

ARTICLE VII.

THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND MESSIANIC
PROPHECY.

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THE prominent place given to prophecy in the Bible makes a right conception of its character and purpose a matter of the greatest importance. "The moral instruction it contains, the great events it announces, the revelation of the divine character and of the nature, establishment, and purpose of the kingdom of God which it affords,—all combine to invest prophecy with the profoundest interest." This estimate applies with special point and force to Messianic prophecy, because of its relation to the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the fullness of time "came to seek and to save that which was lost."

There are two extremes that should be avoided in the study and exposition of prophecy. One class finds in the Bible more minute predictions and literal fulfillments than a sober and scholarly exegesis will justify. They almost assume to be prophets themselves, by the confidence and minuteness with which they apply predictions of Scripture to past and future history. Another class of expositors either repudiate supernatural prediction of future events, or silently ignore it, and substitute an ideal paraphrase of biblical prediction and fulfillment, which is based upon a theory of evolution that does not seem to require the direct action of a living personal God to account for prophets or prophecy. We are not shut up to the acceptance of either of these extremes. We are simply bound to accept as act-

ual prediction and fulfillment whatever is proved by proper evidence, and is in harmony with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Those who make a hobby of such minute and literal interpretations and applications of prophecy are fairly open to condemnatory criticism. But it is not just to represent those who reject theories of prophecy that ignore the supernatural, as if they held views which placed Bible prophecy on a level with divination or fortune-telling.

Much has been written about the origin of prophecy. One would suppose that among believers in a divine revelation there could be little diversity of opinion on such a point. Some, as if animated by a desire to depreciate Old Testament prediction, have assumed that it arose from a natural desire to foresee the future; and that prophecy was common to all the great primitive religions. It is utterly absurd to suppose that any curiosity about the future could have developed into the prophetic vision that gave to the world the Hebrew prophecies, or that they can be accounted for by ascribing them to keen insight or poetic genius. That prophecy was common among other nations, and not peculiar to the Hebrews, is contrary to the facts. The heathen divinations were not prophecy. All unprejudiced Christian scholars will agree with Professor Orelli, who says: "We come to the conclusion that no phenomenon analogous to biblical prophecy, even in form, is anywhere to be found in the world of nations."

It is alleged by others that Hebrew prophecy is developed from the consciousness of the prophet and the conditions of his life. Canon Driver says: "It is a fundamental principle of prophecy that the historical situation of the prophet should be the basis of his prediction." Dr. Edward Riehm teaches that psychologically prophecy "comes to have its roots in the general consciousness of the prophets, and is educed from the same according to the laws of organic development." This comes near to implying that

the circumstances transpiring around him, acting upon the mental powers and religious sentiments of the prophet, call forth the prophecy. It is freely admitted that generally there is something in the prophet's message specially adapted to the people of his own time, and commonly a local coloring. But these things are not the producing causes of prophecy. The great facts of prophecy, especially of Messianic prophecy, and the testimony of the holy seers themselves, as to the way they received their knowledge, contradict this theory. All the prophets testify that they received their prophetic messages in a different way, even by special revelation from God, who "revealeth his secrets to his servants the prophets." Dr. Riehm can scarcely mean all that the words quoted seem to imply, for he says: "It is an undeniable fact that the prophets themselves were most clearly conscious of announcing, not their own thoughts but the thoughts of God revealed to them, not their own words but the word of God laid upon their hearts and put into their mouths." The particular way in which these revelations were made is of secondary importance. Of this we can know nothing but what we learn from the prophets themselves. The fact is more essential than the mode. What we do know from the Scriptures is, that "in divers manners" the Spirit of God revealed to the prophets a knowledge of sacred truths and future events, which no human sagacity without supernatural aid could have enabled them to gain. In the words of Dr. Küper of Germany, "Prophecy is not a psychological product, but a divine revelation."

The origin of the Messianic hope has been almost universally held to be the promise given to our first parents in the dark hour of their expulsion from Eden. In the primitive ages Messianic intimations are comparatively few and generally indefinite. The idea of the selection and training of a nation to be a divine agency to make

known to the world the knowledge of the true God, and his glorious purposes for the redemption of humanity through Christ, is a more sublime and wonderful conception than can be found anywhere outside of the Bible. In the later periods of Hebrew history the inspiring voice of Messianic prophecy grows clearer. The utterances of the prophets become more definite. Their faith gathers a more exultant strength. The hope of a mysterious coming Deliverer and a great national redemption brightens, and broadens in its range till its luster illumines the whole horizon of Hebrew thought and life, and even embraces the Gentile world. This was not by the mere development of a germinal idea. It was the outcome of the clearer light revealed to the prophets.

Different prophets present the Messiah in different characters and under different figures, so that it must have been very difficult for the people to whom these prophecies were addressed to see how they could be fulfilled in one person. Sometimes the prophecy begins with pictures of deliverance from present national woes; and, as the vision opens more fully, there are promises of broader and higher blessings than can be limited to any one nation. Coming down the stream of history to Malachi's time, we find references to the time and place of Messiah's birth and to his character and life. Most striking of all, we have in the description of the suffering Servant of Jehovah in the fifty-third of Isaiah, a graphic picture of the suffering Redeemer, who yields up his life as a vicarious sacrifice for sinners, and through whose suffering healing and justification are to be obtained by the "many." In the New Testament many of these prophecies are referred to as predictions of Jesus the Christ, that were fulfilled by his incarnation, life, and death; though it should not be assumed that no prophecies are Messianic but those referred to in the New Testament. The general Christian

belief concerning Messianic prophecy and fulfillment has not been a result of strained interpretations of particular texts of Scripture, or of efforts to make the facts conform to a preconceived theory. It rests upon the evidence of the long line of accumulating prophetic predictions, which our Lord and his apostles accept as spoken of him, and which the events of his ministry fulfilled. Is there anything in the discoveries of science, or the attested results of modern biblical criticism, that shows the belief of the church on this subject to be baseless or unwarrantable? We answer this question with an emphatic negative.

In estimating the influence of the dominant school of biblical criticism on prophecy, it is necessary to bear in mind that these critics deal but little in exegesis, or the exposition of the meaning of Scripture. That is not the chief object of their criticism. Their main work consists of efforts to ascertain the sources to which the writers of the Old Testament books are indebted, to assign these sources to their supposed authors and redactors, and to find out the time and occasions when they were written. An English biblical critic, speaking of Kuenen and Wellhausen, the high priests of this critical cult, says: "It has apparently escaped them both that there is anything high in idea, noble in motive, regenerating in social influence, in the literature they have set themselves to dissect." The actual critical conclusions of their studies, stated in brief general terms, are: That the books were mainly compiled by anonymous authors and redactors, from documents by writers of whom nothing is known; that they were compiled at much later dates than has been commonly supposed, or than the order and contents of the books themselves suggest; that the greater part of them have not been written by those to whom they have been ascribed; that the Pentateuchal laws are mainly late compilations of different dates, placed in a fictitious historical setting. As the re-

sult, it is held that the account of the national and religious life of Israel presented in the Old Testament conveys an erroneous and misleading impression, not in harmony with the actual history of the Hebrew people. As Kuenen avows it—that their critical science leads them “to form a conception of Israel’s development totally different from that which, as any one can see, is set forth in the Old Testament.”

As many Christian scholars regard these critical theories as not proved by proper evidence, and tending to undermine confidence in the truth and authority of the Holy Scriptures, it is of great practical interest to note the bearing of these theories on the historic faith of the Christian church, as to the teaching of the Scriptures regarding Messianic prophecy and fulfillment. We can obtain an answer to such an inquiry more readily and certainly, by examining the way in which this school of writers deal with these prophecies, than by theorizing respecting the probable effect of their views on the Christian beliefs respecting them.

As the indisputable trend of the theory of the disintegrating critics is in the direction of minifying and ignoring the supernatural, and assuming the sufficiency of evolution to account for the Hebrew Scriptures, and as the prediction of future events, whose fulfillment attests the divine inspiration of the prophets by whom the predictions came, is really miraculous, it becomes evident that such prediction and fulfillment stand directly in the way of their critical theory, and cannot be recognized by its advocates. Indeed, many think that books made up in the way that these critics allege, and that the Polychrome Bible indicates, would not be the channel through which divine revelations might be expected to be given to the world; and therefore, there is a kind of consistency in the critics not claiming such a book to be the repository of

such revelations. By some it has been declared that there is no predictive reference to the historic Christ in the Old Testament prophecies; that they can all be fully explained in harmony with this view; and that fulfillment when spoken of Christ in the New Testament always means only the "application" to Jesus of something which was not originally said of him, and in no case means the coming to pass of events predicted by the prophets. In proof of this unscriptural theory, it is alleged that prophecy is simply preaching, of which, if it be admitted at all, prediction is no essential part. In the advocacy of this position, assertion has generally done duty in place of facts and arguments.

Most writers of this critical school, however, do not protect their scheme by an explicit denial of prophetic prediction and actual fulfillment; but by substituting for the historic Christian belief a conception of Messianic prophecy and fulfillment, in which the main elements are the forecast to be seen in Israel's historic and religious ideas at different periods, and the ideal expectation of a future era of deliverance and blessing, which from age to age animated and cheered the Hebrew people. This theory has one great advantage for its advocates. By making the Messianic hope a vague and impersonal expectation, that did not imply a supernatural communication to the prophets of a knowledge of the coming personal Messiah, it becomes easy to portray a correspondingly vague and general fulfillment, which does not require the recognition of events having come to pass which had long before been foretold by the Hebrew prophets.

A recent volume, entitled "Israel's Messianic Hope to the Time of Jesus," by Professor George S. Goodspeed, of Chicago University, supplies a striking illustration of the method just mentioned. As might be supposed of a book on this subject by an able and scholarly writer, it contains

some good and true things, and some brilliant pictures of Hebrew life and religion, and of the general influence of Christianity on the world. But it is of the assumptions with which the author comes to the work, the peculiar method he adopts, the essential facts which he ignores, and the opinions respecting prophecy and fulfilment which he accepts, that I desire to make some observations.

The history of Israel is regarded as in itself the sufficient prophecy of and preparation for the Messianic kingdom; and as revealing the working out of the divine purpose for the salvation of the race. The work mainly consists of pictures of the successive periods of Hebrew history, and extracts from psalms and prophecies which, though to a large extent not strictly Messianic, are regarded as giving promise of future progress and national blessing. The eminent liberal Scottish professor, Dr. A. B. Davidson, says: "The term Messianic is used in a wider and a narrower sense. In the wider sense it is a description of all that relates to the consummation and perfection of the Kingdom of God, a use not altogether appropriate or exact. In the narrower sense it refers to a personage who is not always, but often, a commanding figure in this perfect condition of the Kingdom." It is significant that it is in the sense which Professor Davidson designates as "not altogether appropriate or exact," that this Chicago professor treats the subject; as if this part was the whole and this the only sense to be considered, and as if prophecies of the personal Messiah were of no importance. It is true in a sense, as Hoffman says, that "history itself is prophecy." Every age is the parent of the succeeding age. But this is not what is meant by biblical Messianic prophecy. And Professor Goodspeed's history is a history in which the chief Messianic facts are largely ignored or omitted. There must be some cause that accounts for the adoption of such a method as this.

The extent to which Professor Goodspeed accepts the distinguishing negative theories of the German school of critics respecting the Old Testament, shows very plainly that he has undertaken to explain Messianic prophecy, while committed to a theory and views of Scripture which compel him to reject or ignore actual Messianic prediction and specific fulfillment, in the sense that may be regarded as the Christian belief, based on the New Testament. A few quotations will illustrate and prove this. Of the historic accounts in Genesis, he says: "In the case of such material it is needless, as well as futile, to ask how far actual preservation of definite historical facts may be expected." He assumes that the Pentateuchal records must be studied as an interpretation of later ages, rather than a history of the past. The prophetic words of Moses in Deut. xviii., predicting the raising-up of a prophet like unto himself, which many eminent scholars, as well as St. Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts iii. 22), regard as a prophecy of Christ, are simply the production of the "Deuteronomic writer," whose book dates from 621 B.C.—that is some eight hundred years later than the time of Moses. He pronounces the prophetic books as they now stand "a great literary jungle"; but the guesswork of the critics is accepted as being according to "recognized scientific canons of judgment." Why, then, do they differ so widely as to dates and authors, which are the main critical issues?

To support the idea that it is the work of the prophets to "make over the dry details and hazy outlines into elements of inspiration and power," he quotes the words of Ottley: "Messianic prediction was to a considerable extent the result of a continuous process of reflection on that history of the past." In one place Professor Goodspeed refers to the New Testament writers as if their being Jews and knowing the history was what gives weight to their opinions. He says: "Their forms of expression and their

methods of grasping the large and rich ideals of the Old Testament may have been of their own times, imperfect, human; but this does not affect their verdict as to its essential character." This way of speaking of the New Testament teaching is significant, when we keep in mind, that it is Jesus the Messiah and his holy apostles who testify on this subject in the New Testament. But this is not all. As from the motions of a planet astronomers have inferred the influence upon it of some invisible planetary body, so the positions taken, and the conclusions quietly assumed by this writer, show that he has accepted a good deal more from the Rationalist critics than he has deemed it necessary to avow. It will be evident to every student of the Bible that the standpoint from which he formulates his conception of Messianic prophecy, and the negative assumptions that underlie it, must prevent its being received by any readers, except those who are prepared to accept the lax views of the truth and authority of the Scriptures on which his theory is based.

The method which Professor Goodspeed adopts in the study of prophecy is characteristic and very questionable. He avows that his main purpose is to find an answer to the question, "What did it mean to him who first uttered it, and to those by whom it was first heard?" No doubt a sound exegesis of every prophecy we study is a matter of essential importance. That should be the first thing. The study of how it was understood by the prophet and his first hearers is proper and interesting, but is of secondary moment for several reasons. No critical sagacity can determine with any approach to certainty the exact sense in which each prophet understood his prophecy. To assume that such a study is the proper method of attaining a right conception of the import of Messianic prophecy, is to shut out the light of fulfillment and the testimony presented in the New Testament, as if they were unnecessary and im-

proper. It is by no means clear that the Hebrew prophets themselves understood the full import of their prophetic messages. Some facts of Scripture indicate the contrary. As to the people whom the prophets addressed, it is admitted by our author himself that to them "these ideas, events, and predictions disclose only a very imperfect apprehension of the great truths and facts, which seem so clear and definite in the light of their fulfillment." Why then should we turn for the meaning to these dim and misty ideas, and reject the clearer light? If Hebrew prophecy was nothing but the outcome of the prophet's own natural reasoning and foresight, what the prophet meant would be the supreme question. But to those who believe that the great truths of prophecy were revealed to the prophets by the Spirit of God, the vital question is, "What is God's thought?" If we are honestly seeking for light and truth, it cannot be right to exclude the light which the Messiah himself imparts. There is no reason for excluding the consideration of the facts and divine comments of the New Testament, unless indeed the expositor holds some theory of Messianic prophecy which he is conscious cannot bear this light. It would be easy to give a host of eminent names of scholars who repudiate Professor Goodspeed's method. I will quote from only two, neither of whom can be accused of being unduly orthodox. Dr. C. A. Briggs says: "There is but one legitimate method for the interpretation of Messianic prophecy, that is (1) to study each prediction by itself with the most patient criticism and painstaking exegesis in all the details; (2) to study it in its relation to other predictions in the series, and note the organic connection; (3) to study it in its relation to Christ and his redemption." Even Riehm asks: "How is the sense intended by the Divine Spirit ascertained? Only by studying the prophecies in the light reflected on them by their fulfillment." Delitzsch, Eders-

heim, Orelli, and other scholars express similar conclusions.

Professor Goodspeed offers this singular explanation or apology for his method: "If disappointment is felt that some considerations, which were legitimate and germane to the study of Messianic prophecy, have not appeared, and that emphasis has been laid too strongly on other aspects of the subject, it is not unexpected, in view of the definite lines our study has laid down for itself." I have called this explanation "singular." Our objection is that the professor ignores things that are essential elements in Scripture Messianic prophecy and fulfillment. His apology is virtually that it was his plan to omit these things; but that he said some good things on other phases of the subject. That is, as we understand it, it was his plan to magnify history as itself prophetic, but to leave out specific predictions of a personal Messiah, and testimony regarding their fulfillment by Jesus Christ.

There is indisputable evidence that the belief in a supernatural prediction of future events has a solid biblical foundation. In several places God appeals by the prophets to his revelation of events yet to come, as an evidence of his claim to their homage and obedience (Isa. xlvi. 9-11). It is unwarrantable to say that the recognition of this truth depreciates the ethical teaching of prophecy. No one who admits that there is such a thing as predictive prophecy in God's government of the world, will deny that it would be inexplicably strange if such an unparalleled event as the coming of the Son of God to redeem and save the world, had not been revealed beforehand to the prophets, to inspire and comfort the people of God. The Scriptures present overwhelming testimony that such a revelation was given. Not as a vague inference that any period was an earnest of a better time; but as the divine promise of a personal Redeemer, who would reign in truth and right-

eousness. It is the prediction of this personal Messiah that is the central fact in the Messianic prophecies. Without this, there would be nothing that could justly be called by this name. It is the understood connection of the hope of future blessing with the promised Christ, which warrants the application of the term Messianic to these general anticipations. The rationalist elimination of the personal element in Messianic prophecy finds no justification in either the Old or the New Testament. It is simply the expedient which a wrong theory of the Bible renders necessary for these critics to adopt, in order to evade the logic of facts.

Passing over the long line of Messianic predictions, with which students of the Bible are familiar, let us take the fifty-third of Isaiah as a test case, and an example of the way in which evidence is set aside to meet the emergencies of an unattested theory. Of this wonderful prophecy, which has convinced many unbelieving Jews and nominal Christians that Jesus was the Christ, the best our Chicago professor has to say about it is, that there is in these prophecies "a lack of definite reference to a personal Messiah"; but he sees, or thinks he sees, here Israel offered as "the accepted and potent sacrifice." We may say of this critical school, "their eyes are holden" that they cannot see Christ in this oracle. A few thoughts in opposition to this negative view may not be out of place or superfluous.

The difference between rationalist and conservative scholars does not relate to a question of exegesis. The main interest still gathers around the eunuch's question to Philip: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?" The late Dr. Edersheim, of Oxford, says: "There is no fundamental divergence between Jew and Christian as to the translation of this chapter;" and Dr. Pusey says: "The question is not, What is the picture? On this all are agreed; but, Whose image and likeness

does it bear?" Rationalists and modern Jews apply it to a personified Israel, and deny that it speaks of a person. It is significant that until modern times, when Christians so largely used this oracle as proof that Jesus is the Messiah, the Jewish doctors regarded it as a prophecy of the Messiah. The late Professor Franz Delitzsch, after quoting Jonathan Ben Uzziel in proof of this, says: "Hence even the synagogue itself cannot help acknowledging that the course of the Messiah through death to glory is predicted here." The rationalist Gesenius has the same thought. The correspondence between the various things said here of the suffering Servant, and in other prophecies, and the character, works, and events of the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, has no parallel in human history. No other being in the world's history but Jesus has any shadow of a claim to have fulfilled these predictions.

Even skeptics have admitted the substantial truth of the Christian interpretation of this prophecy. In the eighteenth century, Anthony Collins denied that there was any reference in Hebrew prophecy to a personal Messiah, or any expectation of such a person cherished by Jews before the time of Christ. Singularly enough, at a later time the skeptic Strauss, speaking of Israel, declares that "there was connected with their hope for the future the expectation of a ruler of David's style of David's line, who should exalt his people from the depth of their present fall to a height of power and prosperity surpassing the days of the David of old." He deemed the correspondence between the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah and the recorded events of Christ's life to be so evident, that he tries to account for it by assuming that the disciples "made his history to suit the predictions."

The apostle Peter distinctly affirms that to the prophets the Spirit of Christ which was in them "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow"

(1 Peter i. 11). Our Lord himself in several places evidently refers to this prophecy as spoken of himself—*not* merely as “applied” to him. Dr. Edward Riehm is no extreme conservative, yet he declares that in our Lord’s references to “Old Testament prophecies regarding his suffering and death and the glory that should follow, he has without doubt, besides Psalm xxii., the prophecy regarding the Servant of God in Isaiah liii. chiefly in view.” St. Paul and all the first Christian preachers used as their main argument with the Jews, the undeniable correspondence between the prophecies relating to the personal Messiah and the facts of the life and death of Jesus. At Thessalonica Paul “reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ.” Apollos also powerfully “convinced the Jews and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.” Peter, on the day of Pentecost, addressing the multitudes, said: “But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled.” In answer to the eunuch’s question “Of whom speaketh the prophet this?” “Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus.” These and many similar passages, referring to Old Testament prophecies of a personal suffering Messiah, declared them to have been fulfilled by the suffering and death of Jesus. Professor Goodspeed admits that the apostles found strong arguments for Jesus in the fulfilment of prophecy. But surely he must see that this must have been the fulfilment by Jesus of predictions relating to the personal Messiah, and not the general historic results of Christianity in the world, which were yet in the future during the earthly life of Jesus.

Let no one suppose that this vague impersonal theory of

Messianic prophecy, which assumes that the Servant in the fifty-third of Isaiah is not a person, and that the prophecy does not refer to the historic Christ, is made necessary by modern critical study. Many learned and independent Oriental scholars of our time repudiate these negations. The eminent Professor Franz Delitzsch says of the suffering Servant in Isa. liii.: "The description of him and his utterances is so individual that the personification of a plurality is excluded. In the mirror of this prophecy the Messiah beheld himself." Even Professor George Adam Smith maintains "that the Old Testament knows nothing of a bearing by Israel of the sin of the Gentiles," and that there are strong reasons to believe "that an individual portrait is intended." Professor Orelli, a learned and liberal biblical critic, says: "Without doubt it is the true Redeemer, the Saviour of his people, whom the prophet meant to depict under this humble yet honorable name." The late Dr. A. McCaul, of England, well known as an eminent Hebrew scholar, says: "The prophetic picture of the sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth is so lifelike that when it has been brought for the first time before Jews ignorant of the passage, they have affirmed that the chapter has been inserted in the Christian edition of the Hebrew Bible." The view of Riehm and Delitzsch has been held by such Hebrew scholars as Edersheim, Wunsch, Cave, Urwick, Forbes, Oehler, Osgood, Briggs, Green, Beecher, Mead, Margoliouth, Bissell, Bartlett, Wright, Douglas, Rawlinson, Gloag, and many others, who firmly maintain that this prophecy (1) speaks of a *person*, and not of a *community*; (2) that it predicts the *future Messiah*; and (3) that it was *fulfilled* by the character and work, the life and death, of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament. The critics who deny this do not get their views by superior scholarship, or from the study of prophecy itself; but from having adopted negative ideas of prophecy and fulfillment,

which are not consistent with the belief, that the prophet is here fortelling "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them."

Professor Goodspeed thinks Edersheim should have accepted Kuenen's view, who says: "If they [Jesus Christ and his apostles] had continued still to occupy altogether the standpoint of the old prophets and poets, Jesus of Nazareth would not have been accepted as the Messiah." But, even if there was a change of policy, which we do not admit,—it is certain that a number believed in Jesus at the very beginning of his ministry; and it was to the "standpoint of the old prophets and poets" that the apostles appealed to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. The success of their appeal to these Scriptures is a sufficient reply to those who say that the prophecies were not specific enough to enable the Jews of that day to recognize his Messiahship. The Saviour must have deemed his works of healing and teaching, to which he pointed John's disciples, a sufficient answer to John's question: "Art thou he that should come; or do we look for another?" St. John says of what he wrote concerning Jesus: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Simeon and Anna recognized him as the promised "light to lighten the Gentiles." Andrew and Philip saw in him evidence which convinced them that they had "found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." As we have seen, Paul and Peter and Apollos showed, by the Scriptures of "the law and the prophets," that "Jesus was the Christ." In Acts xxi. 20 we read, that James and the elders at Jerusalem said to Paul: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed, and they are all zealous of the law." The three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost must have been nearly all Jews. Later we learn that "a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith."

These priests were well fitted to judge of the evidence from prophecy presented to them. These triumphs were not won by the evidence of an "ethical realization" or historic development; but by the presentation of facts of prediction and fulfillment relating to the personal Messiah which rationalist critics ignore or deny.

In objecting to the vague theory of prophecy and fulfillment which takes the heart out of the subject by eliminating the central thought of a predicted personal Messiah, in common with most other objectors, I have no thought of rejecting all the light that a sober and thorough criticism can shed on the books of the Bible, or any exposition that deepens our grasp or broadens our conception of God's purposes as revealed by the prophets to his ancient people. I fully believe that the history and religious life of the Hebrew people were a preparation for the coming of Christ; that the Old Testament pointed to a spiritual fulfillment in the Kingdom of God; that Israel's conception of the Messianic Kingdom was generally dim and indefinite; that the religious hope that was kindled by the predictions of a personal Messiah was gloriously fulfilled, not alone by the historic Christ, but also by the clearer light and richer spiritual blessings of the Christian dispensation; that a knowledge of the time and occasion of a prophecy, when it can be ascertained, invests it with deeper interest and meaning; that the chief burden of the messages of the Hebrew prophets was, as preachers of righteousness to testify against the defections and corruptions of the people of their own times. These beliefs are in perfect harmony with the historic Christian faith respecting a predicted personal Messiah, and are no new discovery of modern criticism, as is so often assumed. Professor Goodspeed makes this curious remark in speaking of Messianic prophecy: "It is not something tacked on, a kind of anomalous excrescence which is appended to the Old Testament religion,

for the purpose of proving the divinity of Christ and the permanent and essential truth of the Christian religion." It may be safely affirmed that no Christian theologian holds such a contemptible view as is here insinuated against those who do not accept his impersonal scheme of prophecy. Why is this absurd offensive view unwarrantably ascribed to those who believe in the evidential value of the fulfillment of prophecy? Is the Scripture truth that the fulfillment of the prophecy proves the divine inspiration of the prophet, to be made an object for unjust caricature, because the masters whom this writer follows have outgrown faith in the truth and authority of the oracles of God? So it seems to be assumed. Yet the Great Teacher himself gives the sanction of his authority to the evidential value of fulfillment. He says: "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe" (John xiv. 29).

The assault on the Christian doctrine of Messianic prophecy is only one of many current attempts to undermine the truth, trustworthiness, and divine authority of the Bible. We cannot accept the hazy, so-called "ethical" theory, without accepting the negations of Scripture truth on which it is based. Though Professor Franz Delitzsch has been represented as having gone over to the advanced critics; yet in his last book, "Messianic Prophecies," which was finished on his death-bed, referring to the phase of this question with which we have been dealing in this article, he forcibly says: "It is a depressing observation that Judaism has strong support in modern Christian theology, and that its literature is like an arsenal, out of which Judaism can secure weapons for its attack on Christianity. . . . We hold to His utterances respecting Himself, and to the testimony of His apostles; for a Christianity torn loose from these authorities and otherwise understood, is only a scientific abstraction, an arbitrary excerpt according to a self-made

pattern, an artificial product according to the demands of the spirit of the age." In the words of Professor W. T. Davison, of England: "Christianity is bound up with miracle. The supernatural is not for it a superfluous garment which may be slipped off without loss, or perhaps with advantage. It belongs to the very essence of the Christian faith." In view of recent developments in destructive criticism, so liberal a theologian as Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, of the *British Weekly*, is impelled to say: "We must face the fact that certain critical conclusions if established will destroy Christianity." We have firm faith that these insidious attacks, mainly from men who wear the livery of the Christian church, shall never destroy the Bible. But they may destroy the faith of those who accept their falsehoods as truths and reject the faith "once delivered unto the saints."

In these testing times, it behooves all Christians to remember, that the mere use of divine and orthodox religious phrases cannot cancel the effect of adopting theories which involve consequences that contradict what these terms signify. No man has any right to take from the Bible just what can be made to appear to fit into his fads, and cast the rest aside. If the conception of prophecy, and of fulfillment by the historic Jesus Christ, plainly set forth in the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, on which the faith of the Christian church has been based from the beginning, is assumed to be a mistake that must be set aside and substituted by a theory sufficiently impersonal and indefinite to accord with the conclusions of Rationalist criticism, it is hard to see how this can be accepted without a radical change in our whole estimate of the New Testament, and of the character and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ himself.