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1913.

538TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE INSTITUTE ON MONDAY,
JANUARY 20TH, 1913, AT 4.30 P.M.

CHANCELLOR P. VERNON SMITH, LL.D., TOOK THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and signed.

The SECRETARY announced that Dr. Eugene Stock and the Rev. L. G. Buchanan and the Rev. W. H. Woods, D.D., Litt.D., had been elected as Associates.

The CHAIRMAN explained the absence of Mr. Urquhart, who had prepared a paper on "Prediction," and called upon the Secretary to read the paper.

THE FACT OF PREDICTION.

By the Rev. JOHN URQUHART.

THE question with which I desire to deal is one which seems to me to have peculiar claims to the serious attention of an Institute such as ours. Is it, or is it not, a fact, that events, which were still future, have been foreseen? There will doubtless be found a ready acquiescence which will confidently and loudly answer "yes"; many will as surely regard the question as almost beneath contempt. The wise, however, will weigh and sift evidence, and will allow their conclusions to be shaped by facts.

Cicero in his *Divinatio* has torn the superstitious beliefs of his times to pieces, "Why need I say more?" he asks. "Such ideas as these are refuted every day. How many of these Chaldean prophecies do I remember being repeated to Pompey, to Crassus, and to Cæsar himself! according to which not one of these heroes was to die except in old age, in domestic felicity, and in perfect renown; so that I wonder that any living man can yet believe in these imposters, whose predictions they see falsified daily by facts and results."*

That is the testimony of one of the first men of his time, who lived in days so full of change and peril that almost no price would have been reckoned too great for light upon the then future. That light was professedly given; and it was worthless. But, on the other hand, it seems to be unquestionable that the pretension to superhuman insight and foresight has been occasionally better supported. We read (Acts xvi, 16) of a damsel who was "possessed with a spirit of divination" who "brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." It seems that in this case the claim was well founded. For, after the spirit was cast out of her by Paul, "her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone." Had her claim been another instance of imposture, there was no reason why it should have been dropped at that juncture.

There are other instances which have been placed on record both in ancient and in modern times. One or two of the latter will be sufficient. Dr. Wolff, the Eastern traveller, records that, when he was at the house of the British Consul-General in Aleppo, in 1822, his host read a letter in his presence and in that of M. Lesseps, M. Derche, his interpreter, and M. Maseyk, the Dutch Consul. It was from Lady Esther Stanhope, and was dated April, 1821. It begged him, the British Consul (John Barker, Esq.), not to go to Aleppo or to Antioch, as M. Lustenau, a friend of hers, had predicted that both these places would be destroyed by an earthquake in about a year. The communication excited extreme merriment among the Consul's guests. Dr. Wolff has told at length how the prediction found a terrible fulfilment a few days afterwards. The whole of Aleppo and of Antioch and of the villages within a circuit of twenty miles was destroyed by a frightful earthquake, and 60,000 people perished.

That instance seems to admit of no doubt that the prediction preceded the event. The following rests upon the testimony of the late Colonel Meadows Taylor, and is given in his book—*The Story of My Life*.* The narrative occupies the whole fifteenth chapter of the Colonel's book, and concerns the Rajah of Shorapoor. Briefly it is as follows: The Ranee, the Rajah's mother, had her child's horoscope made out by native astrologers. It declared that he would not survive his twenty-fourth year and that he would lose his country. Great efforts were made by the Ranee to secure a different finding. These were in vain, and the prediction was everywhere confirmed. The knowledge

* pp. 391-411.

of this melancholy forecast was concealed from the young prince, and was confined, indeed, to Colonel Taylor and the Ranee's minister—a native official. The Ranee died. The young prince became a ward of the East Indian Company and was afterwards installed as Rajah. In 1857 he took part in the Indian Mutiny. After an attempt to destroy the British troops sent to Shorapoor, he fled and was captured at Hyderabad. He was tried and sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted by the Governor-General. The Rajah was to be confined for four years to a fortress, and then, should his conduct be satisfactory, his territory was to be restored to him. *This happened in his twenty-fourth year*, and the Colonel imagined that the Rajah had escaped the predicted fate. But a few days brought a further surprise. At the end of the first day's march to his new abode, the Rajah was examining the commanding officer's pistols, and shot himself—it was believed accidentally. The prediction was therefore literally fulfilled, Colonel Meadows Taylor mentions that the casket containing the horoscope came into the possession of the British officials.

It is worth remembering also that a similar prediction is said to have played an important part in bringing about the Mutiny. It was said that the foreign *raj* would end in 1857. In part this also was accomplished. The rule of the East India Company was ended in that year by Act of Parliament, but the British Government took its place.

In the *Memoires* of the Comtesse de Boigne (vol. ii, pp. 322–325) she gives a striking narrative which she received from her father, the Marquis d'Osmond (French Ambassador to Great Britain), who was intimately acquainted with the Chevalier de X . . . , of whom she writes, and who was fully cognisant of the facts. The Chevalier was lieutenant-colonel of the regiment which the Marquis joined in his youth. A man of striking personality and most amiable disposition, he was adored by his regiment; and, being a relative of the Marquis's family, the young officer and he were close friends from the first. When camping in a small German village during the Seven Years' War a gipsy was brought into the officers' saloon after dinner. At first the Chevalier remonstrated with his fellow-officers, but finally yielded and allowed the gipsy to inspect his hand; after a close scrutiny she said: "You will advance rapidly in your military career; you will make a marriage beyond your hopes; you will have a son whom you will not see; and you will die from a shot before you have reached your fortieth year."

“The Chevalier de X . . .,” continues Madame de Boigne, “attached no importance to these prognostications. However, when in a few months he obtained two successive steps, due to his brilliant conduct in the war, he recalled to his comrades the words of the fortune-teller. They recurred to his memory also when he married, some years afterwards, a young lady, rich and of good family.

“His lady being near her confinement, he obtained leave of absence to join her. The evening before he set out he said: ‘My faith! All that the sorceress said is not true. I shall be forty in five days. I leave to-morrow, and there is little likelihood of a gunshot in perfect peace!’

“He was detained on the way by an accident to the carriage in which he was travelling. He was invited by the officers of the garrison of the town, in which he was thus forced to remain a few hours, to join a hunting party, and was shot by accident. He was badly, though not mortally, wounded. While he lay under the surgeon’s care a letter came for him, saying that his wife had been safely delivered of a boy. ‘Ah,’ he cried, ‘the cursed sorceress was right! I shall not see my son!’ He was attacked with sudden convulsions. Tetanus followed; and twelve hours afterwards he expired in my father’s arms.” His friends explained the end by the effect which the remembered prediction had upon his mind. But no such explanation seems possible of the other four predicted events—his rapid promotion—his fortunate marriage—the birth of a son whom he did not see—and his receiving the gunshot wound.

In view of such cases the conviction seems to be forced upon us that prediction is a fact. The theory that these have all been lucky guesses will be found to labour under heavy—I believe crushing—difficulties. There seems to be only one other hypothesis possible—that some mind or minds possess a power, limited or otherwise, of beholding events set forth upon the stage of the future. How events can be so set forth, before they happen, is a question which no man can answer. But that they have been so set forth in the instances already mentioned is highly probable; and I think that the instances which I am now to produce will show that true foresight and genuine prediction are facts which cannot be successfully assailed.

It seems to me that the predictions of the Scriptures have never yet had their due acknowledgment even as psychical phenomena. Pascal has said that in the Christian religion he found genuine prophecy, and that he found it in no other. That is one of those sayings which has ensured to Pascal the admira-

tion and gratitude of his own and after times; but the study of religions has shown that this line of demarcation runs still deeper. Christianity (including Judaism) is a predictive, and the only predictive, religion. Every other religion clings to the past: Christianity alone is an announcement of, and a preparation for, the future.

In any attempt at a satisfactory discussion of a matter of this kind some things are essential pre-requisites. It would be an impertinence to ask us to consider vague aspirations and events which might be regarded as more or less fulfilments of them. A presumed prediction must be definite. It must also be presented in a form to which no suspicion can be attached of manipulation by which the prediction was altered to suit the asserted fulfilment.

These requirements are fully met in the present instance. The Old Testament was closed centuries—even the most extreme views as to the date of the Old Testament Books grant us nearly two centuries—before the beginning of the Christian era. The contents of that pre-Christian Bible have been fixed by a Greek translation—the Septuagint—begun in the third century B.C.; by the Targums—Jewish translations from the Hebrew into Eastern Aramaean; and by two other Greek translations—by Aquila and Theodotion—belonging to the first or the second century of the Christian era. These afford us a degree of certainty as to the contents of the Old Testament Books most unusual in an inquiry of this kind. But, in addition, we have a confirmation of the utmost value. The Books themselves have been in the care of Jewish scholars, the last men in the world to alter their Scriptures in any fashion whatever, and least of all to fashion them into more formidable weapons for the Christian controversialist. It is from that Hebrew Bible, so faithfully guarded, that our English Bible (Authorized and Revised) has been translated.

We encounter first of all one broad fact. In the early historical books we have promises of the appearing of one outstanding Individual by whom the needs of Israel and of all the nations will be met. The prophetic books supply many details, indicating His nationality, lineage, character, work, and history. This Messiah becomes the hope of Israel. It is a hope that dominates every other. It fills the future as the midday sun the heavens. There are blessings in His coming for the Gentiles also. Now, it is undeniable that one Personality rose upon the world's view as the sun climbs the heaven; that His coming has ploughed a long and broad dividing line between

past and after times. It began the one and only revolution in the world's history that has been for God and for the better and nobler life of man. There has been no other movement to set by the side of it—I believe that few will name or think of Mohammedanism as comparable with Christianity. If they did, Mohammedanism is excluded from the comparison by its Koran, its methods, and its results. The personality of the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely unique. He is utterly above and apart from all besides of this earth's best and greatest. His character and abiding influence make, on the face of them, a startling answer to the Scripture announcement of the coming of the Messiah. He was to be a Jew and He was to bless Jew and Gentile. The man of Nazareth fulfils undeniably and broadly that strange but confident prediction. Is that a chance? Or does it show that prediction is a fact?

The following points are worthy of close consideration:—

1. The earliest announcement of his future appearing is very striking (Genesis, iii, 15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It (or He) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"). Plainly it is One from among the woman's offspring, who is specially described as *her* seed, who is thus to deal directly with the Deceiver who by his wiles has driven man from the presence of God. He will crush the Deceiver's power: "He shall bruise thy head." But the Deliverer of humanity will not escape unscathed: "Thou shalt bruise his heel." I suppose this means that the progress of the Deliverer's work would be suspended or delayed for a time—an astonishing commentary upon the nearly nineteen centuries of delay since Christ's uncompleted work began. Thus three things should be noted here:—

- (1) *The wide scope of the predicted Redeemer's work—He comes for man.*
- (2) *The Redeemer's objective—to slay the Deceiver.*
- (3) *The retardation of the Redeemer's work.*

2. *The Redeemer was to be an Israelite* (Genesis xxii, 18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"). The words were spoken to Abraham. It adds to their significance that they were spoken at the altar upon which Isaac had been laid in sacrifice. It is a striking fact that here again—in a Jewish book—the Redeemer promised is to be for "all nations." It is surely more than a marvellous coincidence that, in a Redeemer sprung from Israel, men of every nationality have already found blessing.

3. *He is to be of lowly, though of royal origin.* The Davidic glory had been for centuries a mere tradition before our Lord's birth. In the following words of Isaiah that royal house is represented as having fallen, although David's descendants were in the time of the prophet still reigning in Jerusalem:—"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse"—the tree has been felled—"and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (xi, 1). The remainder of the chapter shows that this "sprout" or "branch" is no other than He in whom "all nations" are to be blessed; for in verse 10, for example, we read: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the peoples; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and His rest shall be glory."

4. *There will be nothing in His person, in His position in society, or in the aims which He pursues to insure for Him an enthusiastic reception by the people.* "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of Jehovah revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah liii, 1, 2). There we surely see the Man of Nazareth!

5. I now come to a circumstance among the most wonderful that has ever occurred in a nation's history. Let it be remembered that Israel was selected and specially trained to recognize the Messiah when He should appear, to rally round Him, and to become His ministers and messengers; and yet, notwithstanding, *Israel*, in its leaders and in the great body of the people, *is to reject the Messiah!* The prophet (already quoted) continues: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not" (verse 3).

In a preceding part of this prophecy the Messiah is represented as anticipating failure in His attempt to influence Israel; and coupled with that is an intimation that His success will be found among the Gentiles! "Though Israel be not gathered, yet will I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he (God) said 'It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.'" This is supported by an indication of the kind of glory the Messiah will win among the Gentile peoples: "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his

Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers. Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee" (Isaiah xlix, 5-7). Here are three outstanding facts of history distinctly predicted centuries beforehand—(1) the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews; (2) His reception by the Gentiles; and (3) the kind of reception accorded to Him.

6. Details are given of the intermediate tragedy. *The Messiah is to suffer a felon's death*: "He was taken from prison" (He had been apprehended), "and from judgment" (He had been tried and condemned); "and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living" (He was to die in His early manhood) (Isaiah liii, 8).

7. *He is to rise from the dead*. The description (Isaiah liii), which begins in deepest sadness, ends jubilantly: "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied . . . Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (verses 11, 12). The twenty-second psalm indicates that the death assigned will be that of crucifixion—"They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (verses 16-18). This prediction, which opens with an exceeding bitter cry, ends in the unexpectedly joyous fashion of Isaiah liii. "My praise shall be of thee in the great Congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him . . . All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee" (verses 25, 27). What is here implied finds a distinct statement in Psalm xvi, 10: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol (Hades); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." It might be hard to prove that the resurrection of Christ was an actual fact; but that the work revived and went on as the predictions declare it should do are facts. It is remarkable, too, that the transition from overwhelming sorrow to abounding joy was vividly reflected in the experience of the disciples who laid the foundation of the Christian Church.

8. It undoubtedly blunts the edge of the preceding that a host of the predictions regarding the Messiah have found no fulfilment. We look in vain for anything which can be regarded as an accomplishment of what is foretold, for example, in Psalms xlv and lxxii. But that difficulty vanishes when it is noted that there is to be a break in the earthly presence and

earthly work of the Messiah. That break is the subject of a distinct prophecy. In Psalm cx, the speaker (said in the title to be David) describes a scene in heaven. Jehovah is seated upon His throne. Before Him stands One whom the Psalmist names "My Lord." And this is what the Psalmist hears: "Jehovah said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Plainly this Personage so addressed has had a history. He presents Himself after having done a work upon the earth which has aroused against Him a hostility which has triumphed for the moment. Let it be observed also, as bearing upon the question as to Who this Personage is and what He has done, that heaven's highest award is conferred upon Him. He is to sit upon heaven's throne and at God's right hand. We have to mark also that this rest is temporary—"until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This interruption entirely corresponds with the ordinary representation that there is to be a return of the ascended Messiah, and that the predictions yet unfulfilled describe the events which will mark the Return—the coming "a second time."

The rest of the Psalm seems to confirm that view of the matter. It consists of a twofold address by the Psalmist. The first (verses 2-4) seems to be spoken to Him whom he has named "My Lord" (*Adonai*, master). This invites a close scrutiny. It seems to be a promise that the interests of—let us say the Messiah, will not be neglected while He is seated at the right hand of Jehovah. If this reading of the words is correct, it is of immense importance; for these verses will then present themselves as a description of what is to happen between the Ascension and the Return. In other words, they will contain a prophetic history of Christianity.

(1) The earthly interests of the Messiah will not suffer by His absence. His dominion will be extended by fresh conquests. "Jehovah sends the rod of thy strength," the sceptre of thy power, "out of—from—Zion." Jerusalem will be the centre from which the new faith will spread north, west, east, and south—a fact in the early history of Christianity which is historically established.

(2) The new conquest will have limitations. "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." There will be those by whom the new sovereignty will be contested and repudiated. The dominion promised is one in the midst of long enduring hostility. It seems to me that this is a striking forecast of that condition which has called for unceasing vigilance and activity

on the part of the Christian Church. For almost nineteen centuries it has been the Church militant nearly everywhere ; the Church triumphant nowhere.

(3) Those touched by the sceptre of power will be separated. They are described (verse 3) as "thy people." The Psalmist's "Lord" becomes their King. The converts are gathered around Him. The Church will be an *imperium in imperio*, acknowledging a Law to which every other must be subordinated. How that finds its fulfilment in Christianity I need not say.

(4) But the subjects of the Kingdom will be marked by intense devotion: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (verse 3)—literally, "Thy people shall be free-will offerings," etc. The phrase is peculiar and, indeed, unparalleled in the Old Testament. We read (Exodus xxxv, 29, etc.) of the Israelites bringing a free-will offering (the same word); but here the people themselves are to be free-will offerings.

(5) They will be marked by uprightness and purity. It seems preferable to take these words—"in the beauties of holiness"—as an additional characterization. The people of the Messiah will be distinguished by character. They will be apparelled in "the beauties of holiness." It does not seem to me to be possible to furnish more distinguishing marks of the genuine Christian than this and the preceding. Christianity has been advanced and been served by limitless devotion, while its life and thought have been a revelation and an astonishment to humanity.

(6) The new people will form a countless multitude: "More than the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." Those pregnant words invite larger comment; but it is enough to indicate the leading thought. This people will be more numerous than the dewdrops.

The fact which we have to consider here is that, since the disappearance of "the Lord" from the earth, a work in just such circumstances and with just such results has been carried on. It spread from Jerusalem. Everywhere it has been surrounded by hostility. Those brought under subjection have been separated. They have been marked by deep devotion to their unseen Lord, and by purity, uprightness and moral beauty; and the hosts which have been drawn from among the nations during these nineteen centuries may be fairly said to be innumerable. The genuineness of that prediction (guarded to the present hour as a sacred deposit by a race determinedly hostile to Christianity) cannot be questioned. Its fulfilment by

phenomena utterly new to history seems to be equally unquestionable.

The above are a few of what I may call the central prophecies of the Old Testament. There are many others at which the limits of the present paper forbid us even to glance. I shall mention, however, three others which will show the wide range and astonishing accuracy of Scripture prophecy, and which intensify the demand for a calm and philosophic discussion of these surprising phenomena. Egypt, Israel's ancient oppressor, is frequently the subject of prophetic messages. Reginald Stuart Poole in his article on Egypt in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (First Edition) says: "It would not be within the province of this article to enter upon a general consideration of the prophecies relating to Egypt: we must, however, draw the reader's attention to their remarkable fulfilment. The visitor to the country needs not to be reminded of them: everywhere he is struck with the precision with which they have come to pass. We have already spoken of the physical changes which have verified to the letter the words of Isaiah. In like manner we recognize, for instance, in the singular disappearance of the City of Memphis and its temples, in a country where several primeval towns yet stand, and scarce any ancient site is unmarked by temples, the fulfilment of the words of Jeremiah: 'Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant' (xlvi, 19), and those of Ezekiel: 'Thus saith the Lord God: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause [their] images to cease out of Noph' (xxx, 13). Not less signally are the words immediately following the last quotation—'And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt' (*l.c.*)—fulfilled in the history of the country, for from the second Persian conquest, more than 2,000 years ago, until our own days, not one native ruler has occupied the throne."*

One point in these manifold predictions concerning Egypt may be taken as a sample. After describing a 40 years' captivity of the people and their return at the end of that time the prophecy continues: "And they shall be there a base kingdom. 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" (Ezekiel xxix, 14, 15).

The boldness of this prediction will be remarked. It is not a venture at a description of a more or less probable event, but

* Vol. i, p. 512.

a clear and broad account of conditions that will endure to all after time. No test of the possession of genuine predictive power could well be more absolute than is afforded by this prophecy. The probabilities were against its fulfilment. It declares that Egypt will never rise again to her old pre-eminence, but will decline more and more till it occupies the lowest place among the nations. But for centuries afterwards the fruitfulness of Egypt was proverbial. Her natural position and her long, broad waterway enabled her to tap the productions and the industries of Central Africa. The Red Sea and her canals enabled her also to benefit by the commerce of East and West. The high and varied abilities and the vast industries of her own people may be said to have assured her revival even from the deepest prostration to which she could be subjected. Nevertheless, the prediction is the accurate summation of her after history. Never once since has she ruled over the nations. She has fallen lower and lower until she is now the basest of the kingdoms.

It will be observed also that the continuity of Egypt is assumed, and it is to continue to exist as a kingdom. These particulars are remarkable enough. With a foreknowledge of Egypt's perpetual decline we should infallibly have foretold its eventual extinction, or, at least, the loss of its separate existence as a people. But does the description "a base kingdom, yea . . . the basest of the kingdoms" present any true account of Egypt's present condition? The description is exact. She has no place in the Council of the nations. No other nationality seeks her friendship or dreads her enmity. Beyond a rude species of cultivation she has no industries. There is nothing in the character of her people or in the ability and uprightness of her rulers to excite expectation of revived greatness or power. She is a hopeless wreck, and is held together only by the strong hand of a distant nation which her fathers never knew.

The closer inspection of the condition of Egypt confirms more fully the aptness of the phrases in the prophetic description. Financial control is no longer in the hands of the Khedive—the king—of Egypt. He cannot impose a tax or receive the proceeds of it. The British Government officials levy the taxes; and out of the income these yield they pay the interest on the Khedive's debts. They pay the wages of his officials and his own salary! It is, indeed, "a base kingdom," and if there is a baser I cannot say where that is to be found.

There is a prediction in the much abused Book of Daniel which seems worthy of notice. The second chapter contains

what plainly purports to be a revelation of the world's after-history. King Nebuchadnezzar, the real founder of the great later Babylonian empire, beholds in a dream a colossal image with a head of gold, the two arms and breast of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs and feet of iron, the toes partly iron and partly brittle earthenware. The head of gold is explained to the king by the prophet as representing the Babylonian empire. That is to be succeeded by a silver empire, represented by the two arms and the breast. This is to have two successors—an empire of brass and an empire of iron. The toes of the image represent a tenfold division of the last, part of which retains the iron nature, another part having only a delusive semblance to that metal. The whole is crushed and ground to powder by a stone severed from the mountain side "without hands." The prophet explains that from that time there will be (including Nebuchadnezzar's) four empires of man. The fifth will be the kingdom of God.

Exegetes and would-be exegetes have wrestled over this prediction till the air is somewhat foul and the mud beneath is offensive and slippery. A safe and comfortable position can be found, however, without entering that arena, and one from which we can determine broad and unquestionable facts. Four great empires are mapped out in the prophecy. There are four in history with which Palestine and the Jews have had to do. These are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, whose founder was Cyrus, the Grecian, founded by Alexander, and the Roman. The last was, by-and-by, divided into the Eastern and Western Empires and is now represented by kingdoms, not yet exactly ten, but which seem for some time to have been approaching that definite number.

The eighth chapter of the book settles one point which has been keenly debated—whether the Median and the Persian formed two empires or one only. Verse 20 shows the inadmissibility of the hypothesis that the prophecy contemplates them as two. The ram (which in the vision was overcome by the he-goat) is definitely described: "The ram which thou sawest, having the two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia." These two powers are represented by one emblem, and are therefore the united kingdom under Cyrus and his successors. A like attempt has been made to make *two* kingdoms out of the third—(1) that of Alexander, and (2) that of his successors. This supposition is set aside by verses 21 and 22: "And the rough goat is the king of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now, that being broken,

whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nations, but not in his power." The third kingdom, therefore, is that of Alexander and his successors. The fourth must then be the Roman.

Even at the lowest date which has been assigned to Daniel, the marvel remains. There was to be a fourth dominion, and that was to be the last of the great human empires. It should have no successor; and it has had none. It was represented by the two lower limbs; and it became twofold—the Empires of the East and of the West. That fourth dominion was to continue till it should be represented by a more numerous division—by the ten toes of the image. Apart from that number ten (not yet reached), the vision of Nebuchadnezzar has been verified in every detail.

In these brief notices of Scripture predictions some mention has to be made of those concerning the Israelitish people. (1) In case of their persisting in their rebellion against Jehovah, notwithstanding previous chastisements, it was written: "Jehovah shall scatter thee among all the peoples, from the one end of the earth unto the other" (Deuteronomy xxviii, 64). Here it is indicated that the thoroughness of the dispersion will be phenomenal. They will be found among all the peoples from the one end of the earth to the other. That is a feature in this prediction which should not be overlooked. (2) They will in this dispersion be subjected to persistent persecution: "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. But Jehovah shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind" (verse 65). (3) Yet, notwithstanding the loss of country, security, and rest, they will not disappear as a people: "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly" (Leviticus xxvi, 44).

Hosea iii, 4, 5, fills up the foregoing pictures. Israel is to be separated from Jehovah, and her condition during that period is described. (1) It will cover a long period: "For the children of Israel shall abide MANY DAYS." (2) Their political condition is described: they will "abide many days without a king and without a prince." They will have no central government. (3) Their religious condition is in like manner portrayed: "and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." They will be without a sacrifice, and without a priest, that is, one who has the Divinely given right to approach Jehovah on Israel's

behalf. Since the destruction of the Temple, Israel has been deprived of both sacrifice and priest. At the same time they will refuse the delusive help and consolation offered by idolatry. If the altar is taken away, they will not put an image in its place. If they have no longer an ephod-clad priest to inquire of God, they will not seek counsel of the teraphim.

Strange to say it was predicted in the sacred book which the Jews themselves have handed down that they were to reject the Messiah! This has already been before us (see page 63); but we have also a prediction—this time in the New Testament—dealing with the question as to how long this attitude of rejection and loathing is to continue. The Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans is correcting a possible misconception on the part of the Christians at Rome. "For I would not, brethren," he writes, "that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness (hardness) in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in" (Romans xi, 25). There are various interpretations of this "fullness of the Gentiles"; but all agree that this is not even now complete. Until our own times, then, and after there was to be no reversal of the judgment passed by the fathers of Israel in the first century. The "hardness" was to continue. That it has continued notwithstanding all the sufferings of the Jewish people and all the efforts of the Christian Church is one of the facts of history. What eye read the then unwritten record in the middle of the first century?

There is a "hardness" frequently exhibited in our own day, and which is wise exceedingly in its own conceit. If it consent to listen—and that is an unwonted condescension—it never even dreams of investigating the alleged facts, or of weighing their significance. The whole are haughtily waived aside. The facts are treated as if they were non-existent. Such an attitude is unphilosophical and unscientific. It is childish and contemptible.

Before stating what seem to me to be necessary deductions from the foregoing, I may be suffered to say a word upon a somewhat common misconception. There is no necessary connection between foreknowledge and predestination. Knowledge of things past does not affect the facts in any way. The things are not there because we know them: we know them because they are there. And so with things future. Reading of things to come fixes no destiny. The destiny may be self-determined or otherwise; but foreknowledge is in itself no more responsible for the destiny than my knowledge of the contents of to-day's

newspaper makes me responsible for what was placed upon the printed page.

Let me now conclude by indicating some corollaries from our study.

1. Foreknowledge is not a power possessed by any merely human mind. That is the testimony of every human consciousness. It is the consciousness of our own utter incapacity to read the future which explains our astonishment and awe when we are convinced that this has nevertheless been done.

2. Since prediction is an act of intelligence, the fact of prediction must be accepted as proof of the existence and of the activity of mind that is superhuman.

3. The vast variety of the predictions of Scripture, and the ease with which they sweep through centuries, while dealing with special, and fully described, details, show that here we are in contact with a vast intelligence that is unlimited in this power of foresight.

4. The study of these predictions would have saved us the lamentable misdirection of recent discussions upon the limits of inspiration and the Divine and human elements in the Scripture. The suggestion of two-foldness in a prediction, every word of which has revealed the then future, is presumptuous trifling. The message in its entirety is supernatural; and a Book that has such seals leaves no doubt in any candid mind as to its origin and claims.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Urquhart's paper deals with non-moral and non-spiritual instances of Prediction as well as with Prediction contained in spiritual Prophecy. As regards the former, which is somewhat akin to second sight, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish between truth and imposture; but there seems to be undoubted evidence of some true cases. A clergyman now working in London has more than once told in my hearing the story of a dream which he had one year some weeks before a University match at Lord's, of a trifling but most improbable circumstance which was happening to him there, he knew not how or why, and of its exact fulfilment when the match took place. Personally, I feel unable to agree with all the details of the paper: I regard the prophecies in the Bible as foretelling the coming and growth of the Kingdom of God, but not as predicting modern

political events. Prophecy was *not*, what one old divine once called it, "history written beforehand." And it generally, if not always, had, primarily, a bearing on the time and place of its delivery. The prophecy from Isaiah xlix, 6, quoted in the paper, was, as clearly appears from the context, spoken originally of Israel or a portion of Israel, and though we recognize it as chiefly fulfilled in Christ, St. Paul adopted it as applicable to Himself (Acts xiii, 47), and so justifies us in applying it to the Church. But the main conclusion of the paper is that prediction is the action of a superhuman mind. As Baron Von Hügel, I believe, points out in his recent work on *Eternal Life*, all the past, present and future in time are, eternally and always, completely and simultaneously open before God. From Him, therefore, emanates the element of Prediction in spiritual prophecy. From Him, too, must emanate, though we cannot understand how or why, any other true cases of prediction which have come within human experience.

The Rev. E. SEELEY drew attention to the value of prophetic prediction as an argument for the Divine Authority of the Bible, and to the tendency of some modern critics to question the dates of the prophecies when they were inconveniently exact, rather than accept the predictions made.

Referring to the Author's remarks on Egypt, p. 67, he thought he overlooked the predictions in Isaiah xix, 12, 20-25, of a latter-day restoration of Egypt, and of a similar restoration of Assyria, and also Isaiah's very remarkable words linking both of these predicted restorations with the latter-day prosperity of Israel (also left unnoticed by Mr. Urquhart).

During own own lifetime it has been increasingly evident that the unique British Empire has been receiving and possessing the blessings promised to Israel; so that we may perhaps be justified in considering it to be (at least, for the present) the political Kingdom of God,—the political aspect of "the Stone Kingdom."

We, living more than 2,000 years after Isaiah and Daniel, know that Britain is *now* assisting effectively in restoration in Egypt and, in a less degree, in Assyria. And throughout the world this strange Empire is growing and working as no other Empire ever has in the past; but, as some "kingdom" must do, in the days of "the toes," to fulfil these predictions and many others. How could Nebuchadnezzar or Daniel or Isaiah know of things so strange and

so remote in time? Were those statements merely "pious opinions"?

Mr. HOWARD said we had only to look at an almanack to see that if knowledge is adequate, foretelling is possible. Rising and setting of planets, eclipses, tides, etc., are predicted with perfect accuracy. Prognosis is possible, and is the highest result of medical knowledge. Too often men could not get beyond diagnosis. There is a paper in the *Revue des deux Mondes* by Lavoisier, foretelling the later researches of Ramsay and Dewar as to the effect of very low temperatures. It is clear that the all-wise God, having perfect knowing, is able to predict the future, and is it too much to expect that there may be good men who walk so closely with God that they learn His mind and so in their measure are able to prophesy too. Plato, one could scarcely doubt, had this gift in measure, especially when he foretold the fate of the perfectly just man, much more the writers of the sacred literature of the Bible.

Professor HECHLER begged that the greatest care should be taken in correctly interpreting prophecy.

"*The Stone*," in Daniel ii, 34, 35, 45, which "*was cut out without hands*," that is, without human instrumentality, "*and brake them*," the heathen kingdoms, "*into pieces*," is the "King Messiah," as the old Jewish Rabbis taught, and as we Christian students of Prophecy believe. See *Pirkê Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter II*, a Midrash compiled between 700–800 A.D., containing the opinions of Jewish teachers as far back as the days of our Lord. See also *Tanchuma, fol. 31, 4*, a Midrash compiled between A.D. 1100 and 1200. Compare also *Josephus, Antiq. X, 10, 4*.

Notice that in Daniel ii, 34, "*the stone . . . smote the image . . . and brake them to pieces*." Therefore, this seems to refer to the Second Coming of the Messiah in power and judgment, and in Daniel ii, 28, we are expressly informed that King Nebuchadnezzar's dream refers to "*the latter days*," that is, to Christ's Second Coming as the glorified Messiah to execute righteous judgment against all unbelievers, as predicted in Revelation xix, 11.

Surely, the events taking place all around us in our own days, the breaking up of the Turkish Empire, and in Palestine the good agricultural work being done by about 100,000 Jewish Zionist colonists, so that the Holy Land of Promise is again blossoming as a rose, which

the Professor saw himself in 1898 and 1904, all these events prove that we are living in very solemn times, when God's prophecies are fulfilling literally all around us. We may, therefore, soon expect the Master's Return in Glory and Majesty.

Dr. HEYWOOD SMITH said: I wish to draw attention to what has been said concerning Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image in Daniel ii (p. 69), wherein the author says, "The fifth will be the Kingdom of God." That is so. But we have no right to interpret the fifth kingdom as applying to the Church, as is so often done by various commentators, thereby mixing the metaphors. The image is a vision of kingdoms, as is explained by Daniel under the inspiration of God, and therefore we must interpret the fifth, the Stone Kingdom, as also a great empire, and the greatest of all the five, which was to become the dominant empire of the world. Now the British Empire is this great empire, the greatest the world has seen. And whereas Israel was indicated by dying Israel as the Stone Kingdom (Genesis xlix, 24), it follows that the British Empire is in the place of Israel. And, inasmuch as the promises and plans of Jehovah are sure and unchangeable, it naturally follows that the British Empire is the representative of Israel—nay, more, that we are actually the literal descendants of the so-called lost tribes of Israel.

The arguments for this position are so overwhelming, and the interest in this inquiry so widely spreading through our vast empire, and among our brethren in the United States, that it behoves us reverently to study and see whether God is not revealing to this generation the truth that we are Israel and that his promises stand for ever sure.

Mr. MAUNDER said: We have had a very important and suggestive paper read to us this afternoon, but I should like to say how thoroughly I agree with the criticism of our Chairman, that two entirely different subjects have been dealt with in it. For my part, I should have been glad if the whole of the introductory portion, from line 10 on page 57 to line 6 on page 61, had been omitted. The anecdotes which Mr. Urquhart has given us in this introductory section have nothing to do with prediction in its highest sense, or, as I should prefer to call it, prophecy, but simply with fortune-telling, and the distinction between the two is immense. Foreknowledge is the attribute of God alone, and the prophecies of Holy Scripture, which form Mr. Urquhart's main

theme, are, as we have been told by St. Peter, "not of any private interpretation." They are concerned with God's great purposes for mankind in general, with the person and work of Our Lord, and with the scheme of redemption. They stand therefore on an altogether different plane from the prediction of happenings to individual men. As a scientific man, I am inclined to think that such cases of successful fortune-telling require far more cogent evidence to support them than is usually forthcoming; as a rule, when critically inquired into, they resolve themselves into mist; and where they seem well authenticated, I am disposed to think that in many cases they can be explained by some slight confusion of consciousness in the person experiencing them.

Mr. GRAHAM, on the question of what degree of knowledge the prophets had of the extent or reach of their predictions, called attention to the apostolic statement on the subject (1 Peter i, 12), and quoted the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive," etc., given and fulfilled as a sign to Ahaz; applied by St. Matthew to the birth of the Saviour; and thus proving an important prophetic testimony to the truth of the Incarnation. This and other instances given in the Gospels indicated the infinite mind that inspired the prophecies. It was what Bacon called the "germinative quality" of prophecy, by which must be understood successive fulfilments of the same word in the development of the purpose of God. If this suggestion were taken up and followed out, it would dispose of attempts to fix a limit of time for the application of the inspired word.

Mr. C. S. CAMPBELL said: In continuation of the point raised by the last speaker, I may be allowed perhaps to say a few words. He alluded to the double fulfilment of prophecy. And I do not suppose we should find it hard to exemplify such from the Bible or experience. A mere physical fulfilment, to the eye, may be followed by a more distant fulfilment, appealing to the spirit; or we might say, more esoteric. In this connection I had already noted, in passing, the allusion of the writer of the paper to "twofoldness in prediction" (5 lines from the end). If I am at all right in the connection, the writer might perhaps see fit to reconsider his wording; or make his position clearer.

The CHAIRMAN, in closing the discussion, said: I am sure we shall all unite in a hearty vote of thanks to the writer of the paper.

It has given rise to a discussion which, if the limits of our time had permitted, could easily have been prolonged to a late hour of the night. We shall, no doubt, have the benefit later on of seeing his remarks on that discussion when it is published in the volume of our transactions.

Professor H. LANGHORNE ORCHARD wrote :

It is with *very great* regret that I find myself prevented from being present at the reading of Mr. Urquhart's masterly paper on "The Fact of Prediction,"—a paper full of interest. Our thanks are due to the learned Author for the clearness and precision with which he treats a subject which has at all times had extraordinary fascination for the human mind. In the desire for prediction may be recognized man's intuitive belief in a future, in a future which concerns himself, in immortality.

Absolute knowledge of a future event is not the attribute of any creature; it is the attribute of GOD alone. This seems affirmed in Isaiah xlii, where HE tells us that HE declares "new things" "before they spring forth." In the Bible prophecies GOD communicates this knowledge. Perhaps instances of prediction, such as those cited in the early part of the paper, may be partly explained in this way, and partly by coincidence and guess. There are some things which man can foretell, provided always that the natures and relations of things and the laws of nature remain unchanged:—*e.g.*, the heights of the tides on given days, eclipses, returns of comets, etc., etc. These conditional predictions are really calculations. Similarly, we have logical conclusions from premises supplied by experience. The difference between this sort of foretelling and the Bible prophecies is obvious.

I think the remarks, in the last paragraph of p. 71, on foreknowledge and predestination are especially valuable. A surprising amount of haze in connection with these subjects confuses many minds. In the Bible prophecies predestination is combined with foreknowledge of *free-will actions*, and we shall concur with the able Author that "a Book which has such seals leaves no doubt in any candid mind as to its origin and claims."

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

The LECTURER in reply writes :

The interesting discussion which followed the reading of the paper

has largely answered my purpose in writing it. The study of Scripture prophecy has been strangely neglected in recent times, with deplorable results.

May I be permitted to say that I dissent very definitely from the view of the nature of Scripture prophecy expressed by the respected Chairman, Chancellor P. Vernon Smith. I think it was well defined by the old divine whom he quotes as "history written beforehand." Samuel's prediction to Saul (1 Samuel x, 2-6) was of exactly that order, and its exact literal fulfilment impressed Saul accordingly. As to its having had "primarily a bearing upon the time or place of its delivery," although the Chairman is here in accord with a modern principle of prophetic (mis)interpretation, I am quite at a loss to understand the statement. When Daniel pictured the final partition of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, what bearing had that prediction "on the time and place of its delivery"? The belief that the Messianic Psalms, for example, had a primary fulfilment in David is most distinctly repudiated by Holy Scripture. In Acts ii, 29, the first part of the proof, that a certain prediction referred to our Lord, is that it had no fulfilment whatever in David. Is not the Chairman under a misapprehension when he alleges that Paul (Acts xiii, 47) "adopted" "as applicable to himself" a prophecy "chiefly fulfilled in Christ"? Is it not the evident meaning of the Apostle, not that they (Paul and Barnabas) were the light of the Gentiles, but that, Christ having been appointed the light of the Gentiles, they (His servants) must carry the Gospel to them? In view of the enormous importance of testing current modes of interpretation, the Chancellor, I know, will excuse my traversing another statement of his. "The prophecy from Isaiah xlix, 6," he said, was "spoken originally of Israel or a portion of Israel." The words are these: "And he said 'It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Against these words this Jewish rationalistic device is dashed to pieces. Was Israel or any portion of it ever described as God's "salvation"? Were even the Apostles ever so addressed? The words are applied to ONE who, seeing that His mission is to "raise up" the Jew, and "to restore" in the latter day that part of Israel "preserved" throughout "the day of Jacob's

trouble," cannot, by any expositor, who retains his sanity, be identified with Israel or with any portion of it.

Mr. Seeley will see on reflection that, seeing I was dealing only with fulfilled prediction, any reference on my part to those as yet unfulfilled would have been out of place. The importance, however, of these I, in common with him, hold to be inestimable. As to the Anglo-Israelite theory I have to confess that I am utterly unable to accept it, or to understand how it has commended itself to so many good men. I am thankful to note Professor Hechler's excellent words in commending the more careful interpretation of prophecy.

Mr. Maunder thinks that the earlier part of the paper might with advantage have been omitted. That is possible; but, dealing with the fact of prediction, it seemed to me that some notice of those phenomena was called for. I think they are also interesting. The cases cited seemed to me to be well authenticated. Colonel Meadows Taylor had personal knowledge of the facts which he recorded, and Madame de Boigne's testimony seems almost equally strong. The cases recorded in Scripture seem still more incapable of explanation on the supposition of either delusion or imposture (see page 58). That contact is possible with the spirit-world seems scientifically proved; and the plain import of the passage in Acts referred to is that the damsel was possessed by a demon who had to a limited extent the power of prediction. There are other well-known facts which might have been mentioned. Whence came the singular assurance of the Romans as to the duration of their city? It has so far proved itself to be "the Eternal City," and it is clearly indicated that in "the time of the end" Rome has her part to play.

Mr. C. S. Campbell suggests that I should reconsider the wording of the phrase "the suggestion of twofoldness in a prediction every word of which has revealed the then future, is presumptuous trifling." I admit that the wording is strong; but, if Mr. Campbell saw the matter from my point of view, I think he would admit that it is by no means too strong. That suggestion, roundly condemned by Dean Lyall in his *Propædia Prophetica*, if I remember rightly, has worked untold mischief. It has drawn a veil over the eyes of tens of thousands of Scripture students, and is largely responsible for the annihilation of a force to which was due in no small measure the triumphs of the Apostolic Church. With those proofs of the certainty of God's Word constantly under their eyes, how could

they fail to commend it to the heathen, and to impress upon them the offered mercy and the certainty of the coming judgment ?

I may be permitted to cite one instance of the disastrous results of this twofold sense, or double-application, theory. It is that Daniel xi refers largely to Antiochus Epiphanes primarily, and secondarily to the Antichrist. What has been the effect ? The utter nullification of that part of Scripture for almost everyone ! The application to Antiochus Epiphanes, suggested by Josephus and used by Porphyry, was accepted by Christian scholars owing to the twofold reference theory, with the result that so orthodox an authority as *The Speaker's Commentary* sees Antiochus Epiphanes and nothing of the Antichrist, although the Scripture says definitely that the chapter reveals the events of the last days. To the careful Bible student it is absolutely clear that the prediction has no reference whatever to the Syrian king. Daniel xi, 6, takes us to a point much later than his time. We are told that "in the end of years" an Egyptian queen, *who is the last ruler of independent Egypt*, will make a league with the then ruler of Syria. Cleopatra was the last of the Ptolemies, and the prediction suits her and Marc Antony exactly—even to his overthrow and death, her own overthrow and death, the assassination of her son (see the Hebrew "her offspring"—Luther, *mit dem kinde*), plainly Cæsarion, a lad of about 20, who was done to death by order of Augustus.

If that is so, then verse 6 brings us down to 30 B.C.—134 years after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, to whom therefore, the description from verse 21 to verse 45 can have no application at all.

I have read with pleasure the words of my old friend and valiant fellow-soldier, Professor Langhorne Orchard. I must also thank the Chairman and the other speakers for their kind appreciation of the paper.