

## THE PROPHETS AS AUTHORS.

The function of *authorship* was *secondary* with the prophets, and was evoked by later circumstances. Among the people, and to them, the prophet was primarily a preacher. Such distinguished leaders as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, executed their agency exclusively by the living voice. They did not found a prophetic literature proper. What records they made were rather of the nature of historical and biographical essays. They filled the place for their times that the monks of the Middle Ages did for theirs. They acted as chroniclers of important events and teachings, and thus the foundation of prophetic eschatology was laid. But it is a remarkable fact, that from Samuel to Uzziah, a period of nearly three hundred years, we find no prophetic books, except, perhaps, the Book of Jonah.

About the time of Uzziah, began a new era, that of written prophecy. This had become a necessity, both as a means of perpetuating the messages of revelation, despite the purpose of intriguing priests and hostile kings to suppress them; and to conserve the national life, at a time when the almost hopeless present required to be sustained by the hopes of a brighter future.

The *prophetism* of the Old Testament is divided by Knobel, more *objectively*, into four smaller periods—the older period from 1100-800 B.C.; the Assyrian period from 800-700 B.C.; the Chaldean period from 625-536 B.C.; and the post exile period from 536-400 B.C.

Ewald divides the whole period, more *subjectively*, into *three ages*, each marked by distinct and peculiar phenomena. These periods were known, respectively, as the Iron Age, the Golden Age, and the Silver Age of prophecy. The *Iron Age* was the age of speech and action. There was a certain rough wildness about the manner of the prophets, as they stood out boldly and sublimely from the people, a distinct and awe-inspiring caste. Their addresses were simple, brief, spontaneous outbursts of practical statement, without poetical ornament or oratorical completeness.

The *Silver Age* was the age of writing, wherein the prophets