

to the human understanding. "By slow degrees, by more and more," the idea grows in fulness and completeness. A truer point of view is reached; a clearer conception of God is formed; a deeper insight into truth is gained. Each standpoint, though, affords the fullest comprehension of the truth or doctrine that is possible at the time.

Elements of moral and religious truth abound in all the ethical portions of the Old Testament, but they are more or less imperfect, because the ideas were more or less undeveloped. These elements, moreover, are imperfect, not because of divine adaptation, but because of human necessity. The ideas, too, were undeveloped, because they did not have sufficient time to reach maturity. Revelation was a progress not so much from errors in truth as from incomplete statements of truth, resulting from inadequate conceptions of truth. It was a progress from a less adequate to a more adequate conception, from a less complete to a more complete statement. The darkness of the earlier epochs was penetrated and dispelled by the brightness of the later epochs. The patriarchs comprehended more than the primitive peoples, Moses more than the patriarchs, David more than Moses, and the great canonical prophets more than David.

When it is asserted, therefore, that Messianic prophecy was developed from germinal ideas belonging to an early period in the religious history of the Hebrew race, it must be understood that the doctrine gradually grew by the continuous expansion or evolution of the suggestive ideas from which it sprang. It would be interesting, did space permit, to indicate the gradual growth of each of these ideas; but it would require too much time, as well as too much space, to sketch the history of the doctrine through all its various stages of development. We are chiefly concerned at present with the process itself. In harmony with the statements of the preceding paragraph, it may be said, to adapt the language of Orelli, that development in prophecy is progress from indefinite to definite, from intimation to declaration, from sensuous to spiritual.*

* "Old Testament Prophecy," p. 35.