

of the great empires whose burdens rest upon the prophets, the signs of Antichrist, the latter-day infidelity,—all are fulfilments of distinct prophecy, which assuredly was written before their accomplishment.

PROPHECY AND MIRACLE.

The evidence of Prophecy as a credential of revelation is of the highest order: whether taken by itself or in connection with miracle generally.

Nature
of Cre-
dential.

1. In common with miracle proper it is a standing and perpetual token of the Divine presence in the whole sphere of revelation. He Himself appeals to both as His high prerogative in many of the sublimest passages of the prophets. *I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of My mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly and they came to pass.* It was the Voice Supernatural, beyond the ordinary methods of guiding man's inquiries, that declared all coming events from the beginning: nothing worth calling history has taken place without foreannouncement. And it was the Hand Supernatural, beyond the ordinary and quiet operation of Providence in nature, that SUDDENLY brought it to pass. The boundless variety and steadfast unity of these predictions give them an unspeakable grandeur; and the wonderful events in human history which are the direct fulfilment of prophecy are beyond all others great in all the elements of sublimity. In fact, if all the events which have been matter of fulfilment and of prophecy are eliminated from the current of human history there is not much that is left. The leading transactions of every age have been under a ruling prophecy; and we also, in our day, wait to see the end of the things that concern ourselves.

The
Presence
of God.

Isa. xlviii
3.

2. Viewed apart, and by themselves, these prophecies are peculiarly cumulative in their demonstrative force. Unlike the miracles, the fulfilled predictions constantly enlarge the materials of their evidence. There is a sense indeed in which this observation, frequently made, is not true. The miracles recorded in Scripture are thought to be more feebly commended to the acceptance of every succeeding generation; as if the testimony

Cumula-
tive.

on which they rest grows weaker as it recedes from the present. But that is not philosophically true. Moreover, the most evident and noblest miracles—if any such distinction may be made—are yet constantly performed; and the Finger and Hand of God are evermore at work in the hearts of men and in the heart of society. Still, the accumulating force of the prophetic credential is more conspicuous than that of the miracle. We live under a vaster amount of fulfilment than any former age; and he who shall take the historical prophecies of the Old Testament and trace their fulfilment in the course of Oriental history will have an irresistible demonstration of Christianity at his command.

Full of
Instruc-
tion.

3. Finally, like the miracles, the prophecies are bound up with the teaching of the Bible; and, apart from their evidential force, yield an unlimited treasure of instruction in the ways of God, the work of Christ, and the destiny of man. Neither miracle nor prophecy can easily be over-estimated as the vehicle of Divine teaching: neither can be while time lasts exhausted.

Inspira-
tion as
a Creden-
tial.

INSPIRATION, OR THE DIVINE HAND IN SCRIPTURE.

The specific doctrine of inspiration, as the ground of the Divine authority of the Scriptures, will be considered in its place. It may here be regarded very briefly as one of the credentials of revelation, on a level with Miracles and Prophecy and completing or consummating their evidence.

Law of
Scripture.

1. Inspiration is a distinct element of the supernatural order of revealed truth: one of its laws and characteristic attributes. As such it simply means that the sacred documents are worthy of the Divine Author; and that they are not unworthily described as GOD-BREATHED. Strictly speaking only the writers are inspired; but the last word on the subject in the New Testa-

2 Tim. iii.
16.

ment gives the epithet to Scripture itself: *πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος*. What we have agreed to mean by inspiration is therefore the fact that God has interposed to keep a continuous and abiding record of truth in the world: this, throughout all the ages of the world's religious history, has been the Divine method of imparting and preserving the knowledge of God among men. The beginning of this interposition, so far as concerns the written