

A. A. MacRae

Prediction also has a great part in the second purpose of prophecy, that of encouragement to the true people of God. Men who saw their nation tottering to ruin, and knew that its sin was such that escape from disaster was impossible, might easily tend to give way to despair, and the best way to comfort them was to give specific information about continuing blessing that God would provide after the punishment had run its course. Thus in the dark days when the golden calves had been erected in the northern kingdom, an unnamed prophet encouraged God's people by predicting a specific event that would occur some three centuries later (I Kings 13:1-3). (As noted above, this same prediction served as a rebuke to the ungodly.) Many of the most beloved sections of the prophetic writings belong to this second category.

In connection with the third purpose of prophecy, that of revealing important facts about God's nature, predictions would inevitably occur. There was no simpler way of showing God's control over all the nations than to predict His future actions. When Elijah at Mt. Horeb, during the terrible reaction that fol-