

was not simply natural and probable, but necessary and certain. As each reference or representation must be studied critically by itself in harmony with the foregoing principles of interpretation, an exegete must always ask himself what the prophecy in question was intended to intimate when it was originally delivered. He must then abide by the historical result, and not strive to seek a reference or a meaning of a certain kind when the intended reference or meaning was clearly and unquestionably of another kind.

Before applying our principles in ascertaining the import of individual prophecies, it should be noted that certain portions of the Old Testament are supposed to abound in passages which are personally and directly descriptive of Jesus of Nazareth, the historic Christ. Whereas, it must be evident to every intelligent Scripture student that those very portions often describe circumstances or recount experiences that cannot be referred to Jesus Christ, without violating the fundamental principles of a sound method of Biblical interpretation. Against such a serious violation of exegetical principles we must be constantly on our guard. "The question is not—*may* this, by a little exercise of fancy, and a little accommodation of fact, and a little straining of phraseology, be made to intimate something concerning Christ? The question is—*does* this truly speak of Christ, and are we justified in taking that view of it, by the context, or by strict analogy, or by express warrant, or by any other legitimate and safe mode of judging in such cases?"*

Beginning with the Primeval age, the first passage whose import we must ascertain is Gen. iii: 15, which is considered the first prophecy recorded in the Old Testament. It is sometimes designated "the great primitive prophecy." If prophecy, in what sense is it prophetic? The word translated "seed" in the first member of this verse means posterity or race. Though singular in form, it is plural in signification, in the original Hebrew, as well as in the English translation. It has not an individual, but a collective, application. The seed of the woman, therefore, refers to the human race, and the seed of the serpent refers to the reptile race. The passage does not speak of the seed of the

* Thomson's "Lectures on Portions of the Psalms," p. 141.