

is intimately associated with the highest interests and duties of human life, its grand purpose, its relation to God, the conflict of good and evil, the way to conquer the evil. It is in tone both elevated and elevating, bearing us up toward the gate of heaven, familiarizing us with the voice of God, and with the high and holy themes to which that voice gives expression. And still further, the one grand vision that towers above every other in Hebrew prophecy is Redemption; and the consummation to which it conducts us, so far as the faithful are concerned, is a glorious renovation, a Kingdom of Heaven far above the Jewish theocracy—a far higher condition than "Paradise Restored."

Those who look on the prophets as mere moral preachers, and who deny that anything like fulfilment is to be looked for in connection with their utterances, reverse the very conditions under which the prophets claimed divine authority. There were false prophets side by side with the true, and the test to which the true appealed as a token that they spoke in God's name was that of fulfilment. Where the prophecy was one of short date, the sign of the true prophet was that it came to pass (Jer. xxviii. 8, 9). When Hananiah prophesied in opposition to Jeremiah that within two years the yoke of the King of Babylon would be broken, the event proved him to be a false prophet; but this conclusion was anticipated by Providence, for Hananiah died in the seventh month of the same year (Jer. xxviii. 17). So deeply rooted had the idea of fulfilment become in the Hebrew mind that in the New Testament the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy is regarded as a matter of axiomatic certainty. And not only was the fulfilment of specific predictions accepted without doubt, but it was assumed that the very cast of prophetic thought corresponded to the events that fell out. It is on this ground that some things are said to have been "fulfilments" which would not have seemed so otherwise. How comes St. John to see in the fact that on the cross our Lord's legs were not broken a fulfilment of prophecy? If that fact had stood all alone, the inference would have been more than questionable. But in addition to the direct predictions fulfilled in Christ, the whole cast of the prophetic writings, and especially the form of the Hebrew symbolism, partook of the same character. And the ancient writings were held to be "fulfilled" not merely when a specific prediction came to pass, but also when the prevalent tone of thought or the prevalent type of symbolism was realized. It is thus an absurd as well as a bold thing for rationalists to maintain that the idea of fulfilment was not essential.

There are, however, some at the present day who, while believing in the inspiration of the prophets, decline to believe that a literal fulfilment of their specific predictions is to be looked for. They take this position on the ground that there are many such predictions, of which the fulfilment cannot be proved. Thus, the Rev. Brownlow Maitland thinks that we may find in the prophets three great lines of