

(4) It involves also declaration of the blessings to come to those who obey the known will of God and of the punishment to be given to those who disobey.

(5) It involves guidance to the people as to their actions and attitudes in particular circumstances.

(6) It involves encouragement to them when they found themselves in very trying circumstances.

The six purposes which I have named all deal immediately with the message of the prophet to his contemporaries. Yet all of them apply equally well to his message to future generations.

Prediction must be considered as essentially subordinate to these purposes of prophecy. It is not merely for the purpose of satisfying idle curiosity as to the future. We may consider it under each of the purposes which we have named. (1) Prediction serves to authenticate the prophet's message. The evidence that he is able to predict the future, as shown by the fulfillment of his declaration, proves that he speaks for God who alone knows the future, and that his declaration regarding the nature of God and the facts of the universe is worthy to be trusted. The scriptures lay much weight upon this as an important element of authentication of a prophet's message and yet warns us that it alone is not to be trusted. Even if an alleged