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The prophetic conception of the ministry, 1940.

Some years ago I published an Essay on "The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History." I attempted to trace ~~its manifestations~~ ^{the democratic trends} in the political, economic and religious life of Israel; more particularly of ancient Israel. To-day I should like to elaborate upon this theme with special reference to ^{Hebrew} Prophecy and the ^{of course} prophet.

When speaking of the prophet I have in mind the authentic, "classic" prophet, who knew himself to be a "servant of God," (~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ~~nation~~) commissioned to carry the word of God (~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ~~nation~~ ~~or~~ ~~those~~ ~~who~~ ~~controlled~~ ~~its~~ ~~destinies~~). He may have been a ^{historic} ~~lineal~~ descendant of the earlier Nebiim, the seers, diviners, ~~and~~ ^{on} interpreters of signs and dreams. He may have possessed some residual traces of their earlier techniques. But, ^{it is clear that} the band of bacchan^tic Nebiim whom Saul met "coming down from the high place with a psaltery and a timbr^el, and a pipe, and a harp before them" prophesying and whipping themselves into a sacred madness so that they stripped off their clothes and lay naked all the day and all the night, had as little in common with the prophet who announced that "the spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to bring good tidings unto the humble...to bind up the broken-hearted...to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the eyes to them that are bound".. as the astrologer has in common with the astronomer, or the modern chemist with the Medieval alchemist. The

label "Nabi" remains but it is now new wine in new bottles. Amos would like to ^{disassociate himself} ~~decline the title~~, though ^{he insists on functioning as a prophet.} ~~not the mandate of the Nabi~~. Jeremiah would ^{like to} ~~purge~~ ~~true~~ prophecy even of the last vestige of the dream - vision, ^{which was} long regarded as the least objectionable vehicle of revelation, for ^{"said he,} "What hath the chaff to do with the wheat?" He demands a new terminology which will sharply distinguish ^{the} ~~a~~ true and direct revelation of the word of God - ^{the "answer of"} ~~"What hath the Lord answered and~~ ^{the "word of} ~~what hath the Lord spoken?"~~ from the traditional and cryptic "Burden of the Lord" ^{which} ~~was~~ artificially induced by numerous ^{Psycho-physical} ~~psychic~~ devices.

None sensed the sharp break with traditional Prophecy and the new departure which they ^{inaugurated} ~~represented~~ as the classic Prophets themselves. They belonged to a new order; and in them the strong individualism and the pervasive democracy of ancient Israel ^{most} ~~are~~ powerfully reflected.

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Unlike the earlier Nebiim, they did not belong to bands or brotherhoods, (~~nebel; lahakeh~~). Their powers did not derive from ^{any} formal initiation into a professional fellowship ^{which was} possessed of some occult science ^{and which was} connected with some altar or sanctuary. As long as the Nebiim remained members of a school, ~~of prophets~~, they persisted as the monitors of the ~~devinatory~~ ^{some} traditions of a cult. It was only after the individual abstracted himself from the group and stood out alone, unattached and unallied, and became conscious of a personal and ^{direct} ~~immediate~~ Divine communication, that the classic prophet was born. The "aloneness" of the prophet is frequently pointed out. ^{in the B. O.} Moses receives his revelation alone in the wilderness. Elijah travels a day's journey out into the wilderness where his revelation comes to him; and again after forty days' wandering in the wilderness, while alone at Mt. Horeb. Jeremiah sits alone "because God's hand is upon him."

The Prophet had no teacher and no disciple whom he trained to succeed him. Prophecy, unlike ~~Priesthood~~, was neither an office nor a profession. It was not inherited or transmitted. The Prophet was a single human being, one of the countless unordained many, ^{ing} ~~who~~ belonged to no special privileged class, ~~but one~~ whom God chose, in a way quite unmistakable to the chosen one, to transmit His will to men. The reason for ^{his} particular choice remains a mystery to the chosen one. Often the ~~prophet~~ rebels at this choice. The hand of God, ~~which has been~~ laid upon him, is too heavy. He feels himself too young, too inexperienced for the mission. Or, having taken the first few steps upon the hard and broken road which the servant of God must walk, he finds his mission too difficult. Men hated, mocked and persecuted him for the word of God which he brought to them. He feels ^{himself} trapped and enticed. He wants to run away or at least to keep silent. But the word of God is like a burning fire shut up in his ^{bones} ~~pores~~ and he only wears himself to hold it in, for he cannot. "The prophet ^{as his} ~~who~~ suppresses ~~the~~ vision, ~~revealed to him~~ ^{of a later age} declared the Rabbis, ^{deserves} ~~is deserving of~~ death at the hands of Heaven."

Just how he became aware of his selection also remains ^{ed a} ~~wrapped in~~ mystery ^{to him}. It happened, that was clear. It was a sudden, ^{and} unexpected phenomenon. There was no deliberate preparation for it. The ~~prophet~~ ^{did} does not induce it through any ^{exercises}.

of a psychological - corporeal kind - 3-

~~artificial psychic act~~. Deep down within his soul much may have been going on, for a long time, of which he may have been quite unaware. But the revelation itself is an act of grace, ^{emanating} ~~come~~ from without and not from within. It is not achieved by the prophet, ^{through} ~~by~~ the conscious fulfillment of ^{certain} ~~any~~ prerequisites. The rationalistic philosopher, Maimonides, contended that prophecy required preparation and that the prerequisites for ^{it} ~~Prophecy~~ were mental, moral and imaginative (intuitional) perfection. But this is nowhere indicated in the Bible.

When the revelation ^{once} takes place it ^{remains} ~~is~~ an unforgettable and transforming experience. The prophet knows that he has been in direct communion with God. He has received a clear message, ^{a message} ~~not~~ a mysterious oracle requiring decoding, but ~~one~~ of clear cognitional content. ^{And the miracle of it is that} ~~He~~, a man, belonging to no ~~privileged~~ cast of holy men, possessed of no ^d ~~Divine~~ gifts and without any previous conscious conditioning, has been singled out as the channel for ^{a d} ~~Divine~~ revelation to mankind. He, an ^{ordinary} ~~individual~~, was now posses^{ed} of a spiritual authority ^{sedition} ~~which~~ superceded that of cult, priestcraft and long-established traditions. He, ^{and he} ~~a single man~~, has suddenly been raised and set "over the nations ~~of~~ the kingdoms to root out and pull down, to destroy, to overthrow, to build and to plant." With the classic prophet, the impersonal ^{and anonymous} ~~and nondescript~~ religious ^{functionary of} ~~servitor~~ ^{and} ~~at~~ some local deity ^{yields to} ~~shrine~~ ^{strong,} ~~and the~~ ^{one} ~~religious personality transcending~~ shrine and cult, ^{emerges} ~~emerges~~. Man rises to the dignity of a conscious agent of God, ^{by God} ~~so~~ designated because of the ^{His} ~~Divine~~ necessity to employ man in the fulfillment of ^{His} ~~God's~~ plan. The ^{folkist stage} ~~anonymous and the impersonal~~ in religious ^{evolution} ~~history~~ comes to an end. Here now is ^{Man} ~~man~~, a definitive person in an/historical setting, redeemed from what has been called the "brutal solidarity of ancient times", called by name and raised to heights of ineffable spiritual greatness where he is permitted to see God, as it were, face to face.

In this conception of the prophet, one may read the Jewish philosophy of ^{religious} ~~history~~. Spiritual ^{relationship} ~~relationship~~ is not an automatic folk creation or the unconscious evolution of a primitive ^{religious culture} ~~cult~~ played upon by the cross-currents of

"And God said unto Moses: I am that I am... this
is my name for ever: God is named, and His
light is named. Deep calls unto deep,
Thou's luminosity to mine..."



political and economic forces. No constellation of social factors ^{and us} ~~on the~~ impact of historical events produces prophecy. Spritual ^{religious} ~~relationship~~ is the product of revelation - a series of revelations - of God, through man, to mankind. The personal God speaks through a personal man to a society composed of free personal agents who ^{are summoned} ~~are~~ to cooperate with God in the realization of a perfect society. The source is ^{what the prophet proclaims is not a private critique of traditional morality but a} always God, not man. ^{message from God.} What is revealed is ~~like spiritual food given to the~~ ~~Prophet to eat. It is~~ like Heavenly food given to the ~~Prophet to eat.~~ "Thy words were found and I did eat them", is the way ~~which~~ Jeremiah expresses it. Ezekiel uses the same metaphor: "And Thou, son of man, open thy mouth, and eat that which I give thee".

It is God's will which determines the occasion and chooses the men who are to be the vehicles of the revelations. The individuals chosen must, of course be fit instruments for the message which they are to transmit. One cannot play a perfect melody upon an imperfect instrument. Nor is it to be assumed that the individual thus chosen remains just a ~~facile~~, unconscious instrument, an automatic transmitter. To proclaim the message of God to a violently resistant world, to men who are of a "hard forehead and of a stiff heart" requires conscious courage, conviction, fervor, faith, spiritual passion and a capacity for suffering of the first order. The ^{must} ~~Prophet~~ interprets the message ¹ which he receives, as a ^{FIRST RATE} ~~great~~ artist interprets the musical composition of ^{a great} ~~an even greater~~ composer. He gives a faithful, penetrating, reverent and creative rendition of the creator's manifest intent. The ^{received} ~~Prophet~~ was far more than a conduit for ideas. He himself ~~was~~ ^{became} intellectually and emotionally involved in them. His task was not only to transmit and to proclaim, but to redeem! Often the ~~whole~~ experiences of the Prophet's own private life ^{became} ~~were~~ the occasion of a revelation from God. The Prophet himself became the parable. His personal ^{trials and} ~~triumphs~~, sufferings and ~~defeats~~ are employed by God as the plastic material out of which a spiritual revelation of universal significance is fashioned. In such instances, the personality of the Prophet glowingly

interpenetrates his ^{and} prophecy which becomes thereby not merely a revelation of ^d Divinity, but also of humanity.

But the prophet was never submerged in his prophecy. His personality was never extinguished in that of God. There was no dissolution of the prophet's ego. There was a surrender to the will of God, but not a surrender of identity. The gulf between "Thou" and "I", between God and man's soul, remained. The prophet was not a mystic. He reached out for ~~it~~ ^{of self} no ecstatic identification with God, no apotheosis. He did not pursue the "via purgativa" - the mystic's way of self-abasement and self-mortification in an effort to free himself from the shackles of selfhood. He always remained himself, even after he had been chosen. He ^{even found} ~~finds~~ himself, at times, in sharp mental colloquy with God, critical, because unenlightened, concerning God's management of His Universe. To perform adequately that which he was commissioned to do required continuous re-enforcement of his ~~own~~ inner life, the consolidation of his ~~own~~ personality. For his life was a life of swords. Skill ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ attack, resourcefulness in controversy, impressiveness in utterances, subtlety in technique - all that and much more - for one should ^{not fail to make allowance for a large measure of sophistication -} not under-estimate the practical sagacity of the prophets - has to be added to ^{their} ~~their~~ matchless courage and ~~challenge~~ ^{and powerfully} in order to understand ~~and real~~ rugged ~~natures~~ ^{natures}. Here are no wistful dreamers or devotees of ^{the} contemplative life or self-consuming mystics. These ~~men~~ ^{are} ~~were~~ men of strife and contention. ~~They were~~ ^{these men} ~~moral reformers~~. They struck at life and life struck back at them. They were always "against this house and against this city." They were in ^{an} ~~the~~ arena, fighting ^{their} with every available weapon. Their speech was at times very bitter, and ~~invectives~~ like scorpion whips. They spared no one, except those whom God would spare - the weak, the poor, the denied, the broken. The prophets reasoned, pleaded, challenged, mocked, threatened, cursed. They ~~were~~ ^{would not} uncompromising on moral absolutes. They were like "an iron pillar and brazen walls."

Strong, passionate, self-possessed, dynamic individuals were these prophets, men of an heroic and monumental mold.

Neither the idealist ~~philosopher~~, Plato, nor the rationalist Aristotle, nor the mystic, ^{Plato}Platinus was intellectually or emotionally involved in social reform, ~~in~~ championing the cause of the poor or the dispossessed. ~~And xxxxxx~~ Their moral speculations resulted in no compelling sense of personal mission. ^{to champion the cause of the poor or the dispossessed} The prophets, on the other hand, were essentially men of mission, seeking neither personal salvation nor inner peace, but burdened with the sense of having been sent to reconstruct society after the patten of ^dDivine justice and mercy. All their revelations concerned neither the nature of God nor ~~any~~ cosmic mysteries. They revealed ^{no particular "gnosis"} no "secrets". ^{- justice, love, brotherhood, peace -} Their revelations concerned exclusively the moral conduct of men - ^{the pure worship of the one, spiritual and universal God,} and the life of men and nations in the processes of history.

Neither were the prophets apocalyptic visionaries despairing of ever reforming society and awaiting the cataclysmic intervention of God to usher in ~~an utterly~~ a new and miraculous order of things. The prophets did ^{indeed} truly vision "an end of days," ~~altogether~~ suffused in glory and blessedness, when the things which they were struggling ~~so painfully~~ to achieve would actually come to pass, ^{when the good will finally triumph over the evil} ~~xxxxxxx~~ "when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea." But this blessed consummation will result ~~xxxxxxx~~ not from ^dDivine intervention ^{but} ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{from the regeneration of man, and} from the labors and moral ^{countless} efforts of generations ^{of men.}

Strong individuals themselves, they believed in absolute individual moral responsibility. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were not ~~among~~ the first of the prophets to reject the ethics of the proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge", and to proclaim that "every one shall die for his own iniquity." At the very heart of all ^{just of responsibility for} prophecy is the conviction that God can be worshipped and known only through the moral activities of the individual, and that moral guilt or merit are individual achievements. Therefore, ^{while rejecting individual "taken guilt"} they absolved no one from his share ⁱⁿ the moral guilt of the nation. ~~No one~~ could claim immunity. No one could unload his measure of responsibility. Kings, ^{prophets} princes, priests and common people are all joined together in the prophets' indictment of national transgressions. ^{All must meet for the same water-course of responsibility, for all are free moral agents.}

"I have made thee this day a fortified city ... against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes, against the priests, and against the people of the land." Not merely the leaders are ^{to blame} ~~blameworthy~~ for misleading the people, but the people also for allowing themselves to be misled. "An appalling and ^o horrible thing is come to pass in the land: The prophets prophesy in the service of falsehood, and the priests bear rule at their beck; and my people love to have it so." ~~The e was complete moral responsibility for all, because all possessed free will.~~

No prophet ^{tried} ~~sought~~ to monopolize the mandate of prophecy. They claimed no vested ~~professional~~ interests, no hierarchic exclusiveness. When ^{Eldad} and ^{Medad} began to prophecy in the camp, Joshua cried out to Moses; "My Lord Moses, shut them in!" But Moses, the prophet supreme, replied: "Art thou jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them." Priests were always very jealous for their rights and privileges. Every one, not of the priestly class, was a "stranger", whose very touch contaminated the sacred vessels, and whose attempts at performing priestly functions was sacrilege and punishable by death. The prophets wished for all men ^{the privilege} ~~to become servants of God, if it pleased God; men women, and even children.~~ ^{of becoming men and women alike.} There were no women in the priesthood, but ~~men~~ there was more than one woman prophet in ancient Israel. ^{The prophets} ~~They~~ longed for a rich out-pouring of the spirit of God ~~on~~ ^{upon} all flesh. There were many prophets in Israel. The Rabbis, ^{employing} ~~using~~ their favorite device of hyperbole, drive home this fact by declaring that besides the prophets when prophecies are recorded in Scriptures, there were as many ^{others} ~~prophets~~ as the number of people who were delivered from Egypt - sixty myriads - whose ^{their} ~~prophecies~~ ^{though timely were not timbers and were secondary. The prophets} ~~were~~ not written down. ~~Their~~ religious democracy looked to the time when ~~every~~ even the priestly functions would be the prerogatives of all, and not merely of the descendants of Aaron. In that superb prologue to the theophany on Mt. Sinai ^{when} ~~and~~ the supreme revelation in the history of Israel ^{took place,} one hears the majestic accents of this great hope: "And ye shall be unto me a Kingdom"

of Priests and a Holy Nation." The Rabbis retained this democratic religious tradition of the prophets: "If Israel had not sinned through worshiping the Golden Calf, there would be among them no caste of priests; the nation would have been a nation of priests; and it was only after their sin that the greater part of the people lost the right to priesthood." ^{TP} The prophets thought in terms of men and not of institutions, whether sacred or secular. They were not authoritarian, as regards forms of social control. They did not believe in absolute forms of government or institutions which completely submerged the individual. Revelation always emancipates man. It gives him an authority ^{which} transcending ~~all~~ all social disciplines and controls. The democratic movements of the Western World in the last few centuries ~~over~~ owe their rise to a returning faith in progressive revelation and ^{inner} ~~inner~~ illumination i.e. the prophetic tradition - following the Reformation. These movements are perishing in ~~at~~ our day because of the pessimism of our age, its loss of confidence in the individual, due to loss of faith in the reality of revelation in the life of man.

~~of the individual~~ The basic charter of man's dignity and freedom is God and revelation. ~~No human society can long remain~~ Godless and free. (over)

^{and were fully aware of the dangers of} But while the prophets did not believe in infallible institutions of total control, ^{they} they were not hostile to them as such, to the Temple, the priesthood, the state, ^{or} ~~or~~ to the cult, the ritual, or the Law. They were not revolutionary in any organizational, political or economic sense. They did not preach community of goods, or socialism, or non-cooperation with civil or religious authorities.

^{are called institutions} They were not pacifists. But they subordinated institutions to the purposes ^{to} which ^{they} ~~were devoted~~ ^{they} were to serve. ^{Institutions} They were means, not ends. Whenever ^a ~~the~~ institutions thwarted ^{its} ~~the~~ purpose it was to be reformed or, if necessary, abolished. The Temple, as a spiritual center to which all nations will go in order to learn the ways of God and from which shall go forth the Law and the word of God, ^{exalts} ~~ex~~ the prophet Isaiah to exaltation. The Temple as a den of robbers, to which ^{in order} ~~unimportant~~ malefactors of society flock to derive reassurance and deliverance in their abominations, arouses Jeremiah's ^{wrath} ~~moral~~ rage and forces from his lips an imprecation and a prophecy

^{Similarly} of doom ~~upon it~~. The priest is not condemned because of his office but because of ~~the~~

The revelation of Sinai was engraved on
tablets of stone. "Call it not 'engraved' (harut)
said the Rabbis, "Call it 'freedom' (harut)



the *abuse* of his office Ezekiel was a priest, Jeremia^D the son of a priest. Prophecy and priesthood though frequently *with one another* in conflict, are essentially complementary functions in religion. One represents the spirit, the other the organization; one the explorer, the other the settler. The priest is "the messenger of the Lord of hosts," declared Malachi, and people "should seek the law at his mouth."

It is the priests who wait for a man "as troops of robbers," who "teach for hire,"

who wait for a man who scatter and destroy ~~the~~ *their* flock, that are the ~~targets~~ *targets* of

the prophet's attack. ~~Even the institution of sacrifices,~~ the celebration of festivals, new moon, and sabbath and the holding of convocations are not condemned

as such, but only when the hands of the worshipper are full of blood. God "cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly." *The prophets are least sparing in their attack on sacrifices, but even* God is weary of sacrifices, *the dominant thought is that*

They are a burden unto Him. ~~God is weary of sacrifices~~ because, as *deuterio-* Isaiah put it,

the sacrifice *is* burdened with sin. They deprecated the value of sacrifices.

~~And men should remember that there are nobler sacrifices that a man can bring to~~

God — the broken and a contrite heart, and all the sacrifices of righteousness...

They knew the dangers of *as such* and they waged against them. The prophets

did not attack wealth but greed and exploitation, not power but its abuse, not customs

and ceremonies, but their *assumed* sacramental character, *not ritual but* and the dogma of

"*opus operatum*". They did not spend themselves in fighting external forms.

The inner intent, the harmony of act and motive, the inner illumination, the harmony

of purpose and *destiny*, the heart of man, *responding to* the will of God — these and these alone

conceived them.

prophets did not conceive of themselves as They were not the creators of a new religion. The prophets of the 8th and

9th centuries did not originate ethical monotheism. They did not come as innovators.

They were *conscious* of an older source of their faith. They and their

contemporaries were aware of a long established and covenanted *with Jehovah* faith with Jehovah,

the sole creator of heaven and earth, whose worship entailed great moral *disciplines* commands.

the origins of this faith was It was generally identified with the *saga* of the Exodus, with Moses, *and* with the

revelation at Mt. Sinai. The later Rabbis expressed *fact* this conviction by declaring

They believed in human equality, ^{every way's} inalienable worth
and spiritual dignity, ^{every man} having been fashioned in the image
of God - in ^{every way's} right to be free, under God, from
oppression and exploitation and in every way's
duty to obey the universal moral imperatives.



revelation of the
that the first two commandments - those concerning the existence and unity of God, and the prohibitions of idolatry, were heard directly ~~from God~~ by all the people. They did not require the intercession even of the greatest of all the prophets, Moses.

The prophets refer frequently to ^a Torah, a law of God, which was evidently well-known in their days. The prophet Hosea charges the people with having forgotten this law of God, ~~and~~ ^{charges them} Isaiah with having rejected it. Jeremiah chides his people because they say: "We are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us," whereas the pens of the scribes has wrought in vain because they have rejected the word of the Lord.

~~the prophets~~ ^{rather} Rather they regarded themselves as ~~reprovers~~ in the role of men who in a grave hour of national crisis ~~XXXX~~ had received a compelling revelation and were sent to warn the people to repent and return. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken."

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others of the prophets ^{speak of} refer to their prophecies as alarming trumpet-calls in times of danger and war. "Shall the horn be blown in a city and the people not tremble? The lion hath roared, who will not hear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophecy?"

They are ~~sent~~ sent to marshal the spiritual forces of the nation against impending disaster, wrought by moral corruption in high and low places. God wishes to save the people, if they wish to be saved. "They do not address themselves to individuals ~~as such~~ and about private or personal matters, as did the earlier Nebiim. They addressed themselves to the nation as a whole and to those who controlled ^{to} the affairs of the nation; concerning matters which affect them

~~all.~~ But salvation can come only through inner spiritual cleansing, through thorough-going reform, ^{and} ~~through~~ fundamental renewal. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for

the widow."

Their *ethical emphasis* and their insistence on the primacy of ethics are superb. National guilt calling for *condign punishment* is incurred not by "religious" transgressors, by those who forsake *Jehovah* and worship other Gods or, *only by those* who worship *Jehovah* along with other Gods - a fact which was generally conceded even if not generally heeded - but also by those who *grind* the faces of the poor, *who* buy the needy for a pair of shoes, who join house to house and field to field till there be no room for men to dwell in, who make the *ephah* small and the shekel great, who sell refuse for corn and ~~those~~ who oppress the stranger, the fatherless and the widow."

National destiny was thus made dependent upon loyalty to moral ideals - to very exacting moral ideals. A nation cannot survive - nay more - a nation should not survive *which* ~~that~~ does violence to the divine law of justice and compassion.

The prophets loved their nation. They were great patriots. They were not always hard and forbidding, writing "with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond".... They could speak with infinite tenderness and exquisite love of their *ever* people. No patriot *a* felt for his nation ~~as spoke for his nation with~~ deeper and more glowing devotion than Hosea. "Even when they chastised them, they yearned for them with overwhelming love. When Jeremiah, said the Rabbis, was commanded by God to take the cup of the wine of fury at His hand and make the people of Israel to drink of it, he cursed the day that he was born. "I am like the High Priest, he said, who has to administer "the waters of bitterness" to a woman under suspicion of adultery, and when he approaches the woman to make her drink, he beholds - his own mother."

They could comfort when the hurt was great. In darkness and in exile they could kindle the bright *lamps of* hope which sustain the hearts of weary men. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people.... Arise, shine, for thy light is come... When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee... Fear ye not, neither be afraid... I will *not* chide forever, nor will I always be wroth... I will make thy transgressions to

Vanish like a mist... I will -12-

turn your captivity and gather you from all the nations... Behold, I will open your
panes and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people... Fear not!...

But strong as was their love for their people, stronger was their love for

God and their loyalty to ^{His} ~~God's~~ moral law. God's moral law comes first and
it permits no exemptions on the ground of patriotism. *Not my country right or wrong but - perish!*
~~My country right or ruined!~~

"Execute justice in the morning and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the
oppressor, lest my fury go forth like fire and burn that none can quench it." The

State is not above the law, nor ^{is any or} ruler, ~~nor~~ class. The moral law overarches all, ~~and~~

is binding upon all. King Saul and King David and King Ahab and King Rehoboam and

King Baasa and King Zedekiah, all ^{were} ~~are~~ confronted by ^{one unparagoning and impartial} ~~this moral~~
law, ^{out of the mouths of these} ~~shouted at them by the~~ relentless prophets, ^{who} themselves possessed ~~of~~ no authority ~~on~~

^{or} ~~in~~ office ~~and to~~ force, except such as derive from the moral ^{law} ~~law~~ itself. When the

modern world came to think of moral laws as social mores and traced their origin

to human convenience, it prepared the ground for ^{a new} ~~the~~ subjugation of man to ~~all~~ ^{new}

forms of tyranny and oppressions. The totalitarian state is quite properly, by

virtue of the philosophy which made it possible, a law unto itself, and therefore

^{and a desolation} a violence [^] unto all who live within it.

Men feared and hated these prophets. They accepted the fact of prophecy but they preferred the well-beloved ^{haved} prophets, the professional "sons of the prophets", who ^{knew how to} winnow ~~ed~~ with every ^{wind} winnowed with every wind and who understood what was expected of them. It is all well to bring messages from God, but there is after all such a thing as tact and ^{propriety} good taste. One should not be a "troubler of Israel" - that was Ahab's phrase to Elijah. One should ^{not} ~~not~~ step on the toes of people, or offend the authorities or cause people to lose their confidence in their lay ^{and} ecclesiastical superiors. It ^{may} ~~is~~ all right for ⁱ ~~that~~ a rude sheep-grazer and dresser of ^{these ewe} Amos to preach his fanatical ideas among the wild hill-folk of Judea, but he is shockingly out of place here, at the king's sanctuary and the royal house at Bethel, declared Amaziah, the High Priest, who ^{all} knew the proprieties. When the nation clamored for war, the prophet should bring ^{it} ~~them~~ inspiring messages of ^{victory} ~~victory~~. When the people crowded the courts of the Temple, bringing their generous offerings, and contributing to the support of ^{so} ~~the~~ many deserving priests, one should not ^{for their pains} deride and insult them and remind them, at such an inappropriate time, of their dirty moral lives. What is the world coming to when a hairy man, out of the desert, girt with a girdle of leather about his loins, ^{has to} ~~can~~ face a king, a king, mind you, and a queen, and tell them that the dogs shall eat them and lick their blood, because forsooth they had carried through, in the customary ^{manner} ~~manner~~ of ^{royalty} ~~royal prerogative~~, a little ^{matter} ~~affair~~ of expropriating a piece of land which belonged to a commoner!

And so the prophets, the ^{se} scourges over human sin and complacency, were hated, despised, persecuted and slain. They did not carry much weight in their day. Here ^{at a decisive moment} and there a prophet did succeed in affecting the course of his people's destiny ~~at a~~ ^{as a rule} ~~decisive moment~~, but usually they were ^{completely} ~~ignored~~. They were not, however, ^{completely} ~~forgotten~~. Their words and their deeds echoed down the ages. When their words came true, men recalled them and beat their breasts in ^{contrition} for having "made their hearts as an adamant stone, so as not to hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His spirit by the hand of the former prophets."

Classic prophecy began to die out with the dispersion of the people. The fact of exile entered into the life of the race. A haunting sadness settled over its spirit and it quenched the creation fires. The Shechinah ^{he declared the Rabbis} does not descend upon a man - or a race - when he is depressed. The new generation ^{which had} returned from exile faced other problems and tasks ^{and} required a different type ^{Rabbi} of spiritual leader ^{that's the} - a sage rather than a prophet. The conviction grew that a broken and chastised people, struggling desperately with the hard tasks of reconstruction and survival, required the calm, practical guidance of the Hacham, the Sage, rather the stab of conscience and the troubling challenge of the ^{home path} Prophet. The Will of God was ~~not~~ to be found revealed in a written book, to be lovingly interpreted by a Scribe or a Rabbi. The "bat kol" - the Heavenly Voice which revealed things bidden from human knowledge ^{and which will} remained to fill the void left by prophecy, which, according to the Rabbis, was one of the five things which disappeared with the destruction of the Temple, not ~~to~~ reappear again until the days of the Messiah. But even the "bat kol" came to be ^{discounted} frequently ~~ignored~~ as an authentic and dependable source of religious law and truth, ^{an} extreme ^{even} School ^{and} maintained, for definite polemical reasons ^{to be sure}, that ever since the destruction of the Temple prophecy was left to children and fools. But then, even in Hosea's day ^{they called the prophet a fool...} ~~But~~ not all agreed with them. The fact of prophecy persisted down the ages and appears over and over again among peoples, especially among those who were affected by the teachings of the Bible. ^{and} When it does it stirs deep waters and ^{currents} sets new ^{feel} tides in motion. Men ~~rise~~ again the intoxication of great, new beginnings, ~~new~~ heaven and a new earth. Trumpets blow again on new horizons.

Are there prophets today? Is the prophetic tradition alive in the present-day religious ministry? If not, is the ministry to be condemned because it is not prophetic? ^{TP} There are prophets today, and, as of ^{old} ~~now~~, they are little heeded and greatly persecuted. Occasionally they are found inside the ministry, more often outside. The training ^{for} of the ministry is not necessarily a preparation for a prophetic role, any more than the priest of old was expected to be a prophet. The prophet did not preside over a congregation, or occupy a pulpit, or instruct ^{the} youth,

or work through and with an organized fellowship of men. There is much to be said for the minister who is the faithful teacher, guide, ^{and} pastor, a shepherd not too far ahead of his flock. It is an honorable and indispensable profession in the life of society. He, too, does God's work in the world - and an important work it is, ~~and~~ ^{by} their service they are training generations of men to reach up to the high moral absolutes which the prophets set.

All ministers who take ^{into their ministry} ~~unto them~~ the quality and substance of the prophets' the message, if not ^{his} ~~the~~ unique experience and the propelling and overwhelming sense of

mission of the prophet - who remain true to the ideal which the prophets set for the priest ^{belong to the holy covenant of an everlasting priesthood.} ~~are of the spiritually elect.~~ Those men who are more than teachers, preachers and pedagogues, ^{who are privileged to see the vision of God with "opened eyes"} ~~who~~ who are singled out by the hand of God for

proclamation and renewal, "to destroy and to rebuild", to challenge and to attack,

and who at the behest of their vision, are content to give their ^{back} ~~back~~ to the smiter, ^{to remain lonely and} ~~to be lowly, to be friendless,~~ to be hated and despised, asking for no reward

but the ^{nearness} ~~nearness~~ of God, seeking no Heaven but the light of His countenance - these are the prophets. They are the dynamic individuals who venerate ^{mission-laden} ~~ing~~ personality, ^{set out to} ~~who~~

champion the spiritual independence of man, ^{to} ~~who~~ defend the fundamental equality of

all men and nations under God, ^{to} ~~who~~ subordinate the authority of men to the authority

of law, ^{these are the men} ~~who~~ vision the perfect society ^{which is} ~~to be~~ fashioned, at long last, by the labors

and sacrifices of men - a human order of economic justice, of love, brotherhood and

peace, and ^{are} ~~are~~ prepared to use their own blood and tears, ^{their} ~~not~~ those of other men to

cement that order ^{over} ~~they are the prophets.~~ ^{Such prophets} ~~They~~ are found in every age, a few

in number, and in every walk of life, among priests ^{as well as among} ~~and~~ laymen. They require

no ordination. They know when the voice says: "Whom shall I send and who ^{will} ~~will~~ go

us?" and they answer, quite simply, ^{or after long and troubled hesitations} ~~"Here am I, send me!"~~

Such men, the Rabbis said, receive each one of them a drop from the waters of Paradise....

It is by the hand of such prophets that the Lord
brings ~~a~~ people out of slavery, even as He
brought Israel out of Egypt, and by such
prophets are they brought.



Dudley Lecture
Harvard Univ
Apr 16, 1940

~~Alternate choice for~~ (face page)

Are there prophets today? Is the prophetic tradition alive in the present-day religious ministry? If not, is the ministry to be condemned because it is not prophetic?

There are prophets today, and, as of old, they are little heeded and greatly persecuted. Occasionally they are found inside the ministry, more often outside. The training for the ministry is not necessarily a preparation for a prophetic role, any more than the priest of old was expected to be a prophet. The prophet did not preside over a congregation, or occupy a pulpit, or instruct the youth, or work through and with an organized fellowship of men. There is much to be said for the minister who is the faithful teacher, guide, and pastor -- a shepherd not too far ahead of his flock. It is an honorable and indispensable profession in the life of society. He, too, does God's work in the world -- and an important work it is. By their service such ministers are training generations of men to reach up to the high moral absolutes which the prophets set.

All ministers who take into their profession the quality and substance of the prophet's message, if not his unique experience and the overwhelming sense of mission, -- who remain true to the ideal which the prophets set for the priest, to teach the law and to declare the judgment, their lips keeping knowledge and men seeking the law of their mouths, belong to the holy covenant of an everlasting priesthood.

Those men, however, who are more than teachers, preachers, and pedagogues, who are privileged to see the vision of God with "opened eyes," who are singled out for proclamation and renewal, "to destroy and to rebuild," to challenge and to attack, and who, at the behest of their vision, are content

to give their back to the smiter, to remain lonely and friendless, to be hated and despised, asking for no reward but the nearness of God, seeking no Heaven but the light of His countenance $\frac{1}{M}$ these are the prophets. They are the men of mission who, venerating personality, set out to champion the spiritual independence of man, to defend the fundamental equality of all men and nations under God, and to subordinate all human authority to the authority of the divine law. They are the men who vision the perfect society, exalted through justice, love, brotherhood, and peace, and are prepared to use their own blood and tears $\frac{1}{M}$ theirs, not those of other men $\frac{1}{M}$ to cement it. It is by the hand of such men that the Lord brings peoples out of slavery, even as He brought Israel out of Egypt, and by such prophets are they kept. Such prophets are found in every age, a few in number, and in every walk of life, among priests, as well as among laymen. They require no ordination. They know when the voice says: "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" and they answer quite simply, or after long and troubled hesitation, "Here am I, send me!"

Such men, the Rabbis said, receive each one of them a drop from the waters of Paradise. 11.1.2

From "The Prophetic conception of the ministry," Dudleian Lecture, Harvard University, April 16, 1940

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p. 487 a-b follows

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

ANNUAL VISITATION OF THE ALUMNI

APRIL 16, 1940

- 10.30 A.M. Annual Meeting of the Alumni Association in Divinity Chapel. Devotional Service conducted by the Reverend George Hale Reed, President, with the Necrology by the Reverend John Boynton Wilson Day. Election of Officers and other business.
- 11.15 A.M. Annual Address, "The Bay Psalm Book and Harvard Hymnody," by the Reverend Henry Wilder Foote, Minister, The First Church in Belmont.
- 1.00 P.M. Alumni Luncheon in the Farrar Room, Andover Hall. The Reverend Charles Towne Billings will speak for the Class of 1890; the Reverend Frederick May Eliot for the Class of 1915; Mr. Walter Donald Kring for the Class of 1940, and Dean Willard L. Sperry for the School.
- ✓ 3.00 P.M. Andover Chapel — the Dudleian Lecture on "The Validity of Non-Episcopal Ordination" by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio. Subject, "The Prophetic Conception of the Ministry."
- 4.30 P.M. Emerson D — The Ingersoll Lecture on "The Immortality of Man — The Implications of Selfhood" by Professor James Bissett Pratt, Williams College.