

history of Hebrew Prophecy, to find in it moral weaknesses and childish practices which the later prophets outgrew and discarded. If we ultimately find that the early prophets of Israel for many years employed "not only the methods but even much of the furniture of the kindred Semitic religions" we need not, therefore, deny one jot or tittle of their later spiritual teaching, any more than we need believe that man is still a monkey because in his life's process he passed through the monkey stage. We should not hesitate to recognize the many foreign elements in the religion of Israel, for Israel so "regenerated and stamped with its own identity what it borrowed from others, as to bear indubitable witness to its own vital power and invincible capacity for assimilation."^{*}

Let us divide our subject into two parts:—(1) The origin and external form of prophecy. (2). The growth of its spiritual content.

(1). The inquiry into the origin and early history of prophecy among the Hebrews is beset with great difficulties inasmuch as we have no records contemporaneous with the period of which we are to treat and our results must, therefore, at the best, be uncertain. True the word *nabi* is used by the Biblical writers to distinguish a personage as ancient as Abraham but the proper inference from such use of the word is not that Abraham was a real *nabi* but only that the writers have fallen into an anachronism, as any historian, writing of a time long past, is apt to do. The proof of this is to be found in a note in 1 Sam. ix, 9: "He that is now called a *prophet* was before time a *seer*." In this case, if a knowledge of the etymology of the word *nabi* could be arrived at with any certainty, it would be of great importance as an illustration of the conception of the prophetic function among the Israelites. But such knowledge is perhaps impossible, for each Hebrew expert seems to have an etymology of his own. Cornill traces it back to the Arabic in which the primitive Semitic type has been preserved most purely and finds its source in a root (*naba'a*) meaning "he who proclaims something definite," "the speaker who discourses not of himself nor of anything special to himself but as an agent for some other person." He points out also that

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