

CHRISTIANITY AND PROPHECY FULFILMENT

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THE world is full of conflicting religions. Each one claims to be of supernatural origin, and insists that all others represent infidelity to the Supreme Being, classifying them in such terms as heathendom and paganism. And as salvation from eternal torment lies only in believing this one faith at the expense of all others, then happy indeed is the man who happens to be born in the righteous nation—the one whose people worship under that particular set of dogmas!

It is generally held by advocates of all religions that blind faith alone is the truest if not the only approach to spiritual truth, and that this spiritual truth can of course come only through believing in the correct religion and in the man who represents God as his only prophet or son upon the earth.

Therefore, since one may naturally be in doubt as to which religion to choose when faith alone is made the basis of proper choice, he must go back to reason itself in order to judge which one is of Divine origin. And when the religious votary or propagandist makes an appeal for blind faith, he must remember that failure to establish a greater logical foundation for his own creed leaves it upon exactly the same plane as that of other races, and no more worthy of respect than that given another religion whose teachings are in direct conflict therewith.

Of those rational arguments set forth by Christianity to teach the divinity and infallibility of Jesus of Nazareth, the principal bulwark, expounded by such apostles as Fairbairn in his "Evidences of Christianity," consists in the great mass of fulfilled prophecies, chiefly those regarding the promised "Messiah," or "Anointed One."

It is generally considered that the Gospel of Matthew, written by a publican or revenue collector with whom the young Jew Jesus compared those refusing to forgive or to hear the church, was designed for the special purpose of proving Jesus was the expected

Christ, who was to redeem the Hebrews from their sufferings and oppressions.

If the prophecies made concerning this Messiah were actually written hundreds of years before and turned out to be true it is a powerful—well-nigh unanswerable—argument for Christianity. The first thing we shall do, therefore, will be to outline them as referred to by the disciple Matthew, who was naturally elated that his Master seemed to be the promised Messiah, and who wished to convince the world of his divinity.

We are placing in parallel columns the prophecy mentioned by Matthew, and the action or saying of Jesus declared to have been its fulfillment. But in order to bring out the full sense of the passage we shall frequently quote more than was quoted by Matthew; because the key to the full meaning is sometimes found in the preceding or succeeding chapters. We shall also mention two or three prophecies overlooked by Matthew and yet set forth elsewhere as striking examples of inspiration; and make still further parallel comparison of predictions with the history of Jesus as it was given us.

THE PROPHECY

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. . . . But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Phillistines toward the west. (Isaiah xi:1-14.

"The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. . . .

THE ACTUALITY.

The third chapter of Luke gives a genealogy of Jesus so utterly different from that of Matthew, who traced his ancestry through his foster father Joseph, that one is forced to conclude the translation, at least, was not inspired: and that the second word "son" supplied in Luke iii:23 should have been "son-in-law," which would have made Mary a descendant of David. At all events the prophecy clearly referred to a general, and not to a teacher.

"And thou shalt call his name JESUS." (Matthew i:21).

"And I went in unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, . . . the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assy-

.....In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; and it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give that he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land. And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silver-lins, it shall even be for briars and thorns. With arrows and with bows shall men come thither." (Ibid, vii:14-24).

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel;and this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land.....thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian. (Micah v:2-6).

"When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.....And the sword shall abide on his cities.....Ephraim compasseth me about his lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints. (Hosea xi).

"A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted because they were notThus saith the Lord, Refrain

ria.....Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel.Should not a people seek unto their God?.....They shall fret themselves and curse their king and their God... ..Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali.....The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.....For thou hast broken..... the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.....For 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,.....Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David.....The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones. (Isaiah viii and ix).

"For thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." (Matthew ii:6).

"When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there unto the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son." (Matthew ii:14-15).

"Then Herod.....sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts there-

from thy weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner." (Jeremiah xxxi:15-38).

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: and he shall purify the sons of Levi. . . . And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Malachi iii:1-12).

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. . . . Every valley shall be exalted. . . . and the crooked shall be made straight. . . . He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. . . . Keep silence before me, O islands; The isles saw it and feared. . . . But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. . . . Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit in him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness and will hold thine hand, and will keep and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out

of, from two years old and under. . . . Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was a great voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not." (Matthew ii:16-18).

"For this is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." (Matthew xi:10).

"And the chief priests sought how they might kill him." (Luke xxii:2).

"For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon the other."

(Luke xvix:44).

"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Matthew iii:3).

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my spirit in him and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust." (Matthew xii:17-21).

the prisoners from the prison... Let the wilderness and the cities lift up their voice.... The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy, like a man of war: he shall cry, yea roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.... I will destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and will dry up the pools. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not.... I will make darkness light for them, and crooked things straight.... Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?.... Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, against whom we have sinned?.... But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, Fear not:.... I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for glory.... Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.....

One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel

Remember these, O Jacob and Israel, for thou art my servant: I have formed thee.... thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions return unto me, for I have redeemed thee

Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer... That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd

even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord, to his anointed, to Cyrus, I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight." (Isaiah xl:46.).

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the say of Midian For 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 with justice from henceforth even forever." (Isaiah ix:1-7).

"And in the year that king Uzziah died,....I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send?Then said I, Here am I: send me.And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not.Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." (Isaiah vi:10).

"Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of

"And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." (Luke ij:1).

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword..... And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matthew x:34-36).

"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand." (Matthew xiii:14).

my hands; Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon thy shoulders. . . . They shall bow down to thee with their face toward earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and they shall know that I am the Lord. . . . And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty one of Jacob." (Isaiah xlix).

"Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money. For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord; and, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. . . . Bring forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. . . . ye shall go out without haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle [astonish?] many nations. . . . For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke ii:52).

dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness.....He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief....He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment..... And he made his grave with wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in him.....by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours and lay thy foundation with sapphires and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord....In righteousness shall thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression;.....whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.....This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (Isaiah lii-liv).

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off

When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.....I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon." (Zechariah ix and x).

"And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two

"And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death."

"And behold there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man and a just. This man went unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and....laid it in a sepulchre..... wherein never man before was laid." (Luke xxiii:32, 50, 53).

"Then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me....All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." (Matthew xxi:1-5).

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of

staves; the one I called Beauty and the other I called Bands. . . . And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. Then I cut asunder mine other staff even, Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. . . . In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Zechariah xi:7-14, xii:8).

"O my god, I cry in the day time but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. . . . Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and didst deliver them. . . . But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. . . . Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. . . . Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me around. . . . They pierced my hands and my feet. . . . They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. . . . Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. . . . All ye seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither had he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

silver to the chief priests and elders. . . . And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." (Matthew xxvii:3-10).

"And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet; They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." (Matthew xxvii:35).

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli,

My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation." (Psalms xxii).

"They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them. . . . Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. . . . Let them not come into thy righteousness. But . . . O God, set me up on high." (Psalms Lxix:21-29).

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate." (Psalms xxxiv:19-21).

"Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. . . . They pierced my hands and my feet. . . . Save me from the lion's mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn." (Psalms xxii:12-21).

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis xlix:10).

A careful reading of the preceding parallels must have convinced the reader that only by the widest stretch of the imagination could any of the prophecies be considered as a reference to Jesus of Nazareth: and to claim that each passage has a double meaning is only an absurd way of begging the entire question without evidence.

It will also have been noticed how the Old Testament verses were butchered by the supposed historians who attempted to quote them, how Matthew confused Zechariah with Jeremiah in referring to the thirty pieces of silver, and how both he and John distorted passages entirely out of shape, tense and significance, to carry out their purpose—for instance in the alleged quotation, "And in his name shall

Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew xxvii).

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth." (John xix:28-29).

"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look upon him whom they have pierced." (John xix:33-27).

"We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a king." (Luke xxiii:2).

"We have no king but Caesar." (John xix:15).

the Gentiles trust"; "And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me"; and "A bone of him shall not be broken."

To those acquainted with the outlandish and frequently cruel miracles recorded of Christ in the Apocryphal New Testament and believed by the unlettered, gossiping masses with fiercest zeal, the entire narrative of miracles and supposed fulfillments of alleged prophecies must seem more and more fictitious in the light of close examination. Certainly no superstitious multitude, eager for signs from heaven, would have continued to doubt the divinity of Jesus had he actually performed miracles, or if darkness covered the land while he was being crucified, or if the graves were opened and devout Hebrews appeared to their friends. And if he had actually risen from the dead it would be the easiest thing in the world to convert the multitudes by appearing to them also, and giving them the same chance for redemption as was given his own doubting Thomas.

And having had a complete demonstration of the uninspired nature of Matthew's gospel and his unwillingness or inability to tell the exact truth, we cannot help but ask for more evidence when he glibly writes the terms of secret bargains between high priests and Judas Iscariot, and with those supposed to have been paid to claim the body of Jesus was stolen.

There is no doubt that the Jews, taught by their scribes, high priests and elders, really expected a divine messenger; but believing the scriptures as they were written, and taught to believe they were inspired to begin with, they were naturally very skeptical about a young man whose life tallied with prophecies only in enough respects to deceive himself and his busy-tongued supporters. Take for example the description obviously given of Jehovah's servant Israel, who, persecuted by his captors, was to make his grave with the wicked and be with the rich in his death—just the reverse of what the disciples declared to have happened. As to the Hymns of Hate written by David, certainly no one could read them from beginning to end and conclude that this vengeance-inspired man had reference to anyone's woes and triumphs except his own.

As to Isaiah, we have seen how he made visits to the prophetess, and how he declared that she would conceive and bear a son given him by the Lord, and that the government would be upon his shoulders throughout eternity, etc—which was a strikingly clever way to turn condemnation into popular reverence. At all events the conclusion is irresistible that the prophetess was the virgin referred to as furnishing a sign from heaven. Signs were asked for in order that

their fulfillment might convince one of divine power: an event taking place so late as the birth of Jesus would obviously have no such effect on the generation which then needed it. The name Immanuel would have been symbolical in either case, as this name was not given to Jesus except in later reference to the words of Isaiah.

It is far from our purpose to bring out these things merely for the pleasure of disillusionment. If we believed one could maintain his faith in the various inconsistent and unfair teachings of the Hebrew Bible, with its heathen or animal-inspired theory of appeasing an angry god by an innocent human sacrifice—and yet not become a stumbling block in our gradual progress toward happiness and the removal of all antagonism—we would say, "Keep your religious faith, no matter how ridiculous it may appear to me. We will not try to make light of what others consider sacred." This seems to us a most shallow conception of public duty. And it is certainly more than the Christian practices toward the followers of other faiths, with their equally wierd rites, dogmas and superstitions.

If the theory of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, conceived when men were almost universally unlearned if not illiterate, has no support in the fulfillment of prophecy, or some other equally strong evidence which can be explained in no other way than the supernatural, there is no more reason to regard Jesus as supernatural than there is to look upon any other great reformer in the same light.

We make this assertion now as food for thought among those who have not already arrived at this conclusion, because we intend to show that Jesus was only a brilliant young Jew who was probably led to think himself divine by those partially acquainted with the Old Testament prophecies; that he was not only very fallible but quite inconsistent, taught many doctrines utterly subversive of really considerate human affection, and that his only sublime truth was borrowed from another religion.

The supposed chain of evidence that Jesus could not have been crazy because he showed such repartee and gift of evasion, could not have been wicked because he helped the sick, etc., and was therefore the promised messenger from heaven, is poor reasoning indeed. He might have been insane on some subjects and apparently rational on others. He might have done good works intentionally to mislead. He might have been deceived as to his own origin. Or, the record of his actions may be as untrue as the part finally rejected by the Christian Fathers—these men presumably acting under greater inspiration than was granted the writer Matthew or the original translators of the King James Bible.

There were other prophecies in the Old Testament, relating to Cyrus and Elijah. But there is no evidence that the prediction was written in its final form before the character actually lived. The invincible Roman race was very vividly foretold by Vergil in his *Aeneid*, because it had already lived. There is also the possibility that certain characters performed acts or were given names in deliberate attempt to comply with the prediction. It is also probable that Cyrus the Great was shown the flattering prophecies about the good king from the east and from the north, and thus "taffied" into allowing the Jews to rebuild their temple.

As to interpolation we have an excellent illustration in the account of the death of Moses in the Pentateuch which he is declared to have written. And certainly no one can read Genesis iii. 16 and iv. 7 in consecutive order without strongly suspecting some copyist of having tampered with these verses in order to leave his wife no excuse for henpecking.

But until we are given much stronger evidence than that offered by the Hebrew Bible, we would just as well abandon the idea that prognostication by aid of the supernatural is possible or ever has been. The fact that all miracles are thousands of years in the dim, distant past should be sufficient to establish their mythical nature. What religion cannot do now it is safe to say it never could.