

P O E T R Y O F T H E O L D T E S T A M E N T .

I<sup>7</sup>h<sup>s</sup> PROPHEETS.

SEVENTEEN OUT OF THE THIRTY NINE BOOKS THAT NOW CONSTITUTE THE OLD TESTAMENT, ARE KNOWN AS THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHEETS; THEY FORM A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE COLLECTION BUT A LARGE PART OF THEIR VALUE AND INTEREST IS LOST UPON THE AVERAGE STUDENT OF THE BIBLE; BECAUSE OF THE UNATTRACTIVE AND UNMETHODICAL WAY IN WHICH THEY ARE OFFERED TO HIM. AND BECAUSE ALSO OF THE ~~CONFUSING AND~~ *in a count of the* ARBITRARY CREDULITY WHICH THE READER BRINGS TO HIS STUDY; A CERTAIN INTELLIGENT ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF THESE WRITINGS, MUST BE ATTAINED BEFORE ANY REAL APPRECIATION OF THEM CAN BE REACHED. CERTAIN FALSE ASSUMPTIONS CONCERNING THESE WRITINGS MUST BE SET ASIDE BEFORE WE CAN HOPE TO EITHER USE OR ENJOY THEM.

*I Poetry not Prose*

TO HINT AT A FEW OF THESE CORRECTIONS WITH A SUGGESTION OR TWO OF THEIR REAL SIGNIFICANCE, WILL BE MY AIM THIS EVENING. THE FIRST CONFUSING BLUNDER IS THAT WHICH RESOLVES THE POETRY OF THE HEBREWS INTO THE PROSE OF THE SAXON; THESE WRITINGS EMBODY SOME OF THE HIGHEST STRAINS OF POETRY AND THEIR FORM IS ALMOST ENTIRELY ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE HEBREW ~~FOR~~ POETRY, AND ALL JUST TRANSLATIONS OF THEM SHAPED BY SCHOLARLY HANDS, DESERVE THE POETIC FORM. LET THE STately LINES OF TENNYSON'S

'IDYLS OF THE KING' OR THE RINGING MEASURES OF LOWELL'S 'COMMEMORATION ODE' BE BROKEN INTO HALTING PROSE, AND PRINTED AS SUCH, AND THAT BROKEN UP INTO THE ARBITRARY DIVISIONS OF CHAPTERS AND VERSES, WITH BUT LITTLE REGARD FOR PERIODS OR PARAGRAPHS AND THEN LET THE READER UNDERTAKE TO READ THESE WITH THE SAME UNMAGNETIC MIND, HE WOULD BRING TO THE READING OF A JUDICIAL DECISION, OR AN ESSAY ON SURVEYING, THE METAPHORS TAKEN AS ARGUMENTS, THE FIGURES OF SPEECH AS LOGICAL FORMULA, AND THE ~~FIGURE~~ <sup>figure</sup> RHETORIC AS THE ACTUAL RECORD EXACT RECORD OF MIRACULOUS TRANSACTIONS, AND YOU HAVE SOME IDEA OF THE UNNATURAL TORTURE TO WHICH THESE WRITINGS WERE SUBMITTED. <sup>A</sup> TORTURE INFLICTED UPON THEM OFTENER BY THEIR FRIENDS THAN ANY BODY ELSE; PREACHERS AND SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS EITHER THROUGH IGNORANCE OR COWARDICE, CONTINUALLY JUSTIFYING THE TORTURE; THEY ARE SILENT ABOUT THE DEFECTS AND AWKWARDNESS OF KING JAMES' TRANSLATION; EITHER BECAUSE THEY ARE IGNORANT THEMSELVES, FOR WANT OF INTELLIGENT STUDY, OR KNOWING IT, THEY DARE NOT TELL IT LEST IT MAY SOMEHOW BREAK DOWN THE TRUST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE BOOK.

IF THEN THIS BE POETRY AND NOT PROSE, ITS LANGUAGE MUST BE UNDERSTOOD TO BE, AS MATTHEW ARNOLD WELL PUTS IT 'THE LANGUAGE OF LITERATURE, AND NOT OF DOGMA' IT MUST BE REGARDED AS FLUID PASSING THROWN OUT SUGGESTIVELY RATHER THAN CONCISE, EXACT AND INFALLIBLE. THE QUALIFICATIONS TO UNDERSTAND IT ARE SUCH ARE NECESSARY TO APPRECIATE POETRY RATHER THAN THE THEOLOGICAL APTITUDE. SOMETHING MORE THAN A BELIEF IN THE FALL HELL AND THE DEVIL, IS NECESSARY TO APPRECIATE MILTON'S PARADISE LOST.

A KNOWLEDGE OF FLOWERS, BIRDS AND SKIES WILL NOT NECESSARILY MAKE AN APPRECIATIVE READER OF WORDSWORTH; SOMETHING MORE THAN A PIOUS INCLINATION IS NECESSARY TO THE APPRECIATION OF HIS POETRY OF THE HEBREWS AMONG WHICH, I WOULD MENTION THAT CULTURE OF THE IMAGINATION THAT APPRECIATION OF LETTERS THAT FAMILIARITY WITH THE HISTORY AND CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE ~~OW~~ THE TIMES OUT OF WHICH IT HAS SPRUNG; TO UNDERSTAND THE WORDS OF ISIAH, WE MUST UNDERSTAND SOMETHING OF THE FEELINGS AND CAUSES THAT PROMPTED HIS UTTERANCES.

II. THE ARBITRARY ARRANGEMENT.

THE SECOND VIOLENCE DONE TO THESE WRITINGS IN OUR ENGLISH BIBLE, IS <sup>the violence done to</sup> THE VIOLENCE ~~DONE TO~~ ANY LOGICAL OR CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER IN THE ARRANGEMENT. 'TIS TRUE, SCHOLARS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO FIX THE DATES OF MANY OF THESE WRITINGS; BUT HOWEVER THEY MAY DISAGREE AS TO DETAILS IN THIS ONE THING, THEY ALL AGREE; NAMELY:- THE ORDER OBSERVED IN THE BIBLE, IS CERTAINLY NOT THE TRUE ONE. ISAIAH, THE FIRST IN THE KING JAMES VERSION, IS PLACED FOURTH IN THE ORDER BY PROF. NOYES. ACKNOWLEDGED BY ALL, TO BE AONE OF THE LEADING AUTHORITIES. HE PLACED JEREMIAH, THE SECOND; IN THE BIBLE, IT IS THE TENTH; HE PLACES THE BOOK OF DANIEL, THE 17TH; IN OUR BIBLE, IT IS THE FOURTH: YOU CAN READILY UNDERSTAND THE CONFUSION THAT IS LEFT IN THE MIND OF THE OLD FASHIONED READER WHO READS THE BIBLE IN COURSE; BEGINNING WITH GENESIS, AND ENDING WITH REVELATION; IT IS AS IF A STUDENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE TRYING TO GET A GENERAL IDEA OF IT, WAS TO READ WORDSWORTH AND THEN CHAUCER; TENNYSON AND THEN BYRON; CHARLES MC KAY, AND

THEN OLLIVER GOLDSMITH; THE READER ON THE WHOLE IGNORANT OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS ANY VIOLATION OF CHRONOLOGY IN THIS READING.

III. DEGREES OF EXCELLENCE

THIS WOODEN WAY OF READING THE BIBLE, SO PREVALENT, SUGGESTS THE THIRD FALSE NOTION WHICH MUST BE CORRECTED ERE YOU CAN BEGIN TO APPRECIATE THE POETRY OF THE BIBLE; HERE IS NO MONOTONY OF EXCELLENCE THE READER OF THESE 17 OR MORE AUTHORS, TRAVELS ON NO DEAD LEVEN IN UNIFORMITY; LET HIM START OUT EXPECTING IRREGULARITIES; LET HIM REALISE THAT THE MOUNT OF INSPIRATION IS CROWNED BY NO LEVEL SUMMIT. <sup>AS</sup> HERE MAY TRAVEL AS HE WILL ON WELL GRADED ROADS ACROSS WELL TILLED FIELDS. BUT RATHER IS IT CROWNED LIKE ALL THE GREAT MOUNTAINS OF GOD, WITH CRAGGY PEAKS AND PRECIPICES; SPIRE RISING ABOVE SPIRE INTO THE HEAVENLY BLUE; DAMP AND CHILLY VALLEY ANSWERING TO VALLEY IN THEIR MIDST; AS THE SIMPLE STRAINS OF WORDSWORTH FRAGRANT WITH THE BLOSSOMS OF THE FIELDS, AND TRANQUIL MEADOWS DIFFER FROM THE IMPASSIONED BREATHINGS OF BYRON, SO DO THE STRAINS OF AMOS DIFFER FROM THE WRITINGS OF HOSEA WHOSE VERY WORSHIP BEARS THE TAIN OF THE BROTHEL; AS THE CLEAR SENTENCES OF A TENNYSON OR A LONGFELLOW DIFFER FROM THE WORDY PLATITUDES OF TUPPER, SO DO THE VIGOROUS MEASURES OF ISIAH DIFFER FROM THE PROLIX STYLE OF EXERIAL. THERE ARE DEGREES OF ELEVATION IN THE MOUNTAINS OF GOD; BE THEY SPIRITUAL OR MATERIAL; SEEK THEM IN THE REALM OF THE BIBLE OR OUT OF IT; INDEED THERE ARE NO DEAD LEVELS; NO REAL FLATS; NO UNIFORMITIES IN THE FIELDS OF GOD; EVEN THE

12 a  
 OCEAN IS ROUNDED WITH THE CIRCLE OF A GLOBE; IT HAS ITS RESTLESS BILLOWS  
 AND MYSTIC TENNANTS; HOPELESS THEN IS IT TO SEEK FOR SUCH IN THE BIBLE;

WHEN WE EXTEND THE LINE OF COMPARISON BEYOND THE SCHOOL OF PROPHETS;

OUR COMPARISONS SHARPEN INTO CONTRASTS AND ANTAGONISMS. AS THE STATUTE

BOOKS OF MASSACHUSETTES DIFFER FROM THE <sup>poetic</sup> POETIC STRAINS OF HER GREAT

<sup>Emerson</sup> NOBLE PROPHET WHITTIER, SO DIFFER THE CUMBERSOME LAWS OF LEVITICUS FROM  
 THE <sup>of the Song of Songs</sup> CLEAR SONGS OF AMOS; AS THE DREARY ROUND OF CONVENTUAL LIFE WITH

ITS TEDIUS ORDER OF FASTING AND PRAYER; DIFFERS FROM THE STRONG AND FREE

DENUNCIATIONS OF A THEODORE PARKER, AGAINST ALL FORMS AND CEREMONIES, IN

THE INTEREST OF NOBLE ACTION AND BRAVE THINKING; SO DIFFERENT IS THE RAHL

CALL OF THE HEBREW PRIESTS FOR HIS MEAT OFFERING AND PEACE OFFERING; TO

THE STURDY AND ELOQUENT OF MICAH WHEN HE CRIES

" I HAVE NO DELIGHT IN YOUR ASSEMBLIES,  
 WHEN YOU OFFER ME BURNT OFFERINGS AND FLOWER OF-  
 FERINGS, I WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM.

NOR WILL I LOOK ON THE PEACE OFFERINGS OF YOUR  
 FATLINGS.

AWAY WITH THE NOISE OF YOUR SONG, I WILL NOT LISTEN  
 TO YOUR HARPINGS.

BUT LET JUSTICE FLOW AS WATER,

AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY RIVER,

NOT WITH CALVES A YEAR OLD, FOR BURNT OFFERINGS.

WILL JEHOVA BE PLEASED WITH THOUSANDS OF RAMS, AND  
 RIVERS OF OIL?

HE HATH SHOWN THE O MAN, HAT IS GOOD

IT IS TO DO JUSTLY, TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY

WITH THY GOD.

*Reigns the Bible*

THE OLD QUESTION OF RELIGION WAS: WHAT READEST THOU? BUT THE GUES-

SION NOW, IS FOLLOWED WITH ~~ANOTHER~~, WHERE READEST THOU? IS IT ~~REARD~~ -

OF A PRIEST'S REGULATIONS OR A PROPHET'S PRINCIPLE; IS IT ISIAH, OR PAUL, <sup>OR the Song of Songs</sup> OR PETER

IS IT AN ECHO OF COLOMON'S INDULGENCE, OR OF DAVID'S CONTRITION? THE OLD PREACHER ~~COULD~~ SAY "WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE, ITS ALL FROM THE BIBLE" BUT, THAT WILL NOT MUCH LONGER ESCAPE THE RIDICULE OF THE WISE, FOR A VERY LITTLE STUDY SHOWS THAT IT DOES MAKE A VERY GREAT DIFFERENCE.

### 1. A Parable.

#### IIII THE CHARACTER OF THE PROPHET.

LET ME NEXT TRY TO GIVE YOU SOME IDEA OF THE CHARACTER OF THESE WRITERS AND SPEAKERS WHICH WERE CALLED PROPHETS; THEY WERE NO TRANCE SPEAKERS VACATING THEIR OWN SENSE AND THOUGHT IN ORDER THAT VISIONS FROM ON HIGH MIGHT TAKE POSSESSION OF THEM; THEY WERE NO SACRED FORTUNE TELLERS WHOSE CHIEF DUTIES WAS TO FORETELL MESSIAHS AND PREDICT DOOMS.

I WILL NOT ATTEMPT IN THIS PAPER TO CONSIDER WHAT BASES OF TRUTH THERE IS IN THE POPULAR THEOLOGY THAT THESE PROPHETS FORESAW JESUS ~~AT~~ THE BETHLEHAM STABLE; TONIGHT LET ME INSIST ONLY THAT THESE GRANDEST OF ALL HEREBREWS WERE IN NO SENCE DREAMERS; THEIR CHIEF CONCERN WAS WITH NO FAR OFF FUTURITY; MOST EMPHATICALLY, THEY WERE MEN OF THE TIMES; THEIR HEADS AND HEARTS PULSING WITH THE THOUGHT AND FEELING OF THEIR DAY; THEY HAD THEIR EYES WIDE OPEN TO THE SINS ABOUT THEM, AND TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR FELLOWS; THEY WERE PREACHERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; I SAY PREACHERS, BUT THAT IS TOO TAME A WORD; AS ILLUSTRATED BY THOSE WHO WEAR IT IN THESE DAYS; THOSE ANCIENT PROPHETS OF ~~THE~~ <sup>THE</sup> HURLED THEIR REBUKES INTO THE FACE OF SINNERS IN SUCH A WAY AS THE MODERN PREACHER DARES NOT. THEY USED SUCH PLAIN LANGUAGE CONCERNING VICE, AND LOW AND SELFISH STANDARDS, THAT IF USED IN A MODERN PULPIT, WOULD RUIN THE PROSPECTS OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS CHURCH

THEY WERE MEN DEAD IN EARNEST; THEY HAD TOO MUCH TO DO IN RIGHTING THINGS AROUND THEM TO WASTE TIME OR ENERGY IN DREAMING OF FUTURE GLORY

*Et was indeed the burden*  
 FOR THE ~~UNDAUNED~~ DREADERBEN OF THE LORD THAT THEY CARRIED UPON THEIR

SHOULDER, AND ON WHAT A BURDEN REFORM IS ALWAYS TO THE SENSATIVE AND CONSCIENTIOUS SPIRIT; THEY WERE PHYSICIANS CHARGED WITH THE AWFUL RESPONSIBILITY OF CURING THE MORAL DISEASES OF THE SOCIETY IN WHICH THEY LIVED; THEY WERE MEN WHO FELT THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN TIMES OF GODLESSNESS; THEY PLEAD FOR MERCY WITH CRUEL PEOPLE; THEY STOOD FOR JUSTICE IN THE PRESENCE OF INJUSTICE; AND TAUGHT HUMILITY TO HAUGHTY PEOPLE. THIS MISSION OF THE PROPHET IS INDICATED IN THE VERY WORD USED TO REPRESENT THEM. THE

HEBREW WORD IS "NABI," <sup>NC</sup> WHICH ~~HAS~~ A ROOT AKIN TO THAT OF A BUBBLING SPRING. IT IS THE OVER FLOWING SOUL; THE SPIRIT OF DIVINE GOODNESS AND LOVE; STREAMING THROUGH THE WORDS, LOOKS AND DEEDS; THE BIBLE SAYS INDEED " THAT HE

WHO IS NOW CALLED PROPHET, WAS ONCE CALLED A SEER OR GAZER;" BUT ~~IT~~ <sup>THAT</sup> WAS

AN INADEQUATE NAME FOR SO LARGE A MISSION, AND SO CAME THE LARGER WORD,

WHICH IS TRANSLATED PROPHET; THE ETYMOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS WORD,

IS NOT ONE WHO PREDICTS; BUT ONE WHO SPEAKS FOR; THE INTERPRETER; THE

WORD PROPHET INDICATES PRIMARILY, NOT A FORETELLER, BUT A SPOKESMAN; THE

PROPHET IS AN INSPIRED SPEAKER, AN ILLUMINATED TEACHER.

THUS YOU SEE, THE VERY WORDS HELP US TO TAKE A NEW HOLD OF THESE BOOKS AND OPEN THE WAY FOR A FRESHER AND LARGER APPRECIATION OF THEM.

WHAT THE BARD WAS TO THE EARLY KELTIC RACES, THE INSPIRER; THE HISTORIAN

AND MORAL DICTATOR, THE PROPHET WAS TO THE HEBREW AND WHAT THEY WERE TO

THE HEBREW, THE PREACHER OUGHT TO BE IN THE PRESENT; THEY WHO DARE REBUKE

SIN IN HIGH AS WELL AS LOW PLACES; THEY WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN PLAYING UPON THIS TRIPLE STRINGED LYRE OF TRUTH, JUSTICE AND LOVE, THEY WHO WERE EVER CRYING ALOUD AND SPARING NOT, CALLING TO THEIR AID, THE GRACES OF POETRY, MUSIC AND ORATORY, THE COURT, THE CHURCH, THE BATTLE FIELD, AND THE SOCIAL CIRCLE WERE ALL THEIR FIELDS OF LABOR, AND WHOEVER GIVES HIMSELF TO THIS WORK IN ANY TIME OR PLACE, IS A SPIRITUAL SUCCESSOR OF THE HEBREW PROPHET; WHETHER IT BE AS JOHN BROWN OR A LLOYD GARRISON HURLING THEIR ANATHÉMAS AGAINST THE DEALERS IN HUMAN BLOOD; JOHN KNOX THROWING HIS FIERY DARTS AT THE FEET OF A SUPERSTITIOUS QUEEN AND HER TICKED COURT, LATTIMER PREACHING TO EDWARD THE FOURTH, FROM THE WORDS OF THAT STILL BOL-

DER PROPHET OF JEWRY 'THOU ARE THE MAN !!! LUTHER AT THE DIET OF WORMS DEFYING ALL THE CROWNED HEADS OF EUROPE; OR JESUS WITH HIS WHIP OF SMALL CHORDS BUT OF MIGHTY WORDS SCOURGING THE SPECULATORS WHO DEFAMED THE HOUSE OF RELIGION; ALL ARE SUCCESSORS TO THAT NOBLE SCHOOL OF PROPHETS WHO LIFTED THE HEBREW PEOPLE OUT OF ANARCHY AND BARBARISM, INTO THE LIFE OF LETTERS AND ORDER, WHEN EASTERN DESPOTISM HAD BUILT UP A WEALTHY AND LUXURIOUS MONARCHY AND SOLOMAN HAD ERECTED FOR HIMSELF THE THRONE OF A TYRANT, THE INDEPENDENCE, THE DEFIANCE, THE INSPIRATION, OF THESE PROPHETS TEACHERS OF RELIGION, MADE THE MONARCHY A MATTER OF SCARSELY MORE THAN A SINGLE LIFE TIME IN JUDEA; WHILE SURROUNDING PEOPLES OF NORTHWESTERN ASIA GROANED UNDER A TRYANNY THAT LASTED FOR CENTURIES AND IT YIELDED NOT UNTIL IT HAD GROUND OUT THE MANHOOD AND WEAKENED THE LIFE SO THAT DOMIN-

ION WAS NO GLORY; AND THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH LEKT TO BUILD ANYTHING UPON THE  
RUINS, AND LION ROAM TODAY UNINTERUPTED AMONG THE RUINED PAVEMENTS OF THOB  
ANCIENT CITIES; JOHN STEWART MILLS, WAS ONE WHO COULD NOT BE SUSPECTED  
OF TOO GREAT A BIBLICAL BIAS, BUT IN HIS REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT," HE  
PAYS TO THESE PROPHETS OF JEWRY, THIS MERITED TRIBUTE

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"The Egyptian hierarchy, the paternal despotism of China, were very fit instruments for carrying those nations up to the point of civilization which they attained. But having reached that point, they were brought to a permanent halt, for want of mental liberty and individuality - requisites of improvement which the institutions that had carried them thus far entirely incapacitated them from acquiring, and as the institutions did not break down and give place to others, further improvement stopped. In contrast with these nations let us consider the example of an opposite character, afforded by another and a comparatively insignificant Orient - the Jews. They too, had an absolute monarchy and a hierarchy. These did for them what was done for other Oriental races by their institutions - succeeded them to industry and order, and gave them a national life. But neither their

28. #1  
Kings nor their priests ever obtained, as in  
those other countries, the exclusive moulding  
of their character. Their religion gave exist-  
ence to an essentially precious unorgan-  
ized institution, the Oracle (if it may be  
so ~~called~~ termed) of Prophets. Under the pro-  
tection, generally, though not always ef-  
fectual, of their sacred characters, the Pro-  
phets were a power in the nation, often  
more than a match for kings and  
priests, and kept up, in that little corner  
of the earth, the antagonism of influences  
which is the only real security for contin-  
ued progress. Religion ~~was~~ consequently  
was not there - what it has been in many  
other places - a consecration of all that  
was once established, and a barrier  
against further improvement. The ee-  
mark of a distinguished Hebrew, that  
the Prophets were in Church and State the  
equivalent of the modern liberty of the press,

gives a just but not an adequate conception of the part fulfilled in national and universal history by this great element of Jewish life; by ~~means of which~~ this great element of Jewish life; by means of which, the canon of inspiration never being complete, the person most eminent in genius and moral feeling could not only denounce and exprobate, with the direct authority of the Almighty, whatever appeared to them deserving of such treatment, but could give forth better and higher interpretations of the national religion, which ~~throughout~~ became part of the ~~Scriptures~~. Accordingly, whoever can detect himself of the habit of reading the Bible as if it was one book, which until lately was equally inveterate in Christians and in unbelievers, sees with admiration the vast interval between the morality and religion of the Pentateuch, on even of the historical books, and the

and the morality and religion of the  
 Prophets, a distance as wide as between  
 these last and the Gospels. Conditions  
 more favorable to progress could not  
 easily exist; according to the Jews instead  
 of being stationary, like other Asiatics,  
 were next to the Greeks, the most pro-  
 gressive people of antiquity, and jointly  
 with them, have been the starting-point  
 and main propelling agency of mod-  
 ern civilization. — [Stanley Lect. XIX.]

2 THE PROPHET COMES FROM NO CLASS

THE SECOND CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PROPHET MUST BE THOROUGHLY UNDERSTOOD BEFORE HE CAN BE APPRECIATED. THE HEBREW PROPHET CAME FROM THE NORTH OR FROM THE SOUTH, FROM THE HOUSE OF EPHRAIM OR FROM THE TRIBE OF LEVI, HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN TUTORED BY THE FLOCK OR BY THE PLOUGH; GRADUATED FROM THE PRIESTLY RANKS OR FROM MILITARY FILES; TODAY THE PROPHET, LIKE HIS SUCCESSOR, MAY AND DOES COME FROM THE FORGE, THE LOOM, OR THE LATHE, AS WELL AS FROM CLASSIC HALLS OR THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS; UNLIKE THE PRIEST, WHOSE ENTIRE AUTHORITY RESTS IN HIS OFFICE, WHOSE CREDENTIALS ARE INVENTED IN EVIDENCES OF BIRTH AND RANK, THE DIGNITY OF THE PROPHET RESTS IN HIS WORD AND THE AUTHORITY IS ALL VESTED IN THE MORAL QUALITY OF THE MAN. IN REGARD TO THE PROPHET, THE QUESTION IS, NOT "WHERE DO YOU COME FROM? BUT "WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?" THE PROPHETS OF JEWRY WERE RECRUITED OUT OF COMMON LIFE, THEY REPRESENTED HUMAN NATURE; DAVID WAS A SHEPHERD, AMOS WAS A HERDSMAN; SAMUEL, A WARRIOR; ELIJAH, A BEDOUIN WANDERER; MIRIAM, DEBORAH, HULDA, ANNA, AND THE 4 DAUGHTERS OF PHILLIP, ARE PROPHETIC NAMES FAMILIAR TO THE BIBLE READER; REMINDING US THAT GOD KNOWS NO SEX AND SETS NO LINES OF ARBITRARY DISTINCTION.

3 THE PROPHETIC ORDER BROADER THAN ITS LITERATURE.

ALL PROPHETS DID NOT WRITE, THEIR LINE IS MUCH LONGER THAN THOSE REPRESENTED ON THE PAGES OF THE BIBLE; THEIR LIVES WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THEIR WORDS; THE HALTING SPEECH OF JONAH PLEADING WITH THE SIMPLE NINI-

~~THESE ARE THE~~ ~~PROPHETS~~ ~~WHO~~ ~~SHOULD~~ ~~BE~~ ~~TO~~ ~~SEE~~ ~~A~~ ~~F~~ ~~A~~ ~~B~~ ~~E~~ ~~T~~

PHETS? TO THIS END I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A RATIONAL AND INTELLIGENT RE-  
 READING OF THESE PROPHETIC BOOKS OF THE BIBLE; WE NEED PROPHETS TO WAKEN  
 US FROM THE DEAD COMPLACENCY THAT LISTLESSLY ROLLS UPON ITS BED OF INDO-  
 LENCE BEGGING FOR A LITTLE MORE SLEEP AND A LITTLE MORE SLUMBER; OBLI-

VIOUS OF THE GREAT TIDE OF CRIME THAT IS SWEEPING IN OUR MIDST.  
 HAVE WE NO EYES TO SEE THE BLOATED FACESOOF INEBRIATES AND SENSUALISTS  
 IN OUT MIDST? HAVE WE NO INTELLECT TO DETECT THE FALSITIES AND SUPERSTI-  
 TIONS IN OUR LIVES? HAVE WE NO HEART TO RECOIL FROM THE CHILLNESS AND  
 EXCLUSIVENESS OF SOCIETY? THEN WE NEED MORE PROPHETS; WE NEED THEM TO  
 STARTLE THE BROADCLOTH PROPRIETY THAT IN THOUSANDS OF PULPITS TODAY  
 FLATTER THEIR AUDIENCES INTO COMPLACENCY, BY PERSUADING THEM THAT THEY  
 ARE 'AL RIGHT; THUS STIFLING THE QUESTIONS OF THE INTELLECT AND SOTHERING  
 THE YEARNINGS OF THE SOUL. THESE PROPHETS MIGHT SHAME SUCH INTO LIFE  
 THOSE

'WHO WORSHIP THE DEAD CORPSE OF OLD KING CUSTOM'  
 WHERE IT DOTH LIE IN STATE WITHIN THE CHURCH'

WE NEED PROPHETS AGAIN TO TURN OUR EYES FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE  
 TO SHAME US OUT OF THE INFIDELITY THAT MISTRUSTS TOMORROW; THAT QUESTIONS  
 THE RESOURCES OF THE UNIVERSE; WE NEED PROPHETS TO REMIND US OF MES-  
 SAHES YET UNBORN AND THE NOBLE TRIUMPHS THAT AWAIT THEM; WE NEED THEM TO  
 FILL OUR SOULS WITH THE CONVICTION THAT NOT THE PAST NOR THE PRESENT,

BUT

IT IS THE PROPHET THAT MUST TEACH US TO,

So prophetic

ONCE MORE THESE PROPHETS ARE NEEDED TO RE-UNITE THE GOLDEN CLAPPS  
THAT LINK TOGETHER RELIGION AND MORALITY; PRIESTS TO THIS DAY, THERE ARE,  
WHO DECRY HOLY LIVING AS FILTHY RAGS, AND THEIR SENTIMENTAL LISTENERS  
TURN AWAY FROM THE TEACHERS OF MORALITY PRONOUNCING THEM DRY AND UNSPIR-  
ITUAL; IN OUR DAY, AS IN THE TIMES OF SAMUEL, RITUALISM AND SACERDOTAL  
ORDERS ARE LOSING THEIR HOLD UPON THE HEARTS OF MEN; THEIR INFLUENCE FOR  
GOOD IS BECOMING LESS MONTH BY MONTH; PRIESTCRAFT IS NOW SCARCELY SUGGEST  
IVE OF HOLINESS; NOW AS THEN 'THE WORD OF THE LORD IS VERY PRECIOUS IN  
OUR MIDST, FOR THERE IS SO LITTLE OPEN VISION!' THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER IS  
BECOMING LESS AND LESS A PRIEST. THE SACRED AWE THAT USED TO GATHER A-  
ROUND HIS PERSON, IS PASSING AWAY; THE EMBROIDERED VESTMENTS; THE FLOWING  
ROBES; AND THE STIFF WHITE CRAVATS ARE BEING FOLDED OUT OF SIGHT; THE  
HOLY BOX THAT USED TO BE SWUNG UP IN MID AIR IN THE CHURCH, INTO WHICH

THE MINISTER USED TO CLIMB WITH THE LOFTY PRESUMPTION THAT HE WAS AN  
AMBASSADOR OF THE ALMIGHTY BELONGING NEITHER TO HEAVEN NOR EARTH, HAS  
WITHIN THE MEMORY OF THIS GENERATION, BEEN LET DOWN; THE HIGH AND STERN  
"SACRED DESK" REARED IN RIGID SOLEMNITY FROM WHICH WAS EXPOUNDED THE  
LAW AND THE DIVINE VENGEANCE TOWARDS HUMAN REPRORATES WAS EXPLAINED, HAS  
BEEN CHANGED INTO A PLATFORM; THE PULPIT HAS BEEN REDUCED TO THE  
MINIMUM OF A DEAL TABLE, A READING STAND; AND THE MINISTER, NOW AS HE  
STANDS WITH ANY RESPECT, HE STANDS SIMPLY AS A MAN AMONG MEN; AND THE  
CHANGE IS EQUALLY GREAT AMONG THE LISTENERS; THE CROUCHING KNEELING DEVO-  
TEE HAS GIVEN AWAY TO THE AUSTERE STIFFNESS OF MEN AND WOMEN ENCLOSED IN  
HIGH-BACKED PEWS, HERE LIKE PRISONERS AT THE BAR, THEY WERE READY TO FACE  
A WORSE SENTENCE THAT MIGHT BE PRONOUNCED UPON THEM; BUT THEY IN TURN  
ARE GIVING AWAY TO CHEERFUL WILLING LISTENERS; WHO ARE EXPECTING THAT  
KINDLY HELP THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO LIVE MORE TENDER AND GENIEL LIVES;  
MORE READY TO BE MOVED BY THE OVERFLOWING OF THAT IMMORTAL SPIRIT THAT  
TELLS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE LIVING WATER THAT GIVETH ETERNAL LIFE; THEY  
AWAIT THIS INCARNATE GOSPEL; THEY NEED THIS EMBODIED RELIGION TO GIVE  
THEM COURAGE TO ASK, IS IT RIGHT; NOT "IS IT SAFE" AND WILL ENABLE THEM  
TO FEEL THAT THROB OF THE DIVINE ENERGY, THAT WILL ALLOW THEM TO SAY  
CONFIDENTLY AND EARNESTLY WITH THE POET