

THE
CHURCHMAN

APRIL, 1891.

ART. I.—THE PERMANENT CLAIMS OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT.

THERE is a very general impression abroad in the present day that even if the New Testament is able to maintain its ground as an authoritative definition of Christianity, it is impossible for the Old Testament to secure its hereditary position as an authoritative record of divine revelation. So much doubt has been thrown upon its history, its antiquity, its genuineness, and its authenticity, that to defend it is regarded by many as a forlorn hope, and the attempt to do so as simply labour lost and the extravagance of folly; while it is currently supposed that the New Testament is the charter of Christianity, which is, therefore, independent of the Old. But though it is not wise to make Christianity answerable with its life for every statement of the Old Testament or for the genuineness of every one of its books, yet it is certainly true that if the credit of the Old Testament is destroyed as an instrument of Divine revelation, the authority of the New Testament will be very seriously impaired, and the authority of Christ Himself will be shaken if it can be shown that He was wrong in the use He made of the Old Testament Scriptures.

For example: we are told by St. Luke that after our Lord's resurrection He said unto His disciples: "These are the words that I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Me." It is possible for us to reject St. Luke's testimony in this matter, and to affirm that he misrepresented his Master. But putting aside such an extreme course as fatal to anything like loyalty to Christ or the evangelists, we may note, first, that as these words were spoken after the resurrection, it is impossible to suppose that they were in any way conditioned by the limitations, real or imaginary, of Christ's humanity.

If the words were those of the risen Christ they can in no degree be open to the suspicion of fallibility. We may implicitly trust them, if we can trust any words of Christ. But, secondly, He tells us Himself that what He taught His disciples then was in the main identical with what He had taught them while He was with them and before His death. Consequently there can have been no essential variation between His teaching before and after His resurrection. What He was teaching them then did not differ materially from what He had taught them previously. What, then, was this? That there was a necessity that the Scriptures of the Old Testament should be fulfilled in Him. That, therefore, these Scriptures were not merely supposed to look forward to, to anticipate, and to predict certain incidents or events in His career, but that it was a fact that they did so. That they did so, therefore, was not a matter of chance or opinion, but a matter of fact; that in the providence of God they not only did so, but were intended to do so, and that it was as He had said, easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail (St. Luke xvi. 17). If, therefore, this was so, as He said it was, it must follow that, at all events, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were the vehicles of the intents and purposes of the Divine mind. They could not have this forward-looking significance, this distant reference and meaning, without having been selected to that end and endowed accordingly.

The Scriptures of the Old Testament, then, must have differed intrinsically from all other books, because no other books had the same function or the same characteristics. No other books were in the same way vehicles of the intents and purposes of the Divine mind, as it is obvious that no other books had intentional references to Jesus. Perhaps it would not be unfair to go even further, and say that the order in which our Lord spake of these works agreeing, as it did, with the Jewish belief in their sanctity, was His confirmation of their legitimate order in point of importance. He implied, even if He did not intend us to infer, that the Law was of higher authority than the Prophets and the Prophets than the Psalms. We can well believe this in the latter case. The prophets, if their mission was a reality, were entitled to more deference than the unknown authors of spontaneous poetical effusions. But with regard to the Law, it would be simply preposterous to rank that before the Prophets if the great bulk of it was of Exile origin.

We have, therefore, a statement made by the risen Christ which undoubtedly lends countenance to the traditional belief of the nation with regard to the authority and im-

portance of the law; and when this is set over against the other statement in the Sermon on the Mount, that no tittle of the law should fail, we see not only that the teaching of Christ in this matter was identical, as He said it was, before and after His resurrection, but also that we are not at liberty to pass lightly over His words on the latter occasion as if they were only a casual adoption of the common belief of the nation with regard to their sacred writings. This does not seem to be an undue pressure of His words; but, at all events, it is patent and undeniable that we can only infer from what He said that there was in the Scriptures of the Old Testament an element that was intended to be understood as having direct reference to Him, and which, whatever its primary meaning may have been, received only the complete and intentional fulfilment of its meaning when interpreted of Him. But if this is so, then it is impossible to regard the Old Testament as any ordinary book, because this very fact of its ulterior meaning distinguishes and differentiates it from all other books.

It seems, then, that our Lord distinctly taught us to believe that the Old Testament was intended to refer to Him; but intended by whom? In the great majority of cases, probably not by the original writers, but by the Spirit and providence of God, which, as far as they were concerned, unwittingly directed and overruled their writings to such an extent as to make them more applicable to another than they were to themselves. We are told, indeed, by Christ that Abraham rejoiced to see His day—that he saw it, and was glad—and therefore we must suppose that some special illumination was vouchsafed to him, which enabled him to see it; but even then it would not follow that the writer of the narrative about Abraham shared also in that illumination. He may have written down in ignorance a narrative of the things that befell Abraham without understanding them himself. This is conceivable, whether or not it was the case. In like manner the patriarchs and David may have had knowledge vouchsafed to them which faintly glimmers in the narrative about them, though it may have been hidden from the narrator. Moses, it may be conceived, but partly understood the purpose and object of his mission, and though he spoke confidently of the prophet that was to succeed him, he can, without special illumination, have known but little about him or about what his own words meant.

When we come to such passages as Ps. xxii. and Is. liii. the case is different. It is actually more easy to believe that these Scriptures were overruled to correspond as they did with subsequent events, than it is to believe that they were the

plain and literal description of events that happened to their writers. Instead, therefore, of adopting the course that some critics are disposed to take, and arguing that *Psa. xxii.* cannot be David's, because we know and can conceive of no events in his history answering to it, we should rather say that we know of no one in the whole circle of Old Testament history of whom it is likely to have been literally true; and, therefore, on the supposition that the Spirit of God spake by David, as he said it did (*2 Sam. xxiii. 2*), the very historical improbability of the incidents described in the Psalm is in favour of the correctness of the superscription, seeing that our Lord took the first words of the Psalm into His own mouth in the supreme hour of His death, and afterwards led us to believe that there were things written in the Psalms concerning Him. This may not be a position that commends itself to the critical mind, but it is one that can be established logically step by step, and it is wholly unassailable if only we accept our Lord's testimony concerning Himself. The question is, Given the Old Testament as we have it, and how is it to be accounted for? Is it merely the spontaneous production of a particular nation, like the literature of other nations; or is it marked by features totally distinct from those which characterise other literatures, and which cannot be explained as they stand, but which are supposed to have received an immense accession of illustration and explanation from events which occurred many ages afterwards? If it were simply like the literature of other nations, then it would not differ from them in being capable of receiving this accession of unexpected illustration from after-ages. For it is clear that the early history or literature of Greece and Rome did not resemble it in this respect. No one pretends that Alexander the Great or Cæsar was the person whose coming had been anticipated ages before by poets or seers; nor is there anything in either literature which can be reasonably taken to render this probable. But with the Old Testament it is different. We may dispute the propriety, the probability, or the possibility of applying the Scriptures of the Old Testament to Christ, but there can be no question that it was the fact of this having been done which to a large degree laid the foundations of the Christian Church. This is a mere matter of history, of which there is abundant documentary evidence. We have, then, to account for the fact that what was not possible and did not occur in the case of the literature of Greece and Rome, not only was possible, but did actually occur in the case of the Old Testament literature. Why was this the case? Simply because there were notorious features in the Old Testament which lent themselves with remarkable readiness to the

Christian interpretation. Take, for instance, the Book of Genesis, a book of whose author we know absolutely nothing, and whose date has been assigned to any period between 750 and 1500 before Christ. With regard to this book, I am disposed to think that from whatever sources it may have been compiled, Moses was acquainted with and to a certain extent responsible for it, though manifestly a great deal of it must have been in existence before his time. This is unquestionable if it is to be relied upon as history, and that it is our only authority for the earliest history of mankind and of civilization is obvious. But, as a matter of fact, it is commonly recognised that we are under great obligations to the Book of Genesis for the early history of the race, and that many particulars have been preserved to us therein which we should not otherwise have known. But it may at once be said, What about the opening chapters of Genesis? Is it possible that they can be worthy of a moment's attention in view of the modern researches and conclusions of geology? I answer most emphatically, Yes; and I would ask, Is it possible that at any period, even 800 or 1,000 years before Christ, this narrative of creation is likely to have been written down conjecturally? I do not believe it for a moment; but if this narrative is not conjectural, it must have been derived from some other sources. Where are those sources to be found? There is, however, so much in these chapters that is illustrated by modern science and, so to say, verified thereby, that the writer, whoever he was, is entitled to the credit of so far anticipating modern science. Of course, it is needless to observe that there are many points of conflict—or, at all events, of apparent conflict; but I am prepared to maintain that there is so much in these chapters that is confirmed rather than contradicted by science, that our estimate of them is at once raised very greatly; and, at all events, the unity of the worker and the oneness of his work stand out in striking contrast to the puerilities of other cosmogonies, and bespeak our reverential attention to his message.

Take, then, the words attributed to Noah: "God shall enlarge Japheth, and dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be their servant." It matters very little when these words were written, for we gain next to nothing by putting them as late as they can possibly be put. If we suppose them to have had any reference to the subjugation of Canaan, that does not explain the clause, "God shall enlarge Japheth." I maintain that, assign what date we please to these words attributed to Noah, and it is impossible to explain them as having been suggested by the writer's survey of the world in his own time. And yet there is that in them which, even now, thousands

of years after they are supposed to have been spoken, is no bad generalization of the facts of ethnology. The vast expansion of the Japhetic races, the unique position of the family of Shem, and the degradation of the Hamite races, are facts which are patent to our own observation and experience; but it is too much to suppose that they were as obvious a thousand years before Christ. And we may remark in passing that this is not a case in which retranslation helps us to any extent. It matters little whether we read the words precatively or affirmatively. There is still a similar correspondence with fact; and it is the apparent anticipation of fact at an age when naturally there can have been no such anticipation that is at once striking and inexplicable. It is perhaps worth while to add that in the light of St. John's statement, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt in our tents," there is probably a significant allusion to this early promise, which may serve largely to illustrate the character of events which are sufficiently striking independently.

Take, again, the history of Abraham. If it was written to gratify the family pride of his descendants, we must still put it early enough to be a factor in the history of the Exodus; for there can be no doubt that the promise of the possession of Canaan professedly given to him acted as a motive with the people to obtain it. But even then this does not suffice to explain the form of that other promise: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." What explanation can be offered of the simple fact that this promise is recorded as given, to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob, but is not mentioned or barely alluded to again in the Old Testament?—*e.g.*, Micah vii. 20. It cannot be said that the form of the blessing is a natural or a common one, because it is found nowhere but in the Book of Genesis. The promise of the land is frequently referred to in the Psalms and elsewhere, and this seems to show the kind of hold that the history of Abraham had acquired on the people; but the notion of the blessing through the seed seems to have slumbered from the time of the patriarchs till it was revived and burst out with full maturity and vigour in the Epistle to the Galatians and the Gospel of St. Matthew. Yet the promise of blessing through the seed had been on record for many hundreds of years before a line of the New Testament was written. It was not, therefore, written designedly with any reference to the use hereafter to be made of it—to imagine that is an absurdity; and yet there it was, unique and solitary in its character, and no less so in the use to which it was afterwards applied, and in respect of the events which occasioned the application.

Take again, in this same book, the supremacy promised to

Judah in the blessing of Jacob. He is the lion-like tribe. The sceptre and the ruler's staff are assigned to him for a definite period, no matter what, for it is useless to discuss the disputed "Shiloh," though a consensus of rabbinical interpretation refers it to the Messiah, and to Him is to be the gathering or obedience of peoples. We do not know the date of this blessing. Let it be granted that it was intended to refer to David, and was of his time, which, however, I personally do not for one moment believe. At all events, as a matter of fact the tribe of Judah was that which retained possession of the throne till the time of the Captivity, and after the Captivity it was a representative of this tribe that led back the tribes who returned to their fatherland. These are facts which cannot be questioned, and the New Testament is a witness to the belief in the time of Christ that the Messiah was to spring from the tribe of Judah; and in the Book of Revelation, rightly or wrongly, Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It is undeniable that for centuries this promise had been recorded in the literature, and served as a basis for the belief. If we set aside the New Testament application, that does not remove the promise any more than it explains it; if we accept the application of the New Testament, that at once enhances the value of the original blessing, while it invests it with a possible significance which, if it is allowed, constrains us to acknowledge the indication of Divine prescience and prediction.

We pass on to the Book of Exodus and the ordinance of the Passover. He must be a very incompetent critic who, in reading the twelfth chapter, does not see in every verse the tokens of authenticity and genuineness and the living memorial of "that night to be much observed unto the Lord by all the children of Israel in their generations." After a lapse of more than three thousand years the rite then instituted is still observed by the children of Israel in professed obedience to this original command, and no one pretends that any other explanation or origin can be found for it than this which the history supplies. The essential character of the Passover was that of a feast upon a sacrifice, and there is every reason to believe that every year since the first Passover the commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt has been observed in this way. The annals of the world supply no similar instance of anything like the same antiquity. But it cannot be denied that the Jewish Passover was virtually the parent of the Christian Easter, which in like manner perpetuates the sacrifice of Christ our Passover year by year at the corresponding season, and has done so for more than eighteen centuries and a half by a feast upon the sacrifice. It is possible to deny that there is anything more than an imaginary connection between

the death of Christ and the Passover. At all events, the Passover for fifteen centuries laid the foundation for this connection, and if it is anything more than imaginary, then it is not possible that the interest attaching to the institution of the Passover can ever fail; while, if the connection is a real one, it stamps the institution as Divine.

The sacrificial system of Leviticus is minute and burdensome; it is so elaborate that there is an increasing tendency in the present day to regard it as a parasitical growth on the simplicity of the primitive worship, and as the late invention of the priests at Babylon. If this were so, then it is impossible to acquit them of the most barefaced forgery and the most impious imposture, seeing that the individual precepts purport to be the direct commands of the Lord to Moses, or to Moses and Aaron, and twice over in the last two chapters the bulk of them is described particularly as given to him for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai; so that in view of the proposed exilic origin, there is a deliberate falsehood both as to time and place. It has to be explained by what method the nation was prevailed upon to accept a system so burdensome on the mere assertion that it was a thousand years older than they knew it was. Would it be possible to get the English nation at the present day, or any considerable body of any nation at any day, to consent to be bound by a recently introduced ritual code on the mere assertion that it was a thousand years old? We have a right to press the necessary improbability of such a course, because we are able to form a sufficiently accurate idea of the practical difficulty attending it; whereas we are not competent to decide upon the extent to which prescriptions apparently inconsistent or contradictory may have been reconciled in practice according to circumstances or conditions of which we are ignorant.

But, apart from this, the generally sacrificial or mediatorial character of the tribe of Levi requires to be explained. This is recognised by Malachi, and there are continual traces of it in the earlier books. How came the nation to acquiesce in the priestly character of a certain tribe? According to the history this is plain, and it apparently dates from the time of Moses, as it is recognised in his blessing of the tribes, although in the corresponding blessing of Jacob there is no hint of it, though there is an unfavourable promise of their being divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel, which, as a matter of fact, was the consequence of the other blessing, and the condition under which it was fulfilled. It does not seem that this position was a self-chosen one; nor is it likely to have been allowed by the other tribes if it were. It is represented as the deliberate assignment of God; but in this case the selection of Levi as

the priestly tribe becomes indicative of a principle in His action, which is that He selects the conditions under which He is willing to be approached. He appoints and authorizes a system of mediation in virtue of which the priesthood is not a human device for drawing near to God, but a divinely ordained means of bringing men near to Himself. That is to say, by it He is seeking men, even the bulk of the nation, according to certain prescribed methods which He has appointed, and not they invented. If this is so, it overthrows the notion of priestly invention at Babylon, which would have been an elaborately graduated human method of approaching God, and would have furnished no Divinely appointed basis for that scheme of mediation through the sacrifice of a well-beloved Son which the New Testament makes known to us as the fulfilment of the sacrificial types and shadows of the Old.

If we accept the Epistle to the Hebrews as in any sense an authorised interpretation of the ritual of the tabernacle, we see at once how impossible it is to submit tamely to the suggestion of an exilic origin for the law; for, if that supposition is allowed, not only is the authority of the Levitical law destroyed, but it is no longer possible to attach any weight to those minute correspondences which the writer of that epistle has delighted to point out and to interpret; and in depreciating the value of the law we reduce his interpretation of it to nothing more than a fanciful inculcation of certain principles which rest upon a fictitious and worthless basis. For instance, the ritual of the Day of Atonement is especially dwelt upon by him, as having priceless Divine significance; but, according to recent theories, the ritual of this Day was one of the very latest additions to the law, as late as, if not later than, the time of Nehemiah. On this hypothesis we may rightly ask what evidence is there in fact or reason for believing that these prescriptions had any Divine authority, or that they were, without such authority, worthy of being presented as the Divine foreshadowings of Christ's entrance on our behalf into the holy of holies of the tabernacle not made with hands? In all earnestness and sincerity I commend these considerations to my brethren of the laity, believing that it is impossible to discredit or disparage the main features of the Levitical law without impairing to an equal extent the reality of those evangelical truths which are proposed to us as fulfilling them.

We pass on to the Book of Numbers. In the fourteenth chapter we read: "And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word; but as truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Let it be granted that we do not know the date of this. At all events, it would seem

to be earlier than Habukkuk and Isaiah and the seventy-second Psalm, all of which presuppose it. And if it was earlier than the time of David, it may well be as early as the time of Moses; and from its threefold quotation afterwards it is evident, at all events, that it was not without its influence on the national mind. But we are constrained to ask, How is it that this thought found expression fifteen hundred years before Christ under the conditions described; and, finding expression as it did, how has it been vindicated as it has? It is to be observed that it is declared to be the very promise of Almighty God. This must either be a gross instance of prosopopœia, utterly unwarranted and unwarrantable, or it must be taken as genuine. In the former case, it is not explained by assigning it to such an origin, for even then it turns out to be a wonderful anticipation of the fact; but in the latter case it is at once explained, and our astonishment at its apparent correspondence with the fact gives place to the perplexity we feel in explaining in any adequate manner the way in which a promise so apparently valid was made known to the historian of the book; while we are totally baffled by the effort to explain the means by which any mortal man could be so made the instrument of a Divine communication as to leave the evidence of it on record for countless ages, with the prospect of each succeeding age affording fresh and fresh demonstration of its truth.

We now come to Deuteronomy. We have lately been told that "the true author of Deuteronomy is the writer who introduces Moses in the third person." Then on precisely the same principle we may fairly ask, Who is the author of the history of Thucydides or of the commentaries of Cæsar? If it were suggested that these works were written by an unknown author in their name, we should say they were spurious; and most undoubtedly, if Deuteronomy is not the work of Moses, as it professes to be, it also is spurious, and the writer of it guilty of forgery. It matters not how pure and laudable his motive may have been, because, as a matter of fact, he has imposed upon the world, and intended to do so; and if Moses did not write Deuteronomy, then we can place reliance on no single statement that purports to be made by him that we do not choose to believe is corroborated from other sources. The communications, then, and exhortations made in the Divine name are reduced to ideal and imaginary harangues of no value whatever, because they have no foundation of truth or fact on which to rest. If God did not speak to Moses, what becomes of the Mosaic dispensation? What becomes of the law which St. Paul tells us was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator, and of which Christ told us that no jot

or tittle should pass till all was fulfilled? It is all very well to say that such "critical investigations" as these do not really touch "the *fact* of revelation," because it is precisely that which they do touch, and it is solely on this ground that they are worth refuting. We want to know whether we have any real revelation, say in the Pentateuch and in the Mosaic dispensation as there preserved, or not; and, if so, what is the nature of that revelation. Because, if the bulk of the Pentateuch was written in Babylon, and if Deuteronomy is of the age of Josiah, it is all moonshine to talk of *that* as revelation; and then in that case there is left us we know not what, whether the Decalogue or anything less than that, to regard as the original Divine revelation given to Moses. It is absurd to say that if this was the "mode" or "form" that the revelation assumed, it can still be regarded as a fact; for most assuredly a revelation so communicated would be a fiction, and not a fact. It could only by a very fallacious figure of speech be called a revelation of which the *fact* would be the creation of our own minds and nothing more. Have we any ground to believe that God spake to Moses at all; and, if so, what are we justified in believing to have come from Him? Is it the Decalogue, or certain parts of Exodus or Deuteronomy, or what is it? For that our Lord taught us that "the Law" generally came from God is beyond all doubt or dispute. But we are bold to say that if the bulk of the law was concocted in Babylon, or Deuteronomy written merely in the name of Moses in the age of Josiah by a literary adventurer unauthorized and unknown, or by a body of priests on their own responsibility and for their own ends, which they mistook for, or identified with, the ends of God, then it is entirely gratuitous and fatally misleading to say or to suppose that God was in any sense the author of it.

It is, then, of the highest importance that we determine with ourselves in what sense and to what extent God spake by Moses, for beyond all question our Lord has led us to believe that He did so in some special and exceptional way. Deuteronomy has represented to us pretty plainly what that way was. If Deuteronomy is a forgery, we can give no credit to its representation. If Deuteronomy is genuine it is the sublimest book that ever was written, and gives us the sublimest conception of the revelation of God by the hand of the mediator. But it is an error to say that the majesty of its conception is independent of its truth of fact. If it is not true in fact, it is, for aught we can tell, not true in its representation of God. Take, for instance, the ninth chapter. What is the nucleus of fact that underlies it? How can we tell if what we read is not based on the authority of the Lawgiver

Himself? We may brush it aside as imaginary, improbable, untrue. Take, again, the promise of the prophet in the eighteenth chapter. If this was written under the monarchy it simply cannot be true, it is absurd to suppose that there is any truth in it, for we have no other authority for the fact, and the bare memory of the circumstance, personal as it was to Moses, cannot have been preserved for seven centuries. If, therefore, it is not genuine, it is not real, it is not true, no such promise was ever given. For to suppose that it was the ideal setting of an imaginary promise, based upon the actual experience of the rise of the prophetic order, is to deprive it of all value as an actual promise in the past, and to render it worthless as the basis of hopes for the future, and of hopes, moreover, that were fulfilled in Christ.

If we are prepared to say that God was content to take this forgery of the eighth century B.C., and to make it the vehicle of this imaginary and pretended promise which He was, nevertheless, content to honour, as He did by Christ, then be it so; but it remains to be shown in what way this is a conception more worthy of God or more probably consistent with the truth than that which receives it in its literal sense as a definite and distinct promise given to Moses, and recorded by him as it manifestly and undeniably professes to be. It is one of the perplexing problems of this book how to explain this promise of the prophet like unto Moses in the eighteenth chapter. It is clear that the writer of the last three verses of the book had it before him, and the later that addition is supposed to be, the greater is the significance of the comment it makes upon it. But it is not difficult to see that the canon of the Old Testament closes without any apparent realisation of the hopes inspired by this promise, for no one between Moses and Malachi can compare with him; and yet there it is, either to give the lie to the pretensions advanced by the Old Testament itself, or put forth by others in its favour, or else to stand as a challenge to the world to account for its existence apart from its possible reference to Christ, who taught us to believe that Moses wrote of Him. At all events this is one of the many features which stamp the Old Testament as a unique literary phenomenon, and it utterly defies explanation unless we accept it as a Divine promise which Christ recognised and fulfilled. But as long as these features are characteristic of the elder volume of Revelation, it may confidently lay claim to be the record of a Revelation, and as such may rely on its permanent interest for mankind.

With regard to the history of the Old Testament, it must be borne in mind that in many cases it is our only authority, and that in many its testimony has been confirmed contrary to all

expectation by the course of modern discovery. This is especially true in the case of Nineveh and the Hittites. The Book of Genesis is indispensable for the study of the earliest dawn of history and ethnology. But the later historical books also have laid us under obligations which are shared by no other sources of information. And the history itself is very remarkable. For a long while the nation seems to have resisted the tendency to develop into monarchy. The Pentateuch bears witness to this natural tendency, Gen. xvii. 6, 16, and xxxv. 11; Deut. xvii. 14; but it is clear that from some reason or other Samuel was very reluctant to yield to the wishes of the people to have a king, and after his election he was set aside in favour of an unknown rival, in whose family the throne continued for nearly five centuries. It is evident that the most explicit promises were believed to centre in David and his house, but the ideal king seemed never to arise. Solomon, in whose reign the kingdom attained its acme of splendour, was a conspicuous failure, and the disruption of the monarchy which followed threatened to be the destruction of all the national hopes, which, nevertheless, though they languished, never seemed wholly to fail until a thousand years after David. A professed descendant of his suffered death at Jerusalem under the charge of being the King of the Jews, and after that promise and expectation alike seemed to fail, and the nation and the national hopes together passed away.

Conjecture and hypothesis may do what it will with the details of this history, but it will be difficult to disprove the main facts of the outline as now given; and as long as the world lasts there will survive the memory of David and his throne, with all the associations of poetry and promise connected therewith, and there will survive also the known historic fact of the life and death of Him who was called the Son of David, and whose title over His cross was the King of the Jews. These two facts, the distinct landmarks of a millennium, are simply indestructible, and the problem with which from age to age the world will have to deal is the relation in which they stand to each other. It is impossible materially to alter either, and it is impossible to deny the relationship which *may* subsist between them. But as long as this is a possible relationship, and as long as the world lasts, it is one which will appear to many more or less obvious; it is one which will require a full and sufficient explanation, and it is one which will bear witness to the undying interest inherently attaching to the Old Testament and to its permanent claims on the attention of mankind.

There still remains the entire field of the prophetic and

poetic books of the Old Testament, the psalms and the prophets. This in some respects is the more important part, inasmuch as it is of more general interest and corresponds more nearly with the ordinary literature of other nations. The Hebrew prophets present a unique phenomenon in literature; there is nothing which even faintly answers to them elsewhere, and no treatment of them can be fair and adequate which does not do justice to this unique character and recognise it as the evidence of a unique cause producing it. The question whether or not there is a natural genesis for the Old Testament seems to me to be decided by the prophets and the Psalms. Take, for instance, the prophet Hosea. He was a prophet of the northern kingdom, and flourished in the eighth century before Christ. How, then, are we to account for his saying that after many days the Children of Israel should return and seek the Lord their God and David their king? The very form of the words shows that they contain a promise; they throw down a challenge to futurity, and they show that the prophet, though of the northern kingdom, recognised the authority of David's throne, and looked forward to a descendant of his, in accordance with the promise given to him. What justification, we may ask, could the prophet find in the survey of his times to warrant such an assertion as this? Can we venture to say that it was a random utterance of no value and no meaning? Does not the most cursory glance show that the subsequent history of five-and-twenty centuries has many times amply vindicated it, while it gives thereby a sufficiently intelligible pledge that a far more significant fulfilment may still await us if we tarry for it? Kuenen regards the moral earnestness of the prophets, combined with their deep piety, as one of their principal characteristics. Where was the moral earnestness of Hosea, if he wrote down such a promise as this, and meant nothing by it; and if he meant nothing by it, how are we to regard it in the light that subsequent history has thrown upon it? How shall we disregard the seal that the Spirit and the providence of God has thereby set to its authority and truth?

Prophecy, however, presents the fatal difficulty that unless we ascribe the knowledge of future events to the writers, which we are not at liberty to presuppose, it is always possible to deny that their language has any relation to such future events. How can their words be referred with any show of reason to events and circumstances of which they had no knowledge and cannot, unless by a miracle, have had any? And if they had no knowledge of certain events, how can we be sure that their language can rightly be referred to those events? To this we may reply that we know it by the best

of all tests, by a process of induction. If there were but one passage in the prophets which we could refer to any future event, we might well doubt about the reference of that. But when we can gather together, not from one prophet, but from many, passages to which no adequate meaning can be assigned from the history of their times, but to which a most remarkable meaning is only too obvious if we can but be allowed to find it in the history of Christ, it becomes a question whether it is more reasonable to reject this multifold and converging reference than it is to deny to the Spirit and providence of God the will and the power to select this method as the means of indicating what He intended to be understood by the correspondence of prophecy with the facts of history. It must be borne in mind that the mission of the prophets was acknowledged, not only in their own day, but also by posterity and the nation at large, and it was the long result of time and history which vindicated this claim, which was rather given to than assumed by them.

For example: the twenty-second Psalm, among others, is either an exaggerated description of the personal experience of an unknown writer, or it is the ideal and prophetic delineation of sufferings which the writer was privileged to conceive of as his own. In the former case it is devoid of all human interest, as it probably had no human analogue, and does not appeal to any general human interest; in the latter it is at once invested with the highest possible interest, because it depicts so graphically the sufferings of one with whom, on other grounds, our sympathy is enlisted; and I am bold to affirm that it is impossible to enter into His sufferings by the sympathy of faith and not feel that they are anticipated and described in the twenty-second Psalm, as if the writer also had been a witness of them, and as if the Holy Spirit, who was conscious of them, had Himself inspired the Psalmist's thoughts and directed the Psalmist's pen. Of course this is entirely on the supposition that Jesus was what we believe Him to be, and that the Psalmist was guided and enlightened in the way suggested. If we start with the *assumption* that any spiritual illumination of this kind is impossible, and that the Incarnation was a mistake, then these remarks are futile; but that is the very question that has to be proved.

Our position is this, That conceding hypothetically that the New Testament was Divinely intended to supplement and complete the Old, there is that in the Old Testament, which cannot adequately be explained, which is so elucidated by the New as to be not inconsistent with, but rather confirmatory of, this position thus hypothetically conceded; and if *on other grounds* the New Testament witness concerning Christ can

be established, then there is everything in the Old Testament to sustain rather than to disprove that testimony. We have manifestly no right to assume the possibility or the impossibility of such Divine direction or enlightenment as is implied by inspiration, or that the Old Testament does or does not contain the evidence thereof; but the question is, Which position is most consistent with all the facts; namely, that the Old Testament was so ordered and prearranged as to present an insoluble enigma, or that the New Testament was the result of a series of mistakes, based mainly upon an entire misconception of the Old; or that the New Testament and the Old, being what they severally are, and that, as is clear, independently of any human design, the relation in which they stand to each other is such as to warrant us in the conclusion that the Old was Divinely designed to foreshadow the New and the New the historic witness to the validity and reality of its foreshadowings? If there is, as I maintain, sufficient and valid ground for this conclusion, then it is simply impossible that the Old Testament can ever rightly be regarded as an obsolete collection of books. Its significance is determined by other considerations altogether beyond its sphere, and its interest is mainly derived from events and circumstances long subsequent to it, which combine to show that its claims on our attention are permanent and indestructible.

STANLEY LEATHES, D.D.

ART. II.—JOHN SINCLAIR, ARCHDEACON OF
MIDDLESEX.

(Concluded from page 308.)

IN 1853 the mind of the Church was much occupied with the proposal to throw the Crystal Palace open on Sunday; with the question of Church rates; with the proposed Charity Commission; and with the usual educational discussions. On these four topics accordingly the Archdeacon addressed the clergy. The Charge has a vigorous defence of the authority of the Lord's Day: it contains a useful history of Church rates; discusses the charities department, which was then being projected for the control of the 28,840 charities of England and Wales, with property estimated at 75 millions sterling. It contains also a very accurate forecast of the difficulties that would be engendered by any proposal for school rates. He earnestly deprecated suspicions, misapprehensions, and jealousies, reminding the clergy that the watchful