

Prophets

Buck, Harry, M., People of the Lord (The Macmillan Co., New York) 1966

p. 442 A generation ago European scholarship frequently upheld the continuity of prophecy with the cult of Israel, whereas American scholarship stressed its discontinuity. What had been the American point of view has been largely lost in our generation, so that there is a tendency to view the prophets as part of the cultic life of Israel. When taken to extremes, this viewpoint attempts to assign each prophetic oracle a specific cultic setting, losing all sense of the annoying and troublesome nature of the prophets. Because we have attuned ourselves to the belief that there is no piety without cultic worship and no message without an office, we can easily relate the prophets to Israel's main stream of thought. But the truth is that the prophets were gadflies - Elijah was called "the troubler of Israel" (1 Kings 18.17) - and it is difficult to construe them as standing closely within the priestly tradition.

p. 322 Scholarship has vacillated between two poles in treating the prophets. A generation ago, the prophets were regarded as formulators of virtually all that is distinctive in Israel. Courses of study in the Old Testament began with Amos and proceeded to view the codification of prophetic ideals in priestly literature. Modern scholarship is impressed with the continuity of the prophetic tradition and the cultic tradition.