

foreign powers (Isa. xxi: 1-3.) It was frequently his duty to withstand princes and kings in the interests of the weak and oppressed (I. Kings xxi.: 17-21.) The prophet by the study of past history and previous revelations as well as by special revelations to himself often fore-told future events, but chiefly that the people whom he addressed might become a holy nation, separated unto God. He was pre-eminently a preacher of righteousness, a man who sought to know the mind of the Deity on life's problems and declare it without fear to all classes of the people.

He was more than a man of special insight. He had a supernatural Divine enlightenment given to him and was conscious he declared God's thoughts, so much so that sometimes he spoke in God's name in the first person. "He was also conscious that God's word in him had a self-fulfilling power that nothing could defeat nor make void."

But while the prophet had supernatural revelation and special enlightenment given him, God did not make him a mere vocal machine—a trumpet in the hands of the Spirit speaking what he did not understand. In the condition of normal consciousness he received and delivered his message. It came through his own mind, through his own thinking, reasoning and struggling after the knowledge of God and His will. It came through mind and heart and spirit as well as through his voice. His utterances would therefore partake of his own individuality, his knowledge of previous revelation, of nature, of history, of providence, of his hopes and of his fears. While his words often meant more than he understood and have for the most part been applicable to all ages, yet he spoke through his own experience and to his own people. If we would therefore understand an Old Testament prophet "we must," to use the words of Prof. Elmslie, "find out what he was in his own day, what he said to his own people, what they understood him to say, what effect that had upon them, what aims and purposes he set before himself as he spoke in public and forced his way into the councils of kings, addressed great mob-meetings of his fellow subjects in the streets of Samaria or Jerusalem. What was the man actually, practically driving at? What was he seeking to accomplish in his own age and among his own people?"