

The Messiahship of Jesus

by Alexander McCaul

Lecture III (Slightly edited for clarity)

Luke XXIV. 46

*Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer,
and to rise from the dead the third day.*

The object of the present course of lectures has been to prove, by the fulfilment of certain prophecies, that their authors must have been divinely inspired and that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah. For this purpose the prophetic announcements were compared first with the existing state of things; and from the undeniable coincidence between prophecy and event, our faith both in the Old Testament and the New was proved to be well-founded. The next step ought to have been to show the perfect agreement between the predictions and the narrative of the evangelists. We stopped, however, to consider some modern objections recently urged against the authenticity of the gospels, and to these objections replied that even if well founded they do not in the least degree weaken the Christian faith, because the events recorded by St. Paul in his epistles are themselves sufficient to establish the authenticity of the gospel history and the truth of prophecy; and, secondly, that a comparison of the gospels with the epistles would prove that the materials of which the gospels are composed must have been written by eye-witnesses, and before the epistles, and consequently that they must be both genuine and authentic.

If, therefore, we had no other proof, this would be sufficient to warrant our faith in Jesus of Nazareth. He who wrought such miracles and performed such mighty deeds gave the best possible proof of the justice of his claims. The authenticity of the gospel history, however, opens to us another and confirmatory line of argument. We can compare the circumstances of the life of Christ with the prophecies, and if they agree, the predictions themselves must be real and he who fulfilled them the Messiah. To develop this argument is our purpose this day, so far as can be done without entering into critical disquisitions unsuited for this place. In order to prove the truth of a prophecy by its fulfilment, it is necessary, in the first place, to show that the coincidence between the events and the predictions is real.

Some of the more modern Jews deny that the hope of a Messiah is to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures and cite as an authority a Talmudic passage, which says, 'Israel has no Messiah to expect, for they enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah.' Modern gentile infidelity also asserts that the Old Testament contains only vague anticipations and general hopes of a redemption but no definite predictions of a personal Messiah, and, consequently, that the alleged agreement of the gospel history with prophecy is imaginary.

Now it is true that some of the prophecies, if taken by themselves, are of very general import and indefinite in their announcements. Thus, from the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, or that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, it would be difficult to determine whether one individual or the whole human race is intended. But there are other and numerous passages where a personal Messiah is unequivocally announced,

and which no sophistry can explain away. Thus it is foretold by prophets living at different periods of time that the expected Redeemer was to be a son of David. The promise to the son of Jesse himself was not merely the general declaration, 'His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me' (Ps. 89:36), but a particular announcement concerning one of his posterity 'in whose days the righteous were to flourish, and peace so long as the moon endureth, whose dominion was to extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;' 'one who was to be fairer than the children of men, and anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.' The promise of the eternal duration of peace and universal empire, and the express distinction asserted between this and all other kings, show that the author of these prophecies was not indulging merely in a general hope of redemption but describing the glory of one individual of David's posterity. The solemn address to him, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre,' makes the description not only definite but incommunicable.

Three hundred years later Isaiah, the son of Amos, describes a king with attributes so similar that it is impossible not to perceive the identity. In the eleventh chapter he says, 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.' Here the family is the same, and the whole chapter shows that one particular individual is intended. A comparison with the ninth chapter proves that Isaiah's idea of a Deliverer is in all respects identical with that which we have found in the Psalms. Here the prophet says, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever.' Here we have all the same features again. First, the family--he is a son of David; secondly, the extent of his kingdom--no end to its increase; thirdly, its duration 'for ever;' fourthly, his tranquillity--the Prince of Peace; lastly, the dignity of his person--the mighty God and the everlasting Father. Ignorance only, or wilful blindness, can assert that this description is vague, or be insensible to its perfect agreement with the character portrayed by the Psalmist.

The hope expressed by the prophet Micah, Isaiah's cotemporary, is precisely similar and equally definite, when he says to Bethlehem Ephratah, 'Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. . . . And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; . . . for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.' Here the place of origin in time, the existence in eternity, the possession of the divine name, and universal empire again prove that the prophet had in view one particular individual. Nearly two centuries later the same hope of a Redeemer to arise from the family of David is expressed by Jeremiah 23:5, 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.' And in ch. 33, where he repeats this prediction, he implies that this righteous branch is to abide for ever, by adding, 'For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.' The family, the office of universal king, the dignity of his person as manifested in the name, all identify him with the person announced by Micah, Isaiah, and David.

The prophet Ezekiel entertained the same hope, 34:23. After denouncing woes upon the shepherds of Israel, he says, 'I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant

David.' And 'I will raise up for them the plant of renown'--and, again, 37:25, 'My servant David shall be their prince for ever.' Here the characteristics of family, title, and the everlasting duration of his expected government, again identify him with the Deliverer described by previous prophets. Nearly 500 years after David, the prophet Zechariah still cherishes the same hope when speaking of redemption; he says, 12:8, 'The house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.' Words which again imply that the Deliverer at the end of the Jewish people is to be of the family of David and a person of divine dignity.

It is evident, therefore, that David, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah (not now to mention others) all looked for salvation in one particular family, and so identify the Redeemer by incommunicable attributes as to prove beyond all controversy that their hope of redemption was not a mere vague and undefined imagination, natural to all in distress, but an idea well defined and fully developed as to the family, character, and dignity of him by whom it was to be effected. The identity is, however, marked still more strongly by an apparent contradiction running through all the prophecies. On the one hand (as in the prophecies just quoted) they ascribe to him heavenly dignity, and universal and eternal empire. Yet, on the other, they represent him as reduced to the lowest state of humiliation and exposed to persecution which terminates in death.

In the twenty-second Psalm David describes him as saying, in the language of most bitter complaint, 'I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.' In the fortieth Psalm he says, 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.' In the forty-first he says, 'Mine enemies speak evil of me, when shall he die and his name perish--all that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.' In the 69th Psalm his prayer is, 'Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters . . . let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.' Even in the 110th Psalm, in which his glory is described, he is represented as having enemies and being in such a state of humiliation as to drink of the brook in his way. And, in the 118th it is said, 'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.' Similar is the representation of Isaiah. In the forty-ninth chapter of his prophecies the Messiah is represented as he 'whom man despiseth, whom the nation abhorreth.' In that well-known chapter, fifty-third, 'as despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as cut off out of the land of the living, bruised, put to grief, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.' Daniel says, 'Messiah shall be cut off.' Zechariah describes the King of Zion as 'poor, and riding upon an ass'--sold for thirty pieces of silver--as one pierced with some deadly weapon--smitten with the sword of justice--so that in these and similar passages we have the identify of the character so strongly preserved as to prove the identity of the prophetic expectation. Their descriptions are not the offspring of the individual imagination of those who hoped for salvation, and therefore varied and discordant and undefined according to the peculiar constitution of each writer; but all [are] portraits of one archetype--expressions of the same clear and definite idea.

If, therefore, it can be shown that the history of Jesus agrees with the announcements of the prophets, the agreement cannot fairly be regarded as unreal, or fanciful, or a mere accommodation of seemingly-applicable words, but a real and substantial accomplishment of distinct and determinate predictions. The whole tenor of prophecy looked forward to a son of David--Jesus of Nazareth was descended from that family, both legally and really. Brought up by Joseph, the husband of his mother, the Jewish law recognized him as Joseph's son, and therefore of the family of David, inasmuch as Joseph was of that family as St. Matthew tells us in his genealogy--and, as

being the son of Mary, whose genealogy is given by St. Luke, he was really descended from the son of Jesse.

This modern Jews frequently deny, urging that genealogies must be reckoned after the father and not after the mother, and citing as their authority God's command to Moses [in] Numbers 3, 'Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel after their families, by the house of their fathers.' From which they conclude that even if Mary had been of the house of David, our Lord, as not having a human father, could not be reckoned as one of David's posterity.

The answer, however, to this objection is easy and obvious. It may be said, first, that the verse adduced from the book of Numbers is nothing to the purpose. God is not speaking of genealogies generally nor of the fathers of individuals, but of numbering the children of Israel according to the tribes descended from the twelve patriarchs. Secondly, that, according even to Rabbinic law, children born of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father (and there must have been many such when Moses numbered the people) are to be accounted not as Gentiles but as Jews and must be circumcised, of which an instance occurs in the New Testament in the case of Timothy--a plain proof that children are not always or necessarily reckoned after the father. Lastly, in the genealogies preserved in the First Book of Chronicles, even in those belonging to the royal tribe of Judah we find several persons included whose only claim to be children of Judah rests upon the fact that their mothers belonged to that tribe. Thus, in 2:17, it is said, 'And Abigail bare Amasa, and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.' In the thirty-fourth verse we read, 'Now Sheshan had no sons but daughters: and Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha, and Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha, his servant, to wife, and she bare him Attai,' and then follow all the children of Attai as descendants of Judah.

The assertion, therefore, that to be the son of David it is necessary to have a father of the house of David is altogether false. Rabbinic law and the word of God here both agree in showing that there are cases where children are reckoned after their mother. Our Lord's descent from Mary and education by Joseph both make him the son of David, and as such he was acknowledged by the multitude, who in their distress continually addressed him in the words, 'Thou son of David have mercy on us.' And the correctness of the title does not appear ever to have been questioned either by the Priests and Pharisees of the time or by the compilers of the Talmud. Not knowing that he had been born at Bethlehem as the prophet Micah predicted, they reproached him with his Galilean origin; but they never denied, what would have been much more to their purpose, that he was the son of David. Indeed, his descent from the family of David appears to have been universally known and acknowledged, for when Domitian, afraid of a great king to arise from that family, sought for his descendants to destroy them, the relations of our Lord were the persons brought before him. His family, therefore, answered the predictions of the prophets.

His humiliation, persecution, and violent death are equally agreeable to their announcements. The gospel-history informs us of his poverty, of the contempt in which he was held by the great and the learned of his nation, and of his ignominious death. The Talmud confirms the account, and the Jews to this day make this fact one of their most popular objections against Christ's Messiahship. In these particulars, therefore, there is a real conformity between the prophecies concerning the Messiah and the history of Jesus.

It may, however, be said that though the agreement is real it is, nevertheless, only accidental; that the honour in which David's memory was held naturally led the prophets to expect a Messiah from

that family; that the misfortunes of the nation and the sufferings of the pious amongst them may have led them to think that Messiah must be a sufferer also; and that of the descendants of David there may have been many more who lived in suffering and died by violence. But the reply is easy. National calamity is far from preparing men for the idea of a suffering Redeemer. The calamities of the Jewish people have been far greater since the last dispersion than ever they had been before; and yet the greater and the more enduring their suffering, the stronger their disinclination to think of Messiah as a sufferer. The ancient Jews looked to him as one doomed to sorrow because of the sins of the nation; but the Jews for the last 800 years have almost universally denied the possibility of his suffering and death, and expect only a mighty King and a triumphant conqueror.

The supposition that the pressure of affliction makes men look first for spiritual deliverance is one altogether opposed to the usual workings of the human heart. Deliverance from their worldly sorrows is that which fills the mind of most sufferers, as general experience and the history of the Jews both testify. Besides, if we admit that national calamity led the prophets, in portraying the character of the Messiah, to make his exaltation, glory, and triumph consequent upon humiliation and suffering, it is utterly improbable that they should have imagined that this humiliation was to be carried even to death, and that his glory was to follow his resurrection. For this there was no precedent in the national history and nothing inviting to the human imagination. The sufferer desires help--instant, adequate, and complete deliverance. His mind hurries forward to the moment of relief, joy, and triumph, and does not affect the long process of a life of suffering and a death of ignominy as the means. But the number and minuteness of the circumstances predicted and fulfilled by the history of our Lord make an accidental agreement between the prophecy and the event altogether impossible. Micah declared that he should be born in Bethlehem. To Bethlehem the mother of Jesus was called most unexpectedly, and there the child was born. The prophets Haggai and Malachi declared that he should appear in the second temple. In that house Jesus asserted his claims and vindicated his authority by driving forth those who profaned it. Isaiah promised that upon the inhabitants of Galilee the light of the Messiah should arise. Jesus, though born in Bethlehem, was brought up in Galilee, and there especially he made known his doctrines and wrought many of his miracles.

But it is in reference to the death of the Messiah that the prophets are particularly circumstantial. [1] David announced that he should be betrayed by one of his familiar friends. Christ was thus betrayed. [2] Zechariah that the traitor should sell him for thirty pieces of silver, and that the money should be cast to the potter. Our Lord was thus sold and the money thus applied. [3] Isaiah introduces him with the words, 'I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' The evangelist tell us how Pilate scourged him, and how the Jews did spit in his face, and buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands. [4] David announced that 'his hands and feet should be pierced.' The un-Jewish death inflicted by the Romans fulfilled the prophecy. [5] Zechariah declared that they should look upon him whom they had pierced. A heathen soldier violated his sacred side with a spear. [6] Isaiah said that Messiah should be numbered with transgressors. Jesus was crucified between two thieves. [7] He said, again, that his grave should be appointed with the wicked, but with the rich should be his tomb. The Jewish council fulfilled the first, Joseph of Arimathea the second part of the prediction. [8] David said, 'All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.' The gospel relates that such was the conduct of the Jews to Jesus as he hung upon the cross. [9] The Psalmist represents Messiah as complaining, 'Reproach hath broken my heart I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters,

but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat: and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.' The evangelists tell us that when Jesus was come to Golgotha, they gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall. [10] David declared that Messiah's garments should be parted and lots cast upon his vesture. St. John tells us that the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; but that upon his coat, because they would not rend it, they said, 'Let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be.'

To suppose that accident would have conjectured or fulfilled such a number of circumstances is perfectly impossible. If any one of the prophets had conceived the whole idea of Messiah's character and all the circumstances of his birth, passion, and death, although improbable, it might perhaps have been possible to sketch an outline so like real life in its ordinary phases as to find a fulfilment in some individual of the people amongst whom he lived. Sagacity, combined with study of the national character and circumstances, might enable an acute observer to conjecture the rise of some illustrious individual and his influence upon the world. But no skill in poetic portraiture, no acuteness of observation or power of human forecast can enter into the details of family, birthplace, place of education, and all the unusual circumstances of a strange and violent death and burial such as we see in the history of Jesus, nor even offer a conjecture concerning them. But that many individuals living at different periods of time, all professing to be prophets, should offer conjectures as to the life of one and the same individual who was to appear hundreds of years after their decease, and should succeed by a number of independent conjectures in forming a prophetic portrait of that individual's history--each giving some circumstance that the other omits--is totally beyond the limits of possibility. The ordinary course of events might fulfil some of the conditions of the prophecy, but a complete agreement in so many and unlooked-for particulars proves design as certainly as a perfect similitude between a picture and a human being would prove that the one was the original of the other.

And here it is particularly to be remarked that the fulfilment is not mystical. It is not by a doubtful interpretation of dark enigmas, or a skilful adaptation of symbolic imagery, that the likeness is obtained. The coincidence between the prophecies of a Messiah and the history of Jesus of Nazareth is obvious to the view of the most careless and rests altogether upon the plain grammatical sense of the prophecies, so that in some cases it can be evaded only by a departure from the simple meaning and a mystification of the prophetic declarations. Thus Christians take the twenty-second Psalm in its plain literal sense, and thus without any effort or violence the most perfect resemblance is obtained--even to the parting of the garments and the casting lots for the vesture. The Jewish rabbi and the modern infidel are both compelled to turn the whole Psalm into an allegory representing the calamities of the Jewish people in captivity, and to explain away that precise and definite feature concerning the parting of the garments as meaning merely the spoliation of their property.¹ Similar is the case with the thirty-third chapter of Isaiah. The Christian receives it as it stands; the Jew allegorizes to get away from the obvious agreement with Christian doctrine. It is not, therefore, an agreement forced out of the words, but one that lies on the very surface as perceptible to the sober as the imaginative, and as easily comprehended by the simple as the sagacious. In fact, [it is] one that requires the exercise of ingenuity not to find it out, but to hide it from men's view.

It may, however, be said that the predictions wrought their own accomplishment, or were such as a pretender to the Messianic character could fulfil. Thus it is possible that an impostor, acquainted with the prophetic Scriptures, might commence his attempt in Galilee, or ride into Jerusalem upon

1 See Kimchi, in loc.

an ass. But some of the most striking prophecies are such as an enthusiast could not, [and] an impostor would not, accomplish. In the first place, the prophetic promise that Messiah was to arise from the family of David (if not at the same time the promise of the Almighty) could never effect the continuance of that family until the coming of him who laid claim to Messiah's office. Very soon after the appearance of our Lord that family became extinct and is now utterly unknown. Indeed, the preservation of the Jewish people and the continued existence of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, when in the meanwhile other and mightier nations and cities had been completely annihilated, can be ascribed only to an act of Providence. The prophet Isaiah announced Messiah's miraculous conception and birth, but omnipotence alone could effect its accomplishment. David predicted that Messiah's soul should not be left in hell and that his flesh should not see corruption; and Isaiah, that though he should be cut off out of the land of the living, yet that he should live long, and see his seed, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand. But what human power could bring about the accomplishment by raising Jesus from the dead?

These are predictions which, it is evident, could not effect their own fulfilment and could not be realized by an effort either of fraud or enthusiasm, and yet without the accomplishment of which no person can pretend to be the Messiah of the Hebrew prophecies. Unthinking multitudes, such as followed Bar Chochba and others of the Jewish pretenders to Messiahship, might require nothing more than a victorious leader who could gratify their desire for revenge or their appetite for plunder. But no one who quietly reflects upon the unequivocal declarations of the prophets can be satisfied with any claims to Messiahship which do not rest upon the death and resurrection of him who makes them. The expressions are far too strong and too numerous to admit of any other interpretation.

It is not merely that one prophet says, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced,' from which even the rabbinic opposers of Christianity infer the death of the person spoken of; nor that God calls upon his sword to smite the shepherd of Israel; nor that David and Isaiah both speak of him as a voluntary offering for sin, which necessarily implies his death. It is distinctly stated that he should be cut off out of the land of the living; that he should pour out his soul unto death; that he should be led as a lamb to the slaughter. Yea, Daniel, when he says Messiah shall be cut off, uses the very strongest word that the Hebrew language affords to express extermination. And if there were no prophecy of his return to life, it must be necessarily inferred that such was the prophetic expectation if ever their announcements of glory and blessedness were to be realized.

Here, then, is a feature of prophecy which no enthusiast could fulfil and no impostor would attempt. To expect glory from God alone, and for the joy set before him to endure the cross and despise the shame, to live a patient life of poverty and suffering [while] looking forward to a violent death at its termination--is what no impostor would affect and none of the false Messiahs ever pretended to. Their aim was worldly grandeur and wealth; their means for attaining it [was] force of arms. It is true that a violent death proved the fallacy of their pretensions; but that death was not voluntary and from its bands there has been no release. Jesus of Nazareth is the only claimant of such high dignity who sought it in the way of voluntary suffering and death, and whose claims have been satisfied by his resurrection from the dead. He had the will to die and the power to return to life. And as such self-denying love is foreign to the heart of a deceiver and such power beyond the range of all human ability, the fulfilment of these essential conditions of Messiahship is to be accounted for only by an interposition of omnipotence.

The facts of the case, then, stand thus. It is certain that a number of persons professing to be prophets (the very latest of whom, as is admitted by all the most learned opposers of Christianity, lived 500 years before the alleged fulfilment) announced the future arrival of a great deliverer. [They] described the manner, place, and time of his birth; the family from which he should descend; the nature of his life; the circumstances of his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven and the nature of the work which he should accomplish. Suddenly, the pretension to the gift of prophecy ceased. Century after century rolled away, and their predictions seemed to be the mere effusions of poetic patriotism. The true meaning of the prophetic records was forgotten by the multitude and an erroneous idea of the Redeemer and his work became universal, when suddenly, an illiterate man in the most despised part of the country laid claim to the character of the deliverer, opposed the prevailing opinions, disappointed the general expectations, and was therefore by the Jews condemned as an impostor; and yet subsequent examination proves that in the circumstances of his history the announcements of the prophets are fulfilled.

The prophecies are too minute and circumstantial to be ascribed to sagacity, the accomplishment too accurate to be the result of chance, too simple to be rejected as the effort of ingenuity, too difficult to be resolved into the results of the human will. There is but one other solution possible. The prophecies must be the dictates of the Divine prescience and the fulfilment the effort of the Almighty power. Jesus of Nazareth must therefore be the Messiah.

The Jews object, however, that many prophecies, and those such as especially concern themselves, have not been fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth, and that, therefore, he cannot be the deliverer announced by the prophets. To this many Christian writers have replied that such declarations are figurative--and that under earthly emblems heavenly blessings are intended, that the Jews are never to be restored to their land or Messiah to have a kingdom over Israel, that the only blessings which they have to expect are adoption into the Christian family here and admission into the heavenly Canaan hereafter. But to this the Jew objects, that a mode of interpretation which is based upon two contradictory principles is necessarily false. You prove that Jesus is the Messiah, he says, by the grammatical principle; you evade difficulties by the adoption of the figurative. Choose one of the two. Carry through the figurative exposition and then there is no suffering Messiah; carry through the literal and a large portion of the prophecies are not yet fulfilled.

The Jew's demand is reasonable and his objection to this expository inconsistency valid. If the promises of national glory and prosperity to Israel stood detached and were entirely separated from those that speak of Messiah's suffering humiliation, such a mode of interpretation might perhaps be defended with an air of plausibility. But they are frequently so blended as to make separation impossible. Thus, the beginning of the 49th chapter of Isaiah is cited by Christians to prove that Messiah's labours were to be apparently fruitless amongst the Jews, and that he was to be a blessing to the Gentiles, and the cogency of the Christian proof depends upon taking the words in their plain sense. Messiah is represented as complaining, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that to him Israel may be gathered, I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he 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 also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.'

Here it is impossible to separate one part from the other. If the predictions of Messiah's apparent

want [lack] of success and his sending light to the Gentiles is to be taken literally, so must also the 'raising up of the tribes of Jacob, and the restoration of the preserved of Israel.' To receive the one and deny the other is to place an insurmountable stumbling-block before every Jew of common sense, and to hold up prophecy to the scorn of the infidel.

A similar instance is found in that remarkable passage of Zechariah, 'I will pour out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' In the preceding verses it is said, 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place: and it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.' If in this verse we interpret the pouring out of the spirit, and the piercing, and Jerusalem literally, we cannot in reason deny that in the preceding verse Jerusalem also means the metropolis of Judea; nor [can we deny] the immediate consequence--that the Jews are to be restored to their land, and enjoy great national glory.

The answer, therefore, to the Jew's objection--[an answer] which denies these events and mystifies the prophecies--cannot be admitted without entirely renouncing the testimony from prophecy. The basis of this argument is the simplicity of our interpretation and its entire freeness from violence, perversion, or ingenious mystification. The moment that recourse is had to double-dealing--[that is,] departure from the grammatical sense and [a turning to] allegory--the whole force of the proof is at an end and the cause is lost; for in the eyes of all honest men, artifice in interpretation plainly betokens that the obvious sense of scripture is against us.

This mode of reply is, however, as unnecessary as it is injurious. When the Jew says that many prophecies are still unfulfilled, we grant it. But when he infers, therefore, [that] Jesus cannot be the Messiah, we deny his conclusion. First, because if Jesus be not the Messiah then, as none of his cotemporaries can pretend to that character, the time is past and the prophecies are proved to be false. Jacob on his death-bed declared that until his advent neither sceptre nor lawgiver should depart from Judah. The Talmud itself tells us that they were lost before the destruction of the second temple. Malachi and Haggai announced his appearance in that house. If, therefore, Messiah did not then appear, Jacob, and Malachi, and Haggai are false prophets. If not, then Messiah, whether Jesus be the Messiah or not, must have appeared; and if so, then the non-fulfilment of some prophecies does not prove that that person is not the Messiah and therefore cannot prove that Jesus is not the Messiah.

We say, secondly, that the non-fulfilment of these prophecies concerning the national glory is so far from forming an objection against the claims of our Lord that it is one of the proofs of his Messiahship. When Moses promised the Messiah as the prophet like unto himself, he adds, 'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.' National unbelief required, therefore, national punishment. The infliction of it so soon after the crucifixion of our Lord, and the continuance of it ever since though the Jews were then and still are free from idolatry, is one of the most signal proofs that he is the prophet promised by Moses.

Besides, Daniel declared that after the coming of the Messiah the city and the temple should be destroyed. David teaches that Messiah is not to have his kingdom upon earth until he first ascend to the right hand of God, there to wait until his enemies be made his footstool. And Daniel fixes the time of his kingdom to his return in the clouds of heaven for the destruction of the fourth monarchy. All three predictions [are] utterly incompatible with the Jewish assumption that all the

prophecies must be fulfilled at his first advent. The two states of glory and humiliation, as well as express prophetic declarations, necessarily imply that there were to be two advents--one to suffer the other to reign, and that a long season was to intervene between the two. The non-fulfilment, therefore, of certain prophecies is so far from being a difficulty that it is a proof that Jesus was the Messiah, and another argument for the divine origin of the prophecies.

What has been said is sufficient to remove the force of the Jewish objection. What remains must be reserved for another occasion.

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