

HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS



PART III.
—
JEREMIAH.

BUGHANAN BLAKE B.D.

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HOW TO READ JEREMIAH.

HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

BEING THE PROPHECIES

ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY IN THEIR
HISTORICAL SETTING

WITH EXPLANATIONS, MAP, AND GLOSSARY

BY
REV. BUCHANAN ✓ BLAKE, B.D.

PART III.
JEREMIAH

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THIS volume is the third part of a work in which the words of the prophets are arranged in their historic setting, and as far as possible in their chronological order, that so the reader may be impressed with their original force, and appreciate their special contribution to the course and development of Old Testament religion. The prophecies of Jeremiah require such an arrangement almost more than any other book in the Old Canon. Owing to the blending of history and prophecy found here, separation and replacing are desirable. The particular epochs around which Jeremiah's activity gathered are well marked; and these should be clearly stated. There is also to be traced a progress and advance in the thought of the prophet, as he moves on from the more hopeful position he assumed in the early reformation of Josiah, through the teaching of the Law Book, to the more distinctly spiritual, with its exalted idealism, in the prophetic forecasting of the future days.

As a prophet, Jeremiah is one of the noblest figures in Old Testament history. Living at a time of transition, his life has an almost tragic interest. As a teacher, his religious influence was immense, and in many points touches our modern spirit. Many of the Psalms, the Book of Lamentations, as also that of Job, have been ascribed to him as their author. But for none of this is there evidence sufficiently strong. And though manifestly exposed to great trials, he appears not so much a "weeping prophet" as a "man of God," conserving true religion, moulding "the dialect of stated prayer," and affording much material, and many a suggestion, for those psalms that some have traced to him.

As in the other two volumes of this work, already published, in the smaller pre-exilian prophets and Isaiah, prose and poetry have been distinguished, while all chapter and verse divisions have been removed. The historical portions, which, in the previous parts, had to be selected from the Books of Kings and Chronicles, are for the most part found in the prophetic book before us. Attention must be given to these if we would ascertain the exact message of Jeremiah, and secure due emphasis for the "Thus saith the Lord."

The great question, raised in connection with Jeremiah, is the amount of value to be given to the version of the Septuagint : and decisions come to here influence our judgment as to the value of this version elsewhere. Opinion in regard to this matter has swung from an extreme approval to an extreme depreciation. It so happens that the LXX. is so very much shorter than the Hebrew Text, $\frac{1}{8}$ th or 2700 words shorter : and the question is, whether or not it is an abbreviation of an early Hebrew Text : whether or not it is the original of which the Hebrew is an enlarged and later edition, or finally, whether or not there were two originals—one in Hebrew, circulating in Palestine, the other, a briefer one, circulating in Egypt. Decision on such questions is now almost impossible. In our printing of the Text, however, we have endeavoured to furnish material for judgment as to the value of many of the LXX. renderings. The most important variations are italicised in the Text, and given in an appendix. It is sufficient for our purpose here simply to draw attention to this matter : and to urge that, as for the Book of Ezekiel, the LXX. is a "perfectly trustworthy witness to the Hebrew Text, as used at Alexandria in the third century B.C."

Comparatively few passages in the prophecies before us have been denied to Jeremiah. Among these are chap. x. 1-16, and chaps. l. and li. : while chaps. xxx.-xxxiii. have received, some think, additions at the hand of a later editor. Chap. lii. is an historical passage.

The very special characteristics of an Old Testament prophet

are continually seen in Jeremiah. He laboured so manifestly for his own time, uttering the message of Jehovah to the men around him, as he fearlessly condemned sin, inculcated penitence, and held out hope of Divine favour for his people in better conditions. What he has to say to us comes clothed in the form of particular applications of great and abiding principles to the needs of the time, in which he lived. The urgency and immediateness of a prophet's work are seen at every turn, as we study this prophet.

Perhaps Jeremiah has not received from ordinary students of the Word the place that he deserves : a place, and that of the highest, which we cannot help thinking he must receive when his work is studied as a whole. To enable his prophecies to be so studied is the reason of the arrangement of them here given. It is the aim of this volume that all may profit from a teacher so spiritual, and possessed of so many affinities to Jesus Christ Himself.

Explanatory notes.—Portions in italics are not found in the LXX. The names of persons and places printed in black type in the Text are dealt with in the Glossary, in the order in which they occur.

DIVISION I.

THE TEXT OF THE PROPHECIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORICAL CONDITIONS OF JEREMIAH'S MINISTRY,
AND HIS CONSECRATION.

Editorial Heading.

The words of **Jeremiah**, the son of Hilkiah (of the priests that were in **Anathoth**, in the land of Benjamin): to whom the Word of Jehovah came in the days of **Josiah**, the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign (626 B.C.). It came also in the days of **Jehoiakim**, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of **Zedekiah**, the son of Josiah, king of Judah —*i.e.*, the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month (587 B.C.). (Ch. i. 1-3.)

The Historical Period (639-587 B.C.).

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David, his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. For in the eighth year of his

reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David, his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah, and Jerusalem from the High Places, and the Asherahs, and the carved images, and the molten images.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land he sent **Shaphan**, the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the House of the Lord, his God.

And Hilkiah, the high priest, said unto Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the House of the Lord." And Hilkiah gave the Book to Shaphan: and he read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he rent his clothes. In his days **Pharaoh-necho** king of Egypt, went up against the king of Assyria (609 B.C.) to the river Euphrates, and king Josiah went against him, and he slew him at **Megiddo**, when he had seen him.

Then the people of the land took **Jehoahaz**, son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. And Pharaoh-necho put him in bonds at **Riblah** in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and put the land to tribute. He also made Eliakim, son of Josiah, king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign: and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem (609-598 B.C.). And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. In his

days **Nebuchadrezzar**, king of Babylon, came up and Jehoiakim became his servant three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers and **Jehoiachin** his son reigned in his stead. He was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was **Nehushta**, the daughter of El-Nathan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done. At that time the servants of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, came against the city, and the city was besieged (599 B.C.). Then Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his household. The king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

The king of Babylon then made Mattaniah, his father's brother, king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem (598-587 B.C.).

In the eleventh year of Zedekiah came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and he burnt the House of the Lord, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

(2 Kings xxii.—xxv.)

Consecration and Commission of the Prophet.

The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying :

“Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee : and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I consecrated thee. I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations.”

Then said I: "Alas! Lord God, I cannot speak! For I am a youth."

But the Lord said unto me: "Say not, 'I am a youth.' For thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I shall be with thee to deliver thee:" saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth: and the Lord said unto me: "Behold! I have put My Words in thy mouth. See! I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant."

Signs of Mission.

Moreover the Word of the Lord came unto me saying: "Jeremiah! What seest thou?" And I said: "I see the branch of an **evergreen** tree." Then said the Lord unto me: "Thou hast well seen: for I am ever watching over My Word to perform it."

And the Word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying: "What seest thou?" And I said: "I see a boiling pot, and it is turned toward the south." Then the Lord said unto me: "Out of the North an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land: for lo! I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the **North**, saith the Lord: and they shall come, and shall set every one his seat at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. And I will utter My judgments against them, touching all their wickedness, because they have forsaken Me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the work of their own hands. Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins and arise, and speak unto them, all that I

command thee. Be not dismayed at their faces; be not afraid before them. For, behold! I have made thee, this day, a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee saith the Lord, to deliver thee." (Ch. i. 4-19.)

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLIEST PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF THE LAW BOOK (626-621 B.C.).

The Word of the Lord came to me, saying :
 "Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying,
 Thus saith the Lord :
 I remember thee, the devotion of thy youth, the love of
 thine espousals,
 When thou followed'st me in the wilderness, in a barren
 land!
 Israel was all for Jehovah, even the first fruits of his
 increase.
 All who dishonoured * Him were guilty—evil came upon
 them."

An expostulation.

Hear ye the Word of the Lord, O House of Jacob, and
 all ye families of the House of Israel !
 Thus saith the Lord :

* By devouring the first fruits.—(Deut. xxvi. 10.)

What injustice have your fathers found in Me? That they
are gone from me!

That they have followed false gods, and have become false!
They say not, "Where is the Lord that brought us up from
Egypt's land!

That led us through the Wilderness—a land of deserts, and pits!
A land of drought, and the shadow of death!

A land that none passed through—where no one dwelt!"

And I brought you into a garden-land, to eat its fruit, and
goodliness;

But when ye entered—ye defiled My land!

And My heritage, ye made it an abomination!

The priests say not, Where is Jehovah?

Those that handle the law—they knew Me not!

The Shepherds—they also rebelled against Me!

The Prophets—they prophesied by **Baal**: they followed
what profits not!

Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and
with your children's children will I plead.

For pass over to the country of **Chittim**! and see! Send
also to **Kedar**!

Yea, consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing!

Hath a nation changed gods, which are even yet no gods?

But My people have changed their glory, for that which
profits not!

Be ye astonished, O ye heavens, at this! Be ye horrified,
yea, utterly amazed,

Saith the Lord!

For my people have committed two evils!

They have forsaken Me—the fountain of living waters!

They have hewed out for themselves cisterns—broken
cisterns that hold no water! (Ch. ii. 1-13.)

A reminder of God's goodness.

Was Israel a slave? Was he home-born? Why has he
become a prey?

The young lions roar over him! They yell, and make his
land a desert!

His towns—they are destroyed! They are without in-
habitant!

The Children of **Noph**, and **Tahpanhes**—they have fed
upon the crown of thy head!

Has not this been procured for thyself, even by forsaking
the Lord,

Thy God, when He was leading thee in the way?

And now what hast thou to do with Egypt, to drink the
Black Nile?

Or what hast thou to do with Asshur, to drink of the
Euphrates?

Thine own wickedness shall correct thee! Thy back-
slidings shall reprove thee!

That thou mayst know, and see, how evil and bitter it is

That thou hast forsaken the Lord, thy God, that My fear
is not in thee!

Saith the Lord God of Hosts.

For from of old thou hast broken thy yoke, and burst thy
bonds!

Thou hast said, "I will not serve!" Then upon every high
hill

And under every green tree thou liedst down as an harlot!

Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed!

But how art thou turned from Me—branches of a strange
vine!

For though thou wash with nitre, and take thee much
soap—

Thine iniquity is crimson-dyed before Me, saith the Lord
God! (Ch. ii. 14-22.)

A vain defence.

How canst thou say, "I am not polluted: I have not gone
after Baal!"

See thy way in the **Valley!** Note what thou hast done!

A young she-camel, running about hither and thither!

A wild she-ass, used to the desert, snuffing up the air in her
greed!

In her lust, who can hinder her? All that seek her weary
Themselves not. In her month they find her.

Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from
thirst!

But thou saidst: It's of no use: no!

I have loved strangers, and with strangers I will go!

As the thief is ashamed when caught, so is Israel's House
ashamed!

They, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their
prophets!

They say to a block, My father! To a stone, My mother!

But to Me they turn their back, and not their face.

In the time of their trouble, they will say, "Up, and save
us!"

Where are the gods that thou hast made? Let them arise!

If they can save thee, in the time of thy trouble.

For as the number of thy towns, are thy gods, O Judah.

(Ch. ii. 23-28.)

A lamentation over Judah's apostasy.

Saith the Lord:

How can you dispute with Me? Ye have all rebelled
against Me!

In vain have I smitten your children! Ye received not correction!

Your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a roaring lion!

O ye generation! See the Word of Jehovah!

Have I been a desert unto Israel? A land of darkness?

Why say My people, "We are free: we come no more to Thee"?

Can a maid forget her ornaments? A bride her attire?

Yet My people have forgotten Me—days without number!

How thou trimmest thy way to seek love-intrigue!

Ah! thou hast accustomed thy ways to wickedness!

Even in thy skirts has been found the blood of the innocent poor!

Not in some act of violence did I find it, but everywhere!

Yet thou sayest, "Truly, I am innocent! Surely His anger is turned from me!"

Lo! I will judge thee for saying, "I have not sinned."

Why goest thou about so much to change thy course?

Of **Egypt** thou shalt be ashamed, as thou wast of Asshur!

Yea, thence also shalt thou go forth, with thy hands on thy head.

For the Lord hath rejected thy supports; in them thou shalt not prosper.

If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, to be another man's,

Will he return to her again? Will not that land be much defiled?

Though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers: yet return to Me,

Saith the Lord.

Lift up thine eyes to the hills! See where thou hast not committed whoredom!

By the roads hast thou sat, as the Arab in the desert !
 Thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms, and
 wickedness,
 Therefore the showers have been withheld, and the latter
 rain !
 But thou hast had a whore's forehead : thou refused'st to be
 ashamed !
 Wilt thou not now cry to Me, My Father ! Thou art the
 friend of my youth !
 Will He keep up His anger for ever ? Will He keep it to the
 end ?
 Lo ! thou hast spoken thus ! thou hast done evil, and had
 thy way. (Ch. ii. 29—iii. 5.)

A complaint. Judah follows Israel.*

Hast thou seen what backsliding Israel hath done ?
 She would go up on every high hill, and under every green
 tree,
 And there would play the harlot's part !

And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou
 unto Me ; but she returned not. And her treacherous sister
 Judah saw it. Yea, she saw that even because backsliding
 Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away, and
 given her a bill of divorce : yet her treacherous sister Judah
 feared not, but went and played the harlot also ! And it
 came to pass through the greatness † of her whoredom,
 that she defiled the land and committed adultery with
 stones and stocks. But notwithstanding all this her
 treacherous sister hath not turned unto Me with her

* Here in the text is a note of time as follows :—

The Lord spake also these words unto me in the days of Josiah the
 king.

† Sin so great, as to cry unto God.—Gen. iv. 10.

whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord. And the Lord said unto me, Backsliding Israel hath shown herself more just than treacherous Judah. (Ch. iii. 6-11.)

Message of Pardon to Israel.

Go and proclaim these words toward the North, and say :

Thus saith the Lord :

Return, thou backsliding Israel ! I will not look in anger upon you !

For I am merciful, saith the Lord : I'll not keep up anger for ever !

Only acknowledge thine iniquity, in rebelling against the Lord thy God ;

In running to strangers under every green tree, in not obeying My voice,

Saith the Lord.

Turn, O backsliding Israel, saith the Lord : for I am your Husband !

Then I'll take you, one of a city, and two of a tribe, and bring you to Zion.

And I'll give you Shepherds, according to Mine own heart, They shall rule you in knowledge, and understanding.

The Better coming Day.

And it shall come to pass when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall no more say, "Ark of the Covenant of the Lord." Neither shall they remember it : neither shall they miss it : neither shall it be made any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of Jehovah, and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the Name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem : they shall not walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. (Ch. iii. 12-17.)

A re-united people.

In those days the House of Judah shall go to the House of Israel ; and they shall come together out of the land of the North and out of all countries, to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers. And I said :

How I would put thee among the Children, giving thee a pleasant land,

A heritage,—the most glorious among the nations !

Yea, I said :

Thou wouldest call Me, My father ! Thou wouldest not forsake Me !

A Call to Repentance.

Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, So have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O House of Israel, Saith the Lord.

Hark ! There 's heard upon the bare hills the weeping, the supplication of the Children of Israel !

For having perverted their way : for having forgotten the Lord, their God.

Return, ye backsliding Children ! I will heal your backslidings !

The Response of Penitents.

Behold ! We come to Thee ! Thou art the Lord our God ! Truly in vain are the hills, the thronging on the mountains ! Truly in the Lord our God alone is the Salvation of Israel ! The **Shame** hath devoured the labour of our fathers, from our youth ;

Their flocks, and herds : their sons and daughters !

Let us lie down in our shame ! Let confusion cover us !

For we have sinned against the Lord our God ! We and our fathers,

From our youth even to this day ! We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

The Divine Attitude.

If thou wilt return to Me, O Israel, saith the Lord : if thou wilt return,

If thou wilt put away thine abominations out of My sight : if thou wilt not wander from Me !

If thou wilt swear, in truth, justice, and righteousness, "As the Lord liveth ;"

Then the nations shall bless themselves by Him, and in Him shall they glory. (Ch. iii. 18—iv. 1, 2.)

CHAPTER III.

A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL REFORM DEMANDED.

Outward reform not enough.

Thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem : Make for yourselves fallow ground ! Sow not among thorns ! Circumcise yourselves to the Lord ! Circumcise your hearts ! Ye Men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem ! Lest my fury burn like fire, that no one quencheth, for the evil of your doings.

A warning Note.

Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem : and say : Blow ye the trumpet in the land ! Cry ! Gather together !

Yea, say :

Assemble yourselves, and go into the defenced cities ! Set up the standard toward Zion ! Flee ! Stay not !

For I am bringing evil from the North, even a great destruction !

Illustrations of the coming judgment.

There's a lion come out of his thicket ! The destroyer of nations is on his way !

He's gone forth from his place, to make thy land desolate : Thy cities shall be laid waste, without inhabitant !

For this gird you with sackcloth ! Lament and howl !

For the fierce anger of the Lord ! 'Tis not turned back from us.

Thus saith the Lord !—At that day it shall come to pass ; The heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes !

The priests shall be astonished ! The prophets shall wonder !

A personal interjection.

Then said I : Alas, Lord God ! Surely thou hast greatly **deceived** this people, and Jerusalem, saying : “ Ye shall have peace ” : whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

Second illustration of the coming judgment.

At that time shall it be said to this people, and to Jerusalem, A hot wind from the bare hills in the Wilderness,

Toward the Daughter of My people, not to fan, nor to cleanse,

A storm-wind comes thence at My call ! Now is My judgment-day !

Behold ! He comes up as clouds ! His chariots as a whirlwind !

His horses are swifter than eagles ! Woe unto us ! We are ruined !

O Jerusalem ! Wash thine heart from evil, that thou mayst be saved.

How long shall thy wicked thoughts lodge within thee?
 For, hark! One calleth from **Dan**! From **Mount Ephraim**
 one makes known the evil!
 Announce it to the nations! Behold! Call it out to
 Jerusalem!
 Besiegers come from afar! They raise their voice against
 the cities of Judah.
 As keepers of a field! They are round about her!
 For she hath rebelled against Me, saith the Lord.
 Thy way and thy doings have brought these things upon
 thee!
 This thy wickedness, that a bitter thing cometh, that it
 reaches even thine heart. (Ch. iv. 3-18.)

A prophetic Lamentation.

My bowels! My bowels! I am pained at my heart! My
 heart moaneth!
 I cannot be quiet—for thou hast heard, my soul! the
 trumpet's sound, the alarm of war.
 "Destruction upon destruction," is the cry! The whole
 land is ruined!
 Suddenly my tents are ruined! In a moment my curtains!
 How long am I to see the standard? To hear the sound
 of the trumpet?
 For My people are foolish: they know Me not! Silly children,
 without sense!
 They are wise to do evil, but to do good, they have no
 knowledge!
 I looked at the earth! And lo! it is waste and empty!
 At the heavens, and they had no light.
 I looked at the mountains! And lo! they trembled! All
 the hills moved to and fro!

I looked! And lo! man is gone! The birds of the air are
flown!

I looked! And lo! the garden is a desert—all the cities are
broken down

At the Presence of the Lord! By His fierce anger!

For thus saith the Lord:

The whole land shall be desolate! Yet will I not make a
full end!

For this shall the earth mourn! And the heavens above be
in black!

Because I have spoken! I have purposed!

I will not repent, neither will I turn back from it!

The whole land fleeth at the noise of the horsemen and
the bowmen!

They go into thickets! They climb up on the rocks!

Every city shall be forsaken, not one dwelling therein!

And thou ruined one! What doest thou clothing thyself
with purple?

Thou deckest thyself with ornaments of gold! Thou
markest thine eyes with paint!

In vain thou makest thyself fair! Thy lovers despise thee,
they seek thy life!

For I have heard a cry as of one in travail! The anguish
as of one bringing forth her first born!

The cry of the Daughter of Zion, that sigheth deeply, that
stretcheth out her hands!

“Woe is me! For my soul fainteth before the murderers!”

(Ch. iv. 19-31.)

The sinful state of Jerusalem set forth.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and
see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if
ye can find *a man, if there be* one that executeth justice,

that seeketh good faith: and I will pardon her. For though they say, "As the Lord liveth:" surely they swear falsely! O Lord! dost Thou not look for good faith? Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved! Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction! They have made their faces harder than a rock: they have refused to return!

Therefore I said, "Surely these are the poor, the foolish ones, for they know not the Way of the Lord, and the justice of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them: for they know the Way of the Lord and the justice of their God. Yet these too have broken the yoke and burst the bands: wherefore, a lion out of the forest shall slay them, the evening wolf shall rend them, a leopard shall lurk near their towns. Every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces, because their rebellions are many, and their backslidings are increased!"

(Ch. v. 1-6.)

A cry of sorrow.

How can I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken Me!

They have sworn by them that are no Gods! Though they were sworn to Me!

They have committed adultery! They have gone in crowds to the harlot's house!

They were as fat horses, roaming about, each neighing after his neighbour's wife.

Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord.

Shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

(Ch. v. 7-9.)

For among My people are found the wicked!

They lay wait, as fowlers; they set a trap, they catch men!

As a cage is full of birds, their houses are full of deceit :
 Therefore they are become great, and waxen rich ;
 They are fat, they shine, they surpass in deeds of wicked-
 ness !

They plead not the cause, the cause of the fatherless !
 That they should prosper. Yea, the right of the poor, for it
 they do not plead.

Shall I not visit for these things ? saith the Lord.

Shall not My soul be avenged, on such a nation as this ?

(Ch. v. 26-29.)

Judgment announced.

Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy, but make not a
 full end ;

Take away her branches, for they are not the Lord's ;
 For the House of Israel, and the House of Judah ! saith
 the Lord,

They have dealt very treacherously against Me.

They have denied the Lord, and said : " That 's not true !
 No evil shall come upon us !

" We shall see neither sword nor famine !

" And the prophets have become wind : the Word is not
 in them ! " *

Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of Hosts : " Because ye
 say this, behold, I will make My Words in thy mouth fire,
 and this people wood, and it shall devour them. "

The Foe described.

Thus saith the Lord :

Lo ! I am bringing a nation upon you from afar, O House
 of Israel !

A well equipt nation, an ancient nation : Their language

* " Thus shall it be done to them " : omitted by many.

Thou knowest not ! What they say, thou understandest not !
 Their quiver is as an open sepulchre ! They are all men of
 might !

And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread !

They shall eat up thy sons and thy daughters !

They shall eat up thy vines, and thy fig-trees !

They shall batter down thy strong towns, in which thou
 trustest !

Nevertheless in these days, I will not make a full end, saith
 the Lord. (Ch. v. 10-18.)

Judgment again proclaimed.

Therefore thus the Lord :

Behold ! I am laying stumbling-blocks before this people.
 Father and son shall fall on them : both neighbour and
 friend shall perish.

Thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! A people cometh from the North country !
 A great nation is being raised up from earth's farthest parts !
 They lay hold on bow and spear ! They are cruel, and
 without mercy !

Their voice roareth like the sea ! They ride upon horses
 Set in array as men of war 'gainst thee, O Daughter of Zion !
 We have heard about them : our hands wax feeble !
 Anguish takes hold on us ! Pain, as of a woman in travail !
 Go not forth in the field, nor walk by the way.

For the sword of the enemy ! Fear is on every side !

O Daughter of My people ! Gird thee with sackcloth !

Yea, wallow thyself in ashes ! Mourn only as for an only
 son !

Most bitter mourning ! For the foe cometh suddenly upon
 us ! (Ch. vi. 21-26.)

The reason for this judgment.

And it shall come to pass when ye shall say, "Wherefore doeth the Lord our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken Me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not your own. Declare this in the House of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying :

An earnest exhortation.

Hear ye this, O foolish people! That have no understanding!

That have eyes, and see not! That have ears, and hear not!

Saith the Lord :

Will ye not fear Me? Will ye not tremble at My presence?

I who have placed the sand for the bound of the sea,

By a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it.

And though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail.

Though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it!

But this people have a revolting, and rebellious heart;

They have revolted, and gone away!

And they do not say in their heart, Let us fear the Lord our God!

'Tis He who giveth the rain, the former, and the latter, in its season!

He who preserveth for us the appointed weeks of harvest!

Your iniquities have turned away these things.

And your sins have withholden good things from you.

(Ch. v. 19-25.)

Certainty of Punishment. Flight advised.

O ye Children of Benjamin! Gather yourselves to leave Jerusalem!

Blow the warning trumpet in **Tekoa**! Set up a beacon in
Beth-Hakkerem!

For evil cometh out of the North! Even a great destruc-
tion.

Thou art like a meadow, tenderly cared for, O Daughter of
Zion!

Yet against thee come the shepherds with their flocks.

Round thee they shall pitch their tents: they shall eat
bare, each his own spot.

Prepare war against her! Arise! Let us go up at noon!

Woe unto us! The day goeth away! The shadows of
evening fall around us!

Arise! Let us go up by night! Let us destroy her
palaces. (Ch. vi. 1-5.)

For thus hath the Lord of Hosts said:

Hew ye down her trees, and cast up a mount against
Jerusalem.

This is the city to be visited! She is wholly oppression in
her midst!

As a fountain casteth forth its waters; so she casteth
forth her wickedness!

Violence and spoiling is heard in her! Before Me
continually are grief and wounds!

Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest My soul be parted
from thee.

Lest I make thee desolate, a land without inhabitant!

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts:

They shall throughly glean the remnant of Israel, as a vine,
Turning their hand as one that gathereth grapes back unto
the baskets!

To whom shall I speak, and give warning that they may
hear?

Lo ! Their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken !
Lo ! The Word of the Lord is unto them a reproach :
they delight not in it !
Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord ! I am weary
with holding in !
I will pour it out upon the children in the streets : upon the
gathering of young men !
For both husband and wife shall be taken, the aged with
him that is full of days !
And their houses shall be turned to others, their fields and
wives together.
For I will stretch out My hand upon the inhabitants of the
land,
Saith the Lord.
From the least of them, even to the greatest, all are given
to covetousness,
Yea, from the prophet even to the priest, every one dealeth
falsely.
For they would heal the hurt of the Daughter of My people
slightly :
They are saying "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.
A wonderful, and horrible thing is committed in the land,
The prophets prophesy falsely ! The priests rule at their
bidding !
And My people love to have it so ! But what will ye do
in the end thereof ?
They should be ashamed, for they have committed abomina-
tion,
Yet they are not ashamed, neither can they blush.
Therefore they shall fall among them that fall.
When I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.

(Ch. vi. 6-15 ; v. 30, 31.)

Repentance urged in vain.

Thus saith the Lord :

Stand ye in the ways, and see. Yea, ask for the old paths.
Where is the good way? Walk therein, and ye shall find
rest for your souls.

But they said :

“We will not walk therein.”

I also set watchmen over you, saying, “Hearken to the
sound of the trumpet.”

But they said : “We will not hearken.”

An appeal to the nations.

Therefore hear, ye nations, and know what I testify against
them.

Hear, O earth! Behold! I bring evil upon this people—
The fruit of their thoughts, for they have not hearkened to
My Words ;

And as for My law, they have rejected it.

Of what use to me is the incense of Sheba—the sweet cane
from afar?

Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable! Your sacrifices
are not sweet unto Me! (Ch. vi. 16-20.)

The Prophet's position and duty.

I have set thee as a tester and refiner among My people :
That thou mayest know, and try their way.

They are all grievous revolvers, going about slandering ;

They are copper and iron : corrupt doers are they all !

The bellows blow, but the lead is consumed.

In vain the founder melts, for the wicked are not separated.

Refuse silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath
rejected them. (Ch. vi. 27-30.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE PREACHING OF THE LAW BOOK (620-609 B.C.).

The circumstances.

The Word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying :

Hear ye the Words of this Covenant : and speak thou unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God of Israel :

Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the Words of this Covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the heated furnace, saying, "Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you : so shall ye be My people, and I will be your God : that I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey as it is this day."

Then answered I and said, "Amen, O Lord."

Then the Lord said unto me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying : Hear ye the Words of the Covenant, and do them. For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, unto this day, rising early, and protesting, saying, 'Obey My voice ;' yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every man after the stubbornness of his own evil heart : therefore I have brought upon them all the Words of this Covenant, which I commanded them to do : but they did them not."

Then the Lord said unto me :

A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and the

inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear My Words: and they have gone after other gods to serve them. The House of Israel, and the House of Judah have broken My Covenant, which I made with their fathers. Therefore, thus saith the Lord: Behold! I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape, and though they shall cry unto Me, I will not hearken unto them. Then shall the cities of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry unto the gods, unto whom they offer incense, but they shall not help them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah! And according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the Shame, even altars to burn incense unto Baal! Therefore, as for thee, pray not for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time when they cry unto Me for their trouble. What hath My beloved to do in My House, to work an evil device? Can vows, and holy flesh remove from thee thy wickedness? Shalt thou escape by means of these things?

The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit. With a rushing mighty sound He hath kindled fire upon it, and its branches are broken. For the Lord of Hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the House of Israel, and of the House of Judah, which they have chosen to do, provoking Me to anger by offering incense unto Baal.

(Ch. xi. 1-17.)

The Prophet in persecution. In deep despair.

And the Lord gave me knowledge, and I knew: Thou showed'st me their doings.

But I was like a gentle lamb, led to the slaughter.
 And I knew not that they had devised measures against
 me, saying :

“Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof: let us cut
 him off

From the land of the living, that his name may no more be
 remembered.”

But O Lord of Hosts ! Thou that judgest in righteousness !
 Thou that triest the reins, and the heart,

Let me see Thy vindication among them ! Unto Thee
 have I committed my cause. (Ch. xi. 18-20.)

Give heed to me, O Lord ! Hearken to the voice of them
 that contend with me !

Shall evil be recompensed for good ? They have digged a
 pit for me !

Remember how I stood before Thee to speak good for
 them, to turn away Thy wrath from them.

Therefore deliver up their children to the famine ! Destroy
 them by the sword !

Let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be
 husbandless !

Let their young men be put to death ! Let their young
 men be smitten by the sword in the battle !

Let a cry be heard from their houses, when Thou bringest
 a troop suddenly upon them !

For they have digged a pit to take me : they hid snares for
 my feet !

Yet, Lord, Thou knowest all their counsel against me, to
 slay me.

Forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from
 Thy sight.

Let them be guilty before Thee ! Deal with them in the
 time of Thine anger. (Ch. xviii. 19-23.)

The Divine Answer.

Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the men of Anathoth that seek thy life, saying, Prophesy not in the Name of the Lord that thou die not by our hand: Therefore thus saith the Lord:

Behold! I will punish them! The young men shall die
by the sword!

Their sons and their daughters shall die by famine!

There shall be no remnant of them!

I will bring upon the men of Anathoth the year of their
visitation! (Ch. xi. 21-23.)

The Prophet's response.

Righteous art Thou, O Lord! when I plead with Thee.

Yet will I debate with Thee about Thy dealings.

Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Why are
they secure that deal very treacherously?

Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root!

They grow, yea, they bring forth fruit! Thou art near their
mouth!

Far off from their thoughts!

But Thou, Lord! knowest me! Thou hast seen me, and
tried my heart towards Thee.

Set them apart as sheep for the slaughter! Hand them
over to the day of slaughter!

How long shall the land mourn? And the herbs of the
whole plain wither?

For the wickedness of them that dwell therein!

The beasts are consumed, and the birds! Because they
said:

“He shall not see our latter end.”

The Divine reproof.

If thou runnest with footmen, and art weary, how canst thou contend with horses?

If in a land of peace thou art confident, how wilt thou do in the thickets of Jordan?

For even thy brethren, the house of thy father have dealt treacherously with thee,

Yea, they have called aloud after thee! Believe them not, when they speak fair words to thee! (Ch. xii. 1-6.)

CHAPTER V.

JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES IN THE OPENING OF
JEHOIAKIM'S REIGN (609 B.C.).

Jeremiah at the Temple.

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, came this Word from the Lord, saying :

Thus saith the Lord : Stand in the Court of the Lord's House and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's House, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them. Diminish not a word. If so be they will hearken, and turn away every man from his evil way, that I may repent Me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings. And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord : If ye will not hearken to Me, to walk in My law, which I have set before you : to hearken to the words of My servants, whom I sent unto you, rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened. Then I will make this House like

Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth. So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the House of the Lord.

(Ch. xxvi. 1-7.)

A call to spiritual religion. True Temple worship.

The Word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying :
Stand in the gate of the Lord's House, and proclaim there
this Word, and say :

Hear the Word of the Lord ! All ye of Judah, that enter
in at these gates to worship the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

Amend your ways, and your doings, and I will cause you
to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying,
The Temple of the Lord ! The Temple of the Lord !
These are ! Nay, but thoroughly amend your ways and
your doings. If ye thoroughly execute justice between one
another : if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and
the widow, and shed not the blood of the innocent in this
place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt : then will
I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to
your fathers for ever and ever.

Behold ! Ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.
What ! Will ye steal, and murder, commit adultery and
swear falsely, burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other
gods, whom ye knew not ? And then come, and stand
before Me in this House, which is called by My Name, and
say, "We are delivered that we may do all these abomina-
tions !" Is this House, which is called by My Name,
become a den of robbers in your eyes ? Behold ! I, even I,
have seen it, saith the Lord.

But go ye now to My place which was in Shiloh, where

I did set My Name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord (though I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not : and though I called you, but ye answered not), therefore will I do unto the House, which is called by My Name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh : and I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore, pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me : for I will not hear thee.

Seest thou what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough to make cakes to the **Queen of Heaven**, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger !

- Do they provoke Me to anger, saith the Lord? Do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith the Lord God : Behold ! Mine anger, and My fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground, and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched. (Ch. vii. 1-20.)

The Divine requirement.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :
Take your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and eat them
as flesh !

For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt

concerning burnt-offerings, or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying: "Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people, and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels, in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto Me, nor inclined their ear but hardened their neck, and did worse than their fathers. (*And though thou speakest all these words unto them, yet they will not hearken to thee: though thou call unto them, yet they will not answer thee.*)"* (Ch. vii. 21-27.)

The Prophetic lamentation.

And thou shalt say unto them :
 This nation ! She obeyeth not the Voice of the Lord their
 God, nor receiveth correction !
 Good faith is perished ! 'Tis cut off from their mouth !
 Cut off thine hair, and cast it away ! Take up a lamentation
 on the bare hills !
 For the Lord hath rejected, and forsaken a generation dis-
 pleasing to Him.
 For the Children of Judah have done evil in My sight,
 saith the Lord.
 They have set their abominations in the House called by
 My Name, polluting it.
 And they have built altars in **Tophet**, in the Valley of the
 son of Hinnom

* Omitted in LXX., probably a later note.

To burn their sons and their daughters in the fire :
Which I commanded not, neither came it into My heart.
Therefore, behold ! the days come, saith the Lord :
It shall no more be called Tophet, nor the Valley of the
son of Hinnom
But the Valley of Slaughter !
For they shall bury in Tophet, because there is no other
place.
And the carcasses of the people shall be meat for the birds
of the air
And for the beasts of the earth ! None shall frighten them
away !
Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, from
the streets of Jerusalem
The voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness !
The voice of the bride, and the voice of the bridegroom !
For the land shall be desolate !

The punishment described.

At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of his priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves : And they shall spread them before the sun and the moon, and all the stars of heaven, which they have loved, and served, and after which they have walked and which they have sought unto: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried: they shall be for dung upon the surface of the earth. And death shall be chosen rather than life by the residue of the remnant of this evil generation, in all places, whither I have driven them, saith the Lord of Hosts.

(Ch. vii. 29—viii. 3.)

An expression of wonder.

Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord :
Do men fall, and not rise? Do they turn away, and not
return?

Why do this people of Jerusalem slide back in a perpetual
backsliding?

Holding fast deceit, refusing to return?

I bent my ear, and listened. They were not speaking
aright.

Not one repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, What have
I done!

Every one turneth to his own way, as a horse that rusheth
wildly in the battle.

Yea, the stork in the sky knoweth her appointed times :

The turtle, the swallow, and the crane—they observe the
time of their coming :

But my people ! they know not the just law of the Lord.

How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is
with us ?

Lo ! truly the false pen of the scribe hath made falsehood
of it !

The wise will be ashamed : they will be dismayed, and
taken !

Lo ! They have rejected the Word of the Lord ! What
wisdom have they? (Ch. viii. 4-9.)

Judgment denounced.

*Therefore will I give their wives to others—their fields to
their conquerors :*

*For every one, from the least even to the greatest, is given to
covetousness ;*

*From the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth
falsely :*

*They would heal the hurt of the Daughter of My people
lightly :*

Saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace !

*They will be put to shame, for they have committed abomina-
tion.*

Yet they are not ashamed, neither can they blush.

*Therefore, they shall fall with them that fall. In the day of
their*

*Visitation, they shall be cast out : saith the Lord.**

I will surely consume them : saith the Lord.

No grapes on the vine! No figs on the fig-tree! The
leaf fading!

What I have given them, passing away from them!

An exhortation to action.

Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves!

Let us enter into the defenced cities! Let us be silent
there!

For the Lord our God hath put us to silence! He hath
given us water of gall to drink!

For we have sinned against the Lord.

We looked for peace, but no good came! for a time of
healing, but behold! dismay!

The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan!

The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of
his strong ones.

And they came, and devoured the land, and all in it:

The city and those that dwelt in it.

For behold I am sending serpents, basilisks among you.

They will not be charmed, and they shall bite you: saith
the Lord.

(Ch. viii. 10-17.)

* Vers. 10-12 omitted in LXX., cf. ch. vi. 14 (p. 32).

The Prophet's lamentation.

O for comfort in my sorrow! My heart is faint within me!
Hark! The cry of the Daughter of my people from far off
lands!

“Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her midst?”
Why have they provoked Me to anger with their graven
images, and with strange vanities?

The harvest is past! The fruit-gathering is ended! And
we are not helped!

For the hurt of the Daughter of my people am I hurt!

I am in mourning! Astonishment hath taken hold upon
me!

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?
Why, then, is nothing done for the healing of the Daughter
of my people?

Oh! that my head were waters! Mine eyes, a fountain of
tears!

That I might weep day and night for the slain of the
Daughter of my people!

Oh! that I had in the wilderness, the lodging place of way-
faring men,

That I might leave my people, and go from them!

(Ch. viii. 18—ix. 2.)

The state of Judah set forth.

For they are all adulterers—an assembly of treacherous
men!

They bend their tongue, as their bow of falsehood.

They use not their might in good faith, in the land!

They proceed from evil to evil! They know Me not,

Saith the Lord!

Take ye heed every one of his neighbour! Trust ye not in
any brother!

For every brother practises deceit ; every neighbour goeth
about slandering !

Every one deceives his neighbour ! He speaks not the truth !

They have taught their tongue to tell lies ! They weary
themselves to commit iniquity !

Thy habitation is in the midst of deceit ! Through deceit
they refuse to know Me,

Saith the Lord.

Their tongue is a deadly arrow : it speaketh deceit !

They speak peaceably to their neighbours, but in heart they
lie in wait !

(Ch. ix. 2-8.)

Judgment again.

Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts :

Behold ! I will melt them and try them !

How else can I act because of the sin of the Daughter of
My people ?

Should I not visit them for these things ? Saith the Lord ?

Should not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this ?

On the mountains let me take up a weeping, and a wailing !

In the habitation in the wilderness a lamentation !

For they are burned up, none passeth through them ! They
hear not the voice of cattle ! The bird of the air !

The beast of the field ! They are fled ! They are gone !

I am making Jerusalem heaps, a den of jackals !

I am making the cities of Judah desolate, without in-
habitant !

(Ch. ix. 9-11.)

The explanation. Question and answer.

Who is the wise man, that he may understand this ?

To whom hath the Mouth of the Lord spoken, that he may
declare it ?

Why is the land perished? Why is it burned up, like a wilderness,

With none passing through it?

And the Lord saith :

Because they have forsaken My law, which I set before them :

Because they have not obeyed My voice, neither walked therein.

But they have walked after the stubbornness of their own heart ;

And after the Baals, which their fathers taught them.

Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Behold! I will feed this people with wormwood! And give them water of gall to drink!

I will scatter them also among the nations, whom neither they nor their fathers have known ;

And I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them !

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts :

Consider ye! Call for the mourning women to come!

And summon the skilled mourners to come!

Yea, let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us!

That our eyes may run down with tears! Our eyelids gush with water!

For hark! Out of Zion is heard the wailing :

“How are we ruined! We are greatly confounded!

We have abandoned the land! Our houses are thrown down!”

Mourning inculcated.

Yea, hear the Word of the Lord, O ye women, and let your ear receive the Word of His mouth, and teach your

daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation! For

Death is come up into our windows! 'Tis entered into our palaces!

It cuts off the young children from without! The young men from the streets!

The carcasses of men fall as dung upon the open field!

As the handful after the reaper, and none gathereth!

(Ch. ix. 12-22.)

A call to flight.

Gather up thy goods! Clear out of the land, O thou distressed one!

For thus saith the Lord:

Behold! I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this time!

I will distress them, that they may be captured!

A cry of distress.

Woe is Me! O my hurt! My wound is grievous!

But I say, Truly this is my grief, and I must bear it!

My tent is laid waste! All my cords are broken!

My children have left me, and are here no more!

I have none to pitch my tent, and set up my curtains!

The shepherds have become stupid! They do not seek the Lord!

They have not acted wisely! All their flocks are scattered!

Lo! Hark! A report cometh! A great movement from the North!

To make the cities of Judah desolate—a den of jackals.

A prophetic soliloquy and prayer.

O Lord! I know that the way of man is not his own.

It is not for him to walk, and direct his own steps.

O Lord! Correct me, but with justice!
 Not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing.
 Pour out Thy fury upon the nations that know Thee not!
 Upon the tribes that call not upon Thy Name!
 For they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him!
 They have consumed him, and made his habitation
 desolate. (Ch. x. 17-25.)

A lamentation over the Temple.

I have forsaken Mine House; I have cast off Mine heritage!
 I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand
 of her enemies!

Mine heritage has become to Me as a lion in the forest;
 It has roared out against Me, therefore have I hated it.
 Is Mine heritage unto Me as a bird of prey? Are birds of
 prey round about her?

Come ye! Assemble all the beasts of the field! Bring
 them to devour her!

Many Shepherds have destroyed My Vineyard! They have
 trodden My portion under foot!

They have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.
 They have made it desolate! In desolation it mourneth
 unto Me!

The whole land is made desolate, because no man hath
 laid it to heart!

Spoilers are come upon all the bare heights in the wilderness!
 The sword of the Lord devoureth the land from end to end!
 No one hath peace!

They have sown wheat, but reap thorns! They have put
 themselves to pain, but they have no profit!

They are ashamed of their produce, because of the fierce
 anger of the Lord.

A promise of restoration.

Thus saith the Lord: Against all Mine evil neighbours that touch the inheritance, which I have caused My people Israel to inherit.

Behold! I will pluck out the House of Judah from among them!

And it shall come to pass after I have plucked them out, I will again have compassion on them, and bring them back, Every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

And it shall come to pass, if they diligently learn the way of My people,

To swear by My Name, "As the Lord liveth,"

Even as they taught My people to swear by Baal,

Then shall they be built in the midst of My people.

But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up, and destroy that nation.

Saith the Lord.

(Ch. xii. 7-17.)

Sabbath profanation condemned.

Thus saith the Lord unto me :

Go and stand in the gate of the Children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, and say unto them: Hear ye the Word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem that enter in by these gates. Thus saith the Lord: Take earnest thought, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day as I commanded your fathers; (but they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff that they might not hear, nor receive instruc-

tion); and it shall come to pass: if ye diligently hearken unto Me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath, by doing no work therein: then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes, sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots, and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain for ever. And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the Lowland, and from the Hill country, and from the South country, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing thank-offerings unto the House of the Lord.

The alternative.

But if ye will not hearken unto Me, to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched! (Ch. xvii. 19-27.)

A solemn warning.

Now, therefore, go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: Thus saith the Lord:

Behold! I am purposing evil against you! I am devising against you!

Return ye now, every one of you from his evil way! Make your ways and your doings good.

Yet they say, "It's no use! We will walk after our plans: We will every one do according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.

Therefore thus saith the Lord :
 Ask ye now among the nations. Who hath heard such a
 thing ?
 The virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing !
 Doth the snow of Lebanon cease to flow from the rock into
 the field ?
 Or do the cool, rippling waters, from afar, dry up ?
 Yet My people have forgotten me ! They have burned in-
 cense to idols !
 These have caused them to stumble in their ways, the
 ancient paths ;
 To walk in new paths, a way not cast up !
 To make their land an astonishment, a perpetual hissing !
 Every one that passeth by shall be astonished, and shake
 his head.
 I will scatter them, as with an East wind, before the enemy :
 I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of
 their calamity ! (Ch. xviii. 11-17.)

A conspiracy against the Prophet.

Then said they, Come, and let us devise measures against
 Jeremiah ;
 For teaching shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel
 from the wise, nor the Word from the prophet. Come
 and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not
 give heed to any of his words. (Ch. xviii. 18.)

The charge. In Jerusalem.

Now it came to pass when Jeremiah had made an end of
 speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak
 unto all the people, that the priests, and the prophets, and
 all the people took him saying, "Thou shalt surely die.
 Why hast thou prophesied in the Name of the Lord, saying,

“This House shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant.”

And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the House of the Lord. When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the **King's House** unto the House of the Lord, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's House. Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes, and to all the people, saying: “This man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears!”

The Prophet's defence.

Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes, and to all the people, saying: “The Lord sent me to prophesy against this House, and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will repent Him of the evil that He hath pronounced against you. As for me, I am in your hand. Do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring the blood of an innocent one upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.”

The decision.

Then said the princes, and all the people unto the priest, and to the prophets:—“This man is not worthy to die, for he hath spoken to us in the Name of the Lord our God.”

The grounds of acquittal.

Then rose up certain of the Elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying:—“Micah

the Morasthite prophesied in the days of **Hezekiah**, king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying: Thus saith the Lord:

Zion shall be ploughed as a field! Jerusalem shall become heaps!

Yea, the mountain of the Lord's House shall be as a wooded height!

Did Hezekiah, king of Judah, and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord, and beseech the Lord, and the Lord repented of the evil, which He had pronounced against them? But we are like to bring great evil upon ourselves."

The case of Urijah.

And there was also a man that prophesied in the Name of the Lord, **Urijah** the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, who prophesied against this city, and against this land, according to all the words of Jeremiah. And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went to Egypt. Then Jehoiakim sent men into Egypt, viz., **Elnathan**, the son of Achbor, and other men with him, and they brought Urijah out of Egypt, and set him before Jehoiakim the king: who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

But the hand of **Ahikam** the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death. (Ch. xxvi. 8-24.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROPHET AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AS INTERCESSOR
(609-605 B.C.).**Forbidden to marry.**

The Word of the Lord came also unto Me, saying :
"Thou shalt not take thee a wife, nor have sons and daughters in this place."

For thus saith the Lord concerning the sons, and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land :

They shall die of grievous deaths ! They shall not be lamented !

They shall not be buried ! They shall be as dung on the earth !

They shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine ! Their carcases shall be meat for the birds of the air, for the beasts of the field !

For thus saith the Lord :

Enter not into the house of mourning. Go not to lament nor bemoan them !

For I have taken away My friendship from this people, My loving-kindness, and mercies ! Saith the Lord.

Both great and small shall die in this land ! Without burial !

None shall mourn for them either cutting themselves, or shaving their head !

They shall not eat the bread of mourners, to comfort them for the dead.

They shall not drink the cup of consolation, even for father and mother.

Neither go thou into the house of feasting, to sit with them eating and drinking ;

For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

Behold ! I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days,

The voice of mirth and the voice of gladness.

The voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride !

(Ch. xvi. 1-9.)

A reason given.

And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee : “ Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great calamity against us ? What is our iniquity ? What is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God ? ”

Then shalt thou say unto them, “ Because your fathers have forsaken Me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken Me, and have not kept My Law : and ye have done worse than your fathers. For, behold, ye walk every one in the stubbornness of his evil heart, that ye may not hearken unto Me. Therefore will I hurl you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers, and there shall ye serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favour. (Ch. xvi. 10-13.)

An interjected Promise.

Therefore behold ! the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, “ The Lord liveth that brought up the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt : ” but “ The Lord liveth that brought up the Children of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the lands, whither He had

driven them." For I will again bring them into the land that I gave unto their fathers. (Ch. xvi. 14, 15.)

Judah's sin declared.

Thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! I send for many fishers, and they shall fish them !
Then I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt
them

From every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the
holes of the rocks !

For Mine eyes are upon all their ways ! They are not hid
from my Face !

Neither is their iniquity hid from Mine Eyes !

And first I will recompense their iniquity, and their sin
double :

For they have defiled My land with the carcasses of their
monsters !

My inheritance they have filled with their abominations !

(Ch. xvi. 16-18.)

The sin of idolatry to be acknowledged.*

O Lord, my strength ! My fortress ! My refuge in the day
of affliction !

The nations shall come unto Thee from the ends of the
earth, saying :

"Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanities, profitless
things !

Shall a man make gods unto himself ? and they no gods !"

Therefore behold ! I will this time cause them to acknow-
ledge,

I will cause them to acknowledge My hand, and My might.
They shall acknowledge that My Name is Jehovah.

* Leviticus xxvi. 3—xxvii. 34.

The sin of Judah! O'tis written with an iron pen, with a diamond point!

'Tis graven upon the tablet of their heart, upon the horns of their altars.

Whilst their children remember their altars, and their Asherahs!

Under every green tree, on every high hill!

O My mountain in the country! To the spoil I will give Thy substance, and all thy treasures

For the sin of the high places within thy borders.

And thou, with thy life alone, shalt go forth from thine heritage that I gave thee!

And I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in an unknown land!

*For ye have kindled a fire in Mine anger that shall burn for ever! **

(Ch. xvi. 19—xvii. 1-4.)

The true trust set forth.

Thus saith the Lord: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man,

That maketh flesh his arm! Whose heart departeth from the Lord!

He shall be like a forsaken one in the desert, not seeing when good cometh!

He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, a land salt, and unoccupied!

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord! Whose hope the Lord is!

He shall be as a tree planted by the water: that spreadeth out her roots to the river.

She will not fear when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green:

* See page 64, line 8.

She shall not have care in the year of drought, nor cease
from yielding !

The heart ! How deceitful ! How terribly corrupt !
Who can know it ?

I, the Lord, search the heart ! I try the reins ! To give every
man

According to his ways ! According to the fruit of his doings !

As a bird sitting on young she hath not hatched !

So is he that getteth riches, but not by right !

They shall leave him in the midst of his days !

And at his end, he shall be a fool !

A glorious high throne from the first art thou, the place of
our sanctuary.

O Lord, Thou art the Hope of Israel : All that forsake thee
shall be ashamed :

They that depart from Thee shall be written in the dust,
Because they have forsaken the Lord, the Fountain of living
water.

A personal prayer.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed ! Save me, and I
shall be saved. For Thou art My praise !

As for me, I have not hastened fully to follow Thee.

Neither have I desired the woeful day ! Thou knowest !

That which came out of my lips was before Thee !

Be not a terror unto me ! Thou art my hope in the day of
trouble !

They shall be confounded that persecute me ! Let me not
be confounded.

They shall be dismayed ! But let not me be dismayed.

Bring upon them the day of trouble ! Destroy them with
double destruction !

(Ch. xvii. 5-18.)

A time of distress.

The Word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the **drought** :

Judah mourneth ! Her gates languish ! They are in mourning !

The cry of Jerusalem has gone up !

Their nobles have sent their servants to the waters ! They came to the wells !

They found no water : they returned with their vessels empty.

They were ashamed and confounded ! They covered their heads !

The earth is dismayed ! There's no rain in the land !

The ploughmen are ashamed ! They have covered their heads !

The hind also calved in the field and fled, for there was no grass.

The wild asses stand on the bare hills, snuffing up the wind like jackals.

Their eyes do fail, for there is no green thing !

An appeal to God.

O Lord ! Though our iniquities testify against us, work Thou for Thy Name's sake !

For our backslidings are many : against Thee we have sinned.

O Thou, the Hope of Israel ! Thou, the Saviour thereof, in time of trouble !

Why should'st thou be as a stranger in the land ?

As a wayfaring man, that turneth in to tarry for a night ?

Why should'st Thou be as a man astonished ? As a mighty man, unable to help ?

O Lord! Thou art in the midst of us! We are called by
Thy Name! Leave us not! (Ch. xiv. 1-9.)

The Divine Explanation.

Thus saith the Lord unto the people: Thus have they loved to wander. They have not restrained their feet. Therefore, the Lord doth not accept them. He is now remembering their iniquity, and visiting them for their sins. And the Lord said unto me: Pray not for this people's good! When they fast, I will not hear their cry: and when they offer burnt-offerings, and meal-offerings, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

Then said I, Alas! Lord God! behold! the prophets say unto them:

Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine!
But I will give you peace, and continuance in this place!

Then the Lord said unto me:

The prophets prophesy lies in My Name: I sent them not: I have not commanded them, neither have I spoken unto them;

They prophesy unto you a false vision, and a vain divination: even the deceit of their own heart.

Therefore thus saith the Lord, concerning the prophets that prophesy in My Name, and I sent them not, who yet say:

“Sword and famine shall not be in the land.”

By sword and famine shall these prophets be consumed.
And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out
In the streets of Jerusalem, because of the famine and the
sword

They shall have none to bury them, them nor their wives,

Their sons, nor their daughters. I will pour their wickedness upon them ;

Therefore, thou shalt say this word unto them :

Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day : let them never cease !

For the virgin Daughter of My people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow !

If I go forth into the field, then lo ! those slain with the sword !

If I enter into the city, then lo ! those who are sick with the famine !

Yea, both the prophet and the priest go about in the land, without knowledge ! (Ch. xiv. 10-19.)

The Prophet's Remonstrance.

Hast thou utterly rejected Judah ? Hath thy soul loathed Zion ?

Why hast thou smitten us, so that there is no healing for us ? We looked for peace, and there is no good ! For a healing time, and lo ! terror.

We acknowledge, O Lord ! our wickedness, even the iniquity Of our fathers. For we have sinned against Thee !

Do not abhor us, for Thy Name's sake ! Do not disgrace the throne of

Thy glory ! Remember ! Break not Thy Covenant with us ! Are there any among the idols of the nations, that can cause rain ?

Or can the heavens give showers ? Art Thou not the Lord our God ?

Therefore we will wait on Thee : for Thou hast made all these things ! (Ch. xiv. 20-22.)

The Divine resolution taken.

But the Lord said unto me : Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind could not be toward the people ! Cast them out of My sight ! Let them begone ! And it shall come to pass if they say unto thee : Whither shall we go forth ? Then thou shalt tell them : Thus saith the Lord : Such as are for death, to death ! Such as are for the sword, to the sword !

Such as are for famine, to the famine ! Such as are for captivity, to captivity !

For I am appointing over them four kinds, saith the Lord. The sword to slay, and the dogs to worry. And the birds of the air,

And the beasts of the field, to devour, and destroy.

And I will cause them to be tossed about among the kingdoms of the earth,

Because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. (Ch. xv. 1-4.)

A mournful lamentation.

O who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem !

Who shall bemoan thee ? Who shall go aside to enquire for thee ?

Thou hast forsaken Me ! saith the Lord : thou hast gone backward !

Therefore have I stretched out My hand against thee, and destroyed thee.

I am weary with repenting.

I have fanned them in the gates of the earth ! I have bereft them of their children !

I have destroyed My people ! They returned not from their ways !

At my bidding their widows are increased above the sand
of the sea !

I have brought upon them, against the mother of young
men, a spoiler at noon-day !

I have caused pangs and terrors to fall upon her suddenly.
She that hath borne seven, languisheth ! She hath given
up the ghost.

Her sun hath gone down while it was yet day ! She is
ashamed and confounded.

Can one break iron, northern iron and bronze ?

Thy substance, and thy treasures have I given for spoil
without price.

For the sin of thy high places in all thy borders,

I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in a land thou
knowest not !

For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, which shall burn for
ever. (Ch. xv. 5-9 ; 12-14.)

A personal lament.

Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of
strife

And a man of contention to the whole earth !

I have neither lent on usury, nor have men lent to me on
usury ;

Yet every one of them doth curse me !

The Divine Promise.

The Lord said, Verily the rest of thy life shall be good !

I will intercede for thee with the enemy, in the time of evil,
And in the time of affliction. (Ch. xv. 10, 11.)

The Prophet's personal plaint.

Thou knowest, O Lord ! Remember me ! O visit me !

Do Thou avenge me of my persecutors! Take me not
away in Thy long-suffering!

Know that for Thy sake I have suffered reproach!

Thy Words were found, and I did eat them! Yea, Thy
Word was to me

The joy and rejoicing of my heart! For I was called by
Thy Name, O Lord God of Hosts!

I sat not in the company of those that laugh, nor did rejoice!
I sat alone, because of Thy Hand! Thou hast filled me
with indignation.

Why is my pain perpetual? Why is my wound so bad,
even incurable?

Why art Thou becoming to me as a deceitful stream, as
failing waters?

The Divine Word of Comfort.

Therefore thus saith the Lord:

If thou return, then will I cause thee again to stand before
Me.

If thou shalt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt
be as My mouth.

Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.

And I will make thee unto this people a fortified wall of
brass:

They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail
against thee:

For I am with thee, to save thee, and deliver thee:

Saith the Lord.

Yea, I will deliver thee, out of the hand of the wicked,

I will redeem thee, out of the hand of the terrible.

(Ch. xv. 15-21.)

A SERIES OF SYMBOLIC PROPHECIES SETTING FORTH THE
CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE AND PUNISHMENT.

1. The parable of the girdle. A first symbol.

Thus saith the Lord unto me: "Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water."

So I bought a girdle according to the Word of the Lord, and put it upon my loins.

Then the Word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying: "Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to **Ephratah**, and hide it there in a cleft of a rock." So I went, and hid it near Ephratah, as the Lord commanded me. And it came to pass after many days that the Lord said unto me, "Arise, go to Ephratah, and take the girdle thence, which I commanded thee to hide there." Then I went to Ephratah and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it, and behold! the girdle was marred: it was profitable for nothing.

The application.

Then the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying:

After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, who refuse to hear My Words, who walk in the stubbornness of their heart, and walk after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle which is good for nothing. For as the girdle fitteth close to the loins of a man, so I caused the whole House of Israel, and the whole House of Judah to cleave unto Me, saith the Lord: that

they might be unto Me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory. But they would not hear !

(Ch. xiii. 1-11.)

2. A second symbol. A filled bottle.

Thou shalt also speak unto them this Word. Thus saith the Lord :

“ Every bottle is made to be filled with wine.”

And they shall say unto thee : “ Do we not certainly know that every bottle is made to be filled with wine ? ”

Then thou shalt say unto them. Thus saith the Lord : “ Behold ! I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David’s throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness. And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord. I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but I will destroy them.”

(Ch. xiii. 12-14.)

3. A third symbol. The potter and the clay.

The Word, which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying :

“ Arise, and go down to the Potter’s house, and there will I cause thee to hear My Words.” Then I went down to the Potter’s house, and behold ! he was at work with his wheels. Whenever the vessel that he was making was spoiled in his hand, the potter made it into another vessel, as it seemed good to him to make it.

The application.

Then the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying : Thus saith the Lord :

O House of Israel ! cannot I do with you as this potter ?

Behold! As the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in My hand, O House of Israel!

When I speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom,

To pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy!

If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their sin,

I repent of the punishment I purposed to give unto them.

And when I speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom: To build and to plant.

If it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice:

Then I repent of the blessing wherewith I said I would bless them. (Ch. xviii. 1-10.)

4. **Symbol four. A broken bottle.**

Thus saith the Lord: Go and get thee a potter's earthen vessel, and take some of the elders of the people, and some of the elders of the priests, and go forth unto the Valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the **Potter's** gate, and proclaim there the Words that I shall tell thee: and say:

Hear ye the Word of the Lord, O kings of Judah! O inhabitants of Jerusalem,

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel:

Behold! I will bring trouble upon this place,

The which, whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle!

Jerusalem's sin.

For they have forsaken Me! They have counted this place strange!

In it they have burned incense unto other gods, unknown To them, and to their fathers, and to the kings of Judah.

They have filled this place with the blood of children !
 They have built also high places for Baal ! To burn their
 sons !

In the fire as offerings to Baal ! Which I commanded not,
 Neither did I speak it, nor did it come into My mind.

Jerusalem's punishment.

Therefore, behold ! the days come, saith the Lord, that this
 place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the Valley of the
 son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter.

For I empty out the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in
 this place :

I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies :
 And by the hands of them that seek their lives.

Their carcases will I give to be meat to the birds of the air,
 And to the beasts of the field !

And I will make this city an astonishment, and a hissing :

Every one that passeth by shall be astonished, and hiss,
 When they see all the blows she has suffered.

Yea, I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons—of
 their daughters !

They shall eat every one their flesh in the siege, and
 distress,

Which their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall
 bring upon them.

The confirmatory symbol.

Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men
 that go with thee, and shalt say unto them : Thus saith
 the Lord :

Even so will I break this people, and this city !

Even as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be
 made whole again.

(And they shall bury in Tophet, for want of room to bury.)
 Thus will I do unto this place : saith the Lord !
 And to the inhabitants thereof ! I will make the place
 as Tophet.
 The houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of Judah, which
 are defiled,
 Shall be as the place of Tophet ;
 Even all the houses upon the roofs of which
 They have burned incense unto all the host of heaven,
 And have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.
 (Ch. xix. 1-13.)

CHAPTER VII.

OPEN PERSECUTION, VIOLENCE DONE TO THE PROPHET,
 AND HIS MESSAGE (605 B.C.).

The Prophet in the Temple Court. Irrevocable doom.

Then Jeremiah came back from Tophet, whither the Lord had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the Lord's House, and said unto all the people :

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

“Behold ! I will bring upon this city, and upon all her towns, all the calamity that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear My Words.”

Actual persecution. The Prophet a prisoner.

Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief officer in the House of the Lord, heard Jeremiah

prophesying these things, and Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were at the **Upper gate** of Benjamin, which was near to the House of the Lord. And on the next day, Pashur brought Jeremiah forth out of the stocks. (Ch. xix. 14—xx. 3a.)

The Prophet's message to Pashur.

Then said Jeremiah unto him : "The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib.* For thus saith the Lord : Behold ! I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends ; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it, and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. Moreover, I will deliver all the stores of this city, and all the profits thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hands of their enemies, who shall plunder them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. And thou Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house, shall go into captivity, and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou and all thy friends to whom thou hast prophesied lies." (Ch. xx. 3b-6.)

The Prophet's soul-agony, and victory.

O Lord ! Thou hast drawn me, and I allowed myself to be drawn !

Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed !

I am in derision all the day long ! Every one mocketh me !

* Not joy but fear on every side.

Whenever I speak, or cry out, I must call out about violence
and oppression ;

For the Word of the Lord was made to me a reproach, and
a derision all the day !

If I said, " I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any
more in His name,"

Then His Word was in mine heart, as a burning fire shut
up within me !

Yea, I weary myself with holding it back, and cannot do
it !

I have heard the whispering of many ! Terror was on every
side !

" Announce," and we will announce it ! My friends watch
for my halting.

" Perchance he will be drawn aside ! We shall prevail
against him :

Then we shall take our revenge on him !"

But the Lord is with me, as a mighty warrior !

Therefore my persecutors shall stumble ! They shall not
prevail !

They shall be greatly ashamed, that they have not
succeeded :

Theirs shall be an everlasting disgrace, never to be forgotten ;
For Thou, O Lord of Hosts ! triest the righteous ! Thou
seest the reins and the heart !

I shall see my vengeance on them ! To Thee have I com-
mitted my case !

Sing to the Lord ! Praise ye the Lord !

He hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of
evil-doers !

(Ch. xx. 7-13.)

A fit of despondency.

Cursed be the day wherein I was born !

Let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed !
Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father
That a man-child was born unto him, making him very
glad.

Yea, let that man be as the cities overthrown by the Lord
without mercy :

Let him hear the cry in the morning, and the alarm at
noontide !

Because he slew me not at my birth !

Oh ! that my mother had been my grave ! That she had
never borne me !

Why came I forth to see labour and sorrow ?

To have my days consumed with shame.

(Ch. xx. 14-18.)

Jeremiah and Jehoiakim. The roll burned.

Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this Word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying :

Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the Words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah even unto this day. It may be that the House of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Then Jeremiah called **Baruch**, the son of Neriah : and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the Words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him upon a roll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying : " I am under restraint ; I cannot go into the House of the Lord ; therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast

written from My mouth, the Words of the Lord, in the ears of the people in the Lord's House upon a day of fasting: and thou shalt also read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be that their supplication may be presented before the Lord, and that they will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people."

The roll read.

And Baruch, the son of Neriah, did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the Words of the Lord in the House of the Lord. Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah (604 B.C.) in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord, to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the towns of Judah unto Jerusalem. Then read Baruch in the book, the words of Jeremiah, in the House of the Lord, in the Chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the Scribe, in the Higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's House, in the ears of all the people.

Alarm among the Scribes.

When Michaiah, the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the Words of the Lord, then he went down into the King's House, into the Scribes' Chamber, and lo! all the princes sat there—viz., Elishama the Scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. Then Michaiah declared unto them all the Words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. Therefore, all the princes sent Jehudi, the son of Nethaniah

the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, "Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come."

So Baruch, the son of Neriah, took the roll in his hand, and came unto them. And they said, "Sit down now and read it in our ears." So Baruch read it in their ears. Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the Words, they looked one to another in terror, and said unto Baruch, "We must tell the King of all these Words." And they asked Baruch saying, "Tell us now, how didst thou write all these Words at his mouth?" Then Baruch answered them, "He dictated all these Words unto me, and I wrote them in the book." Then said the princes unto Baruch, "Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah, and let no man know where ye be."

Information given to the King.

And they went in to the King into the Court, but they laid up the roll in the Chamber of Elishama the Scribe, and told all the Words in the ears of the King. So the King sent Jehudi to fetch the roll, and he brought it out of Elishama the Scribe's Chamber.

Then Jehudi read it in the ears of the King, and in the ears of all the princes, who stood beside the King. Now the King sat in the **Winter-house**, in the ninth month, and there was a fire burning in a brazier before him: and it came to pass when Jehudi had read three or four columns, he cut it with the Scribe's knife, and cast it into the fire in the brazier, until all the roll was consumed in the fire. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the King, nor any of his servants that heard all these Words. Nevertheless, Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah had earnestly requested the King not to burn the roll, but he

would not hear them. The King then commanded Jerahmeel, one of the princes, and Seraiah, the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah, the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the Scribe, and Jeremiah the prophet: but the Lord hid them.

The Prophecies re-written.

Then the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, after that the King had burned the roll with the Words which Baruch had written at the dictation of Jeremiah, saying: "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former Words, that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the King of Judah hath burned: and thou shalt say to Jehoiakim, King of Judah:

"Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast burned the roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein saying, 'The King of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy the land, and shall cause man and beast to cease from its midst.'"

Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim, King of Judah:

He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David.

His dead body shall be cast out! To the heat in the day,
And in the night to the frost!

And I will punish him, and his house, and his servants for their iniquity, and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah all the evil that I have pronounced against them, but to which they hearkened not.

The second roll.

Then Jeremiah took another roll, and gave it to Baruch the Scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the book, which

Jehoiakim, king of Judah had burned in the fire, and there were added, besides, unto them many like words.

(Ch. xxxvi. 1-32.)

A message to Baruch.

The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the dictation of Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying :

Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel unto thee,
O Baruch, thou didst say,
Woe is me now ! The Lord hath added grief to my pain :
I was weary in my sighing ! I could find no rest !
Thus shalt thou say unto him : Thus saith the Lord :
Behold ! that which I have built will I break down !
That which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole
land !

Seekest thou great things for thyself ? Seek them not :
For behold ! I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord ;
But thy life will I give unto thee for a prey,
In all places whithersoever thou goest. (Ch. xlv.)

CHAPTER VIII.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING NEBUCHADREZZAR AND THE NATIONS (606-605 B.C.).

The fourth year of Jehoiakim. A note of explanation.

The Word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of

Josiah, king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon. The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying :

A message to Jerusalem (629-606 B.C.).

From the thirteenth year of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, even unto the day, these three-and-twenty years, the Word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early, and speaking : but ye have not hearkened. For the Lord hath sent unto you all His servants, the prophets, rising early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened nor inclined your ear to hear them, saying : “Turn ye again, now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of his doings, so that ye may dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you, and to your fathers for ever and ever. Go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke Me not to anger with the works of your hands, so that I may do you no hurt.” Yet ye have not hearkened unto Me, saith the Lord : that ye might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts : Because ye have not listened to My Words, behold ! I will send and take all the families of the North, saith the Lord (*and Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant*) and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the lamp : and this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment, and

these nations shall serve the King of Babylon **seventy** years. And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished that I will punish (*the king of Babylon and*) that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity (*and the land of the Chaldeans*) and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all My Words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also, and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me :

(Ch. xxv. 1-15.)

A summary of the Divine judgments.

Take the wine cup of this fury at My hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink it. Yea, they shall drink and reel to and fro, and act like madmen, because of the sword that I will send among them.

Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me, namely :

1. Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse. (*As it is this day.*)*

2. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people, and all the mercenaries, and all the kings of the land of Uz.

3. All the kings of the land of the Philistines, even of Ashkelon, and Gaza, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod.

4. Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon.

* An editorial addition.

5. And all the kings of Tyre, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the island across the sea.

6. Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all the corner-clipped peoples, and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mercenaries that dwell in the desert.

7. And (*all the kings of Zimri, and*) all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, and all the kings of the North, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the surface of the earth. (*And the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.*)

(Ch. xxv. 16-26.)

The coming judgment certainly declared.

Therefore thou shalt say unto them : Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

Drink ye, and be drunken ! Be sick, and fall ! Rise no more !

Because of the sword which I will send among you !

And it shall be that, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them : Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Ye shall certainly drink ! For lo ! I begin to bring calamity upon the city, which is called by My Name, and should ye be utterly unpunished ? Ye shall not be unpunished : for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of Hosts : therefore prophesy against them all these Words, and say unto them : The Lord shall roar from on high ! He shall utter His Voice from His Holy Habitation.

He shall mightily roar upon His homestead ! He shall give a shout,

As they that tread the grapes, against all that dwell in the land !

A noise shall come to the end of the land ! The Lord hath
 a controversy with the nations ! He judgeth all flesh !
 The wicked He will give to the sword, saith the Lord !

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts :

Behold ! Trouble goeth forth from nation to nation !
 A great whirlwind riseth from the ends of the land !
 In that day the slain of the Lord shall be many :
 From one end of the land, to the other end !
 They shall not be lamented ! They shall not be gathered
 nor buried !
 They shall be as dung on the face of the ground.

A call to mourning.

Howl, ye Shepherds ! Yea, cry, and wallow yourselves, ye
 Leaders ?

For the days for your destruction are fully come !
 I will break you in pieces ! Ye shall fall like a precious vessel.
 There shall be no flight for the Shepherds ! No escape for
 the Leaders !

Hark ! The cry of the Shepherds ! The howling of the
 Leaders !

For the Lord hath destroyed their pasture.
 And the peaceful dwellings are desolate,
 Because of the fierce anger of the Lord.
 He hath forsaken His covert as a Lion ! Their land is
 become waste !

Before the fury of the oppressor, and before his fierce anger.

(Ch. xxv. 27-38.)

JEREMIAH TO THE NATIONS.

1. To Egypt.

The Word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the

prophet against the nations: Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates at **Carchemish** (which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, 606 B.C.).*

The message.

Order ye the buckler and shield! Draw ye near to battle!
Harness the horses! Mount, ye horsemen! Stand forth
in your helmets!

Furbish the spears! Put on your coats of mail!
Why do I see them dismayed? They are turned away
back!

Their mighty ones are beaten down! They flee in haste,
and look not back!

Terror is on every side of them! Saith the Lord.

Let not the swift flee away! Let not the mighty man
escape!

In the north by the river Euphrates they have stumbled
and fallen!

Who is this rising up as the Nile? Who moveth along
like the rivers?

Egypt! He riseth up as the Nile? He moveth himself
like the rivers?

For he saith, I will go up! I will cover the land!

I will destroy the city, and those that dwell in it!

Go up ye horses! Rage ye chariots! Let the brave
come forth!

Ye Ethiopians, and ye Libyans, that handle the shield!

Ye Lydians that handle and bend the bow!

* A later addition.

For that day is a day of the Lord God of Hosts—a day of
 vengeance,
 That He may avenge Himself of His adversaries !
 The sword shall devour ! It shall be satisfied, and drunk
 with their blood !
 For the Lord God of Hosts hath a sacrifice, in the north
 country,
 By the river Euphrates.
 Go up to Gilead, and buy balm, O thou virgin, daughter of
 Egypt !
 In vain dost thou use many medicines ! There is no
 healing salve for thee !
 The nations hear of thy shame ! Thy cry fills the land !
 The mighty have fallen against the mighty ! They are both
 of them down. (Ch. xlvi. 1-12.)

2. To the Philistines.

The Word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet,
 against the Philistines before that Pharaoh smote **Gaza**.

Thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! Waters rise up out of the north ! They become
 an overflowing flood !
 They overflow the land, and all therein ! The city and its
 citizens !
 Then the people shall cry ! All that dwell in the land shall
 howl !
 At the noise of the stamping of horse-hoofs !
 At the rushing of chariots ! At the rumbling of the
 wheels !
 The fathers, for feebleness of hand, turn not back for their
 children.
 For the day that cometh to destroy all the Philistines !

To cut off from Tyre and Zidon every helper that escapeth !
 For the Lord will destroy the Philistines, the remnant that
 came from **Caphtor**.

Baldness is come upon Gaza ! Ashkelon is struck dumb !
 O remnant of their valley ! How long wilt thou cut thyself ?
 O thou sword of the Lord ! When wilt thou rest ?
 O be sheathed ! Be at rest ! Be still !
 How canst thou rest ? The Lord hath given it a work to do
 Against Ashkelon, and the coast ; thither hath He sent it.
 (Ch. xlvii. 1-7.)

3. To Moab.

Against Moab thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of
 Israel :—

Alas ! For Nebo ! For it is plundered !
 Kiriathaim is put to shame, and taken ! The strong fort is
 put to shame, and destroyed !
 No more is Moab praised ! Against Heshbon, they have
 devised evil !
 “ Come, and let us cut her off from being a nation.”
 Madmenah ! Thou also art cut down ! The sword
 pursues thee !
 Hark ! The cry from **Horonaim** ! Plunder, and great
 destruction !
 Moab is destroyed ! They cry aloud towards Zoar !
 The ascent of Luhith is gone up with great weeping ;
 In the descent of Horonaim is heard the distressed cry of
 destruction !
 “ Escape for your lives ! Be like a lonely one in the
 desert !”
 Thou hast trusted in thy works, and treasures ! Thou art
 taken !

Chemosh goes into captivity! His priests and princes
together!

Upon every town the spoiler comes! Not one shall
escape!

The valley also shall perish! The plain shall be destroyed!
As the Lord hath spoken.

Give Moab wings, that she may fly, and get her away!

For her cities shall become desolate, without inhabitant!

Cursed be he who doeth the Lord's work remissly!

Cursed be he who keepeth back his sword from blood!

Moab hath been at ease from his youth! He hath lain
on his lees!

He hath not been drawn off, nor taken into exile:

Therefore his taste remained in him: his scent is not
changed.

Therefore saith the Lord: Behold! The days come

When I will send those that draw off, and they will draw
him off;

They shall empty his vessels, and break his jars in pieces.

Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as Israel was ashamed
of Bethel,

In which they put their confidence. (Ch. xlvi. 1-14).

The vanity of human glory.

How can ye say, We are mighty men! We are valiant in
war!

Moab is laid waste! Her towns are burnt up!

Her best young men are consumed in slaughter!

Saith the King, whose Name is the Lord of Hosts.

Moab's calamity has drawn near! Her affliction hasteth!

Weep over her, O ye neighbours! All ye that know her
name!

Say, how is the mighty stem broken ! The beautiful rod !
O thou Daughter that dwellest in Dibon ! Come down
From thy glory, and sit in thirst !
The destroyer of Moab is upon thee ! He destroyeth thy
strongholds !
Thou that dwellest in Aroer, stand at the wayside, and
look !
Ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, saying, What
has happened ?
Moab is put to shame ! She is dismayed ! Howl and cry !
Tell ye it at the Arnon, that Moab is laid waste !
Yea, judgment has come upon the table-land :
Upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaah,
Upon Dibon, Nebo, and upon Beth-diblathaim,
Upon Kiriathaim, upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-meon,
Upon Kerioth, and Bozrah ! Upon all the towns of
Moab, far and near !
The power of Moab is broken ! His arm is shattered !
saith the Lord.

The pride of Moab.

Make ye him drunk : for against the Lord he hath boasted
himself !
Let Moab wallow in his vomit : let him also become a
derision.
Was not Israel a derision to thee, when he was found among
the thieves ?
Whenever thou spakest of him, thou didst wag the head
at him.
Leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, ye that dwell in
Moab !
Be like the dove, that maketh her nest on the sides of a
steep decline !

We have heard of the pride of Moab! He is very arrogant!

His loftiness, and arrogancy: his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart,

I know his wrath, saith the Lord. It is nothing!

His boasts have accomplished nothing!

(Ch. xlvi. 15-30.)

Mourning over Moab's fall.

Therefore I will howl over Moab! Over the whole of Moab will I cry!

For the men of Kir-heres shall there be mourning.

O vine of Sibmah! I weep over thee, and Jazer.

Thy branches are gone over the sea, they reached even the sea of Jazer.

Upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage the spoiler has fallen:

Joy and gladness are gone from the harvest field—from the land of Moab!

Yea, I cause the wine to fail from the presses!

They do not tread with shouts! Their shouting is no shouting!

Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh. Their voice is heard even at Jahaz!

From Zoar even to Horonaim, even to **Eglath-Shelishyah!** The waters also of Nimrim are deserted!

I will cause to cease from Moab, saith the Lord,

Him that offereth on the high places: him that burns incense to his gods:

Therefore my heart soundeth like pipes for Moab:

My heart soundeth like flutes, for the men of Kir-heres:

For the riches, that they have gotten, are perished.

Every head is bald! Every beard is clipped!

Upon every hand is cutting ! Upon every loin sackcloth !
Upon all the housetops of Moab, and in every street,
lamentation !

Moab is broken like a vessel in which I have no delight :
saith the Lord,

They shall howl ! How it is broken down ! How hath
Moab turned his back !

Moab shall become a derision, and a horror to all his
neighbours.

For thus saith the Lord : Behold ! He flies
As an eagle ! He spreads out his wings over Moab.
Kerioth is taken ! The strongholds are surprised !
Brave men's hearts shall in that day be like those of women
in travail !

And Moab shall be destroyed ! He shall be no more a
people !

For he hath magnified himself against the Lord.

Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee,

Thou inhabitant of Moab : saith the Lord.

He that fleeth from the fear, falleth into the pit:

He that getteth up out of the pit, is taken in the snare :

For I bring upon Moab the year of his visitation : saith the
Lord.

They that fled stand powerless, in the shade of Heshbon :

For a fire cometh out of Heshbon—a flame from out of Sihon:

It devoureth the corner of Moab, and the head of the
tumultuous ones.

Alas, for thee, Moab ! Destroyed is the people of Chemosh !

Thy sons are taken captive ! Thy daughters are in bondage !

Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter
days : saith the Lord.

(Ch. xlvi. 31-47.)

4. Against the Children of Ammon.

Thus saith the Lord :

Hath Israel no sons? Hath he no heir?

Why doth **Milcom** inherit Gad? Why do his people dwell
in its towns?

Therefore, behold! the days come, saith the Lord, that I
will cause an alarm of war to be heard in **Rabbah** of the
Ammonites, and it shall be a desolate heap, and her
daughter shall be burned with fire. Then shall Israel be
heir to them that were his heirs, saith the Lord.

Howl, O Heshbon! For Ai is spoiled! Cry, ye daughters
of Rabbah!

Gird you with sackcloth! Lament, and run to and fro on
the walls!

For **Milcom** goeth into captivity! His priests and his
princes together!

Why gloriest thou in the valleys? Thy flowing valley!

O rebellious daughter! Thou that trustest in thy treasures!
Saying, "Who will come to me?"

Thus saith the Lord God of Hosts :

Behold! I will bring fear upon thee from all around thee :
And ye shall be driven out, each man straight before him,
There shall be no one to gather in the fugitives.

Thus saith the Lord :

In the latter day I will turn again the captivity of Ammon's
Children. (Ch. xliv. 1-6.)

5. To Edom.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts :

Is wisdom no more in **Teman**? Is counsel perished
From the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished?

Flee ye, turn back, bow low, O ye inhabitants of **Dedan**!

For I am bringing the ruin of Esau upon him, the time of his judgment !

If grape-gatherers come to thee, they leave no gleanings !
If thieves come by night, they destroy till they have enough !
Yea, I have stript Esau bare ! I have discovered his hiding-places !

He shall not be able to hide himself ! His seed is spoiled, His brethren, and his neighbours ! And he is no more.
Leave to Me thy orphans ! I will preserve them in life !
And let thy widows put their trust in Me !

For thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! These who were not accustomed to drink of the cup,—

They have drunk ? Shalt thou then go unpunished ?

No, verily ! For thou shalt surely drink of it too.

For I have sworn by Myself, saith the Lord !

Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse !

And all her cities shall become desolate for ever !

I have heard a report from the Lord !

A messenger has been sent among the nations !

Gather yourselves together ! Come against her ! Yea, rise up in war !

Behold ! I make thee small among the nations, despised among men !

Thou a feared one ! The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee !

Thou that dwellest in the clefts of rocks ! That occupied'st the heights !

Though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from it, saith the Lord.

And Edom shall be a desolation ! Every passer-by

Shall be astonished, and mock at her troubles.
 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the
 towns around,
 Saith the Lord. No man shall abide there !
 No son of man shall sojourn in her.
 Behold ! He shall come up, like a lion,
 From the thickets of Jordan to the evergreen pastures.
 Suddenly will I drive him out ! Him that is chosen, I will
 set over him,
 For who is like Me ? Who will appoint Me a time ?
 And who is the Shepherd that will stand before Me ?
 Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord, that He hath
 taken against Edom, and the purposes that He hath pur-
 posed against the inhabitants of Teman :
 Verily they shall be dragged away, the little ones of the
 flock !
 Verily the place of their dwelling shall be desolated !
 At the noise of their fall, the earth is moved !
 At the cry ! Its sound is heard at the Red Sea.
 Behold ! He cometh up, and flieth like an eagle :
 He spreadeth His wings over Bozrah !
 In that day the heart of Edom's mighty men
 Shall be as the heart of a woman in travail.
 (Ch. xlix. 7-22.)

6. To Damascus.

Hamath is ashamed ! And **Arpad** !
 They have heard evil tidings ! They are faint-hearted !
 They are troubled as the sea ! They cannot rest !
 Damascus is waxed feeble ! She turneth herself to flee !
 Fear hath seized upon her : anguish and sorrows,
 They have come upon her, as on one in travail.

Why is the city of renown not abandoned, the city of my
joy?

Therefore her young men fall in the streets! All her men
of war

Are cut off in that day. Saith the Lord of Hosts,

I kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus! It consumes

The palaces of **Benhadad!** (Ch. xlix. 23-27.)

7. To Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor (smitten by
Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon).

Thus saith the Lord :

Arise ye! Go up to Kedar! Spoil the Children of the
East!

Their tents and their flocks let them take: their curtains
and vessels

And camels, they shall take away for themselves;

And they shall cry unto them: "Terror on every side."

Thus saith the Lord :

Flee, get you away, lie low, ye inhabitants of Hazor!

For Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, hath taken counsel,

He hath formed a plan against you.

"Arise, get you up against a nation that is at ease:

That dwelleth securely," saith the Lord.

"Who have no gates, nor bolts, who dwell alone.

And their camels shall be for booty!

The multitude of their cattle shall be for plunder!

Yea, I shall scatter them to the winds, the **corner-cropped**
ones

I shall bring trouble upon them, from every side,"

Saith the Lord.

Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons! A desolation for
ever!

No man shall abide there! No son of man shall sojourn there!
 (Ch. xlix. 28-33.)

8. To Elam.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts :

Behold! I break the bow of Elam! The chief of their might!

I bring upon Elam four winds, from four quarters of the heaven ;

I will scatter them towards all those winds !

Yea, unto every nation shall the dispersed of Elam come.

I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies,

Before them that seek their life, saith the Lord :

I will bring evil upon them, even My fierce anger !

I will send the sword after them ! I will utterly consume them !

I will set My throne in Elam ! I will destroy their king

And their princes from the midst, saith the Lord :

In the latter day I will bring again the captivity of Elam :

So it shall be, saith the Lord. (Ch. xlix. 34-39.)

Symbolic message concerning Babylon.

The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. (Now Seraiah was chief chamberlain.) And Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon (even all these words that are written against Babylon). Now Jeremiah said to Seraiah : "When thou comest to Babylon, and shall see, and shall read all these words, then shalt thou say :

"O Lord ! Thou hast spoken against this place to cut it off,
 That none shall remain in it : neither man nor beast ;
 But that it should be desolate for ever !"

And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, and say :

Thus shall Babylon sink to rise no more ;

By the evil I bring on her she shall be utterly exhausted !

(Ch. li. 59-64.)

CHAPTER IX.

A REMONSTRANCE AGAINST THE FALSE SHEPHERDS AND PROPHETS : KINGS AND TEACHERS.

The condemnation of kings of Judah.

Thus saith the Lord : “Go down to the palace of the king of Judah, and speak there this Word, and say :

“‘Hear the Word of the Lord, thou king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates. Thus saith the Lord : Execute ye justice, and righteousness, and deliver the oppressed out of the hand of the oppressor. And do no wrong ! Do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed the blood of the innocent in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house, kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots, and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by Myself, saith the Lord, that this House shall become a desolation.’”

For thus saith the Lord unto the House of the King of Judah :

Gilead art thou to Me ! As the summit of Lebanon !
 Truly I will make thee a desert, towns without inhabitant !
 I prepare destroyers against thee, each fully armed !
 They shall cast down thy choice cedars ! They shall cast
 them into the fire !

Many nations shall pass by this city, saying one to another,
 " Wherefore hath the Lord done thus to this great city ? "

Then they shall answer :

Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord, their
 God :

Because they have worshipped other gods, and served
 them. (Ch. xxii. 1-9.)

A word to the House of David.

And concerning the House of the king of Judah. Thus
 saith the Lord :

Hear ye the Word of the Lord ! O House of David !
 Execute justice every morning : deliver the victim of
 oppression !

Lest My fury go out like fire, and burn unquenchably
 Because of the evil of your doings.

Behold ! I am against thee, thou inhabitress of the Valley,
 Thou Rock of the Plain, saith the Lord.

Thou sayest, who shall come down against us ?

Who shall enter into our habitation ?

But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings,
 saith the Lord :

I will kindle a fire in the forest, and it shall devour on every
 side. (Ch. xxi. 11-14.)

1. Concerning Shallum or Jehoahaz.

Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him.

Weep sore for him that goeth away ! For he returneth no
 more :

No more shall he see his native land !

For thus saith the Lord concerning Shallum, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah, his father, who went forth out of this place :

He shall not return thither any more ;

He shall die in the place whither they have led him captive ;

He shall see this land no more ! (Ch. xxii. 10-12.)

History of Shallum.

Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign : and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done : and Pharaoh-necho put him in bonds at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem.

And he made Eliakim, the son of Josiah, king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. He also took Jehoahaz away : and he came to Egypt, and died there. (2 Kings xxiii. 31-34.)

The judgment on Jehoiakim.

Woe to him that buildeth his house unjustly ! His chambers by wrong !

Who useth his neighbour's service without wages, and payeth him not !

Who saith, I will build me a wide house, and large chambers :

Who cutteth him out windows, inlaying them

With cedar, and painting them with vermilion !

Wilt thou be a king, because thou makest a show with cedars ?

Did not thy father eat and drink, doing justice, and right ?

Then it was well with him.

A warning to the Royal House. To Jehoiachin and Nehushta.*

Hear ye, and give ear! Be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken!

Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness;

And before your feet stumble upon the mountains of twilight;

And while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death,

And make it gross darkness.

But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for your pride.

Yea, mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears,

Because the Lord's flock is taken captive!

Say unto the King, and to his mother,

Humble yourselves! Sit down! Your crowns have fallen down!

Even your crowns of beauty!

The towns of the Negeb are shut up! None shall open them!

Judah is altogether taken captive! She is wholly taken captive!

Lift up your eyes! Behold them that come from the North!

Where is the flock that was given thee—thy beautiful flock?

What wilt thou say, when he shall set thy friends over thee, as head,

Seeing that thou hast taught them against thyself?

Shall not sorrows seize upon thee, as of a woman in travail?

* Read this warning in connection with the history of Jehoiachin—pp. 97 and 98.

The Explanation.

And if thou shalt say in thine heart, "Wherefore have these things come upon me?"

For the greatness of thine iniquity is shame cast on thee,

And thou art treated with violence.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?

Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away

By the wind of the wilderness.

This is thy lot, the portion measured out unto thee from Me, saith the Lord ;

Because thou hast forgotten Me, and trusted in falsehood !

Therefore I will expose thee, and cause shame to come on thee.

I have seen thy abominations, and thy whoredoms !

The lewdness of thy whoredom ; thy abominations on the hills in the field !

Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem ! How long yet ere thou be made clean !

(Ch. xiii. 15-27.)

Jehoiachin dethroned.

Jehoiachin did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord : and at the same season of the year king Nebuchadrezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon with the goodly vessels of the House of the Lord, and made Zedekiah, his uncle, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

(2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, 10.)

He judged the cause of the poor and the needy :

Then it was well with him.

Was not this from knowing Me? saith the Lord.

But thine eyes and thy heart—they are only on dishonest gain!

To shed the blood of the innocent, even to practise

Both oppression and violence.

Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah :

They shall not lament for him—Ah my brother! My sister!

They shall not lament for him, Ah lord! Ah his glory!

He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn out, and cast forth afar from the gates of Jerusalem.

(Ch. xxii. 13-19.)

The people in distress.

Go up to Lebanon, and cry! Lift up thy voice in Bashan:

Cry from **Abarim**: for thy lovers are all destroyed!

In thy prosperity I spake to thee! Thou saidst, I will not hear!

So has it been from thy youth—thou obeyedst not My voice.

The wind shall eat up thy Shepherds! Thy lovers shall go into captivity!

Then surely shalt thou be ashamed, and confounded for all thy wickedness.

O thou that dwellest in Lebanon! That makest thy nest in the cedars!

How thou wilt sigh, when pains come upon thee,

Pains as of a woman in travail! (Ch. xxii. 20-23.)

History of Jehoiachin (599 B.C.).

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign,

and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. At that time the servants of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem and besieged it. Then Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his household, and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign ; and he carried him away to Babylon.

(2 Kings xxiv. 10-15.)

Later history of Jehoiachin.

It came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that **Evil-merodach**, king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin and brought him forth out of prison, and spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the thrones of the kings that were with him in Babylon, and changed his prison garments : and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. And for his provision there was a regular diet given him by the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

(Ch. lii. 31-34.)

The judgment of Jeconiah—*i.e.*, Jehoiachin.

As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah, son of Jehoiakim, Be the signet on My right hand, yet I will pluck thee thence.

I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life ;
 Into the hand of those whose face thou fearest :
 Even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon :
 And into the hand of the Chaldeans.
 Yea, I will hurl thee out, and thy mother that bare thee :
 Into another country where ye were not born.
 And there shall ye die.

But to the land to which they desire to return,
Thither they shall not return.

Is this man Coniah a despised, a broken piece of work ?

Is he a vessel in which no one takes pleasure ?

Why then are they hurled out, he and his seed ?

Why are they cast into a land which they knew not ?

O land, land, land ! Hear the Word of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord :

Write ye this man childless—a man that never prospereth !

None of his seed shall prosper. None shall sit on the
throne of David,

None shall rule again over Judah. (Chap. xxii. 24-30.)

Concluding words about the House of David.

Woe to the Shepherds that destroy, and scatter the sheep
of My pasture : saith the Lord.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the
Shepherds that feed My people :

“Ye have scattered and driven away My flock ? Ye have
not cared for them !

Lo ! I will visit upon you the evil of your doings :” saith
the Lord.

A Restoration Promise.

But I will gather the remnant of My flock,
Out of all countries, whither I have driven them :

I will bring them again to their folds,
And they shall be fruitful and increase.

I will set up Shepherds over them, who will feed them,
And they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed !

Neither shall any be lacking, saith the Lord.

Behold ! The days come, saith the Lord.

I will raise unto David a righteous sprout : he shall reign
as king.

He shall prosper, and shall execute justice and right in the
land.

In his days Judah shall be saved ! Israel* shall dwell
safely.

This is the Name whereby he shall be called,

“The Lord is our righteousness.”

Therefore, behold ! the days come saith the Lord, that
they shall no more say :

“As the Lord liveth, who brought up the Children of
Israel out of the land of Egypt.” But, “As the Lord
liveth, who brought up, and led the seed of the House of
Israel out of the North Country, and from all countries
whither He had driven them.” Then they shall dwell in
their own land. (Ch. xxiii. 1-8.)

**A lamentation over false teachers. Concerning the
prophets.**

Mine heart within me is broken ! All my bones shake !

I am like a drunken man—like one whom wine hath over-
come !

Because of the Lord, and because of the Words of His
holiness.

The land is full of adulterers ! Because of the curse, the
land mourneth !

The pleasant places of the wilderness—they are dried up !

Their course is become evil ; and their might is not right.

Both prophet and priest ! They have become profane !

Yea, in My House have I found their sin, saith the Lord !

Therefore their way shall be to them as slippery ways in
darkness.

* Or Jerusalem (ch. xxxiii. 16). See page 141.

They shall be driven on! Yea, they shall fall therein!
For I bring trouble upon them, the year of visitation, saith
the Lord.

In the prophets of Samaria I have seen folly:
They prophesied through Baal, and caused My people
Israel to err.

In the prophets of Jerusalem too, I have seen an horrible
thing:

They commit adultery, and walk in lies;
They strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, so that no
one abandons his evil.

They are all unto Me as Sodom! Their inhabitants as
Gomorrah!

Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts concerning the
prophets:

Behold! I will feed them with wormwood!
I will make them drink the water of gall!
For from the prophets of Jerusalem profaneness is gone
into all the land.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts:

Hearken not unto the words of the prophets, that prophesy
unto you.

They make you vain: they speak a vision of their own
heart,

Not one out of the mouth of the Lord.

They say still unto them that despise Me, "The Lord
hath said, Ye shall have peace." And they say unto every
one that walketh in the stubbornness of his own heart, "No
evil shall come upon you." But who hath been in the
council of the Lord, let him perceive and hear His Word,
yea, let him mark my word, and hear it.

Behold! The storm of the Lord, a whirlwind, even His
fury is gone forth!

It shall whirl around the head of the wicked.
 The anger of the Lord shall not return till He have
 executed,
 And till He have performed the thoughts of His heart.
 In the latter days ye shall understand it perfectly.

(Ch. xxiii. 9-20.)

Denunciation of False Prophets.

I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran !

I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied !

If they had but been in My counsel, then they would have
 caused My people to hear My Words, and turned them from
 their evil way and from the evil of their doings.

Thus saith the Lord :

Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?

Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see
 him? saith the Lord.

Do not I fill heaven, and earth, saith the Lord?

I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in
 My Name,

Saying I have dreamed ! I have dreamed !

How long shall it be? Do they think in their hearts,

These prophets that prophesy lies, these prophets that speak
 the deceit of their own heart,

That they cause My people to forget My Name,

By their dreams which they tell every man his neighbour,

Even as their fathers forgot My Name for Baal?

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell his dream !

He that hath My Word, let him speak it faithfully !

What hath the straw to do with the wheat, saith the Lord?

Is not My Word like as a fire? As a hammer breaking the
 rocks to pieces? saith the Lord.

Therefore saith the Lord :

Behold ! I am against the prophets that steal My Words,
Every one from his neighbour.

Behold ! I am against the prophets that use their own
tongues,

That say " He saith," saith the Lord.

Behold ! I am against them that prophesy false dreams,
And do tell them, saith the Lord :

That cause My people to err by their lies, and their vain
sayings,

When I sent them not, nor commanded them.

Therefore they shall not profit the people at all, saith the
Lord. (Ch. xxiii. 21-32.)

The threatened cessation of Prophecy.

And when this people, or some prophet, or priest shall ask thee saying : What is the **message** of the Lord? thou shalt declare this message unto them : " I will forsake you, saith the Lord ! " And upon that prophet, or priest, or people that shall say, " Message of the Lord ! " I will bring punishment both on his person and house. Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, " What hath the Lord answered? And, What hath the Lord spoken? " But " the message of the Lord " shall ye speak of no more : for each man's own word shall be the message, for ye have perverted the Words of the living God, the Lord of Hosts our God. Then shalt thou say to the prophet. What hath the Lord answered thee? And what hath the Lord spoken? But if ye say " the message of the Lord : " therefore thus saith the Lord. Because ye say this word, " the Message of the Lord " : and I have sent unto you saying, Ye shall not say, " the message of the Lord ! Therefore behold ! I, even I, will take you up and cast you and

the city that I gave you and your fathers, out of My presence : and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you and a perpetual shame, which shall never be forgotten.

(Ch. xxiii. 33-40.)

The obedience of the Rechabites. A striking contrast.

The Word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah saying :

Go unto the house of the **Rechabites**, and speak unto them, and bring them into the House of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jaazaniah, the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites ; and I brought them into the House of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was next to the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah, the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door, and I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, " Drink ye wine ! " But they said ; " We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, ' Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever : neither shall ye build house nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any : but all your days ye shall dwell in tents, that ye may live many days in the land, wherein ye are strangers.' Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, our daughters, nor to build houses for us to dwell in, neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed,

but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab, our father, commanded us. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came up into the land, that we said Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the **Syrians** : so we dwell at Jerusalem.

(Ch. xxxv. 1-11.)

The application of this example.

Then came the Word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying :

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel. Go and ask the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, if they will not receive instruction and hearken to My Words, saith the Lord. The words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed : for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment, but I have spoken unto you rising early and speaking, and ye hearkened not unto Me. I have sent also unto you all My servants, the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, "Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given unto you, and to your fathers ;" but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto Me. Because the sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people hath not hearkened unto Me : therefore thus saith the Lord God of Hosts, the God of Israel : Behold ! I will bring upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil that I have pronounced against them : because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard, and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.

The Rechabites encouraged. Fidelity rewarded.

And Jeremiah said unto the House of the Rechabites :

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you: therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: "Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever."

(Ch. xxxv. 12-19.)

CHAPTER X.

PROPHECIES IN THE REIGN OF ZEDEKIAH (599-588 B.C.).

The New King. The Doom of Jerusalem.

Now King Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, reigned instead of Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar made king in the land of Judah: but neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land did hearken unto the Words of the Lord, which He spake by the prophet Jeremiah.

Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the Lord, it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon, till He had cast them out from His presence. Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign in the **tenth** month, in the tenth day of the month, that

Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon came, he and all his army against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was severe in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land: then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the King's garden (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about), and they went by the way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also the princes of Judah in Riblah: then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and kept him in prison till the day of his death. (Ch. lii. 1-11).

In the seventh year of his reign Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive three thousand and twenty-three Jews: in the eighteenth year, he carried away eight hundred and thirty-two persons (588 B.C.). (Ch. lii. 28, 29.)

The Vision of the Bad Figs, and its Lesson.

The Lord shewed me, and behold! two baskets of figs were set before the Temple of the Lord (after that Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen, and smiths from Jerusalem, and

had brought them to Babylon). One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe, and the other basket had very bad figs, which could not be eaten, so bad were they. Then the Lord said unto me, "What seest thou, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs—the good figs very good: and the bad figs, very bad, that cannot be eaten, so bad are they."

Then the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying:

Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: "Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans, for good. For I will set Mine Eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land, and I will build them, and not pull them down: yea, I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart. And as the bad figs, which are so bad that they cannot be eaten, surely thus saith the Lord, so will I make Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt, and I will make them a shuddering in all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them, and to their fathers. (Ch. xxiv. 1-10.)

A message to the peoples.

In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, came this Word unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying:

Thus saith the Lord to me : Make thee a complete yoke, and put it upon thy neck, and send it to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites and to the king of Tyre, and to the king of Zidon by the ambassadors who have come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah, king of Judah, and command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Thus shall ye say unto your masters :

I have made the earth, *both man and beast upon the ground*,
By My great power, and by My outstretched arm.

I have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto Me.

And now have I given all these lands into the hand
Of Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant,
Even the wild beasts of the field have I given to serve him.

*Yea, all nations shall serve him, his son, and his son's son,
Until the fixed time of his own land shall come.*

Then many nations, and great kings shall make him serve.

Submission urged.

And it shall come to pass that the nation and the kingdom that will *not serve this Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, and will not* put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword and with the famine *and with the plague*, until I have fully delivered them into his hand. Therefore hearken not to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers who speak unto you, saying : "Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon." For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land, *and to make Me drive you out that ye should be destroyed.* But the nations that submit to the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those

will I allow to remain in their own land, saith the Lord, and they shall till it and dwell therein.

(Ch. xxvii. 1-12.)

The message to Zedekiah. The nation's policy.

I spake also to Zedekiah, king of Judah, according to all these words saying, Submit to the *yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people and live: why should ye die, thou and thy people by the sword and the famine and the plague, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? Therefore hearken not unto the prophets that speak unto you, saying, "Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon,"* for they prophesy a lie unto you. I have not sent them, saith the Lord; yet they prophesy a lie in My Name, that so I might drive you out, and ye might perish, ye and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

To the people.

Also I spake unto the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying: Behold! the vessels of the Lord's House shall *now shortly* be brought again from Babylon, for they prophesy a lie unto you. *Hearken not unto them. Serve the king of Babylon and live! Wherefore should this city be laid waste?* And if they be prophets, and if the Word of the Lord be with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of Hosts that the vessels which are left in the House of the Lord, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.

The fate of the vessels of the Lord's House.

For thus saith the Lord of Hosts concerning *the pillars,*

and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the rest of the vessels that remain in this city, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away Jeconiah captive from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem: yea, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the House of the Lord and in the house of the king of Judah, and of Jerusalem, they shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the Lord: then will I bring them up and restore them to this place. (Ch. xxvii. 12-22.)

Hananiah's false prophecy (596 B.C.).

And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (*i.e.*, the fourth year in the fifth month) that **Hananiah**, the son of Azur, the prophet, who was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the House of the Lord, in the presence of the priests, and of all the people, saying: Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, saying: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again unto this place all the vessels of the Lord's House, that Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, took away from this place, and carried away to Babylon: and I will bring again to this place Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah's reply, and appeal to history.

Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the House of the Lord,

even the prophet Jeremiah said: "So be it! Would that the Lord might do so! Would that the Lord might perform the words, which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the Lord's House, and all that is carried away captive from Babylon into this place! Nevertheless, hear thou now this Word, that I speak in thy hearing, and in that of all the people. The prophets that have been before me, and before thee of old, prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms of war, and of calamity, and of pestilence:—the prophet who prophesieth of peace, when the Word of that prophet shall come to pass shall be known as the prophet whom the Lord hath truly sent."

Hananiah's perverseness and death.

Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it: and Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying: Thus saith the Lord: "Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years."

And the prophet Jeremiah went away.

Then the Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying: Go and tell Hananiah, saying: Thus saith the Lord: Thou hast broken the wooden yoke, but thou shalt make in their stead an iron yoke: for thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: "I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and they shall serve him. I have also given him the beasts of the field."

Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet : Hear now, Hananiah ! The Lord hath not sent thee, and thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord : Behold ! I will cast thee from off the face of the earth. This year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.

So Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month. (Ch. xxviii. 1-17.)

A message to the captive nobles.

Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah, the prophet, sent from Jerusalem unto the portion of the elders who had been carried away captive, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people, whom Nebuchadrezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon, after that Jeconiah the king, and the queen-mother, and the king's household, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the craftsmen and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem : by the hand of Elasah, the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah, the son of Hilkiah (whom Zedekiah, king of Judah had sent to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon), saying :

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :
 Unto all that are carried away captive, whom I have caused
 to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon.
 Build ye houses, and occupy them ; plant gardens, and eat
 their fruit.

Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters :
 Give your daughters in marriage that they may have children :
 That ye may be increased there and not diminished.
 And seek the peace of the city, whither as captives
 I have carried you ! Yea, pray unto the Lord for it :

For in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :
Let not the prophets and the diviners among you deceive
you !

Do not hearken to your dreams, which ye cause to be
dreamed !

For they prophesy unto you falsely, in My Name :
I have not sent them, saith the Lord.

For thus saith the Lord :

After seventy years be accomplished for Babylon, I will
visit you,

I will perform My good Word to you, and cause you to
return here.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the
Lord :

They are thoughts of peace, and not of evil,

Even to give you hope for your future days.

Then shall ye call upon Me ! Yea, ye shall go

And pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you,

And ye shall seek Me, and find Me.

When ye shall search for Me with your whole heart,

Then I shall be found of you, saith the Lord.

I will restore your prosperity ! From every nation will I
gather you,

Even from every place whither I have driven you, saith the
Lord.

Yea, I will bring you again into the place, whence I caused
you to be carried away captive. (Ch. xxix. 1-14.)

The certainty of a complete captivity.

Whereas ye have said, "The Lord hath raised us up
prophets in Babylon." Thus saith the Lord of Hosts

concerning the king that sitteth upon the Throne of David, and all the people that dwell in this city, your brethren that have not gone forth with you into captivity : thus saith the Lord of Hosts.

Behold ! I send upon them the sword, the famine, and the plague ;

I will make them like bad figs, so bad that they cannot be eaten !

I will persecute them with the sword, the famine, and the plague ;

I will make them a shuddering to all kingdoms of the earth : A curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach,

In all the nations, whither I have driven them :

For they hearkened not to My words, saith the Lord :

Which I sent unto them by My servants the prophets,

Rising up early and sending them : but they would not hear, saith the Lord.

Hear ye therefore the Word of the Lord, all ye of the captivity,

Whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon !

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, concerning **Ahab** the son of Kolaiah, and **Zedekiah** the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie unto you in My Name :

Behold ! I will deliver them up to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon,

And he shall slay them before your eyes.

And from their fate all the captivity of Judah, who are in Babylon shall form a curse, saying :

The Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab,

Whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire !

For they have wrought folly in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken

lying words in My Name, which I did not command them :
for I am He that knoweth, and witnesseth, saith the Lord.

(Ch. xxix. 15-23.)

Concerning Shemaiah.

Thou shalt also speak concerning Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, saying :

Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, saying :

Because thou hast sent letters in My Name unto all the people that are at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, "The Lord hath made thee priest in the place of Jehoiada the priest, that thou shouldst be an overseer in the House of the Lord, that thou shouldst put every man that is mad, and that maketh himself a prophet, in the stocks and in the collar : now, therefore, why hast thou not reprov'd Jeremiah of Anathoth, who maketh himself a prophet unto you ? Forasmuch as he hath sent unto us in Babylon, saying : "This time will be long : build ye houses, and occupy them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them." (For Zephaniah the priest had read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.)

Then came the Word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying :

Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite : Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie : therefore, thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his house.

He shall not have an heir to dwell among this people ;
He shall not see the good that I will do for My people,

For he hath taught rebellion against the Lord, saith the Lord.
(Ch. xxix. 24-32.)

The Prophet consulted the first time.

The Word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, when King Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur, the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying: Enquire I pray thee of the Lord for us, for Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon maketh war against us: if so be that the Lord will deal with us according to all His wondrous works that he may go up from us.

Then said Jeremiah unto them: Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah;

Thus saith the Lord, God of Israel:

Behold! I will turn back your weapons of war!

With which ye fight against the king of Babylon, and the Chaldeans

Who besiege you! I will bring them into the midst of the city.

Yea, I myself will fight against you, with an outstretched hand;

With a strong arm, even in anger, in fury, and great wrath; I will smite the inhabitants of the city,

Both man and beast! They shall die of a great plague.

And afterward, saith the Lord, I will deliver Zedekiah, king of Judah, and his servants and his people, who are left in this city from the plague, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life, and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword: he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

And unto this people thou shalt say : Thus saith the Lord : Behold ! I set before you the way of safety, and the way of danger.

He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the plague, but he that goeth out, and joineth the Chaldeans that besiege you shall live, and his life shall be given unto him. For I have set My Face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord : it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. (Ch. xxi. 1-10.)

The Prophet consulted a second time.

And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah saying, "Pray now unto the Lord our God for us."

(Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people for they had not put him into prison. And Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt : and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard this news, they departed from Jerusalem.)

Then came the Word of the Lord unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying : Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel : Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto Me to enquire of Me :

Behold ! Pharaoh's army which is come forth to help you shall return to Egypt, their own land : and the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire. Thus saith the Lord : Deceive not yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us : " for they shall not depart from you : and though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against

you, and there remained only wounded men among them, yet would every man in his tent rise up and burn this city with fire. (Ch. xxxvii. 1-10.)

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROPHET A PRISONER.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF JEHOVAH.

The arrest.

Now it came to pass that when the army of the Chaldeans had gone up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin, to take his possession there among his own people. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the overseers was there, whose name was Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, and he laid hold on Jeremiah, saying, "Thou desertest to the Chaldeans." Then Jeremiah said, "This is not true, I do not desert to the Chaldeans." But he listened not to him. Then Irijah laid hold on Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes. And the princes were wroth with him, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the Scribe: (for they had made that the prison).

Zedekiah's interview.

When Jeremiah had gone into the dungeon with its vaults, and had remained there for many days, the king Zedekiah sent and took him out. Then the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there a Word from the Lord?" And Jeremiah said: "Yes; for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon."

Moreover Jeremiah said unto King Zedekiah, What offence have I committed against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people that ye have put me in prison? Where are now the prophets, that prophesied unto you, saying, "The king of Babylon shall not come up against you, nor against the land." Therefore, hear now, I pray thee, O my lord, the king! let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee, that thou cause me no more to return to the house of Jonathan the Scribe, lest I die there."

Then Zedekiah, the king, commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the Court of the Watch, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the **Baker's** Street, until all the bread in the city were done. Jeremiah therefore remained in the Court of the Watch.

(Ch. xxxvii. 11-21.)

The King's weakness.

Then Shephatiah, the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah, the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah was speaking unto all the people, saying :

Thus saith the Lord :

He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword,
By the famine, and by the pestilence :
But he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live,
He shall have his life preserved, and shall live.

Thus saith the Lord :

This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army
Of the king of Babylon : it shall take it.

Therefore the princes said unto the king : "We beseech thee, let this man be put to death, for he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hand of all the people, in speaking such words unto them ;

for the man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt."

Then Zedekiah the king said: "Behold, He is in your hand, for the king is not able to do anything against you."

They then took Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah, one of the princes, that was in the Court of the Watch, and they let Jeremiah down with cords. Now, in the dungeon there was no water, but mire, so Jeremiah sank in the mire. (Ch. xxxviii. 1-6.)

The kind help of Ebed-melech.

Now when Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, one of the chamberlains of the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in a pit, he went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king (who was then sitting in the Gate of Benjamin), saying: "My Lord, the king! these men have done wrong, in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the pit, and he is like to die of hunger in the place where he is, for the bread is done in the city."

Then the king commanded Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, saying: "Take three men with thee from here, and bring Jeremiah the prophet up out of the pit before he die."

So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the king's house into the room under the Treasury, and took thence old torn clouts, and rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the pit to Jeremiah. And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, "Put now these old torn clouts and rotten rags under your arms under the cords." And Jeremiah did so. So they drew Jeremiah up with cords, and brought him out of the pit, and Jeremiah remained in the Court of the Watch. (Ch. xxxviii. 7-13.)

Another interview between Prophet and King.

Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him to the third entry into the Lord's House, and the king said unto Jeremiah, "I will ask thee something : hide it not from me."

Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, "If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, thou wilt not listen unto me!"

So Zedekiah the king swore secretly unto Jeremiah, saying : "As the Lord liveth, who hath made us alive, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life!"

Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah : Thus saith the Lord, the God of Hosts, the God of Israel : "If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thou shalt live, and this city shall not be burned with fire : yea, thou and thy house shall live, but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire and thou shalt not escape out of their hand."

And Zedekiah, the king, said unto Jeremiah : "I am afraid of the Jews who have fallen away to the Chaldeans, lest I should be delivered into their hand, and they mock me."

But Jeremiah said : "Thou shalt not be delivered up to them. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee, so it shall be well unto thee, and thou shalt live : but if thou refuse to obey, this is the Word that the Lord hath showed me : Behold ! all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and they shall say : 'Thy familiar friends have set thee on : they overcame thee.

Thy feet are sunk in the mire ! They turn themselves back !'

So shall they bring out all thy wives, and thy children to the Chaldeans, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon, and this city shall be burnt with fire."

Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, " Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die : for if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee : Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and also what the king said unto thee, and we will not put thee to death : Then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication to the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house to die there."

The interview known.

Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him : and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him, for he made nothing of the matter known unto them. So Jeremiah remained in the Court of the Watch until the day that Jerusalem was taken. (Ch. xxxviii. 14-28.)

During the siege. A message to the people. The illustration.

This is the Word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were in Jerusalem to declare freedom for themselves, that every man should let his man-slave and his female-slave go free if they were of Hebrew blood, that none of them should any more keep one of the Jews, their brethren in slavery. Now all the princes, and all the people who had entered into the covenant obeyed, and

every one released his male and female slaves, not keeping any of them in slavery any more, they even obeyed, and made them free; but afterward they changed their mind, and caused their male and female slaves whom they had released to come back, and brought them into slavery as male and female slaves.

The application.

Then the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel :

I made a covenant with your fathers, in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying: "At the end of seven years, every man must release his brother, if a Hebrew, who hath been sold unto him, and when he hath served him for six years, he shall let him go free from him:* but your fathers hearkened not unto Me, neither inclined their ear. And now ye were turned, and were doing right in My sight in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour, and ye had made a covenant before Me in the House, which is called by My Name, but ye have turned, and profaned My Name, and caused every man, his male and female slaves, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and ye have brought them into subjection to be unto you for male and female slaves. Therefore, thus saith the Lord· 'Ye have not hearkened unto Me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour, behold! I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, but for the sword, for the pestilence, and for the famine, and I will make you a shuddering unto all the kingdoms of the earth, and I will give the men that have transgressed My

* Deut. xv. 12.

covenant, who have not performed the words of the **covenant**, which they had made before me (by cutting the calf in twain, and passing between the parts of it), even the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and all the people of the land, who passed between the parts of the calf, these I will give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth. And Zedekiah, king of Judah, and his princes, will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which is gone up from you. Behold ! I will command, saith the Lord, and cause them to return to this city, and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire, and I will make the towns of Judah a desolation without inhabitant. (Ch. xxxiv. 9-22.)

Ebed-melech rewarded.

Now the Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the Court of the Watch, saying : Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts the God of Israel :

“ Behold ! I bring My Words upon this city for evil, and not for good, and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee : but I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord, and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid ; for I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be preserved to thee because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the Lord.” (Ch. xxxix. 15-18.)

Jeremiah's last words to Zedekiah (589 B.C.).

The Word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord

(when Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion, and all the people fought against Jerusalem, and all her towns), saying :

Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel :

Go and speak to Zedekiah, king of Judah, and tell him :
Thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire : and thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand : and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. Yet hear the Word of the Lord, O Zedekiah, king of Judah : Thus saith the Lord of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword, Thou shalt die in peace, and with the burnings, with which the funeral rites of thy fathers the former kings were celebrated, so shall thine be, and they will lament over thee, saying, Ah ! Lord : for I have pronounced the Word, saith the Lord.

(Then Jeremiah the prophet spake all these Words unto Zedekiah, king of Judah in Jerusalem, when the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the towns of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against **Azekah** : for these fortified towns remained of the towns of Judah.)

(Ch. xxxiv. 1-7.)

CHAPTER XII.

A FORECASTING OF THE FUTURE HOPE.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES.

Directions for the Prophet.

The Word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying :
 “ Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying : “ Write thee all the Words that I have spoken unto thee in a book, for lo ! the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will cause them to return to the land, that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.”

The Consolation of Israel.

Now these are the Words that the Lord spake concerning Israel, and concerning Judah. Yea, thus saith the Lord :
 We have heard a sound of terror, fear, and no peace.
 Ask ye now, and see, whether men do bring forth !
 Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins
 As a woman in travail, and every face in paleness ?
 Alas ! that day is great ! There ’s been none like it !
 ’Tis the time of Jacob’s trouble—but he will be saved out
 of it.

For it shall come to pass on that day, saith the Lord of
 Hosts,

I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and burst thy bonds :
 Strangers will no more reduce them to bondage,
 But they shall serve the Lord their God,
 And David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.
 Therefore fear thou not, O My servant Jacob !

Neither be dismayed, O Israel !

For lo ! I will help thee from afar, and thy seed,
From the land of the Captivity.

Jacob shall return, and rest ! He shall be secure, and undisturbed !

For I am with thee to help thee, saith the Lord.

Though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee,

Yet I will not make a full end of thee. According to justice I will correct thee, I cannot leave thee wholly unpunished.

For thus saith the Lord :

Thy wound is incurable ! Thy grief without comfort !

No one pleadeth thy cause ! There is no binding up !

Healing remedies to apply, thou hast none !

All thy lovers have forgotten thee ! They seek thee not !

For I have wounded thee as an enemy, chastised thee as a cruel one !

For thine iniquity was great : thy sins were increased !

Why criest thou over thy wound ? That thy pain is incurable !

For thy great iniquity, thy many sins, I did this unto thee.

Therefore all that devour thee, shall be devoured ;

All thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity ;

They that spoil thee shall be spoiled ! They that prey on thee shall be preyed upon !

Yea, I shall bind thee up, and heal thy wounds, saith the Lord.

Because men call thee "Outcast !" they say,

"This Zion ! which no man seeketh after."

Thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! I bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents :

I will have mercy on his dwelling-places.

And the city shall be built again upon her own hills ;
And the palace shall be occupied in its own manner.
Out of them shall come thanksgiving, the voice of those
that make merry.

I will multiply them, and they shall not be made few :
I will glorify them, and they shall not be lightly regarded.
Their children shall be, as in the former days,
Their congregation shall be established before Me :
I will punish all that oppress them.
Their nobles shall be of themselves : from their midst, their
rulers.

Whomsoever I cause to approach Me, shall approach unto Me.
(For who pledgeth his courage to approach Me, saith the
Lord?)

And ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.
Behold ! the storm of the Lord goeth forth in fury :
A sweeping storm to whirl upon the head of the wicked.
The fierce anger of the Lord returns not, till the work be done,
Until He have performed the purpose of His heart :
At the end of the days ye will understand it,
Saith the Lord. (Ch. xxx. 1-24.)

At that time will I be the God of all the families of Israel ;
And they shall be for Me a people.

Thus saith the Lord :

The people that escaped the sword find grace in the wilder-
ness :

I will go forth to cause him, even Israel, to rest.
From afar the Lord hath appeared unto me, saying :
Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love,
Therefore My loving-kindness have I continued unto thee.
Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O Virgin
of Israel !

Thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets,
 And go forth in the dances of those that make merry.
 Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the hill of Samaria ;
 The planters shall plant, and eat.
 For that shall be the day, when the watchmen of Mount
 Ephraim shall cry,
 "Arise, and let us go up to Zion, unto the Lord our God."
 (Ch. xxxi. 1-6.)

A Song of Rejoicing.

For thus saith the Lord :
 Sing with gladness for Jacob ! Shout for the chief of the
 nations !
 Praise ye aloud saying, "Help, Lord, Thy people, Israel's
 remnant."
 Behold ! I bring them from the North country : I gather
 them from the ends of the earth !
 With them, the blind and lame, she that is with child, and
 she that travaileth.
 A great company they shall return thither.
 They shall come with weeping : with prayers shall I lead
 them.
 I'll guide them to the water brooks, in a straight way, with-
 out stumbling,
 For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim^a isⁱ My firstborn.
 Hear the Word of the Lord, O yeⁿ nations, and declare it
 in the distant lands, and say :
 "He that scattereth Israel will gather him ! He will keep
 him
 As a shepherd doth his flock."
 The Lord hath redeemed Jacob ! He hath ransomed him
 from the hand of the strong !
 And they shall come, and sing upon Mount Zion ;

They shall flow to the good things of the Lord, to the wheat,
 and wine,
 To the oil, and to the young of the flock and the herd.
 Their soul shall be as a watered garden! They shall
 languish no more!
 Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, young men and
 old together,
 For I turn their mourning into joy, and comfort them,
 I will make them rejoice after their sorrow.
 And I will satisfy the desire of the priests with plenty:
 Yea, My people shall be satisfied with My good things:
 saith the Lord. (Ch. xxxi. 1-15.)

Lamentation forbidden.

Thus saith the Lord:
 A voice is heard in **Rama!** Lamentation, and bitter
 weeping!

Rachel weeps for her sons! She refuseth to be comforted
 For her sons, because they are not!

Thus saith the Lord:
 Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears,
 For thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord,
 They shall come again from the hand of the enemy.
 Yea, there is hope for thy future, saith the Lord.
 "Thy children shall come again to their own border."
 I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.
 "Thou didst chastise me, and I was chastised, as an
 untrained bullock,
 Turn Thou me, and I will return, for Thou art the Lord
 my God.
 When I turned away, I repented. When I understood, I
 smote upon my thigh.

I am ashamed, yea, confounded : for I bear the reproach of my youth.”

The Divine yearning.

Is Ephraim a dear son to Me? Is he a favourite child?
For as often as I speak against him, I remember him still ;
Yea, My bowels are troubled for him : I will surely have
mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

Set thee up way-marks ! Make thee finger-posts !
Set thine heart toward the way by which thou wentest :
Turn again, O Virgin of Israel ! Turn again to these thy
cities !

How long wilt thou wander away, O thou backsliding
daughter !

For the Lord hath made a new thing in the earth—
A woman shall be as a man. (Ch. xxxi. 15-22).

The restoration of Judah.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :
Again shall they thus speak in the land of Judah,
And in the cities thereof, when I turn again their captivity :
“ The Lord bless thee, O thou habitation of Justice ! Thou
mount of Holiness !

And Judah with all her cities shall dwell therein together.
Husbandmen also, and they that pasture the flock.
For I will satisfy the weary soul, and fill every fainting one.
(Upon this I awaked, and beheld, and my sleep was
pleasant unto me.)

The future days.

Saith the Lord :
Behold ! The days come, that I sow the House of Israel,
And the House of Judah with the seed of man, and of beast.

And it shall be—As I have watched over them to pluck up,
and break down,
To throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict ;
So will I watch over them to build, and to plant, saith the
Lord.

In these days they shall no more say :

“The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s
teeth are set on edge.”

But every one will die by his own iniquity :

Every man that eateth sour grapes shall have his own teeth
set on edge. (Ch. xxxi. 23-30.)

The Gospel before Christ.

Behold ! the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make
a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the
House of Judah, not according to the covenant, that I
made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the
hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which cove-
nant of Mine they break, although I was an husband unto
them, saith the Lord : but this shall be the covenant, that I
will make with the House of Israel, after those days, saith
the Lord :

I will put My law in their inmost parts : and write it in
their hearts ;

I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

They shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and
every man his brother,

Saying, Know the Lord.

For they shall all know Me, from the least unto the
greatest, saith the Lord.

For I will forgive their iniquity : I will remember their sin
no more.

Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, so that the waves thereof roar—the Lord of Hosts is His name.

If these ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord ;
The seed of Israel also shall cease to be a nation before
Me for ever.

Thus saith the Lord :

If heaven can be measured upwards, and earth's foundation
searched downwards,

I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they
have done,

Saith the Lord.

The new city. Its boundaries.

Behold! the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the Tower of **Hananeel** unto the Corner gate. The measuring line shall go forth to **Gareb**, and shall turn towards **Goath**. And the whole valley with the dead bodies, and the ashes, and all the pools unto the brook Kidron, unto the corner of the **Horse** gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord. It shall not be plucked up ; nor thrown down any more for ever.

(Ch. xxxi. 31-40.)

The hope of a better day symbolically declared. The purchase of ground by a prisoner. (588 B.C.)

The Word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar (for then the king of Babylon's army was besieging Jerusalem). Now Jeremiah was shut up in the Court of the Watch, which was in the king of Judah's house, for Zedekiah, king of Judah, had

shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold ! I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it, and Zedekiah, king of Judah, shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes ; and he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord. Though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.

And Jeremiah said, The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Behold ! Hanameel, the son of Shallum, thine uncle, shall come unto thee, saying, “Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth for the right of redemption to buy it is thine.”

So Hanameel, my uncle’s son, came to me in the Court of the Watch, according to the Word of the Lord, and said unto me, “Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin, for the right of inheritance is thine, and the right of redemption is thine ; buy it for thyself.”

Then I knew that this was the Word of the Lord, and I bought the field of Hanameel, my uncle’s son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, seventeen shekels of silver. I then wrote it in the deed, and sealed it, and in the presence of witnesses weighed him the money in the balances. Then I took the deed, both that which was sealed, and that which was open, and I gave the deed unto Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel, my uncle’s son, and in the presence of the witnesses, that subscribed the book of the purchase before all the Jews that sat in the Court of the Watch.

The transaction explained.

And I charged Baruch before them saying :

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel : Take these deeds, this deed which is sealed, and that deed which is open, and put them in a jar, that they may be preserved. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

“ Houses and fields and vineyards shall be bought again in this land.” (Ch. xxxii. 1-15.)

The Prophet prays.

Now when I had delivered the deed of purchase unto Baruch, the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the Lord, saying : Behold the mounds ! They are come unto the city to take it, Yea, the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans They besiege it with sword and famine and pestilence ; What Thou hast spoken has happened ! Behold thou seest it, Yet Thou hast said unto me, O Lord God ! Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses, And the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

The answer to prayer. Light for darkness.

Then came the Word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying : Behold ! I am the Lord, the God of all flesh ! Is there anything too hard for me ? (Ch. xxxii. 16, 24-27.)

The prophetic response.

O Lord God ! Behold ! Thou hast made the heaven and the earth
By Thy great power and stretched out arm ;
There is nothing too hard for Thee !
Thou showest loving-kindness unto thousands :
Thou recompensest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children.

The great, the mighty God, is His Name :
Great in counsel, and mighty in working.
Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men,
To give everyone according to his ways,
And according to the fruit of his doings.
Thou didst signs and wonders in the land of Egypt ;
Even so until this day, both in Israel, and among men ;
Thou hast made Thyself a name, as at this day.
Thou hast brought forth Thy people out of the land of Egypt :
With signs, and with wonders, and with a strong Hand,
With a stretched-out Arm, and with great terror.
Thou hast given them this land, promised in oath to their
fathers,
A land flowing with milk and honey.
And they came in, and possessed it, but hearkened not to
Thy voice.
They walked not in Thy law—they did none of Thy commands.
Therefore Thou hast caused all this trouble to come upon
them ! (Ch. xxxii. 17-23.)

A sad retrospect.

Therefore thus saith the Lord : “Behold ! I give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and he shall take it : yea, the Chaldeans that besiege this city shall come and set it on fire, and burn it with the houses, on the roofs of which they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods to provoke Me to anger : for the Children of Israel, and the Children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth : all the Children of Israel have only provoked Me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord. This city hath been to Me a

provocation of Mine anger, and of My fury, from the day that they built it, even unto this day, that I should remove it from before My face, because of all the evil of the Children of Israel, and of the Children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger, they, their kings, their chief men, their priests, and their prophets, both the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. For they have turned unto Me their back and not their face, though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction, but placed their abominations in the House which is called by My Name, to defile it ; and they built the high places of Baal, which are in the Valley of Hinnom, to cause their children to go through the fire to Moloch, which I commanded them not, neither came it into My Mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (Ch. xxxii. 28-35.)

The promise for the future repeated.

And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, " It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by famine, and by the pestilence " :

Behold ! I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them

In Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath.

I will bring them again to this place, and cause them to dwell safely,

And they shall be to Me a people, and I will be their God.

Yea, I will give them one heart, and one way evermore to fear Me,

That it may be well with them, and their children after them.

I will make an everlasting covenant with them :

I will not turn away from them, that I may do them good :
I will put My fear in their heart, that they may not depart
from Me,

I will rejoice over them to do them good ! Yea, I will
in truth plant them

In this land, with My whole heart, and My whole soul.

For thus saith the Lord :

Just as I have brought all this great calamity upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the prosperity that I have promised them, and in this land whereof ye say, "It is desolate without man or beast : it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans"—fields shall be bought, men shall buy fields for money, and write deeds, and seal them and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and the places round about Jerusalem, and in the towns of Judah, and both in the towns of the **Hill-country**, and of the Plain, and of the South-country. For I will cause their captivity to have an end, saith the Lord.

(Ch. xxxii. 36-44.)

A second message concerning the future.

Moreover, the Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the Court of the Watch, saying :

Thus saith the Lord, the maker thereof, the Lord that formed it to establish it : the Lord is His Name ; (Call unto Me, and I will answer thee great and wonderful things, which thou knowest not :) yea, thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down on account of the ramparts, and the siege-engines, in order to fight with the Chaldeans, and to fill them up with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in Mine anger, and in My

fury and for all the wickedness of whom I have hid My face from this city :—

A message of good cheer.

Behold! I will bring it health! I will apply to it a healing remedy!

I will bring to them an abundance of peace, and permanence!

I will cause the captivities of Judah and Israel to return:
And I will build them, as in the former days.

Yea, I will cleanse them from all their iniquity,

Whereby they have sinned against Me;

And I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned

And transgressed against Me:

It shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honour,
Before all the nations of the earth,

Which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.

And they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness,

And for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

Thus saith the Lord:

Again there shall be heard in this place, of which ye say
“It is desolate without man, and without beast!”

In the cities of Judah, and the streets of Jerusalem,
That are desolate without man, inhabitant, or beast:

The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness:

The voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride,

The voice of them that say, “Praise ye the Lord of Hosts;

For the Lord is good: His mercy endureth for ever.”

The voice of them that offer praise in the House of the Lord.

For I will turn again the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts:

Again in this place, which is desolate without man or beast,

In all its towns will be a pasture for shepherds to rest their
flocks,

In the towns of the Hill-country, and the Plain, and the
Negeb,

In the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem,
And in the cities of Judah, saith the Lord,

The flocks shall pass again before him that counteth them.

*Behold! The days come, saith the Lord,**

*That I will perform that good thing which I have promised
Unto the House of Israel, and to the House of Judah.*

In those days, and at that time, I will cause

A sprout of righteousness to grow up for David,

And it shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

*In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem dwell
secure ;*

And thus it shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness."

For thus saith the Lord :

*David shall never want a man to sit on the throne of the
House of Israel ; neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a
man before Me to offer burnt offerings, and to burn meat
offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.*

(Ch. xxxiii. 1-18).

Final confirmation of these promises.

And the Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying :

Thus saith the Lord :

If ye can break My covenant with the day, and the night,

That day and night should be no more in their season :

*Then will also My covenant with David My servant be
broken*

That he should not have a son to reign upon his throne,

And with the Levites, the priests, My servants,

* 14-26 omitted in LXX. (largely repeated from xxiii. 1-8), p. 100.

*As the stars of heaven cannot be numbered, and the sand of
the sea measured,
So will I multiply the seed of David My servant,
And the Levites, who minister unto Me.*

(Ch. xxxiii. 19-23.)

A word to unbelievers.

Moreover the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying:
Hearst thou not what this people say—viz.,
“The two families which the Lord hath chosen, He hath
cast them off,”
And they despise My people, so that they are no more a
nation before them.

Thus saith the Lord:
If I have no covenant with day and night,
If I have not appointed the laws of heaven and earth,
Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My
servant,
And take none of his seed to rule over the seed of Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob.
For I will turn again their captivity! I will have mercy
upon them.

(Ch. xxxiii. 24-26).

CHAPTER XIII.

EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO THE FALL OF THE CITY.

The history of these days.

In the ninth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the tenth month came Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth of

the month, the city was broken up. Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle gate—viz., Nergal-sharezer, the **Samgar**, Nebu-Sarsechim, the Rabsaris, Nergal-sharezer, the Rab-mag, with all the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon. And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem. Then Nebu-zar-adan, the captain of the guard, carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people, that remained in the city, and those that had gone over to him, and those still alive: but he left the poor of the people, who had nothing in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at that time.

(Ch. xxxix. 1-3, 8-10.)

In the twenty-third year of Nebuchadrezzar, he carried away captive from Jerusalem seven hundred and forty-five persons. All the persons carried away were 4600.

(Ch. lii. 30.)

The fate of Jeremiah.

Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had given charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, saying, "Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm, but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee."

So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard sent Nabushazbar, the Rabsaris, and Nergal-sharezer, the Rab-mag, and all the king of Babylon's princes:* they sent and took Jeremiah out of the Court of the Watch, and committed him to **Gedaliah** the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among his own people.

* Omitted in LXX., 4-13 vers. found in lii. 7-16; for vers. 4-7, see p. 107.

The explanation of Jeremiah's release.

The Word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord after that Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, had let him go from Rama, when he had taken him, being bound in chains, among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem, and Judah which were carried away captive to Babylon: and the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him: "The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil on this place: and He hath brought it, and done according as He had said; because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you. And now, Behold! I loose thee this day from the chains, which are upon thy hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look well after thee: but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, then do not come. Behold! all the land is before thee; whither it seemeth good, and convenient for thee to go, thither go." And as he did not reply, he said, "Go back to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the towns of Judah, and dwell with him among the people, or go wheresoever it seemeth best for thee to go."

So the captain of the guard gave him victuals, and a present, and released him. Then Jeremiah went unto Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, to **Mizpah**, and dwelt with him among the people, that were left in the land.

(Ch. xxxix. 11-14; xl. 1-6.)

Settlement of land under Gedaliah, as governor. (587 B.C.)

Now, when all the captains of the forces which were in the country, they and their men, heard that the king of

Babylon, had made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, governor of the land, and had committed unto him the men, women, and children of the poor of the land, who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, then there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah Ishmael and others with their men. And Gedaliah swore unto them, and to their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you! As for me, behold! I will dwell at Mizpah to serve the Chaldeans, who will come unto us: but gather ye wine and summer fruits, and oil and put them in your vessels, and dwell in the towns that ye have taken."

Likewise when all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and in other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and had set Gedaliah over them, even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered much wine and summer fruit.

(Ch. xl. 7-12.)

Gedaliah warned.

But Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the other captains of the forces that were in the country came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, and said unto him, "Dost thou not know that Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee?"

But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not. Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah, secretly, saying, "Let me go I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know it. Wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews, which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant

of Judah perish." But Gedaliah said unto Johanan, "Thou shalt not do this thing, for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael."

Ishmael's treachery. Gedaliah slain.

Now it came to pass in the **seventh** month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama of the seed-royal, and one of the royal princes, and ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah, and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah. Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. Ishmael also slew the Jews that were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldean men of war that were found there. And it came to pass on the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no one knew of it, that there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh and from Samaria, even fourscore men having their beards shaven and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand to bring to the House of the Lord. Then Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all the way as he went, and it came to pass, when he met them, he said unto them, "Come to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam." And it was so that when they came into the midst of the town, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of a pit, he and the men that were with him. But there were ten men among them that said unto Ishmael, "Slay us not, for we have treasures of wheat, and barley, of oil and honey in the field." So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren. Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men whom he had slain, was the pit

which Asa had made for fear of Baasha, king of Israel : and Ishmael son of Nethaniah, filled it with them that had been slain. Then Ishmael carried away captive all the rest of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzardan, the Captain of the Guard had committed to Gedaliah, and Ishmael carried them away captive, and went away to the Ammonites. (Ch. xli. 1-10.)

A rescue by Johanan.

But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains that were with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, they took all their men and went to fight with Ishmael, and found him by the great water at Gibeon. Now it came to pass that when all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan and all the captains that were with him, then they were glad, and all the people that Ishmael had carried away from Mizpah turned back, and returned unto Johanan ; but Ishmael escaped from Johanan and went to the Ammonites. Then Johanan and all the people whom he had brought from Gibeon came and dwelt in the **Serai** of Kimham near Bethlehem, on the road to Egypt. They were afraid of the Chaldeans because Ishmael had slain Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had made governor in the land.

(Ch. xli. 1-18.)

A proposal to go to Egypt. Jeremiah consulted.

Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah and all the people came near, and said unto Jeremiah the prophet, "Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, for all this remnant (for we are a few left

out of many, as thou dost see us :) that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.”

The answer of the Prophet.

Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them : “I have heard you, and behold ! I will pray unto the Lord your God, according to all your words, and it shall come to pass that whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you : I will keep nothing back from you.” Then they said to Jeremiah : “The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us ; whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to Whom we send thee, that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God. And it came to pass after ten days that the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. Then he called Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest : and said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto Whom ye sent me to present your supplication before Him. (Ch. xlii. 1-9.)

The Divine Oracle.

If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you,
 And not pull you down. I will plant you, and not pluck
 you up ;
 For I repent Me of the evil that I have done unto you.
 Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are
 afraid ;
 Be not afraid of him, saith the Lord,
 For I am with you to help you, and to deliver you from his
 hand.

Yea, I will show mercies unto you, that he may have
mercy upon you,

And cause you to return to your own land.

But if you say :

We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of
the Lord your God.

Saying "No, but we will go into the land of Egypt

Where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the
trumpet :

Where we shall have no hunger of bread—there will we
dwell."

Then hear the Word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah !

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to
stay there,

Then it shall come to pass that the sword which ye feared

Shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt !

And the famine whereof ye were afraid,

It shall follow close after you there in Egypt,

And there shall ye die !

So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into

Egypt to stay there: they shall die by the sword, by the

famine, and by the pestilence, and none of them shall

remain, or escape from the evil that I will bring upon

them.

For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

As My anger and My fury hath been poured forth upon the
inhabitants of Jerusalem,

So shall My fury be poured forth upon you, when ye enter
Egypt.

Ye shall be an execration, and a curse, and a reproach,

And ye shall see this place no more.

The Prophet's reproach.

The Lord hath said concerning you, O remnant of Judah !

“Go ye not into Egypt, know certainly that I have advised you this day.

For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God : and according to all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it. And now I have this day declared it unto you, but ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, nor anything which He hath sent me with unto you. Now, therefore, know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go to sojourn.”

(Ch. xlii. 10-22.)

The people's disobedience.

Then it came to pass that when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the Words of the Lord their God with which the Lord their God had sent him unto them, even all these Words, Azaiah the son of Hoshaiah, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men spake unto Jeremiah, saying : “Thou speakest falsely ! The Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, ‘Go not into Egypt to sojourn there : but Baruch, the son of Neraiah, setteth thee on against us to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.’”

So Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people obeyed not the voice of the Lord, to dwell in the land of Judah. But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Judah that were returned from all nations whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah,

men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzar-adan, the Captain of the Guard, had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neraiah. So they came into the land of Egypt, for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord. Thus came they to Tahpanhes. (Ch. xliii. 1-7.)

A message concerning Egypt.

Then came the Word of the Lord unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying : Take great stones, and fix them in the soft clay, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah : and say unto them,

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :

Behold ! I will send, and bring Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have placed here, and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh he shall smite the land of Egypt : what is for death to death : what is for captivity to captivity : and what is for the sword to the sword. And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the Egyptian gods, and he shall burn them, and carry them away captive, and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt as a shepherd covereth himself with his garment : and he shall go forth thence in peace. He shall also break in pieces the images of **Heliopolis**, that is in the land of Egypt, and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire. (Ch. xliii. 8-13.)

CHAPTER XIV.

JEREMIAH'S LAST PROPHETIC DISCOURSE.

Idolatry condemned.

The Word that came to Jeremiah, concerning all the Jews that dwell in the land of Egypt—viz., at Migdol, Tahpanhes, Noph, and in the district of Pathros, saying :

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel :
Ye have seen all the evil that I brought upon Jerusalem,
and all the towns of Judah.

Behold ! this day they are a desolation. No man dwelleth therein !

Because of their wickedness, which they did to provoke Me,
In going away to burn incense, and to serve other gods
Which were not known, neither by you, nor your fathers.
Howbeit I sent unto you all My servants the prophets, rising
early and sending them,

Saying, "O do not this horrible thing that I hate !"

But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear
To turn from their wickedness, to burn incense to other gods,
Therefore My fury, and Mine anger was poured forth : it
was kindled

In the towns of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.

And they are wasted and desolate, as at this day.

Therefore now thus saith the Lord, the God of Hosts, the
God of Israel :

Wherefore commit ye great wrong against your souls, to cut
off from you,

Man and woman, child and suckling out of Judah,
To leave you none to remain ?

Why do you provoke Me unto wrath, with the works of your hands,

Burning incense unto gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye have come to dwell :

Only to cut yourselves off—that ye may become a curse, and a reproach

Among all the nations of the earth ?

Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the kings of Judah,

The wickedness of their wives, and of yourselves, and of your wives,

Which was committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem ?

They are not humbled yet, neither have they feared Me ;

They walk not in My law, nor in My statutes,

That I set before you and before your fathers.

Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel : Behold ! I set My Face against you for harm, and to cut off all Judah !

I will take the remnant of Judah, who have come to dwell in Egypt,

They shall all be consumed : they shall fall in Egypt :

They shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine ;

They shall die every one of them by the sword, and by famine :

They shall be an execration, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach !

I will punish them that dwell in Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem,

By the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence !

Not one of the remnant of Judah, which have come to dwell in Egypt,

Shall escape or remain, that they should return to Judah,

Whither they have a desire to return to dwell there.

For none shall return home, but those that escape !

(Ch. xlv. 1-14.)

The people murmur, and adhere to idolatry.

Then all the men, who knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in **Pathros**, answered Jeremiah, saying :

As for the Word that thou hast spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee : but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and princes in the towns of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, for we had plenty of food, and were prosperous, and suffered no harm. But since we left off to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have had great want, and have been consumed by the sword, and by the famine. "And when we," said the women, "burned incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make cakes for her worship, and pour out drink offerings unto her without our husbands?"

(Ch. xlv. 15-19.)

Jeremiah's reply.

Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men and to the women, and to all the people, who had given him that answer, saying :

"The incense that ye burned in the towns of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember it, and came it not into His mind? So

that the Lord could no longer bear it, because of the wickedness of your deeds, because of the abominations which ye have committed: and, therefore, your land became a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse—without an inhabitant as at this day: because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, nor walked in His law, nor in His statutes, nor in His testimonies, therefore this evil has happened unto you, as at this day.

A final address to the Jews.

And Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women:

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, saying: Hear ye the Word of the Lord, all ye of Judah that are in Egypt!

Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouth, and fulfilled it with your hand,

Saying, We will surely perform the vows that we have vowed,

To burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to her.

Ye will certainly accomplish your vows, and perform them. Therefore, hear ye the Word of the Lord, all ye of Judah that are in Egypt.

Behold! I have sworn by My great Name, saith the Lord:

“My Name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt, saying, As the Lord God liveth.”

Behold! I watch over them for evil, and not for good!
And all the Jews that are in Egypt shall be consumed by the sword,

And by the famine, until there be an end of them.
 Only a few shall escape, and return out of Egypt into
 Judah,
 And those that remain of Judah that have come to sojourn
 in Egypt
 Shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs.

A Sign. The overthrow of the Pharaoh.

Thus saith the Lord :
 And this is the sign unto you, that I will visit you in this
 place,
 That ye may know that My words shall surely stand against
 you for evil.
 Behold ! I will give **Hophra** the Pharaoh, king of Egypt
 (saith the Lord),
 Into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them
 that seek his life,
 As I gave Zedekiah, king of Judah, into the hand of
 Nebuchadrezzar
 His enemy, and one that sought his life.

(Ch. xlv. 20-30).

Against Egypt.

The word that the Lord spake to Jeremiah the prophet,
 declaring how Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, should
 come and smite the land of Egypt :
 Declare ye in Egypt, and publish it in Migdol !
 Publish it in Noph and in Tahpanhes !
 Say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thyself !
 For the sword shall devour round about thee.
 Why are thy **valiant** men swept away ?
 They stood not, because the Lord did drive them.
 He made many to fall, yea one upon another :
 So that they say, " Arise and let us to our own people

To our native land from the destructive sword.”

They did cry out there of Pharaoh, king of Egypt,

“He is lost! His chance is gone!

As I live, saith the King, whose Name is the Lord of Hosts :

As Tabor among the mountains, as Carmel by the sea,

So shall he come. Prepare to go into captivity

O thou that dwellest in Egypt.”

For Noph shall be waste, and desolate! Without
inhabitant!

Egypt is a very fair heifer! From the North a gadfly
cometh against her!

Her hirelings are like fatted calves in her midst! They
also shall turn and flee!

They do not stand, for the day of their calamity—the time
of their visitation has come.

Her sound is like that of the serpent! They come upon
her in force,

They attack her with axes, as those that cut down a wood.

They shall hew down her forest, saith the Lord, though it
cannot be searched :

For they are more than the locusts! They cannot be
counted!

The Daughter of Egypt shall be put to shame! She shall
be given over

Into the hand of the people of the North.

(Ch. xlvi. 13-24.)

A word of comfort to Jerusalem. Last Words.

The Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel saith :

Behold! I punish No-Amon, and Pharaoh, and Egypt :

With their gods, and their kings : even Pharaoh, and those
that trust in him.

I deliver them into the hands of those that seek their lives :
 Into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and his
 servants ;

Afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old.
 Saith the Lord,

Fear thou not, O Jacob My servant ! Be not dismayed, O
 Israel !

Behold ! I will save thee from afar, even thy seed in their
 captivity :

Jacob shall return, and be at rest ! He shall be at ease,
 with none to cause him fear.

Fear thou not, O Jacob My servant ! I am with thee, saith
 the Lord ;

I will make a full end of the nations whither I have driven
 thee ;

I will not make a full end of thee : I will chastise thee in
 judgment :

I will not leave thee wholly unpunished !

(Ch. xlv. 25-28.)

CHAPTER XV.

LATER PROPHETIC APPEALS.

The true source and ground of merit.

Thus saith the Lord :

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom :

Let not the mighty man glory in his might : let not the rich
 man glory in his wealth.

But let him that glorieth, glory in understanding and
 knowing Me !

For I am the Lord, shewing loving-kindness, justice, and right on the earth ;

For in these things I delight : saith the Lord.

Behold ! The days come, saith the Lord,

That I will punish all who are only outwardly circumcised !

Egypt, and Judah, Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab

All that cut the corners of their hair, that dwell in the Wilderness,

For all the nations are uncircumcised :

Yea, the whole House of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.

(Ch. ix. 23-25.)

Idolatry forbidden.

Hear ye the Word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O House of Israel. Thus saith the Lord :

Learn not the way of the nations ! Be not afraid at the signs of the heavens !

For the nations are dismayed at them.

The customs of the peoples are vain ! They cut it as wood out of the forest !

It is the work of the hands of the woodman, with the axe !

They deck it with silver, and with gold :

They fasten it with nails, and with hammers, that it move not.

They are like a pillar in a field of cucumbers : they speak not !

They must needs be carried, because they cannot go !

Be not afraid of them : they cannot do any harm, nor any good.

(There is none like unto Thee, O Lord ! Thou art great, and great is Thy Name in might !

Who should not fear Thee, Thou King of the nations !
For to Thee it belongs !

Among all the wise of the nations, and in all their dominion
there is none like Thee.

They are altogether stupid, and foolish ! A vain teaching
is the wood !) *

Silver, beaten out, is brought from Tarshish, and gold from
Uphaz :

The work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder :
Blue and purple is their clothing ! They are all the work of
clever men :

But the Lord ! He is the true God ! The living God !
An Eternal King !

At His wrath the earth trembles ! The nations cannot abide
His fury !

Thus shall ye say unto them :

(The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth
They shall perish from the earth, and from under these
heavens !)

He hath made the earth by His power ! He hath established
the world

By His wisdom ! He hath stretched out the heavens by
His knowledge !

When He utters His voice, there is a rushing of waters in
the heavens.

He causeth the vapours to ascend, from the ends of the earth.
He maketh lightnings and rain ! He bringeth forth the
wind out of His treasures !

Every man is stupid, without sense ! Every idol founder
is confounded by his image !

For his molten image is falsehood ! There is no breath in
them !

* Omitted in LXX.

They are vanity : the work of deceit !
 In the time of their visitation, they shall perish !
 The Portion of Jacob is not like them ! He formeth all
 things !
 Israel is the Rod of His Inheritance !
 The Lord of Hosts is His Name.* (Ch. x. 1-17.)

A PROPHECY AGAINST BABYLON.

The Word that the Lord spake against Babylon and the
 land of Chaldea.
 Declare ye among the nations ! Publish it, and set up a
 sign.
 Publish ! Conceal it not ! Say, Babylon is taken !
 Bel is confounded !
 Merodach is broken in pieces !
 Her idols are confounded !
 Her images are broken in pieces !
 Out of the North a nation cometh up against her !
 It will make her land desolate, and without inhabitant.
 They shall be gone ! They shall flee ! Both man and
 beast !
 In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord,
 The Children of Israel shall come, they, and the Children
 of Judah together ;
 Weeping shall they come to seek the Lord their God.
 After Zion shall they enquire with their faces thither ;
 Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual
 covenant,
 Never more to be forgotten.
 My people have been a lost flock ! The Shepherds caused
 them to stray.

* See page 169.

They led them aside on the mountains.
They have gone from mountain to hill—they have forgotten
their fold ;
All that found them devoured them. Their adversaries
said,
We do no wrong, because they have sinned against the
Lord—
The habitation of Justice, the Lord, the Hope of their
fathers !
Flee out of the midst of Babylon ! Go forth out of
Chaldea !
And be as the he-goats before the sheep !
For, behold ! I raise up and bring against Babylon
An assembly of great nations from the North country :
And they shall set themselves in array against her, and take
her.
Their arrows shall be of an expert archer, none shall fail !
Yea, Chaldea shall be a spoil : all that spoil her shall be
satisfied,
Saith the Lord.
For ye were glad, and rejoiced, O ye destroyers of Mine
heritage,
Ye have become fat as a heifer treading the corn, and neigh
like strong steeds.
Your mother shall be confounded ! She that bare you
—ashamed !
“ Behold ! the last of the nations—a wilderness, a dry land,
a desert ! ”
Because of the wrath of the Lord, it shall not be inhabited,
But it shall be wholly desolate ! All that pass by Babylon
Shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.
Put yourselves in array against Babylon, all ye archers !

Shoot at her: spare not the arrows! She hath sinned
against the Lord.

Shout against her on every side! She stretches out her
hand!

Her bulwarks are fallen! Her walls are thrown down!

For it is the Lord's vengeance: take vengeance upon her:

As she hath done, so do unto her.

Cut off the sower from Babylon, and the reaper in the
harvest;

Before the destroying sword, every one shall flee to his own
people,

Every one to his own native land.

Israel is a scattered flock! The lions have chased them
away!

The king of Assyria first devoured them! Now last, this
Nebuchadrezzar,

The king of Babylon,—he hath broken their bones!

Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of
Israel:

Behold! I will punish the king of Babylon and his land,

As I have punished the king of Assyria.

I will bring Israel again to his home! He shall feed on
Carmel and Bashan!

His soul shall be satisfied upon Mount Ephraim and
Gilead.

In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord,

The iniquity of Israel shall be searched for, and it shall not
be!

The sins of Judah, and they shall not be found!

For I will pardon him, whom I reserve.

The doom of Babylon.

Go up against the doubly rebellious land! Even against
it!

Go up against the land that is to be visited!

Slay, and utterly destroy after them, saith the Lord,
And do according to all that I have commanded thee.

Hark! War in the land! And great destruction!

How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and
broken!

How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!

I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken,

O Babylon, and thou wast not aware!

Thou art found, and also caught,

Because thou hast striven against the Lord.

The Lord hath opened His armoury! He hath brought
forth His weapons of wrath!

For the Lord God of Hosts hath a work in the land of the
Chaldeans.

Come against her from every quarter! Open her store-
houses!

Cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly:

Let nothing of her be left!

Slay all her bullocks! Down with them to the slaughter-
house!

Woe unto them! Their day is come! The time of their
visitation!

Hark! Those that flee, and escape out of the land of
Babylon,

To declare in Zion, the vengeance of the Lord our God,
The vengeance of His Temple.

Call against Babylon the archers!

All ye that bend the bow camp against it round about!

Let there be no escape! Recompense her according to
her doings!

According to all that she hath done, do unto her!

For she hath been proud against the Lord, the Holy One
of Israel!

Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets,
And all her men of war shall be cut off in that day:

Saith the Lord.

Behold! I am against thee, Thou proud one! Saith the
Lord God of Hosts,

For thy day is come, the time of thy visitation.

Then the proud one totters, and falls! None shall raise
him!

I will kindle a fire in his cities—it shall devour on every
side!

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts:

Oppressed were the Children of Israel, and the Children
of Judah together!

All their captors held them fast: they refused to let them
go!

Their Redeemer is strong! The Lord of Hosts is His
Name!

He shall thoroughly plead their cause, to give rest to the
land,

And disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

There's a sword upon the Chaldeans, saith the Lord,

Upon those that dwell in Babylon, her princes, and wise
men.

There's a sword upon the boasters, and they shall be
foolish.

A sword upon her mighty men, and they shall be dismayed.

There's a sword upon her horses, and upon her chariots;

Upon all the allies, that are in her midst : they shall be as women !

There's a sword upon her treasures, and they shall be robbed !

There's a drought upon her waters, and they shall be dried up !

For it is a land of graven images, where they trust in idols.

Therefore shall wild beasts and jackals dwell there :

Ostriches shall dwell therein ! It shall not be inhabited,

Nor dwelt in by man from generation to generation.

As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha with the towns near by,

So shall no man abide there, no son of man shall dwell therein.

The Fall of Babylon.

Behold ! A people come up from the North—a great nation !

Many kings shall be raised up from the ends of the earth !

They handle the bow and lance : they are cruel and show no mercy !

Their voice is like the roar of the sea—they ride on horses, Arrayed like a man for the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon !

The king of Babylon hath heard of them, and his hands waxed feeble :

Anguish took hold of him—pangs as of a woman in travail.

Behold ! like a lion he comes—out of the thickets of Jordan to the green fields :

I will suddenly make them run away from her !

And he that is chosen, him will I set over them.

For who is like Me, and who will order Me ?

And who is the Shepherd that will stand before Me ?

Therefore hear ye the counsel of the Lord that He hath taken against Babylon, and the purposes that He hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans :

Surely, the little ones of the flock shall be dragged away !

Surely, He shall make their pasturage desolate for them !

At the cry " Babylon is taken " the earth trembleth :

And crying is heard among the nations. (Ch. l. 1-46.)

Thus saith the Lord :

Behold ! I raise against Babylon a destroying wind,

And against * the **Chaldeans** who dwell there.

And I will send unto Babylon fanners to fan her, and empty her land,

For in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about,

Against the archer, let the archer bend his bow,

And against him that standeth up in full armour.

Spare ye not her young men ! Destroy ye utterly all her host !

And the slain shall fall down in the land of the Chaldeans,

They that are thrust through, in her streets ;

For by his God, the Lord of Hosts, Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah,

Though their land has sinned against the Holy One of Israel.

Flee out of Babylon ! Let every man save his own life !

Be not cut off through her iniquity ! 'Tis the time of the Lord's vengeance :

He will render a recompense unto her !

The Restoration near.

Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand : she made the world drunken.

* See Glossary.

The nations have drunk of her wine, and have become mad.

Babylon is suddenly fallen, and destroyed : howl for her !

Take balsam for her pain, if so she may be healed.

We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed :

Forsake her and let us go every one into his own land,

For her judgment reacheth into heaven, it is even up to the skies.

“The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness.

Come, let us declare in Zion the Work of the Lord our God.

Make bright the arrows ! Hold firm the shields !”

The Lord hath stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes,

For His purpose is against Babylon to destroy it :

It is the Vengeance of the Lord—the Vengeance of His Temple.

Set up a standard against the walls of Babylon : make the watch strong,

Set up the watchmen ! Prepare the ambushes !

For the Lord hath purposed and done what He hath spoken against Babylon.

O thou that dwellest upon many waters — abundant in treasures,

Thine end is come, the time for thy cutting off !

The Lord of Hosts hath sworn by Himself, saying,

“Surely I have filled thee with men as with grasshoppers,

Yet they shall lift up a shout against thee.”

The Divine Glory.

He hath made the earth by His power—the world by His wisdom,

He hath stretched out the heaven by His understanding.
At the sound of His Voice the waters gather in the skies ;
He causes the vapour to ascend, from the ends of the
earth,
He maketh lightnings, and rain ! He bringeth forth the
wind out of His treasure-house,
Every man is dumb before Him, and without knowledge :
Every image maker is confounded by his graven image ;
His molten image is falsehood, and has no life :
They are vanity ! The work of delusion !
In the time of their visitation, they shall perish.
The portion of Jacob is not like them ! He formeth all
things.
They are the rod of His inheritance ! The Lord of Hosts
is His Name.

Confidence in God.

Thou art my battle-axe—my weapons of war !
With Thee will I break in pieces the nations, and destroy
the kingdoms ;
With Thee will I break in pieces the horse, and the rider ;
With Thee will I break in pieces the chariot, and its
driver ;
With Thee will I also break in pieces man and woman ;
With Thee will I break in pieces old and young ;
With Thee will I break in pieces the young man and the
maid ;
With Thee will I also break in pieces the shepherd and his
flock ;
With Thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his
yoke of oxen ;
With Thee will I break in pieces the chiefs and their
deputies.

And I recompense to Babylon, and to all that dwell in
Chaldea,
All the wrong they have done to Zion in your sight, saith
the Lord.

1. **Babylon as a volcano.**

Behold ! I am against thee, Thou destructive mountain,
Saith the Lord, thou who hast destroyed the whole world,
I stretch out My Hand over thee, and roll thee down from
the rocks :

I will make thee a burnt-out mountain !

They shall not use thee for corner, or foundation stones,
But thou shalt be a desolation for ever, saith the Lord.

2. **Babylon as a threshing floor.**

Raise ye a standard in the land ! Blow the trumpet among
the nations !

Prepare the nations against her ! Call up against her the
kingdoms,

Even of **Ararat**, **Minni**, and **Ashkenaz**.

Appoint a leader against her ! Bring up horses like the
bristly locusts,

Prepare against her the nations, with the **kings** of the Medes,
The captains thereof, all their rulers, and every part of their
empire,

And the land shall tremble, and be in pain !

For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against
Babylon :

To make Babylonia a desolation, and without inhabitant !

The mighty men of Babylon have ceased to fight—they sit
in their forts :

Their might hath failed them ! They have become as
women !

Her houses are burned! Her bars are broken!
One courier shall run to meet another—messenger meets
messenger!

To tell the king of Babylon that his city is wholly taken:
The passages occupied: the gates are burned, the men of
war in terror!

For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel:
The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor—it is time
to thresh her;
In a little the time of her harvest shall come!

The indictment against Babylon.

Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured and
crushed us:

He hath made us an empty vessel—he hath swallowed us
like a dragon:

He hath filled himself with our best, he hath cast us out!

“The wrong done to us and our flesh be upon Babylon,”

Shall the inhabitant of Zion say;

“Our blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea,” shall
Jerusalem say:

Therefore thus saith the Lord:

Behold! I plead thy cause! I take vengeance for thee!

I will dry up her river, and seal up her fountain,

And Babylon shall become heaps—a dwelling-place for
jackals,

An astonishment, and a hissing, without an inhabitant!

They shall roar together like young lions! They shall
growl as lion's whelps!

To heat them I will make a feast, yea, I will make them
drunk,

That they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep,

And never wake, saith the Lord ;
 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like
 rams with he-goats.

Lamentation over the fall of Babylon.

How is **Sheshach** taken ! The praise of the earth, surprised !
 How is Babylon become an astonishment among the
 nations ?

The sea has come over Babylon ! She is overwhelmed
 with its waves !

Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness !
 A land in which no one dwelleth—thro' which no man
 passeth !

Thus I do judgment on Bel in Babylon, and take from his
 mouth what he hath seized ;

The nations shall no more flow to him—Babylon's wall
 shall fall !

My people ! Go ye out of the midst of her !
 Save ye every man his life, before the fierce anger of the
 Lord !

Let not your heart faint ! Be not afraid of what ye shall
 hear in the land !

For rumour after rumour comes of violence in the land,
 ruler against ruler.

Behold ! the days come when I punish the images of
 Babylon,

All her land shall be ashamed ! Her slain shall fall in her
 midst !

But heaven and earth, and all therein, shall sing over
 Babylon,

For the spoilers come to thee from the north, saith the Lord :
 As Babylon caused the slain of Israel to fall, so shall it be at
 Babylon.

Ye that have escaped, begone, stand not still !

Remember the Lord when afar ! Let Jerusalem be in
your mind !

“We are ashamed, for we heard reproach ! Shame covers
our faces !

For strangers have gone into the Holy Place of the Lord’s
House.”

Wherefore, behold ! the days come, saith the Lord :

I will punish her images : her wounded shall groan every-
where :

Though Babylon mount to the skies, and build her towers
on high :

Yet shall those that destroy her come from Me, saith the
Lord.

Hark ! the cry of Babylon ! Great ruin in Chaldea !

For the Lord hath destroyed Babylon, He hath removed her
loud noise !

(’Twas like the roar of great waters, a noise of a loud voice !)

The destroyer is come up upon Babylon ! Her men of
might are taken !

All their weapons are broken ! The Lord God of recom-
penses requireth !

I will make her princes and her wise men drunk—rulers and
men of might !

They shall sleep for ever : saith the King, called the Lord
of Hosts,

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts :

The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken ;

Her high gates shall be burned with fire.

The people shall have laboured in vain :

The nations wearied themselves, only for the fire.

(Ch. li. 1-58.)

DIVISION II.

THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH READ IN THEIR HISTORICAL SETTING, WITH EXPLANATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORICAL CONDITIONS OF JEREMIAH'S MINISTRY, AND HIS CONSECRATION.

A PERIOD of about fifty years elapsed between the close of the ministry of the great prophet Isaiah, and the birth of the young man who was to be so soon his outstanding successor. For Jeremiah was born about 647 B.C., in the little village of Anathoth, some two and a half miles from Jerusalem, in a priest's town, and of a priestly family. But during these fifty years many prophetic voices had been heard, continuing the work Isaiah had begun, and preparing the way for what Jeremiah had to do. Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk had all discharged prophetic functions: the burden of the second Zechariah had also most probably been uttered, while at the very commencement of our prophet's ministry, the prophetess Huldah had a recognised position, and an accredited message to deliver. Such persons had been Jeremiah's teachers: under the influence of their work he began his in the year 626 B.C., in the opening years of manhood, still a young man, below the recognised age for taking up public work. He entered

upon his ministry at a most interesting time, and surrounded by important and stirring movements. Though it is almost certain that his father Hilkiah was not the reigning high priest, so favourably known in connection with Josiah's reformation, and the promulgation of the Law-Book of Deuteronomy, young Jeremiah as a priest, and of about the same age as Josiah, must have had special advantages. Had he been the son of the high priest, he would have been more prominently associated with him: while the circumstance of his belonging to Anathoth, where the priestly line of Phinehas had property, points, though not conclusively, still with some force, to the view that he did not belong to the priestly family then in office.

When Jeremiah was called to be a prophet, Josiah, also a young man, was king. Here two kindred souls enter almost together as true yoke-fellows on life's duties. The blighting days of the idolatrous rule of Manasseh and Amon now closed, though their influence was irretrievable. A man after God's own heart, a true Davidic king, now sat on the throne. By his father's premature death, Josiah had been early called to power. When Jeremiah, a priest by birth, became a prophet by Divine consecration, Josiah had reigned thirteen years (639-626 B.C.). Ascending the throne at the age of eight, he was now twenty-one: and the hour for more decisive action had come. This hour sees Jeremiah at Josiah's side.

Beginning thus his prophetic activity at this moment, our prophet carried on his work through the reigns of five kings: his main prophecies concern Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, Judah's last king, but he survived the fall of his city, and pursued his ministry for many years with but little success among his exiled country-folk in Egypt.

It was a singular providence that Jeremiah should find such a prince on the throne as he began his work. Such an one did Isaiah too, at a critical moment in his life-work, find in the person of Hezekiah. But the dark days and devious courses of Manasseh had done irrevocable harm to Judah: the earnest, and well-intentioned efforts of Josiah came now too late to counteract the evil leaven, or avert the rapidly approaching judgment of Heaven. At the age of sixteen the young king took up his stand for Jehovah, and against idolatry. Four years later, at the age of twenty, with the assistance of men trained in the school of Isaiah, and now in the royal councils, a strenuous endeavour was made to bring Jerusalem back to the condition of things, in which Hezekiah had placed it. The worship on the high places was purged, and the symbols of idolatry were removed. But eight years later than this, the king being now about twenty-eight, and Jeremiah a prophet of seven years' standing, a very much greater measure of reformation was undertaken. A clear understanding of this is necessary to the appreciation of the early prophecies of Jeremiah. Now, a new step forward was taken, a step beyond any urged by Isaiah, and rendered urgent by the failure of the reforms of Hezekiah to stay the course of idolatry. Not as yet had there been an absolute prohibition of the worship of Jehovah at these high places: what had been forbidden was the worship of heathen deities there, every form of idolatry. But it came to be realised now that all worship of Jehovah—all worship of a sacrificial sort must be offered in the Temple alone; not "in all places where Jehovah's name was mentioned," but in one place, one central sanctuary.* It was seen that the tendency to

* Exodus xx. 24; Deut. xiv. 23.

idolatry could not otherwise be checked. For this absolute prohibition of all worship at the high places the authority of God was now produced, and this new discovery fell out thus. A very thorough purgation of the Temple had taken place, and Hilkiah the high priest found a roll of the law, a copy or edition of the law, which contained such a clear statement of the mind of God on this matter, that it caused quite a shock to the young king when for the first time he heard it read. To him it was indeed a new revelation, a new discovery: neither he nor his fathers had gone as far as this law required. It is generally supposed that this Law-Book now published corresponds to Deuteronomy vi.-xxviii. or to chapters xii.-xxvi. alone: and we must understand the matter thus. The original legislation of Moses, being kept in the hands of duly constituted authorities, would be added to from time to time, as new needs arose and circumstances were altered. The mind of God was revealed to the prophets in succession. As new aspects of the divine will were grasped and understood, as new requirements of the divine righteousness were perceived by God's chosen servants, these would be authoritatively engrossed in the Law Book, alongside of, and in continuation of the original legislation. Thus the whole, always up to date, under the same inspiring Spirit who spoke to Moses, but in ever-increasing fulness and bulk, was preserved in one whole, and handed down as the law of Moses: and as truly carrying out the plan and purpose of the old legislator, it was rightly regarded as Mosaic. From time to time, then, the actual legislation in the sacred archives of the nation would increase from more to more: and editions or summaries of this legislation would be in circulation among a small circle of privileged

ones. Of this nature then would be the book now issued, containing the teaching of the prophets up to date—conclusions which were accepted indeed by the high priest and the prophets, but which caused consternation in the royal household. It was this book that gave the necessary authority and adequate impetus to Josiah's reform: it is to this book, and to this reform that Jeremiah frequently refers. In the Chronicles full and graphic details are given of what was done, while the prophetic writings before us show us painfully how superficial was Judah's reformation at this time.

After a reign of thirty-one years Josiah died. He had unfortunately refused the prophet's advice to abstain from embroiling himself in the dispute between Egypt and Babylon: he entered the field against Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, and lost his life on the Flodden-like field of Megiddo, when great and sincere was the lamentation of people and prophet over their good and noble king. This was in 609 B.C. His successor was Jehoahaz, a king of the same name as Ahaz, known without the distinctive prefix. But this appointment was not approved by Necho, who made his brother Jehoiakim king in his stead. Soon, however, another power appeared on the scene, and Jerusalem began to feel the force of Babylon. Nabopolassar, in 625 B.C., had founded a mighty dynasty, and his son, Nebuchadrezzar, was to play a prominent part in the world's history. Babylon and Media together had secured the overthrow of Assyria (607 B.C.): this being the result of an alliance which had been cemented by the marriage of Nebuchadrezzar to the daughter of Cyaxares, king of Media, 626 B.C., the year of Jeremiah's call. Necho, the son of the famous Psammetichus, ruler in Egypt from 660

to 610 B.C., had been on his way to fight with Nebuchadrezzar, when Josiah in vain opposed him : at Carchemish in 606 B.C., Babylonian arms were successful, and Necho was defeated. Jehoiakim then became tributary, but soon after rebelling, the king of Babylon carried away into captivity many of Judah's best people, among whom were Daniel and his companions. Meanwhile, Jehoiakim had been succeeded by his son Jehoiachin (599 B.C.), power remaining for a brief period in his mother, Nehushta's hands. The royal family, however, go into exile ; and Jerusalem's last king was Jehoiakim's brother, the uncle of Jehoiachin. He owed his throne to Babylon, and his fall likewise to the same power, after eleven troubled years (599-588 B.C.). Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard of Nebuchadrezzar, then burnt the Temple and brake down the walls of Jerusalem. Micah's threatened doom had now come : Jeremiah's repeated denunciations were all now fulfilled to the letter. "The adversaries trode down the sanctuary, Zion became a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Their holy and their beautiful House, where their fathers praised God, was burnt up with fire : all their pleasant things were laid waste." Judah had had nearly a century and a half more than Israel as an opportunity for repentance ; but this came not : the cup of her iniquity was now full, and for her sins she ceases for a time to have a name and a place. The Lord had arisen to vindicate His great Name.

It was to declare this coming judgment that Jeremiah was called by the voice divine, and though at first a more hopeful tone seems to characterise his earliest prophecies, only too soon do we find him constrained to speak of nothing but punishment. Truly this was a task of great pain, and we can sympathise with utterances of bitter

disappointment, that fell not once, but often from his lips—utterances that reveal his genuine humanity and true patriotism, for with all her faults, must he not yet have loved his country?

Our prophet had a keen sense of the divine calling and election: he felt that a mighty Hand had been laid upon him, even the Hand that formed him. The divine voice, that appointed him a prophet not to Jerusalem only, but to the nations, based this appointment on the grounds of divine foreknowledge and predestination. Here the prophet had to acquiesce in a divine determination of his life-work. He might plead his youth and inexperience, but these were faults that would mend; he felt that he must obey. He must go: he must speak. He is assured of divine guardianship, and is entrusted with a message. His mission is mainly to be destructive: for while under four expressions the work of judgment is set forth, only under two is a constructive task handed to him. Like Isaiah's case, this commission starts Jeremiah on his ultimate work, and bids him expect what he was soon to meet, even bitter opposition. The man who is called of God to speak in such circumstances, and to deliver such a message against king, priests, prophets, and people, had much need of divine strengthening, and very special enduement. He was to be a defenced city, an iron pillar, and a brazen wall. Thus would God be for him in the fearless delivery of the divine message, promises that remained no unfulfilled order as time advanced,—promises that alas! sometimes our prophet forgot, and suffered for intensely, as a terrible melancholy seized upon him, but which were finally his all-sufficient stay.

To the prophet, who, as we shall frequently see, was very

fond of symbolic illustrations, two symbols are now given : one to strengthen him, and the other to give him the accent of conviction and certainty as to what he would have to declare. In the symbol of an evergreen tree he sees an ever-wakeful, ever-watchful God ruling over all things, a God who never slumbers nor sleeps, in whose protection every believing soul can rest with perfect confidence. The child of God can look back and say with Joshua, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you : all are come to pass unto you,—not one thing hath failed thereof:" and with confidence, increased by such experience, he can look forward to to-morrow. How Jeremiah must have been strengthened by symbol number one !

The second symbol clearly showed two things ; first, that trouble was coming, and secondly, the quarter from which it was coming, even from the north. At the very time that our prophet was thus being called and fitted for his work, great commotions were in progress in the north. The wild Scythian tribes were plundering in every direction, and were hovering for several years on the very borders of Judah. They seem even to have plundered the Philistine town of Ashkelon, and to have been deterred only by the gifts of Psammetichus, the reigning Pharaoh, from attacking Egypt. Perhaps the fear of this dread scourge may have quickened the measures of reform in Jerusalem ; but when this fear passed away, and when Nineveh was destroyed, as Nahum the prophet had foretold, Judah breathed freely. This symbol of the seething caldron would, however, always be before Jeremiah's mind : he at least must have felt that judgment was inevitably coming from the north. Hence, when a false peace began to be enjoyed, his warning voice

was raised against the false prophets, and he began to recognise in the Babylonian power, now in the ascendant, the instrument of the divine vengeance. To him, the hurt of Zion was no superficial thing: it was more than skin deep: he had to show Jerusalem her sin, even as it appeared to his own mind. The forsaking of Jehovah, and the burning of incense unto other gods, could not be atoned for by any outward amelioration. The spirit of justice, and of burning must pass through the land. In his almost single-handed conflict with kings and false teachers, the prophet prevails ever. For to him God says, "I am with thee to deliver thee."

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY PROPHECIES.

BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF THE LAW BOOK (626-621 B.C.).

JEREMIAH, as we have seen, entered upon his ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah; while in the eighteenth year of that king the Law Book, with its new teaching about the central sanctuary, was made known. There are thus five years at the beginning of his prophetic career during which Jeremiah must have been busily employed as a fellow-worker with the king in his earlier reformation, and in the consolidation of its results. The prophecies that belong to this period first fall under our notice. Our consideration of these "first words" will show us the character of our prophet's earliest teaching.

His opening sentence strikes the key-note of sweetest music, and opens up the prophetic view of the special and

close relationship that in the divine purpose existed between God and Israel. Here the history is carried back at once to the great Exodus, when Israel was born in a day: not to the call of Abraham, when first a people was designated, but to the deliverance from Egypt, when in the warm enthusiasm of a first love a people set up institutions in honour of Jehovah their God; simple and rudimentary though these at first may have been, yet set up they were. This starting point in the national history Jeremiah with singular power and tact here emphasises: in this he sees the true lines on which Jerusalem should have continued,—in deviation from them, he sees the foundation mistake. His call then is that they should repent and do the first works: his complaint is that the remembrance of the great deliverance and its consequent devotion has been forgotten. Devotion to Jehovah had ceased: other gods had been honoured. Allegiance to the one great deliverer had been lessened by a complaisant regard for the gods and idolatrous worships of the country into which they had come. This land was to be Jehovah's: but alas! it had been defiled by the recognition of Baal, Moloch, and the crew "of gods many and lords many." Priests, kings or shepherds, prophets, all had failed: all had been unfaithful to their high functions as Jehovah's delegated, and anointed ones. But why all this? The prophet boldly appeals to them. He challenges them first of all in regard to the divine love. Had this changed? Had any insufficiency been found here? Verily no. Secondly, he confronts them with the use and wont of the nations: they never abandon their national gods. Blank astonishment seizes the prophet: his people have forsaken an ever-flowing fountain-head of goodness, and gone after leaky human cisterns!

The prophet's circumstances are clearly seen from what follows. A party in Josiah's court are urging an alliance with Egypt and its powerful king. They saw in this the only hope of deliverance from the dangers coming from the north. But as Isaiah condemned the alliance with Assyria, so Jeremiah condemns the one now proposed with Egypt. Ahaz, by his policy, had only given Assyria an advantage : this, Josiah's pro-Egyptian advisers were now doing for Egypt. The prophet, true to Isaiah's teaching, declares that Judah ought to have no lot or part in any such alliances. And yet he is disappointed ; the forces at work are very strong against him : in Jerusalem, he sees the evidence of an old tendency to break away from simple trust in Jehovah. At times, under good kings, a dawning of better things seemed at hand ; but soon the clouds fell again. The abominations of Moloch-worship in the Valley of Hinnom, the idolatries on the high places, the Asherahs, all showed evidence of the evil habit in sad abundance. As among the heathen, alas ! every town and village seemed to have its own tutelary deity. Hence, all arguments in self defence, or justification, are utterly out of place ; most manifestly, Judah had been unfaithful to a covenanted God. There was no secrecy about the matter ; it was open and patent. But habit and repute had bred indifference : men had grown up accustomed to idolatry : unabashed, they plead innocence of the prophetic charges. This is, however, a wrong attitude : and the prophet calls for repentance in the spirit of Hosea's yearning teaching. As to a faithless wife, a call to return is addressed to Judah, in Jehovah's Name.

Here the division of chapters in the Authorised Version is difficult, and the opening word in the Hebrew text,

“they say :” but this is omitted in the LXX. The note of time in ver. 6, which we have put in a footnote (p. 20), may have been an editorial gloss, and not part of the text. Some would place it at the opening of chap. iii.: its place is of no importance, but the note is helpful as clearly corroborating the early date of the prophecies before us.

Jeremiah’s appeal to Jerusalem is strengthened by the history of the Ten Tribes, a century before. Hosea’s life-work stands out before us here. Judah has not simply such an appeal as this prophet addressed to Israel, but much more ; she has the appeal, and the historical consequences of the rejection of such an appeal. Hence, being more guilty, the prophet is encouraged to proclaim pardon, even yet to captive Ephraim and this in terms that remind us of Hosea’s closing chapter. Here, the prophetic hope appears : Israel shall yet return : Judah and Israel shall again be united, as in David’s happy days. In the prophecy of this better day, the spiritual elements now emphasised deserve our attention. The Ark and the Temple, that once seemed all and in all, take a subordinate place ; and supreme honour is given to the Name—*i.e.*, the character of Jehovah. A restored and reunited people will no more be a stubborn people, a favourite phrase with Jeremiah ; no more a house of rebellion, as Ezekiel called them. Not a word, however, is yet spoken about the captivity of Judah : at this point restoration and reunion are to come through a healing repentance. But will it? The way is clearly set forth. The very words that a penitent people should use are suggested by the prophet. And again, we have Hosea’s words before us. Thus, in every age, do God’s prophets advise men to return with a clear consciousness of the failure of all false hopes, with a distinct recognition of the

sin of disobedience to the voice divine, that speaks in providence, in grace, in the still small voice within, and with full purpose and endeavour after a new obedience. The demand that is made upon a penitent people is a moral demand. While of course, first of all, there must be a putting away of the false things, and a true return to the divine way, there must be truth, justice, and righteousness going alongside of the oath of allegiance to Jehovah ; and where this is seen, a public testimony of wide-reaching effect will be given to true religion.

CHAPTER III.

A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL REFORM DEMANDED.

WE continue in this chapter our study of Jeremiah's work between 626 and 621 B.C. ; but now we see our prophet taking a distinct advance forward in his demand. He seems fully aware of all the outward reforms then in progress, but he clearly and distinctly asks for more. He recognises that sowing of good seed is going on, but he conceals not his misgiving that the ground has not yet been cleared of thorn roots ; that the land is not ready for a spiritual movement. The first word of judgment is now addressed to Judah, as yet only as a solemn warning, a possibility in the event of men contenting themselves with a superficial reformation, which might have good promise, but no abiding result. The prophet tells the people that, in days like theirs, when the Scythian scourge was abroad, they would be wise if they looked to their state in God's

sight. In loud notes he sounds his warning cry: he sees the Scythian lion-like on his way, as the great destroyer; his onward march can only be stayed by a genuine repentance—a circumcision, not of the outward life, but of the inward spirit. And just here we have one of those extremely interesting personal interjections of our prophet, so characteristic of the man, and which shed a flood of light upon the motives and feelings of his inner life, which, occurring so often, reveal the human side of the prophet, and if they bring him down from a supposed dais of eminence as a prophet, bring him into a very much closer touch with the brotherhood of man, as one himself compassed about with like infirmities.

Jeremiah was, like all true teachers of God, confronted with other teachers of a more sanguine, and more easily satisfied temperament. They could not see so much of the heinousness of sin as he could, and they were, in consequence, more readily satisfied with the amendments made by men. These men spoke of a hurt, but they saw it lightly healed. Among them would be courtly flatterers, having very much to say in praise of the noble efforts of Josiah, but not enough to say about what had yet to be accomplished. Jeremiah doubtless rejoiced in what Josiah was doing; but in the spirit of noble disinterestedness, he aimed at perfecting this work. Thus he was brought very early into personal controversy with the false teachers of Jerusalem—prophets in name, in dress, but not true prophets as lacking the essential credential of a divine imprimatur. Their influence was great, and through them the people had been deceived into an unsatisfactory measure of contentment with what was being done. We may be taken aback at the form of expression, “Thou hast

deceived this people," as afterwards we almost shrink from using it concerning Jeremiah : for God deceives never, but men are deceived by drawing their own poor conclusions from divine providences. We would not say that providence employs much illusion in training its instruments, but we do see men under illusion often.

The criteria of a true, as distinguished from a false prophet, are to be found in their appreciation of the Divine mind and will, and their measuring of all things, not by the variable standards of time, but the absolute one of eternity. And see how Jeremiah does this, as in glowing paragraphs he describes Jehovah's judgment day, and the necessity of a heart purified from wicked thoughts. There is no mincing of words : as with Peter before the Sanhedrim, so with Jeremiah here ; guilt is charged home with unflinching courage. His is a deep-felt emotion : the patriot-lover of his people is seen : and withal, the earnest vindicator of the glory of God. In what magnificent language have we here his vision of desolation effected by the Scythians—language like that of his predecessor, or perhaps also fellow-prophet, Zephaniah, in view of similar circumstances. Moved with such a vision, as he sees the possibility of this awful desolation sweeping in destructive fury to the very gates of Jerusalem, he seems to hear the pained cry of his loved city, and in the deep necessity of such a moment he shows the folly of all outward adornments, all superficial betternesses.

But is he fair to his country ? Let search be made both in the streets and in the palace, among the ignorant, and the learned : let evidence, if any there be, of real radical amendment be produced. The search is vain : evidence of this there is none. On the contrary, the facts discovered

prove the prevalence of great evil and oppression. What avail then the abolition of high places : what use then the confining of religious worship to a central sanctuary? Much more is wanted. In the absence of this radical reform, judgment is called for, but as yet not a complete one: not yet is a full end to be made. The prophetic conviction of the necessity of punishment begins to appear, and grows: but now it is not what it became in his later years. Here we have prophetic anticipation of what took place in the dread day of Megiddo's fateful fight: not yet of what took place when the city itself was sacked twenty years after. The Scythians, so powerfully described here, were warded off, but the wrath of the Pharaoh fell on the land. About the certainty of this partial judgment the prophet has less and less doubt, as he almost hopelessly marks Judah's depravity and unlikelihood of repentance. Not simply against Jehovah their own God, but against the great Creator, had they sinned: "the fear of God was not before their eyes."

The piece that follows is most graphic, and characterised by the play on words of which Isaiah and Micah have given instances. In Tekoa, or Trumpet town, the trumpet is blown. But the prophet speaks to deaf ears, and yet he cannot contain himself. As at a later time when he tried to be silent, and not deliver the Lord's message, he found it burning as a fire within his bones: he must speak out. His earnest entreaty to seek and walk in the old way is scornfully rejected: his assurance that God wanted them to listen to the warning blast of His watchmen is met by a bold and defiant refusal. In witness of his fidelity as God's servant, he appeals to the nations: his clear testimony to the divine requirement is given in the most public manner.

And now the prophet begins to realise the necessity of the promise made, that he should be as a wall of brass to this people. He finds himself in a most trying position: he tries, and is tried. And yet his efforts are so far not successful. The separation of wheat and chaff, precious metal and alloy, good and evil is not accomplished. The radical reform seems not forthcoming: are the people altogether rejected by the divine Spirit? Alas! the prophet begins to feel they are.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PREACHING OF THE LAW BOOK. (620-609 B.C.)

THE Law Book having been made known to Josiah, and a very great religious reformation having been accomplished thereby, our prophet must have been specially concerned in the promulgation of the principles of this Law, and his prophetic activity throughout the country must have been great at this time. It was the closing period of Josiah's reign. Not many of the prophecies belonging to this time remain; but so distinct is the reference to the Covenant in chapter xi. (p. 34), that this prophecy may safely be regarded as one delivered when the discovery of the Law Book was being spoken of by everybody. From it we can see how he had been sent up and down the land as the preacher of this law.

The opening appeal, in which attention is called to the Words of the Covenant, reminds us of the similar passage in Deuteronomy. The essential requirement of the Deutero-

nomic Law is clearly set forth as such a recognition of the great Deliverer as would lead to obedience to His voice : a worship of supreme devotion to Jehovah. There is not here any emphasis laid on an elaborate ceremonial, such as we find in the fully developed Levitical law. On the contrary, a warm glowing appeal is made to the heart of the nation, as in Deuteronomy, and loving obedience to a living God is asked for. This, however, is being refused. Probably the first enthusiasm of Josiah's reform has passed over : perhaps the undue attention that had been given to outward reforms had led to an exhaustion of energy, and a relaxation of interest. At any rate, the tone of our prophet is one of disappointment. If the legislation as to the central sanctuary had been adopted, there had not yet been a full compliance with the spiritual requirement of the divine law. So great had been the violation of the Covenant that a radical reform was nigh impossible : surprise is expressed that a people so corrupt should mock Jehovah by worshipping Him in their unregenerate condition in the Temple. The prophet, while doubtless in completest harmony with the legislation of the one sanctuary, was convinced that true worship could only be rendered by pure hearts. Thus, an apparent attack is made on Temple-worship as such : and the prophet seems to stand in antagonism to the recent reformation. Can vows and circumcision avail to remove wickedness, he asks ? Here the emphasis laid by Jeremiah on individual conversion, to use a New Testament mode of speech, is very distinct, and marks the advance made by our prophet upon previous teaching. Isaiah had hoped for national regeneration : Jeremiah, in common with our modern view, looked for individual regeneration as the first essential.

And now we see the first beginnings of that persecution that further on became so bitter and extreme against our prophet, insomuch that he has become a type of the suffering servant of Jehovah. Of this opposition to his teaching, arising at first from his own kinsfolk, he was made aware. In his case a prophet received no honour in his own village. At first he had no suspicion of any kind of the steps being taken against him: and when he did discover them, he committed himself to God in an appeal of perfect confidence. A tone of human irritation is seen here towards the people of Anathoth, as in a paroxysm of grief he prays that what they had devised against him might fall upon themselves. But now he was safe in having friends at court: so that so long as Josiah lived no violent hands were laid upon him. When another king out of sympathy with his aims and character was on the throne, in the persons of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, Jeremiah was to fare otherwise. And now he gives us the divine answer, with its rebuke of his impatient outburst of anger. Anathoth was indeed to suffer yet severely in the year of divine visitation; but not just yet: hence the prophet expresses his surprise that in God's world wicked men should not only be allowed to live, but also to flourish. The theme of Job, as of Psalms xxxvii. and lxx. is just this: Why do the righteous suffer? And the solution lies here, that suffering is disciplinary: that the prosperity of the wicked is temporary, and that there will be a vindication of righteousness at length. Keenly though Jeremiah now felt his treatment, he is made to realise that worse is to follow. He is called to courageous endurance. God's servants must not break down in the minor contests, such as those with footrunners, or in a time of peace: they have to brace themselves for greater ones still, even with

mounted men, and on dangerous ground. To be forewarned is to be fore-armed.

CHAPTER V.

PROPHECIES IN THE OPENING OF JEHOIAKIM'S REIGN (609 B.C.).

JEREMIAH tells us that in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim he was sent of God to stand at the Temple gate, and deliver a special message of warning to Jerusalem. A terrible disappointment had just been suffered by the country, and many hopes had been dashed to the ground. It was a crisis for our prophet: Josiah had lost his life. A very differently minded king now reigned: idolatry was once more receiving royal patronage. Circumstances being altered, Jeremiah's message and attitude are altered too. He is now inflexibly courageous. He has to speak a dreadful word, even this, that Solomon's glorious Temple may yet become like the forsaken ruin at Shiloh, that Micah's awful doom may soon come, when David's city may be trodden down by foreign soldiery. His words are given at length. We have already seen his demand for a pure worship: and now he has to confront the very men who were putting their trust in Temple-worship, who were fondly imagining that whatever might be the conditions of life and character in Jerusalem, the existence of the Temple, and the due honouring of its worship would guarantee immunity from invasion to Jerusalem. Isaiah indeed had taught that God would intervene for the deliverance of David's city, and for the preservation of the Temple, but manifestly he

contemplated that the people would be holy for whom such things should be done. This latter element Jeremiah is now called upon to emphasise : he puts first not a preserved Temple, but a holy people. The people and the false prophets put first the Temple, and, as in every age, the tendency was now seen to exaggerate the outward forms of religion at the expense of inner spiritual experience. To speak as if the Temple, apart from a holy people, could secure divine favour for Jerusalem, our prophet calls lying words. And he declares that no amount of religious activity can atone for a life of sin.

A crisis in the nation's history was now being reached. Idolatry was once more being seen in Jerusalem : and yet men were trusting in the Temple : some virtue already seemed to lie in the legislation of the central Sanctuary. Ceremonial sacrifices were abundant : obedience to the voice divine was remarkable for its absence. Hence the prophet gives utterance to lamentation over the sorrows that are coming. And he sees the enemy coming : he marks the signs of the times, being amazed beyond measure that Jerusalem should not be able to do so. Away up in the north, but even already within the borders of the Holy Land, the dread Chaldean has taken up his position. In such circumstances the callousness of Judah is surprising. Surely now, if ever, prompt action is required. Jeremiah and Habakkuk both voice the warning. Necho had gone north to meet the conqueror of Nineveh, and about this time armed battalions were mustering near Carchemish for a decisive struggle. The power of Egypt, Jerusalem's paramount power at this time, was near its limit. Jeremiah is deeply impressed : he longs for a place of retirement. At home he seems powerless for good : he can find no one in

whom to place his confidence : the whole of society seems to him rotten to its core. God's judgment must come on such a state of things : why do not the wise among men understand this? And here prophecy and fulfilment alternate : anticipation of the coming doom, and the lamentation over the doom already seen, succeed each other in rapid succession. How graphic these passages are, as we try to read them standing in the prophet's place and circumstance ! He feels his position : he recognises that God rules over all, and sees how little after all any man is able to understand or explain any part of his own pathway through life.

The language which the prophet uses in God's Name as a divine lamentation over the Temple is important. It is God's House : Jerusalem is God's Heritage—His dearly beloved : yet it is forsaken, but only because Jerusalem first forsook God. And herein is a lesson written large in human history. Divine grace is long-suffering, and man is never forsaken by God, until he has in some very definite way turned his back on God. And even in judgment there is a purpose of mercy. For here, as a postscript, we have a promise of restoration for Jerusalem : and alongside of the threat that her enemies will be punished, comes the promise that if they will learn the way of Jehovah they too might be built up and have a place in God's city, an indication of the wider missionary outlook seen in the Second Isaiah, a protest already in germ against the narrow exclusiveness and particularism of later Judaism, another anticipation of the future on the lines of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

About the same time probably we have two very earnest messages delivered by our prophet, one against Sabbath

profanation, and the second a call to walk in the old ways : and these two messages, going along with the faithful words that had already been spoken against a formal Temple-worship naturally led to the severe persecution shortly to fall upon Jeremiah in Jerusalem itself. The exhortation to Sabbath observance, in the way of urging the cessation of trade on that day, was thoroughly in line with the preaching of the Law Book ; here no emphasis is put on any ceremonial requirement, but simply on obedience to the divine voice. The Sabbath to Jeremiah would be a day of glad free service to Jehovah—an opportunity for that recognition of God at the Temple which the work of other days would prevent. And here the continuance of the Davidic dynasty is clearly associated with obedience to God : while disobedience in this matter would lead to the overthrow of that dynasty with all the gates and palaces of the Davidic capital. Doubtless the relaxation of religion that set in again with the commencement of Jehoiakim's reign, was accompanied with a careless observance of the Sabbath : and thus Jeremiah found himself bound to speak out on this particular matter at this time. In the second message here we find the prophet arguing with a kind of hopelessness on the part of the people. The clouds had again returned : a refusal of amendment was being stubbornly made, the prophet does not admit any impossibility here : to his faith all things are possible. But he is met by a cry of " It's no use : we will walk after our own ways." He is therefore left without any other resource : he has again to foretell a speedy scattering of a people so perverse : he has to announce the hiding of the divine face. This, however, is too much for the people. Though they will not amend their ways according to the

prophetic teachings, they yet believe that city and Temple will remain: that still the priest shall issue his teaching as to the law, still the wise man shall give advice, and still prophets shall prophesy. And when the prophet spoke against these false hopes, they resolved to smite him and give no heed to what he had to say. He is therefore arrested and summoned before the authorities to give an account of his teaching—the chief article in his indictment being his words about the Temple. Even so fared it with Christ: for in His mock trial before the high priests, it was a charge of having spoken some words about the Temple, of which they were so proud, that brought about the crisis in the proceedings. Being charged first before the ecclesiastical authorities, the prophet soon finds that the royal house are among his judges: and to them he is handed over as already adjudged guilty. To his royal judges the prophet has the simplest explanation to make: he was acting as a prophet in obedience to God, and what he said at the Temple-gate, he now again repeats. The sterling honesty of the man was apparent. Not yet could the princes go so far as to close the mouth of a man so true and faithful: they felt that he had spoken to them in the Name of God. He is therefore acquitted this time, and the elders are told to quell the people's wrath by a distinct statement of the grounds of this acquittal. The case of Micah is in point: and from the treatment of this prophet, who had spoken words very similar to those for which Jeremiah is now blamed, a royal precedent is quoted. What Hezekiah did, surely Jehoiakim could. Powerful influences, however, were at work to deliver Jeremiah: and had it not been for the intercession of his friend Ahikam, a similar fate would have befallen him

as had come upon his fellow-prophet Urijah, who now is the scape-goat for the king's wrath, and whose death perhaps was deemed a sufficient warning to Jeremiah. At any rate, Jeremiah was at this time on "the verge of martyrdom." Ahikam knew Jeremiah very well, and was a man of influence at the court. He had been sent to Huldah by King Josiah to enquire about the Law Book ; and not only himself, but his two sons, Gemariah and Gedaliah, proved themselves "friends in need, friends indeed" at a later period to our prophet. Thus not unfrequently in history has God raised up friends at court for his faithful servants. Jeremiah does not yet require to hide himself.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROPHET WARNED HOW TO ACT. AS INTERCESSOR
(608-600 B.C.).

HAVING been set free from the fanatical mob that had threatened to curtail his ministry, the prophet now realises very keenly his position as one of extreme danger. Not indeed that he for a moment dreams of remitting in any measure his faithful testimony, but he is made to feel that he must take up an independent career in life, avoiding any entanglements with the *status quo*, which would give him a personal interest either in any particular family or property arrangements in Jerusalem. The apostle Paul thus wrote : "He that is married careth for the things that are of the world : " and to read with many—"he is divided : " interests

are apt to clash : hence the same apostle says : “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of life.” Thus Jeremiah is made to act. He was engaged in a terrible contest : daily the combat thickened. To him therefore came about this time the divine command, “Thou shalt not take thee a wife, nor have sons and daughters in this place.” Circumstances alter cases : and while marriage is a holy estate, fully sanctioned for clergy as for laity, and honourable in all, yet there are undoubtedly times when prophetic men must hold themselves aloof from any relationship that might commit them to approval of existing arrangements, and in the overthrow of these arrangements entail suffering upon many innocent ones. Ezekiel was married, as was Isaiah ; but Jeremiah is forbidden to marry. So clearly did he see that Jerusalem was very soon to have bitter days, that on highest grounds the prophet adopts this self-denying ordinance, and becomes a celibate. How could he be happy in family joys, when so soon his beloved city is to be overthrown, and himself an exile and homeless ? What a vision he has before his eyes ! Grievous deaths ! No funerals ! Unburied remains ! In Jerusalem, as in all Eastern lands, much ado was made at funerals : professional mourners were called in, and head and beard were shaved ; the signs at least of mourning were many. In the coming time of trial these would cease. Not only was the prophet restricted in regard to marriage, he was also restricted in regard to social amusements. He was not to go to the house of feasting : he was not to dance and make merry, when so soon all joy and mirth should cease. He could not truly appear joyful, when he knew that sin was so prevalent and its retribution so near. In the same earnest spirit good men in all the ages have been called upon to shun the gaities

of the world, and the short-lived frivolities of time. They have a message to the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

Seeing all this, and feeling it acutely, Jeremiah finds his peace in recourse to God as his strength and fortress, his refuge in this the day of trouble. He is sure that after the trial is over, the people will be truly penitent: he deeply wishes that before it came, even to prevent its necessity, repentance might come: that in some way or other God's hand and might should be acknowledged. How great was Judah's sin in the matter of the Moloch-altars, and the High places—how indelibly graven in her history! Beautifully, and in a most touching manner, does the prophet set forth the true trust, and urge the abandonment of every false confidence. As in Hosea's time, the kingdom of Israel had been torn asunder by an uncertain policy, looking at one time to Egypt, at another time to Assyria; so now, Jehoiakim owed his throne to Egypt, but after Carchemish, with its defeat of Necho, he acknowledged the supremacy of Babylon. Soon, however, even after three brief years, he rebelled against Nebuchadrezzar. Verily cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; while, on the other hand, great is the blessedness of the man who trusts in Jehovah, who follows a true policy, and avoids unjust gains! And this is powerfully set forth here, as the prophet finds in God the glorious high throne of Zion.

But once more the prophet expresses his own personal feelings again—his eager conviction that he was distinctly called forth to his great mission, and that he had not acted on any individual impulse or private judgment in this matter. As an obedient servant, he would find his support in that Master who sendeth no one a warfare at his own

charges. With the Psalmist he would say, "Hope thou in God!"

About this time the land was distressed by famine, the result of drought; and in this judgment the prophet sees marks of divine dissatisfaction with Judah, and he would use the providence as a call to repentance. But the expectation of any change on the people's part seems now less than ever in the prophet's mind. Their doom seems now more irrevocable than in the earlier chapters, as we have arranged them. And it is almost by way of remonstrance that God is here addressed. Judah belonged to Jehovah: why should He not make bare His mighty arm and claim His Sovereignty? They had been called by Jehovah's Name: yes, indeed, but how had they dishonoured it! Hence the almost despairing cry, Leave us not! Truly the crisis has come: for now all intercession for this people is forbidden. Every hope of deliverance must now be given up. Reformation was not radical enough; and already the great instrument of the divine wrath is on his way. The hopes aroused by the temporary submission of Jehoiakim, and withdrawal of Nebuchadrezzar, especially as these were set forth by the false prophets, are now boldly denounced: already in the drought the judgment has begun: sword and famine will soon do their dread work. Prophets who prophesied otherwise, shall soon find out this to their cost in the coming downfall.

The hoped for inviolability of Zion is here put in distinct words. What the people and their teachers were talking about, and basing their fondest hopes upon, the prophet states in clearest form: he puts the case on this supposition in the most favourable manner before God, even as an advocate might do his very best for his client. He says as

much as he can possibly say by way of confession of the people's sin : he promises, on their behalf, amendment ; and he appeals to the divine choice of Zion. But it is too late !

The sin of Manasseh had sown its dire seed : and now cometh the harvest. Not even Moses, nor Samuel could now avert the doom. The divine mind has resolved on casting out this people. For the prophet there is nothing left now but lamentation : and from such passages as the one that follows, he may well be called the "weeping prophet," even though he never wrote, as it is now generally believed, the Lamentations. He led the mourning of the people on the death of Josiah : and in the dread events of Megiddo's field he now sees shadows of even greater woes. Then surely had severest warning been given. And now a greater power than Egypt is coming, even the Northern iron and bronze, which shall be unbreakable, but which will crush everything before it.

Truest patriot, Jeremiah doubtless was ; but he had fallen on evil days. He could not speak peace, when he saw evil so near, and yet he is sorry for himself. He almost shrinks from his terrible task, and no wonder. In his ear is whispered sustaining words, that enable him to go on without fear, for he is promised protection for himself in the evil day, a true hiding-place from the wrath of man. We know what Ebed-melech, Nebuzar-adan and Gedaliah did for him when the catastrophe he had foreseen was fully come. Now Jeremiah was doubtless tempted to abandon his mission ; but he bravely overcomes the temptation. He is assured that if he stands true to God he will yet be a powerful intercessor for this people : he must not go over to the side of the people : he must be as a wall of brass against them.

The series of symbolic prophecies that we now take in here are extremely appropriate to a time when the prophet is concerned to vindicate God's ways to men, by showing that in bringing judgment on Zion, He in no way proved unfaithful to His people. There are four such symbolic prophecies. Our prophet largely uses symbolic illustrations; already we have met with the ever green tree and the seething cauldron: soon we shall have the Rechabites, the baskets of figs, the wooden and iron yokes, and the purchase-transaction—all used in a similar way—all as parabolic illustrations of important teachings.

In the first case here, the close relationship in which God had been desirous to place Judah to Himself is clearly shown under the figure of the linen waist-wrapper or girdle. Had that remained pure, it might have remained for ever in use: but having become defiled, it was now to be cast aside. The prophet acted out this truth before the people, having taken a linen garment, such as is worn next the skin in the East, and deposited it in a hole near Jerusalem: when next taken out, it was unfit for wear. And thus was made manifest this truth, that if God now cast away His people, it was not through any change or caprice on His part, but because of their sins. Actual disobedience on their part led to their rejection by God.

The second symbol likewise shows how the destruction of Jerusalem was being brought about by her own conduct: the evils in the midst leading to the place being filled with a rebellious spirit, even as with drunkenness: mutual self-seeking and distrust would so prevail as to bring about a condition in which God could not pity.

In the third symbol we have the illustration of God as the great potter, and Judah as the clay. The plastic clay

is formed into vessels of use and beauty : even the vessel marred in the making can be restored to the plastic state, and out of it another formed. Here is taught the wondrous lessons of the divine sovereignty, and of the discipline of Providence. Judah had been a vessel marred in the making, not by reason of the want of skill on the potter's part, but by reason of the hard, stubborn and resisting elements in the clay : if now it was to be broken up, this was only that a better vessel might be formed. The individual or nation that proves plastic, obedient, or acquiescent in the potter's hand, survives, and lives for the glory of God. The divine purpose is conditioned by the obedience or disobedience of those concerned, at least, for the time ; but a divine purpose can always secure its own final accomplishment—a glad obedience resulting from a graciously prolonged discipline. Judah's present breaking up would be to the prophetic mind only one step, and that not a final one, in the divine process.

About the fourth symbol there is no manner of hope : dark indeed is its teaching. The bottle or vessel, which might have been filled with wine or water to serve the needs of man, is now dashed in pieces. Jerusalem, in which a light might have been kept clearly burning, is now to be broken, apparently finally and hopelessly, so far as man was concerned. Only God could gather together fragments so violently scattered. Such a breaking up Jeremiah saw to be inevitable. Only strongest faith in a covenanted God, and in a sovereign purpose could venture on any hopeful forecasting.

CHAPTER VII.

OPEN PERSECUTION. VIOLENCE DONE TO THE PROPHET
AND HIS MESSAGE (606 B.C.).

WE come now to the definite period of the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, a year specially signalised by remarkable prophetic activity on the part of Jeremiah. The opposition, which had been for the time quieted, now becomes acute, and we shall not only find violence done to the person of our prophet by the temple authorities, but also to the roll, containing his message, by the king himself. Ahikam is now unable to shield his friend. The first great period of Jeremiah's ministry is now closed—a period of twenty-three years (629-606 B.C.). Now only an irrevocable doom is pronounced: now no notes of hope, no glimmer of light appear in his message. To Temple authorities, and to the royal house, he becomes alike distinctly an obnoxious person, and his words supremely disagreeable.

The last of the symbolic prophecies, in which Jeremiah spoke of Jerusalem as a broken bottle, especially roused opposition. He had just returned from the Valley of Hinnom, after delivering his terrible prophecy, and was again in the most fearless manner repeating the substance of that prophecy, when suddenly the chief officer of the Temple smote him, and placed him in custody. In this, we are reminded of the rude assault made upon our Lord by the Temple authorities, and of their impetuous question, Tell us by what authority Thou doest these things? (Luke xx. 2).

Pashur, in so acting, must have been sure of royal

approval, because his action must have been arranged beforehand. He must have felt that Jeremiah had now no powerful defender at court. But though this officer may have been secure of his earthly master's favour, he had forfeited that of Him whose was the Temple and its service. When, therefore, he brings the prophet out of the stocks, expecting doubtless to find the man of God full of fear and deferential, how must he have felt when the tables are turned upon himself, and he is made to realise that not the prophet, but himself has fear all around him. For this is the meaning of the new name given to Pashur, even Magor-missabib. For the first time, in Jeremiah's words, we now meet with a full and detailed reference to the king of Babylon as the instrument of the divine wrath in the punishment of Jerusalem.

And with good reason. The fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first of Nebuchadrezzar—verily, a year of crisis for the known world. The young prince, who had been at the head of the victorious army at Carchemish, and instrumental in the fall of Nineveh, had hastily returned in this very year to Babylon, to receive the royal crown awaiting him on his father's death. The prophet recognised the significance of such events: he saw plainly that nothing could bar this conqueror's progress. His power, it could be seen, was not like that of the Scythian hordes, but an established power, fully supported by a regular government, and disciplined hosts. As Jeremiah looked out upon the nations, and perceived this new aspect of affairs, he could have no manner of doubt as to the issue: he could, with certainty, foretell a complete captivity for Jerusalem, as he now does to Pashur, who is to be among the very first carried into exile.

Picture now the prophet's position, as you read the words which tell of the agony of his soul, and his victory through faith in God. Such words as these may well express the feelings of our prophet, as he was confined in the stocks at the gate of Benjamin by Pashur. They are a psalm indeed like to many in our psalter, and it is not to be wondered at that the circumstances of Jeremiah's life have been deemed by many writers fit occasions for the composition of such psalms as express the feelings of some saint under severe persecution, especially where historical evidence is so entirely wanting to allow the reader to give definite dates. We see the wicked coming upon him to eat up his flesh: we see them stumbling and falling. He could say, "The Lord is my light, and my salvation. In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion." Forsaken by kith and kin, even by father and mother, he could feel that the Lord was taking him up. To God he could commit his case, and, therefore, confident of deliverance, he could already sing.

But oh! these fits of despondency! How they come upon a man even after holiest, highest moods! With Elijah, with Jonah, with the second Isaiah, nay, with our blessed Lord Himself, the saints have to say, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?"

And now, indeed, Jeremiah remained under personal restraint of some kind: he was either under guard, or under some obligation not to enter the Temple courts. He says, "I am shut up or restrained." But, in his enforced absence, he is eager that the advisers of the king should be in no manner of uncertainty as to the burden of the Lord by his hand; hence he calls his faithful friend, Baruch, and bids him write down either the whole of the prophecies

delivered by him during his twenty-three years of public life, or more probably a summary of them such as we now have in chapter xxv. (p. 78). See how eager he is, even yet, that another warning note should be sounded in the ears of Jehoiakim, that some step might yet be taken to avert the speedily coming doom: one might have thought that Jeremiah had done all he could: that he was hopeless: yet with truest forbearance, in deepest sympathy for his country, he does one thing more. He places the written roll as a testimony before people and king. The spoken word may be discounted as the result of feeling or impulse: the written word will surely have a more abiding influence. Let us see.

It is now the fifth year of Jehoiakim. It is a public fast: much need was there for such national humiliation: the people are gathered together. Baruch avails himself of this opportunity. It is a most daring thing! The prophet himself forbidden to appear, has yet his words thus publicly read without authority at this public ceremony! Michaiah, a man very unlike his brother Ahikam, and his nephew Gedaliah, is alarmed, and immediately informs the rest of his brother scribes as to the unauthorised proceedings going on in the Temple courts. The roll and its reader are brought into the presence of the scribes. They hear the roll read, and strictly question Baruch about the method of its preparation. Consternation fills their hearts, and after bidding Baruch hide himself, they seize his roll, and carry it into the royal presence. For the king was not content with hearing the words of this roll, he must see it, and hear it read himself. But he no sooner hears these contents, than in a foolish burst of rage he seeks to destroy the roll. Otherwise had Hezekiah treated Isaiah: far otherwise had

Josiah treated Jeremiah, far different treatment was meted out to the Law-Book in the hands of Ezra. But thus vainly have kings, in different ages, under false advice, sought to prevent the Will of God from being known. Instances of this in our own English history, occur at once to our mind. Gemariah and others had endeavoured to hinder the king acting as he does now, doing a thing that must certainly do more harm to himself than to the roll, which could easily be reproduced. And now, very providentially, Jeremiah and his faithful amanuensis are safely hid, and placed beyond the reach of the king. This could not have been accomplished without some very friendly and powerful intervention. Just thus was Luther securely protected by the friendly and powerful Elector in the Wartburg. God was watching over a life so precious, and seeing to it that the wrath of this king should not interpose any barrier to the spread of the truth. "The Word of the Lord liveth, and abideth for ever."

We pass from the royal palace with its futile efforts to destroy the indestructible, and we enter the prophet's hiding-place, where, after a temporary season of sorrow, industrious labours go on in the direction of reproducing the roll. But in this new collection of the prophecies, there was not simply a copy as near as possible of the roll destroyed: nay, on the contrary, it would be one much fuller and completer. Many like words were added unto it. There was now leisure and opportunity for a better edition of Jeremiah's prophecy; and if now the introduction was added, we can easily see how the words about "the iron pillar and wall of brass" should receive such clear expression.

How touching must have been the fellowship of Jeremiah and Baruch at this time! Twin souls bound together in highest effort; friends indeed, because friends in need!

A David and a Jonathan ! And as we think of their joint efforts to issue a complete record of a prophetic ministry so important, and at such a crisis in the nation's history, we are reminded of the closing scene in the life of the venerable Bede, as almost with dying breath he completes his translation of St John's Gospel. And Baruch as he has finally in his possession this treasure, which we may be sure would no more be exposed to any such risk, as the former had suffered from, received a message to himself. Weighed down by responsibility, dismayed at the aspect of things, seeking doubtless better things for himself, he is assured that in the great trials that are coming his life would be preserved, and his great mission in life successful. To this faithful scribe, about whom we would have liked to know more, how much do we owe ! We can follow him into Egypt with his master, and to his labours we can doubtless trace the copies of Jeremiah's prophecies, which in shorter or fuller form must have circulated in that country, and some one of which has given rise to the LXX. version of these prophecies about which so much discussion has taken place. It is generally agreed that the Hebrew Text gives us a correcter record, as it is very much fuller : while at the same time the LXX. is of very much value for several portions, where the Hebrew text appears in an expanded form. A free translation such as the LXX. is, is helpful as showing the general sense in which words and phrases were accepted at the time ; and it may readily be believed, as we have said above, that an earlier, or shorter copy of the prophecies was in use in Egypt. It may also be believed that a final edition of the prophecies was issued at a much later time, and in serener circumstances. Some pieces do not seem to us suitably

placed: "in many particulars the arrangement of the book is due to causes concerning which we must confess our ignorance."

Three main views have been taken of the LXX. version— (1.) That it is the original of the prophecies. (2.) That it is an abbreviated form of them. (3.) That it is capricious and untrustworthy. The third view is certainly unworthy. When we look at the omissions of the LXX. we find that a large number of these are the omissions of unnecessary words or repetitions. In the Hebrew text the formula "The Lord saith" occurs 117 times, very much too often: it is largely left out in the LXX. Then there are thirty-seven passages repeated in the Hebrew, of which seven are omitted in the LXX. (see Appendix). These seven passages are thus probably later additions from the margin. The authority for the few additions is so great as to indicate their primitive character; while other versions more frequently agree with the LXX. than with the Hebrew. The more chronological arrangement of the prophecies concerning the nations found in the LXX. also speaks for this version as an original authority.

There is very much in the appearance of the work as now in our hands to make us believe that the Hebrew text received its present form with additions, and careful revision, at a period long subsequent to that when the original copy translated by the Seventy was prepared. And the special interest that the Jews in Egypt would have in Jeremiah's work, may account for the Egyptian or Alexandrian original of his prophecies being their own, and so distinct from the Palestinian edition now embodied in the Hebrew text. Many of the traditions about Jeremiah in Egypt, manifestly false though they are, yet

bear witness to this special interest of the Egyptian Jews in him and his work.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING NEBUCHADREZZAR AND THE NATIONS (B.C. 606-605).

IN the opening sections of this chapter we have the portions referred to in our last chapter, and an account given of the circumstances in which the first roll was prepared. It is the first year of the new and great king of Babylon, Nebuchadrezzar. It is a crisis-year: hence appropriately there is here Jeremiah's apology or vindication of his life's work for the last twenty-three years. Here is a *resumé* of his essential teaching leading up to and explaining the necessity of the divine judgment upon Jerusalem, a judgment that is now most clearly set forth, both as to its form and its duration. The passages which we give in italics here are omitted in the LXX.: and thus the reader will find easy confirmation of the fact, already mentioned, that this version is briefer, and less redundant than the Hebrew. Nebuchadrezzar is now named, and seventy years are now set as the limit of captivity, a period which was not meant to be counted literally, but substantially. Compare the seventy years of Isaiah (xxiii. 17). Seventy years did not intervene between the fall of Jerusalem and the return—only fifty (587-536); between the date of this prophecy (606 B.C.) indeed, and the return (536 B.C.) we have seventy years. Doubtless the prophet spoke generally, using the symbolism of ten sevens: the spiritual significance is fuller

of truth than the literal statement. And seventy years form a life-time or generation.

As Nebuchadrezzar ascends the throne, the wine cup of the divine wrath is ready to be poured out. This striking coincidence the prophet fully appreciates; and in seven distinct messages he enumerates summarily the judgments about to fall on these seven peoples respectively. The placing of the series of prophecies against foreign nations in close connection with chap. xxv. is justified by many reasons. They belong certainly to this period, the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and they occupy such a place in the LXX. version. It is not easy now to determine more definitely whether they should go in between vers. 13 and 15 of chap. xxv., or at the close of this chapter. The words "in this book" at the middle of ver. 13 seem to refer to this series of prophecies: and perhaps the last words of this verse, along with ver. 14, may have been inserted when these prophecies were removed to the end of the whole work and placed where we now find them in our Bible.

The order of these seven prophecies differs in this version of the LXX. also. Elam is spoken of first, then Egypt, Babylon, the Philistines, Edom, Ammon, the Arabian Tribes, Damascus, and Moab.

The sphere of the prophetic activity is co-extensive with the known world. The messages of Amos are likewise seven, if we unite Israel and Judah; while Isaiah, too, had a most comprehensive mission. Here in the summary Jerusalem first, then Egypt, Philistia, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, the Arabian tribes in order, with Elam last of all, come in for mention. Syria, to which Amos spoke, and Assyria, against which Isaiah fulminated, are now great powers no more. Damascus is waxed feeble. To existing

peoples the message of the Lord now comes. The conquering armies must sweep onwards in every direction : the nations will have no choice: they must most certainly meet this new conqueror, and drink, whether they liked or not, of the wine of the Lord's fury. In the rise of an earthly avenging power, this new World-Power, the prophet sees Jehovah rising from His throne, and girding His sword upon His thigh. History, to the prophet's eye, is the unrolling of a divine programme. God is in and behind it all! Nebuchadrezzar, heathen king though he be, is the servant of Jehovah.

Jerusalem with her false advisers is specially concerned. Something is going to happen, which neither Jehoiakim nor his counsellors expected: all their calculations are about to be overturned. Probably they hoped to play off Egypt against Babylon, helping as they saw fit the weaker part. The something that soon came to pass was like what happened to the European Congress at Vienna when Napoleon landed from Elba. King and wise senators in Jerusalem would soon be overwhelmed with shame. Resistance to this new power would be highest folly.

And now first of all look at Egypt. We have here portrayed the brave spirit and martial array in which Pharaoh-necho, flushed with his victory over Jerusalem, and every opposing force, marches on to his final conflict with Babylon. How graphically is this march of Necho described: hear his boastful words, "I will go up: I will cover the earth." And mark the fall of pride! The balsam of Gilead so largely used in Egypt will afford no healing now: Egypt's overthrow is hopeless, and without remedy. Carchemish casts its dark shadow before him; and in this defeat Jeremiah sees, and by it he foretells, Egypt's final overthrow.

The transition from Egypt to the fate of the Philistines is natural enough : they lay on the highway of armies, and already, this very Necho had inflicted loss upon them, as he marched northwards to the Euphrates. The conquest of Gaza is here distinctly mentioned in the introductory heading. Thus we can see how the form of the prophecy, as now extant, is due to a later date than the prophecy itself. This we indicate by a different form here. But a much greater foe is to come down upon Philistia than Egypt : the advance of Babylon's destructive armies is clearly foretold. How strikingly is the Sword of the Lord here spoken of : it cannot be sheathed until its work be finished.

As we pass on to the lengthy oracle against Moab, we are at once reminded of almost similarly worded prophecies in Isaiah (*Cf.* ch. xv. xvi.). This former prophet had embodied in his work the oracles of earlier prophets : and Jeremiah had thus large material lying to hand bearing on this particular people. As before, we find again a considerable knowledge of the geography, and a large use of the names of Moab as a foundation for the statement of great spiritual truths. The complete destruction of Moab had been already foretold : it is now repeated, and in the repetition we find the working up of many past suggestions, as in a finished picture. An illustration is taken from the decanter of wine : the strength of the undrawn wine remained in Moab because they had not been carried away into captivity, but this is to be no more. Moab is to be emptied out, and removed ; his strength and original purity are to cease. The picture of restful security in a false confidence is powerfully brought before us : what a rude awakening shall all receive who put their trust in lying vanities ! The divine decree had gone forth against all the towns of Moab, and to

emphasise the truth, a large list of towns and villages is given. How complete too is the mourning! The signs of grief are described to us, showing how the people of that time bewailed their dead. Heads were shorn, beards were cut off, the body was even wounded, the loins were covered with sackcloth, and the hired mourners filled every place. As on eagle-wing, the hosts of Nebuchadrezzar advance: and all the false exultation and idle boastings of Moab are found out to be utterly empty things (*Cf.* Numbers xxi. 28; xxiv. 17). But here let us mark the prophetic outlook, in which mercy is sung of, as well as judgment. Jeremiah sees beyond the dark clouds of the present, and can recognise even for Moab a day of brightness when great sins shall have been punished. In this do we not mark a prophetic advance, an anticipation of passages like those which abound in the second portion of Isaiah—an evangel for the nations?

The prophets spoke of Moab and Ammon because of their close relation to the great Jewish family. Why did not the same worship of Jehovah prevail in Ammon and Moab as in Judah? Why should geographical limits or national peculiarities retain or restrain religious principles? The prophet cannot see why **Milcom**, the god of the Ammonites, should be worshipped in the territory of Gad; and therefore he proclaims that soon Israel shall recover their old possessions, and Jehovah reign over Ammon. In the prophetic vision of the end of all idolatrous worships we can see the prophetic hope of better things for the peoples once sunk in idolatry.

In the prophetic message to Edom, that now follows, there are many parallels to the words spoken by the prophet Obadiah to the same country. Jeremiah and Obadiah were probably contemporary prophets: and thus, both held the

same language towards Edom. In this oracle against Edom we have only another form of that which has come down under the name of Obadiah: in both forms the total destruction of this kingdom is set forth. The eagle-flight of Babylon caused terror to this people also.

Already at the hand of the Assyrian kings, Sargon and Sennacherib, had Syria been reduced, and thus had Isaiah's prophecy, that Damascus would cease to be a capital, been fulfilled. In 732 B.C. the conquest of Syria had taken place. But as the prophet sees Nebuchadrezzar coming down from the North, he cannot help portraying the feelings of the towns he passes, such as Hamath, Arpad, Damascus. Even yet, in this famous city of Damascus, where resistance was vain, and might have been avoided, many fall in the streets before the Babylonian. Amos is here quoted. In the same manner the tribes of Arabia would suffer too, and did suffer, as the heading here tells us. Kedar and Hazor, near the Persian Gulf, are mentioned. Hazor, which means the fortified, shall be a desolation for ever, even as it is now.

The introduction to the prophecy against Elam in the Authorised Version, is recognised by critics as an error of a scribe: and it is generally conceived that some confusion has taken place between the heading here and the opening verse of chap. xxvii., where Jehoiakim is read in the Authorised Version for what ought to be Zedekiah. The wrong insertion of chap. xxvi. here may have had something to do with this, for this is a chapter which should come in much earlier in connection with the cognate chap. vii. This is done here in our arrangement, see p. 38. The mention of Elam here is indeed strange: for it stands as the representative of those Eastern nations beyond the

Tigris, to be conquered by Nebuchadrezzar, and which soon formed part of his all-embracing empire. Information of any certain character is not forthcoming as to when this was accomplished. It is interesting in passing to observe the reputation for archery which these people had, and to note this is an indication of the prophet's knowledge of his own time.

And here, finally, we take in a prophecy concerning Babylon itself. The superscription, indeed, dates this portion as belonging to the fourth year of Zedekiah, when he went to pay homage to his paramount lord; but it has been regarded as a postscript or appropriate conclusion to the book that contains the prophecies of Jeremiah against the nations. Babylon, which had been raised up to execute the divine vengeance on idolatrous peoples, and to chastise Jerusalem for her idolatry, would herself, when God's purposes had been served, become desolate for ever. It is impossible to fix a date for this prophecy. Similar prophecies in the first portion of Isaiah, but dated much later by critics, here recall themselves to our mind. In the absence of definite information as to time and circumstance, and with the knowledge we have of the want of critical care on the part of scribes and editors, it is beyond the power of any critic to determine these now. This, however, is clearly true that the prophetic interpretation of the coming future did most certainly involve the overthrow of every heathen power, and the establishment of Jehovah's power over all nations. Hence Jeremiah must have perceived that even the days of proud Babylon were numbered! In the two last chapters (l. li. p. 161) the overthrow of Babylon is enlarged upon by a later prophet.

CHAPTER IX.

A REMONSTRANCE AGAINST THE FALSE SHEPHERDS AND
PROPHETS: KINGS AND TEACHERS.

THE prophet Jeremiah had a distinct message to the several kings of Judah, and in the delivery of this message nothing could deter him: neither the opposition of the court, nor the much more painful contradiction of the false prophets. He had received a ministry, and he pressed on towards its accomplishment.

Jehoiakim, who after three years of submission to Nebuchadrezzar at length rebelled, soon after lost his throne and his life. He was succeeded by Coniah, or Jehoiachin; while this king, as we have already mentioned, after three months of the semblance of power is followed by Zedekiah, the last king of Jerusalem. The prophecies that now fall under consideration are those that concern the period before the reign of this king. While our last chapter dealt with what may be called the Foreign Affairs of the time, we shall in this deal with the Home Policy: and listen to what the prophet has got to say about the leaders of the people at home.

The lines of a true and worthy government are laid down, even the great moral and spiritual duties, which every administration should keep well in the foreground, the neglect of which in any age is a sure precursor of coming ruin. In Jerusalem God had a divine interest, but this was bound up with that city doing what the divine law required: the continuance of that interest depended on the maintenance of righteousness: otherwise she should be destroyed, dear

though she had been as a right eye, or a right hand. The date of this prophecy is determined by the tone of certainty as to the coming judgment.

The paragraph concerning the House of David which we find at present in chapter xxi., finds suitable place here : for it is an exhortation to the royal house to the discharge of the true duties of a kingly dynasty, accompanied with a hopelessness of tone as to any likelihood of amendment, or change for the better. Manifestly the time of divine vindication was now very near against the inhabitress of the valley. Vain now were all Jerusalem's false confidences !

What a pathetic story is that of Shallum, known as Jehoahaz ! At the age of twenty-three, full of strength, purpose, and hope he ascends his father's throne, and in three months, a period as brief as that during which Jehoiachin reigned, he is carried away into exile, no more to return to his native land. The prophet indeed had wept sorely himself, but now he forbids his people to weep for him who had died at Megiddo, even Josiah : and he calls upon them the rather to weep for this sad young fellow, whose career had been so prematurely cut short by Necho, the Pharaoh of his day. First of all, he was kept a prisoner at Riblah in the north, and when Necho returned home he was taken with him to Egypt. Like the king of the same name, his predecessor, he did evil in the sight of Jehovah ; but probably the vitality of his rule and his refusal to accept the king of Egypt as his paramount lord were the reasons for his dethronement. A patriotic sovereign had thus been removed : no wonder Jeremiah weeps over such a tragedy ! This departure was for evermore : never again was Shallum to see his native land !

Jehoiakim succeeded Shallum, as we have seen, and

reigned from 609 to 599 B.C. We can gather clearly enough from the prophecies before us, and from the whole tenor of Jeremiah's preaching during this reign, the character of this king. While, doubtless, his policy was vacillating, he seemed to have been struggling for a free hand, but struggling without any reliance on Jehovah, and without any guidance from Jeremiah.

He was between two great powers, but he failed to recognise the Power that is above all. Hence he was out of touch and sympathy with Jeremiah's life-work. Moral considerations weighed too little, if at all in this king's life; and thus the prophet is called upon to denounce woe upon him and his conduct. In the passage before us the royal desire to have a magnificent palace, worthy of a great king, is dwelt upon and condemned. The difficult verse (ver. 15) seems to satyrise the man who thinks that kingly dignity is secured and preserved by a sumptuous and extravagant style of living. Ahab and Ahaz had indeed thought thus; and their foolish tradition Jehoiakim follows, all forgetful of the truth, that he is kingly who kingly does.

Whether we follow the LXX. here, introducing a reference to Ahab or Ahaz, or the Hebrew text, we find the teaching the same, that vain is vieing with former kings, or building of palaces, when there is an absence of justice and right. It is also hinted in this paragraph that this king carried through his extensive works with forced and unpaid or underpaid labour. And Josiah is made to stand out in contrast to his son here,—that king who so largely realised the prophet's ideal of what a true king should be, even "a just man ruling in the fear of God." True success in kingly government is based on a distinct knowledge of God, such a knowledge as will be of necessity the fountain-spring of all good doing, of all

true moral discernment. This knowledge of God was wholly absent from the mind of Jehoiakim : hence his goal was gain, and his rule oppression. When his end would come he would not be lamented : his death would be no loss to Jerusalem. The Chronicles speak of the abominations which he did : and the prophet declares that his burial would be attended by many marks of contumely and disgrace. The striking words of Habakkuk (ii. 11) were doubtless spoken in reference to the conduct of this same king. How he died or where, we are not told : but prior to his death he had suffered ignominy enough at the hands of the proud conqueror. Such was the fate of him who cast disgrace on the roll of God.

And now the prophet thinks of the sad condition of the people under such government : a condition largely brought about by their own consent, and not recognised in its fulness of evil by them, as by him. Lebanon, Bashan, Abarim, or Nebo are chosen here as high places for public mourning. They had all been associated with Jehoiakim's, and Judah's efforts at architectural aggrandisement ; they are all to be witnesses now of his and their humiliation. From every border of the land shall the cry of distress go up, even from Lebanon in the far north to Hermon (Ps. lxxviii. 15) in Bashan, right down to Nebo beyond the Jordan. Judah's shepherds or lovers—*i.e.*, her kings, in whom she had put her trust, had all proved a great disappointment. But like king like people : and the failure of a crown is a people's loss.

The forcible dethronement of Jehoiakim by Nebuchadrezzar, and his disgraceful end, is followed by the brief three months' reign of Jehoiachin. This young man soon saw the hopelessness of his position, and allowed himself to submit his case to the decision of the great arbiter of the world at

that time. The appointment to the throne of Jerusalem had now to be made by Nebuchadrezzar: the patriotic feelings, which had perhaps expressed themselves in the choice of Jehoiachin, were doing so for the last time. Judah's last king is the nominee of Babylon. Mattaniah, brother of Jehoiakim, had perhaps given in his allegiance to Nebuchadrezzar at an earlier time, and taken occasion to express his disapproval of the election of Jehoiachin, his nephew, in the circumstances of the country. He, therefore, received the favour of Babylon, and becomes king under the name of Zedekiah. Alas! that this was but a name: had it represented any reality—had this king known Jehovah as his righteousness (for this the Hebrew means), and received his throne from Him, it would have been better for him. As it was, he was really a usurper; and the favour of Jehovah was now manifestly withdrawn from Jerusalem and her king. By the consent of Nebuchadrezzar, the king-maker, he takes the place vacated by Jehoiachin. Concerning this king, the prophet shows by his words here that great hopes were once entertained, but that these hopes were soon dashed to the ground. And yet it would seem as if all this misfortune came upon Coniah through no fault of his own: he lived in troublous times, when it was vain to try to avert the coming storm. Hence the lamentation over the condition of Jerusalem as the prophet cries out in tears, "O land, land, land! Hear the Word of Jehovah!" In the departure of this prince, the prophet sees the departure of Judah's royal house, and sorrowfully realises that never again shall one of this family reign in David's city. And now follow some concluding words about the royal family, words of indignation and disappointment. Those who ought to have been true shepherds had failed in their functions, and destroyed

and scattered the sheep. The human shepherds, however, having thus terribly failed, the divine Shepherd reveals His presence, and assures His people of His abiding interest in them. A promise of restoration is here given. Once again the flock will be gathered together from every quarter, whither it had been dispersed : a true Davidic shepherd will once again be raised up in the new conditions, even as Isaiah foretold. The characteristic of this new government shall be righteousness, and its consequence a true deliverance from every enemy. The passage makes us think of the fuller Messianic prophecy of the better future given further on in chapters xxxi.-xxxiii. (p. 127) ; and ver. 6 here specially suggests xxxiii. 16 (p. 141). How strangely does the new hope of the Lord our Righteousness contrast with the counterfeit reality of the king then reigning : even as all our true hopes for time and eternity painfully contrast with the counterfeit substitutes offered us by the world. To the man of faith it is always better further on, inasmuch as God has much yet to do for our race. Jeremiah dwells in rapture on this coming day. By him it was felt to be a day better and more glorious than the best and most glorious in Israel's national history, even the day of the Exodus. Hence he declares that men shall think of God in the future not as the God of the Exodus, but as the God of the Restoration. This new deliverance was to eclipse the former. And thus has the work of Calvary eclipsed all previous deliverances : so that to-day we speak with deepest gratitude of God as as our Redeemer in Christ Jesus. This is His last and best title : the God of Redemption.

Passing now from a consideration of the kings of Jerusalem, the prophet enters upon a condemnation of the false prophets, and unsatisfactory religious guides of the time.

With these our prophet was in perpetual conflict. And this just because he had a deeper insight into the character of his time, and a truer appreciation of the course of events than they. These false prophets, indeed, seemed to possess many of the credentials of the prophetic office: they had the ear, too, both of the king and the people. But they did not possess that true credential which is all essential, that Jeremiah had, even an ear opened to the divine voice, and a will subservient to the will of God. His whole being was under a divine influence: and though the divine revelations were not seldom too awful for him to believe, though the divine burden was frequently too heavy for him to bear, yet he received the one, and bore the other: this he felt to be involved in the prophetic calling. It was his to be persuaded by God—to be the channel through which God might speak all His own counsel. A false prophet—*i.e.*, a prophet in the outward appearing takes what he chooses, and accommodates all to human standards of acceptance. A true prophet is God's man, and must speak whether men hear or forbear. And more, he must see things as God sees them, weighing them in the balances of the sanctuary. Thus it is now with our prophet, who finds so much to deplore in the land, and hardly anything in any class to praise. His complaint is chiefly of the religious teachers, whose influence had been cast on the wrong side: instead of being a restraining power, they had become a centre and spring of evil. They held out false hopes too, hopes diametrically opposed to those of Jeremiah: they foretold peace and prosperity in present conditions, he spoke only of peace and prosperity after the subversion and overthrow of these conditions. He claims to have been in the council of the Lord, to have been sent by

Him, and therefore to speak a vision not of his own heart, but according to that which had been spoken by the Lord. His word is not his own, but God's: and this he is convinced will be recognised not only by its speedy fulfilment, but by any one who has been in communion with God. The true prophet thus must be sent, and have a commission: he must be accompanied in his work by those spiritual influences of a righteous and moral character that evidence the presence of God.

Jeremiah is deeply grieved that the "Thus saith the Lord," has been so much taken in vain, and he can only see one result from this open and profligate disregard of the God of truth, even the cessation of true prophecy in the land. The false prophets by their habitual use of such phrases as "the Burden of the Lord," or "Thus saith the Lord," when they had no authority for using them, had brought these phrases, even the very message of God into popular disfavour. Isaiah had used this phrase largely, "the Burden or Message of the Lord," and indeed with right; but many had used it wrongly, thinking thereby to gain a hearing for their own foolish imaginings. Hence the very phrase is forbidden; its use is to cease. Men should ask now, "What hath the Lord answered?" They should go beyond the oracular statement, and seek for some evidence of the speaker being truly inspired of God, having really heard the divine voice, and been in touch with the Holy One. And if perchance any one should come forth vainly using such a phrase as "the Burden of the Lord," he would find out to his cost that, as the word also etymologically means, the Lord would lift him up and cast him out of His presence. The prophet makes the word here a forcible expression of a great truth that the

man who speaks without authority in God's Name or speaks other words than what God gives, shall be disgracefully dismissed.

Kings, priests, prophets, and people having thus all proved themselves so disobedient to the divine voice, is there any trace of fidelity left in the land? This the prophet finds in the family of Rechab, the son of Jonadab; and by drawing attention to their faithful obedience to the voice of their earthly father, he emphasises the wickedness of the nation in proving disobedient to the voice divine. Again we have a symbolic action on the part of our prophet. He actually tests the Rechabites to see whether they will steadfastly resist every temptation to break their pledge. Their representatives are publicly brought into the Temple, and bowls of wine are set before them. The temptation is firmly resisted. Then at once the lesson is pressed home upon the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The faithful Rechabites would continue, while unfaithful Jerusalem would be visited with severest punishments. In obedience even in smallest matters there is the soil of surest growth for moral purpose and endeavour. Be the object of the resolution what it may, however small, if only it be pursued with unfaltering courage, moral power will be developed. In this lies the principle of the promise added to the fifth commandment—To obedience is promised long life. And if thus highest earthly blessing is associated with obedience to parents, and the voice of conscience, clearly then obedience to God is the guarantee of an endless life. By disobedience Jerusalem fell.

CHAPTER X.

THE REIGN OF ZEDEKIAH. THE DOOM BEGUN.
(599-588 B.C.).

IT has been already mentioned that Nebuchadrezzar had appointed Zedekiah to be king in the place of Coniah or Jehoiachin, whose abdication he had accepted. And now the end of Jerusalem draws near : only the eleven years of this king intervene before the doom foretold by Jeremiah is fully accomplished. The prophet was entirely disregarded : neither king nor people paid any attention to what he had to say. They had thus conducted their affairs without any consideration of the divine will, and their rebellion against Babylon only brought their punishment nearer. The prophet very clearly perceived that it was a vain and foolish policy for a king like Zedekiah, who owed his throne to Babylon, to think of rebelling against her mighty ruler : and as we shall immediately see, he very distinctly declared the course that the king should follow, as he used once more his symbolical method of teaching important truth. But his advice was not taken. Hence, in his ninth year, Nebuchadrezzar besieges Jerusalem, and after a siege of about two years the city is taken, and thrown down : then the beautiful house in which their fathers had worshipped God was burned with fire, and all their pleasant things laid waste, as the prophet of the exile so touchingly tells us. Already the very flower of the people had been carried away into Babylon : some three thousand and twenty-three. Then Ezekiel had gone with the captive nobles, while Jeremiah remained at the post of danger : Daniel and his

companions, it is believed, had gone with an earlier band of captives when Jehoiakim submitted to Babylon. At this time 832 more people are taken away, but still Jeremiah remained with the residue, the body of the people, whose fortunes we shall soon find him sharing in Egypt, a country to which they went much against his own desire. Zedekiah's fate is sad enough. His household is slain before his eyes, and then his own eyes were put out. In blindness and misery he closed his days in Babylon. For Jehoiachin better things were in store: we are told how he received honour and kindly recognition at the hands of the next Babylonian king. While Jerusalem was overthrown, the true seed of David's house, which was not represented by Zedekiah, was preserved, and in due time, when the seventy years of captivity were ended, a new leader, even a prince of the royal house was raised up in the person of Zerubbabel (one born in Babylon) to lead out the people in a new and better Exodus.

Just immediately after the captivity of Jehoiachin, and at the very beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, we have a very striking symbolic representation of the attitude of the prophet towards the people who remained behind, and who were undoubtedly thinking of themselves as the true people of the land. Even as afterwards, we find in Ezekiel (ch. xi.) a vision of the Shekinah glory leaving Jerusalem, and going far hence to find a new dwelling-place among the true and sincere worshippers by the Chebar, so now we find Jeremiah making quite distinct this thought that already the true people of God were those who had gone into captivity, not those who still remained in the land. Ezekiel's first vision dates some six years after this—*i.e.*, in 593 B.C., but it concerns just exactly the same circumstances. Those who had been carried hence were being despised by

those who stayed behind. Jeremiah, under the figure of the good and bad figs, shows on the contrary that those who had been transferred to Babylon were the best of the people, the true seed. The prophet corrects and contradicts the proud and self-sufficient views that were spreading in Jerusalem: he shows that the divine favour had gone with the captives, and that God's interest in those remaining behind had really ceased. This is Ezekiel's message too to his captive companions, and to them it was indeed a message of good cheer. These indeed were the true seed: in them were enshrined the true traditions: and by being united by a common suffering, oppressed by the tyranny of idolatry, they were to be weaned from all false worships, and in due course restored as the true people. Captivity was to have, by means of its discipline, even as already Amos had declared, great spiritual uses. In exile from home, in deprivation of religious privileges, they were to receive an heart to recognise and serve Jehovah. Thus in every age, suffering, with its loss of privilege, leads to these privileges being more highly valued. Jeremiah's attitude towards Zedekiah and the residue is manifest. For him and them he has nothing good at all to say. Strange indeed that in such circumstances he should have longer tarried in Jerusalem! Why did he not join himself to Ezekiel and his comrades? Ah! for him the post of danger was the post of duty: soon in his deepest distress he was to receive from God, and utter for all time, words of the highest consolation. Just because he was to experience almost nothing in his own outward state that could comfort him, he was to get nearer to God, and staying himself more entirely upon Him, was to have a peace, and a knowledge that the world could neither give nor take away.

Soon after Zedekiah was established on the throne, and Nebuchadrezzar had turned his attention elsewhere, it would seem that the old patriotic spirit of independence at once began to assert itself in Jerusalem. The popular party urged Zedekiah to resist the supremacy of Babylon, and a movement was set on foot to enlist the sympathies of the smaller kingdoms round about in a general rising. Hence a council is held, and among its members are the representatives of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Zidon. A strange gathering, when we consider the relations of Judah to these powers in former days, and very specially strange, when we remember the prophetic attitude towards all these kingdoms! What fellowship is this? No wonder then that Jeremiah is obliged to speak out in terms of highest condemnation of this whole matter. He makes a complete yoke, and places it upon his own shoulders, as he proceeds symbolically to teach the absolute necessity of Judah and the various neighbouring kingdoms submitting at once unreservedly and with good grace to the rule of Nebuchadrezzar. An utter delusion, however, seemed to lay hold upon Jerusalem, and false prophets did all they could to strengthen the hope that resistance to Babylon might be successful. Jeremiah saw and declared the folly and utter hopelessness of such a course. Nebuchadrezzar was to be invincible until his time should come: not by puny Judah and her sinful alliances would a limit be put to this giant power, but by God alone. Resistance then, in the meantime, the prophet regarded as the most foolish thing possible: submission alone would secure the enjoyment of the blessings they then had: poor though these were, they might be poorer much!

It is interesting to note here how much fuller is the Hebrew text in the chapter before us than it is in the LXX. :

hence the value here especially of our plan of printing the parts omitted by the LXX. in italics. It will be observed that the shorter version is quite complete in itself, and gives all the important elements. The amplifications found in the Hebrew, put there no doubt by a later editor, are repetitions in most cases, fuller expression of details or a more emphatic statement of the promised restoration (ver. 16). In one particular greater accuracy is found in the LXX. of ver. 19; for we read in ch. lii. 17 that the pillars of brass, and the bases, and the brazen sea had been broken up, and probably melted so as to be taken to Chaldea. Thus the omission in ver. 19 of all reference to these things is more correct. This is a case where the value of the LXX. clearly appears: the additions here and elsewhere being later than the original in use in Egypt, and introduced from marginal annotations into the text current in Palestine.

Jeremiah speaks both to king and people. Another adviser, however, by name Hananiah, had at this time the ear of both, and our prophet is refused any attention. This man claimed to be a prophet, and to speak in Jehovah's Name: and he distinctly contradicted all that Jeremiah said: especially in these two particulars—(1) He declared the restoration of Coniah; and (2) the cessation of Nebuchadrezzar's power in two years. The event proved both these assertions false indeed, for Coniah never was restored, and Nebuchadrezzar reigned for more than thirty years longer. Of course Jeremiah would have been delighted if there had been any chance of these things happening; but in their very desirableness to the carnal heart might be seen evidence of their essential falsehood. He is content to abide by the result of an appeal to the facts of history: the true prophet is ever he who correctly

discerns the true course of events : and this true discernment is the prophetic gift. But Hananiah is not content to wait, leaving both Jeremiah's words and his own to be thus tested. He shows the violence of self-conceit : he has not the confidence in the historic vindication, which the knowledge of possessed truth secures : his is the presumption that brooks no delay, and tries to secure by force its own vindication at once. He could indeed break the wooden yoke that the prophet held ; but he was entirely helpless to avert the coming yoke thus symbolised. Hence Jeremiah is sent to tell him that an unbreakable yoke, even one of iron, is the yoke of Babylon : and immediately after he is led to speak out with extreme plainness to this false prophet. Thus Peter had to speak to Ananias, and with a similar result. Two months after Hananiah died, even as Jeremiah had declared. What an illustration of the pride that cometh before a fall, of the hasty self-assertion that only brings sudden and irretrievable ruin !

To emphasise the certainty of Jerusalem's coming fall, and more markedly to show his appreciation of the sons of Judah already carried into captivity, and his genuine sympathy with them, Jeremiah about this time sent a letter to these captive ones. An opportunity for communication was afforded by the circumstance that Zedekiah had sent two well-known men on a deputation to Nebuchadrezzar. Perhaps these men who headed the deputation were in full sympathy with Jeremiah, and had urged the king to abandon his projects of rebellion, and send assurances of his loyalty to Nebuchadrezzar. Our prophet, at any rate, found them willing enough to carry his message to their countrymen. The terms of the message are important. He bids the captives be full of hope : for them he sees a day of prosperity

coming. But he urges them to identify themselves largely with Babylon: to be loyal and diligent: to avoid all rebellious movements. For seventy years, a pretty long period, they were to be where they were: the present generation would never again see their own land. The time of captivity may seem short enough to us, it may have seemed short enough to Israel, when their warfare was accomplished, their time of service finished; but to these captive nobles, to men in their prime, seventy years were long indeed: these years meant perpetual banishment from the home-land. And yet in the limiting of the captivity there was hope and encouragement. Such bright expectations those that remained in the land were not to share. Perhaps in this complete disregard for the people of the land left behind may be found the germ of that severe adherence to the roll of those who returned, in Zerubbabel's days. A prophetic message delivered in one set of circumstances may have led to a tradition wholly unwise in an entirely new set of circumstances. Jeremiah's words applied to his own time and generation: not to the time and generation of the Restoration. At present the Bene-ha-Golah, or Children of the Captivity, were the good figs and the true seed; but at the end of the discipline a rigid adherence to the principle that only those who had been in the Captivity were entitled to privilege was fraught with danger. The title Bene-ha-Golah was regarded as one of honour, and special qualification. This the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had to oppose: it led to a spirit of fleshly confidence.

As in Jerusalem Hananiah had stood up as a false prophet to delude the people, and turn them away from the words of Jeremiah, so now we find two false prophets

acting in a similar way in Chaldea. Jeremiah finds himself bound to speak in terms of strongest condemnation of these two, foretelling their speedy punishment by Nebuchadrezzar, against whom they had dared to lift up their voice. Along with these two, Ahab and Zedekiah by name, another false adviser called Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, comes in for severe rebuke. He must have been a man of some authority amongst the captives, for he had presumed to write to the chief priest in Jerusalem, urging him to take steps to gag Jeremiah. This man shows how many of the captives viewed the period of captivity: it seemed very long. So misunderstanding their position and duty, their vengeance would fall on the faithful prophet. But the chief priest, instead of taking any steps to restrain our prophet, fully informs him of the communication that he had received from Shemaiah in Babylon. Hence, a second letter is sent to the captives, pointing out that this false and presumptuous adviser would soon himself suffer in his own person; and for teaching rebellion against the Lord, both he and his household were to be destroyed from among the people.

About this time, while events were fast bringing about a terrible complication, we can easily imagine that the king, Zedekiah, would like to have a personal interview with the great prophet, whose attitude seemed so firm, and whose words always sounded out with clear and certain meaning. Zedekiah had never recognised Jeremiah; he had never paid the slightest attention to his recommendations. His policy was rebellion against, and not submission to, the great king of Babylon: a policy that, in the estimation of Jeremiah, was not simply absurd, but also wicked. What the prophets foretold is now being fulfilled. Nebuchadrezzar

was not going to stand this conduct on the part of his refractory vassal. The king is in the straits of difficulty; Pashur, a different man we may be sure from that insolent Pashur who had so harshly dealt with the prophet some years before, and Zephaniah, the son of the high priest, both friends of Jeremiah, are sent by the king to inquire of the prophet, in the hope that this threatened evil of invasion might be averted. But it was too late: and it was very foolish. Yet thus often do men act: they refuse the teaching of the prophets of God, and when they are beginning to suffer the results of such refusal, they call upon these same advisers for guidance. Friendly though the deputation of the king was, Jeremiah could not hold out one single hope. All the resistance of Jerusalem was to be absolutely useless; for not simply Babylon, but even God Himself was now fighting against her. The city must fall: her king must be taken captive. The only method of preserving life at all is the way of capitulation, and if the king and his counsellors will not adopt this method, then the prophet advises the people to adopt it piecemeal, so as to end this useless revolt against the crushing might of Babylon. Oh, how weak is Jerusalem, when God is against her: strong only in His defence!

Zedekiah then turns to other advisers, at least for the time. The party now in office and in favour at court urge resistance. Jeremiah and his friends are left in the cold. But, in a short time, we read of another deputation being sent to our prophet. He was a factor that could not always be discounted; even wicked men must sometimes listen to the "still small voice within." There seemed indeed to be a little bit of blue sky opening above the doomed city. Egypt, on whose help Jerusalem was now

relying, had at last taken the field, and was marching to her relief. Would Egypt be successful? Nebuchadrezzar's forces are withdrawn for the time to meet this more powerful enemy. Ezekiel describes the condition of things at this period in ch. xii. He speaks of Judah as a house of rebellion, so unwilling to obey, and so eager to construe every event as happening against the mind of God, as declared by His prophets. Ezekiel strikingly foretells the vanity of all hopes of deliverance, and shows how there is to be a great fitting. Hophra was now king in Egypt, and he signalled the beginning of his reign by this endeavour to drive back Nebuchadrezzar, but the attempt proved vain indeed. What happened at Carchemish happened here again. Egypt now felt the power of the great conqueror, but was soon again to feel it even more effectively in two great invasions in the years 581 B.C., and 570 B.C. Egypt was truly a broken reed: her help was vain. Now Jerusalem realises how true was every word that her great prophet Isaiah had spoken concerning this power. Jeremiah follows up only what Isaiah had already spoken: he removes every ground of hope: and shows that the dark clouds will immediately gather only to break in fearful storm upon his city. "Deceive not yourselves," he cries, "saying, 'The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart from you.'" Jerusalem's hour of doom had now irrevocably come: the shadow on the dial would not now go back.

Thus Jeremiah remains faithful to the proclamation of his message to the very last. He allows no influence, from whatever quarter brought, to weigh with him in the slightest degree, and no apparently favourable or unfavourable combination of events to move him from his path of

duty. Does he not remind us of that great Roman who kept on saying even when the forecast seemed so impossible, "Carthago delenda est," till that proud capital was at length humbled to the dust? From the first, Jeremiah saw the vanity of resisting Nebuchadrezzar: the approaching fall of Jerusalem he sees to be the sure result of that resistance.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROPHET A PRISONER. THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF JEHOVAH (590 B.C.).

UP to this time during the reign of Zedekiah, Jeremiah had been allowed to go out and in among the people: he had declared openly and boldly the counsel of the Lord to all who inquired of him: but the days of his freedom were now to be ended. He is arrested and placed in custody. Those who had hitherto befriended him were now helpless. The party who had adopted a pro-Egyptian policy were engaged in their last strenuous endeavour to maintain their national independence. Doubtless a most careful watch was kept, and any deserters would be especially severely dealt with at such a time of military law. The prophet, perhaps, had grown callous to danger by this time, and was thinking that as no one paid any regard for his words, his person would be safe enough. Little imagining that a charge of desertion would ever be brought against him, he availed himself of the occasion afforded by the withdrawal of the enemy, to visit Anathoth, and arrange about his property. But in this he was mistaken; for no

sooner does he pass the gate, than he is arrested on just this very charge. He had indeed urged capitulation as the best policy for the nation, and people ; but as a prophet he was not concerning himself about his own personal safety. He felt that he had a work to do in Jerusalem : the same reasons which had led him to stay at the post of danger previously still held good. The truth, however, is that his enemies were on the watch to arrest him on some charge or other : they could not do so with good grace, after all that had gone before, on the ground of his faithful teaching : hence they avail themselves of this pretence. The noble minded prophet who had spoken so well, and lived so worthily, is now thrown into a dungeon on the disgraceful charge of being a cowardly deserter !

Twice we have seen Zedekiah in vain trying to get an answer from the prophet favourable to the course he was pursuing. Now that the prophet is in prison, may he not be induced to speak some word agreeable to king and princes ? If as a free man he refused to flatter the party in power, might he not now that he had lost his liberty ? The principle of the Inquisition is now to be acted upon. Zedekiah must see the prisoner in person, and use his royal influence over him. Is there not a Word from the Lord ? asks this royal hypocrite, who cared nothing for the Words that had already come from the Lord. Unmoved and undaunted, our prophet reminds the king of these former Words, and assures him that God had not given any indication of having changed His purpose. The king, and not the prophet, trembles now, as Jeremiah boldly challenges his royal master for having allowed him to be cast into prison without trial, and on an odious charge. Zedekiah has no courage to justify such a course of treatment, and

he at once orders that the prophet should be kept in custody in better quarters, and that his wants should be adequately attended to as long as the siege should last. It soon became known to the princes that their king had been in secret conference with the prophet, and they were very specially enraged when they found that he still continued to denounce their puny resistance. They felt that his words weakened their hands in what they were doing, and they now demanded that the prophet should be put to death. "Sinful heart makes feeble hand:" the poet reminds us. Why might not these men change their sinful ways? Then they would have had Jeremiah on their side. And not he only, but all the influences that he represented. The weakness of the king now becomes very manifest. In secret conference he trembles before the prophet, and gives him relief: now in the presence of his princes he gives way to them, and allows the prophet to fall into their hands. Then indeed Jeremiah's lot was sad enough: he sinks in the mire and the clay of an horrible pit. From this pit, however, he is soon delivered in God's providence by one of the royal household, who was moved to pity by the cruel indignities heaped upon this faithful man. Help is brought nigh by Ebed-melech. Jeremiah's circumstances were now like those in which the author of Psalms xl. and lxix. must have been; but in this we have no evidence strong enough to warrant our ascription of these and other Psalms to him. Unfortunately, other faithful men under the Old Testament suffered such things. Jeremiah is drawn out of the pit, and by the consent of the king is ordered to be kept in the Court of the Watch, the closed court in which the palace guard were placed, where he had been formerly sent: and from which he need not

have been removed had the king only showed sufficient firmness of purpose. This, however, is now the fourth stage in the imprisonment of our prophet. He is taken from prison to prison. We may apply to this case the sublime words, in which the sufferings of the servant of Jehovah are described, "By oppression and punishment he was taken away: and as for his contemporaries, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living."

And now comes a second secret interview between the king and the prophet. Vain was all attempt at secrecy, however, just as every endeavour to influence the prophet had proved vain. Once again the burden of the message is the same. The king, after swearing not to divulge the nature of the interview, is assured that his only safety lay in capitulation to Babylon. If only now, at the eleventh hour, Zedekiah would surrender, he would save the city from destruction, himself and his wives from insult and suffering. An unworthy fear burdens the king at this point. Others had acted on Jeremiah's advice, when he had strenuously resisted it: they would mock him were he now to yield. Thus an idea of consistency keeps the weak king consistent only in resisting the will of God thus again, as often declared to him before by Jeremiah. And now Zedekiah is a picture of helpless indecision, unable to take any action of a right or manly sort: his last interview with the prophet of Jehovah ends with his urging on one, who was the very soul of truth, a miserable subterfuge. The princes, however, can make nothing of Jeremiah: their efforts to get anything out of him result in failure. The prophet, in consequence, remains a prisoner till the city is taken.

But though in prison he is in direct contact and fellow-

ship with God : and he is led to express the divine judgment upon the changeableness of the king's policy during the siege. An emancipation of the slaves had been agreed upon at the beginning of the siege, and the enthusiasm and popularity accompanying such a step must have proved very helpful at such a time. But unfortunately this liberal policy was abandoned, and the old state of things reverted to, just at the moment most probably when a sudden hope of rescue had sprung up on the temporary raising of the siege. The setting aside of this measure of emancipation is severely condemned by Jeremiah, who sees in it only an illustration of the chronic disobedience of the Jews as a nation in so continually abandoning the divinely sanctioned arrangements of their social institutions, so clearly enjoined in the great, and recently promulgated Law-Book (Deut. xv. 12). In the emancipation the prophet had seen an indication of a return to the former kindly relations between all classes ; but this return was short-lived indeed. The evil state of things comes back : and the word of doom is heard resounding once more. A people and a king so weak and vacillating, so false to the best traditions of their country, were soon to be swept from off the land. But as in the fall of Jericho Rahab was remembered, so now in the approaching ruin the kindly intervention of Ebed-melech is not forgotten. We are not told anything of the subsequent history of this faithful man ; but he was delivered, we doubt not, from the sword. The prophet of the Exile has kindly words to say about the faithful eunuchs, and we know how, in the early Church, one found his place among the very earliest with those of distant lands in acknowledging the Messiah.

What a contrast this closing message to Ebed-melech, presents to the closing message to his royal master ! One

is taken and the other is left! What amount of liberty Jeremiah had at this time is not very clear. It is, of course, possible that on this occasion King Zedekiah happened to be near the Court of the Watch, when the prophet was divinely led to proclaim in his hearing this last terrible message. Surrender was now too late. The city is now to be burnt with fire. Zedekiah is to become a prisoner: after seeing the king of Babylon face to face, he is to be carried away to Babylon in the train of his conqueror; but as we have already been told, with his eyes put out. His last days were to be days of peace: he would die a natural death, and at the hands of his fellow-captives he would receive a funeral appropriate to his royal position. Thus, three kings of Jerusalem died in Babylon—viz., Jehoiachin, Jehoahaz, and Zedekiah. The exact moment or place of Jehoiakim's death has not been told us. Thus ended, for a space at least, the royal house around which fondest hopes had once gathered, and around which, even now that its branches were all lopped off, a new hope of national regeneration was soon to take hold upon the people.

CHAPTER XII.

A FORECASTING OF THE FUTURE HOPE. MESSIANIC PROPHECIES.

THE group of prophecies found in the five chapters beginning with the 30th and ending with the 34th all hang together, and belong to the same period in Jeremiah's life, even those outwardly dark days of his that just pre-

ceded the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. He was a prisoner, but, as we have said, near to God. And now from him, as from Luther in the Wartburg, and Bunyan in Bedford gaol, come words and writings that the Church values among her most precious heritage, and will not let die. The certainty of captivity, nay, the very nearness of captivity impresses the prophet, and he looks away beyond the dark skies of the near present to the brighter days that faith sees coming soon. He addresses himself to the consolation of Israel, and he tells us how he was specially directed to write these words of comfort in a book, that so they might be an abiding memorial of the good things promised by the Lord to His people. We call these prophecies Messianic, because although they found their first and primary fulfilment in the Restoration under Zerubbabel, they yet found a fuller embodiment in the life-work of Jesus of Nazareth, the true son of David's royal house, a greater than David.

How graphically our prophet describes the state of Jerusalem on the eve of her fall! Every one goes about the streets in hopeless despair: nothing can now be done: further resistance is futile. And now that the prophet's earlier words of doom are being fulfilled before his eyes, now that history is vindicating his true prophetic insight, he steps forth to speak other words. Now that Jacob's trouble has come, he is enabled to speak about salvation and deliverance. He strikes his key-note thus: "Though I make a full end of all nations, yet I will not make a full end of thee." The present terrible ordeal, which seemed so like a full end, is conceived as one of chastisement, a chastisement that is to be followed by the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Departure from God, and disobedience

to the voice divine had rendered punishment necessary ; but it was to produce salutary results. The people truly disciplined are again to serve Jehovah, and be ruled over by a true Davidic king. Thus had Amos and Hosea foretold already : on their bright promises Jeremiah now dwelt, and in their clearer application, as the time of need drew nearer, he finds comfort.

Meanwhile he probes the wound : and knowing the advantages that are to follow true penitence, he can do so without shrinking. He does so want Judah to realise the greatness and extent of her sin. But God, not man, is to punish her : He is to put a limit to all the proud waves of human wrath. The hand that smites is here also the hand that heals. Men may not understand this. They may not conceive how God should have forsaken Zion so much, and yet still be Zion's God. But when the course of events shall have evolved the divine purpose, then would all understand why these things had happened. The future is filled up with pictures of happiness, just because the prophet grasps the unchanging and abiding loving-kindness of Jehovah to His covenanted people. Israel and Judah shall share in the Restoration blessings : Ephraim shall no longer envy Judah, for now the watchmen of Mount Ephraim shall say, "Arise, and let us go up to Zion." The song of rejoicing that follows particularly concerns Ephraim, the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, about whose sufferings, already enduring for nigh a century and a half, the prophet cannot help thinking, as he views Judah's captivity so near at hand. About the re-union of the Twelve Tribes in the Restoration neither Jeremiah nor Ezekiel have any doubt : and such re-union Hosea clearly anticipated. How any believer in Old Testament prophecy can speak about the Lost Tribes

passes understanding : much rather does it seem a case of lost faith.

The language here used about the Return so strongly reminds us of that used by the prophetic writer of the 35th chapter of Isaiah, that this prophecy and that chapter may find in similar circumstances the occasion of their composition. How the heart of the prophets rejoiced, as they saw with faith so certain the great goodness of the Lord yet to be bestowed on His people.

And now the prophet sees the people on their way into captivity. He sees them at Rama : he beholds the whole nation, personified in their great ancestress, in tears. This picture of Rachel weeping over her children is most powerful in its effect on the mind and heart. Rachel's tomb was probably at or near Rama : it was not at Bethlehem, but on the way to it : and in her tears the prophet represents a mother's sorrow over the misfortunes of her descendants. The passage is quoted in the gospels as finding another illustration in those tears that the mothers of Bethlehem wept over their slaughtered little ones. But having solid comfort himself, it is the prophet's function now to comfort his people : he forbids tears, as he impresses upon them his hope for the future. Jacob's time of trouble had come, but he was to be saved out of it ! God thus ever by His servants forbids mourning despair : He bids them lift up their weeping eyes, and await the morning joy. Some perhaps would call in question the prophetic hope : hence the strong glad emphasis, "Yes, there is hope for thy future," saith the Lord. And a people thus graciously dealt with are a penitent people. Already Ephraim is regretting the folly of sinful departure from God : thus too would Judah soon do : and in the possibility of such

penitence is the germ of a complete return to God. The soul that can truly repent is the soul that God must and will bless : for there is "a godly sorrow that worketh a repentance not to be repented of."

The divine yearning here expressed recalls the touching words of Hosea, addressed also to Ephraim as a dear son, a favourite child. Under the tender influences that such a yearning Father in Heaven must exercise, must bring to bear upon His child, that child must return. The weak, frail, sinning child must become strong, manly, holy : and this is the new thing that God makes in the earth,—all of weakness and frailty expressed by the term woman is to be transformed into the strength and vigour expressed by the term man. Out of weakness they were made strong : yes, indeed, they were made new creatures. Thus the apostolic writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews could write. Thus now in joyful hope sings the prophet.

In v. 26 (p. 132), we have an interesting statement about the prophet. He tells us that, filled with such bright visions of the future, he had fallen asleep : and that his sleep was pleasant. No wonder ! For what sleep can be more pleasant than that of those who believe in God, and in the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living ? Jeremiah's mission had been declared as being of a two-fold character at the time of his consecration. The first half was now about accomplished in the plucking up and breaking down : the second half now begins in the building and planting. The divine watchfulness represented by the Evergreen Tree is as much to be recognised in the one as in the other.

And here we have a striking statement of the doctrine of personal responsibility, closely related to Jeremiah's clearer

grasp of the truth of individuality. "Every one," he says, "shall be held responsible for his own iniquity." Formerly the doctrine of heredity had been so largely quoted as almost to destroy personal responsibility: this, says Jeremiah, shall no more be so. Against a one-sided application of the new view, the prophet would doubtless have to protest only too soon. In his ode (p. 136), he speaks of God recompensing the iniquity of the fathers in the person of their children, while also giving to every one according to his ways. For here we stand on the border of a great spiritual mystery, where two opposing truths meet and blend, so that neither the one nor the other by itself is true, but both true only as both are admitted and recognised. Ezekiel (xviii. 2) was roused to indignation at the way in which many of the captives excused themselves by the law of heredity, a method of viewing things that among Eastern nations has often led to the ignoring of the obligation of moral distinctions. A hurtful fatalism was the result. Ezekiel thus follows up Jeremiah in giving emphasis to an almost forgotten truth, that "the soul that sinneth it shall die." "The son shall not bear the iniquity of his father." Such teaching roused opposition among the Jews, who attributed sufferings not so much to a man's own sins, as to those of his ancestors. They asked Christ, when He came, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The argument of Job's friends likewise endeavoured to make out that he must have sinned grievously seeing that he suffered so intensely. But in dealing with this subject the author of this book, who lived either about the time of Jeremiah, or some time later, reaches a higher and truer conception of the relation of suffering to sin, in which there is a reconciliation of

the two opposing views above referred to. For in suffering, while men pay the wages of their own sin, they also pay the wages of sin generally: and when such suffering is rightly used, and profited by, it becomes more disciplinary than punitive.

We now come to the kernel of this whole section, and find the grand doctrine of a new spiritual covenant, so clearly set forth, that we may well speak of it as the gospel before Christ. Jeremiah here reaches his highest spiritual point of view: here we have the expression of his deepest insight into the relation of God to the human spirit. Three truths of the most supreme importance are distinctly set forth:—these are (1) The writing of the divine law on heart and conscience; (2) The knowledge of God by the individual soul; (3) The forgiveness of sin. Formerly the law had been conceived as written on tables of stone, or on something outward: now it is to be conceived as written on fleshly tables of the heart. Formerly the knowledge of God was conceived as conveyed by teaching; now it is to be conceived as received directly by spiritual illumination. Formerly forgiveness was not truly understood, inasmuch as the necessity of it had not been truly grasped: now the people, pressed down with a deep sense of their own sin, individual rather than national sin, would long for and appreciate the divine forgiveness.

This glorious covenant of God with man is spoken of in tones of absolute certainty. A double confirmation is given. The prophet thinks of the God that rules the sun, moon, and stars, and declares that this covenant is as stable, as abiding as these ordinances. Or he thinks of the immeasurable height of heaven, the immeasurable depth of

earth, and assures Israel that just as it is impossible to measure these, so it is impossible for God to abandon His people. The fixed laws of Nature, and the sublime grandeur of creation, afford proof to the prophetic mind of the certainty of the divine covenant. Here is an anticipation of the words of one that said, "Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?" Oh, the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge! It is as inexorably sure as the reign of law.

This leads our prophet on to deal with the question of the new city with which the second Zechariah had already dealt, and with which Ezekiel was yet more elaborately to concern himself in a remarkable fulness of detail. Jeremiah having assured the people of their restoration, now advances to the further assurance that the city, now in the horrors of siege, and so soon to be burned with fire, would again be rebuilt. He sets forth the boundaries of the new city. The first limit can be traced easily even from the Tower of Hananeel to the Corner Gate—*i.e.*, from the N.E. to the N.W.—the breadth of the city: the third limit also is recognisable, being the southern boundary from the Valley of the Dead or Hinnom to the Kedron Gorge, with the Horse Gate in the East. But a difficulty arises about Gareb and Goah. Ewald looked upon this line as giving the northern boundary: Graf regards it as the southern. If Goath be taken as with some the equivalent of Golgotha, and Gareb be placed in the Valley of Hinnom, then the dimension of the city from N. to S. would be given. Identification of details is here, however, of little importance: the recognition of Jeremiah's firm hope that a city as large as the present, if not even larger, would be restored, is here the chief point.

What the prophet declared to others to be a reality, he firmly believed for himself. He does not recommend people to invest in a concern from which he draws out. The introduction to the next paragraph fixes down the time of the purchase of some ground by Jeremiah. When we bear in mind that he was still a prisoner, and without any hope at all of averting the present calamity, the symbolic character of his transaction clearly appears. The ground in question may have been that piece in Anathoth about which he was going to arrange when arrested for desertion. He tells us that in this matter he was directly influenced by God: and after the purchase had been duly witnessed, he gives utterance to this oracle, "Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land." In full belief in the coming prosperity he buys land now, and orders the deed of purchase to be carefully preserved till the day he foretold should come. What a contrast his conduct now is, to what it was at the opening of Jehoiakim's reign, (p. 70). This action thus serves as a striking confirmation and sign of Jeremiah's faith in the certainty of the Restoration. Yet at this very time the prophet seems attacked with a fit of despondency: the strangeness of his action in the circumstances then present may however fully account for this depression, to which we have already seen our prophet prone. The question of human doubt is met by the assertion of the divine ability:—"Is there anything too hard for the Lord, the God of all flesh?" The sin of Jerusalem had been so manifest, so provocative of divine wrath, that the present judgment seems so necessary, and so just; but the divine love was a constant factor, and Jeremiah's faith in a better future is strengthened by a fuller consideration of that love, especially in the light of

the divine omnipotence. Hence the promise for the future is once again grasped, and in firm, unflinching accents anew declared. On this repeated promise we may dwell with interest, for here the spiritual fervour of the prophet and his wondrous insight into the deep things of God fully appear. The truest and deepest theology are here found, as the essentials of the covenant are set forth in the one heart, and the one way, the abidingness of the divine love, and the abundance of the divine joy.

In this way we see how the symbolical lessons of the purchased ground are utilised to teach highest spiritual truths.

And now a second message is given when the defence of the city was pretty well advanced. Probably the first message is here to be understood as referring to the circumstances of the purchase above dealt with; but full details are not supplied as to this mark of time, and it is therefore impossible to say exactly what this "second time" corresponds to. At the time of its delivery Jerusalem was in direst straits: every effort had been made to defend the city. Jeremiah has no interest in these efforts: he had long ago denounced them, and he can now entirely discount them. His concern is wholly with what is to be after these calamities are overpast. While men were wringing their hands in hopeless despair as they beheld the desolation around them, our prophet was rejoicing in his prison as he saw in all these things only the necessary preliminaries to the fulfilment of his best hope: this was to him the destruction that must precede true construction.

Considerable detail is now given about the future days. Bride and bridegroom, shepherd and husbandman, Davidic king and Levitic priest, are all once again to be found in

the home-land. The Restoration is conceived of as something complete: a restoration of the old order in a purer form, and among a holier people. The interests of justice and righteousness, dear at all times to the prophets, nay, their continually paramount concern, are to be attended to above all things by David's true heir. The true worship of the temple likewise is to go on uninterruptedly: for this end the house of Levi are promised an abiding succession. When Zerubbabel, a true Davidic prince, and Joshua, a true Levitic priest came back, these hopes were largely realised: as largely as possible in the new conditions of the time. If any one has been stumbled to find this reference to sacrifices embodied here in the midst of such spiritual forecastings of a better day, they have only to remember that to our prophet the spiritual was not conceived as separate from, but in harmony with the continuance of the sacrificial economy. He had not completely disentangled the spiritual from all local relations. The confirmatory proofs which had already been given for the certainty of the promise of better days in general are here again given with reference to these two details—the Davidic dynasty, and a Levitical priesthood, in particular. Unbelief is silenced by pointing to the covenant with day and night, the laws of heaven and earth. If God can be so good to men, so faithful in these matters, must He not be even better and more faithful in higher things, those which concern the soul? Verily, He must. Thus our prophet speaks in the prison his last word of faith.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FALL OF THE CITY. JEREMIAH'S ADVICE TO THE
PEOPLE (586 B.C.).

WHAT our prophet had foretold fully ten years before now came to pass: and when Jerusalem is taken, his prison chains fall from him. The words which he had consistently spoken concerning the course of events and Nebuchadrezzar as the chosen instrument of Jehovah at this time, secured the favour of the Babylonian king, so far at least that his life was preserved. Now we have to follow the fortunes of our prophet on the three great days, which were afterwards great fast-days among the captives in Babylonia. Altogether there were four sad dates associated with this time, and these were the following:—In the tenth month the siege had begun: we have seen what Jeremiah advised then. This was the first fast-day. The second was in the fourth month, when the city was captured and broken up. The third fast-day was in the fifth month, when the temple was burnt: while the fourth was in commemoration of the sad end of Gedaliah, who had rallied the remnant of the people, and around whom hopes had again gathered of something being done. These four fast-days were regularly kept in Babylonia, until the prophet Zechariah showed the utter uselessness of them now that a new city was reappearing, and a better than Gedaliah was at the head of affairs. We have now to see how Jeremiah acted on the three occasions of the fall of the city, the burning of the temple, and the murder of Gedaliah.

After about two years of siege Jerusalem fell in 587 B.C. on the 9th of the fourth month, or Tammuz in the Ecclesiastical Calendar. The very day of such a sad event is thus recorded. This was the third carrying away of Jews from Jerusalem : the total number thus carried away being 4,600. Those that were left behind were the poorest of the people, and they received the land to till. Nebuzaradan, the chief officer of Nebuchadrezzar, was specially ordered to look well after Jeremiah, and see that his comforts were attended to according to his own wish. He chose to remain with these poor people, and to share their fortunes. Humanly speaking, a better fortune might wait him in Babylon ; but he felt in his own soul that with these crushed ones he must still remain. Ezekiel was the divinely recognised prophet among the captives in the captivity. Jeremiah might well then remain where he was. It might be his to ameliorate their sufferings : it might be his to guide them in some measure. At any rate, he would give them the chance : he would be their prophet still. Thus God left Himself not without witness in their midst. In the choice of a home and a friend we can readily see how his wishes were gratified : for in Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, and the grandson of his old friend Shaphan, he must have found one full of kindly sympathy. In this moment of national wreckage, the prophet's action doubtless designated Gedaliah as the best man to lead the people. And it also happened that this was the man chosen by Nebuzaradan to be governor of the land. Two somewhat conflicting narratives, with an imperfect text, are before us here in regard to this transaction, as elsewhere in Scripture, but they agree in their substantial truth. The details are unknown to us. Suffice it for us to see Jeremiah honourably treated by

Nebuchadrezzar, and comfortably housed with his friend Gedaliah, now the governor of the land. The small town of Mizpeh in Benjamin, now became the temporary headquarters of Gedaliah, while Rama, whence the prophet was dismissed, was about six miles north of Jerusalem. A policy of loyal obedience to the Chaldeans is adopted by Gedaliah, we can well believe, on Jeremiah's advice, at least with his hearty concurrence. Things began to promise well for the remnant, when a dark cloud again gathered on the horizon. The enemies of Jerusalem now saw their opportunity to drive out these feeble Jews, and bring their country under their control. Hence an alliance between Edom and Ammon is formed, and a treacherous Jew called Ishmael, is found willing to slay Gedaliah. Jeremiah's policy would of course be extremely unpopular with many, and Ishmael would not be at a loss to find comrades. The aims of Ishmael were plainly realised by Johanan, who made them known to Gedaliah. But the governor believed them not: only to suffer for his unsuspecting friendship to this usurper. The little band of supporters is broken up, and many were being carried away to Ammon on the murder of their leader, when Johanan, finding his worst fears confirmed, at once attacked Ishmael. The rescue thus carried through was so successful that Ishmael fled almost alone to his master. But the Jews were so terrified at the turn of events, and so afraid of the wrath of the Chaldeans, that they immediately formed the project of departing in a body to Egypt. Before, however, taking any overt step in this direction, though their minds seem to have been pretty well made up, they go through the form of consulting the prophet, making no end of protestations that they would do as he advised them. How sad was their condition now indeed: physic-

ally and spiritually their fortune seems at its lowest ebb. Their misfortunes had all sprung from their disobedience to the Voice of God ; and yet now they are about to add to these by another act of disobedience, to the great grief of the prophet. Did they imagine that the prophet would give the sanction of God to their already formed project? Was prayer merely a request for the divine approval on their own chosen course of action? Should it not rather be a request for guidance and direction? Should not men first wait on God before forming their plans? Surely, for true prayer must always express a willingness to be controlled by the divine Will : so that the truest prayer will be the Gethsemane prayer, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Prayer, if rightly used, should alter and transform the human will, rather than wrestle with the divine Will.

After some days the prophet declares the divine answer. It is distinctly against the proposed departure into Egypt. Jeremiah can see no reason whatever for this. Even though Gedaliah had been most unfortunately done to death, it would be perfectly possible to explain matters to Nebuchadrezzar, and receive a continuance of his protection where they were. Fear not this king, the prophet cries : for he could guarantee his favour. Furthermore, he regards this move as extremely foolish ; for it would only be fleeing to ills they knew not off, ills far more severe than those they now suffered : for it was against Egypt that Babylon must advance. In a few years after this the avenging armies of Nebuchadrezzar must, he knew, invade the land of the Pharaohs. The strongest possible language is then used by the prophet to deter the people ; but all in vain. Clearly, their mind had been made up : nothing now can hinder them in their mad enterprise. The prophet feels

that he has been badly used : that the people have been dissembling all the time. Hence there is nothing for it, but to denounce once more this disobedient people.

Then Johanan, with the leaders of the people, took upon himself to call in question the authority of Jeremiah to speak in God's Name : they even went the length of charging him with simply speaking in favour of the Chaldeans, as a mouthpiece of a pro-Chaldean policy. Surely by this time they might have known the *bona fide* character of the prophet : his absolute sincerity should have been beyond question. How painful Jeremiah's position now, spoken against by the very men for whose sake he had thrown away his hopes of peace and safety !

Once more our aged prophet is virtually a prisoner ; for he is compelled to go down into Egypt with this rebellious crowd. Truly these are indeed the bad figs ! They have the royal princesses in their midst, but they do not take with them the seed-royal nor the best traditions of Judah. No, certainly : not among them shall we look for any good thing. They come to Tahpanhes, and there they become lost among the Egyptians. No return from such a captivity is promised : and we can well believe that none ever did return thence : perhaps the Jews of Egypt looked with feelings of hostility towards those in Palestine.

While here in Tahpanhes, Jeremiah delivers his last prophetic message concerning Egypt, and finishes his great prophetic career. Now very definitely he repeats what in substance he had already foretold, even the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar. He does so most graphically by his favourite method of symbolic teaching. A throne is erected in the entry of the palace : on this throne shall Nebuchadrezzar soon sit, the prophet says. And in

prophetic vision he sees the Babylonian conqueror breaking in pieces the idolatrous gods of Egypt's most sacred place, On or Heliopolis. To-day this sacred spot is only marked by a ruined column. In 581 B.C. and in 570 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar invaded Egypt as we have said: and this great conqueror died in 561 B.C. In the interval between his two invasions of Egypt must have occurred that strange mania from which he suffered for seven years, and to which reference is made in the book of Daniel.

CHAPTER XIV.

JEREMIAH'S LAST PROPHETIC DISCOURSE: THE END OF HIS CAREER (ABOUT 561 B.C.).

WE now approach the last recorded scene in the history and life-work of the great prophet whom we have been studying: and this scene with its noble stand on behalf of Jehovah is worthy of all that has gone before. It is not known how many years after the event of the arrival of the Jews in Egypt this prophecy was delivered. The prophet is supposed to have lived for about twenty-five years in Egypt. Probably he delivered the words now before us as his last condemnation of the idolatrous tendency of these Jews, apparently so fixed, and soon after to have ended his life in martyrdom. A great lack of details here meets us: tradition, for the most part untrustworthy, has busied itself in endeavouring to fill up the blank. It may well be accepted, however, that the prophet was stoned to death. If this happened in 561 B.C. when the prophet would be about ninety years old, then his active ministry would have

covered a period of about sixty-six years, verily a long and remarkable career. How marked with vicissitude was his lot in the many years intervening between his bright and happy consecration in the reign of Josiah, and his martyrdom now in Egypt! It has been suggested that Jeremiah did some literary work during his stay in this land. The book of Job, and several of the Psalms, especially those so full of reference to the ruins of Jerusalem, have been ascribed to him. (See *e.g.* Ps. lxxi.) The former work, however, cannot have been composed earlier than the seventh century: and, to quote Professor Davidson, "the problems discussed in Job first show themselves in the prophets of the Chaldean age," but "as to the author of the book we are in complete ignorance." There seems also immense difficulty in definitely attributing any of the Psalms to Jeremiah, and so, as one says, erecting as it were "their porticoes."

It is interesting to note that the great conqueror Nebuchadrezzar died in the same year to which the death of Jeremiah is assigned (561 B.C.), after a reign of more than forty years. In the same way, among the strange coincidences of history, it may be noted that the death of Sennacherib and Isaiah were not far apart. By this time Ezekiel's life-work too seems to have closed: for the prophetic ministry of this successor of Jeremiah extended from 594 to 574 B.C., while his life may have reached to about 561 B.C. Thus one mighty king and two remarkable prophets were dying about the same time! But in the interval between Ezekiel's last prophecy in 574 B.C., and the joyful herald shout of Isaiah xl. there would be other "voices crying in the night," anonymous indeed to us, but none the less useful and honoured in their own day for all

that. The continuity of a man's work is better than the permanence of his name.

Let us look now at Jeremiah's last prophecy. From its introduction we see that the Jews had spread themselves as far as Pathros or the Thebaid—*i.e.*, Middle Egypt, though they were chiefly to be found in the towns of the north—*viz.*, Migdol and Tahpanhes. The opening words take the form of a sad and mournful retrospect. The habitual disregard by the Jews of the divine teaching is dwelt upon: and in the remnant who have come to Egypt the prophet sees, as we have already had occasion to notice, the representatives of this tendency to disobey Jehovah. To them he has only words of doom to speak. As they are thus forcibly reminded by the prophet of the Lord in their midst, of their manifold transgressions in the past, which were only finding a new repetition in the present, a spirit of opposition is roused. A very determined position indeed is now taken up. The Jews have manifestly resolved to pay no attention whatever to Jeremiah in his efforts to do away with the idolatrous worship of Ashtoreth, the "queen of heaven:" they insist on continuing this form of worship. Their words about the apparent prosperity they had enjoyed in the days when idolatry was rampant in Jerusalem—the days of Ahaz or Manasseh—sound strange enough: but so under the infatuation of idolatry do men often argue. Thus we find Hosea dealing with this phase of the matter. Men do not know, says Hosea (Ch. ii.), that it is God that gives the corn and wine, and multiplies the silver and the gold. Misfortune is accounted for by everything but its true cause; it is traced to everything but sin. The women have their say in this matter too: this particular cult was pleasing to them, though of course they had the

full consent of their husbands to what they did, this being necessary in those days to give their religious vows any force (Numbers xxx. 6, 7). In many forms of a less spiritual and more sensuous worship there is a place given to women not given in those more spiritual and devotional: and hence sometimes the latter lack an influence of a most powerful and pervading kind. In Eastern lands woman is undoubtedly the strong conservative force in the maintenance of many heathen customs. The regeneration of society depends on that of woman.

Instead of regarding idolatry as the source of prosperity, Jeremiah very plainly tells his hearers that it was the direct cause of the lamentable fall of their city, and the scattering of their people. And, inasmuch as they had so resolved, the prophet firmly declares that such a people must abandon all pretence to be a people of Jehovah; that they must cease to use the common form of adjuration, in which the sacred name of Jehovah occurs. Every nation swears by its own god: its forms of adjuration contain the name of the national deity to which it professes allegiance. As these Jews had abandoned Jehovah, and the true monotheism of their national religion, and preferred Ashtoreth, the outward profession of allegiance must be given up. Any profession that is not accompanied by genuine belief is worthless in the estimation of a true prophet. Here again Jeremiah boldly appeals to the verdict of history. The few who might escape from idolatry and the misfortunes of Egypt, would see that his forecastings were abundantly realised. Of this he is convinced. About this future misfortune that is to fall on Egypt the prophet now speaks once more, and by way of confirming his recent words, as also of preventing the people from putting any confidence in the present

security they enjoyed for their idolatrous ways. Trust in the shade of Egypt had always been a chief temptation to the Jews : what Isaiah said about this they had chosen to forget. Hence Jeremiah's repetition of the coming overthrow of the land of the Pharaohs. The passage here must be dated about 572 B.C., after the invasion of Egypt in 584 B.C., and prior to the second in 571 B.C. The reigning Pharaoh, Hophra by name, was to be delivered a prisoner into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar, even as Zedekiah, King of Judah, had been. Against this king the great conqueror had a long standing complaint : for it was this very Pharaoh, Apries or Hophra, who had encouraged Zedekiah to make his last effort at rebellion against Babylon. The fate that befell him soon befell Hophra too.

A beautiful ode then follows, in which the lamentation of Egypt in all her borders is described. Vain was the help of the various allies and mercenary forces of Pharaoh : all realised that hope was gone. They all abandon her in consequence : the power of Babylon becomes unquestioned. Thus Nebuchadrezzar attained the highest point of his glory, and returned to Babylon as indeed the great king.

But when Jeremiah thinks of the fall of No-Amon, the great and mighty Thebes, that most splendid capital of antiquity, the very ruins of which are magnificent, he is reminded amid the wreck of world-empires of the covenanted goodness of God to Israel. His last words are thus most fittingly words of comfort to his afflicted people. Of all the nations that had vauntingly carried the Tribes into captivity a full end was to be made : they were to fall, no more to rise. Nineveh had fallen : Egypt was dissolving : and Babylon's end was soon to come, a complete end indeed. But before Israel there was to be a resurrection-future :

Jacob was to return and be at rest. With these last words of hope ringing in our ears, awaiting and finding their speedy fulfilment, in divine providence, we bid farewell to our great prophet, for whom, the more we know him, our admiration and affection grows.

CHAPTER XV.

LATER PROPHETIC APPEALS.

IN this chapter we have two passages that are generally regarded as belonging to a period later than Jeremiah, though undoubtedly thoroughly in the spirit of this prophet, and frequently coloured by his way of thought and mode of expression. Along with these passages we might have placed the so-called Lamentations of Jeremiah, and would have done so, did we not regard this book as belonging rather to the Hagiographa than to the prophets,—to an age much later than that of this prophet. Not one but several persons seem to have their compositions bound up in this collection : and their only interest for us at present, and in connection with Jeremiah, is the fact that they deal with the same circumstances in which Jeremiah lived and spoke.

The first passage that we have here is found in the first portion of the book, even at the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth chapter, but it seems to stand very much by itself, and out of all connection, both with what goes before and with what follows after, clearly breaking the continuity of the narrative. It is again complete in itself, and betrays its later origin in various ways. This is seen

e.g., in the expression "House of Israel," now used not for the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes only, but for the whole people. Then the people so addressed seem to be living among the heathen: the captivity has come, and nearly gone. The language again recalls that of the second Isaiah (in Chap. xli.), about the vanity and folly of idolatry. By daily contact with idolatry in its most perfected shape and results, Israel was being weaned from it entirely, and prepared for that new restoration-life, in which idolatry would have no part or place at all. And, besides, the paragraph about the future days, when vengeance would fall heavily on all the uncircumcised nations, confirms the view of the later origin of the whole passage. While, lastly, the words about the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth (in p. 160), are manifestly of late date, when Chaldaic influences were at work. This verse is certainly not Jeremiah's, yet, as it stands here, it is as easy to regard the whole passage as a complete piece inserted among the genuine writings of Jeremiah, as to regard this verse alone as an interpolation. In Chap. li. we find a portion of this passage quoted. The passage as a whole is deserving of our attention, because of its lofty conception of Jehovah as the true portion of Jacob, and the sarcasm displayed towards the imperfect deifications of the heathen. "A stick, a god! The vanity of it." We should also mark the moral excellences here attributed so clearly to God, with the anticipation of the New Testament teaching, that to know Him is life everlasting. But such a conception of Jehovah was thoroughly on the lines of Jeremiah's teaching, and was the heritage of his followers.

Taking up the second passage contained in Chaps. l. and li. 1-58, we notice first of all, that in l. 1, the clause

“by Jeremiah the prophet” is omitted in the LXX., along with the repetition against the land of the Chaldeans. Such an important item would surely not have been left out, if found in the original writing : its insertion at a later date, when the book was completed, can more easily be understood than its omission. This goes far to support the view that we have here an oracle belonging to a time subsequent to that of Jeremiah. The passage looks more like the production of one living in Babylon, in full view of Bel and Merodach. It is in the style of Isaiah xlvi., and must have had such prophetic oracles as Isaiah xiii., xiv., and xxi. fully in view. The old opinion that this is the prophecy sent to Babylon by Seraiah cannot now be accepted. A very much briefer prophecy must have been sunk by him in the river Euphrates. Of course, this longer prophecy is only a fuller development of what was involved in that shorter one, and is in complete agreement with Jeremiah’s language in many places : nay, there seems almost to have been a copying of his very words. Compare xlix. 17 with l. 13, and xlix. 26 with l. 30. This circumstance militates against the Jeremian authorship. Did we know more about the relations, if any, that existed between the captives in Egypt and those in Babylon ; did we know what communication, if any, existed between Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we might then have more light upon this whole matter. In the absence, however, of all such information, we cannot reach any very certain conclusion. It has indeed been suggested that the prophecy was elaborated by Jeremiah in his old age, and then written down at his dictation.

The opening words make us think of the fall of Babylon as an event very near at hand. They almost seem to have

been spoken on the very eve of this event. Now Babylon fell in 539 B.C., some twenty-two years after Jeremiah died : and as we have seen, Jeremiah's last words dealt rather with the triumph than with the overthrow of Babylon. The standpoints of Jeremiah, then, and that of the author of these words do seem so different. The association of these closing chapters with this prophetic book is not difficult to understand, when we bear in mind similar phenomena in connection with the books of Zechariah and Isaiah. And it may be noted that Chap. l. has its own heading, while Chap. xlix. seems most fitly to close the prophecy of Jeremiah. The closing sentence, "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah," is obviously editorial.

But let us now look at the oracle before us. The overthrow of Babylon, we repeat, is obviously near at hand ; and the new power coming out of the North, obviously here the Persian power, must by this time have appeared on the horizon. In Isa. xli. 25 a distinct reference is made to Cyrus, whose power indeed grew up to the East of Babylon, but which, moving round, came against this great city finally from the North. This impending attack is seen almost to be opening out already on the doomed capital. Then again the end of the captivity so strikingly described in Isa. xl. in these words, "Comfort ye, Comfort ye, My people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare (the time of service) is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned,"—the end of the captivity thus described, seems at hand to our author, as he sees the repentant people again seeking the Lord their God, and enquiring after Zion. The shout of Isaiah xlvi. 20 is heard : "Flee ye out of the midst of Babylon ; go forth out of Chaldea !" The great day of the divine

vindication has come, and Babylon is powerless now to keep God's people in bondage. So long as Israel had to pay the penalty of her sin, Jerusalem vainly strove against Nebuchadrezzar, as Jeremiah clearly declared. But now that the determined chastisement had been borne, the limit is put to the power of the chastising arm, and our prophet now sings of deliverance. A complete break up of the Chaldean empire is foretold: all peoples return to their own homes. This is what we know happened. A new policy was introduced by Cyrus, whereby peoples were led to submit to the paramount power, not by methods of forcible depopulation, but by the gratitude springing from generous treatment. The prophetic insight into that deepest of all mysteries in life—viz., the necessity, and at the same time the limitation of the period of punishment, is clearly seen here. There is no under-estimating of sin and its evil consequences, but a distinct recognition that sin is heinous in God's sight, and must be duly punished. And yet we are taught that a time comes when the wages of sin are paid: that when the sinner understands his sin, and abandons it, God graciously ends the time of suffering. Pardon through grace, accompanied with necessary chastisement for a limited time,—this is the doctrine of the prophets at this period.

The doom of Babylon is next graphically described. It is to be so sudden and so complete. The measure of it is to be that which had been meted out to others by herself. The vindication of the Name of God, and of His Temple was to be adequate. It was the doing of the Lord, and wonderful indeed in the eyes of men. But yet all was in perfect harmony with the character of God, and His ways of working in every time. This is clearly shown in the

powerful words that tell us what a worthy conception our prophet had of God. His power, His wisdom, His infinite resources—these are dwelt upon in contrast to the weakness, folly, and helplessness of idols: and this passage suggests the verses placed in this same division, ending with the same refrain, “The Portion of Jacob is not like theirs” (Ch. x. 12, p. 161). The hymn of confidence that follows, in which the great things that the believing soul can do when God is on his side are set forth, reminds us of Zechariah x. 4, and anticipates the shout of apostolic triumph in these words, “I can do all things in Christ, who strengtheneth me,” or again in those, “In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.”

A complete panoply is found in the armoury of God: if any of His followers fail, it must be because they fail to take what is so fully and freely provided for them. No enemy can stand against a God-equipped soul. Christian armed in the House Beautiful proved a match for Apollyon, even in the Valley of Humiliation.

Babylon is here looked at from two points of view. First a great and destructive volcano, which, Vesuvius-like, had entombed towns: it was now to be an extinct crater. Secondly as a threshing-floor, on which God's people had been threshed: it was now to be threshed by the nations: the time of threshing had come. And the reason is made abundantly clear. Zion had been crushed by this tyrant power, and without any consideration of what was involved in all this. Mighty kingdoms, intent on self-aggrandisement, seldom look at the moral significance of events: but in this lies a power of infinite rectification and vindication. The right may be apparently weak, may even invite the crushing foot of insolent might, but as right it possesses a

moral power that will yet overthrow the physical might, that rests on injustice. That nation alone has any true title to live that recognises the moral rights of her humblest subjects and weakest dependencies. The story of Babylon's short-lived might should surely teach the world a lesson. At one time it was the one great power of the known world. Yet really it was a one-man's kingdom, like that of Alexander, or Cæsar, or Napoleon. In the lifetime of Nebuchadrezzar, and by his remarkable energy and powers, Babylon reached the highest climax of glory: when that life ended, and that mighty arm was broken for ever by death, the fall began. Most truly could the great conqueror say: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" From 607 to 561 B.C. Babylon grew in greatness: from 561 B.C. it began to fall: in 539 B.C. it fell. Then Cyrus, at the head of the combined Medes and Persians, established a new World-Empire, and issued speedily his Edict for the Return of the Jews, and the Rebuilding of the Temple.

DIVISION III.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH occupies an extremely important position in the development of Old Testament theology. He lived during a time of national crisis and transition, when old institutions were being threatened with destruction, and when men were being called upon to distinguish between the permanent and the transient elements in their beliefs. A century elapsed between Isaiah and our prophet (730 to 630 B.C. say), during which time an immense advance in religious thought was made. A comparison between the writings of the first Isaiah (i.-xxxix.), and those of the second (xl.-lxvi.) shows this most clearly. The old dependence on outward institutions, and the Isaianic belief in the inviolability of Jerusalem, and the Temple suffered a rude shock: in the second Isaiah there is a new spiritual outlook and atmosphere. This advance is in the making during Jeremiah's life-work. He sees with his own eyes the Holy City and the Temple overthrown, and it is his function to proclaim the new epoch, with its more spiritual relationships, to tell men that nothing of permanent value is being lost in the great national crisis of that day.

His religious ideas are largely taken from his predecessors, but taken up by him into the living experience of his own life-conflict they appear so new. Chief among

these is the doctrine of man's direct or individual relationship to God. This doctrine becomes emphatically expressed by reason of the force of outward circumstances, whereby the prophet is compelled to lay stress upon moral conditions, as distinct from outward privileges, now being removed. Amos indeed had expressed the distinctly moral character of the requirement of the divine law, while Micah had declared the inevitable destruction of Jerusalem, if this moral requirement were violated. But alongside of Amos and Micah were other two prophets, one of whom, Hosea, dwelt more upon the tender relationship of Jehovah to His people, viewed as a unity and in covenant relationship with Him, an idea which in Isaiah's hands becomes that of the inviolability of Jerusalem as Jehovah's dwelling-place. Jeremiah looks at things from a practical, and an earthly point of view: he becomes the successor of Micah rather than of Isaiah. No theoretical view of a divine relationship to man, of a covenant, blinds him to the truth that a human relationship is also necessary. Hope for Jerusalem lies not so much in some outward deliverance wrought by God, as in an inner and spiritual transformation of individuals. The Temple, the State, the Ark, even the sacrificial system, all have to pass away: and yet all that these symbolised, or secured for a time in their own way, must be preserved. Not only, however, did Jeremiah find himself influenced by the above mentioned writings, the great work of Deuteronomy also touched him much. In this work was expressed by his immediate predecessors their great hope for Judah's preservation: in it are set forth the means which they put their trust in. The people must come back to a pure worship of Jehovah at one central Altar: they must obey the statutes and commandments of the Lord,

that it might be well with them. This was a renewal of the covenant: a call back to the first love (Jer. ii. 2): but its failure to arrest decay soon became manifest. Confidence was placed on the law, on a book and in the Temple: there was a change of teaching and of place of worship, but no change of spirit or of heart. Not this way, then, lay the hope of Israel's regeneration. Jeremiah was driven back on the principle of obedience to the living Voice of a living God as the essential of religion. He was made to look for some new foundation of the religious life, which might be independent of Law, Covenant, State, and Ritual: this he finds in the knowledge of God by each man for himself, an ever-present God revealing Himself to each man by writing His law on man's heart. The Covenant now becomes moral, rather than natural, or national. From within, by a divine teaching, must life come: all other means had failed. Here Jeremiah, by this supremely valuable teaching, touches our modern spirit: he shows how the religious life in the last resort is not in any way dependent upon any national or churchly form, through which at any time it may have found expression. Our prophet had a very clear sense of what was involved in national regeneration: he saw how serious was the hurt of his people, and the cure he inculcated was a radical one, as opposed to the more superficial palliatives of the false prophets. The cure could only be applied personally by each individual for himself: Josiah's external reformation had failed just because of its externality. A doctrine of heart circumcision is taught by Jeremiah: and this just because he realised the nature and extent of Judah's sin, a sin intensified by rejected warnings. How often he had to weep over the hard-heartedness of his people! The people loved to have things so; they refused

to walk in the right path. High places might go, but God was not allowed to reign on the high places of their hearts.

Jeremiah, then, demands a true and spiritual obedience to the divine voice as of the very essence of religion. He was not content with the negative denunciation of idolatrous worships: he inculcated an individual turning from sin unto God. He desired that men in a true spirit of prayer, in an attitude of life, should turn towards God. To himself this was the secret of power, and the unveiling of God. Great things, yea, secret things which were unknown, would be shown to the man of prayer (xxxiii. 3, p. 139). To him the essence of religion lay in the recognition of God implied in obedience to Him. The Isaianic doctrine of a "remnant" involved the idea of a spiritual society: this Jeremiah developed. But this new teaching involves two new truths as to what God is, and what man should be. God is conceived of as essentially a moral Being, delighting in goodness, justice, and righteousness: a spiritual Being, always near: as such He is the governor of a moral universe, and can be brought into relation with all men as moral individuals. Not yet is He named God, as in the later fuller sense (save x. 10, itself later). He is Jehovah, God of Israel. Repentance can now be preached to all nations: even the captivities of Moab and Ammon may be turned. Men in turn have worth and value as such: and they fulfil the end of their being in any place, and among any people by living a moral and religious life. Man's glory is to know and understand God. This secures him perpetuity: while God's glory is in the manifestation and vindication of Himself. Here are the germs of immortality, not simply for the nation but for man, and of a true doctrine of eternity as applied to God—a spiritual people dwelling

with God for ever. The figure of the clay shows how God's judgments are conditioned by moral considerations: man is now a person with individual responsibility: God is now conceived of as capable of being in relation to the individual soul. But, of course, while showing thus great advance on what went before, Jeremiah was not able to free himself from all the limitations of his time. Not yet is God's supremacy reconciled with His nearness. He has still his anticipations for his own people: the future is largely for them, the last days, or better, the coming days: his measure of universal outlook is not yet what that of the second Isaiah was. Israel is still a wife in special relation to Jehovah: not yet the *servant*. Hence there are passages about the reunion of the Tribes, a Davidic dynasty, and the Levitic priesthood, all of which show the more particular and national side of his outlook—difficult to reconcile with much else in Jeremiah's lofty idealism, but natural enough in the circumstances,—Jerusalem going to be the centre of a new life. Jehovah was as yet only a Father to Israel, not as yet to a redeemed world. The individual was not yet completely emancipated; but Jeremiah points on to the time of emancipation in Christ the Son, who made men free in the truth. The prophetic ideal, which suffered almost total oblivion in the Rabbinic days, is elevated by Jeremiah, and handed on for Christ to realise. In regard to personal punishment for sin, and to slavery, our prophet has much to say in the direction of emphasising the worth of individuality. Sin, he saw, lies in moral separation from God, whose revelation gave men moral insight and impulse, and salvation lay therefore in a return to God based on knowledge, and resulting in fellowship with God. A new people looms before the prophetic vision, a people

made new, serving God free from sin, with His law in their hearts: with no local spot for Temple, but the whole city Jehovah's throne. Hence an arrest is laid on the development of the idea of a Messianic king: now a new community of redeemed individuals is anticipated. A mighty work has to be accomplished in the world, not limited to Jews alone: the King of all the earth uses Nebuchadrezzar to accomplish His sovereign purpose, making earth's proudest monarch His servant. God concerns Himself somehow in all peoples. Here again a universal interest is expressed, and the foundation of a universal religion is being prepared for. Jeremiah's demand that Israel should submit to Babylon seemed strange to Zedekiah, but it depended on the prophetic recognition that a sovereign God was now using Babylon. How far into the course and essence of things our prophet looks! Verily He carried the burden of truth, which is a burden often so heavy to be borne before its full realisation! The prophet's burdened soul oft found expression in great sudden bursts of temporary grief, but not of brooding resentment; the great truths he had to declare were a surprise to himself, and much more so to his contemporaries. The Word of God was for him a fire—a hammer—a given word. We are touched as we hear him crying out under the overmastering touch of the inspiring Spirit, and ours is deepest sympathy as we see him persecuted and reviled by men so little capable of appreciating his high spirituality. In the way in which he suffered so undeservedly he is the antitype of the servant in Isaiah liii., which in its turn is the antitype of Christ. His was an intense conviction that God was with him: that he was an instrument chosen even from the beginning. To God he gave himself up, even at greatest

cost to himself, and thus proved himself a true prophet. A true patriot, animated with deepest feelings for suffering, he was obliged to separate himself so entirely from all the temporary forms of truth and patriotism, to attach himself all the more firmly to the truth that abides and the city that continues, whose architect and builder is God. He believed in Providence: God was for him no absentee deity. God would vindicate Himself, and finally triumph over every opposing power. With such beliefs, no wonder that Jeremiah lived and died as he did.

CHAPTER II.

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

- B. C.
- 742-700. Period of Isaiah's ministry.
701. Jerusalem delivered.
- 698-642. Dark days—Idolatries of Manasseh and Amon.
649. Birth of Jeremiah.
- 648 (?) Birth of Josiah.
- 639-609. Reign of Josiah.
629. Jeremiah's consecration as prophet.
625. Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadrezzar, reigned.
624. Birth of Ezekiel the prophet.
621. The great Reformation in Jerusalem.
609. Battle of Megiddo, and death of Josiah.
- „ Jehoiakim becomes king.
607. Overthrow of Nineveh.
605. Battle of Carchemish—Defeat of Necho.
- 605-4. The Roll burned.
- 599-597. The first captivity (Ezek. i. 1).
598. Tyre invested.
- 599-587. Zedekiah's reign.
592. Ezekiel's first prophecy.
- 589-587. Siege and fall of Jerusalem.
585. Triple Alliance formed—Sardis, Media, and Babylon.
581. Invasion of Egypt by Babylon.
574. Ezekiel's last prophecy.
561. Nebuchadrezzar dies, also Jeremiah (?).
539. Overthrow of Babylon.
536. End of the seventy years' captivity.

CHAPTER III.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES AND NOTES.

(Arranged as they occur in the text.)

(Pp. 12-13).

Jeremiah, a priest by birth, a prophet by divine appointment. Called in 626 B.C., and continued in office till 561 B.C. or thereabouts.

Hilkiah, the father of Jeremiah, probably not the famous high priest, who published the Law Book.

Anathoth = Anata $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.E. from Jerusalem. Assigned to the priests (see Joshua xxi. 18, 1 Chron. vi. 60), along with other places. Birthplace of Jeremiah : frequently visited by the prophet.

Josiah reigned in Jerusalem from 639 to 609 B.C.; a well disposed king. Brought up among godly people, and therefore befriended Jeremiah. Amon, his father, had been an idolatrous king, as also Manasseh. Josiah therefore fell on evil days.

Jehoiakim, after Jehoahaz's brief tenure of office, became king in 609 B.C. He adopted a very different policy from what Josiah had favoured. Against him, therefore, the prophet had to denounce judgment. He died in 599 B.C. He vainly resisted the might of Babylon.

Zedekiah, son of Josiah, and brother of Jehoiakim. On the deposition of his nephew Jehoiachin, he became Jerusalem's last king (599-587 B.C.).

Shaphan, a prominent religious leader in Jerusalem. He was a friend of Jeremiah, and his family befriended the prophet.

Pharaoh-necho, successor of Psammetichus as king of Egypt. From 610 B.C.

Megiddo, in south of Galilee, where Josiah fell in battle with Necho.

Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, reigned only three months in 609 B.C.

Riblah, a town in the north of Palestine, in Hamath. Used as a military station.

Nebuchadrezzar raised Babylon during his reign of forty-four years (606 to 561 B.C.) to its highest glory. He conquered Palestine and Egypt, having as heir-apparent assisted in the overthrow of Nineveh. He married the daughter of Cyaxares, king of the Medes. His seven years' mania or lycanthropy is referred to in "Daniel," and probably occurred between his two invasions of Egypt 581 and 570 B.C. Babylon's

(Pp. 13-31.)

power decreased on his death : his successors were weak kings, and in 539 B.C. this empire passed into that of the Persian under Cyrus. The spelling of the name with *r* instead of *n* is more ancient, and in keeping with the inscriptions in Babylon. This is an indication of the later date of "Daniel" as a book.

Jehoiachin, with Jehoahaz, had an exceedingly short reign : being deposed by the conquering Babylonian (599 B.C.).

Nehushta, the queen-mother—*i.e.*, wife of Jehoiakim, and mother of the reigning king Jehoiachin. She vainly endeavoured to preserve the kingdom in her son's hands.

Evergreen-tree, in Authorised Version almond-tree ; but the Hebrew is not here the ordinary word for this tree. See Dan. ix. 14 (Heb.).

The North, a general term for the whole country north of Judah. The Scythians, Assyrians, and Babylonians all came down from the north against Jerusalem.

Baal, the false deity worshipped in Canaan : against this false worship all the prophets from Elijah protested. A male deity as contrasted with Ashtoreth. It was a profitless worship, as the word purposely used here in Hebrew means.

Chittim, the isle of Cyprus, the original home of the Philistines.

Kedar, an Arabian tribe. The national deities remain unchanged among heathen tribes : religion and patriotism one. *Pro aris et pro focis*.

Noph = Memphis, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt.

Tahpanhes, an Egyptian town near the coast, and nearest to Palestine of the towns of Egypt. It is the Daphnae Pelusii of the Greeks.

The Valley = the Valley of Hinnom, where idolatry had been practised so largely.

Violence or housebreaking. See Exodus xxii. 2. Those guilty of acts of violence might lawfully be punished.

Egypt. The policy of an alliance with Pharaoh had been advised, but is here condemned by the prophet, as Isaiah had condemned the alliance with Assyria.

The Shame, the term applied to Baal by the later prophets ; in Hebrew, Bosheth, hence Ishbaal is the earlier form of Ishbosheth (1 Chron. viii. 33 ; 2 Sam. ii. 8). Jerub-bosheth in 2 Sam. xi. 21 is Jerubbaal in Judges vi. 32. What ought to have been given to Jehovah had been wasted on Baal.

Fallow. Don't cultivate the thorny ground : let it lie fallow, and first get the thorns out.

Deceived. What God allows to be is often conceived as the direct doing of God.

Dan, north of Palestine—extreme north, Deut. xxxiv. 1. Hence Dan to Beersheba.

(Pp. 31-70.)

Mount Ephraim, nine miles from Jerusalem, dividing Ephraim from Judah.

Tekoa, a town about ten miles south of Jerusalem. This name means "shouting."

Beth-Hakkerem, a hill near Tekoa; suitable for a beacon light (Neh. iii. 14).

Sheba, in Southern Arabia = Yemen. Distinct from Seba or Meroe.

Shiloh, in Ephraim, where the Tabernacle stood in the time of Samuel.

Queen of Heaven = Ashtoreth, the female object of worship: perhaps the Moon. The cakes offered "were shaped like the full moon, and had lights stuck in them."

Tophet, the place of burial in the Valley of Hinnom. Having once been desecrated by idolatrous rites, it became unclean. It means "spitting."

Gilead, territory east of Jordan. Here natural balm was largely produced as an article of commerce.

King's House—*i.e.*, royal palace on Mount Zion.

Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, foretold fall of Jerusalem (720 B.C.).

Hezekiah, king in Jerusalem, 721-698 B.C.

Urijah, a prophet contemporary with Jeremiah, who died a martyr's death.

Elnathan, perhaps Jehoiakim's father-in-law, called Elnathan of Jerusalem on page 74.

Ahikam the son of Shaphan the Scribe. Jeremiah owed much to his friendly interposition.

Mountain, xvii. 1-4. Perhaps a fragment of another and older prophet. Omitted in LXX. Even as passages in Isaiah are fragments of earlier oracles (*e.g.*, ii. 1-4; xv.).

Drought, an actual famine occurred at this time through the withholding of the rain.

Ephratah. Not necessarily the Euphrates. Perhaps either Bethlehem, poetically called Ephratah: or more likely some known pool in Jerusalem. The Hebrew is Phrath. Usually "the river" is used to denote the Euphrates in Hebrew.

Potter's House and potter's field had their fixed place near the Potter's Gate.

Potter's Gate to the south of Mount Zion entering into Gehenna. Translated East Gate in Authorised Version by a misunderstanding.

Pashur. There are two persons of this name mentioned in Jeremiah. The one here had charge of the Temple guard, and was unfriendly to the prophet. The other was sent by King Zedekiah to confer with him later on.

(Pp. 70-96.)

Upper Gate. The High Gate of Benjamin or Prison Gate was in N.E. corner.

Baruch, Jeremiah's faithful friend and amanuensis.

Winter House. The kings had a Summer House or upper chamber of cooling (Judges iii. 20, Revised Version).

Seventy Years, a definite period of ten sevens. From 606 to 536 B.C.

Buz, in LXX. Roz. Not definitely identified. Probably an Arabian tribe.

Zimri omitted in LXX. Reference not known.

Sheshach, a cabalistic writing for Babylon. The last letter of the alphabet in Hebrew for the first: the second last for the second: and so on. This method is called Atbash. The LXX. omit the clause: an indication that it is a later addition.

Carchemish, an important town for military purposes as a crossing of the Euphrates, and scene of a battle between Necho and Nebuchadrezzar, 605 B.C. in which the latter was victorious. This was a decisive conflict.

Gaza, a Philistine stronghold. Capthor = Cyprus.

Horonaim. The prophet shows his geographical knowledge of Moab: he knows the ascents and descents of the country.

Eglath Shelishyah. The third place of same name in Moab.

Chemosh, the national and tribal deity of Moab, as

Milcom was the national and tribal deity of Ammon.

Rabbah, chief town of Ammon.

Teman, a dukedom of Edom.

Dedan, a nomadic Arabian tribe. (Isaiah xxi. 13.)

Bozrah, the capital of Edom.

Arpad, a town now in ruins, situated on coast below Hamath, north of Zidon.

Benhadad, the name of several kings of Syria.

Kedar, an Arabian tribe: living in the desert between Babylonia and Arabia Petraea.

Hazor, also an Arabian kingdom round the Persian Gulf. The plural is used here as a generic expression. Kedar and *all other* Arabs are addressed.

Corner-cropped, a characteristic mode of cutting the hair among Orientals (see page 159).

Elam: v. 34 in Hebrew is not found in LXX. and is probably an editorial interpolation, or marginal gloss. Elam was a part of the Babylonian Empire due south of Media, and east of the Tigris. Its capital was Susa the royal seat of Persian Emperors.

Seraiah, the chief officer of the household of Zedekiah, was sent about 596 on a diplomatic embassy to Babylon.

Cedars. The reference here is to the royal palace which Jehoiakim

built. The LXX. suggest that in this he vied with Ahab or Ahaz (1 Kings xxii. 39).

Abarim, a high hill or peak of a range on borders of Palestine near Dead Sea: connected with Mount Nebo (Deut. xxxii. 49, "In the land of Moab, over against Jericho"; Num. xxi. 11). The mountain of Bashan is Hermon (Ps. lxxviii. 15). From Hermon to Abarim means from north to south. "Passages" in Authorised Version is a translation of Abarim.

Evil-merodach succeeded Nebuchadrezzar as king in 561 B.C.

Israel is Jerusalem in Ch. xxxiii. 16 (p. 141). But in the LXX. xxxiii. 14-26 is omitted. The change to Israel was probably made later.

Message = burden = something laid upon the prophet for him to lift up. The Heb. is Massah.

Rechabites. Jonadab the son of Rechab was a prominent man at the time of Jehu, and assisted in the overthrow of the House of Ahab (2 Kings x. 15). He was a zealous maintainer of the worship of Jehovah. A full account is here given of his strict injunction of a vow, like that of the Nazarites.

Syrians. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 2) where the Syrians appear in alliance with the Assyrians.

Tenth month, along with others, regarded as a fast by the exiles.

Hananiah, one of the false prophets who opposed Jeremiah, as were also **Ahab** and **Zedekiah**, and **Shemaiah**.

Baker's Street. In Eastern towns, streets and quarters are named after tradesmen and artizans, those of the same occupation living together.

Ebed-melech: the name of this friendly Ethiopian is not here given; this compound word simply means, "the servant of the king."

Covenant means cutting: hence the reference here.

Azekah. (See Judges x. 11) in the Shephelah, south west of Judah.

Jacob. Note the use of this patriarch's name, and of that of his wife in this prophetic portion. The prophet thinks of the common origin of the tribes: he goes back to a time before their separation.

Rama, north of Jerusalem: Rachel's tomb was there (Gen. xxxv. 20).

Rachel, the mother of Joseph, and grandmother of Ephraim and Manasseh, the leading tribes among the Ten. The mother of Benjamin weeps for both peoples—both Judah and Ephraim.

Hananeel, tower of; in middle of northern second wall, at west end of which is the *Corner Gate*.

Gareb, } not certainly identified. Probably on north of the city.
Goah, }

Kedron, name of stream flowing through valley of Jehoshaphat.

Horse Gate, due east of the Temple.

(Pp. 134-172.)

Hill country, the plain, the south. A threefold geographical division of Judah. Shephelah = the Plain : Negeb = the South.

Samgar Nebo. Here Samgar is regarded as a title of office = cup-bearer, while the Nebo is part of the name that follows, as in LXX. : as in Nebuzaradan, &c. Rab means chief: Rabsaris, and Rab-mag being titles of officers: chief of the eunuchs, and chief of the magi.

Nergal-sharezer. son-in-law of Nebuchadrezzar, who reigned for four years after Evil-merodach.

Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, Jeremiah's friend : now governor.

Mizpah, in territory of Benjamin, not far from Jerusalem.

Seventh month, celebrated as a fast because of Gedaliah's murder.

Pit, the LXX. reading here makes the sense clear. Pit = cistern.

Serai = inn or traveller's rest-house. For Chimham see 2 Sam. xix. 37.

Heliopolis, or Beth-Shemesh = House of the sun. The LXX. give the older name On for this sacred Egyptian city. Only a column or obelisk (like Cleopatra's Needle) now remains to mark the spot of what was a place of learning and importance at the time of the Exodus, the college to which Moses was sent. It is near Memphis.

Pathros = Upper or Middle Egypt or the Thebaid, with Thebes for its capital.

Hophra, the successor of Necho in Egypt.

Migdol, an Egyptian town near course of Suez Canal.

Valiant, perhaps the Calf-god of Egypt—*i.e.*, Apis.

No-Amon—*i.e.*, Thebes, the ancient centre of Egyptian religion and learning (see Nahun).

Tarshish, on coast of Spain, famous for silver mines.

Uphaz (see Dan. x. 5). Meaning not certain. Perhaps same as Ophir, or an adjective meaning purified.

Bel, one of the deities of Babylon : as also **Merodach**.

Chaldeans. Leb-kamai in the Revised Version, translated "the midst of those that rise up against me," in Authorised Version corresponds to Chaldeans in the cabalistic form of writing. Ch for L, S for B, and so on. See page 282.

Ararat = probably Armenia.

Minni = probably a portion of Armenia.

Ashkenaz, a state adjoining the above (Gen. x. 3).

Kings of Media. It is singular in the LXX. About 593 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar was at war with Media. Thus for about 55 years the Medes were in active hostility to the Babylonian Empire.

Sheshach = Babylon : see page 282.

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THE MORE IMPORTANT LXX. VARIATIONS.

VIII. 10-12. omitted =	VI. 12-15.	xxxiii. 14-26. omitted = xxxiii. 5. 6, 17, 18, 20, 26.
XI. 7-8. „	VII. 24-26.	xxxix. 4-13. omitted = lii. 7-16.
xvii. 3-4. „	xv. 13-14.	xlvi. 40-41. „ xl. 22.
xxx. 10-11. „	xlvi. 27-28.	Also ch. xxv. largely abbreviated.

SOME BETTER READINGS IN THE LXX. ILLUSTRATING ITS VALUE.

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