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*DIALOGUES ON THE CHRISTIAN PROPHETS.*

I.

*Mason.* By the way, Riddell, I met a man in the train to-day who was reading your book.

*Riddell.* You don't say so, Mason! I should never have thought it would become a rival to *Truth* and *Tit Bits*.

*M.* I can't say how he varied his browsing; but seeing your name on the cover, I ventured to ask his opinion of my friend's book.

*R.* This is interesting to me. And he said——?

*M.* Well, he declared he could not make head or tail of it. He could not tell what you were driving at.

*R.* And you helped him of course, and said what careful study the subject demanded.

*M.* I found he was an architect by profession, but he also professed an interest in theology, and he was a regular church-goer.

*R.* The last two do not always go together, and the church-goers are rarely fed with theology in church.

*M.* That is not what they go for. They like hearing what they have heard before. At least "the man in the street" does. The man in the train did not.

*R.* You mean, the man in the train moved faster?—even than the man in church!

*M.* Yes, but his mind was not fast enough for your remarks on Prophecy.

*R.* I was not aware of such rapid transitions.

*M.* There's the rub. Perhaps you go up and down the

line and forget how many points you pass over. Dangerous, rather!

*R.* Well, I have obeyed the signals, and the points will mind themselves. But pray, Mason, tell me some that I rattle over too fast.

*M.* I will tell you one or two as my interlocutor saw them. He understood them better than I do. You will recollect, please, that these are his criticisms and not mine.

*R.* He was an architect, you said; and you, I know, are a Freemason. I shall have something more for both of you. But where shall I begin?

*M.* One of his first observations was this: "We used to be told the Prophet's function was to foretell the future, and especially the Messiah's coming. Here is a writer who discovers that after the days of Jesus Christ there were numbers of Prophets still in active employment. This in fact is the subject of his book. Don't you think," he said to me, "that this is perversity itself? Priests we know, and Prophets B.C. we know, some greater and some less, but who are these Prophets A.D.? What use can there be in them?"

*R.* Do you remember your Acts?

*M.* Pray don't ask me? The man in the train said he knew there were some Prophets in the New Testament, but they had nothing to do with the old ones: they were preachers. I could confirm that, for I remembered how we were told at Eton that to prophesy was to forth-tell, which is quite as important as to fore-tell. The forth-tellers were preachers, who preached uncommonly straightforward. We want such now; we always shall.

*R.* That may be; but you will admit that a Prophet may be a preacher as well as a Prophet. In the last eight verses of Hebrews xi. you will find an eloquent encomium on the Prophets as a body with whom the active testimony of a practical life has quite eclipsed their qualifications as a

contemplative society of foretellers. Or when you read Isaiah have you observed how many pages of his writing are occupied with foretelling and how many with preaching?

*M.* No doubt they could preach, but their name arises from the fact that their business was to foretell.

*R.* That may be so. Their Hebrew name—and Hebrew was the language of the first Prophets—implies that they “bubbled over” with—inspiration, shall we say? or fervent zeal? For “fervour” also in its Latin original means “bubbling over.” I do not see that you can make *n’bîim* mean always foretelling and nothing else. It implies an unusual and abnormal condition among men, a gift which was believed to be of God.

*M.* Yes, and the question was whether this gift was continued A.D. as we know it existed B.C.

*R.* The man in the train evidently found a sturdy champion in his interlocutor. And so have the Prophets. I cannot disguise the fact that A.D. is not the same as B.C. Can you?

*M.* No, but I can judge of the identity of a corporation at one period and at another of its existence.

*R.* That is not always so easy. Are the Greeks the same as 1,500 years ago? or the British? or the French? Or is any nation but the Jews the same?

*M.* The Jews are, and the Hebrew Prophets ought to be. If they were called Hebrew Prophets at first because they foretold, they ought to be so called 1,500 years later for the same reason and for no other.

*R.* Let us have a little regard for analogy. Race-identity is one thing and it can be tested by the question of blood. But corporate identity is rather different. Did you ever hear of a corporation performing exactly the same functions over a period of 1,500 years? I name this figure 1,500 because Moses was the first Prophet—“A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from among your *brethren*

*like unto me,*" is what he said in reference to Joshua—and at least the author of the Apocalypse about 70 A.D. was a Prophet—"I am of *thy brethren the Prophets*" (Rev. xxii. 9). There are your one and a half millenniums. Now you must admit that between the first Prophet and (let us assume) the last it was inevitable that some changes should occur in the procedure of the Prophets, in the mode of their prophesying, in the way of their organization, in their regard of their own office and in their relation to it, perhaps even their admission to it.

*M.* Perhaps it could not be otherwise.

*R.* The very greatness of individual Prophets at one time or another, the clear simplicity of the first Isaiah, the sublimity of the second, the fiery originality and precise thought of Ezekiel, the momentous turns of detailed imagery in the Book of Daniel, and above all the words and works of Him who taught as one that had authority—for He too was a Prophet—all these historical results bore directly upon the corporate life of the Prophets and could not possibly leave it as they found it. The same would be true of any human organization—the Roman Senate, the Vestal College, the British Parliament: you cannot expect the same name to connote the same functions at long intervals of time. The idea of Catholic practice in 1900 being the same as it was in 900 is equally preposterous. "All thy waves and storms are gone over me," might the Church well exclaim if she wished to excuse her failure to observe the ancient paths; but to deny that failure, to deny that the "strong hours indignant worked their wills," would be palpably absurd.

*M.* I am heartily with you there. The boast of "semper eadem" on the banner of any Church is neither "glorious" nor true except with the widest limitations. They are a very thick kernel to a very small nut.

*R.* But I am only illustrating the unity of the prophetic

body at one time and at another. I am not sure that you will find any less identity—forgive the division of the atom!—in the Prophets than you will in the Christian Church. They foretold in 700 B.C. and they foretold in 70 A.D. They preached in 700 B.C. and they preached in 70 A.D. They suffered martyrdom in 700 B.C. and the same in 70 A.D. They claimed the name in 700 B.C. and they claimed it in 70 A.D.

*M.* How is it then that your Prophets are not more like the old Prophets?

*R.* I have been thinking, on the other hand, how remarkably like they were. We have paragraphs of prophecy in the Revelation which are just like paragraphs in Isaiah in point of length and in kind of contents, have we not?

*M.* Yes; I suppose you mean a paragraph of about a dozen verses on one subject which then disappears like a dissolving view into another. But the character of *dissolution* is stronger in Revelation than in Isaiah.

*R.* Perhaps it is; but you will observe that the author of Revelation, although his position is not less that of a Prophet than Isaiah's was, is more of a Seer, who sees visions, which naturally dissolve. It is true that Isaiah was sometimes a Seer of visions (i. 2, ii. 1, vi. 1, xiii. 1, etc.); but he was sometimes a preacher (ii. 1 he preaches a vision, or sees a sermon—ix. 8, etc.); and often a poet (v. 1, xiv. 4, etc.); and we are meant to regard him also as even an historian (vii. 1, xxxvi. 1, etc.). The one function does not exclude various kinds of literary expression. Thus too, on the other hand, you will admit that the Revelation contains the elegy of a poet in xviii. verse 2 onwards—an elegy upon Rome.

*M.* An elegy on Rome! Why do you say that?

*R.* Because it is the plainest possible fact; but let us leave that question just now. I was saying that even the Prophet of 70 A.D. is able to diversify his strains, after the

ancient models of prophecy. His noble hymns are more conspicuous than his elegy, if not more poetical. Yet the bulk of the book is decidedly prose.

*M.* Yes; prose perhaps, but is it even literature? A friend of mine, a scholar of great discrimination, ability, and piety, thinks that some chapters of it read like an evil dream. It is a strangely unequal work, from the point of view of literature.

*R.* I am glad to find you admit the inequality. Some parts are not as vital as others. Just as life is not present so much in one's ear-tips as in one's heart, so inspiration is not so perceptible in one part of the Bible as in another, nor in one part of a Book as in another. Whatever inspiration is, we must accept the view that there are many different degrees of it. Some parts of the Old Testament could be spared, and some parts of the Apocalypse could be spared, without much loss to the modern reader.

*M.* I have noticed that it repeats itself sometimes, or seems to do so.

*R.* Certainly it does. The latter part is now to be read by us in two forms.

*M.* I confess the last two chapters of Revelation have often struck me as very beautiful, but with a fused and blended beauty like that of a shifting atmospheric effect upon the landscape after a storm.

*R.* I think if you will examine them carefully and write them out, you will find yourself inclined to write most of chapter xxii. parallel with most of chapter xxi. instead of underneath it.

*M.* How so?

*R.* If you still have any regard to time when you are reading accounts which deal with eternity, you will notice that the author has sometimes used the future tense. Thus in xxi. 3, 4, "He shall dwell with them," "They shall be His people," down to "pain shall be no more," there are

six future verbs. Now in xxii. 3-5, we come upon futures again—seven of them. There you have a clue. Here is my Westcott and Hort's text, which you know is the safest guide, though Dr. Hort most candidly admits "We are by no means sure that we have done all for the text of the Apocalypse that might be done with existing materials."

*M.* I think the plain man like myself may be quite content with the enormous gain in clearness alone which the Revised Version, especially with the marginal notes, affords him as compared with the Authorised Version. Why, only yesterday, a friend of mine told me that when the Revised Version first appeared, he read it at a sitting, and it came to him with a direct call to become a missionary: he obeyed the call and has now been a missionary in India for twenty years, and a very able man he is.

*R.* There you have an instance of the power of truth—that spirit (for power is spirit) that wrought in Zerubbabel. Perhaps you have read the first book of Esdras?

*M.* Apocrypha, isn't it? Alas, I never read the Apocrypha.

*R.* But you cannot understand the New Testament unless you do. In fact there are some parts of the Old that you can hardly understand without it. You remember that impressive passage in Zechariah, "Not by might, nor by power, but by *my* spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts"?

*M.* Pray don't ask me about Zechariah—one of the lesser Prophets—very much lesser, only read on Saints' days!

*R.* Well, read them every day. They are grand, in parts at least. "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

*M.* I thought Zerubbabel conducted a caravan across the desert from Babylon to rebuild the Temple after the captivity.



*R.* So he did. But what gave him the power? His love of *truth*. He was a sound man, a straight man, a true man, and therefore he awakened enthusiasm in his men, and so they built with a will. Before Zerubbabel, *and before his love of truth*, the mountain of rubbish and of difficulty became a plain. You see what sort of "plain" is meant?

*M.* I should think the plain of the great Arabian desert.

*R.* Not at all, for you notice that a few verses before this the prophet Zechariah has been speaking of the stone to be used in the rebuilding of the Temple—a work in which he and Haggai, his brother Prophet, were the most useful assistants to Zerubbabel the prince and Joshua (that is Jesus, as the Septuagint always calls him,) the high priest. We have previously crossed the desert (Zech. i. 8–15), and "are returned to Jerusalem with mercies," and now "my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of Hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" (Zech. i. 16). Then comes "the man with the measuring-line in his hand" (Zech. ii. 1), and the stones, as we have seen, and the golden candlestick (iv. 2) is ready. But the actual foundation is now laid by Zerubbabel's hands (iv. 9), and "his hands shall also finish it." You agree with me, Mr. Freemason, that we are witnessing "the stone well *and truly* laid" according to the plummet of the following verse, do you not?

*M.* I may not divulge the secrets of my craft.

*R.* Perhaps you will kindly note that many of those secrets made clear are in the Bible. If your heart is not of stone, you must respond, I think, to the many, the multitudinous and oft recurring references which are to be found in the New Testament to the Stone, the Corner stone, and to the other associations of the "building of the house of the great King in glory for evermore."

*M.* I do not recognize the last quotation. Is it in the minor Prophets?

*R.* No, it is in the most memorable passage of the Book of Enoch.

*M.* The Book of Enoch! What is that?

*R.* I will tell you another day. You should provide yourself meanwhile with the well printed modern translation of it by Dr. Charles. But I would not leave Zechariah just yet. Zerubbabel has to lay the stone well and truly upon a flat surface, a sure foundation, and that Zechariah calls a "plain."

*M.* I see that you are taking a practical view of the passage.

*R.* Yes, a practical view must be taken of all the original writings of the Old Testament Prophets. They really wrote sense, which their contemporaries understood. They were meant to understand them.

*M.* I must confess I thought they were always obscure.

*R.* Do you really mean that they *were always* obscure? or that you *always thought* them so? I can well imagine that the latter is true.

*M.* Perhaps I did not think about it. Most people find them obscure.

*R.* Most people are content to take their own point of view and no other.

*M.* What other point of view is there?

*R.* The writer's, especially if you are dealing with a writer of many centuries ago.

*M.* I do not find the commentators help me much to do that. They usually harp upon the references to the other parts of Scripture.

*R.* And rightly too, provided that they master the primary meaning before they proceed to the secondary.

*M.* Primary! and secondary! These are rather technical theological terms.

*R.* How then would you like "Eocene and Meiocene?" I dare say you know something of Tertiary strata, in geology, if I might delicately hint at the possible absence of good building stone in addressing a Freemason.

*M.* You are safe there.

*R.* Primary, then, is the original meaning which Old Testament Scripture bore for Old Testament writers and those who heard them speak. Their speeches and writings lay for many centuries in layers, and then they were taken up in parts, and handled and treated and used by a later generation for its own purposes, and this generation was like yourself, allow me to say, in that it did not use its imagination to complete the framework of its knowledge, and indeed its knowledge was far from complete.

*M.* Very likely.

*R.* We give, then, the name "secondary" to that meaning placed by the unimaginative later generation upon the original text which, you admitted, it did not perfectly understand. It found words in Scripture, holy and blessed, and it took and applied them to its own passing events and its own current ideas. You cannot blame or wonder at it.

*M.* No indeed, it was human nature.

*R.* Yes, human nature exercised upon words divine. These words would not have been less divine if rightly understood. Understanding cannot take away from divinity; but it takes away obscurity.

*M.* You think there *was* obscurity, then, in the original prophecies.

*R.* Pardon me, obscurity resides in the mind of the hearer or reader, not in the prophecies themselves.

*M.* But do you really maintain that there was not obscurity in the mind of the older Prophets?

*R.* I do. The primary meaning is clear: the secondary meaning is also clear, when you in the twentieth century see

what they of the first century thought of the prophecies of the eighth century B.C. But if you go and jumble up the three strata, what compound can you ever expect to result from the mixture, but mud?

*M.* Very severe. You hardly allow for human nature.

*R.* Human nature is like General Councils in the Twenty-first Article of Religion. "When they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God." That is admirably put.

*M.* We sometimes forget what good things there are in the Thirty-nine Articles. A pity they are so much reviled! They would not have been reviled if they had not been forced down so many throats.

*R.* Probably you are right. But I must hold you to the distinction of primary and secondary. Let us have one thing at a time.

*M.* You mean, I trust, no disrespect to the Articles.

*R.* I mean to suggest that we should take the primary meaning at one time and the secondary at another time. The old prophets were wont to preface their declarations with the appeal, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth" (Isa. i. 2 and reff.). Do you think it is conceivable that this should be the preface to words which the prophet could not understand himself? If you will look and see what sort of passage follows this appeal, you will find that it is such as does not always explain itself forthwith to your unaided intellect. Some little thought or imagination or reflection or comparison of other texts is required; but probably no commentary beyond the aid which the A.V. margin has supplied for your intelligent use. But if you cannot interpret every word, you can read that the Prophet is addressing the nation, or the congregation, or the mountainous land of Israel, or the people, that is, some large

gathering to whom he must—as your common sense tells you—above all things make himself plain and intelligible; he must therefore use no enigmas; he must avoid mystery; otherwise he need not speak at all. But if he can be understood by the common multitude, much more can he understand himself.

*M.* I suppose so. But now you seem to be labouring a needless point. Who doubts it?

*R.* Pardon me; but I thought you said just now that the Prophets were obscure. I am only saying that the obscurity was not in *their* minds, nor perhaps in their hearers'.

*M.* But perhaps I could produce you a text which even you would admit was obscure. If so, your theoretical objections to my statement, being of a general kind, will fall before my one particular stone in my Davidic sling. The general is always a sort of Goliath before a particular.

*R.* By all means quote one.

*M.* I will sling my stone at a venture and give you a text which has no reference against it in A.V. margin. Here is one: "Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey?"

*R.* Causes always produce their effects—a truth which we are all apt to forget. I see no obscurity. Moreover, the parabolic illustration by Amos is *general* in this case!

*M.* The passage is, I admit, rather too familiar, being from the famous third chapter of Amos. Now take another: "But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things but Michael, your prince" (Dan. x. 21).

*R.* No, no; you wish to involve me in masses of particulars. If I told you who, in my opinion, is meant by "Michael, your prince," you would easily press and overwhelm me with many other details from Daniel. So, instead of being drowned in details, I shall be content to ask you whether you doubt for one moment that the writer of

those words had some particular person in his eye when he used them.

*M.* Yes, I admit that. But I am not so sure that Ezekiel is not obscure very often.

*R.* You will have to maintain that Ezekiel did not know what he was driving at.

*M.* I don't know that I could go so far as that.

*R.* Do not be afraid of putting your thoughts in plain language. The Prophets were not. And I may reassure you by saying that so great a critic and so justly revered a man as the late Dr. Hort is on your side; for in his lectures on 1 Peter i. 9, he says that even Prophets (i.e. the Old Testament Prophets, for he entirely ignores the New Testament Prophets), the receivers and vehicles of God's revelations, were in this respect themselves seekers and searchers like other men, only that they sought out the meaning of their own words! He goes on to say, not that there is evidence of this, but that "St. Peter *doubtless* found the evidence" of it in the prophecies themselves; and whereas Peter says that "the Spirit of Messiah which was in them was making (something) plain," Dr. Hort says this "making plain" may "naturally stand for *faint half-hidden suggestions* of the Spirit in the midst of its clearer notifications." What do you think of that?

*M.* I claim Dr. Hort for the obscurity of the Prophets, and I rejoice in the "half-hidden suggestions." That quite covers my meaning. It is a delightful compromise between the clear and the obscure. It possesses all the merits of a fine *chiaroscuro*. Yes, "half-hidden suggestions" is good.

*R.* But you have no evidence for it.

*M.* It is enough for me that Dr. Hort thinks that St. Peter had, and he is a great authority.

*R.* Dr. Hort cannot err! Must I then prove to you that he can? He was indeed a seeker and a searcher after truth,

if ever there was one, and I am quite sure, from personal knowledge as well as acquaintance with his books, that he would never have allowed such incense to be offered to his name and authority. I beg you not so to canonize any man. Here, for instance, on the same page from which I quoted, is a remark which I think you will yourself challenge. Do you remember some words of St. Paul to the Romans (ix. 33) about Israel not attaining to the law of righteousness because they (attempted) not by faith?

*M.* I do.

*R.* Do you remember that he quotes Isaiah (xxviii. 16) ?

*M.* Yes; you mean the words: "Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth (why do they not say "trusteth"?) on him shall not be ashamed" ?

*R.* Would you be surprised, then, to find that Dr. Hort says this: "It is a remarkable illustration of this chasm in the Old Testament prophecy that, when St. Paul is wishing in Romans and Galatians to justify out of the Old Testament his doctrine of salvation by faith, *the one text from the prophets which he is able to adduce is Habakkuk ii. 4*; his other great proof-text being the Pentateuchal saying about Abraham" ?

*M.* Well, I must admit that Dr. Hort, like Homer, was caught napping there.

*R.* I hope, too, you will note that he avows a chasm in Old Testament prophecy just upon the very point on which he "cannot find," or, at least, in the course of his very voluminous commentary, does not produce, evidence, although he says St. Peter *doubtless* found evidence for it. The commentary, I admit, is a posthumous work, but those who edit posthumous works undertake a great responsibility, and they are bound to criticize and, if necessary, correct errors and indicate deficiencies. Don't you think so?

*M.* I do. I observe that so great an historian as Gibbon

has been edited again and again with footnotes and supplementary matter, and even he is not the worse for it; his lustre shines all the brighter.

*R.* But have you ever considered the meaning of that passage in 1 Peter?

*M.* I must confess that I have not. To tell the truth, I do not like the Epistles of Peter; at least, I dislike the Second so much that I have rather thought that the First was tarred with the same brush.

*R.* A most unfounded objection, but one which you share with those who call 2 Peter pseudonymous. The gods call it "pseudonymous," but the men say "forgery"; and the men are more correct than the gods in that term. But I will not argue the question of 2 Peter now; only let me give you what is plainly the meaning of that part of 1 Peter (i. 10). He says that the prophets (of whom he was one, and the Christian prophets were many when he wrote) had for their object to seek out and search out a certain time; if they could not ascertain the exact time, they could perhaps find the sort of time—namely, the time of Messiah. The expectation of Messiah was one which had ruled the minds of devout Jews for many years before He came in the person of our Lord Jesus. But though they expected the coming, they could not tell the exact time when He would come.

*M.* I should gather from my reading that the knowledge of the time, or even of the kind of time, would be something of a clue to the identification of Messiah when he did come.

*R.* Well, there you can easily see that Peter, in speaking of salvation, reminded his readers that the faith of many previous generations had now received its end (verse 9), and that they received the end of their faith in the appreciable sense of the salvation of their souls. But their faith did not cease because the end or object of it had come. It



continued to rest upon that object as before, and he dwells upon the previous stage or stages of it, in which the generations down to the present had listened to one prophet after another (verse 10), "seeking out and searching out," and then prophesying, concerning the grace or favour of God which He now extended to them (*eis*)—not to any previous generation, but to them.

*M.* I see your meaning. Their generation was favoured above all, for to it was vouchsafed the revelation of the Lord.

*R.* Yes, but not directly to it; rather to the Prophets (verse 12)—we may call them the Christian Prophets, for they became the first Christians—in order that, instead of keeping it to themselves (verse 12), they might minister the same to that generation. The Christian Prophets were separated by no chasm from the Prophets of old. So far from being separated, they were essentially one and the same order which had prophesied through the ages, most dimly at first, and indeed as regards their mouthpieces quite unconsciously, but with an increasing definiteness on the whole until the Desire of the Ages came. Thus the Spirit of Messiah (verse 11), which was in them as a historic body, was ever making plain the time at which He should come: it was ever foretelling by calling to witness beforehand the sufferings of all the Prophets, which, as it were, looked forward unto Messiah, and were destined to find their fulfilment in Him, to be followed by the glories which attend upon them. I wonder if I make my meaning clear?

*M.* It seems to me there are four parties concerned in this passage—(1) the writer, and (2) the readers, of course; (3) the Prophets, and especially one (4) party, those who preached to the readers. This last appears to be almost the same as Evangelists (1 Pet. i. 12, Eph. iv. 11).

*R.* I quite agree with you, except of course that preach-

ing was the common function of Prophets and of others who were not Prophets. A Prophet was one who received Apocalypses or revelations (verse 12), which he might or might not preach afterwards. An Evangelist was one who preached, but had not received Apocalypses first. The writer does not exclude himself from the number either of the Prophets or of the Evangelists. But I have a very clear idea that he belonged to the Prophets, and only the lateness of the hour keeps me from discoursing upon this point tonight. The Evangelists did not do the "seeking out and the searching out"; they did not receive the revelations; but they were the medium of the Prophets (verse 12, *διὰ*) in ministering to the converts and in announcing the Prophets' revelations.

*M.* I see your text has brought you to the point which we began by discussing—I mean the unity and continuity of the prophetic body, and I wish I had been able to produce your explanation, which seems to me clearly put, to satisfy the ravenous maw of my companion in the train.

*R.* Very likely it would not have satisfied him. I can tell you, without having seen him, that he would have said at once, The passage in 1 Peter, my dear Sir, refers to the Old Testament Prophets and no others. It has been taken so from time unknown; it is taken so by the able article on "Prophet," in Smith's Bible Dictionary; and every one else must take it so.

*M.* And what would you have replied to him yourself?

*R.* Merely what was said just now: that by his interpretation you have to picture to yourself the ancient Prophet, who has just delivered his message to the hearing heavens, and the listening earth and the vacillating multitude—picture him sitting down and asking himself, "What have I said? What meaning can it bear? What half-hidden suggestions can I find in it? What Messianic inklings?" That is what you must imagine. There is no

evidence for it, but you must say that if you yourself have none, still "St. Peter doubtless found the evidence for it." It would be quite true to say that the Christian Prophets sought out things in the Old Testament Prophets' writings; but it would not be true nor reasonable to say that any one Prophet sought out his own meaning in his own writings. Thus you are compelled to attribute to Peter a very remarkable ability—the power to find evidence in the works of the Prophets that they sought out and searched out Messianic suggestions individually from their own individual works; whereas, on the other hand, St. Paul was unable to find more than three texts—Dr. Hort said two—to justify out of the Old Testament his doctrine of salvation by faith.

*M.* I shall never accept this estimate of the relative powers of the two Apostles, Paul and Peter.

*R.* Nor need you do so, for St. Paul, you may be sure, has simply chosen and mentioned two of his texts as representative of his entire Old Testament, one in the first few pages of it and one in the last few, besides one in the middle, being confident that he could cite very many more when occasion required. You see, my dear Mason, that the blind following of authority is likely to lead you now and again into a snare. St. Paul's own maxim is better when he says: "Despise not prophecies—these were Christian prophecies—but put all things to the test; hold fast the good."

E. C. SELWYN.