

LECTURE V.

PROOF OF THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS.

IN applying the argument from prophecy to the proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, there are two propositions to be established,—the first, that there are in the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah; the second, that there is a correspondence between these prophecies and the life of Jesus,—and from these two propositions the conclusion is drawn, that ‘Jesus was the Christ,’ or the Messiah. This is precisely the method which St. Paul adopted in his reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue of Thessalonica: he first proved from the Scriptures that the Messiah ‘must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead;’ and, secondly, he inferred, from the occurrence of these events in the history of Jesus, ‘that this Jesus whom he preached is the Messiah’ (Acts xvii. 2, 3). In our two last lectures we considered the first of these propositions. We proved that there are undoubtedly Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament: some of them of such a primary

nature that, in their strict and literal sense, they relate to the Messiah, and do not apply to any other person or event; and others, though of a secondary nature, yet so decidedly Messianic that they can only apply to some other person or event in Jewish history in a very subordinate sense, and can only receive their full accomplishment in the Messiah. We now proceed in this lecture to compare these prophecies with the facts of the life of Jesus as recorded by the evangelists, and shall thus consider the second of these propositions—*the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.*

The question, then, to be discussed in this lecture is: Whether there be a sufficient correspondence between the Messianic prophecies and the life of Jesus to prove that he was the Deliverer foretold in the Old Testament? In order that our argument may be free from all objections, we restrict ourselves in our proof to those prophecies which in our opinion are either primary, or, if of a secondary nature, are so decidedly Messianic as to be admitted by the ancient Jews to apply to the Messiah. Several of these prophecies, both of a primary and secondary nature, we have already enumerated in our two last lectures, and on these chiefly we base our argument. There are several secondary Messianic prophecies which we do not, in the first instance, employ; because their

character as Messianic prophecies must first be established, and this, with regard to many of them, depends chiefly on the authority of our Lord and His apostles; and, therefore, to employ them in an argument designed to prove our Lord's authority as the Messiah, would be to reason in a circle. For a somewhat similar reason, we also omit, for the present, all those prophecies, though of a primary nature, which relate to the miraculous works and the resurrection of the Messiah. We wish to consider prophecy as an independent evidence of the divine mission of our Lord; and, for this reason, we do not assume the reality of His miracles, and do not argue from them. Miracles constitute one evidence in favour of Christianity, and prophecy another; each rests on its own foundation: the one chiefly on testimony, and the other on the accomplishment of the prophecies; and although they mutually support each other, yet each is independent and distinct, and both combined afford the most undoubted proof that Christianity is from God.

The Messianic prophecies extend over a thousand years. They are interspersed throughout all the books of the Old Testament. They are found in the books of Moses, the oldest writer, and in the prophecy of Malachi, the last of the prophets. They are numerous; if all were to be collected from the sacred writings, and if the secondary and

typical prophecies were to be included, it would be found to be no exaggeration to affirm that the Old Testament was pervaded with the Messianic idea. They are varied ; they relate to minute particulars as well as to great events ; some of them are seemingly contradictory ; some represent the Messiah as a mighty king, and others speak of Him as a man of sorrows. They differ widely in clearness ; some are primary, direct, and unmistakeable, and others are secondary, obscure, and hardly discernible. But all these prophecies, when examined, will be found to have received their fulfilment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and not one will be discovered that is inconsistent with the history of His life.

But let us now proceed to an actual comparison between the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah and the events recorded in the life of Jesus.

I. *The Family from which the Messiah was to arise.*

There is in the Old Testament a gradual limitation in the description of the family from which the Messiah should arise. At first, the prophecy is general, so that the whole human race is included ; but afterwards it is limited more and more, until it rests with a single family of the Jews. The first

prophecy which occurs in Scripture, is likewise the first promise. It is contained in part of the sentence pronounced on the serpent: 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel' (Gen. iii. 15). Taken by itself, apart from other predictions, this prophecy is vague and obscure: it is impossible to tell whether the seed of the woman denotes an individual, or the human race in general; but the prediction denotes this at least, that the victory which the serpent had obtained over our first parents was not final, but that in the end the human race would come off victorious.¹ This promised seed of the woman is afterwards alluded to in various prophecies. It is first expressly limited to the family of Abraham (Gen. xxii. 18). The promise is then renewed to Isaac, one of the sons of Abraham (Gen. xxvi. 4), and to Jacob, one of the sons of Isaac (Gen. xxviii. 14). Still there is an indefiniteness and a generality about the prediction. It is rendered more particular and definite in the blessing pronounced by Jacob on Judah, one of his twelve sons: 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be' (Gen. xlix. 10). The promised seed of the woman is now restricted to one person,

¹ See Supplement IV. to Lecture I.

to Shiloh or the Peace-maker, belonging to a particular tribe of Israel, namely Judah. The promise is still further limited, until it is concentrated in the regal line of David, of the tribe of Judah. There are several primary prophecies which predict this. 'There shall,' says Isaiah, 'come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him' (Isa. xi. 1, 2). And the same prediction is contained in the prophecies of Jeremiah: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness' (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). And it is to be observed that the Jews uniformly believe that their Messiah shall belong to the house of David. 'The Son of David' is one of the most common of the Messianic titles. Hence, when the Lord asked the Pharisees, 'What think ye of the Messiah? whose Son is He?' they were ready with their reply, 'The Son of David' (Matt. xxii. 42).

Now, this class of predictions was fulfilled in the person of Jesus. It is admitted by all that He was a Jew by birth, and thus belonged to the tribe of Judah. 'It is evident,' says the author of the

Epistle to the Hebrews, 'that our Lord sprang out of Judah' (Heb. vii. 14). And we are expressly informed in the Gospels that He was descended from David. Two of the Evangelists, most probably from public records, trace back His descent to David; and although there are undoubtedly difficulties connected with these genealogies, yet both coincide in the fact of His Davidic descent.¹ Matthew begins his Gospel with these words: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham' (Matt. i. 1). And St. Paul states it as an acknowledged fact that Jesus Christ was of the seed of David (Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8). Hence, then, the prophecies were fulfilled in respect of the *family* from which the Messiah was to arise. And it is further to be observed, that if these prophecies are not already fulfilled in the person of Jesus, they never can be fulfilled; for all distinctions of families among the Jews were lost, and all public documents destroyed, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

II. *The Time of the Appearance of the Messiah.*

It may be said that the prediction regarding the *family* may apply to any other illustrious person

¹ This is not the place for discussing the difficulties connected with the genealogies. We rest the Davidic descent of Jesus more on the statement of St. Paul than on the genealogies of Matthew and Luke.

of the house of David. But not to mention that from the time of Jeremiah, with the exception of Zerubbabel, no illustrious person descended from David has appeared, the *time* marked out for the appearance of the Messiah is sufficiently definite to enable us to restrict the prophecy to the Lord Jesus. The time is limited by the prophets to a very short period, as may be seen from the following predictions. In the prophecy of Jacob, already frequently adverted to, it was foretold that the Messiah would appear before Judah ceased to be a tribe and to have governors of its own (Gen. xlix. 10). Now this did not happen until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; for before that event the Jews, though subject to the Romans, had rulers of their own; but after that event, they ceased to be a nation. The same time is specified in other prophecies, wherein it is predicted that the Messiah would appear whilst the second temple was still in existence. 'The Lord, whom ye seek,' says Malachi, 'shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts' (Mal. iii. 1). On the other hand, it was foretold that the Messiah would not appear until after the fourth prophetic kingdom had obtained the mastery of the world. Thus Daniel says: 'In the days of these kings' (that is, of the fourth kingdom) 'shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never

be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever' (Dan. ii. 44). It is evident that the allusion here is to the kingdom of the Messiah. The four prophetic kingdoms are almost universally admitted to correspond in their descriptions with the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman Empires.¹ Now it has been observed, that the Roman Empire was not universally established until after the battle of Actium, when Egypt, the last of the branches of the Macedonian Empire, was subjugated. And probably, as an inference from this prediction of Daniel, there is the following singular statement or prediction in the third book of the Sibylline oracles, supposed to be written about the very time of the conquest of Egypt: 'When Rome shall rule Egypt, then shall appear the great kingdom of the immortal King.'² Thus, then, there are two limits marked out by prophecy—the establishment of the Roman Empire, and the destruction of Jerusalem: the Messiah was to be born after the first event, but before the second. Now the battle of Actium was fought about thirty years before the Christian era,

¹ Rationalistic critics suppose that by them are meant the Babylonian, the Medean, the Persian, and the Macedonian Empires; but there was no distinct empire of the Medes after the Babylonian. Ewald and Bunsen with still greater improbability suppose that the four empires are the Ninevite, Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian.

² Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, p. 276.

and the destruction of Jerusalem occurred seventy years after ; so that there is only the space of a century within which the Messiah was to appear.¹

But the most remarkable prophecy concerning the time of the appearance of the Messiah, is that of Daniel's seventy weeks, referred to in a former lecture, but on which it is requisite to dwell for a little : 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks : the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself : and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary ; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week : and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it

¹ See Hill's *Divinity Lectures*, vol. i. p. 160.

desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate' (Dan. ix. 24-27).

Neither your time nor the nature of this lecture will permit me to enter upon any critical examination of this remarkable and undoubtedly in many respects obscure prophecy. It is to be observed that the time of the Messiah's advent appears here to be specified. It was to occur a certain number of weeks after a certain event, namely, 'the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.' It is in general admitted that the weeks are to be understood, according to the prophetic mode of computation, as weeks of years (Ezek. iv. 6). There is a wonderful agreement on this point among almost all biblical scholars. Jewish Rabbis as well as Christian commentators, those who give to the passage an anti-Messianic interpretation as well as those who regard it as Messianic, agree in considering the weeks as weeks of years, and hence in asserting that by the seventy weeks in the prediction are meant four hundred and ninety years. Thus, Dr. Adler writes: 'The angel tells Daniel that by these seventy years mentioned in Jeremiah's prophecy, ordinary years were not to be understood, but years of release, or weeks of years, that is, periods of seven years each.'¹ The Hebrew word here

¹ Adler's *Course of Sermons*, p. 106.

translated *weeks* denotes merely 'periods of sevens,' without reference to their nature, whether they are days, weeks, months, years, or millenniums; the duration of the period must be decided from the context. So that the translation 'seventy weeks' is more definite than the original warrants. Now, from the context it is evident that the term cannot be understood as weeks of natural days, because the seventy days would be only a year and a half, a period far too short for the accomplishment of all the particulars mentioned in the prophecy. Jerusalem was not only to be restored and built, but to be destroyed, and the sacrificial worship of the Jews was to cease. On the other hand, it is evident also from the context, that the reference is to the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the seventy years that should elapse between the Babylonish captivity and the restoration of the Jews to their city and nation (Dan. ix. 2): the seventy septenary periods of Daniel answer to the seventy years of Jeremiah; and hence it is inferred that the septenary periods here mentioned are not periods of seven days, but of seven years. According to this calculation, the seventy weeks of Daniel amount to 490 years. These weeks or septenary periods are again subdivided into three parts—seven weeks, threescore and two weeks, and one week ($7 + 62 + 1$); and events are stated as happening at the end of each. After seven

weeks, Jerusalem was to be rebuilt ; after threescore and two weeks, Messiah was to be cut off ; and during one week, the covenant was to be confirmed with many. Each of these periods is to be considered as consecutive,—the one following the other, and each is calculated from the close of the preceding ; this is necessary to make up the whole number of the seventy weeks. From this it follows that sixty-nine septenary periods—that is, considering the sevens to be not weeks of days, but weeks of years, 483 years—were to elapse between the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah. Now we learn that such a commandment was given in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus to Nehemiah (Neh. ii.), which, according to the most approved chronology, occurred B.C. 454. Adding to this the thirty years which elapsed before Jesus commenced His public ministry ($454 + 30 = 484$), then the period of our Lord's appearance will, as nearly as possible, coincide with the prophetic weeks of Daniel.¹

We are the more confirmed in the correctness of this calculation by the knowledge of the remarkable fact, that about the time when our Lord was upon the earth, there was a general expectation of the advent of the Messiah not only among the Jews, but throughout the East, as we learn from

¹ Supplement I.

the writings of Virgil, Tacitus, Suetonius, and the Sibylline oracles.¹ We cannot account for such an expectation, except on the supposition that, according to the most approved calculation, the weeks of Daniel were then approaching their termination. Josephus observes that Daniel, whom he calls one of the greatest of the prophets, 'did not only prophesy of future events, as did other prophets, but he also determined the time of their accomplishment.'² In the Talmud we are informed that 'in Daniel is delivered to us the end of the Messiah;' that is, as Rabbi Jarchi explains it, 'the time of His appearance.' There is also in the Talmud the statement, that about the time of Titus the Messiah was considered as having already come, although concealed until the Jews were rendered more worthy for his appearance.³ And Rabbi Nehumias, said to have lived about fifty years before our Lord, is cited by Grotius as affirming that the time fixed by Daniel for the Messiah could not go beyond fifty years.⁴

Now this class of prophecy, relating to the time

¹ See on this, Supplement II. to Lecture III.

² Joseph. *Ant.* x. 11. 7.

³ Referred to in Anger's *Geschichte der Messianischen Idee*, p. 86.

⁴ Grotius, *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ*, v. 14: 'In Jesum autem tam bene convenit, ut magister Hebræus Nehumias, qui annis quinquaginta eum præcessit, aperte jam tum dixerit, non posse ultra eos quinquaginta annos protrahi tempus Messiaë a Daniele significatum.' For talmudic references to the time of the birth of the Messiah, see M'Caul's *Old Paths*, pp. 387-398.

of the Messiah's advent, does also undoubtedly apply to the Lord Jesus. He appeared after the Romans had conquered Egypt, and so obtained the mastery of the world, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, whilst the Jewish nation had rulers of their own, and when the second temple was still standing. He also came, as near as can be calculated, towards the close of Daniel's prophetic weeks. Thus, then, our Lord lived at the time when it was predicted by the prophets that the Messiah should appear. It is also to be observed, that this predicted period of the Messiah's advent has long passed away; Judah has for ages ceased to be a nation: the temple of Jerusalem has been so completely destroyed that not one stone has been left upon another; the Roman Empire has crumbled into pieces; and the seventy weeks of Daniel have long since been completed. If the Messiah was to come, He has already come; and although the Jews still expect a Messiah, yet, in cherishing such an expectation, they do so in direct contradiction to the prophecies contained in their sacred books.

III. *The Place where the Messiah was to be born.*

'Time and place,' observes Dr. Hill, 'are two circumstances which every false prophet is careful

to avoid, or at least to express in ambiguous terms, but which were precisely marked and literally accomplished with regard to the Messiah.¹

The time predicted, we have found, corresponds with our Lord's appearance; and so also, we shall find, does the *place*. This place is clearly stated by the prophet Micah, in a remarkable prophecy adverted to in a former lecture: 'Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting' (Micah v. 2). This prophecy has been generally acknowledged by the Jews to signify that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem. The Jews, in the time of our Lord, so understood it. This is evident from the reply to Herod, when he demanded of them where the Messiah should be born: 'They said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea' (Matt. ii. 5). And so also the supposition that Jesus was born in Galilee, His usual place of residence, was urged as an objection to His Messianic claims. 'Shall the Messiah come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, That the Messiah cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?' (John vii. 41, 42).

Now this prediction was fulfilled in the birth of

¹ Hill's *Lectures in Divinity*, vol. i. p. 158.

our Lord. Two of the Evangelists inform us that He was born in Bethlehem. 'Jesus,' writes St. Matthew, 'was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king' (Matt. ii. 1). The occasion of His birth in Bethlehem was remarkable. The residence of Mary, His mother, was Nazareth in Galilee, not Bethlehem; so that, had nothing unusual occurred, He would have been born in Nazareth. But the Emperor Augustus had issued an order that all the inhabitants of Herod's kingdom should be enrolled; and this was done, according to the Jewish custom, by each repairing to the city to which his family originally belonged. Accordingly we are informed by St. Luke, that in consequence of this decree, 'Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David' (Luke ii. 4). Mary, his espoused wife, accompanied him, and it was then that Jesus was born. Thus this prophecy was remarkably fulfilled: the hand of Providence in bringing it about is clearly discernible; so that, in consequence of a series of unforeseen events, it happened that our Lord was born in Bethlehem, the very place foretold by the prophet, seven hundred years before, as the birthplace of the Messiah.

IV. The Life and Character of the Messiah.

The predictions concerning the Messiah's life and character are very numerous and varied ; we can only make a selection. It was foretold that the Messiah should have, as a forerunner, an illustrious prophet, coming in the spirit of Elijah. 'The voice of him,' says Isaiah, 'that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God' (Isa. xl. 3). And the prophecy of Malachi is still more definite : 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me' (Mal. iii. 1) ; 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord' (Mal. iv. 5). It was foretold that the Messiah Himself should be an illustrious prophet, that He should be the author of a new and better dispensation of religion, that He should be a preacher of righteousness, and that His doctrines should not be confined to the Jews, but extend to the Gentiles. 'The Lord thy God,' says Moses, 'will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto Him ye shall hearken' (Deut. xviii. 15). 'Behold,' says Isaiah, 'my Servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth ; I have put my Spirit upon Him : He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, and

the isles shall wait for His law' (Isa. xlii. 1, 4). And again: 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound' (Isa. lxi. 1). It was foretold that the Messiah, although He should be born in Bethlehem, yet would reside chiefly in Galilee: 'Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first He lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined' (Isa. ix. 1, 2). It was foretold that the Messiah should live an afflicted life, and that He should be rejected by the generality of His countrymen: 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not' (Isa. liii. 3). It was foretold that, nevertheless, He should enter Jerusalem in lowly triumph: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation;

lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass' (Zech. ix. 9).

Now all these prophecies were fulfilled in the life and character of the Lord Jesus. John the Baptist appeared, and announced himself to be the forerunner of the Messiah, as 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord' (John i. 23). Our Lord was a Prophet like unto Moses: like him, He was a lawgiver, the author of a new dispensation of religion, and a mediator between God and man. He was Himself a great preacher: He preached the gospel to the poor, and commanded His disciples to preach His religion to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature' (Mark xvi. 15). The sphere of His ministry was chiefly confined to Galilee; He left Nazareth and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, on the borders of Zabulon and Naphthali, and hence His disciples were at first called Galileans. He lived a life of persecution, poverty, and sorrow; He was rejected by the generality of His countrymen: 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (John i. 11). And a few days before His death, He entered Jerusalem in lowly triumph. Thus, then, the prophecies which described the life and character of the Messiah were fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

V. *The Sufferings, Death, and Burial of the Messiah.*

Now it is admitted that the predictions of the sufferings of the Messiah are not so numerous as those which proclaim His kingdom and glory. Still there are some remarkable and explicit predictions. The Twenty-second Psalm and the Fifty-third chapter of Isaiah must ever be regarded as the most explicit of the Messianic prophecies: here a suffering Messiah, rather than a Messianic King, is portrayed, although, according to both predictions, the sufferer passes from extreme anguish to glory. And so also in the prophecies of Zechariah there are some remarkable predictions of a suffering Messiah. Thus it was foretold that the Messiah should be sold and valued at thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave: ‘If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them’ (Zech. xi. 12, 13). It was foretold that the Messiah, though innocent, should be dealt with as guilty and treated as a criminal: ‘He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many’ (Isa. liii. 12). It was foretold that the Messiah should be derided and upbraided with

His confidence in God: 'All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him' (Ps. xxii. 7, 8). It was foretold that the Messiah should be wounded and pierced: 'He was wounded for our transgressions' (Isa. liii. 5); 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced' (Zech. xii. 10). It was foretold that the hands and feet of the Messiah should be bored, and His garments divided among His enemies: 'They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture' (Ps. xxii. 16-18). It was foretold that the Messiah should at length be put to death: 'He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken. He hath poured out His soul unto death' (Isa. liii. 8, 12). And it was foretold that although He should suffer the death of a malefactor, yet He should be buried in a rich man's grave: 'He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death' (Isa. liii. 9); or, as Bishop Lowth renders the passage: 'And His grave was appointed with the wicked: but with the rich man was His tomb.'

Now it is clear from the narratives of the Evangelists that these predictions were minutely fulfilled

in the person of the Lord Jesus. He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, and sold by him for thirty pieces of silver, the price at which the priests and Pharisees had valued Him. He was treated as a criminal, being condemned by the Sanhedrim on the charge of blasphemy, and by Pilate on the charge of sedition. He was wounded and pierced; His hands and feet were nailed to the cross, and His side was pierced with a spear. His enemies parted His garments among them, and cast lots for His vesture; and the very words of the Psalmist were employed by them when they derided Him on the cross. He was put to an ignominious death, being crucified between two thieves. But although He died a malefactor's death, yet He was buried in a rich man's tomb; for Joseph, who, we are informed, was a rich man of Arimathea, and a member of the Sanhedrim, obtained on application the body of Jesus, and buried Him in his own sepulchre. Thus, then, the prophecies which described the sufferings, death, and burial of the Messiah were fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

VI. *The Success of the Religion of the Messiah.*

The prophets not only predicted the sufferings of the Messiah, but still more fully the glory that should follow these sufferings: the establishment

and the success of the Messianic kingdom. The Messiah was foretold as the Author of a better and more glorious dispensation of religion than that of Moses. A new covenant was to be entered into with the house of Israel, and all nations were to be admitted to share in its blessings. The Gentiles were to be received into the number of God's people, and the religion of the Messiah was to become the religion of the world. 'In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek' (Isa. xi. 10). 'The Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising' (Isa. lx. 3). It was foretold that the kingdom of the Messiah would embrace all nations, and all men would do homage to Him as the great Anointed King. 'Ask of me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession' (Ps. ii. 8). 'He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before Him, and all nations shall serve Him' (Ps. lxxii. 8, 11). Daniel, in an evident prediction of the Messiah, says: 'I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all

people, nations, and languages should serve Him : His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed' (Dan. vii. 13, 14). And the same success of the religion of the Messiah is foretold by the contemporary prophets Isaiah and Micah in terms almost precisely similar : ' In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it' (Isa. ii. 2 ; Micah iv. 1).

Now this class of predictions also finds its realization and fulfilment only in the Lord Jesus. He is the Founder of a better and more glorious dispensation of religion than Judaism. It is not, like the religion of Moses, confined to one particular nation, but designed to embrace the world. And the history of the early Church is just the history of the rapid diffusion of Christianity. Within a few years after the death of its Founder, it was propagated over the whole Roman Empire, and penetrated into countries which the Roman legions never visited ; persecutions availed not to stop its progress, and it is now professed by the most enlightened and civilized nations of the world. It is true that the complete fulfilment is yet future : the greater part of this world is still unchristianized ; but there are tendencies at work

which point to Christianity being the destined religion of the world, and certainly enough has already been accomplished to prove that the above prophecies evidently point to Jesus of Nazareth as the great Messianic King.

We have compared the prophecies regarding the family, the time of appearance, the birth-place, the life and character, the sufferings, death, and burial, and the success of the religion of the Messiah, with the facts recorded in the Gospels of the life of Jesus, and we have found an exact correspondence between them; so that we can have no dubiety in drawing the conclusion that 'Jesus is the Christ.' As has been well observed, 'the fact of a complicated lock being opened by a key, shows that the lock and key were meant for each other.'

In order to perceive the full force of the argument, we must take a conjunct view of the whole. Not one, but numerous prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus—prophecies all of them uttered hundreds of years before Jesus was born—prophecies varied and complicated—prophecies referring to time and place, and to many minute events in history—all of them point to Jesus, and receive their fulfilment in Him. He was born of the same family and in the same place which the prophets foretold of the birth of the Messiah; He was in the world at the time when the Messiah was to appear; His character and life bore a minute resemblance to the

character and life of the Messiah ; He suffered all those indignities which the Messiah was to suffer ; He was wounded, He was pierced, He was killed, He was buried, as it was foretold that the Messiah should be wounded, pierced, killed, and buried ; and His religion was received by the Gentiles, as it was foretold of the religion of the Messiah. So many prophecies fulfilled, and not a single one disproved, clearly demonstrate that Jĕsus of Nazareth is the Messiah predicted by the prophets. It matters not whether some of the prophecies are secondary ; it matters not whether some of them are obscure and their application doubtful ; it is the whole combination of prophecies which must be disproved ; it is the entire Messianic spirit of the Old Testament which must be denied ; it is the evidence not of one, but the united testimony of a hundred witnesses which must be refuted.¹

SUPPLEMENT I.

DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS (DAN. IX. 24-27).

THIS passage has given rise to more discussion than any other Messianic prediction. The meanings assigned to it are nearly as various as the

¹ Supplement II.

interpreters of it are numerous. Christian commentators of all shades of opinion, as well as numerous Jewish writers, have expended on it a vast amount of learning and ingenuity. And it must be admitted that there is hardly any other Messianic prediction involved in so much obscurity. There are many particulars contained in it which have given rise to a great variety of opinion. What is the nature of the weeks? Are they weeks of days or weeks of years? What is the reason of their subdivision into three parts? Are the parts consecutive, or are they to be calculated from the same point of commencement? What is the special commandment, 'to restore and build Jerusalem,' from which the seventy weeks are to be calculated? Is it the decree of Cyrus, or of Darius, or of Artaxerxes to Ezra, or of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah? Or is it the 'word of the Lord to Jeremiah,' in his prophecy of the seventy years of the captivity? Are there two Messiahs—the Messiah the Prince, and the Messiah who shall be cut off—or are these one and the same? Who is the Prince that shall come to destroy Jerusalem? These are questions which have been very differently answered by biblical scholars. No doubt a large portion of this obscurity arises from the want of historical data. Our information concerning the restoration of Jerusalem is small, and the chronology of the Persian Empire somewhat confused. Could we

certainly fix the date of a commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, we would be better able to calculate the seventy weeks ; but so long as there is a difference of opinion about this commandment, there must also be a corresponding difference in the calculation. Besides, the passage is extremely difficult to translate : the construction is intricate, and the meaning of several of the words doubtful ; so that eminent Hebrew scholars have given a different sense to several of the phrases ; and if there be a dubiety in the translation, there must also be a dubiety in the interpretation. But even had we accurate historical data, and could arrive at a true translation of the passage, all obscurity would not be removed ; the questions concerning the nature of the weeks and the reason of their subdivision would still remain to be answered.

The translation of the passage is difficult ; but the following is as accurate and literal a translation as I can give :—

24. Seventy septenaries are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and the prophet, and to anoint a holy of holies. 25. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah a Prince shall be seven septenaries,

and sixty and two septenaries; and the street shall be restored and built, and the trench, even in troublous times. 26. And after sixty and two septenaries Messiah shall be cut off, and *the people* shall not be to Him; and the people of the Prince, the coming One, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be in a flood, and until the end of the war desolations are determined. 27. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one septenary: and in the half of the septenary He shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease, and on the summit (wing) of abomination shall be the destroyer, even unto the completion, and that decreed shall be poured upon the destroyer.

The Septuagint affords no assistance in the translation of the passage. Its version of the Book of Daniel was so corrupt and faulty, that at an early period, so far back as the time of Jerome, it was superseded, and the version of Theodotion was substituted in its place.¹ This version differs from the Hebrew in several particulars, but these are not of much consequence, and do not throw much light upon the passage. The principal variations will be noticed as we proceed with the exposition.

Ver. 24. Here a great difficulty meets us at the outset. What is the nature of the weeks here

¹The true Septuagint translation of Daniel was supposed to be lost, but was discovered at Rome, and published in 1772.

mentioned? We have in the lecture assigned reasons why these weeks should be considered not as weeks of days, but as weeks of years; and hence in our translation we have substituted the word *septenaries* for weeks. The word שָׁבָעִים is the plural of שָׁבַע. It does not necessarily signify *weeks of days*, but may denote *periods of sevens*. To denote *weeks of days*, יָמִים is sometimes added in apposition (Dan. x. 2). The special nature of the septenary periods is to be determined from the context. Now the context favours the idea of year-weeks. The reference is undoubtedly to Jeremiah's seventy years, previously alluded to in this prophecy (Dan. ix. 2); and hence, when it is said that seventy septenary periods are determined 'on Thy people and on Thy holy city,' it is natural to suppose that septenary periods of years are intended. Besides, as remarked in the lecture, if the term is to be understood of natural weeks, it would be far too short a period for the accomplishment of all the particulars mentioned in the prophecy.

Six particulars are mentioned as occurring during or at the termination of these seventy weeks or septenaries. 'Seventy septenaries are decreed upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and the prophet, and to anoint a holy of holies.'

Of these only the last particular requires comment. In our version it is, 'to anoint the Most Holy;' but literally translated it is, 'to anoint a holy of holies.' Those who give the prediction an anti-Messianic interpretation, suppose that by 'a holy of holies' is to be understood the temple or the altar; and accordingly some refer it to the dedication of the temple in the time of Zerubbabel, and others to the consecration of the altar of burnt-offerings by Judas Maccabeus, after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. It is, however, to be observed that when the words are applied to 'the holy of holies' in the temple, they are always—both in the Hebrew and in the Greek version—accompanied with the article; nor is there any mention of an anointing either of the temple in the time of Zerubbabel, or of the altar in the time of Judas Maccabeus. On the other hand, the words naturally admit of a Messianic interpretation. The five previous particulars are all of a Messianic character, and therefore so must be the sixth. The phrase 'a holy of holies,' though usually applied to things, admits of a personal application, as it is applied to Aaron and his sons (1 Chron. xxiii. 13).¹ And so also our Lord Himself is called τὸ ἅγιον, *the holy thing* (Luke i. 35). Hence, then,

¹ In our version it is rendered: 'And Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things;' but the correct translation is: 'And Aaron was separated to sanctify him as a holy of holies,' אֲהִרֹן לְהַקְדִּישׁוֹ קֹדֶשׁ קֳדָשִׁים וַיִּבְדֵּל.

we consider that our version, when it renders the words by 'the Most Holy,' gives the true import of the phrase, though not the literal translation. And this is also the meaning assigned to it in the various versions: the personal sense is there maintained. The Septuagint has εὐφραῖναι ἅγιον ἁγίων, which can only apply to a person. The version of Theodotion has Χριστῶς ἅγιον ἁγίων, which, though an exact rendering of the Hebrew, was understood by the Fathers to refer to the Person of the Messiah. The Syriac version directly refers it to the Messiah: *till the Messiah, the Most Holy*; and the Vulgate has *Sanctus sanctorum*.

Ver. 25. A difference in the punctuation of this verse gives rise to a difference in its interpretation. In the Masoretic punctuation, an athnach, which is in general equivalent to our colon, is placed after 'seven weeks;' and accordingly the Jews read the passage as follows: 'Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah a Prince shall be seven septenaries; and during sixty and two septenaries, the street shall be restored and built, and the trench, even in troublous times.' This reading and punctuation have been adopted by those who assign to the passage an anti-Messianic interpretation. It must also be admitted that this rendering gives a clearer meaning to the subdivision of the weeks than our translation; the seven

weeks extend to Messiah the Prince, and the sixty and two weeks are occupied in the restoration and building of Jerusalem. On the other hand, the authority of the Masoretic punctuation is not great; at the most, it gives only the opinion of those Jewish Rabbis who introduced such a punctuation into the sacred text; and, besides, the athnach is often employed by them when it has not the force of a colon. The context is against our adoption of such a punctuation. It assigns the long and incredible period of sixty-two weeks, that is, 434 years, to the building of Jerusalem; and in the following verse it is said that 'after sixty and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off,' so that it would assign the same extended period of 434 years to the life of the Messiah; unless, indeed, the difficulty be escaped by the assumption that two Messiahs are here intended—that Messiah the Prince in verse 25 is different from the Messiah who shall be cut off in verse 26.

We shall consider what commandment to restore and build Jerusalem is referred to, when we compare the Messianic and the anti-Messianic interpretations of the passage. This is evidently the period from which the seventy weeks are to be computed. These are in verse 25 subdivided into seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; and in verse 27 the last week is mentioned ($7+62+1$). These periods are necessarily consecutive, in order to make

up the whole number of seventy weeks. The seven weeks commenced at the beginning of the period 'from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem;' the sixty-two weeks at the end of the seven weeks, and the one week at the end of the sixty-two weeks. Events are predicted as happening at the end of each of these periods. This is clearly stated regarding the last week (Dan. ix. 27), though not so clearly regarding the other two periods—the seven weeks and the sixty and two weeks; still, however, with sufficient clearness to assign the special events to each with some degree of certainty: 'Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah a Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be restored and built, and the trench, even in troublous times; and after threescore and two weeks Messiah shall be cut off.' Two periods are here given—seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; and two events are stated as happening at these periods—the building of Jerusalem, and Messiah being cut off. Now we are told that the Messiah would be cut off after the threescore and two weeks; and it is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that the building of Jerusalem refers to the first period, the seven weeks. Thus, then, during seven weeks, that is, forty-nine years, Jerusalem was to be rebuilt; and after threescore

and two weeks, that is, 434 years, Messiah was to be cut off.

The last clause of the verse, rendered in our version, 'The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times,' is difficult to translate. Hengstenberg renders it: 'Restored and built is the street, and firmly determined, but in narrow times.' Bleek gives the following translation: 'It (Jerusalem) shall be rebuilt with streets and ditches, but in troublous times.' The meaning, however, is not difficult. The reference is evidently to the commandment previously mentioned to restore and build Jerusalem; and the words assert that this restoration shall be carried on in troublous times.

Ver. 26. The first clause of this verse is, in our version, as follows: 'And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself.' It is almost universally admitted that this translation is erroneous. The words *לֹא עֲלֵי* cannot be translated, 'but not for Himself.' The only meaning of which they are capable is: 'And it is not to Him;' or, 'And it shall not be to Him.' Almost all critics agree in this translation, yet various meanings have been attached to the words. There is evidently an ellipsis to be supplied, and this has been differently attempted. Bleek renders it, 'And He shall have no successor;' Hengstenberg, 'And there is no inheritance to Him;' Keil, 'He loses

His position as Messiah ;' and Pusey, 'The city and the sanctuary shall be His no more.' The version of Theodotion translates the words, *καὶ κρίμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ*, 'And there is no judgment to Him.' Perhaps the most correct meaning is to supply the word *people*: 'Messiah shall be cut off, and *the people* shall not be to Him'—that is, the Jews shall reject Him, they shall renounce Him as their Messiah. 'He came unto His own,' says the Evangelist, 'and His own received Him not.' And this rejection culminated at the crucifixion, when the cry of the multitude was, 'Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him, crucify Him! We have no king but Cæsar!'

The last clause of the verse is extremely difficult to interpret. *עַם נָגִיד* means *the people of the Prince*. But who is meant by this has been much disputed. By the anti-Messianic interpreters it is supposed that the Prince here mentioned is Antiochus Epiphanes, who laid waste Jerusalem and desecrated the temple. By most Messianic interpreters it is thought that the reference is to the Jewish war, and that by the *people* are meant the Romans, and by the *Prince*, Titus. It would, however, seem more natural to understand by the Prince Him who was already mentioned, namely, Messiah the Prince; more especially as the phrase which follows in apposition, 'He that shall come,' or 'the coming One,' is one of the titles of the

Messiah. 'Art Thou He that should come?' This, however, does not necessitate us to deny the application of the 'people of the Prince' to the Romans, who may well be called 'the people of the Messiah,' inasmuch as they were His instruments in the execution of His vengeance on the Jewish nation. The version of Theodotion read $\delta\upsilon$, *with*, instead of $\delta\upsilon$, *people*, the difference being in the pointing. It gives the following translation: 'And He,' that is, the Messiah, 'shall destroy the city and the sanctuary with the Prince that is coming.' The words that follow, 'and the end thereof,' have been variously interpreted. Some apply them to the end of the city and the sanctuary; others, to the end of the people of the Prince; and others, to the end of the whole series of events—'the end of the matter.'

Ver. 27. In this verse the particulars of the last or seventieth week are stated. There is a great variety of opinion regarding the person who shall confirm the covenant for one week. The anti-Messianic interpreters in general suppose that it is Antiochus Epiphanes who entered into league with the apostate or Hellenizing Jews, and whose persecution lasted for seven years. The Messianic interpreters suppose that it is the Messiah, and that the reference is to the preaching of the Gospel for seven years, either during the ministries of John the Baptist and Christ, or during the ministry of

Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after His ascension. By 'the summit, or wing, of abominations,' Hengstenberg understands the temple, so called on account of its desecration by the Jews. Bleek refers it to the altar of the temple. Theodotion renders it ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων, *on the temple shall be the abomination of desolations.* And so also the Vulgate has *et erit in templo abominatio desolationis.* It is most probably to this passage that our Lord refers when He says: 'When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place' (Matt. xxiv. 15); and if so, the prophecy refers to the Jewish war.

Having given a translation and exposition of the prophecy, we now proceed to consider the two very different meanings which have been assigned to it—the Messianic and the anti-Messianic.

I. The Messianic interpretation has been adopted and defended at length by Prideaux, Faber, Pusey, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Hävernick, and Auberlein. We have dwelt upon it in the lecture. According to this view, there is only one Messiah: 'Messiah the Prince' and 'the Messiah who was to be cut off' are one and the same. This Messianic interpretation is justified by the Messianic character of ver. 24. The points mentioned in that verse—the finishing of transgression,

the making an end of sin, the making atonement for iniquity, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness—have all a reference to the age of the Messiah, as is evident from the prophetic language of the Old Testament in general. And so also there is a wonderful coincidence as regards the time; as shown in our lecture, the time of our Lord's advent as nearly as possible coincides with the seventy weeks of Daniel, calculated from the decree given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign.

Four different edicts of the Persian monarchs are mentioned in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The first was in the first year of Cyrus given to Zerubbabel, granting permission to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple (Ezra i.). The second was in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and was a renewal of the edict of Cyrus (Ezra vi.; Hag. i. 1). The third was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, given to Ezra to establish the worship of God (Ezra vii.). And the fourth was in the twentieth year of the same monarch, given to Nehemiah to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. i. 1, 2, ii. 5). Now the decree which certainly corresponds best with the indications given in the prediction of Daniel, is that of Artaxerxes Longimanus to Nehemiah. In the other decrees there is no mention of the building or fortifying of Jerusalem, but only of the temple; Jerusalem

still remained without walls until the time of Nehemiah. In all probability, the Jews were not until then permitted to fortify their city. As Hengstenberg remarks: 'Up to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, what had once been the city of Jerusalem was an open village, thinly populated, and exposed to injury of every kind from those who dwelt around.'¹ But now by this decree permission was given to Nehemiah to build and to restore Jerusalem. From this date, then, the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel are to be calculated; after sixty-nine of these weeks, or 483 years after this decree, Messiah was to appear. According to Hengstenberg, who enters upon a long and minute dissertation on the chronology of these times, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus coincided with B.C. 454.² If we add to this the thirty years which elapsed before our Lord commenced His public ministry, we obtain a period of 484 years, which differs only by one year from the sixty-nine prophetic weeks of Daniel. And, as has been stated in our lecture, the correctness of this calculation is strongly confirmed by the expectation of the advent of the Messiah among the Jews at the time of our Lord;

¹ Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. iii. p. 202.

² Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. iii. p. 223. Dr. Pusey disagrees with Hengstenberg as to the duration of the reign of Artaxerxes, and dates the commencement of the weeks from the commission to Ezra (*Lectures on Daniel*, pp. 168-170).

and which expectation, as Josephus admits, arose from their calculation of the numbers contained in the prophecy of Daniel.

A great objection to the Messianic interpretation is that it is admitted by those who adopt it, that there is in the prediction a manifest reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which is represented as occurring in the seventieth week, but which in reality did not occur until nearly forty years after the crucifixion of our Lord. 'The people of the Prince, the coming One, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.' 'In the half of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease, and on the summit of abominations shall be the destroyer, even to the completion, and that decreed shall be poured upon the destroyer.' 'This clause,' observes Dr. Adler, 'is stated to refer to the entire destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and to their having caused the sacrifices to cease for ever. But surely these events did not take place in the midst of that week (the seventieth) when the Nazarene is said to have died, but upwards of thirty years later.'¹ Now I candidly admit that this is a difficulty of which I am not prepared to offer any satisfactory solution. It will not do to affirm with Faber that 'this half week is not the half of the previously-mentioned week, but an entirely distinct portion of

¹ Adler's *Course of Sermons*, p. 113.

time,'¹ and thus to cut it off from Daniel's seventy weeks ; for this is irreconcilable with the words of the prediction. The words denote not 'in half a week,' but 'in the half of the week.' Nor can it be denied that, according to the Messianic interpretation, there is here a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Our Lord's allusion to the prophecy confirms that reference. It may, however, be that the destruction of Jerusalem is here mentioned, because it virtually, though not actually, occurred during the seventy weeks. When the Jews rejected the Saviour, Jerusalem was virtually destroyed ; its preservation was rendered an impossibility. And so it often happens in prophetic language that an event which is inevitable is said to have occurred. And, in this case, not only was the train laid, but by the rejection of Christ the match was applied, though the explosion occurred at a later period. At all events, the obscurity of one part of a prediction does not invalidate the conclusions drawn from the completion of those other parts which we understand.

It has been further objected, that the Messianic interpretation only accounts for sixty-nine weeks and a half ; no meaning whatever is assigned to the last half of the seventieth week. According to the usual mode of calculation, Christ appeared

¹ Faber *On Daniel*, pp. 375, 376.

after sixty-nine weeks: His ministry lasted for half a week; so that there is still half a week unaccounted for.¹ Dr. Pusey thinks 'the remaining three and a half years probably mark the time during which the gospel was preached to the Jews, before the preaching to the Samaritans showed that the special privileges of the Jews were at an end, and that the gospel embraced the world.'² Others carry down the seventy weeks to the death of the martyr Stephen. But the solution of Prideaux is perhaps to be preferred. He refers the whole of the seventieth week to the ministry of Christ—carried on during the first half indirectly by the ministry of John the Baptist, and during the second half directly by Himself; and that thus the words, 'He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week,' received their accomplishment; and during the second half of the week, by His own death, the one great sacrifice for sin, He 'caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease.' So that, according to Dr. Prideaux, it was not at the close of sixty-nine and a half weeks, but at the close of the seventy weeks, that the death of Christ occurred. It is to be observed that Prideaux calculates the seventy weeks from the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus in the seventh year of his reign to Ezra, and gives, according to another

¹ See objections stated in Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, p. 266.

² Pusey's *Lectures on Daniel*, p. 178, second edition.

chronology, a different duration to the reign of that monarch.¹

Applying this prophecy to the Lord Jesus, it will be found to receive its full accomplishment. The first part of the prophecy—the period of seven weeks, or forty-nine years—refers to the restoration of the city: from it we learn, that it was foretold that forty-nine years would elapse from the decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem until the work was completed. The want of historical data prevents us comparing this part of the prediction with the event, nor does it at present concern us. But the other parts of the prophecy all relate to the Messiah. We have found, taking the weeks as years, that Jesus appeared at the very time it was here predicted that the Messiah would appear. Jesus accomplished the work that it was here predicted the Messiah would accomplish: He ‘finished transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.’ Jesus was put to death, as it was here predicted that the Messiah would be put to death: ‘after sixty and two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off.’ Jesus was rejected by the Jews, as it was here predicted that the Messiah should be rejected: ‘the people were not to Him.’ Jesus by the sacrifice of Himself put

¹ Prideaux, *Connection of Old and New Testaments*, vol. i. pp. 220–231.

an end to the sacrifices under the law, as it was here predicted that the Messiah should cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. In Jesus, then, this prophecy receives its accomplishment. He is 'Messiah the Prince,' that 'Messiah who was to be cut off.'

2. But to complete this dissertation, we must consider the anti-Messianic interpretation. This interpretation has been adopted and defended at length by Drummond, Davidson, Eichhorn, Bertholdt, Rosenmüller, Kuenen, Ewald, Bleek, Wieseler, Hitzig, Hilgenfeld, Lücke, Anger, and partially by Hofmann, and by all recent Jewish writers. They refer the fulfilment of the prediction to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, though with most of them it is regarded as *vaticinium post eventum*. The meaning which these critics give of course differs widely from that which we have advanced. They fix the commencement of the weeks, not from any decree given by a Persian monarch to restore Jerusalem, but either from the commencement of the Babylonish captivity, or from the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar: they are constrained to do this on account of the numbers given in the prophecy. They consider that there are two Messiahs mentioned—the first, 'Messiah the Prince,' who should appear after forty-nine years, and whom they all agree in considering to be Cyrus; and the other, the

‘Messiah who was to be cut off,’ but concerning whom there is a great difference of opinion. The prince whose people should come and destroy the city and the sanctuary, they consider to be Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of the Jews. To him they apply the words, ‘And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease’ (Dan. ix. 27). The persecution, they observe, lasted one week of years, and in the midst of the week, for three years and a half, the Jewish worship was prohibited. ‘Most probably,’ observes Dr. Adler, ‘the prophecy refers to the persecutions and oppressions which Israel was destined to endure at the hands of the cruel and fanatic Antiochus Epiphanes. The purpose of this, as of some of the other visions that were vouchsafed to Daniel, seems to have been to strengthen and encourage the Jews to remain faithful to their God in those times of trial that awaited them. This vision announces to them that at the expiration of seventy weeks,—that is, 490 years after the destruction of their temple,—their sufferings would be at an end, their iniquity pardoned, the piety and righteousness of old re-established, and the Holy of Holies again anointed. The prophet here foretells events which were fulfilled in the renewed dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus,

and the re-establishment shortly afterwards of the independence of Israel, when kings of their own race and faith again sat on the throne of David, and a new era commenced, which was designated the era of the freedom of Israel.¹

But whilst these anti-Messianic writers agree in considering the first Messiah to be Cyrus, they differ widely in their views concerning the second Messiah. According to Collins, he is Judas Maccabeus. According to Eichhorn, Wieseler, Hitzig, Hilgenfeld, Kuenen, and Hofmann, he is Onias III., the high priest who was put to death at the instigation of Menelaus (2 Macc. iv. 34, 35)—an opinion which is also entertained by Dr. Adler. According to Bertholdt and Rosenmüller, he is Alexander the Great. According to Ewald, Bleek, and Anger, he is Seleucus IV. Philopater, the brother of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was poisoned. Thus Anger observes: 'This Messiah, who was to appear sixty-two weeks after the former, that is, on the sixty-ninth week, immediately before Antiochus Epiphanes, is either Seleucus Philopater, who died B.C. 175, four years before the beginning of the last week, or the high priest Onias III., who died B.C. 171, at the commencement of the last week; probably the former, because in the description afterwards given in chap. ix., Seleucus is indicated, but not Onias.'²

¹ Adler's *Course of Sermons*, p. 114.

² Anger's *Vorlesungen*, p. 81.

In this interpretation of the seventy weeks there is a complete disregard and violation of chronology.¹ The commencement of the seventy weeks is affirmed to be the 'word of the Lord to Jeremiah,' in his prophecy of the seventy years of the captivity,² and is dated from B.C. 606, when Jehoiakim became tributary to Nebuchadnezzar. Now, according to their interpretation, seven weeks or forty-nine years would reach to the time of Cyrus, whereas the interval is seventy years; and hence there is an error of twenty-one years. Again, the end of seven weeks is placed at the time of Cyrus, B.C. 536, and the end of sixty-two weeks at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 164; consequently, according to this view, sixty-two weeks or 434 years ought to intervene between these periods; whereas the interval was not more than 372 years. There is thus here also an error of sixty-two years. The only way by which these critics try to avoid this difficulty, and in this they only partially succeed, is to consider the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks not as consecutive, but as both commencing at the same period—namely, the commencement of Jeremiah's seventy years, B.C. 606. But such a mode of calculation is irreconcilable with the words of the prophecy, and cannot be admitted. Of

¹ This is admitted by Adler, *Course of Sermons*, p. 120.

² It is difficult to conceive how a prophecy of the desolation of Jerusalem can be construed into a command to restore and rebuild it.

course it is easy to cut the knot by saying, with Ewald, Hitzig, and Kuenen, that Daniel was mistaken in his calculations;¹ but such a method places the matter out of the sphere of argument. We consider, then, that there are insuperable difficulties to the adoption of the anti-Messianic interpretation.

Keil adopts a mode of interpretation peculiarly his own. Hofmann had indeed suggested that the prophecy might receive only a partial fulfilment in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and that its full accomplishment might be reserved for the appearance of Antichrist, and the final completion of the kingdom of God at the second advent. Accordingly, Keil supposes that the prediction refers to the second advent of the Messiah. The weeks of Daniel are not to be considered as year-weeks, but as indefinite periods measured by sevens. The point of commencement is the edict of Cyrus, permitting the Jews to return from Babylon. The seven weeks are the period between that and the first advent of Christ. The sixty-two weeks which follow are the duration of the Christian Church—the period between the first advent of Christ and the advent of Antichrist. And the last week indicates ‘the time of the supremacy and of the victory of the destroyer of the Church of God, the Antichrist, and the destruction of

¹ Kuenen's *Prophets and Prophecy*, p. 272.

this enemy by the irrevocably determined final judgment.'¹

The prophecy of Daniel's seventy weeks has been discussed by numerous writers. Sir Isaac Newton, at the commencement of last century, wrote a treatise on it. The subject is treated at great length by Prideaux in his *Connection of the Old and New Testaments*, vol. i. pp. 207-332. The following are the principal modern works which treat of the subject:—Faber's *Dissertation on the Prophecy of Daniel*, contained in Dan. ix. 24-27; Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, pp. 243-266; Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. iii. pp. 92-263; Keil *On Daniel*, pp. 336-400; a valuable dissertation on this prediction in the *Speaker's Commentary*; Kuenen's *Prophets and Prophecy of Israel*, pp. 263-273; Pusey's *Lectures on Daniel*, Lecture iv.; Hitzig *On Daniel*, pp. 153-175.

SUPPLEMENT II.

THE FORCE OF THE ARGUMENT.

THE following extract from the work of Dr. Olinthus Gregory, *On the Evidences of Religion*, will give us

¹ Keil's *Commentary*, p. 575. The same view is also stated by Leyrer in Herzog's *Encyclopedia*, article 'Zahlen bei den Hebräern.'

some idea of the accumulated force of the argument from prophecy, stated as it is with the precision of mathematics:—

‘Suppose that, instead of the spirit of prophecy breathing more or less in every book of Scripture, predicting events relative to a great variety of general topics, and delivering besides almost innumerable characteristics of the Messiah, all meeting in the person of Jesus, there had been only *ten* men in ancient times who pretended to be prophets, each of whom exhibited only *five* independent criteria as to place, government, concomitant events, doctrine taught, effects of doctrine, character, sufferings, or death; the meeting of all which in one person, should prove the reality of their calling as prophets, and of his mission in the character they have assigned to him; suppose, moreover, that all the events were left to *chance* merely, and we were to compute, from the principles employed by mathematicians in the investigation of such subjects, the probability of these *fifty* independent circumstances happening *at all*. Assume that there is, according to the technical phrase, *an equal chance* for the happening or the failure of any one of the specified particulars; then the probability *against* the occurrence of all the particulars in *any* way is that of the 50th power of 2 to unity—that is, the probability is greater than *eleven hundred and twenty-five millions of millions*

to one, that all the circumstances do not turn up, even at distinct periods. This computation, however, is independent of the consideration of *time*. Let it then be recollected farther, that if any one of the specified circumstances happen, it *may* be the day after the delivery of the prophecy, or at any period from that time to the end of the world ; this will so indefinitely augment the probability against the contemporaneous occurrence of merely these *fifty* circumstances, that it surpasses the power of numbers to express correctly the immense improbability of its taking place. Be it remembered, also, that in this calculation I have assumed the hypothesis *most* favourable to the adversaries of prophecy, and the most unfavourable possible to the well-being of the world and the happiness of its inhabitants,—namely, the hypothesis that everything is fortuitous,—and it will be seen that my argument is strengthened by restoring things to their proper state. If everything were left to blind chance, it appears that the probability against the fulfilment of only fifty independent predictions in the same time, place, and individual would be too great to be expressed numerically ; how much greater, then, must it be in fact, when all events are under the control of a Being of matchless wisdom, power, and goodness, who hates fraud and deception, who must especially hate it when attempted under His name and authority, who

knows all that occurs in all places, and who can dissipate "with the breath of His mouth," every deceiver and all his delusions ?' ¹

¹ Gregory's *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, pp. 123, 124, Bohn's edition.