

prosy, ineffective in the pulpit. I will agree to find you ten preachers who are too dry, scholastic, heavy, where you will find me one too philosophic or too literary. The danger is on the other side of the way, just now at least. The danger of neglecting secular studies is as real, as serious as the danger of overdoing them.

II.—THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF PROPHECY.

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At three different periods in the history of the Christian Church, the evidential value of prophecy has had a prominent place.

1. At the very birth of Christianity, much stress was laid on the agreement between the facts of Christ's life and the predictions of the prophets. Not only was this argument waged on Jews who had always believed in the inspiration of the prophets, but in the hands of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen ("Contra Celsum") and others, it was pressed on pagans likewise, and always with the feeling that, as an argument, it was as unique as it was convincing.

2. In the days of English deism, the argument came in for a share of the general assault; it was discredited by Anthony Collins as nothing more than an application of certain symbolical utterances to Jesus Christ, too vague to be of any value. This drew out the two Chandlers and Bishop Newton in defense, who were naturally led to insist much on the *literal* meaning and the literal fulfilment of prophecy. These were followed in the present century by Dr. Keith, of St. Cyrus, who, to illustrate the literal fulfilment of prophecy, directed special attention to the state of the Jews, and to the discoveries of modern travelers.

3. In the course of the present century, in connection with the revival of the exegetical study of Scripture, much attention has been paid to the exegesis of the prophetic writings and the meaning they had for the people to whom they were first addressed. In the hands of rationalist critics, it has been affirmed that the single object of the prophets was to convey God's message to the men of their day; it was to impress them with the great facts of God's moral government; their writings contained no supernatural predictive element; the threatenings and promises with which they dealt were based on the principles of God's government; and the specific scenes in the future which they portrayed were just dramatic illustrations of these principles, not designed to be literally fulfilled, and therefore not capable of furnishing any argument for the supernatural inspiration of the prophets. The late Professor Kuenen, of Leyden, carried this view to its utmost limit in his work, "*De Profeten en de Profetie ondx Israel*" (A.D. 1875), "*The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel.*"