

prophetic utterances in the Old Testament, whose underlying truths and principles find their embodiment in Jesus Christ.

THE NATURE OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY.

Since prophecy in general differs from Messianic prophecy in particular, a just conception of our subject depends upon an adequate definition of the doctrine. We must, therefore, first endeavor to define it. Before attempting to define it, each term of the subject needs to be explained. In framing a definition, we have two words to discuss, namely, "prophecy" and "Messianic." Without an accurate understanding of each word, an intelligent consideration of the question is impossible.

The prevalent but erroneous view of prophecy makes it, with Bishop Butler, "nothing but the history of events before they come to pass." So accustomed are we to identify prophecy with prediction that the two terms appear practically identical to most Christian minds. They are, however, very far from being synonymous. In the popular conception of the term, prophecy is supposed to be the prediction, by means of divine revelation, of contingent occurrences, which could not be foreknown by human wisdom. This conception is entirely inadequate.

What is prophecy? Its primary meaning in the original is very different from the sense in which we commonly employ the English word. The derivation of the Hebrew word for prophecy is disputed. Literally, according to Gesenius, the word to prophesy in Hebrew signifies to bubble up, to gush out, to flow forth, as a fountain or a spring. Figuratively, according to the same authority, it signifies to tell or to announce. Technically, however, as he shows, it signifies to speak or to proclaim under the influence of a divine impulse. Hence, etymologically, neither prescience nor prediction is implied in the old Hebrew word. Whatever may have been its etymological signification, its ancient, if not its primitive, figurative usage is illustrated by Exodus vii. 1, where Aaron is described as Moses' prophet. "And Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet," or spokesman, as the context indicates.

Properly, therefore, prophecy does not necessarily mean to