

Kindred as may have been their character in earlier ages, in later ages there is nothing between them similar, much less identical. The distinguishing differences consist especially in the peculiar nature and contents of Hebrew prophecy. Its nature is peculiar, in that it claims to be a special divine revelation; its contents are peculiar, in that they profess to unfold a special divine purpose. By these two fundamental features Hebrew prophecy is essentially differentiated or distinguished from any form of pagan prophecy. While not denying a measure of prophetic inspiration to the heathen, one must not fail to acknowledge that the superhuman element common to all prophecy is greater in degree in Hebrew than in pagan prophecy, as Judaism is purer and higher than heathenism. The former was an advancement toward God; the latter was a departure from him. Hebrew prophecy was a development upwards; pagan prophecy was a development downwards—a degeneration into soothsaying and superstition. In its developed stage, particularly during the period of the great canonical prophets, Hebrew prophecy is without a parallel in human history. During this period, prophecy proper had its origin. Such prophecy is characteristic only of Judaism and of Christianity.

For this reason, Old Testament prophecy is of special interest and importance to the Biblical student. The subject is interesting on account of the moral and religious phenomena which it presents. Their character is such that they cannot be adequately explained without admitting a special degree of divine agency, and their contents are such that they cannot be intelligently interpreted without acknowledging a special measure of divine influence. The subject is also important on account of the relation of these moral and religious phenomena to the New Testament dispensation. Before discussing this relation, it should be observed that, though we commonly distinguish the Jewish and Christian Scriptures as belonging to different dispensations, the distinction is somewhat misleading, if not wholly false. The inner unity of essential elements pervading the writings of each covenant proves the oneness of the revelation they individually contain. Their general end or aim is one. There is in each the same fundamental doctrines of sin