

political circumstances as these developed themselves before his eyes," but even his Messianic predictions are but "corollaries" from his general religious convictions. "To Isaiah," in short, "inspiration was nothing more nor less than the possession of certain strong moral and religious convictions which he felt he owed to the Spirit of God, and according to which he interpreted, and even dared to foretell, the history of his people and the world" (p. 372). It is in keeping with this view that in his forecastings of the future Isaiah frequently made "mistakes"—how, with any mind short of omniscient could it be otherwise—that the tone of his predictions varied with his moods, that he promised sometimes more and sometimes less, that he occasionally said "extreme" things, that in all but their essential substance his prophecies are fluctuating and inconsistent. And we are bid admire "how profitable, how edifying is the Bible's own account of its inspiration!" On which we would remark—I. That this, at all events, is

NOT THE BIBLE'S OWN ACCOUNT

of predictive inspiration. The Bible recognises predictive prophecy, and makes no allowance for "mistakes" (Deut. xviii. 21).² Its pages abound in minute and circumstantial predictions of events which no one will pretend were within the scope of natural foresight. The rationalist may explain these as unhistorical, legendary, *vaticinia post eventa*, or anything else he pleases. They are at least there as witnesses to the Biblical belief in the reality of supernatural prediction. A very minor instance is the prophecy of Agabus, in Acts xi. 28, of the famine that was about to come throughout all the

¹ So Ewald writes, "What the prophet can, with perfect right, announce as the word of his God is, in its contents, nothing but the application of some general Divine truth to a given moral condition, or a clear contemplation as to the confusions or unevennesses of moral life before him, springing out of the clear light of the Spirit. What belongs to it falls within the province of the purer, *i.e.*, the Divine Spirit; and if a prophet knows anything more, and can give answer as to other questions, this is something accidental."—*Die Propheten*, i. 12.

² Cf. Is. xli. 21-26; xlii. 9; xlv. 7, 25-28; xlv. 21; xlv. 9, 10; &c.