

substantially the same. Strictly speaking, moreover, the Greek word has a local rather than a temporal import. By this assertion it is meant that the prefix in the Greek word refers more properly to the present than to the future. It applies especially to speaking publicly or before the public, and not so much to speaking predictively or previous to an event. In Greek, therefore, as well as in Hebrew, the word prophet signifies one who declares, expounds or forthtells what the Divine Spirit has inspired. Without discussing further the nature or extent of the prophetic office, it is sufficient to observe that, in harmony with the foregoing explanation, old Augustine says significantly that the prophet of God is "nothing but the teller-forth of the words of God to men."

There is a great advantage in thus regarding a prophet as a forthteller rather than a foreteller. Indeed, the former meaning is required not only by the literal derivation of the word, but also by the technical application of it throughout the entire Old Testament. The usual view of prophecy as anticipated history, it has been well observed, virtually excludes from the roll of prophets some of the greatest teachers under both the Old and the New Covenant, who are distinctly characterized as such by Christ and his apostles. The present view properly embraces all this class of persons in its scope, and assigns to each his proper place according to the character of his work. The Hebrew prophets were preëminently religious teachers, whose duty it was, as preachers of righteousness, to denounce sin, to command repentance, and to enforce obedience. In these respects, they were the pioneers of Christianity. As John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, so the canonical prophets were the forerunners of the apostles. Hence Christian ministers, in a significant sense, are the direct descendants as well of the prophets as of the apostles.

The true significance of the root or stem, from which the word for prophet is derived, is beautifully illustrated by the original meaning of the word Barnabas, both in the Hebrew and in the Greek. In Acts iv. 36, for instance, this name is incorrectly interpreted in the Authorized Version, "son of consolation." Its correct interpretation, though, is "son of