

the human spirit, and that it entered into consciousness, not as imaginary but as an actual conviction or experience.

While Messianic prophecy has the general characteristics of other prophecy, it also has some special characteristics which are peculiarly its own. The doctrine, therefore, that all prophetic Scripture is inspired of God, does not account for these distinctive peculiarities. Granting that the Divine Spirit was the originating cause of every prophetic utterance, just as the Deity was the efficient cause of all things, what were the special or secondary causes to which Messianic prophecy owes its origin? A full answer to this question would necessitate an inquiry exceeding the limits of this discussion. One would need to answer the further questions, when, where, and by whom did Messianic statements of a prophetic character arise? For our present purpose it will be sufficient to consider briefly the special features of Messianic prophecy, and the special reasons for their existence.

The essential contents of Messianic prophecy are of an ideal nature, somewhat in the same way that unrealized experience exceeds realized experience. These contents have an onward, upward look; they point to brighter, better days to come. Springing from the organic connection of the Old Testament prophecy with the central ideas of the Jewish religion, they embody a nation's hope and express a nation's confidence of future greatness and grandeur. This organic connection is like the relation of the germ to the flower, or the relation of incipient truth to developed truth. Germinal ideas of increase, germinal notions of progress, germinal conceptions of improvement seem to have existed at a very early date. From the relation which the Hebrew people maintained toward Jehovah, the very nature of their religion furnished grounds for lofty aspirations, for extended prospects, and for exalted hopes. These and other similar characteristics made Judaism, among all the religions of antiquity, as others have often observed, pre-eminently the religion of hope.

In the opinion of Riehm, whose analysis of the originating causes of Messianic prophecy is exceedingly explicit and suggestive, the fundamental ground for the peculiar hopefulness of