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul,
and upon Bethmeon, and upon Kerioth, and upon
Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far
and near' (Jer. xlviii. 15—24).

"No less than eleven of the old cities which I saw
from Salcah, lying between Bozrah and Beth-gamul,
were visited by Mr. Graham. Their ramparts, their
houses, their streets, their gates and doors, are nearly all
perfect; and yet they are 'desolate, without man.' This
enterprising and daring traveller also made a long journey
into the hitherto unexplored country east of the moun-
tains of Bashan. There he found ancient cities and
roads, and vast numbers of inscriptions in unknown
characters, but not a single inhabitant. The towns and
villages east of the mountain range are all, without
exception, deserted; the soil is uncultivated, and 'the
highways lie waste.' In the whole of those vast plains,
north and south, east and west, DESOLATION reigns supreme.
The cities, the highways, the vineyards, the fields are all
alike silent as the grave, except during the periodical
migrations of the Bedawîn, whose flocks, herds, and
people eat, trample down, and waste all before them.
The long predicted doom of Moab is now fulfilled: 'The
spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall
escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall
be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken. Give wings unto
Moab, that it may flee and get away; for the cities
thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.'...
But why should I transcribe more? Why should I con-
tinue to compare the predictions of the Bible with the state of the country? The harmony is complete. No traveller can possibly fail to see it, and no conscientious man can fail to acknowledge it. The best, the fullest, the most instructive commentary I ever saw on the forty-eighth chapter of Jeremiah was that inscribed by the finger of God on the panorama spread out around me as I stood on the battlements of the castle of Salcah."

But it is not only that the general appearance and condition of Moab so marvellously accord with Scripture that the words of the prophets might well have been the production of modern travellers, the ancient seers foretold matters of minute detail that strikingly confirm our faith in their inspiration. "O vine of Sibmah," apostrophises Jeremiah, "I will weep for thee . . . the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses; none shall tread with shouting" (xlvi. 32, 33). The prediction seems to imply, that while the natural fertility of the country should remain, and the vine should still bring forth its rich ripe clusters, there should be no real cultivation, and the vines should be robbed of their fruit. And such, indeed, are the facts. The Bedawîn roam over the fields, pasturing their flocks upon their grass and preventing all agricultural operations; grapes still grow in the old terraced vineyards, but the Bedawîn, "the spoiler," strip the trees and carry away their fruitage. Isaiah had said, "The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (xvii. 2). We can easily understand how flocks may lie down in pasture
lands; but in cities—this is unusual. Yet place by the side of the prophet’s words the traveller’s statement: “We observed in wandering through Hebrân, as we had done previously at Kerioth and other cities, that the large buildings—temples, palaces, churches, and mosques—are now universally used as folds for sheep and cattle. We saw hundreds of animals in the palaces of Kerioth, and the large buildings of Hebrân were so filled with their dung that we could scarcely walk through them.”

It is worthy of notice that the burden of Moab delivered by the messengers of Jehovah was not fulfilled immediately. Long subsequent to the days of Jeremiah the cities of Moab prospered; in Christian times they still flourished. Nevertheless the doom was accomplished. God can afford to wait. And still He waits to perform the comforting promise with which the oracle against Moab closes: “Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days” (Jer. xlviii. 47).

The Ammonites were of kindred race to the Moabites. They shared in deadly hatred to the children of Israel, and more than once united in an invasion of their territories. The sentence pronounced by the prophets upon Ammon closely resembles that pronounced upon Moab. Zephaniah (ii. 8, 9) joins them in one common doom, and so does Ezekiel (xxv. 8, 10, etc.) The chief city of the Ammonites was Rabbath Ammon, and the most striking predictions were delivered in connection with it. Its position on the frontier of the desert, “the last place where water could be obtained,” gave to it an importance which it retained to a comparatively late date. It was built on both sides of a stream which rose in the city itself,
and received many tributaries from the neighbouring hills. Thus Rabbath was emphatically "the city of waters." Its ruins indicate both strength and splendour, but nearly, if not quite, all of them are of Roman origin. "It was not," says Dr. Tristram, "old Rabbah, but Philadelphia, the Roman city, among whose prostrate marbles we groped our way. All is Græco-Roman, and all, probably, except the citadel, subsequent to the Christian era."

The pith of the prophecies against Ammon is thus expressed by Ezekiel (xxv. 4, 5): "Behold I give thee to the children of the East for a possession, and they shall set their encampments in thee. They shall eat thy fruit and they shall drink thy milk. And I will make Rabbah a dwelling-place of camels, and the children of Ammon a couching-place for flocks."

The witness of the performance of this oracle is only too abundant. Dr. Tristram gives a lengthy description of the remains of Rabbath, and adds, "Nowhere else had we seen the vestiges of public magnificence and wealth in such marked contrast with the relapse into savage desolation." Lord Lindsay declares, "Ammon was situated on both sides of the stream; the dreariness of its present aspect is quite indescribable. It looks like the abode of death; the valley stinks with dead camels; one of them was rotting in the stream; and though we saw none among the ruins, they were absolutely covered in every direction with their dung." And again: "Bones and skulls of camels were mouldering [in a ruined theatre] and in the vaulted galleries of this immense structure." Lord C. Hamilton informed Dr. Keith that while he was "traversing the ruins of the city, the number of goats and sheep which were driven in among them was exceedingly
annoying, however remarkable as fulfilling the prophecies."

Yet has prophecy its message of comfort even for Ammon, for "I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord" (Jer. xlix. 6).
EDOM.

EDOM was a more implacable foe of Israel than even Moab. The relationship of race between the two nations only served to increase the enmity. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. Isaac, in his blessing upon his eldest son, foretold the antagonism which would exist between the children of the two brothers: "By the sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." * The prophecy that the Edomites should live by the sword meant that they should be a warlike people, ever eager for battle. With this description their history exactly harmonizes.

The circular compartment of the picture illustrating this chapter represents the messengers from Moses entreat ing permission from "the King of Edom" to pass through his country, promising "we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's highway." The request was refused churlishly, and an armed force was drawn up to oppose the Israelites' passage.

* Gen. xxvii. 40: "When thou shalt have the dominion" is probably equivalent to "when thou shalt struggle," or "because thou art turbulent."
Moses therefore directed the journey by another route. The Israelites never forgot or forgave this manifestation of ill-will.

The conditions that Moses offered to observe show that the Kingdom of Edom had enjoyed lengthy and considerable prosperity before the children of Jacob had obtained possession of Canaan. There were enclosed fields and vineyards; there were public highways. The Edomites retained their independence till the time of David. That king defeated them with terrible slaughter, and annexed their dominions to his own, thus accomplishing one portion of Isaac's prophecy. As early as Solomon's reign they made a partially successful effort to shake off the yoke, the part of the country which lay to the east of Judæa obtaining a tributary king. After the rebellion of the Ten Tribes, Edom continued subject to Judah, until, in the reign of Jehoram, "the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day."* Jehoram was strong enough to inflict upon them a sharp punishment, but he could not force them to return to their allegiance. Amaziah endeavoured to re-conquer them. He defeated them in battle and stormed their capital. He signalized his victory by an act of great cruelty, slaughtering ten thousand prisoners by throwing them from the rocks. The country, however, retained its independence, and soon recovered and surpassed its former prosperity. The Edomites contrived to ingratiate themselves into the favour of Nebuchadnezzar, and thus escaped the fate which overtook Palestine and neighbouring kingdoms. During the captivity they encroached greatly upon the territory of Judah, and occupied even the city of Hebron. Upon the return of the Jews from exile, the Edomites

* 2 Chron. xxii. 10.
strove in every possible way to hinder the work of restoration. Some prophecies had been spoken against them before this period; others were uttered during it.

At the same time, or a little later, that the Edomites took possession of the southern portion of the land of Judah, the Nabathean Arabs obtained supremacy in Eastern Edom. It is not known how they accomplished this, by conquest, or by alliance, or by gradual encroachment. At any rate, Petra became the capital of a Nabathean kingdom, the Edomites proper being confined to the country south of Judæa.* Both states flourished, especially the Nabathean. Petra was ornamented with splendid temples and other buildings. Its wealth was won chiefly as the centre of large and profitable caravan-trade. None of the prophecies against Edom refer directly to the Nabathean kingdom. Many of them, probably most,† were uttered before it existed in that form and under that name. The later prophecies belong to the southern Edomites exclusively. Nevertheless the earlier prophets seem to refer to the future of the country as well as that of the people who inhabited it, and the later prophets seem to have had often in their mind the whole of Idumæa, and to employ the phrases and threats of their predecessors.

* I have followed the history as it is most commonly understood. It is, however, quite possible that Nebuchadnezzar sacked the Edomite capital and expelled its inhabitants, that the destruction foretold by the earlier prophets may have been his handywork. It is certain that Edom became subject to him. Perhaps it was he that placed the Nabatheans in Edom in the room of its former inhabitants. It is quite possible, too, that the chief encroachments of the Edomites upon the southern territory of Judah did not take place till the calamitous days of Antiochus Epiphanes. These details, however, do not interfere with the fulfilment of the prophecies.

† It is not certain whether Obadiah prophesied before or after the exil.
Of the predictions concerning Edom let us consider the following first: "Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance and there shall be holiness: and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it." The general sense of this prediction is clear. The Jews are to enjoy their land, while the Edomites are deprived of theirs. The Edomish kingdom is to be destroyed, and the Jews are to be the agents of the destruction. Recollect that this warning was given when Edom was fully as prosperous as Judah, when, indeed, symptoms of decay and death were manifest in the Hebrew state, and vigorous life beat amongst the Edomites. This prophecy received a striking accomplishment. Under the Mac-cabean princes the Jews recovered their freedom and much of their former power. One of the strongest of these rulers was John Hyrcanus. He invaded Idumsea proper, reduced its fortified cities, and so completely overcame its warlike people that he offered them the hard terms of acceptance of circumcision or expulsion from the country. They chose the former alternative, and, as Josephus says, "were henceforth no other than Jews." Their history ceases with the destruction of Jerusalem. Probably this interpretation does not exhaust the prophecy. Probably Edom stands typically for the enemies of God, and Jacob for His Church; but in the conquest of Edom by John Hyrcanus these prophecies found a remarkable and unquestionable fulfilment.

Other prophecies speak of the utter desolation of

* Obad. 17, 18; Ezek. xxv. 14.
Idumæa, that is of the country subsequently the seat of the Nabathean Kingdom: "Thy sword shall come down upon Idumæa . . . . from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." "I have made Esau bare . . . I have sworn by Myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes . . . Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation, every one that goeth by shall be astonished." "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, shall I not destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?" *

It will suffice to place by the side of these prophecies travellers' descriptions of the country to which they relate; comment will be superfluous. We may note, however, that the word translated rock is Selah, which was the Edomite name for their capital. The city was not known as Petra till a much later date. When the prophets wrote, and for long centuries afterwards, the country was not only commercially flourishing but fertile, covered with fields, plantations, and gardens. Barrenness was foretold for the land as well as destruction for the cities. We cannot now ascertain the precise manner in which the predictions were accomplished, but ample evidence exists of the grandeur and wealth of Petra and of the prosperity of the kingdom of which it was the

* Isa. xxxiv. 5, etc.; Jer. xlix. 7, etc.; Obad. 7, etc.
metropolis. Situated upon easily defensible mountains, its buildings constructed of massive stone, many of them cut out of the solid rock, it would seem that if any city could count upon its future, Petra might anticipate permanent prosperity. But as time went on, the diminishing population of the Roman Empire lessened the caravan traffic; then new methods and routes of trade caused it to cease. The artificial irrigation on which the fertility of the soil largely depended became too costly and laborious to be maintained. The inhabitants deserted the country, drought occasioned barrenness, and time and the destructiveness of the Arabs completed the desolation. The very existence of the once splendid and potent city was forgotten. For a protracted period it remained hidden and unvisited till it was re-discovered by Burckhardt in 1812. In this long concealment and silence the word of the Lord was fulfilled: "From generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." To this day Idumæa continues deserted, visited only by a few wandering Arabs and an unfrequent traveller.

Olin compares the present and past condition of Idumæa in these words: "We saw many ruined terraces, the evidences and remains of a flourishing agriculture, which, in the prosperous days of Edom and Petra, clothed many of these sterile mountains with fertility and beauty. . . . The splendid ruins and monuments of Petra, however, are alone sufficient to demonstrate the wealth and civilization of the kingdom of which it was the metropolis. Fields of wheat and some agricultural villages still exist in the eastern portion of Edom, but, with very slight exceptions, the country is blighted with cheerless desolation and hopeless sterility. The hill-sides and mountains,
once covered with earth and clothed with vineyards, are now bare rocks. The soil, no longer supported by terraces and sheltered by trees, has been swept away by the rains. The various contrivances for irrigation, which even now might restore fertility to many considerable tracts, have all disappeared. Sand from the desert, and the débris of the soft rock of which the mountains are composed, cover the valleys that formerly smiled with plenty. The rays of a burning sun have imparted to the whole region a dark and gloomy hue, which harmonizes well with the melancholy detail of its desolation."

A brief extract or two may be given from the testimonies of other witnesses: "On leaving Petra, we traversed a country of the most utter desolation, hills succeeding hills; without the slightest picturesque beauty, covered with loose flints, sand, and gravel; sterility in its most repulsive garb; it made the very heart ache and the spirits sink: such is Edom now, 'most desolate,' as prophecy foretold it would be" (Lord Lindsay). "The barren state of the country, together with the desolate condition of the city, without a single human being living near it seems strongly to verify the judgment denounced against it" (Captains Irby and Mangles). "Nothing can exceed the desolation of its present condition, although the ruins of its former wealth and power are so durable as to have remained for many centuries after it was deserted; and they look as if as many more may pass over them without working any visible change" (Lord Claud Hamilton). "I would that the sceptic could stand, as I did, among the ruins of this city among the rocks, and there open the Sacred Book and read the words of the inspired penman, written when this desolate place was one of the greatest cities in the world. I see the scoffer arrested, his cheek
pale, his lip quivering, and his heart quaking with fear, as the ruined city cries out to him in a voice loud and powerful as that of one risen from the dead; though he would not believe Moses and the prophets, he believes the handwriting of God Himself in the desolation and eternal ruin around him” (Stephens).

No evidence can be stronger or more cogent than that of Harriet Martineau, whose disbelief in the Scriptural prophecies makes her statements the more forcible. She says, “We stopped in a hollow of the hills to rest. It was strange to remember what an extraordinary depot this was for the merchandise of the East for a course of centuries. By this pass came long trains of camels laden with silks, muslins, spices, and ivory of India, and the pearls of Arabia, and amber, gold, and apes from Abyssinia, and all the fine things that the treasury of Europe derived from the East. These all came through Petra, and were lodged there for rest, and for no little traffic, as in a place wholly inaccessible by every foe. The eagle might pounce upon the kid among the areas of Petra, and the lightning might dash down from the summits, but no human enemy could enter to steal, or arrow from human hand to destroy.” “It was immediately clear to me that little is remaining also of the rock-abodes, in comparison with what once existed. I think that travellers have not only much underrated the number of rock-dwellers, but failed to perceive that what remains are the mere débris of what the precipices once presented to view. An observant eye may detect remnants of stucco ornaments very high up many rocks, and in great numbers. Again, many of the excavations are so difficult to reach, and some are such mere walls or surfaces that it appears as if the whole front of the rock,
to a considerable depth, had fallen. . . . Again, the conduits, cisterns, and flights of steps scattered over the rocks and among the precipices, indicate a larger number of rock-dwellings than remain now, very great as that number is. . . . What different people must have been met there from the few we saw to-day! Instead of Eastern merchants and Roman soldiers, and a Greek traveller or two, I saw to-day a group of goats and their herdsmen, eating into the deepest shadow from a reach of sunshine; and a child standing with two kids on a point of rock above my head; and a wild troop of shaggy Arabs, clattering their arms as I passed; and here and there a solitary piper, with his matchlock, brown tunic, and white teeth, perched on a pinnacle, or striding over a distant slope."

One of the predictions tells that wisdom shall perish from Teman (a synonym for Idumæa). Many indications survive that the Edmonites were at one time among the most learned nations of the earth. Now the handful of Arabs who occasionally traverse the waste or encamp among the ruins display far less than the average intelligence of men. Even to clear the cisterns of the rubbish that chokes them and thus obtain the benefit of sorely needed streams of water is beyond their ability and thought. Laborde, who carefully surveyed the whole region and took pictures of its most striking portions, repeatedly expresses his astonishment at the genius of the men who produced works so marvellous even in their ruins. He declares, "The Arab passes through the scene with perfect indifference, scarcely deigning to look at works executed with so much ability or to meditate, except with contempt, on an object which he in vain seeks to comprehend."
Among the tokens of the desolation which should overtake Edom, Isaiah dwells upon the number and variety of the wild birds and beasts which would haunt the ruins and the wild vegetation which would overrun it. He predicts, "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it. . . . And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island; and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate" (xxxiv. 11—15).

It is perhaps not possible to ascertain exactly what beasts and birds are signified by the Hebrew words the prophets used. But we have abundant proof that the deserted cities of Idumæa, especially Petra, are favourite resorts of wild animals and fowl. Nearly all travellers mention the screaming of birds both by day and by night. The Arabs state that noxious beasts frequently roam there. "Dragons" doubtless means serpents. The Arabs fear to use the ruined towns of Idumæa to stable their cattle because of "the enormous scorpions with which they swarm." "So plentiful," says another traveller, "are the scorpions in Petra that though it was cold and snowy, we found them under the stones, sometimes two under one stone; and I have no doubt that there are vast numbers of them in the summer time as well as serpents, which the natives say there are." The same gentleman adds, "The common English black-
thorn and bramble are very numerous in Petra; and a plant more prickly than either, and also regular old stinging nettles.” Lord Claud Hamilton examined the interior of the solitary building in Petra that exists in anything like preservation—a palace. He writes, “The wooden joists still remain in the walls, apparently strong and sound. The ground is strewed with fragments of the roof, hewn stone, and portions of the cornice, amongst which numbers of thistles, prickly plants, and nettles grow . . . . Thus there were nettles in the only palace that the proud city of Petra contains erect.” “Thorns come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof.”

Whether then we refer the prophecies to the land of Edom or to the inhabitants thereof, they have all been fulfilled. Spoken when the kingdom or kingdoms were in great prosperity, their accomplishment was long delayed. Nay, succeeding years seemed to put the performance of the predictions at vaster and vaster distances. The splendour of the Nabathean erections seemed to falsify the prophetic utterances; nevertheless therefrom the word of Jehovah received one of its most remarkable accomplishments. The prophets announced that buildings should be destroyed which were not even in contemplation when the doom was proclaimed. “Though thou make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down;” the “nest” was not made when the threat was uttered. “They shall build, but I will throw down;” the various styles of architecture revealed in the ruins of Petra and its sister cities, showing that erection has followed and enlarged erection, form a suggestive and easily read commentary upon the text.
PHILISTIA.

During the period of the later judges and the earlier kings, the Philistines were the most troublesome and dreaded enemies of Israel. The upper compartment of the engraving attached to this chapter represents their most striking triumph, when, after the utter overthrow of the Hebrew army, the Ark itself was carried to the temple of Dagon.

The Philistines were an enterprising and powerful people, especially remarkable for their warlike qualities, but by no means destitute of the arts that produce prosperity in times of peace. Sorely smitten, even subdued by David, they recovered their independence and wealth. The arms of Egypt and Persia effected transient or more permanent conquests, but the country does not seem to have suffered very severely. Gaza stoutly defended itself against Alexander the Great and the troops which had taken Tyre. It was not until the Saracens overran the land that its desolation can be said to have fairly began. And even after this conquest Ashkelon offered a prolonged resistance to the Crusaders, holding out till it was the last city to submit to them. The soil of Philistia was so richly fertile that it appeared well-nigh impossible that it should cease to support a flourishing population.
'Travellers with one accord testify that the natural fertility of the soil remains, but the inhabitants are few and the cities are wasted.

The principal prophecies against Philistia relate to the general desolation of the land or to particular cities. Both sets of predictions have been accomplished to the letter. Zephaniah * declared, "Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the Lord is against you: O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks." Side by side with this utterance of doom may well be placed the statement of the infidel Volney, whose last thought it was to confirm the truth of Holy Writ: "In the plain between Ramleh and Gaza we met with a number of villages, badly built of dry mud, which, like the inhabitants, exhibit every mark of poverty and wretchedness. The houses, on a nearer view, are only so many huts, sometimes detached, at others ranged in the form of cells around a courtyard, enclosed by a mud wall. In winter they [the inhabitants] and the cattle may be said to live together, the part of the dwelling allotted to themselves being only raised two feet above that in which they lodged their beasts. Except the environs of these villages, all the rest of the country is a desert, and abandoned to the Bedouin Arabs, who feed their flocks on it." This description needs no comment, except perhaps to remind the reader that the plain between Ramleh and Gaza is washed by the sea. The full measure of desolation has not yet been reached. The sea is receding from the land; the fine dry sand thus left is rapidly drifting over

* Zeph. ii. 5, 6.
field and orchard, and the entire coast promises soon to become a mass of barren shifting heaps.

The chief cities of Philistia when the prophets foretold its doom were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron. Zephaniah pronounces sentence against each city in a single verse: * "Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation; they shall drive out Ashdod at the noonday, and Ekron shall be rooted up." Other prophecies concerning these towns will be found in the following passages: Jer. xlvii. 4—7; Amos i. 6—8; Zeph. ii. 4—7; Zech. ix. 5—8.

"Gaza shall be forsaken. Baldness is come upon Gaza. I will send a fire on the walls of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof. The king shall perish from Gaza." There is some difficulty in tracing the accomplishment of these threatenings, as the most trustworthy authorities do not agree whether or no the present town of Gaza stands upon the site of the original city. Dr. Keith and Dr. Kitto accept a tradition which is not without considerable historical confirmation, that the ancient site has been deserted and another town built in its neighbourhood. The former sees in the peculiar barren appearance of the hill on which he believes the old city stood a striking illustration of the words, "Baldness is come upon Gaza." Dr. Thomson thinks the present Gaza is situated upon the ruins of the original town. Certainly the king has perished from Gaza, and the palaces and buildings of marble which ornamented the city have been destroyed. For a long time Gaza existed as a miserable cluster of villages. Alexander the Great and other conquerors devastated it. Its ruins afford ample evidence of the destruction which has come

* Zeph. ii. 4.
upon it. Now, though it contains fifteen thousand inhabitants, it is perfectly defenceless, and the bulk of its people are in squalor and poverty. Possibly the prophecies referred only to the city then standing, when they were delivered. But the doom of Gaza has a much milder sound than those that were threatened to its sister towns; and we may see in its past and present existence and condition a suggestive accordance with its more lenient sentence, especially if the contrast afforded by Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron is borne in mind.

"Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself? O thou sword of the Lord, how long wilt it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself in thy scabbard, rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing that the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the seashore? there hath He appointed it; in Ashkelon shall be a desolation." Volney witnesses, "The sea, by which it was formerly washed, is every day removing farther from the deserted ruins of Ashkelon." Dr. Thomson describes the ruins of Ashkelon, and contrasts the splendour these remains testify to have once existed. He adds, "The walls must have been blown to pieces by powder, for not even earthquakes could toss these gigantic masses of masonry into such extraordinary attitudes. No site in this country has so deeply impressed my mind with sadness. O man, savage, ferocious, brutal, what desolations thou hast wrought in the earth! They have stretched out upon Ashkelon the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. Thorns have come up in her palaces, and brambles in the fortresses thereof, and it is a habitation of dragons, and a court for owls."*

* Isa. xxxiv. 10, 11.
sword, Dr. Keith says, "In the twelfth century, or about two thousand years after this prophecy of Amos, the seashore of Philistia was the scene of some of the fiercest battles of the Crusaders. There Saladin and his armies were alternately the conquerors and the conquered. There, near to Ashkelon, the Franks defeated the Moslems with a terrible slaughter, and 'pursuing their vanquished foes,' says the chief historian of these wars, 'for twelve miles there did not cease to be a continual slaughter of the enemy.' There, too, the last battles of the Crusades were fought on the sea-coast where the Lord had appointed the sword. In the words of Gibbon, 'After the surrender of Acre, and the departure of Philip (King of France), the King of England led the Crusaders to the recovery of the sea-coast,—a march of one hundred miles; from Acre to Ascalon was a great and perpetual battle of eleven days.' There the sword is not yet put up in its scabbard. From the ruins of Ashkelon the writer saw seven thousand Bedouins—sons of Ishmael, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them—as they were returning from a battle fought with a hostile tribe on the sea-coast of Philistia."

Of Ekron and Ashdod Mr. Porter writes, "Akês is a wretched village, containing some forty or fifty mud hovels, its narrow lanes encumbered with heaps of rubbish and filth. It stands on a bare slope, and the ground immediately around it has a dreary and desolate look, heightened by a few stunted trees scattered here and there round the houses. Yet this is all that marks the site and bears the name of the royal city of Ekron. There is not a solitary vestige of royalty there now. With feelings which it would be difficult to describe, we took out our Bibles, and read the doom pronounced
upon it by the Hebrew prophet, while it yet stood in all
the pride of its strength and beauty: 'Ekron shall be
rooted up.'"

"The plain sweeps the northern base of the low
rounded hill on which once stood the royal city of
Ashdod. The temples, palaces, and houses are all gone.
The dust of centuries has covered them. Terraced orchards
of figs and olives, apricots and pomegranates, now occupy
their places, clothing the hill-side from base to summit.
The modern village of Esdúd, a confused group of mud
hovels, lies embowered on the eastern slope. It bears an
ancient name, but we might truly change it to Ichabod,
for its glory is departed. . . . The village is wretched in
the extreme. Groups of hungry-looking men and squalid
women lounged lazily in the dirty lanes and on the
dusty roofs, gazing listlessly on the strangers, and scarcely
able to muster energy enough to curse the infidel Frank.
As we looked on them and their miserable dwellings, the
words of Zechariah flashed upon our memory—'A bastard
shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the
Philistines.' We climbed to the top of the hill. . . . Along
the southern declivity old building stones, with fragments
of columns and sculptured capitals, are piled up in the
fences of little fields, and in the walls of goat and sheep
pens, showing how time and God's unchangeableness
have converted prophecy into history: 'And the sea-coast
shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds
for flocks.' How sad and yet how glorious is the view
from the top of that hill, beneath which the dust of a
mighty city lies dishonoured! On the one side, the
noble plain, stretching away to the foot of Judah's
mountains, here and there cultivated, but mostly
neglected and desolate, yet all naturally rich as in the
palmiest days of Philistia's power. On the other side a dreary, hopeless waste of drifting sand, washed away yonder by the waves of the Mediterranean, and here, at our feet, advancing with slow and silent, but resistless step, covering, and to cover, flower and tree, ancient ruin and modern hut, in one common tomb."

The words of Richardson, the celebrated traveller, form a fitting appendage to these testimonies. He states:—"Ashkelon was one of the proudest satrapies of the lords of the Philistines: now there is not an inhabitant within its walls; and the prophecy of Zechariah is fulfilled: 'The king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.' When the prophecy was uttered, both cities were in an equally flourishing condition; and nothing but the prescience of Heaven could pronounce on which of the two, and in what manner, the vial of its wrath should be poured out. Gaza is truly without a king. The lofty towers of Ashkelon lie scattered on the ground, and the ruins within its walls do not shelter a human being. How is the wrath of man made to praise his Creator! 'Hath He not said, and shall He not do it?' The oracle was delivered by the mouth of the prophet more than five hundred years before the Christian era, and we behold its accomplishment eighteen hundred years after that event."

It is impossible not to connect the present condition of the modern representatives of these Philistine cities with the doom foretold by the prophetic word. But if, as is clearly the more probable, the modern towns simply bear the name of the ancient ones, but do not stand upon their sites, as is the case with Gaza, and Ashkelon and Ashdod are only the forts of former inland cities, we must look to an earlier period for the performance of the predic-
tions, except so far as the complete destruction of the original town fulfils them. Nor is indisputable historic evidence wanting. In the Maccabæan wars Philistia suffered severely. Judas Maccabæus “spoiled their cities;” Jonathan burnt Ashdod and the suburbs of Gaza. Alexander Janneus razed Gaza to the ground. The entire territory submitted to the Maccabæan conquerors, thus fulfilling the prophecy, “And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah” [or, “it shall be a portion for the remnant of the house of Judah”].* When the prediction was uttered, Judah had not gone into captivity. They must be led to Babylon, and a portion of them return, and that portion grow strong enough to overcome the Philistines before the word could be accomplished. Who but God and His servants the prophets, to whom He revealed it, could have foreseen this succession of events?

* Zeph. ii. 7.
NINEVEH.

In the earliest account of the settlement of the earth by its various peoples after the Deluge, we meet with the name of Nineveh. After recording the exploits of Nimrod, the “mighty hunter before the Lord,” the sacred writer goes on to say, “Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city of Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city” (Gen. x. 11, 12). These verses have given rise to considerable controversy, as to both the person referred to and the cities he built. “That land” is “the land of Shinar,” and we may with some confidence identify it with Mesopotamia, or the southern portion of it. Asshur was a son of Shem (v. 22), and he may have been driven from his possessions by Nimrod, and then become the founder of Nineveh. So the translators of the English Bible understood Moses’ statement. But it may also be rendered, “Out of that land he” (Nimrod) “went forth into Asshur,” etc.—i.e., invaded Assyria, and founded cities therein. This interpretation accords better with Assyrian traditions than the other. Many expositors translate the last clause of the twelfth verse, “this is the great city,” and suppose that it means
that the four cities, Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen, formed together the great city of Nineveh, just as with us Marylebone, Southwark, Westminster, etc., are comprised under the one name of London. Others regard the four places mentioned as separate towns, and think they can trace their probable sites. These very doubts remarkably fulfil prophecy, as we shall see shortly.

However and by whomsoever founded, there is no doubt that Nineveh grew to be "a great city," with a very large population. In the Book of Jonah its extent is described as "of three days' journey," and it is said to have "six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand." One hundred and twenty thousand young children implies a population of at least six hundred thousand. Ancient heathen historians assert that Nineveh was larger than Babylon. They say, moreover, that it was built in the form of a quadrangle; the two longer sides measuring about twenty miles, and the two shorter about twelve miles each. This measurement would make its circuit about sixty-four miles, a sufficiently near approach to the sixty miles represented by Jonah's three days' journey. Mr. Layard's estimate of the size of the city is precisely that of Jonah's. He gives for the longer sides of the square eighteen miles, and for the shorter twelve miles each, precisely sixty miles in all.

The extent of Nineveh is by no means the only evidence of its importance. It was the capital of the mighty Assyrian empire, one of the five great monarchies of the ancient world. The excavations of Mr. Layard and others have furnished abundant evidence of its glory and grandeur. Vast palaces and temples have been discovered, guarded by huge stone bulls, winged and human-headed.
Innumerable inscriptions and bas-reliefs on pillar and tablet, and brick, and stone and wall, tell of the victorious marches of the Assyrian armies, of the battles they won, the towns they took, and the prisoners they captured. We see long lines of slaves bearing tribute from distant provinces, and kings and princes supplicating the mercy of the mighty monarch of Nineveh. The sculptures represent the agriculture, the commerce, the manufactures, and the amusements of the people; and show the pomp and state of the court. Tradition and history and remains combine to testify of the wealth and magnificence and power of the city and of the empire of which it was the capital.

While Nineveh was at the very summit of its prosperity, while it was well-nigh undisputed mistress of the known world, while the terrible conqueror, Sennacherib, and the scarcely less savage and skilful Shalmaneser were its lords, an obscure Hebrew, Nahum, of the little village of El Kosh, spoke the word of the Lord against it, and predicted its utter downfall and the manner of the overthrow. He describes the marshal array of its soldiery, their uniform of "scarlet," reminding us of the red coats of the British infantry, the "fire of steel" that flashed from the scythes with which the axles of their war chariots were armed, the mustering of its hosts, and the thundering tramp of its valiant men (ii. 3—5).* He ventures to make use of one of its most recent and striking displays of might to foreshadow its doom. He asks, "Art thou better than the populous No, that was situate among the rivers, whose rampart was the sea . . . ? Egypt and Ethiopia were her strength, and it was boundless . . . . Yet was she carried away, she

* "Flaming torches"—the best authorities translate "fire of steel."
went into captivity,” etc. It was Assyria herself, under Asshur-bani-pal, that had crushed Thebes and deported her people as prisoners of war, thereby fulfilling a prophecy by Isaiah (xx. 3, 4). Thou art not stronger than Egypt, proclaims the prophet, except as thou art wielded by His hand. He who raised up thee against Egypt can find instruments to cast down even thee. All her strength shall be in vain; the doom of the city has been pronounced, for Assyria is the enemy of the God of Israel. “Why do ye imagine mischief against the Lord?” inquires the prophet; and he declares Jehovah “will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time” (i. 9).

It is quite possible that these words refer to the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, and the awful judgement that should overwhelm it—a judgement so fearful that Assyria never again attacked Jerusalem after the flower of its troops had become “dead corpses” at the breath of the destroying angel. Wonderfully significant is the silence of the cylinders Mr. Layard and M. Botta have brought to light. For sixteen years they boast of the victories of Sennacherib, and they tell even that he shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage; but for eight years there is no record of successful campaigns; the power of the haughty warrior had “melted like snow at the glance of the Lord.”

But such predictions as the following can only relate to the final overthrow of the city: “With an overrunning flood He will make an end of the place thereof. . . . While they be folded together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry. . . . And the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name
Nineveh, Past and Present.
be sown. I will make thy grave;* for thou art vile. The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved. Take ye the spoil of silver; take the spoil of gold. She is empty, and void, and waste. There shall the fire devour thee. Thy crowned are as the locusts; when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they were” (i. 8, 10, 14; ii. 6, 9, 10 iii. 15, 17).

In the prophecies just quoted, three points are worthy of special notice,—the suddenness of the overthrow of the empire, the mode of the fall of the city, and its complete desolation. Side by side with the predictions, let us place the witness of ancient historians and more modern travellers.

When Nahum spoke, there was no earthly power of which Assyria had the slightest reason to be afraid. The prophet does not hint that the destruction should be the work of any one nation, of some great rival and successor. The fall of an empire generally takes place after long and wasting war, after a more or less protracted struggle for pre-eminence. At least there are some visible signs of decay. But the blow fell upon Assyria when she was at the height of her power. The most skilful of modern investigators confess themselves puzzled to account for its sudden destruction. For the empire of Assyria was no mushroom-growth; it had gained the mastery of the world by centuries of conquest and consolidation. To the last its soldiers

* Probably this sentence should be rendered, “I will make it thy grave” —i.e., I will make the house of thy gods thy grave. Thus there is a striking reference to the doom of Sennacherib, who was slain by his sons while he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god (2 Kings xix. 35—37).
retained their bravery and prowess. The unexpected revolt of a trusted general, who was in command at Babylon, was the first cause of the overthrow. He allied himself with the Medes, then tributary to Assyria. The rebels marched suddenly upon Nineveh, and laid siege to it, and in an incredibly short space it fell into their hands. Nothing but Divine foreknowledge, certainly not the political sagacity of the Hebrew villager, could have foreseen such a conjunction, the result not of deeply-laid plot, but of immediate impulse. The mighty empire vanished as rapidly and silently as a fierce flight of locusts before the wind of God.

Herodotus asserts the fact of the capture by the Medes and Babylonians, promising further details in a work which he never wrote. The fullest account, however, comes from the pen of Diodorus Siculus; it is brief, but pertinent and decisive. The Assyrian monarch had gained considerable successes against his rebellious subjects, and the coalition of Medes and Babylonians was about to be dissolved. He does not seem to have been alarmed from the first. Nineveh was well provisioned, and its fortifications were, against the military engines of the time, absolutely impregnable. Loyal armies were mustering in distant parts of his dominions. He could afford to wait for their arrival. He gave himself up to feasting, and his example was followed by his troops. Drunkenness spread throughout the troops. The sentries forsook their posts to join in the general jollity. Meanwhile a welcome reinforcement had reached the Median camp. Deserters carried intelligence of the debauchery and carelessness to Arbaces, the rebel general. He resolved to take advantage of it to assault the city. Probably he would not have succeeded but for another predicted
occurrence. *Continual heavy rains had swollen the river Tigris; it overflowed its banks,* and broke down part of the battlements that defended the city. Through this providential breach the Median soldiers pressed; and Nineveh was in their hands. Drunkenness and flood had fulfilled the word of the Lord; now fire performed its allotted task. An oracle had said that the city should be impregnable till the river became its enemy. When the Assyrian king heard of the flood and the attack, he remembered the oracle, and believed that all was lost. Thereupon he "*built a large funeral pile in the palace, and collecting together all his wealth, and his concubines and eunuchs, burnt himself.*" Such is the testimony of Diodorus, who knew nothing of Nahum's prophecy. The excavations confirm the historian's statement; for, writes Mr. Layard, "The palace had been destroyed by fire. The alabaster slabs were almost reduced to lime, and many of them fell to pieces as soon as uncovered. The places which others had occupied could only be traced by a thin white deposit left by the burnt alabaster upon the wall of sun-dried bricks." The fire must have spread widely, for its traces were repeatedly found in mounds distant from each other. Of another palace, Mr. Layard says, "The whole entrance was buried in charcoal, and the fire which destroyed the building appears to have raged in this part with extraordinary fury." In the ruins he found melted lead. And M. Botta, at one time sceptical as to the evidence of the work of fire, admits of yet another palace, "I must acknowledge that I can no longer doubt that this monument was destroyed by fire."

Diodorus also states that the sack of Nineveh greatly enriched the conquerors, and that vast store of treasures
was conveyed to Ecbatana. The sculptures, too, prove that the city possessed enormous riches.

Before adducing specimens of the evidence—embarrassing by its quantity—that shows how perfectly the predictions concerning the complete desolation of Nineveh have been accomplished, let us read the utterances thereupon of the prince-prophet Zephaniah; we adopt the spirited version of Mr. Cox:—

"And He will stretch His hand over the north,  
And destroy Assyria;  
He will also make Nineveh a barren waste,  
An arid waste, like the desert;  
And herds shall lie down in the midst of her,  
Wild beasts of every kind in droves;  
Pelicans and hedgehogs lodge on their capitals;  
Birds sing from the windows;  
Rubbish-heaps lie on the thresholds,  
For the cedar-work is laid bare.  
This is the city, the exulting city, the impregnable city,  
Which said in her heart,  
‘I, and no other.’  
How is she become a desolation,  
A lair of wild beasts!  
Every one that passeth by her shall hiss,  
And swing his hand" (ii. 13—15).

See now how thoroughly the threatenings of Nahum and Zephaniah were performed. The earliest witness is the prophet Ezekiel; and his testimony is none the less striking because he too was a prophet. So well known was the destruction of the imperial city, that he could refer to it as a thing of the past (xxx.i.) The apocryphal Book of Tobit also mentions it incidentally. Two centuries after the destruction, Xenophon marched, during the famous retreat of the Ten Thousand, over
its site, noticed the ruins, but knew not of what place they were the remains. Lucian, who lived in the second century of our era, affirms: "Nineveh hath so perished, that no vestige of it remains at this time, nor can it be easily ascertained where once it stood." Gibbon, describing the decisive battle between Heraclius and Chosroes, which was fought A.D. 627, says, "Eastward of the Tigris, at the end of the bridge of Mosul, the great Nineveh had formerly been erected; the city, and even the ruins of the city, had long since disappeared; the vacant space afforded a spacious field for the operations of the two armies." So completely had the fame of Nineveh perished, that men doubted whether it had stood on the Euphrates or the Tigris. The learned Niebuhr could pass by the mounds which have so recently revealed their secrets, and mistake them for hills cast up by the hand of nature. Well might the infidel Volney declare, "The name of Nineveh seems to be threatened with the same oblivion which has overtaken its greatness." Sir Arthur Shirley, an Englishman who visited Assyria about the end of the fourteenth century, records, "Nineveh hath not one stone standing to give memory of the being of a town. One English mile from it is a place called Mosul, a small thing, rather like a witness of the other's mightiness and God's judgement, than of any fashion of magnificence in itself."

Out of the many witnesses ready with similar testimony, we select one with strong claims to be heard, who has connected himself inseparably with the rediscovery of Nineveh, Mr. — now Sir Henry — Layard:—

"It is, indeed, one of the most remarkable facts in
history that the records of an empire so renowned for its power and civilization should have been entirely lost; and that the site of a city as eminent for its splendour as its extent should for ages have been matter of doubt."

He describes one of the mounds as "a vast, shapeless mass, then covered with grass, and showing scarcely any traces of the work of man, except where the winter rains had formed ravines down its almost perpendicular sides, and had laid open the remains of ancient walls. A few fragments of pottery and inscribed bricks, discovered after a careful search amongst the rubbish which had accumulated round the base of the great mound, served to prove that it owed its construction to the people who had founded the city of which the mounds of Nimroud are the remains." Of another mound he thus speaks: "The spring rains had clothed the mound with the richest verdure, and the fertile meadows, which stretched around it, were covered with flowers of every hue. Amidst this luxuriant vegetation were partly concealed a few fragments . . . Did not these remains mark the nature of the ruin, it might have been confounded with a natural eminence." And he says of the traveller contemplating the site of the ancient city: "He is at a loss to give any form to the rude heaps upon which he is gazing. Those of whose works they are the remains, unlike the Roman and the Greek, have left no visible traces of their civilization or of their arts; their influence has long since passed away. The more he conjectures, the more vague the results appear. The scene around is worthy of the ruin he is contemplating; desolation meets desolation: a feeling of awe succeeds to wonder; for there is nothing
to relieve the mind, to lead to hope, or to tell of what has gone by."

Do the prophecies concerning the ruin of Nineveh need a more suggestive commentary?

But the marvel of them grows greater when we remember that when Nahum lived the complete destruction of such a city as Nineveh was altogether unknown. Conquerors rarely razed cities to the ground; their policy was to transplant people of one city to others, and so to add the captured towns to the strength and glory of their empires. Moreover, the situation of Nineveh marks it out as peculiarly suitable for a great city. Nowadays men wonder that an emporium of trade does not rise in the neighbourhood of its ruins. But God declared He would "make the place" [the site] "thereof an utter consumption;" and the word He has fulfilled to the very letter.
BABYLON.

ANCIENT authorities are agreed that Babylon was the largest city of the whole world except Nineveh. But their measurements differ from each other considerably. Herodotus says that Babylon was built in the form of a square, each side being one hundred and twenty stadia, nearly fourteen miles, long. It was surrounded by a wall two hundred royal cubits high and fifty royal cubits wide. Diodorus reduces the length of each wall by thirty stadia, the height to fifty cubits, and states that the breadth allowed two chariots to pass on the top. The larger measurement would make the total length of the wall about fifty-six miles, its height rather more than three hundred and seventy-three feet, and its width rather more than ninety-three feet. The smaller measurement would be as follows:—length, about forty-two miles; height, a little less than ninety feet; and thickness, some thirty-two feet. The space enclosed would be one hundred and seventy, or one hundred and six square miles. In either case, no modern city could compare with it in size except London, which would be one-third smaller or one-eighth larger, according to the figures we adopt.

The whole of the area was not occupied by buildings.
A great portion of it was cultivated, so that it might stand a longer siege. And Babylon was strongly fortified. At an uncertain distance from the exterior wall ran another scarcely less formidable. Then a wall surrounded each palace or temple, with their gardens, court-yards, officers' dwellings, etc. The river Euphrates ran through Babylon, and canals crossed the city in various directions.

The origin of Babylon is lost in obscurity. The date of its foundation cannot well be later than the sixteenth century before Christ. For a long period it obeyed the Assyrian monarchs. The fall of Nineveh opened the way for the domination of Babylon. No town could be better situated for commerce than it was. The navigable river Euphrates brought to her the productions of Armenia, enabled her to carry the articles of her trade to a point scarcely a hundred miles from the Mediterranean coast, and to communicate with the Indian Ocean. Parallel to the Euphrates ran the Tigris, giving fresh outlets to Babylonian enterprise, and fresh sources whence to draw its imports. A system of canals connected the two mighty rivers. A considerable coasting trade was carried on along the shores of the Persian Gulf as far as India. And good highways radiated from Babylon in all directions. Babylon became the emporium of the known world's commerce. Precious stones, silk, frankincense, ivory, cotton, spices, corn, were among her imports and exports. And her manufactories supplied carpets and woollen fabrics, and silks of the choicest quality and most tasteful designs. A hundred brazen gates afforded inlet and outlet to her vast commerce, and protection against her foes.

Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon reached the summit
of its prosperity. It was the undisputed mistress of the earth, so far as the globe was known to its inhabitants. It would be scarcely possible to overrate the magnificence of its buildings. The Temple of Belus is said to have been "half a mile in circumference, and a furlong in height." Its hanging gardens were the wonder of the world. Sir H. Layard has disinterred abundant evidence of the wealth and luxury of its inhabitants, the might of its monarchs, the splendour of its architecture, and the extent of its trade. It might well be called by the prophets "great Babylon," "the golden city," "the lady of kingdoms," "abundant in treasures," "the praise of the whole earth."

The prophecies concerning Babylon relate to the capture of the city, and to its subsequent condition. They are numerous and lengthy. We can allude only to the most remarkable: "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates" (Isa. xlvi. 1): "Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media" (Isa. xxi. 2): "The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts musteth the host of the battle. . . . Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it" (Isa. xiii. 4, 17): "The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight; they have remained in their holds; their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwelling-places; her bars are broken. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his
Babylon. Past and Present.
city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. . . . In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord. . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts: The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire” (Jer. li. 30—32, 39, 58): “For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country; and they shall set themselves in array against her; . . . none shall return in vain. . . . Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the Lord. Shout against her round about. . . . I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware. . . . Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the Lord. . . . A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up. . . . They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not show mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon” (Jer. 1. 9, 14, 15, 24, 30, 38, 42): “These two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood; they shall come upon thee in their perfection” (Isa. xlvii. 9).

Every one of these prophecies was fulfilled; “every purpose of the Lord” was “performed against Babylon.” Both the leader and the people were foretold who should be the agents of destruction. And Babylon was be-
siegéd and captured by Cyrus, at the head of the Medes and Persians. Previously he had subdued other kingdoms and incorporated their armies with his own, so that many nations were raised up by the Lord of hosts against Babylon. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah speak of horsemen and of those that hold the bow and the lance. The army of Cyrus consisted almost entirely of cavalry, archers, and javelin-men. How was such an army to take a strongly-fortified city? Evidently there was but one method; they must surround Babylon and endeavour to starve it out. Accordingly they dug a trench completely round the city, built towers at suitable distances, and maintained a close blockade. Cyrus was apprehensive lest the Babylonians should make sallies and inflict great loss upon his heterogeneous assemblage of troops. He therefore marshalled his forces in a peculiar fashion, evincing considerable skill in their disposition; he set them in array against Babylon. The renown of the Babylonian soldiers caused him to organize these precautions. But he need not have taken them. The beleaguered troops made no effort to free themselves, their courage failed them, and they trusted to the strength of their walls. Their mighty men forbore to fight. And even when, according to the custom of the times, Cyrus challenged the king to personal combat, he could obtain no answer.

To reduce by famine a city with enormous stores of provision and vast spaces of fields and gardens seemed well-nigh a hopeless task. When the siege had lasted two years, Cyrus grew impatient, and he sought for some more expeditious method of obtaining possession of Babylon. His eye fell upon the broad Euphrates, which ran right through the town. One of his staff
suggested that the course of the river might be changed, and its dry bed would form a highway for his army. The Persian monarch resolved to make the attempt. The labour involved was stupendous, and it was necessary so to carry it on that the Babylonians might not suspect the design. At length the preparations were finished. One division of the army was stationed at the point where the Euphrates entered the city, another where it emerged, while Cyrus himself superintended the final operations by which the river was turned into the trench which he had dug round the city. As soon as the water had begun to flow into its new channel, he hastened to put himself at the head of the troops detailed for the assault. In a short time the bed of the river was reported dry. Thus did God dry up her sea and send a drought upon the waters of Babylon.

Along the channel thus laid bare marched the Median and Persian soldiery. Then was witnessed the extraordinary military manœuvre of cavalry advancing to assault a walled town; and thus was fulfilled another prophecy. The enterprise was attended with considerable hazard. Had the Babylonian sentries observed the position of their enemies, they might have secured their city by shutting the river gates and have annihilated the Persian force by raining down missiles upon them from their lofty walls, while the invaders would scarcely have been able to strike a blow in their own defence. But the thing was from the Lord. He had foreseen the danger and had foretold how it should be escaped. The night of the Persian assault synchronized with the great annual idolatrous festival. Heathen historians inform us that drunkenness had overpowered the whole army, so that the guards left the walls unprotected and joined
in the general riot and shouting. Cyrus commanded his
troops to shout like men exhilarated with wine, so the
noise of their marching was hidden, and they had slain
the Babylonian sentinels almost before they were aware
they were attacked. Thus the enemies of Babylon
shouted against her round about, and the drunken slept
"a perpetual sleep."

The soldiers of Cyrus penetrated the city at opposite
quarters. Messengers hastened to warn the king of the
disaster, and as they came from opposite ends, one post
would meet another with the doleful intelligence. And
doubtless they would also convey the news that the reeds
were burnt with fire, for Cyrus caused his soldiers to
carry torches, and pointed out to them the inflammable
character of the Babylonian buildings. Even when the
outer walls were passed, the king might have offered
further resistance; for his palace was also his citadel.
And the Medes and Persians could not have forced its
walls and gates, which would have barred their progress
as effectually as the external fortifications had so long
done. But the king, hearing the disturbance, in his
excitement caused the gates to be flung open, that he
might know the reason of the noise. So God went before
Cyrus and opened for him the two-leaved gates. As the
Persians swarmed into the town, the streets were filled
with men as with caterpillars, and the Chaldaeans were
thrust through in the streets, not on the open battle-field.

Most conquerors have shown themselves greedy of
gold. But it was specially prophesied that the captors
of Babylon should not delight in it. No characteristic of
Cyrus is better authenticated than his contempt for riches.
His nobles imitated his example, whether or no they
imbibed his spirit. After foretelling the first fall of
BABYLON.

Babylon, the prophet added, "None shall return in vain." Several times after its capture by Cyrus was the city besieged, but never in vain. It always fell a prey to its enemies. Alexander the Great, Antigonus, Demetrius, Antiochus the Great, and the Parthians successively occupied it.

Two circumstances of the siege by Darius demand especial mention. Cyrus did comparatively little damage to the city. He regarded it as one of the chief towns of his empire. But by-and-by it rebelled against Darius. That monarch immediately laid siege to it. Its strength resisted his utmost efforts, and, like Cyrus, he determined to reduce it by famine. The inhabitants prepared for a protracted investment. That they might hold out the longer, they resolved upon the desperate expedient of putting to death every female in the city, with the exception of their mothers and one of each family to bake the bread. Thus there came upon Babylon in one day, and in their perfection, the loss of children and widowhood.

The siege had lasted nearly a year and three quarters, and no perceptible impression had been made upon the town. Darius had tried the method of assault which Cyrus had adopted; but the river was now well guarded. In conjunction with Zophyrus, one of his nobles, another stratagem was concocted. Zophyrus suffered his nose and ears to be cut off, and his back to be beaten till he was covered with blood. With his wounds yet fresh, he begged admittance into Babylon, representing himself as a deserter from the Persian camp, who had been cruelly ill-treated by Darius. With such terrible proofs of the truth of his story, how could the Babylonians doubt him? He avowed himself determined to be revenged upon his tormentor, and promised to betray all the Persian secrets.
He immediately received high command in the besieged army. Soon he justified his appointment. Sallying suddenly upon the Persians, he slew a thousand of them, and was rewarded with increase of rank. Repetitions of this exploit brought repetitions of the reward, till he became commander-in-chief of the army and guardian of the walls. Darius now hurled his whole army against the city, as though determined to take it by storm. Zophyurus marshalled his forces to repel the assault. But he offered no resistance whatever to the Persian troops, and opened the gates for them to enter the city. Both Darius and he had been playing a part. The king had agreed to sacrifice the lives of many of his soldiers, and Zophyurus to endure pain and indignity to give colour to the plot. So a snare was laid for Babylon; it was taken, and it was not aware; "the praise of the whole earth" was "surprised."

The subsequent history of Babylon after its capture by Darius affords many remarkable correspondences between prediction and event. To two only we will now allude. Jeremiah declared in the name of the living God, "I will do judgement upon the graven images of Babylon" (li. 47), plainly pointing to some mark of the Divine displeasure which should affect the idols themselves. When Xerxes withdrew from Greece after his miserable failure to subdue that country, he passed through Babylonia. The drain upon his treasury had well-nigh exhausted it; he therefore seized upon the enormous wealth stored in the temples of Babylon. Many of the images were of gold, and were ruthlessly appropriated by him and melted down; the value of the precious metal thus obtained is said to have been twenty millions sterling. But the Persian king was a determined foe to all image-worship,
Babylon, Past and Present.
and to mark his hatred of it, he levelled the temples with the ground and destroyed the idols he did not confiscate. So was Bel punished in Babylon, and that which he had swallowed up was brought forth out of his mouth.

Another prophecy foretold that unsuccessful attempts would be made to restore the city to its former prosperity. The most noteworthy of these was made by Alexander the Great. The natural advantages of the situation of Babylon greatly impressed him; he deemed it a suitable position for the metropolis of an empire which should include the whole known world. By his direction, the temple of the god Bel began to be rebuilt, and active preparations were set on foot to turn the Euphrates into the channel from which it had been diverted by Cyrus. His sudden death, however, caused the abandonment of his ambitious schemes. A short time afterwards the city of Seleucia was founded, and attracted the inhabitants of Babylon to itself. Gradually the once proud capital of Nebuchadnezzar sank into decay, till it became what it is in our time.

Sir H. Layard describes a visit he made to the site of ancient Babylon: "The plains between Khan-i-zad" [a caravanserai, near Baghdad] "and the Euphrates are covered with a perfect network of ancient canals and watercourses; but 'a drought is upon the waters of Babylon, and they were dried up' (Jer. 1.38). Their lofty embankments, stretching on every side in long lines until they are lost in the hazy distance, or magnified by the mirage into mountains, still defy the hand of time, and seem rather the work of nature than of man. The face of the country, too, is dotted with mounds and shapeless heaps, the remains of ancient towns and villages." He speaks of "a long ride of ten hours through this
scene of desolation." Again: "We perceived a huge hill to the south; . . . we could plainly distinguish around it great embankments, the remains of walls and canals. . . . It was the mound of Babel. . . . To the vast mound of Babel succeed long undulating heaps of earth, bricks, and pottery. A solitary mass of brick-work, rising from the summit of the largest mound, marks the remains known to the Arabs as the Mujelibé, or 'overturned.' Other shapeless heaps of rubbish cover for many an acre the face of the land. The lofty banks of ancient canals fret the country like natural ridges of hills. Some have long been choked with sand; others still carry the waters of the river to distant villages and palm groves. On all sides fragments of glass, marble, pottery, and inscribed brick are mingled with the peculiar nitrous and blanched soil, which, bred from the remains of ancient habitations, checks or destroys vegetation, and renders the site of Babylon a naked and hideous waste. Owls start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackal skulks through the furrows." From the summit of one of the mounds, called Bir 'Nimroud, by many thought to be the ruins of the original tower of Babel, by others the ruins of the principal temple of Babylon, that to Belus, and by others again the remains of Borsippa, a city of Babylonia, Sir H. Layard tells us he "gazed over a vast marsh," the overflow of the Euphrates now settling where magnificent buildings once stood.

Sir H. Layard, at great cost of labour and money, carefully examined some of the principal mounds, digging far into the interior of them. He was rewarded with many interesting "finds," but, on the whole, he was disappointed. He says, "The discoveries amongst the ruins of ancient Babylon were far less numerous and important
than I could have anticipated. No sculptures or inscribed slabs, the panelling of the walls of palaces, appear to exist beneath them as in those of Nineveh. "Scarcely a detached figure in stone, or a solitary tablet, has been dug out of the vast heaps of rubbish." The same traveller testifies, "The lion, the hyæna, the wolf, the jackal, the wild boar, the fox, and the porcupine now alone break the solitude of a wildness once the seat of the most luxurious and civilized nation of the East... We saw many tracks of lions in the sand, some not many hours old. Flocks of pelicans whitened the plain; we started innumerable waterfowl from the reeds; and the pheasant-like francolin sprang with a loud whirring noise from almost every thicket."

It would be easy to quote from other travellers similar testimony to that given by Sir H. Layard. They assure us that at one time wild goats used to sport over the rubbish-heaps, and all kinds of venomous reptiles and noxious beasts took shelter within them. Some affirm that the Arabs do not care to encamp where they can obtain no forage for their flocks, and that they believe the ruins are haunted by evil spirits, for fear of whom they avoid the neighbourhood. All speak of the utter desolation of the scene, of the pools of standing water, of the frequent inundations of the Euphrates, of the dry and arid character of the mounds and such parts of the soil as the river does not turn into a swamp. Visitor after visitor traces the action of fire in the rubbish-heaps, and remarks that while great quantities of brick are obtained from portions of the ruins, there are other portions, chiefly the mounds, from which scarcely a stone has been removed, because the whole heap has been fused into one mass. Explorer after explorer has searched for vestiges of
the celebrated walls, but with uniform ill-success. There is abundant evidence that they once existed; but not a vestige of them can be traced.

Side by side with this brief account of the present condition of Babylonia and its metropolis, let us place some of the utterances of Isaiah and Jeremiah. We shall not mark the correspondences; they will be apparent at a glance:

"Babylon... shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs" [? wild goats] "shall dance there... I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts.... Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.... Her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down.... Cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.... I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.... A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up.... I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord.... Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.... The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the
waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness" (Isa. xiii. 19—21; xiv. 23; Jer. l. 2, 15, 26, 32, 38; li. 25, 26, 37, 42, 43).

Could performance more exactly answer to prophecy? Only He Who knoweth "the end from the beginning" could have foreseen and foretold how so numerous and so minute predictions, many of them not only unlikely in themselves but to all appearance mutually contradictory, could have been fulfilled. And the argument is irresistible that the Book which contains them must be the word of the Omniscient God.
EGYPT.

THE three great empires with which Israel had most to do during the times of the Prophets were Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt. We have seen how the predictions concerning the two former received their exact fulfilment; there was also laid upon the seers "the burden of Egypt," and they declared it in a manner which adds another strong link to the chain of the evidence from prophecy.

The total ruin of Nineveh and Babylon was foretold, yet with such details and circumstances as plainly distinguish the predictions from indiscriminate anathemas threatening their objects with general destruction. The prophecies with regard to Egypt, though sufficiently terrible, stop short of asserting the utter ruin of the empire and its cities. Indeed, they foretell the continuance of the kingdom under a contemptible and abject form. Accordingly, while the very sites of Babylon and Nineveh were long matters of doubt, and the dominion of their monarchs has only historical remains, Egypt has at this day a Government of its own, it has still its populous cities as well as its marvellous ruins. And it is remarkable that when the Prophets wrote their visions, Egypt was not the first of the nations. Decay had
already begun in it; its greatness was becoming perceptibly a thing of the past. If they had been guided simply by their own sagacity, they would unquestionably have prognosticated the complete obliteration of Egypt, rather than of Assyria and Babylonia. The prophecies concerning Egypt furnish proof of inspiration as much by their silence as by their speech.

No monarchy can compare in duration with the Egyptian. When Abram was a wanderer in the land which his seed were to possess hereafter, the Pharaohs had an ancient and extensive dominion; when the family of Israel had grown into a nation, the Pharaohs were still the mightiest sovereigns of the world; and Egypt enjoyed a considerable degree of independence and prosperity for two centuries after Ezekiel had foretold her doom. The ruins of magnificent cities, with temples, and palaces, and pillars, and obelisks, still witness to Egyptian power. Inscriptions and sculptures bear testimony to the majesty and success of her monarchs and warriors; and the pyramids remain immovable monuments of her civilization. The wisdom of the Egyptians achieved world-wide celebrity; the kingdom was noted as much for its learning as for its military prowess and architectural skill. The fertility of the country was prodigious; for centuries it was the great corn-growing country of the world.

One of the earliest prophecies against Egypt foretold the conquest of the country by Nebuchadnezzar. It was uttered by Jeremiah only a very short time before its accomplishment, and was recorded after that event. It is found in Jeremiah xlvi. 1—12, and ends: "The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the
mighty, and they are fallen both together." Pharaoh-
Necho took advantage of the revolt of the Babylonians
against the Assyrians to invade Syria; on his way
thither he defeated Josiah, who opposed him, and finally
captured Carchemish, on the Euphrates. He was return-
ing in triumph, laden with spoil, when Nebuchadnezzar,
then king only as associated with his father, fell on him,
and inflicted upon him so crushing a defeat that all his
conquests were wrested from him, "and the king of
Egypt came not again any more out of his land" (2 Kings
xxiv. 7).

A second and more complete conquest of Egypt by
Nebuchadnezzar was also foretold. Jeremiah entitles
one section of his prophecy, "The word that the Lord
spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar,
king of Babylon, should come and smite the land of
Egypt" (xlvi. 13). And Ezekiel declared how God
promised: "Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused
his army to serve a great service against Tyrus, . . . yet
had he no wages, nor his army. . . . Therefore thus saith
the Lord God: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt
unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall
take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her
prey; and it shall be the wages for his army" (xxix. 18,
19). And Jeremiah named not only the conqueror, but
also the conquered: "Behold, I will give Pharaoh-hophra,
king of Egypt, into the hand of his enemies" (xlv. 30).
Scholars are agreed that Pharaoh-hophra is the Biblical
name for the Apries of Herodotus. There is ample
evidence that his most popular general, Amasis, rebelled
against him, that he was obliged to rely chiefly upon an
army of foreign mercenaries, and was defeated and taken
prisoner. Amasis became king; for a while he treated
his former master with kindness, but at length put him to death, so he was "given into the hand of them that seek his life." It is practically certain that Nebuchadnezzar interfered in the concerns of Egypt during the rebellion of Amasis, probably assisting the rebel. He transported so many captives as to prove the truth of Ezekiel's words: "I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries."

The nineteenth chapter of Isaiah contains prophecies about Egypt of rather doubtful application. The invasions by Nebuchadnezzar would answer them, but they may refer to the Persian conquest. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian monarchy, attacked Egypt as one of the earliest enterprises of his reign. He completely subdued it, and ruled it with such cruel tyranny that of him the prophet might well be speaking when he said: "And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts." The prophecy, however, which connects these disasters with civil war—"I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom" (v. 2)—taken in connection with very recent discoveries in Egyptian history, gives good reason to suppose that Isaiah was speaking of the Ethiopian conquest of Egypt, which was preceded and followed by intestine commotions, previous to which conquest Egypt was divided into a number of little kingdoms, ruled by petty princes, having slight, if any, connection with each other, and owning merely nominal allegiance to their suzerain. The Ethiopian monarch
did not at first attempt to alter greatly this state of affairs. But on the rebellion of Tafnekt, who possessed himself of Lower Egypt, Pharaoh Piankhi suppressed the revolt with some severity, and brought the subject territories into more immediate dependence upon himself. The difficulty of this reference is that Piankhi was by no means "a cruel lord," nor could he be fairly denominated a stranger, as he was of Egyptian descent. Perhaps the oracle relates to the overthrow of Egypt by Sargon, king of Assyria, which Isaiah foretells in the twentieth chapter. We may well suppose that he speaks first of the civil war waged against Piankhi, and then announces fresh disasters from another source. The predictions which follow certainly cannot be limited either to the rebellion or to the invasion by the Assyrians. The latter part of the chapter may refer to the expulsion of the Persians from Egypt by Alexander the Great, who favoured the Egyptians, and to the settlement of large numbers of Jews in Egypt, by whom the inhabitants were instructed in the knowledge of Jehovah.

It is worthy of notice that "an altar" was erected "to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt" some four hundred and fifty years after this prophecy was uttered. The temple of Onias was built at Leontopolis about B.C. 150. The fuller accomplishment of the blessing upon Egypt began when devout Jews returned from Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. For a considerable period Egypt was one of the principal seats of the Christian Church.

Another peculiarity of the prophecies concerning Egypt is their detailed threatenings against separate cities. In the thirtieth chapter of Ezekiel, from the twelfth to the nineteenth verse, the following cities are warned by name,
Egypt, Past and Present.
Noph, Pathros, Zoan, No, Sin, Aven, Pibeseth, and Tehaphnehes.

There can be little or no doubt that Noph is the Hebrew name for Memphis, when Ezekiel wrote, the capital of Lower Egypt. It was the chief city of the Pharaohs, and was worthy of the greatness of its kings. Ancient writers speak in the strongest possible terms of its grandeur, though their descriptions are somewhat vague. The pyramids were considered to belong especially to Memphis. Its temples were the theme of universal admiration. Very recently the mausoleum of the god Apis has been disentombed, and it justifies the eulogies of Diodorus and others. The vast necropolis of Memphis proves that at one time it could boast of a large population. Now it is "waste and without an inhabitant." Till the excavations of M. Mariette its very site was matter of dispute; the drifting sand had enveloped it.

For Zoan the Margin reads Tanis, and with good reason. Zoan appears to have been a favourite residence of the Pharaohs at certain seasons of the year. Here it was that Moses wrought his miracles before the Egyptian court, and threatened the plagues. Isaiah speaks of "the princes of Zoan." The extent of the mounds or "heaps" that cover its streets and palaces shows its former importance. Mr. Macgregor describes its present condition: "The horizon is nearly a straight line on every side; and looking west, the tract before us is a black, rich loam, without fences or towns, and with only a dozen trees in sight. This is 'the field of Zoan.' Behind is a glimmer of silver light on the far-away shore of Lake Menzaleh. Across the level foreground winds most gracefully the Mushra; but between that winding river and the mound we look from, there is, lying bare and gaunt,
in stark and silent devastation, one of the grandest and oldest ruins in the world. It is deep in the middle of an enclosing amphitheatre of mounds, all of them absolutely bare, and all dark-red from the millions of potsherds that defy the winds of time, and the dew and the sun alike, to stir them, or even to melt away their sharp-edged fragments." Various remains of buildings may be seen there, and many huge "vitrified pieces" bear conclusive testimony to the accomplishment of the prediction, "I will set fire in Zoan."

No, or No-Ammon, as it is often called, has been identified with Thebes. This was the ancient metropolis of Egypt, and it continued to be the capital of Upper Egypt after the seat of political power had been removed to Memphis. Homer mentions it, with its hundred gates, and its thousands of soldiers, horses, and chariots. Nahum witnesses to its glory and prosperity when he addresses Nineveh: "Art thou better than populous No? . . . Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite." Its ruins now testify to its former greatness. Dr. Kitto calls it—"perhaps the grandest desolation in the world." Denon tells us how the French army that invaded Egypt caught their first sight of it: "On turning the point of a chain of mountains, which forms a kind of promontory, we saw all at once ancient Thebes in its full extent. . . . This city—described in a few pages dictated to Herodotus by Egyptian priests, which succeeding authors have copied—renowned for numerous kings, who, through their wisdom, have been elevated to the rank of gods; for laws which have been revered without being known; for sciences which have been confided to proud and mysterious inscriptions, . . . earliest monuments of the arts which time has respected; this sanctuary, abandoned,
isolated through barbarism, and surrendered to the desert from which it was won; this city, shrouded in the veil of mystery by which even colossi are magnified; this remote city . . . was still so gigantic an apparition, that, at the sight of its scattered ruins, the army halted of its own accord, and the soldiers, with one spontaneous movement, clapped their hands.” Can other evidence be wanting to the past grandeur and present desolation of once “populous No”? Many of its buildings are standing; many are mere heaps of fallen stones or overturned fragments. Truly, Jehovah has “cut off the multitude of No,” has executed judgements in her, and rent her asunder.

Sin is, doubtless, the same as Pelusium. Ezekiel calls it “the strength of Egypt;” it was one of the frontier towns, strongly fortified, and strong in its natural position, being defended on all sides by mud and swamp. Consequently it always felt the first fury of every invader from the East. Sin had “great pain.”

Aven, called “On” by Moses and “Beth-shemesh” by Jeremiah, signified Heliopolis. It was the seat of the principal university of Egypt. Here Moses learnt the wisdom of the Egyptians. The obelisk now placed on the Thames embankment was originally erected before its principal temple. Now “mounds and crude brick walls are all that remain of Beth-shemesh!” Its young men have been slain, and fire has devastated “the houses of the gods of the Egyptians” (Jer. xliii. 13).

Of Pibeseth, or Bubastis, Dr. Kitto asserts: “There is no portion of any standing edifice remaining. All is overthrown, and the widespread rubbish affords the only remaining evidence of the ancient splendour of Bubastis.” And of Tehaphnehes, or Daphnæ Pelusîæ, the same
authority remarks: "The desolation of the ancient city is so complete, that the site now offers nothing that calls for notice." Truly "the pomp of her strength" has "ceased."

Side by side with another prophecy by Isaiah, let us place an extract from the Journal of the Rev. G. S. Drew. Isaiah xix. 5, 6: "And the water shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. And they shall turn the river far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither." Mr. Drew: "All through the first sixteen miles of our journey from Birsatín to Suez, we seemed to be going along the bed of an ancient river. If it was a river, it could not have been far from the coast-line of the sea, for we soon came on endless layers and heaps of oyster-shells. The quantity in which they are found is quite immense... Towards the close of our day's journey, about twelve miles from Birsatín, we came on traces, in an abundance of petrified trunks of trees and logs of wood, of an ancient forest. How strangely different must this country, now a dry and weary desert, have appeared when that forest stood here on the river bank, or marine creek, which then evidently flowed through this very spot! Our road was whitened by innumerable shells, which we at first took to be an additional indication of the water that anciently flowed upon this bed; but we found afterwards they were the bleached shells of the desert snail." If, as Dr. Keith seems to think, Isaiah's words refer to the decline of the practice of irrigation, there is only too ample proof that artificial fertilizing streams ran formerly where all is now a sandy waste.

The most remarkable prophecy concerning Egypt is yet
to be adduced: "It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations... And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt" (Ezek. xxix. 15; xxx. 13). And since the second conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, no native prince has ever ruled that land; and generally her governors have been subordinate to a lord paramount. The Persian succeeded the Babylonian; the Macedonian, the Persian; the Roman, the Macedonian; the Saracen, the Roman; the Mameluke, the Saracen; and the Turk, the Mameluke. Faint and evanescent gleams of prosperity have smiled on her, but most of her rulers have oppressed her. The events of the last year or two remind us how base a kingdom Egypt has become. The Khedive was deposed by the Sultan; Egyptian finances were pronounced in all but irretrievable disorder, and a commission of foreigners was appointed to manage them. Then followed the revolt under Arabi Pacha and his complete overthrow. And now Egypt has to submit to military occupation by the English. The state of the country is deplorable: its peasantry are overtaxed and degraded, its once fertile lands in great part arid desert, and its cultivated parts producing far less than they would under a proper system of agriculture and a just and wise Government. Thus Egypt stands in its low estate a witness to the truth of the Divine oracles which foretold its doom, different from that of Nineveh and Babylon.
TYRE.

As early as the days of Joshua, Tyre was known as "the strong city," * i.e., the fortress. The date of its foundation is not known; but, though "the daughter of Sidon," it could boast a very high antiquity. Isaiah calls it a "joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days." †

At the time when Ezekiel spoke, Tyre was the chief commercial city of the world; her ships were in all seas, her merchants were "princes," her "traffickers" were "the honourable of the earth." She was the emporium of the trade of Asia, Africa, and Europe. She had outstripped her rival and founder Sidon, and there was none to dispute her supremacy. In the upper compartment of the picture illustrating this chapter, the artist represents Hiram receiving Solomon's emissaries. At that period, Tyre, though a thriving and important town, was far from the summit of her prosperity; she was then engaged in fierce competition with the neighbouring seaport; the limits of her enterprise were comparatively narrow. But when Ezekiel denounced destruction against her, she was in the full tide of her fortune, as his own description of her commerce and

* Josh. xix. 29. † Isa. xxiv. 7.
power and luxury shows. She was “replenished and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.”* Then it was that the prophet declared,

Thus saith the Lord God:
Behold, I am against thee, Tyre,
And I will cause many nations to come up against thee,
As the sea causeth its waves to come up.
And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre,
And break down her towers.
And I will scrape her dust from her,
And make her like the bare rock.
It shall be for the spreading of nets, in the midst of the sea;
For I have spoken it, saith the Lord God:
And it shall become a spoil for the nations” (xxvi. 3—6).

And in a following verse Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned by name, as one of the agents of her destruction.

If we combine with the utterances of this prophet about her the similar predictions of Isaiah† and Zechariah,‡ we shall see that they foretold concerning her that the city should be besieged and taken by Nebuchadnezzar; that the reigning dynasty should be overthrown; that Tyre should “be forgotten seventy years,” and should then revive, and recover, and even increase its former splendour; that its merchandise should be “holiness to the Lord;” that it should be again destroyed and irretrievably ruined; that the sea should flow over it, and that no remnant of the city should be left; that, finally, it should be a mere fishing-village, “a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea.” Many of these things, together with certain details to be noticed presently, seemed impossible to be accomplished: let us see how the word of the Lord was verified.

* Ezek. xxvii. 1—25. † See Isa. xxiii.
‡ See Zech. ix.; also Amos i.
It is necessary to bear in mind that Tyre was not a single town, but a territory, having a city on the mainland, and an insular port. Very soon after the utterance of the prophecies, they began to be fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar came up against the city; and, after the manner of the warfare of his age, raised a mound against it, and built a fort. For thirteen years he besieged the city by blockade, and it was reduced by famine. On its surrender, therefore, Nebuchadnezzar entered by the "gates" (Ezek. xxvi. 10), and not by means of a breach; the still standing walls, of course, vibrating to the march "of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots." He must then have dismantled the town, as for a long time it lay in ruins. We have no direct evidence that its commerce was paralysed for exactly seventy years; but it is morally certain that when Cyrus permitted the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem, he also allowed the Tyrians to repair their city, and encouraged its trade with all his power, especially as it would form an excellent nursery for his seamen.* At any rate, Tyre rose from its ruins, and at the time of Alexander the Great was as flourishing as it ever had been. A smart sceptic might have asked, "What has become of your prophecy?" The most important part of the prophecy remained yet unfulfilled; how was it to be accomplished? Nothing less than an influx of the sea seemed capable of bringing the waters over it, and that would almost necessarily have falsified other portions of the prediction. But, though the word of the Lord tarried, it had not failed. In the year B.C. 333, immediately after the battle of Issus, Alexander

* There is no necessity, however, to search for a precise period: "it is surely allowable to understand these seventy years as a conventional expression for a long period."—Cheyne on Isaiah.
laid siege to New Tyre. The Grecian king had no fleet; how could he take an island-city? If he had collected a navy, probably such expert seamen as the Tyrians would have soon scattered it to the winds. His eye fell upon the ruins of Old Tyre: he determined to construct a large mole, over which his army might march to the sack of the new city, using as materials the stones and timber of the old town. A storm, and the efforts of the Tyrians, destroyed a large portion of his work: additional matter was needed; he took the soil and cast it upon his broken breakwater, and so formed a safe passage for his troops. Thus was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Ezekiel, saying, “I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock, . . . and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water” (Ezek. xxvi. 4, 12; see also ver. 19). The causeway is yet undestroyed, and upon it fishermen dry their nets. Soon the sand drifted over the site of the city, and now no man knows where it stood, nor is a vestige of it to be seen: “Though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God” (Ezek. xxvi. 21).

The obstinate and skilful resistance Tyre offered to the great conqueror forms a noteworthy comment on Zechariah’s description of the city. “Tyre did build herself a stronghold:” walls one hundred and fifty feet high defied the approach of an enemy from the sea. The walls were composed of huge stones, embedded in gypsum. A second wall stood a little distance within the first, the intervening space being filled with stones and earth. The wealth of Tyre ensured her being well provisioned. A heathen historian says the determination to defend themselves against Alexander was founded upon their
trust "in the strength of the island and the stores which they had laid up," the two resources of which Zechariah speaks. "Tyrus shall fall," declares the prophet, "though it be very wise." The ingenuity of the defence rivalled its courage. Alexander was inclined to abandon the siege as hopeless, but his prestige demanded indisputable success. Her walls were crowded with catapults, the cannon of the time. Her engineers invented new machines as necessity arose. Ever-moving wheels caught the missiles and rendered them harmless. Nets and grappling-hooks laid hold of all who ventured within their reach. Molten metal and hot sand penetrated the joints of the assailants' armour. Divers tore the rising mole to pieces. A fire-ship and burning arrows destroyed a great portion of the work. Bags of sea-weed hung over the walls deadened the shock of the battering-rams. But wisdom, strength, and wealth were vain, for "the mouth of the Lord had spoken it."

The conqueror, enraged by the obstinate resistance he had encountered, after crucifying two thousand persons, sold thirty thousand into slavery; thus returning their recompense upon their own head, for they had dealt in "the persons of men," and children of Israel had been among their captives. Alexander then set the town on fire, burning it to the ground (Ezek. xxviii. 18). But Tyre was utterly to lose her maritime and mercantile supremacy: she had recovered from blows as fearful as those which Alexander had struck her: a town situated so favourably for commerce could not but be a thriving port; at least, so it seemed. Alexandria was founded, the course of the trade of the whole world was changed, and the doom of Tyre was sealed. It is true, its commerce partially revived, but only partially: some
centuries after Alexander's conquest, Pliny, after de-
scribing its former prosperity, says: "But at this day all
the glory and reputation thereof standeth upon the dye
of purple and crimson colours."* When the Crusaders
landed in Asia, it was a port of some local importance,
and was of no small service to them. However, in the
year A.D. 1291 it was razed to the ground by Khalil,
Sultan of Egypt, and has never been "built any more."
The infidel Volney, in his "Travels," tells us: "Instead
of that ancient commerce, so active and so extensive,
Sour [Tyre], reduced to a miserable village, has no other
trade than the exportation of a few sacks of corn and
raw cotton; nor any merchant but a single Greek factor,
in the service of the French of Saide, who scarcely makes
sufficient profit to maintain his family." And again
he writes: "The whole village of Tyre contains only
fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the
produce of their little ground, and a trifling fishery."
After a temporary return to prosperity on a small scale,
it is now much the same as it was then. The harbour is
choked with sand and rubbish, and can only shelter a
few fishing-smacks.

Numerous other testimonies might be adduced with
ease. Hardy says, "Ships may be seen but at a distance;
no merchant of the earth ever enters the name of Tyre
upon his books, and where thousands once assembled in
pomp and pride, and there was beauty and splendour and
dominion, I could discover only a few children amusing
themselves at play, and a party of Turks sitting in gravity,
and sipping their favourite coffee." Another traveller, the
Rev. J. L. Porter, soliloquises on the spot, "Would it not
seem as if the prophet had drawn aside the veil which

* Pliny, Nat. Hist., ix. 36.
shrouds futurity, and looking down through five-and-twenty centuries, had seen that bare, unmarked, deserted plain as I saw it? One might even imagine that his prophetic eye had been able to distinguish a solitary traveller from a far-distant land wandering up and down, searching, but searching in vain, for the city of which he said, 'Though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again.'" Many of the stones of Tyre have been removed altogether from the neighbourhood of the once powerful city. The fortifications of Beyrout and Acre were built in great part of materials brought from the site of Tyre. Those fortifications, in their turn, have been destroyed, and the stones of Tyre lie amongst the rubbish* of other cities.

The prophecy which states that, at one time, the merchandise of Tyre should be "holiness to the Lord," is not so easy of interpretation. It may refer in the first to the help rendered by Tyre to the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem (Ezra iii. 6, 7); and, next, to the fact that this city was one of the first to receive the Gospel (Acts xxii. 3, 4), as so many of Isaiah's predictions point to the establishment and progress of Christianity, and that a Church was founded in the town before many of the Apostles had passed to their rest; but its ultimate and highest reference is, doubtless, typical; indicating the final consecration of all commerce to the service of God:—unless, indeed, the name Tyre has some spiritual significance like that which Babylon bears in the Book of the Revelation. What is the true interpretation "it would be impossible for any commentator to say, unless he were himself a prophet;" for "its ultimate fulfilment has still to be waited for."†

* See The Land and the Book.  † Delitzsch.
TYRE.

Thus not one word of the Lord passed away till it was fulfilled; and we confidently anticipate the accomplishment of the single word which may not yet have received its highest realization. Who, reading this prophecy, and noting its many improbabilities, the minute agreement of prediction and event, and the wonderful manner in which much of it was accomplished, can doubt that Ezekiel spoke under Divine influence, or refuse to accept the doom of Tyre as evidence of the inspiration of Holy Writ? If ever the “argument from prophecy” is legitimate and convincing, it is in this instance. This case is one of those which not even “gainsayers,” like Volney, are “able to resist.” This prediction cannot be accused of “fulfilling itself;” the agents were, none of them, aware that they were doing God’s bidding while they were performing it. Though the doom of Tyre was not only foreseen by the Almighty, but positively came upon her as His vengeance, His own act, yet the natural course of things was never disturbed, and the human instruments worked their own will.
THE JEWS AND THEIR LAND.

I. THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS.

Generally in a Jewish synagogue the Law—i.e., the Old Testament—is read in a loud voice by one of the richest and most highly-respected members of the congregation, who has paid probably a considerable sum of money for the privilege. The people listen reverently and attentively; it is thought very honourable either to read or to hear the Law. But when the lesson is the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, everything is different. The reader seems ashamed of his task, and you cannot hear a word he says. The congregation bow their heads or cover them with their cloaks. Close to the reader stands a poor man, shuddering as the reader hisses into his ear the holy words, and he has been paid a large price to listen. The student of the Bible and of Jewish history does not need to ask the reason of this strange proceeding. The twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy contains the curses Moses pronounced upon his nation if they did not worship and obey Jehovah. They have been rebellious, and they did turn from the true God and forsake His law; the threatenings therefore
have been performed, and the history and present condition of the Jews strikingly illustrate the fulfilment of prophecy. The threatenings were prophecies of what would occur in certain circumstances; the circumstances have arisen, and if God's word is true, the predictions must be performed. We shall see that they have been fulfilled to the letter.

In the warnings of punishment addressed to the Israelites in the event of their apostasy, we find the following amongst other particulars:—

"The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee. . . . The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. . . . The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee. . . . The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. . . . Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, . . . and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of
fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young. And He shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters; the tender and delicate woman shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherein thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, 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."

Subsequent prophets gave utterance to similar threatenings, especially the prophet Jeremiah, who seems to have interwoven the words of Moses with his own. The Bible itself contains the record of the fulfilment of some of the predictions. In the siege of Samaria, narrated in the sixth chapter of the Second Book of Kings, a mother killed and ate her own son; and in Kings, Chronicles, and Jeremiah we read how Nebuchadnezzar "brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about," after he had besieged and taken it, and how he carried Israel away into captivity. Prophecies very similar to those of Moses and Jeremiah, Jesus Christ Himself spake; and in the chapter
upon the Destruction of Jerusalem, we shall see how thoroughly they were accomplished. We will notice now chiefly fulfilments of prophecy not to be found in the historical books of the Bible and not mentioned in that chapter.

The principal predictions are that the Jews shall be forcibly removed from the land of Canaan; that they shall be scattered among all nations, among whom they shall nevertheless remain a separate people; that they shall be oppressed terribly and systematically in the countries whither they shall wander and wherein they shall reside; and that they shall be smitten with blindness.

It is a patent fact that the Jews are not now in possession of their own land, and history testifies that they have been driven therefrom for long centuries. The chief instruments in their expulsion were, first the Chaldaeans and then the Romans. To either of these enemies the description of Moses applies. Each was "a nation of a fierce countenance," each came "from far," the tongue of both was foreign to the Jews, and both showed themselves utterly merciless. But it specially suits the Romans, whose legions bore the eagle as their standard, and whose rapid marches conduced so greatly to their victories. They indeed swooped down upon Palestine "swift as the eagle flieth." It adds to the appropriateness of the description that the Roman soldiers were of various nations—Gauls, Britons, and Spaniards. Some of the legions came direct from our country to the conquest of Judæa; and Vespasian and Hadrian, the most ruthless foes of the Jews, had held commands in Britain. The Lord brought them against His people "from the end of the earth." The cruelty of the conquerors knew no limits. Of Vespasian Josephus writes: "He slew all,
man by man; the Romans showing mercy to no age." Moses specially notes that the Israelites should be sold into slavery into the land whence they had been redeemed, and that they should be conveyed thither in ships; and enormous numbers of captive Jews were sold into slavery after the destruction of Jerusalem, a considerable proportion of whom were sent into Egypt. As the Romans had a fleet in the Mediterranean, it is highly probable that it was used for the transport of the slaves. Indeed, Jerome distinctly states "that after their last overthrow by Hadrian, many thousands of them were sold, and those who could not be sold were transported into Egypt, and perished by shipwreck or famine, or were massacred by the inhabitants."

The Emperor Hadrian decreed the utter expulsion of the Jews from their own country, and absolutely forbade any of them to return thither. From that day the Jew has been a stranger in the land of his fathers. Even at this present time he visits or resides in his fatherland only on sufferance. He must buy at a great price the privilege of wailing over the stones of the Temple, and confessing, "Thy holy cities are a wilderness; Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant places are laid waste."

That the Jews are now scattered over the known world is an unquestioned fact. What habitable portion of the globe is there in which the Jew is not found? The gift of tongues at the day of Pentecost was necessitated by the dispersion of the Jews, partial though it then was. In the year of the Crucifixion they were abiding temporarily at Jerusalem, Jews "out of every nation under heaven," who had been born in foreign countries and
THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS.

could speak of their languages as the tongues wherein they were born. And nowadays there are Jews of all possible nationalities; yet are they "few in number" in comparison with the people among whom they reside, and most likely they are actually fewer than when they dwelt together in Canaan. So is the word of the Lord accomplished: "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve" (Amos ix. 9).

It would be easy to write a volume upon the oppression and persecution the Jews have endured. Mohammedan and Christian have vied with each other in maltreating them. Even the Pagan Roman hated and spurned them. In some places there were annual seasons at which it was an act of religious duty to injure and despoil them. Again and again popular fury has burst out against them without adequate cause, almost without any cause at all. In several countries the children of Jewish parents have been seized to be educated as Christians, and never to return to their homes again; their sons and daughters have indeed been "given unto another people." The scornful pity Voltaire extended to them shows the estimation in which they were held in his day. "The Jews," he says, "are but an ignorant and barbarous people, which for a long time has joined the foulest greed to the most frightful superstition and most unconquerable hate against all who endure and enrich them. It is not, however, necessary to burn them." Very recent times have witnessed outbursts of fanaticism against them in civilized Germany and semi-civilized Russia and Roumania. The treatment the unfortunate Hebrews received in England may serve as a specimen of the manner in which they were dealt with in European countries; savage and brutal
though it was, it was less brutal than the conduct of Continental Christians towards them.

Sir Walter Scott describes their condition about the beginning of the thirteenth century thus: "Except perhaps the flying fish, there was no race existing on the earth, in the air, or the waters, who were the object of such an unintermitting, general, and relentless persecution as the Jews of this period. Upon the slightest and most unreasonable pretences, as well as upon accusations the most absurd and groundless, their persons and property were exposed to every turn of popular fury, for Norman, Saxon, Dane, and Briton, however adverse these races were to each other, contended which should look with greatest detestation upon a people whom it was accounted a point of religion to hate, to revile, to despise, to plunder, and to persecute. The kings of the Norman race, and the independent nobles, who followed their example in all acts of tyranny, maintained against this devoted people a persecution of a more regular, calculated, and self-interested kind."

The reign of Richard I. furnished some fearful examples of the popular fury against the Jews. At his coronation, the king, at the instance of the Archbishop of Canterbury, refused to accept from them the customary gifts. That same night the mob began to murder and pillage the Jews in London and Westminster: their stores, shops, and dwelling-houses were set on fire; and as the affrighted inmates rushed into the streets for safety, they were "received upon the points of spears, bills, swords, and gleaves of their adversaries, that watched for them very diligently." At a subsequent period the populace massacred the Jews in various cities of the kingdom. In York, five hundred men, women, and children took refuge in
The prophecy and its fulfilment.
the castle, where they were besieged by the crowd, led by men of higher rank. In despair, the Jews first cut the throats of their wives and children, then set fire to the castle, and committed suicide themselves. "From that time," writes an historian of the Jews in England, "through nearly a hundred years, the Jews in England were fated to buy their existence day by day with gold, and at last, when the cup of fury was filled, did the angry God of Israel pour it out upon those who had gone astray of His people, even to the coasts of the sea." The reference of the last sentence is to the banishment of the Jews by Edward I., who desired to appropriate their vast wealth. The historian continues: "The heart shudders to read how sixteen thousand poor Jews quitted the island kingdom,—how the boatmen, even on the Thames, maltreated them,—how the inhabitants of the five ports took from them, as travelling money, that which the rapacity of the king had yet left to them,—how thereon the shipowners refused to admit them on board, and how by hundreds they perished in sight of the open sea."

It is a well-known story of King John that he confined a wealthy Jew in one of the royal castles, and daily caused one of his teeth to be torn out, until, when the jaw of the unhappy Israelite was half-disfurnished, he consented to pay a large sum, which it was the tyrant's object to extort from him. The little ready money that was in the country was chiefly in the possession of this persecuted people, and the nobility hesitated not to follow the example of their sovereign, in wringing it from them by every species of oppression and even personal torture. Yet the passive courage inspired by the love of gain induced the Jews to dare the various evils to which they were subjected, in consideration of the immense
profits which they were enabled to realize in a country naturally so wealthy as England. In spite of every kind of discouragement, and even of the special court of taxation called the Jews' Exchequer, erected for the very purpose of despoiling and distressing them, the Jews increased, multiplied, and accumulated large gains.

Mention has just been made of the wealth of the Jews, and by many their love of money and successful accumulation of it are taken as fulfilling the prediction of Isaiah about "their silver and their gold," and their eating "the riches of the Gentiles" (Isa. lx. 9; lxi. 6).

It is unnecessary to adduce evidence that the Jews have remained and yet remain a distinct people. "A full end" of them has not been made. But it is worthy of note that this survival of a deported people is absolutely unique. Other nations carried into captivity have either perished or been absorbed by their captors. But the Jews are Jews still, even though they prefix an adjective of nationality to their name, and call themselves, and are called by others, English, Polish, Austrian Jews, etc., etc. It may well be that the hatred the Gentiles have borne them and their pride, which has deemed the meanest Jew of greater dignity than the highest Gentile, have had much to do with their conservation as a separate people. But the fact is none the less certain and impressive that they continue to this day among the nations, yet not of them.

Assuredly, too, blindness hath happened to Israel. Though the Saviour of the world was the Messiah whom their prophets spoke of and their rites typified, yet to this day they perceive Him not. Though their temple is destroyed, and worship according to their law impossible, yet they gather in their synagogues and read of the
curses pronounced against their sin and the prophecies which have long since become history, which they are at an utter loss to interpret consistently. They are not sceptics; they are not idolaters; they are not deceived by a lying messenger professing to be from God; nevertheless, with an open and reverenced Bible in their hands, they know not Him who is the "sole subject of the sacred Book." Truly, they "grop at noonday."

Frederick the Great's chaplain spoke wisely and rightly when, in reply to a demand to give a proof of Christianity in a single sentence, he answered, "The Jews, your Majesty."

II.—THE LAND OF ISRAEL.

Other prophecies relate to the land the Jews lived in. They formed part of the warnings uttered by Moses, and were repeated and amplified by subsequent seers. One strain runs through them all: "Your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste." Only too ample evidence exists of the fulfilment of this prediction. The infidel Volney unconsciously rendered great service to Christianity by the publication of his travels in Syria and Palestine. Dr. Keith aptly quotes a single sentence of his which testifies to the accomplishment of several prophecies: "The temples are thrown down, the palaces demolished, the ports filled up, the towns destroyed; and the earth, stripped of inhabitants, seems a dreary burying-place." Moses* had foretold, "I will destroy your high places and bring your sanctuaries into desolation;" Isaiah† had declared, "The palaces shall be forsaken;"

and Ezekiel,* "I will destroy the remnant of the sea-coast: I will make the land more desolate than the wilderness." Long lists of deserted and dismantled towns and villages have been prepared, which show that they may be counted by hundreds. Dean Stanley asserts: "Above all other countries in the world, Palestine is a land of ruins. It is not that the particular ruins are on a scale equal to those of Greece or Italy, still less to those of Egypt. But there is no country in which they are so numerous, none in which they bear so large a proportion to the villages and towns still in existence. In Judæa it is hardly an exaggeration to say that whilst for miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation, except the occasional goat-herd on the hill-side, or gathering of women at wells, there is hardly a hill-top of the many within sight which is not covered by the vestiges of some fortress or city of former ages."

Mr. Porter gives repeated and emphatic testimony to the "wonderful fulfilment of prophecy" manifested in the present condition of Palestine. He describes thus the scene as he stood upon one of the hills of Bashan: "I confess it was with feelings of awe I looked from time to time out over those desolate but still beautiful slopes to that more desolate plain. I knew what caused the desolation. The silence, too, awed me yet more, for it was profound. . . . Her cities studded the whole country, but the stillness of death reigned in them; there was no ploughman in the field, no shepherd on the hill-side, no flock on the pasture, no waggon, no wayfarer on the road. Yet there was a time when the land teemed with an industrious, a bustling, and a joyous population. At that time prophets wrote: 'Your highways shall be

* Ezek. xxv. 16; vi. 14.
desolate’ (Lev. xxvi. 22). ‘The wayfaring man ceaseth. The earth mourneth and languisheth’ (Isa. xxxiii. 8).

‘The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled, for the Lord hath spoken this word. Therefore hath the curse devoured the land. Therefore the inhabitants of the land are consumed, and few men left. Every house is shut up. The mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction’ (Isa. xxiv. 3—12). Many of the people of those days doubtless thought the prophets were but gloomy dreamers, just as many in our own day regard their writings as gorgeous fancy pictures of Eastern poets; but with my own eyes I saw that time has changed every prediction into an historic fact. I saw now, and I saw at every step through Bashan, that the visions of the poets were not delusions; that they were not even, as some modern critics suppose, highly-wrought figures, intending perhaps to foreshadow in faint outline a few leading facts of the country’s future history. I saw that they were, one and all, graphic and detailed descriptions of real events, which the Divine Spirit opened up to the prophet’s eye through the long vista of ages.” He adds, “Opportunities were afforded me of examining evidence, of testing witnesses, of seeing with my own eyes the truth or the falsehood of Bible predictions. I embraced these opportunities, as God gave them, and to the utmost of my power and the best of my ability, I examined deliberately, cautiously, and, I believe, conscientiously. My examinations extended over all Palestine, and over most other Bible lands; and now I thank God that, with the fullest and deepest conviction—conviction that all the ingenuity of modern criticism and all the plausibility of modern scientific scepticism can never overthrow, could never shake—I
can take up and re-echo the grand, the cheering statement of our blessed Lord, and proclaim my belief before the world that "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." Elsewhere he writes: "One would suppose, too, looking at the Bible and looking at the land—comparing prophetic description with authentic history and present reality—that the prophets must surely have seen the present utter ruin and terrible desolation of this part of it [Bashan] as I saw it, and that they must surely have heard from the lips of the people the story of their oppression and their dangers as I heard it, before they could possibly have written such graphic words as these: 'I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation. I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it' (Lev. xxvi. 31, 32). 'The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sickness which the Lord hath laid upon it, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?' (Deut. xxix. 22, 24).

"These are only a few," he continues, "a very few, of multitudes of similar predictions. And, let it be observed, the predictions are not in general terms, capable of a wide rendering and a somewhat vague reference. They are special, graphic, and detailed; and their fulfilment is evident as it is complete. The fields are waste, the roads deserted, the cities abandoned, the houses without inhabitants, the sanctuaries desecrated, the vineyards, orchards, and groves destroyed. And the land is desolated by the 'violence' and the folly
of ‘all them that dwell therein’—of the Turks, its nominal owners, and of the Arabs, its periodical ‘spoilers,’ who come up upon all high places through the wilderness. ‘Every one that passeth by it is astonished’ at its deserted cities and waste fields, and ‘the stranger that comes from a far country,’ the thoughtful student of history, the thoughtful observer, the thoughtful reader of his Bible, cannot refrain from exclaiming, as he rides through Bashan, ‘Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land?’” And again after explorations in various quarters he declares:—“Now upon the northern border, as before upon the eastern, the southern, and the western, with my own eyes I witnessed the fulfilment of the prophetic curse.”

The minute coincidence between prediction and event again and again strikes the reader so startlingly that he almost suspects some deception. Nevertheless here are the words of the prophet, and here the corresponding facts. He can destroy neither, he is forced to believe both; and the conviction grows deeper that the relation of one to the other must have a supernatural origin. Take but two specimens, though many more might be given:

Isaiah (xxvii. 10, 11) declared—

For the fortified city shall be desolate,
A habitation forsaken and deserted, like the wilderness.
There shall the calf feed,
And there shall he lie down, and consume its branches.
When its boughs are withered they shall be broken off;
Women shall come and burn them.
For it is a people of no understanding.

Of the destruction of fortresses evidence has been presented. But we may add the testimony of Volney,
"Every step we meet with ruins of towers, dungeons, and castles with fosses, frequently inhabited by jackals, owls, and scorpions." And side by side with the prophet's condemnation of the people as "without understanding" we may place the sceptic's statement, "The most simple arts are in a state of barbarism. The sciences are totally unknown." The graphic detail, too, of the burnt trees, with its implied wastefulness and folly, has received its full accomplishment. The magnificent trees which once adorned the neighbourhood of Jerusalem and the whole land of Palestine become fewer and fewer every year. Women may be met at the gates of the cities carrying home for fuel branches of goodly trees, often already charred, branches that ought never to have been removed. Trees burnt from their roots, their branchless trunks lying useless upon the ground, can be seen commonly in copse and forest. The entire tree has actually been burnt down for the sake of ease in obtaining the branches! This wanton destruction has been the work of women who wanted fuel, or of Bedouins who required the branches to make charcoal for sale. Mr. Porter remonstrated with his guide upon this wilful waste, and pointed out to him that the inevitable consequence will be the destruction of the forests and the cessation of the supply of fuel. "Oh, my lord," replied his guide, "it is you Franks alone who have wisdom to look to the future and power to provide for it. We! what can we do in this unhappy country? We are all wanderers—here to-day, away to-morrow. Should we attempt to preserve these oaks, or to plant vineyards and olives, or to spend labour and money on fields or houses, we should only be working out our own ruin. The Bedawin would be attracted in clouds round the tempt-
ing fruit; and the Turks would come, drive us out with their cannon, and seize our whole property. No, no! we can have no permanent interest in the ground. We can only hold it as we have got it, by the sword; and the poorer it looks the less will our enemies covet it."

"The whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart. The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: . . . no flesh shall have peace" (Jer. xii. 11, 12).

The prophets foretold, however, that the land of Israel would be not utterly desolate nor altogether depopulated. "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done."

"The glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean; . . . yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it." "There shall be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, . . . as a tailed-tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves."* Parts of the country are still cultivated, and yield an abundant harvest. Volney describes the soil as "fat and loamy," and his testimony has received frequent and recent confirmation. The cities, or some of them, are still partially peopled, and travellers never weary of describing the beauty and fertility of portions of Palestine. The substance remains in the tree, though the leaves have fallen, and by-and-by it may again bear rich foliage and fruit. But the comparison of the prophetic "Yet in it shall be a tenth" with the present condition of the country is especially noteworthy. A parliamentary Report on the Statistics of Syria states,

* Isa. xxiv. 13; xvii. 4—6; vi. 11—13.
"Syria is a country whose population bears no proportion to its superficies, and the inhabitants may be considered, on the most moderate calculation, as reduced to a tithe of what the soil could abundantly maintain under a wiser system of administration; and again, "The country is capable of producing tenfold its present produce." Dean Stanley, with this official statement before him, wrote, "The countless ruins of Palestine, of whatever date they may be, tell us at a glance that we must not judge the resources of the ancient land by its present depressed and desolate state. They show us not only that 'Syria might support tenfold its present population, and bring forth tenfold its present produce, but that it actually did so.'" Of course "a tenth" may be only a general phrase for a very small remnant; nevertheless the coincidence in substance and in terms between the predictions of the Bible and the witness of modern travellers cannot but impress every one that places the prophecy and the fact together.

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III.—SAMARIA—BETHEL—CAPERNAUM.

Definite predictions were uttered against individual cities. Some of the prophecies concerning Samaria are connected rather with the downfall of the kingdom of Israel than the fate of the capital. Hosea especially proclaims the destruction of both city and country: "The inhabitants of Samaria shall mourn.... As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water" (x. 5, 7). Every one knows that the ten tribes were carried into captivity whence they never returned, and the kingdom of Israel is a thing of the past. The
clearest prophecy against Samaria itself was delivered by Micah: "I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard. And I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley; and I will discover the foundations thereof." Several times Samaria has been besieged and taken. The Assyrians, when they removed its inhabitants, seem to have done the town comparatively little mischief. During the Maccabæan wars, John Hyrcanus captured the city, and, according to Josephus, "he demolished it entirely, and brought rivulets to it to drown it, for he dug such hollows as might let the waters run under it. Nay, he took away the very marks that there had ever been such a city there." The restoration of Samaria was commenced by one of the Roman governors of Syria. Herod the Great completed the work in a style of considerable magnificence. When our Lord was upon the earth, Samaria obviously enjoyed a degree of prosperity. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the issue of Hadrian's decree forbidding any Jew to remain in Palestine, Samaria grew of less and less importance. It exists now only as a miserable village.

Situated on the top of a steep and lofty hill, no more forceful threat of absolute ruin could be promulgated than that the very stones of the city should be cast into the valley below. The prediction has been accomplished amply. The winding road which leads up to the ruins is lined with fragments of pillars and stones evidently detached from splendid palaces and other buildings. The hill-sides are thickly strewn with similar fragments that have been arrested on their journey from the summit to the valley, and the valley itself is full of such débris. The devastation bears upon its face testimony
to the violence with which it has been wrought; the stones have not fallen, they have been thrown down by human hands. In consequence of this, the foundations of the various buildings are not concealed by rubbish, as is usually the case: they are discovered. The prophecies against Samaria have received a literal fulfilment. Harriet Martineau, without a thought of the predictions the genuineness of which she did not believe, declares, "The white convolvulus and dog-rose run riot over the foundation-stones of the ancient palaces." M. Van der Velde writes, "I thought of the prophecies spoken against Samaria. Their fulfilment I have this day had before my eyes. Samaria, a huge heap of stones! her foundations discovered, her stones thrown down into the valley! her streets ploughed up, and covered with corn-fields and olive-gardens!" The only building standing entire is said to be a church erected by the Crusaders.

Bethel owes its place in prophecy chiefly to Jeroboam's selection of it as one of the centres of his idolatrous calf-worship. Amos foretells, "I will visit the altar of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. And I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great" [or many] "houses shall have an end, saith the Lord." (iii. 14, 15). The "altars" speak of the idolatry practised at the place, "the winter-house with the summer-house" and "the houses of ivory" of the luxury and wealth of the inhabitants. The destruction of Bethel was so complete that its site remained long unknown; a mass of ruins covering some three or four acres is now identified as the lost city.

Capernaum.—Special interest attaches to this city and the neighbouring towns of Chorazin and Bethsaida because
their doom was pronounced by our Lord Himself: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell" (Matt. xi. 20—23). Perhaps no better proof could be given of the accomplishment of this prediction than the prolonged dispute as to the situation of these places. It is now pretty generally believed that some extensive ruins, called Tell Hum, represent Capernaum. They furnish abundant illustration of the importance of the town when Jesus preached and wrought signs therein. The ruins of a magnificent synagogue are particularly remarkable. Mr. Hepworth Dixon describes the place as only "a mound of marble, basalt, pottery, dust, and sand." Chorazin is probably the modern Kerazeh, a mere mass of decayed and broken buildings. The identification remains rather doubtful to this day, though some ruins not far from Kerazeh on the eastern bank of the Jordan are supposed to mark the spot where the flourishing town once stood. All three places were destroyed in the furious wars between the Jews and the Romans.

We may well meditate on McCheyne's beautiful verses:

How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave,
O Sea of Galilee!
For the glorious One Who came to save
Hath often stood by thee.
Fair are the lakes in the land I love,
Where pine and heather grow,
But thou hast loveliness above
What nature can bestow.
It is not that the mild gazelle
Comes down to drink thy tide,
But He that was pierced to save from hell
Oft wandered by thy side.
Graceful around thee the mountains meet,
    Thou calm reposing sea;
But, oh! far more, the beautiful feet
    Of Jesus walked o'er thee.

Those days are past—Bethsaida, where?
    Chorazin, where art thou?
His tent the wild Arab pitches there,
    The wild reed shades thy brow.

Tell me, ye mouldering fragments, tell,
    Was the Saviour's city there?
Lifted to heaven, has it sunk to hell,
    With none to shed a tear?

O Saviour! gone to God's right hand,
    Yet the same Saviour still,
Graved on Thy heart is this lovely strand,
    And every fragrant hill.

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IV.—THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

Thrice, at least, in the last week of His earthly life, did our Lord foretell the utter destruction of the holy city. In the midst of the triumphal journey from Olivet to the Temple, Jesus stayed the procession while He wept over the city, and prophesied: "The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke xix. 43, 44). As He leaves the Temple, He breaks out into pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, who would not permit her children
THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. 129
to be gathered by Him, "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." And as the disciples call the Master's attention to the huge and goodly stones and magnificent buildings of the Temple, He predicts, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. xxiv. 2; Mark xiii. 2; Luke xxii. 6). Seated upon the Mount of Olives, He answers His disciples' question: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world." The first three Gospels record the long and solemn discourse He delivered in reply to this inquiry (Matt. xxiv. 3—51 and xxv.; Mark xiii. 3—37; Luke xxii. 7—36). And again, to the women who followed Him to Calvary, bewailing and lamenting Him, He says: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children" (Luke xxiii. 28). The reference must have been to the calamities impending over the city.

It is not easy to decide with exactness how much of our Lord's prophecy on Olivet relates to the destruction of Jerusalem, and how much to the Second Advent. But enough is quite clear to manifest the striking conformity between the prediction and the event. The prediction itself we find recorded in the Bible. The main authority for the fulfilment of the prediction is Josephus, a Jewish historian, who is silent as to the prophecy of Jesus, if he even knew that the words had been spoken. Confirmatory evidence is obtained from Tacitus and other heathen writers, as well as from the Christian Eusebius.

The chief points of our Lord's prediction were—(1) the appearance and popularity of false Christs; (2) "wars and rumours of wars;" (3) "famines, pestilences, and earthquakes;" (4) fearful sights and great signs from
heaven; (5) persecution of His disciples; (6) the "Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world;" (7) Jerusalem encompassed by the Roman armies; (8) opportunity for flight; (9) the shortening of the time of tribulation; (10) "great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people;" (11) the slaughter and slavery of multitudes; (12) the complete destruction of the Temple; (13) "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." Centuries before Jesus uttered His predictions, prophets had sounded forth similar warnings. Specially had Moses, before the nation had a single city, foretold the siege and the consequent misery (Deut. xxviii. 49, etc.) One horrible detail must be mentioned: Moses foretells how starvation shall drive the besieged to feed on human flesh, and even the mother to kill and eat her babe. Micah adds a remarkable particular: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Zion shall be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps" (Jer. xxvi. 18; Mic. iii. 12).

It will be sufficient merely to mention the accomplishment of those parts of the predictions that relate to the time before the actual commencement of the siege. I will then give a short narrative of the siege, whence the fulfilment of the remaining portions of the predictions will be made clear.

(1) *False Christs.*—The names of three, Simon Magus, Dositheus, and Theudas, have been preserved. But so many appeared that Josephus says, "Felix [the procurator] apprehending many of them, day by day, caused them to be put to death." (2) The Emperor Caligula ordered a statue of himself to be erected in the Temple, and sent a detachment of troops to Jerusalem to enforce his command. The Jews protested by prayers
and entreaties to the general under whose immediate orders the soldiers were. But the expectation of war was so confident, that the fields were left uncultivated. For a considerable time Palestine and Syria were disturbed with internal dissensions, in which multitudes were slaughtered. "Italy was convulsed with contentions for the empire; and, as a proof of the troublous and warlike character of the period, within the brief space of two years, four emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, suffered death."—Dr. Keith. (3) Bishop Newton adduces abundant evidence of the widespread destitution caused by famine and pestilence; and he enumerates twelve earthquakes mentioned by profane historians. (4) Both Josephus and Tacitus relate several portents and prodigies, fearful sights and signs from heaven, as armies seen fighting in the clouds, voices heard in the Temple, etc. (5) As to persecutions, it is amply sufficient to instance that under Nero. (6) By the world, throughout which the Gospel was to be preached, we can hardly understand other than the Roman world. The labours of the Apostle Paul alone went far to accomplish the prediction. And it is universally admitted that by the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, the doctrine of the despised Nazarene had penetrated into every part of the Roman empire.

The warning of our Lord that Jerusalem would be encompassed with Roman armies, and that that investment would be the Divine signal for the flight of the Christians from the city, received a remarkable fulfilment. There could be no doubt that Roman armies were meant, as "the abomination of desolation" clearly indicated the eagles of the legions, their idolatrous standards. But if soldiers were encamped round the city, how could any
of the inhabitants escape? Some of the Christians had retired before the investment, influenced by other signs. But when Cestius Gallus laid siege to Jerusalem with a large force, and delivered two or three assaults with much success, it seemed as though all possibility of flight was closed. Indeed, a powerful party of traitors were prepared to open the gates to him, and had entered into negotiations with him on the subject. Suddenly, without visible motive, he broke up the siege, and commenced what proved to be a disastrous retreat. Thus the way was surprisingly opened for the exodus of the believers in Jesus. They took refuge in the little town of Pella, and not a hair of their heads perished. And the prayer they were instructed to pray was answered; their "flight" was "not in the winter."

When Vespasian became Emperor of Rome, A.D. 70, he despatched Titus to Judæa, with instructions to reduce the stronghold of the Jews, who had again rebelled against their masters. Vespasian himself had previously captured several of the fortresses of the country, and some feeble attempts had been made against the metropolis. For the sake of both expediency and honour, Titus prosecuted the siege with all possible speed, though the obstinate resistance of the Jews rendered it a work of time and difficulty. Nevertheless, his haste caused the days of that tribulation to be shortened. And the mad folly of the defenders of the city contributed greatly to the shortening. For they fought with each other, frustrated each other's counsels, and burnt huge stores of provision that would have enabled them to hold out much longer than they did. After having forced two of the walls with which Jerusalem was defended, and having made several unsuccessful efforts at storming the
third, Titus ordered the construction of a wall all round the city, which should effectually shut in the besieged and prevent any food from being conveyed to them. So were accomplished the sorrowful words of Jesus: "The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side" (Luke xix. 43).

The miseries of the city baffle description. Even before the investment by Titus, "the days of vengeance" had begun. Factions fought fiercely in the streets, and besieged each other in the Temple; houses were burnt down, and provisions destroyed; and the very altar of God was profaned with the blood of the slain. Of the state of the city before Titus had arrived in front of it, Josephus says: "They [the factions] agreed in nothing but this, to kill those that were innocent. The noise also of those that were fighting was incessant, both by day and by night; but the lamentations of those that mourned exceeded the other. Nor was there ever any occasion for them to leave off their lamentations, because their calamities came perpetually one upon another, although the deep consternation they were in prevented their outward wailing; but being constrained by their fear to conceal their inward passions, they were inwardly tormented, without daring to open their lips in groans. Nor was any regard paid to those that were still alive by their relations; nor was there any care taken of burial for those that were dead; the occasion of both which was this, that every one despaired of himself; for those that were not among the seditious had no great desires of anything, as expecting for certain that they should very soon be destroyed; but for the seditious themselves, they fought against each other, while they
trod upon the dead bodies as they lay heaped one upon another, and taking up a mad rage from those dead bodies that were under their feet, became the fiercer thereupon. They, moreover, were still inventing some-what or other that was pernicious against themselves; and when they had resolved upon anything, they executed it without mercy, and omitted no method of torment or of barbarity.” In one of the most furious of the party fights Annas, the high-priest by whom Jesus was condemned to death, is said to have been slain. Though for more than half a century he had been the foremost ruler in Jerusalem, though he belonged to a noble family, and had rendered great service to his countrymen during the troubles, his body was insulted in every possible way and then thrown contemptuously without the city to be eaten of dogs and wolves.

After the final siege had commenced, the miseries of the inhabitants of the once holy city grew keener. For a while the strong had food enough, which they forced from the hands of the weak by excruciating tortures. Those who could not protect themselves were reduced to the last extremities of starvation, till children would snatch food from their parents’ mouths. Very many stole out of the city by night to gather herbs and roots in the neighbouring valleys. Numbers were taken prisoners by the brutal Roman soldiery, who whipped them, put them to all kinds of torture, and then crucified them under the city walls, till “their multitude was so great that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanted for the bodies.” The encircling wall of Titus added to the terrors of the siege. Soon sustenance failed the most powerful. Of this time Josephus writes: “Now, of those that perished by famine in the city, the number
was prodigious, and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable; for if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did anywhere appear, a war was commenced presently; and the dearest friends fell a-fighting one with another about it, snatching from each other the most miserable supports of life. Nor would men believe that those who were dying had no food; for the robbers would search them when they were expiring, lest any one should have concealed food in their bosoms, and counterfeited dying: nay, these robbers gaped for want, and ran about stumbling and staggering along like mad dogs, and reeling against the doors of the houses like drunken men; they would also, in the great distress they were in, rush into the very same houses two or three times in one and the same day. Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable, that it obliged them to chew everything, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them; nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes; and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed: the very wisps of old hay became food to some; and some gathered up fibres, and sold a very small weight of them for four Attic drachmæ,” which were then worth at least as much as a sovereign is now.

Josephus then relates a horrible story of a noblewoman who killed and cooked and ate her sucking child. And again the Jewish historian testifies: “Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; the upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged; the children also, and the young men, wandered about
the market-places like shadows, all swelled with the famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them."

Let these quotations suffice to manifest the fearful calamities that came upon the Jews during the investment of their capital by Titus. After a siege of one hundred and forty-two days, Jerusalem fell into the conquering general's hands. The furious legionaries slew without distinction of age or sex, till they ceased their murderous task from sheer weariness. Christ's prophecy that the Jews should "fall by the edge of the sword" was certainly accomplished. It is calculated that one million one hundred thousand persons perished in the siege; and the tale would be increased by half a million if the Jews slaughtered in other parts of Palestine during the whole war were added to it. And vast multitudes were sold into slavery, and thus scattered over the known world, till slaves became a glut in the principal markets. Ninety-seven thousand persons were seized as slaves during or after the siege alone.

That all the predictions might be accomplished, it was necessary that the buildings of the city, and especially the Temple, should be destroyed. Spite of the remonstrances of Titus, the Temple was set on fire. And out of wanton mischief the Roman soldiers burnt down a very large portion of the town. By order of the general, all the fortifications were razed, except three towers and a small portion of the walls, left standing for the convenience of the Roman encampment. The Temple was utterly demolished. Treasures were discovered hidden in the foundations of some of the houses, and in the search for more the soldiers dug over almost the whole city. And Terentius Rufinus, who commanded the forces
Titus left behind him, tore up the foundations of the sanctuary with a ploughshare. Thus Jerusalem became a heap, and Zion was ploughed as a field. Since that terrible overthrow, Jerusalem has remained under the dominion of the Gentiles. And it will so remain "until the times of the Gentiles" are "fulfilled."

The prophecy of Micah had received an earlier fulfilment. Nebuchadnezzar so desolated the city that Jeremiah could complain that foxes were accustomed to walk upon Mount Zion. Nehemiah relates how Sanballat taunted those who were endeavouring to restore Jerusalem, "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" and how the bearers of burdens found their task too hard for them because of the dust into which their feet sank.

Still Zion continues ploughed as a field. Richardson, speaking of Mount Zion, testifies, "At the time I visited this sacred ground, one part of it supported a crop of barley, another was undergoing the labour of the plough, and the soil turned up consisted of stone and lime mixed with earth, such as is usually met with in the foundations of ruined cities." A later traveller confirms this witness: "On the south-east Zion slopes down, in a series of cultivated terraces, sharply though not abruptly to the sites of the king's gardens. . . . Here and round to the south the whole declivities are sprinkled with olive trees, which grow luxuriantly among the narrow slips of corn."

Thus the threatenings uttered by Moses, and by the Prophet greater than Moses, have received historical proof of their truth; and the argument from prophecy has another and most forcible illustration.
THE MESSIAH.

It is impossible to give within the compass of a short chapter even a summary of the Messianic prophecies. They run throughout the Old Testament, and are of many kinds and various degrees of clearness and definiteness. The utmost I can attempt is to exhibit a few of the more salient features of this long succession of predictions, and the fulfilment of those remarkable for their detail and precision.

The earliest of the Messianic prophecies was evoked by the Fall: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Thus from the first the eyes of sinful man were directed in hopeful expectancy to a coming Deliverer, or at least deliverance. The anticipation grows more defined as Jacob foretells, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."† It matters little how we translate the word Shiloh so long as we keep it in its rightful position as the nominative to the verb "come."‡ It must designate a person. This becomes clearer as Moses points to the Prophet

* Gen. iii. 15.
† Gen. xlvi. 10.
‡ Shiloh has been interpreted as equivalent to "He who is to be
whom God should raise up from the midst of Israel.* Again and again in the Psalms we find allusions to a Righteous Sufferer and an Everlasting King which undeniably look in the same direction. But it is not until we reach the great prophets whose writings have been preserved to us in the canonical Scriptures that we see the strength and the completeness of the Messianic predictions. We will look first at a few specimens of specific prophecies.

I.—PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

The finger of prophecy indicated with unmistakable directness the time when the Christ should be born. Two extreme limits were fixed, the one by the prophet Malachi, the other by the prophet Daniel. Malachi (iii. 1) declared that "the Lord . . . shall suddenly come to His temple." The advent therefore must take place while the Temple was standing; it could not happen after the destruction of Jerusalem. Nor could the Messiah appear before the establishment of the Roman empire, for Daniel foretold that it should be "in the days of these kings"—those ruling the fourth empire—that "the God of heaven" would "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Perhaps the prophecy of Jacob concerning Shiloh fixes the date more exactly. Many expositors, from the Fathers downwards, have seen in the degradation of Judæa into a province of Syria, which occurred when Jesus was about twelve years of age, the departure of the sceptre from Judah.

* Deut. xviii. 15.
 Others believe that the rule of Judah continued till the destruction of Jerusalem, when the last vestige of the Jewish civil government disappeared. In either case the confession "We have no king but Cæsar" affords a striking comment upon the prophecy; the sceptre had already departed or was in the act of departing when such words could be spoken with truth. The most precise prediction of the times of the Messiah is given in the Book of Daniel: "Seventy weeks [periods of seven] are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and prophecy, and to anoint a holy of holies [or the Most Holy]. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah a Prince shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off; but not for himself [literally, "and shall not be to him"—i.e., perhaps, the people shall not be to him; he shall be rejected by the nation]. And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be in a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and upon the summit of abomination [or, upon the wing of the Temple there shall be abomination] shall be the desolater, even unto the consummation, and that which is determined shall pour itself upon the desolate" (ix. 24—27).
The phraseology of this prophecy is by no means easy to understand, and it is not possible to calculate the periods referred to with perfect certainty. There is no doubt that the "weeks" represent periods of seven years, that therefore the seventy weeks signify four hundred and ninety years, divided into three periods of forty-nine, four hundred and eighty-three \( (7 + 62 = 69; 69 \times 7 = 483) \), and seven years. It is tolerably sure that the prediction "Messiah shall be cut off" refers to the Crucifixion. But it is not clear from what date we are to start and to what date we are to carry our calculation. Subordinate difficulties abound: e.g., does the statement "he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease" indicate the time when the typical offerings ought to have ceased, i.e., when they ceased to have any value, to be acceptable to God, because the sacrifice which they preadumbrated had been actually offered? or does it point to the time when the daily sacrifice in the Temple did literally cease to be slain and to be burnt upon the altar? The principal questions, however, concern the terminus from which and the terminus to which the four hundred and ninety or the four hundred and eighty-three years are counted. What decree is intended by "the commandment to build and to restore Jerusalem" with its street and wall? Two decrees of Artaxerxes Longimanus may be considered to satisfy the conditions, leaving out of sight two earlier decrees of his predecessors. One was given in the seventh year of his reign to Ezra (Ezra vii.); the other in the twentieth year of his reign to Nehemiah (Neh. i. 1, 2; ii. 5). If we were able to decide definitely between these two commandments, the uncertainty as to our starting-point would not vanish, because we are insufficiently acquainted with the chronology of Artaxerxes' reign. Nor do we know
with absolute accuracy the dates of our Lord's birth and
death. At first sight these doubts might seem to deprive
the prophecy of all present value. It is remarkable, how-
ever, that on the strength of this prediction the Jews
were excitedly expecting the advent of the Messiah at
the very time when Jesus Christ was born.

Moreover, the extreme limits between which this pro-
phecy, referring it to one of the decrees of Longimanus, can
oscillate, enclose a space of barely thirty years. Within
this space beyond all question Jesus Christ was crucified.
Surely we have here evidence of foresight not less than
Divine.* That we cannot demonstrate the fulfilment of
the prediction to a single year does not prevent the
Christian's believing that it was so fulfilled, while the
indications it plainly affords of the date of the Messiah's
life upon earth possess no little argumentative weight.

Other prophecies declare the family to which the
Messiah should belong. The promise first given to
Abraham was repeated to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then
to the tribe of Judah. The narrowing process continues
until the house of David is chosen, and it is announced
that the Messiah will come of his royal line: "Behold,"
says Jeremiah (xxiii. 5), "the days come, saith the Lord,
that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a
King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement

* Date the twentieth year of Artaxerxes B.C. 455 and the Crucifixion
A.D. 29, and you have the precise period of 483 years. For the correct-
ness of these two dates there is a large amount of cogent evidence.
Another calculation makes A.D. 29 the year of our Lord's entrance upon
His public ministry, the Crucifixion following about three and a half
years (the exact half-week) later. But other dates and other limits
cannot be set aside positively. Nevertheless Daniel's prophecy indicates
to us the fulness of the time with sufficient precision to convince us
of its supernatural authorship.
and justice on the earth." Distinct predictions such as this and many passages connecting the Messianic glories with the name of David * taught the Jews to expect confidently that the Messiah would be "the Son of David." Everyone admits that Jesus of Nazareth was of the house and lineage of David. During and immediately after His life His adversaries did not dispute it, and the Gospels contain two genealogies each tracing His descent from David. Probably these were copied or condensed from carefully-preserved rolls, accessible to the public. Their substantial genuineness is beyond denial. Prophecies of Christ's royal blood might seem to conflict with those that described His position as one of lowliness and obscurity. Yet in His birth of the Virgin Mary these opposite demands were met. David belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and Shiloh appears to be promised to Judah. Yet here again history justified the seemingly contradictory statements of prophecy, for after the return from the Captivity, Judah absorbed Benjamin. All the known children of Abraham were denominated Jews.

Micah (v. 2) foretold the place in which the Messiah should be born: "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." The Jews understood this prophecy to relate to the birth of the Messiah; and so assured were they of its meaning and application that they quoted it to Herod as decisive of the question (Matt. ii. 5; see also John vii. 41, 42). We may remind ourselves that

* See Amos ix. 11, Isa. lx. 3, 4; Matt. xxii. 42; Acts xv. 13—18, xiii. 34; Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8. Mark that St. Paul assumes the Davidic descent of Jesus as a fact unquestioned.
our Lord's mother dwelt at Nazareth, and that but for the taxing under Cyrenius her Son would, humanly speaking, have been born in Galilee. We can hardly fail to note the chain of remarkable circumstances through which this simple prophecy was accomplished.

 Isa. lii. 13 to liii. 12. These verses contain a very remarkable description of the Servant of Jehovah, who obviously had not appeared when it was written. They are then essentially predictive. We may safely assume the identity of the Servant of Jehovah with the Messiah;* at any rate, we shall see that these prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus, who is called the Christ. These predictions present a succession of contrasts. The Servant is Himself righteous, guiltless, yet He suffers, and for sin. He shall be "high and exalted and lofty exceedingly"—"Kings shall shut their mouths because of Him" (in astonishment and reverence); yet He shall have "no form nor beauty," and shall be "despised and rejected of men." "He was taken from prison and from judgement" (margin, "away by distress and judgement," i.e., by a wrongful decision of a court), yet "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;" it was Jehovah Who "put Him to grief." He dies, and His grave is appointed with the wicked and with the rich, yet afterwards He sees His seed and prolongs His days, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand. Though He is "numbered with the rebellious," He "makes many righteous." He is oppressed and afflicted unjustly, yet all is borne with perfect patience and of His own free will.

It is impossible to study this picture and to compare it with the person and life and work of Jesus Christ without being impressed with the complete resemblance.

* See below.
Nay, the statements are unintelligible and irreconcilable if they are applied to any other than He. Grant for argument's sake that you may find—though this has never been done—a righteous sufferer who, without sin of his own, voluntarily endures the punishment of Israel's transgression; you have yet to explain how this imaginary being was a sin-offering, how he was exalted above the kings of the earth, and how after his death he could prolong his days and perform Jehovah's pleasure. Mark again the repeated and emphatic assertions of the vicarious nature of the suffering,* and say what else can account for them than the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. Extended comment is needless; every feature of this marvellous description has its counterpart in Christ, and in Him alone. He harmonises its apparent contradictions. It sets forth, as only the determinate foreknowledge and counsel of God could, His character, His trial, His death, His atonement, His resurrection and ascension, and the salvation that comes through faith in His name.

II.—PROPHECIES FULFILLED UPON THE CROSS.

Certain prophecies were accomplished while the body of the Lord Jesus actually hung upon the cross. These we may study in some little detail. The picture painted by Isaiah is too vast and magnificent for us to examine in these pages.

"That the Scripture might be fulfilled;" so St. John explains the motive of one of the Seven Words from the Cross. When the hours of His mortal agony were well-

* The fifteen verses contain twelve distinct assertions of the vicarious nature of the sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah. The reader may search them with profit.
nigh over, the Saviour yet lingered, because a prophecy remained to be performed. "Knowing that all things were now accomplished" which depended upon the hands of others alone, Jesus speaks, that the one prophecy unfulfilled might be transformed into history; and then, with the loud shout of triumph and the bowed head of submission, He gives up the ghost. At the beginning of that very week He had fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah that the King should come to Jerusalem riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass, and so announced Himself as the Messiah; and almost His last act previous to His death accomplishes, of set purpose, the sayings of the seers.

Let us ponder, then, the prophecies accomplished while Christ was actually on the cross. General prophecies relating to the Messiah as Sacrifice and Sin-bearer, and to His violent death, we will not again dwell on; but we will notice only certain predictions of details of the Crucifixion:—

When the cruel nails were driven in that fastened Jesus to the wood, the words of the Psalmist were fulfilled, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalm xxii. 16); and when the cross of Jesus was erected between the crosses of the thieves, that prophecy received a fresh fulfilment which had already been accomplished in the arrest and trial and condemnation of the Innocent One and the preference of a murderer to Him: "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. liii. 12). And the Christian cannot but connect with Isaiah's following words, "and made intercession for the transgressors," the touching prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The cross is fixed in the ground, and the careless
soldiers, utterly indifferent to the Victim's agony, turn
to divide the spoils of their shameful office. Before
Jesus had been nailed to the tree, He had been stripped
nearly naked. As in England formerly, so with the
Romans then, the clothes of the executed criminal were
the perquisite of the executioners. A quaternion of
soldiers had been detailed to carry out Pilate's sentence.
The partition causes no difficulty till they reach "the
cloak." "Now the cloak was without seam, woven from
the top throughout." It is not certain what garment
"coat" designates, whether the abba, the outer garment,
or the tunic, the under-garment. The abba is "a simple
woollen mantle,... nearly square, reaching from the
shoulders to the calf of the leg, or even the ankles, and
about as wide as long. A square sack, having in front
a slit from top to bottom, a hole at the top for the neck,
and a slit on each side for the arms, would give a good
idea of this unshapely but useful article of dress.
Garments of the kind indicated are of various qualities
and texture. Some are very light and fine, with
embroidery in silk, silver or gold on the breast and
between the shoulders; but the common sort are coarse
and heavy, commonly with alternate stripes, a foot wide,
of blue and white, or brown and white, but frequently
all black or brown. Except in the finest sorts, the seam
is conspicuous and unsightly, which must be one reason
why those without seam are preferred."—Dr. Kitto.
Josephus describes a tunic worn by the high-priest.
He says: "This vesture was not composed of two pieces,
nor was it sewed together upon the shoulders and the
sides. It reached from the neck to the feet, and was
fastened round the throat with a clasp. It was also
parted where the hands were to come out." The common
priests are said to have worn a somewhat similar article of apparel. Tunic or abba, the "coat" was the most valuable piece of our Lord's clothing. The soldiers hesitate to assign it to any one of them; and to tear it would be to deprive it of its worth. "Let us not rend it," say they, "but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." To this all agree, and the lots are cast. Perhaps the lots are placed in the helmet of one of the guard, and shaken till one falls out. Thus is performed another prediction: "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture" (Psalm xxii. 18). "These things therefore the soldiers did," adds St. John: the heathen soldiers, ignorant of the Old Testament, and unconscious that this action of theirs had been foretold many centuries before their birth.

Doubtless, from the time of His severe scourging, Jesus had felt the burning thirst that comes with torture and is often more intolerable than the torture itself. The soldier wounded upon the battle-field complains more of his thirst than of his wound; the wretch broken upon the wheel would cry for water when he had ceased to beg for mercy. In our Lord's case, the desire for drink must have increased with terrible speed. He had refused the "wine mingled with myrrh," which would have relieved His parched throat and deadened His sensibility. Now that the termination of the conflict is visible to Him, He confesses, "I thirst." A vessel containing the acid drink of the soldiers stood near. One of them dipped a sponge into it and lifted it on a stalk of hyssop to Jesus. The stalk might be a foot and a half in length, and the cross was never unnecessarily elevated, so that Jesus' mouth
was easily reached. The sixty-ninth Psalm had said (ver. 21), "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."

The shout of triumph, "It is finished," had concluded the mortal struggle. Yes, the agony was over. The hour of darkness had passed; the power of darkness had been broken for ever. The rent veil had proclaimed that the types and shadows were fulfilled; that which is perfect had come, that which was in part was done away. The Sacrifice was offered once for all; the Atonement was completed; the Redemption of man achieved.

The body of the Saviour did not remain long upon the cross after the spirit had reached the Father's hands, into which Christ had commended it. Joseph of Arimathea hastened to Pilate to beg the body, then hastened to Calvary to remove it from its position of shame, and to bury it as reverently and honourably as the near approach of the Sabbath allowed. But short as was the time, in it were fulfilled two prophecies; and we contrast with wonder the centuries of preparation and the moments of performance. The Romans usually left crucified criminals to die a lingering death, and their corpses to decompose on the cross. The Mosaic law positively forbade that the body should remain a single night upon the tree (Deut. xxi. 22, 23). Zealous for the letter of the law while they violated its spirit, the Jews besought the governor to kill the crucified outright. The law must be kept on so "high" a day as the ensuing Sabbath. It was not unusual to inflict the crucifragium, or fracture of the leg, upon criminals, either as a separate punishment, or to accelerate death while diminishing the pain as little as possible.
The Jews asked that this should be done to Jesus and the malefactors that suffered with Him. Pilate acceded to the request, nothing loth to bury out of his sight the tokens of his weakness and sin. Accordingly, soldiers crushed the ankles or insteps of the two thieves with iron mallets. Finding that Jesus was dead, "they brake not His legs." But one of them, actuated perhaps by malignity or by some unaccountable, uncontrollable impulse, or more likely by his desire to put the death of Jesus beyond all doubt—to kill Him if He were only in a deep swoon—stretched forth his spear and violently thrust it into Christ's side. "These things," adds St. John, "were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him Whom they pierced."

The first of the texts quoted by the Evangelist occurs in a slightly different form in Exodus xii. 46, where it is commanded of the paschal lamb, "neither shall ye break a bone thereof." The prophecy of symbol was accomplished as truly as the prophecy of word. The second text came from the mouth of Zechariah, who, foretelling the effect of the outpouring "upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem," of "the spirit of grace and of supplications," declares, in the name of the Lord, "And they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (xii. 10). The piercing has been performed; and by multitudes of Jews, from apostolic times to our own, the mourning. But the full significance of the latter prediction remains to be unfolded.
THE MESSIAH.

Who that studies the correspondence between prophecy and event—even in the four instances just referred to—can doubt that Jesus is the very Christ, that of Him the Law and the Prophets spake? They could not have been fulfilled except by means of a heathen power. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment. Had Jesus been stoned to death, the hands and feet and side would not have been pierced, but the bones would have been broken. Had He been slain by the hands of His own nation, the garments would have been accounted accursed, and no hired executioners would have parted and cast lots for them. And the torture would not have endured so long as to produce the thirst. Only He to whom all things are naked and open, the vast and the minute, the order of empires and the hearts of the obscurest men, could have foretold details which depended for their realization upon the rise and fall of kingdoms, and upon the secret workings of the minds of individuals about apparently trivial things. The prophecies prove both that the Babe born in Bethlehem was the Lamb of God “slain from the foundation of the world,” and that He Who uttered the predictions is the Omniscient, in Whose sight Past, Present, and Future are alike visible.

It is needless to point out how enormously the force of these considerations is increased when we take into account the entire word of prophecy concerning the Messiah, with its numberless instances of correspondence between prediction and event. Observe that these coincidences relate not merely to minute particulars, but to broad and general features as well. The details occur as part of wider representations, in which they hold their appropriate places. Predictions of specific incidents were
not recorded simply that a comparison between them and the events might indicate to future ages the Messiah when He appeared or after He had been offered upon the tree. They were given for the instruction of the generations that heard them, to stimulate the faith and hope of the Church that waited for the Christ.

The atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ and its results were prefigured by types as well as by verbal prophecy. The whole sacrificial worship of the Old Testament was arranged by Divine wisdom so as to foreshadow the one Perfect Sacrifice. Take an illustration or two drawn from the more prominent ceremonies of the Levitical ritual.

The very centre of the Mosaic ceremonial law was the sacrifice in which life was destroyed, blood was sprinkled, and flesh was burned. For our present purpose we may confine our attention to the sin-offering and the red heifer. Between these and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ it would be easy to trace a minute correspondence. In the second case, the directions concerning which are found in the former half of Numbers xix., the analogy might be drawn as follows:

The colour denoted either our Lord’s manhood—clay being the substance of which the first man’s body was formed, and red being the meaning of the name Adam—or His passion, red being the hue of blood. The sex of the heifer typified the infirmity of His human nature Who was “crucified through weakness.” As the animal was without blemish, so He was free from sin; its yoke had never come upon His neck. That Eleazar, not Aaron, directed the ceremony intimated the changeful character of the Levitical priesthood. As all Israel brought the
heifer to Eleazar, so the whole Jewish nation consented to Christ's death. The beast was slain without the camp, so Jesus suffered outside the city of Jerusalem. As the heifer was killed not by the priest, but by another in his sight, so Jesus was put to death at the demand of the Hebrew hierarchy, but by means of the Roman power. As the entire animal was burnt, so Christ was a complete sacrifice, offering both body and soul, His whole being, to God. The ashes collected and preserved could be used time after time, were practically inexhaustible; so is the Atonement permanently efficacious. The legal uncleanness of all who took part in the ceremony showed the imperfection of the Mosaic dispensation, taught that all these things were but shadows of a reality that had not yet appeared.

Without committing ourselves to the assertion that this contrast has caught the exact significance of each incident in the ritual of the red heifer, we may admit that it furnishes a sufficiently remarkable parallel—one that could scarcely be possible unless it had been designed from the first.

The typical meaning of the sin-offering on some points coincides precisely with that of the red heifer. We perceive, however, this difference, that the sin-offering atones not merely for unavoidable uncleanness and involuntary transgression, but for actual, wilful sin. On the Day of Atonement two victims were required to set forth the significance of the ceremonial. One was sacrificed; the other, "the scapegoat," bore the sins of Israel away, removing transgression from them as far as the east is from the west.* On that day, too, the high-

* I have adopted the ordinary interpretation of "the scapegoat." I am
priest entered the holy of holies and, having filled the place with incense, sprinkled the blood of the victim before and upon the mercy-seat.

The true significance of all this the Epistle to the Hebrews points out; it regards the entrance of the high-priest into the most holy place as typical of the ascension and intercession of our Lord: "Within the veil . . . Jesus entered for us, having become a High-priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." "Christ having come a High-priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us" (Heb. vi. 19, 20; ix. 11, 12, 24). The purpose for which He "hath passed through the heavens" (and therefore into the highest heaven) is no less clearly declared: He "ever liveth to make intercession for" us (Heb. iv. 14; vii. 25).

Observe that these remarks of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews explain facts vouched for by sober history. Once the meaning of the type is revealed to us, we can notice its appropriateness and perceive in that an argument for its truth. Thus there is foreshadowed the death, the atonement, the ascension (by consequence, the resurrection), and the intercession of our blessed Lord. We may well pause and ask ourselves if so close, so pregnant a correspondence could be of less than Divine origin.

far from being satisfied that it is correct. The prophetic significance is not affected by other views of the exact meaning of the rite.
THE MESSIAH.

We may remind ourselves, however, that as types had foreshadowed the Ascension, so verbal prophecy had foretold it. The two most remarkable predictions proceeded from the harp of King David. In the twenty-fourth Psalm he sang exultingly:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.

The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."—Ver. 7—10.

If this Psalm merely accompanied the entrance of the ark to the long-forsaken tabernacle, it is almost impossible to account for the assertion that the Person demanding admission is "the Lord of hosts;" and it is quite impossible to account for the twice-repeated phrase, "ye everlasting doors." The Church has ever seen in this chant reference to the Ascension. As Christ passed into the heavens, the eternal gates rolled back, nor shall they ever be closed. A multitude that no man can number, the nations of the redeemed, out of every clime and country, shall enter in through the gates into the city, that the Firstborn may stand among many brethren.

St. Paul has removed all doubt as to the application of the second prediction. In the sixty-eighth Psalm, with sudden and suggestive change from the second to the third person, David addresses an invisible Auditor:

"Thou hast ascended on high,
Thou hast led captivity captive:
Thou hast received gifts for men; 
Yea, for the rebellious also, 
That the Lord God might dwell among them."—Ver. 18.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle quotes these words with a slight alteration that amounts to an inspired comment. He tells that He Who received gifts for men gave gifts unto men. But this no way invalidates the force or the cogency of the predictions.

A portion of the sacrifice frequently was eaten by the officiating priests and by the offerers. The Passover lamb was consumed as a family meal. Herein we have a preadumbration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and of the truth that Jesus Christ is Himself the Bread of life, the spiritual food of those that believe on Him.

Readers who ponder carefully the correspondences mentioned in this chapter will probably be satisfied that they really exist and supply evidence of an omniscient and omnipotent design. From the vast mass of Messianic prophecy I have selected a few predictions which admit of being compared sharply and separately with the history that followed them. These are the easiest to trace, the quickest to be perceived, the most susceptible of pictorial illustration. There are those, however, who refuse to acknowledge the cogency of the argument drawn from these coincidences. They declare, in effect, that the coincidences themselves are simply fortuitous or that they have no existence except in the fancy of him who beholds them. To us the attempt to explain away clear resemblances too numerous and definite to be the effect of chance or mistake seems wholly unsuccessful. Upon
the reasons alleged for this destructive criticism I have already said* all that the plan of this volume allows; but it may be useful to sketch briefly that which it is compelled to leave.

In the first place, it is beyond all doubt that the Jews for many centuries before Christ believed in a Messiah who should appear in due season, and that, in later times at any rate, they professed to find their belief upon the teaching of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

Secondly, no question can be made that the Old Testament contains descriptions of a Great and Righteous King to come. Many of the references to Him are couched in language which could not with any propriety be applied to an earthly monarch and his kingdom, e.g., "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed."†

Thirdly, the Old Testament certainly portrays a Righteous Sufferer, whose pains are in the strictest sense vicarious. The passages cited from Isaiah liii. and in noting the prophecies fulfilled upon the cross, especially when regarded in the connection in which they originally stand, furnish ample proof of this assertion.

Nor is this all. The reader of the prophecies cannot fail to perceive—what indeed the stoutest opponent of the Christian faith does not dispute—that the prophets look forward to the establishment of an Universal Religion, which shall include both Jews and Gentiles;

* See Introduction.
† Ps. lxxii. 11, 12, 17. See also Ps. cx., cxxxii., Isa. ix., xl., etc.
of a Spiritual Religion, which shall have its seat in the heart, not in ritual and ceremony. Every one who believes in religion at all acknowledges that Christianity is such an Universal and Spiritual Religion. But we have now to do only with strictly Messianic prophecy.

A suffering, a martyrred Messiah; a victorious and ever-reigning Messiah! How are we to reconcile these apparently contradictory ideas? The difficulty was so serious that the Jews, in despair of solving it, adopted the theory of two Messiahs, of whom one should suffer and the other reign. Yet in Jesus Christ both qualifications meet, and only in Jesus Christ. Placing prediction and performance over against each other in this bold and bare manner, is it possible to account for the correspondence except by reference to the inspiration of God? Mark how large a space the Messianic hope fills, how mighty a force it exercises in the Old Testament. Whence did it arise? It is incredible that it should have been a human invention. But if it was, why was it not disappointed? Observe, too, the manner of the fulfilment, such as no human foresight could or did discover. Accepting for the moment nothing more than rationalistic criticism is obliged to allow us, we are driven to call in the aid of Divine foreknowledge and counsel to account for it. The consequences of this admission have been indicated in the Introduction. At least it is manifest that God spake by the prophets; and if so, no coincidence between prediction and event, however broad the picture, however minute the detail, need surprise us.
THE PROPHECIES OF THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

THE Epistles to the Seven Asiatic Churches are not, strictly speaking, prophecies. Nevertheless, as these Seven Epistles relate to the future, and display the foreknowledge of the Omniscient, their contents add to that department of the evidences of Christianity which is called the evidence from prophecy. Though scarcely prophecies in form, they are closely allied to prophecies.

Let us glance at each of these Epistles, and note how the subsequent history of the Churches to which they were sent, compared with the Inspired Letters, illustrates and proves the omniscience of Him Who sees the end from the beginning:—

_Ephesus._—To the angel of the Church of Ephesus John was commanded to write: "Repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." When the banished Apostle penned these words upon his rocky islet, Ephesus was a prosperous and wealthy city, with a flourishing Christian Church. It was the chief seat of the worship of Diana, and its magnificent temple to her was one of the wonders of the world. The colonnades that led to the shrine wherein
was deposited the image which all Asia and the world honoured, rested upon a forest of one hundred and twenty-seven columns, each said to have been the gift of a king. Statuary and paintings by the foremost sculptors and artists of Greece adorned its corridors; and its riches were beyond all computation. The amphitheatre of the city could accommodate twenty thousand persons. To the Christian, its connection with the Apostles John and Paul gives it a very high interest. One of the epistles of the latter is known as that to the Ephesians, and from Ephesus the First Epistle to the Corinthians was addressed. In its splendid amphitheatre he, "after the manner of men, . . . fought with beasts," and over its church he placed his own son in the faith. Uniform tradition makes Ephesus the place where the disciple whom Jesus loved tarried till his Lord came, and to this day the name of the wretched village where herd the few inhabitants who live in the vicinity of the once populous town bears witness to the belief that "St. John the Divine" once lived at Ephesus. It is called Ayasolouk—a corruption of hagios theologos, the Greek title St. John received in the Eastern Church, meaning "the holy theologian."

The present condition of Ephesus is one of utter ruin; it is now literally without an inhabitant. Dr. Tristram, one of the most recent travellers to the sites of the Seven Churches, quotes the prophecies concerning Babylon as best conveying the impression of desolation the ruins made upon him. God has stretched "out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." Repeatedly spoiled by the invaders of the later Roman empire, its destruction was completed by the Turks in 1312. In the last century a few miserable peasants
haunted the ruins, but now even they have deserted them; the very sea has withdrawn from the city as if in horror, and the place over which heavily-laden ships sailed to the great trade-mart is now a "pestilential morass, covered with mud and rushes." Another recent traveller testifies, "This once famous city is now a mass of ruins."

_Smyrna._—The message sent to the Church at Smyrna from Him who walketh in the midst of the candlesticks, by "His servant John," contains no threatening. In apostolic times Smyrna was the rival of Ephesus; the two were called "the eyes of Asia." The latter city is void and desolate; the former is one of the most flourishing towns in the Turkish empire. It is "still the centre of the trade of the Levant." Its population exceeds one hundred and sixty thousand persons, of whom half are nominally Christians, and the Moslems interfere but little with the free exercise of their religion. The town necessarily suffered its share in the calamities which befell Asia Minor, as Persian and Roman and Greek and Turk struggled for its possession; but prosperity ever returned to the city after misfortunes which might well have crushed it. The Spirit forewarned the angel of the Church in Smyrna: "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days;" but the same Spirit promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" and exhorted, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." The ten days' tribulation received its accomplishment in the persecution under Diocletian, which endured precisely ten years, and Smyrna felt its utmost fury. And we cannot but connect the promise of a crown of life to the faithful unto death with
the glorious martyrdom of Polycarp. Indeed, there is little room for doubt that that saint was the "angel unto whom the words of cheer were spoken. "Eighty and six years," said the aged Christian to the proconsul who tried to persuade him to "revile Christ"—"eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me wrong: how, then, can I revile my King and my Saviour?" So, steadfast in the faith, he won his martyr's crown, and passed to heaven through the fire.

*Pergamos.*—The Church in Pergamum received neither the commendation of that in Smyrna, nor the condemnation of that in Ephesus. The threatening ran: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth;" but it was not said that the candlestick should be removed out of its place. Accordingly we find that whether we regard the city itself, or the position of Christianity therein, there is not the prosperity of Smyrna, or the desolation of Ephesus. At one time Pergamum could show a church with every external mark of success. The ruins of the cathedral of St. John evince its former stateliness, and another ancient church is now used as the principal mosque. Bergama, the ancient Pergamum, has between twenty and thirty thousand inhabitants. Bishop Newton declared: "There are not in the whole town above a dozen or fifteen families of miserable Christians, who till the ground to gain their bread, and live in the most abject and sordid servitude." Matters must have somewhat improved since Bishop Newton's day, as Dr. Tristram estimates the Christian population of Bergama at about four thousand. But he adds that "under the dominant Turkish race they have never enjoyed the comparative freedom of worship permitted to their brethren.
in Smyrna and Philadelphia. One mean and inconspicuous building is the only church, and even there the worship is often hushed, lest it should exasperate an outburst of fanaticism."

Thyatira.—The letter to Thyatira is, so far as threatening is concerned, very similar to that to Pergamos, but the words of warning are more plainly addressed to only a portion of its Church-members. At the present time its inhabitants are fewer than those of Pergamos, but a larger proportion of them are Christians, and they are permitted to serve the true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent, without much molestation from their Mohammedan masters. The trade of Lydia, who was "a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira," is still the staple industry of the town; its scarlet cloths "are considered superior to any others furnished by Asia Minor; and large quantities are sent weekly to Smyrna for the purposes of commerce."

Sardis.—"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Such was the judgement of the Great Head of the Church upon the Church in Sardis. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee;" such was the doom foretold to the decaying Church, whose outer life was active and vigorous, whose inner life was ready to expire. Sardis had once been the wealthy and powerful capital of the Lydian kingdom, but had long fallen from its metropolitan estate. Under the Roman government it occupied no mean position; and magnificent ruins testify to its former splendour. The remains are few; earthquake, and fire, and wanton destruction by the hand of man have done their work too effectively to leave much standing; but there is ample proof that
Sardis could once boast of architectural glories. Now the Christian Church has utterly perished. "No Christians reside on the spot," one traveller witnesses. Another writes: "If I were asked what impresses the mind most strongly in beholding Sardis, I should say, its indescribable solitude, like the darkness of Egypt, darkness that could be felt. So the deep solitude of the spot, once the 'lady of kingdoms,' produces a corresponding feeling of desolate abandonment in the mind, which can never be forgotten." Canon Tristram thus describes the scene: "For acre after acre the soil, luxuriant in its growth of thistles and thorny shrubs, is strewn with carved stone and marble fragments. Here and there a mass of brickwork, a crumbling arch, or a broken column, tells the story of a perished splendour; but the existing signs of human occupation are confined to a water-mill and two or three wretched little hovels."

Philadelphia.—Unmingled approbation did He bestow upon the Church in Philadelphia. Who knew the works of all the churches; and He promised to keep its members in "the hour of temptation." Bishop Newton thinks that "the hour of temptation" signifies the time of the Moslem government. Whether the Bishop's interpretation be correct or not, the faithfulness of Philadelphia to Christianity has excited the admiration of even the infidel historian Gibbon. He narrates the conquest of Asia Minor by the Turks, and subjoins this striking passage: "The captivity or ruin of the seven churches of Asia was consummated, and the barbarous lords of Ionia and Lydia still trample on the monuments of classic and Christian antiquity. In the loss of Ephesus the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel—the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation. The desolation is com-
The Seven Churches of Asia.
THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

plete; and the temple of Diana or the church of Mary* will equally elude the search of the curious traveller. The circus and three stately theatres of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes; Sardis is reduced to a miserable village; the god of Mahomet, without a rival or a son, is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamos; and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians. Philadelphia alone has been saved, by prophecy or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above four-score years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins—a pleasing example that the paths of honour and safety may sometimes be the same.”† This testimony, all the more remarkable because of phrases that only an unbeliever could have used, might alone suffice to manifest how closely the history of Philadelphia corresponds with the Divine promise. Even Tamerlane spared the city, after he had taken it by storm. A Christian traveller says: “The circumstance that Philadelphia is now called Allah-Shehr, ‘the city of God,’ when viewed in connection with the promises made to that church, and especially with that of writing the name of the city of God upon its faithful members, is, to say the least, a singular occurrence.” The Turkish name certainly shows that those who gave it believed that Philadelphia was

* Since this was written excavations have been made at Ephesus which have established the site of Diana’s temple beyond all doubt.

† Gibbon cannot forbear a sneer, in a note to this passage, at those who see in the preservation of Philadelphia any fulfilment of Christ’s promise. The sneer is evidence that the historian felt the force of the argument.
under the special protection of God. Canon Tristram, who visited the city very recently, writes of its present state: "Of the whole population, which is about fifteen thousand, fully one-third are Christians of the Greek Church. There is still a bishop of Philadelphia, and about fifteen churches are now belonging to that communion. The Christians have still the free exercise of their religion, and are permitted to ring their church bells, and to have religious processions in the streets—a privilege accorded to no other town in Asia Minor."

Laodicea.—As Philadelphia ranks first in praise, so Laodicea sinks deepest in blame. Not a single syllable of approbation relieves the weight of censure. Laodicea was once a flourishing city, caring rather for wealth and luxury than for prosperity of a less tangible sort. It said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Laid in ruins by an earthquake in the year 64, it, alone of all the towns in that part of Asia, recovered from its own sole resources. "At length," says Bishop Lightfoot, "the name of this primitive apostolic church passes wholly out of sight. The Turkish conquest pressed with more than common severity on these districts. When the day of visitation came, the Church was taken by surprise." Now, as Canon Tristram testifies, "Nothing can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea. ... The very ruins themselves are, like the hills, featureless masses of conglomerate, from whence all the marble facings have been torn by Turkish grave-stone cutters, leaving the relics of fair temples reduced to the débris of a stone quarry." The place, though utterly without inhabitants, is still marked by its Turkish name, Eski Hissar, i.e., 'Old Castle;' and of ruins, enough are left to attest its ancient grandeur in the
heaps of its vast stadium, its aqueducts, bridges, theatre, and gymnasium. In desolation it passes even Sardis. The stone-cutter never comes but for the day, and hurries back to Denisli. The pasturage is poor, and it is only in spring that even a gipsy-tent may occasionally be seen, while the flocks are grazing on the early herbage. Wolves, foxes, and "deadly serpents" haunt the ruins. The ruins themselves are gradually disappearing, as stone is carried away to neighbouring villages. A very few Christians still live in the village of Denisli, where their ancestors took refuge when, about 1230, the Ottomans sacked Laodicea, and put all its inhabitants, except a handful who made good their escape, to the sword.

Let the reader mark the different fates of the seats of the Seven Churches of Asia, compare them with the Seven Epistles, and then decide how threatening, promise, and event could so minutely agree—our enemies being judges—unless the Letters are indeed the infallible Word of God.
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