

predict or to foretell coming events. It means rather to tell forth or to forthtell existing verities. That is, instead of specially revealing the hidden events of the future, it specially discloses the concealed facts of the present; or, instead of dealing chiefly with future contingencies, it deals chiefly with present realities. Thus, in order to obtain a true idea of the subject we must, at the outset, carefully distinguish prophecy from prediction. The distinction is of fundamental importance. In general, prophecy means to deliver a divine message, or to proclaim a divine truth, for the sake of influencing human life. Throughout the Old and the New Testament alike, prophecy is almost synonymous with preaching or with inspired teaching.

But, inasmuch as prophecy sometimes signifies to foretell or to tell beforehand, the term has two essential elements, the one a moral and the other a predictive element. The predictive element, it has been claimed, and rightly claimed, it seems, characterized only those prophetic teachers, as a rule, who had the more ordinary gifts. Be that, however, as it may, the moral element is the fundamental and indispensable element to which the predictive element is everywhere subordinate. The moral element, moreover, occupies the highest place in all prophetic communications. "The prophetic preaching," Delitzsch tells us, "always has a moral end in view, and even its proclamation of the future serves this end."* It is this ethical aim, one should observe, that gives to the prophetic teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures its peculiar and unique significance. The moral and spiritual, indeed, are the primary principles of the entire Old Testament.

Thus, it must be carefully borne in mind, prediction constitutes but one feature of Old Testament prophecy, and that, by no means, the most common or important feature. It forms but one phase, so to speak, of the ethical instruction of the ancient Jewish teachers. This predictive phase, it is suggested by Prof. Briggs, can best be understood from the general conception of religious instruction which lies at the basis of all Hebrew prophecy. "Prediction," he says, "is the instruction that prophecy gives as it looks forth from the present into the

* "Messianic Prophecies" (Lectures), p. 12.