

TITLE OF THESIS:-

THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH:

(Ch.1.1-13.17.)

A NEW TRANSLATION,

from

a revised Hebrew Text,

with brief expositions,

by

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THESIS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE.....pp.i-iv.

A LITERARY INTRODUCTION TO
THE POETRY OF JEREMIAH.....1-26.

THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH(Chb.1-13v17)
A NEW TRANSLATION, with Text
and Exposition.....27-235.

A SYSTEMATIC VIEW OF THE
TEACHING OF JEREMIAH.....236-265.

WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY.....266-269.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....270-275.

INDEX.....276-280.

PREFACE.

The following thesis is an English translation of the poetical prophecies of the prophet Jeremiah. The work of translating has been the work that has taken the largest proportion of time, and although much preliminary preparation was involved, it is the translation, which must bear the brunt of scrutiny and by it the thesis be tested. The work, therefore, is first and foremost a translation. Herein lies its originality.

In approaching the task of translating, however, the scholar must adopt certain methods. In the present instance he can set aside all the prose work in the chapters concerned, as being outside the scope of his operations, and there is no attempt in the following pages to modernise the stately Elizabethan language of the Authorised Version. Even when the poetry is thus separated from the prose, the translator is confronted with the delicate task of defining the limits of each poetic prophecy. It becomes at once obvious that the units of poetry are much shorter than previous translators have been accustomed to think, and each is a separate and independent creation of the prophet. Such a fact necessitates ~~that~~ a separate treatment for each piece, and this, it will be found, has been carried out.

¹ Professor W. B. Stevenson's analysis of Jeremiah 1-18 has been read, and followed.

No theory of strophic construction, such as Cornill evolved, has been allowed to dictate either the length or the lines of each poem, so that both in length and in metre the translations will be found to portray the richest possible variety.

Once the poem had been defined, the text of the Hebrew original calls for careful consideration. The Textus Receptus had to be critically examined, and variations from the Septuagint and other Versions taken into account.¹ The simplest course has been to write out the new and revised Hebrew text, with footnotes, explaining the changes from the Massoretic Text, and to arrange the lines in the form of poetry,² so that the reader may follow the original and trace the source of the translation with perfect ease. In arriving at this Hebrew text, no special preference has been given to the Greek over the Hebrew, nor indeed to any Version, since the priority of one over another is still an open question.³ Whereas some scholars, such as Duhm, have allowed a metric theory to dictate the nature of the poetry, no such procrustean bed has been provided in this instance, but only the broad and universally acknowledged principles of enlightened textual criticism.

The true text having been arrived at, the translator applies himself to his task. The canon that has been kept constantly in prominence in the present work is to reproduce the original as far as the limits of the English language will allow. A line of

- ¹ The emendations and reconstructions of modern scholars have been consulted, and used, and where possible acknowledged in the notes. *These other emendations are his own.*
- ² The arrangement of these poetic lines is original.
- ³ The text used has been Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, edited by Rothstein, with critical notes.

Hebrew poetry is composed of a certain number of beats or stresses, either two, three or four, and in this work a serious attempt has been made to produce in each line of English the exact number of beats that occur in the Hebrew. The translation is therefore more than a line for line one; it is also a metre for metre translation. An even more delicate ideal has been kept in view, which like most ideals has been often unattainable, i.e. to arrange the words of each line in the same order as they appear in the original. In this way, the emphasis of say a noun at the beginning of the line is made clear, although the usages of Hebrew are always to be kept in mind. Fortunately for the translator, the occurrence of rhyme constitutes no such problems as face the scholar of say Arabic, for in the poems which follow there is only one case of rhyme. At the same time, the Hebrew original is so tantalizingly brief and clear and vivid that the English language is taxed almost beyond its limits to yield an adequate reproduction. 2

It will be found that all the poems contained in Chapters 1-13.v.17, have been translated, and although this does not exhaust the poetical achievement of the prophet, it includes the largest section of his poems, and it provides ample evidence of the success of this method of translating. Not only does this contain the very best in his literary output, but it also portrays good specimens of every type of his composition. For the purpose in hand, therefore, the range pro-

1. This is an original feature in the translation

2. While the English translations of McFadyen, Welch, Moffatt, Smith etc., have been consulted, there is no conscious debt to these in the translation.

vided within these chapters may be deemed quite adequate.

It is possible that pieces so small and so detached might be found difficult of understanding, and a short exposition has been attached to each to elucidate the thought, but this is ⁱⁿno way an essential and integral part of the work. 1

The Literary Introduction is designed to link up the work of Jeremiah with the main stream of Hebrew poetry, and to point out the peculiar literary qualities that distinguished his poetic output. 2

The Systematic View of His Teaching is an attempt to co-ordinate his thought, and to indicate his point of view on the great issues with which his life was concerned. 3

1. Unless where acknowledged the expositions are original.
2. In dealing with Hebrew Poetry generally, use has been made of ^{M. L. G. etc.}
2. In dealing with Hebrew Poetry generally, use has been made of Leath, Buchanan Gray, Burney, Cornill, Durham, Loney etc., but in elucidating the poetic qualities of Jeremiah the chapter is, unless otherwise stated, original. 265
- directly on the Book of Jeremiah.

A LITERARY INTRODUCTION

TO

THE POETRY OF JEREMIAH.

A LITERARY INTRODUCTION

TO

THE POETRY OF JEREMIAH.

The poetry of Jeremiah is to be found in the Book of the same name along with much prose material relating to the events in the life of the prophet. Some of these prose pieces contain a prophetic phrase or thought and some describe the experiences of the prophet as seen by a contemporary, but in each case they are clearly distinguishable from the prophecies composed in the poetic style. Without entering into the relative historical value of these two classes of material, and without conceding that Jeremiah did not use the medium of prose himself, it is clear that in these genuine poetical passages we come closest to the living soul of the prophet, for here we come upon the very words he used and can enter into the emotion that animated him. It will hardly be disputed that the original fire of the prophetic soul is best preserved through the medium of verse, while in point of accuracy it is clear that the human memory grips poetry more easily and retains it more readily than prose. The poetical pieces, therefore, assume the importance of first-class historical material, by means of which we are able to come very close to the man and the poet, and to measure his standard of literary excellence. Insofar as the style is the man it will be possible also to estimate the range of his mind and emotions.

Hebrew poetry possesses certain broad features, which, quite naturally, are present in the work of the prophet of Anathoth. He followed a line of prophets, who made poetry their chief means of communication with the world, and it would have been strange if, living in their world of ideas and hopes, he had not composed his messages in poetry too. It requires to be remembered, in approaching this type of poetry that it is essentially poetry with a purpose. Greek and Latin poetry form a decided contrast to this, because in these there is primarily a sense of beauty expressing itself in the medium of language, and it is the aesthetic impulse which dominates in these the process of poetry. But the Hebrew prophet, whatever might have been said about secular Hebrew poetry, made the moral and religious impulse the one compelling power in his literary work. He would have reflected the dictum "Art for Art's sake" most emphatically, for all his literary art was but a means to the saving of the nation. It is only too obvious that his interest in the poetic art was subsidiary and contributory to the declaring of the will of his God. It is therefore a poetry which is harnessed to a great religious purpose. Another feature that will strike the modern reader is the concrete and unsophisticated nature of the thought. The Hebrew of all poets shunned the purely philosophical, but rather he endowed abstract terms with personality and life, for he took terms like "righteousness" and interpreted them in simple and human terms. He changed the abstraction called "Israel" into the figure of Rachel weeping for her ~~child~~ children.

In order to illustrate typical

points in Hebrew poetry with greater clearness, let us take a verse that often comes from the prophet.

Such people shall I not punish,
saith Jehovah,
And on such a nation as this
shall I not take revenge? (Ch. 5.v.9.)

In the Hebrew of this verse there are but thirteen words, while in the English we have no less than twenty, and this is a fair indication of how much more concise and telling Hebrew poetry can be. Indeed, a very few Hebrew words ^{mean} a very great deal in human thought and spiritual vision. This brevity of diction is effected by the elision of particles and connectives that are normally used in prose, and constantly the uncommonly neat participle is utilised to take the place of an entire clause. In this way the poet turns off compact and pregnant lines that arrest the attention and remain long in the memory of his audience.

This verse also illustrates the use of parallelism, which, it will be noticed, is a parallelism not of sound, as in English poetry, but a parallelism of idea. The Hebrew poetic genius never attempted to match its lines with the same rhyme, but its likeness was grounded more deeply in a similarity of idea. Here, in the present instance, the idea of revenge in the latter part of the verse repeats and accentuates the idea of punishment in the former part. This art, it will be seen, is not an exercise in word mosaics as is so patent in Arabic and even English poetry; it is rather the masterly handling of great and compelling ideas, which inflame the heart and stir the soul of man. But, of course, a simple duplication of idea

1. Bishop Lowth (1753) was the first to emphasize this feature.

failed to satisfy completely the taste of the poet; developments of this device were called for, and changes were duly rung upon this parallelism. As long ago as 1753 Lowth (II) distinguished three distinct types of this poetry. Synonymous parallelism, seen in the verse just cited from Ch.5.v.9., repeats in the second half the idea but not the words of the first. This is probably the simplest and commonest form. The second type appears where an antithesis is drawn, and one statement is made, followed by a contrasted statement, as in Ch.8.v.7.,

Even the stork in the heavens
 is aware of her time.....
 But my people know not
 The Doom of Jehovah.

Such a device was valuable alike for variety and for emphasis and is used largely and with telling effect by Jeremiah. It is seen perhaps to best advantage in the poetry of the Book of Proverbs. Lowth found, however, many instances that could ^{not} be quite so neatly classified as those of the synonymous and antithetic kinds, and he tried to distinguish a third type, which he called the synthetic. His typical instance is from Psalm 19.8.

The statutes of the Lord are right,
 rejoicing the heart,
 The commandment of the Lord is pure,
 enlightening the eyes.

Dr. Buchanan Gray² has carried the investigation further, and prefers to call this type not synthetic but incomplete parallelism, with and without compensation. The sense of a verb, for instance is often carried on into the second half of a verse, while the verb

1. De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones
 Academicae. (1753)

² *Forms of Hebrew Poetry*. 1915.

itself is dropped, as in Gen.4.23,

A man have I slain for wounding me,
And a youth for bruising me....

Here there is no compensation for the lost verb, but often there is compensation, which gives of course a better balance, as in Deut.33.28,

And he dwelt Israel safely,
Untouched the fount of Jacob.

In addition to these varieties, the Hebrew poet achieved considerable success by changing the relative terms in his two, three and four word-lines, for like all artists he was faced^{with} the problem of monotony in his art, and he strove to avoid it in this way. Thus parallelism, in whatever form and with whatever variations, is a fundamental element in Hebrew poetry and is present in it from beginning to end. From the verse quoted above, by way of illustration, it is easy to see that parallelism is fundamental to the poetic work of Jeremiah.

A third outstanding feature is evident from the same verse, namely the presence of rhythm or stresses. Taking "line" to mean the shorter unit of rhythm, and not the double stichos, we have here three stresses in the first line, two in the second, three in the third and two again in the last, as

Such people shall I not punish,
Saith Jehóvah,
And on such a nation as this,
Shall I not take revéⁿge? (Ch.5.v9)

This is a very typical rhythm, and one to which Jeremiah is very partial, being the only one with a definite designation, namely

the Qina rhythm from its close association with the elgiac mood. Budde, however, in giving this name to the metre has turned out to be misleading, for as we shall find the metre is used for more than one mood. Torrey prefers to call this 3:2 verse the "lyric verse"(1), but this is hardly more satisfactory. A designation of an even more general nature is called for. The main member of this 3;2 verse is of course the first half-line or line as above defined of 3 beats, and it will be found that this lies at the foundation of all Hebrew verse. Whether the 3;3 verse is "truly the national meter"(sic) as Torrey maintains or not, it can hardly be disputed that a line having three stresses, with a varying number of ~~each~~ unstressed syllables before and after ~~the~~ stress, lies at the basis of all the rhythms. The second line, or the minor member of two stresses may be explained either as a shortened three stress line or as an expansion of the main member. While the 3:3 verse is the natural way of expressing the parallelism so dear to the Hebrew mind, the poetic instinct would not long remain content with such a restricted medium, and the 3:2 verse must have emerged almost contemporaneously. Indeed the demand for variety led to a three-beat line being added to both these rhythms, thus creating such definite verses as 3:3:3 and 3:2:3 and even 3:3:2. Some years ago Duhm² maintained that Jeremiah used only the 3:2 verse, and carried through his critical treatment of the text on this theory. This Procrustean bed is obviously too crude a method of assessing the genius of such a poet as Jeremiah. In any case it

1. The Second Isaiah, C.C. Torrey, p. 159.

2. 1901. *Jeremiah* by Bernard Duhm.

is against the facts, for there are unnumberable cases of 3:3 verses, which indeed almost equal 3:2 in number. It is to be noted however that in an independent study of Second Isaiah Professor Torrey cannot find any cases of the 2:2 metre, while four beat lines are so isolated as to defy classification.(1) On the other hand, we seem to come upon indubitable instances of the two beat line in Jeremiah, as in Prophecy No.43 and of the four beat line in Prophecy No.23. Each of the two members of a verse "has a certain logical distinctness, the structure of the sentences setting it apart as a recognisable unit"(2). The decision as to whether a verse belongs to the 2:2 or the 4:4 metre is a more delicate point, as it rests upon considerations of context and sense, but it may be taken as a general rule that each rhythmic unit should carry within it a definite and unbroken sense. Notice how complete is the mental content of each rhythmic unit in Prophecy No.43.

They cling to their wife,
 They refuse to return,
 I hearkened and listened,
 Not a word did they speak,
 Not a man would repent,
 And say, 'What have I done?'

Similarly any attempt to divide up the lines of Prophecy No. 23 into the 2:2 metre would end in disaster. We are, therefore, compelled to credit the prophet with a range of metres of 2,3 and 4 stress lines and with all kinds of permutations of these, and we must also be

1.The Second Isaiah, C.C.Torrey, p.165.

2.Ibid.p.153.

prepared to find that these metres are not arranged in stanzas, with a fixed number of lines, nor is there the same elaborate constructions as one finds in the English sonnet.

It might appear that with such a limited means of expression Jeremiah's poetry would necessarily be restrained and monotonous, but in point of fact no poetry could be more unfettered and spontaneous and none could so reflect swift changes of mood and emotion. In the same poem the metre will change twice and sometimes thrice, so careless is the poet of stanzas so long as he gives linguistic body to his thought. It is just here, indeed, in the use of rhythm that Jeremiah displays his supreme literary gifts, for by his unerring instinct he is able to secure poetical effects that may be felt even through the medium of a translation. How he conveys the changes of emotion by means of the changing rhythm can only be shewn by an exceptionally close translation, such as is attempted in the following pages, where the original is followed, line for line, stress for stress, and so far as possible word for word.

It is clear, as the outset, that the prophet did not confine himself to one particular metre. In contradiction of what Duhamel maintained, he employed a four-stress line as in Prophecy No.23.

I scanned the earth and lo! confusion,
 The heavens but not a single light,
 I scanned the hills and lo! they quaked,
 And all the hill-tops went a-tremble,
 I scanned and lo! no human being,
 Every wing in heaven had fled,
 And scanned and lo! the orchard desert,

Each city levelled low.

By using this four-beat line the poet gained powerfully in securing his effect, for he had a larger canvas to work upon, with greater room for portraying the terrible and devastating effect of the invasion. The longer ^{line} creates just the sense of awe and terror he endeavours to induce, and yet even in choosing such a four-beat line he does not feel chained to it, for he rounds off his eerie piece by a pathetic three-beat line. Other examples will be found, too arresting and original to be denied to the prophet, which refute the suggestion that Jeremiah confined himself to one particular rhythm, Qins or any other.

At the same time, it is just as clear that the poet had a particular liking for the 3:2 metre and it is this medium that gives him his most winsome and appealing effects. When he touches the highest flights of his genius it is always on the wings of this measure. Take, for instance, Prophecy No.22.

O Vitals of mine! I writhe!
 Walls of my mind!
 My mind is all a tumult,
 No silence for me!
 For the bugle-call I hear,
 The slogan of battle.
 Crash upon crash resounds,
 For spoiled is the land,
 In a flash are spoiled my tents,
 In a moment my curtains.
 How long must I see the ensign,
 And hear the bugle-call?

One may feel here the fire of a real heart aflame, and it is all too clear that the

1. This, of course, has been recognized by all modern scholars.

writer is going through a mental maelstrom. Here is a perfect mastery of his linguistic medium, nor is it easy to see how he could have secured such an overwhelming effect with any other medium. The emotional tone of this poem is the gauge of the artist's skill.

A further observation on this piece is that on closer inspection it disproves the common belief that the 3:2 rhythm is essentially a Qina or elegiac measure, for it can easily be seen that this is not an elegy at all: it is a lyrical expression of the poet's inmost feelings. He is disturbed at the national threat and upheaval, he is thrilled to the core by the advance of armies and the blowing of bugles, but the time has not yet come for elegies. Indeed, it may easily be shown that to regard this as essentially a "lyric" measure is a mistake, for wide though the term "lyric" can be (1), yet some instances of this 3:2 metre fall outside of it. A notable instance is Prophecy No.8., where the sentiment is exactly the reverse of elegiac, namely stirring and challenging:-

They have turned upon me the back,
 But never the face,
 Yet in time of their trouble they call,
 "Up and preserve us!"
 But where are the gods ye made you?
 "Up, let them save you,
 For the sum of thy cities has reached
 Thy gods, O Judah. 2.

This is a direct rebuke that is meant to sting the conscience of the listeners; there is too much of moral passion for it to pass as merely lyrical. There are also other

1. The Second Isaiah, C.C. Torrey, pp. 158/9.

2. This challenging note in the Qina has eluded the notice of students of Jeremiah.

pieces which are even farther removed from the elegiac strain, as for instance Prophecy No.27 which concludes on a note of towering anger:-

Such people shall I not punish,
 Saith Jehovah,
 And on such a nation as this
 Shall I not take revenge?

The perusing of Jeremiah's poems elicits another interesting fact. While the 3:2 metre is peculiarly adapted for the elegy, the elegy can be and is expressed by other metres. The short two stress line is used primarily for descriptive work, but Jeremiah can make it convey the pathos of the elegy too. In Prophecy No.71, for instance he begins with the 3:2 rhythm in the approved fashion, but at the end he slips into the dwindling two beat line with great effect:-

Hear, and pay heed, nor be vain,
 For Jehovah hath spoken,
 Give Jehovah your God the glory,
 Before it turns dark,
 And before you lose footing,
 On twilight hills,
 And ye long for a light,
 That He changes to gloom
 And turns into darkness. 1

The short two-beat line, it will be noticed permits the poet to introduce into his verse more detail in rapid time and with a lighter touch. It is admirably suited to quick movement and swift action, and time and again it is used in this way:-

1. This use of the 2 beat line has not been noticed before.

At the shout of horseman and bowman,
 Flees all the land,
 They enter the thickets,
 The cliffs they ascend,
 Each city abandoned,
 With never a dweller within it. (No. 24).

In descriptions, too, this short line is very useful, for it allows the facts to be stated with almost breathless haste, as in Prophecy No. 43:-

Why does Jerusalem go wrong?
 For ever go wrong?
 They cling to their wile,
 They refuse to return:
 I hearkened and listened:
 Not a word did they speak:
 Not a man would repent,
 And say, what have I done?

Such a measure enabled the prophet to strike off laconic and biting phrases that could not easily be forgotten, and without waste of words it made his meaning clear and unmistakable. Just as the supreme artist with his brush can create his impression by a few deft strokes, so the poet by a line or two of this swift measure can draw his graphic picture. It may lack the dramatic power of the Second Isaiah, but it is truly "impressionistic art". (1) Prophecy No. 49 is further proof that Jeremiah was the master of this two-beat measure.

Like all poets and like most prophets

1. The Second Isaiah, C.C. Torrey, p. 187.

Jeremiah was subject to rapid moods and fancies. His active brain moved swiftly from thought to thought, and his highly-strung temperament ranged through the whole gamut of human emotion without intermission. As he watches the breaking of his nation, his mind darts from possibility to possibility on the wings of his two-beat measure,

in the break of my nation I break;
 horror has gripped me!
 is balm not in Gilead?
 is a healer not there?
 Then why does not grow?
 New flesh on my people? (No.48).

The point to be noted here is that the rhythm, which is used to describe swift action in the external world, is the very same rhythm- and naturally so- which indicates the swift changes in the thought of the poet.

It might be thought, from reading the foregoing pages, that a study of these poems gives no ground for classifying either their form or their content. And yet it must not be assumed too readily that the poet was haphazard in his verse-making(1). On the contrary, a close study makes it clear that between the ideas and their linguistic expression there was the closest possible correspondence, and this correspondence was a triumph of art. That he did not adhere to any artificial and mechanical rule of stresses is to be accounted to his credit. He trusted rather to the idea embodying itself in its most fitting measure, and how successful he was and how sure was his feeling for rhythm and sound may be

1. Cornill explains his irregular rhythms as being due to his regarding poetry as secondary to his message. Das Buch Jeremia, xlvi.

gauged from his finest effort, Prophecy
No.52:-

Call for the wailers to come,
To the experts send to give voice,
To lift for yourselves a lament,
That your eyes may run with tears,
And your eye-lids gush with water;
For the sound of lament resounds in Sion,
"How ruined we are!
We blush indeed, for we leave the land,
Outcast from our homes".

In this first part of the piece the measure is appropriate to the command of the prophet and the self-pity of the nation, but in a flash he changes to the grave concern of the Word of Jehovah, and the sad fate of the thousands lying dead on the field of battle, and with this change of thought and emotion the rhythmic measure changes too. It may be followed in the translation:-

But hear, O Women, the Word of Jehovah,
Take in with your ear the Word of His mouth,
And teach to your daughters a wail,
Each woman her neighbour a dirge:

For up went Death through your lattice,
Went into your palace,
Clearing the child from the street,
The youths from the squares,
And strewn are the bodies of men
On the face of the field,
Like sheaves behind the reaper,
That nobody gleans.

This second part, it should be noticed, begins in the strong and sustained four-beat measure, being itself a strong and sustained command to his listeners, and then with the thought of

the dirge it slips quickly into the three beat measure to end in the echoing strains of the elegiac, with its alternate swing of three and two beats. One can feel the end approaching as it moves from 4 beats to 3 and then to 2, poetically symbolic of the dying nation. Jeremiah was obviously a master in the art of using more than one metre in the same piece and of ringing the changes so subtly as to reflect the changes of mood and emotion in his own soul. (1) Insofar as his own feelings were neither staid nor unchanging, so too his poetic measures enjoyed the same abandon, with the happy result that the ^{beauty} ~~value~~ of his verse is too patent to be denied.

In passing from Jeremiah's use of rhythm, it is interesting to consider how he handled the ~~the~~ less obvious materials of the poetic art. Words have been called the tools of the poet, and a moment's consideration will shew that the prophet was in a unique position in this regard. The genius of the Hebrew language might almost be termed a genius for brevity, so parsimonious is it of words, and he added to this a very definite hatred of mere wordiness. He seems to have learned in his solitude the value and the beauty of mere words, and to have turned them over and over in his mind until he could see each side of them. The result is that every word in his verse tells, and he achieves a simplicity which is the reward of long toil. In Prophecy No. 4 his self-restrained emotion finds chaste expression:-

1. Forrey finds the same in the Second Isaiah, see page 160, *but the discovery was not taken from Forrey.*

I brood on the charm of thy youth,
The love of thy wedlock.

Not only does he shew a preference for particular words in the Hebrew vocabulary, but it is clear that he brooded ~~unrepeatedly~~ upon his favourites, for they appear and re-appear. Such expressions as crash(1), bigotry(2), terror(3), vex(4) are constantly on his lips. Two features exist, also, which confirm this, namely the pun and the paranomasia. The pun, or the playing upon a word, is a favourite device among the literary prophets(5), and the poet of Anathoth has some striking instances of it, the best known being the almond-tree, Prophecy No.2. Some of these are to be found among fine prose passages in a highly polished setting as in the Parable of the Jars(6). Two good examples of the paranomasia may be found in Prophecies 19 and 48(7) and there are many others, which may be recognised in the Hebrew text. In addition to these manipulations of words, it should not be forgotten that Jeremiah was exceedingly fond of securing a greater effect by simply repeating his key word, as in Prophecy No.1

Be not scared at their face,
Lest I scare thee before them...

or again in Prophecy No.22,

Crash upon crash resounds.

1.Ch.4,6., Ch.6,1.,Ch.14,17 etc.

2.Ch.4,17, Ch.7,24, etc.

3.Ch.6,25. etc.

4.Ch.7,18.19, Ch.8,19 etc.

5.The Second Isaiah,C.C.Torrey,p.198.

6. Ch.13,12.ff.

7. על־פְּנֵי בַת־גִּבְיֵי הַטְּבֵרְיָה וְעַל־פְּנֵי צִיּוֹן

It is clear, then, that he valued and weighed each word of his prophecy, according to the thought and meditation it deserved as a word of Jehovah.

Not less interesting, from a literary point of view is the prophet's use of simile and metaphor. It is well-known that the Oriental, and especially the Semitic mind loves the symbolical way of speaking and thinking. Jeremiah was a true Semite in this regard, and insofar as this literary practice illustrates the skill and experience of the poet, it helps us to appreciate the mind behind it. The similes he uses are drawn from rural and homely scenes, such as the cageful of birds, the false woman, the city of strength, the lamb led to the slaughter. The usage lends colour and vividness to many of his passages and indicates the breadth of his interests. When he compares the invader's approach to the sea, as

Their voice like the sea keeps roaring

the inference is that he must have stood on the coast near Carmel and seen the billows breaking on the shore. His similes are all suited to the intelligence and experience of his listeners, and they are wrought into the fabric of his message with amazing deftness.

The metaphor, however, demands even more skill than the simile, and if it is more telling it is also more exacting on the artist. Here Jeremiah is highly successful. The telescoping of an idea into a concrete image suits his pithy style and appeals to his unmetaphysical mind. By the magic of metaphor he turns his disloyal nation into a sweet, young bride, who spends the idyllic days of love in the blissful quietude of the desert. A glance at his metaphors shews

1: Sir George Adam Smith calls them "coarse images." Jeremiah. 43.

how large a place rural life took in his mind. Founts of fresh water(No.5), fallow ground(No.18), thorns(No.18), winnowing winds(No.19), horses in heat(No.43), storks swifts and swallows(No.43), the lowing of cattle(No.51), grapes and figs(No.46), wild grass(No.51), wild herbs(No.64) and olives (No.60) all are strewn among his pages with an Olympian profusion, indicating at once his powers of keen observation, his love of the simple things and his literary skill and deftness. The city and the city life occupy but a small place in his thought, if his metaphors are any indication of his mind. Even the mighty Babylonian as he marches to invasion is charmed by the poet-prophet into a "lion destructive".

Closely related to the use of metaphor is the prophet's fondness for personification. He shunned the pure abstractions, and wherever possible turns to the concrete and the near-at-hand. "Rachel weeping for her children" is much more appealing than any computation of national decline and exile. **Jehovah** Himself is endowed with all the attributes of manhood and distinguished by a personal name. Nor must we assume that Jeremiah was misled by this process of personification into thinking that Jehovah was merely a person. He treats Israel in exactly the same fashion, knowing full well that Israel was no mere female. When he calls Israel a bride, a woman in travail, a harlot, it is clear he uses a poet's licence. He refers often to Israel as The Maiden of Sion, and what more beautiful figure could he have used? Just as the figure of Britannia stands for the British people, so the Maiden of Sion stood for Israel. Jeremiah also personifies his people as a man, a slave and a step-son, and the enemy he treats as a lion. His greatest triumph is his person-

-fication of death, which he regards as a man, stealing up the wall and climbing in by the window, searching even the palace of the king, and then, going out into the public places, he clears away the young life and finally appears on the battlefield, where like a reaper he leaves behind him heaps of slain.

For up went Death through your lattice,
 Went into your palace,
 Clearing the child from the street,
 The youths from the square,
 And strewn are the bodies of men
 On the face of the field,
 Like sheaves behind the reaper,
 With never a gleaner....(Prophecy No.52).

This example is sufficient to prove that the prophet is worthy to rank with the greatest masters in the art of personification.

Another literary usage should be noted in these poems, for it is probably the commonest of all, and that is the rhetorical question. It usually expresses very strong emotion, and it forms a pleasing variety from statements of fact or mere descriptions. He was artist enough to discover that a succession of threats and condemnations would soon prove ineffective, and time and again he has recourse to the question, which usually admits of only one answer. His common practice is to begin his prophecy by asking a question, thus arousing interest at the start of his piece:-

What fault found your fathers in Me
 That Me they estranged? (No.5).

or again:-

Why do ye wrangle with me? (No.9).

or:-

How can I forgive you? (No.27).

Often he ends a piece by a question, which by its very uncertainty heightens the effect. This was symbolic of the great question-mark that he saw over his nation's destiny. He rounds off a denunciation several times with the question:-

And on such a nation as this
Shall I not take revenge? (No.27).

He can imply the most awful calamities by a subtle use of the question at the end of his prophecy:-

The prophets foretell by fraud,
And the priests are hand in glove,
And my people are fond of it so;
But what will ye do at the last? (No.33).

Even in messages from Jehovah, which are ~~not~~ addressed to the prophet himself, the same device appears, thus enabling the prophet to experience the awful effect of his own literary device:-

Thou hast raced with the foot and they
tired thee,
Then how wilt thou vie with the horse?
in a land of safety thou fearest,
Then how in the jungle of Jordan? (No.65).

Case after case might be adduced, and all would alike prove that Jeremiah was no novice in the handling of the rhetorical question.

And yet it cannot be too strongly emphasised that while we have here in these pieces specimens of genuine poetry, it is poetry widely different from that of our own age. It is clear to the writer that any

attempt to divide them into strophes is foredoomed to failure, and any reconstruction of the text based upon a theory of strophes or even stanzas is fanciful. The maker of this poetry claimed the utmost freedom in his arrangement of rhythms and lines, in this shewing himself far removed from modern verse. In one point, however, there is a resemblance, namely that just as a volume of modern poems bears no necessary connection the one poem to the other, so also these pieces, even though lying side by side have no direct connection in thought or situation. In our case, we suffer through there being no title and separate page for each poem.

Once again, the most of these poems are in fact revelations or messages from the Divine. Just as Mohammed could reveal the words of Allah in rhymed prose, so Jeremiah declared Jehovah's message in rhythmic lines. In these the prophet is merely the mouthpiece of God, as in Prophecy No.9:-

Why do ye wrangle with Me?
 You all have rebelled.
 In vain I struck your sons,
 A lesson they learned not,
 A sword devoured your prophets
 Like a lion destructive.

The words "Saith Jehovah" are often found in these pieces, although it is not a uniform feature. It will be found that sometimes this phrase is an integral part of a poem, and cannot be explained away, while in other cases it has been obviously added. It is sufficiently clear, however, that both in his own time and at later periods, the phrase was the hall-mark of the divine message,

carrying with it the prestige of the Divine.

There are many pieces, on the other hand, which are not such pure messages from Jehovah, and these begin often with a summons from Jehovah, followed by the comment of the prophet, and close with a proclamation of doom. This is the form usually taken by the longer poems, such as Prophecy No.26:-

Rove through Jerusalem's streets,
 Look and make sure,
 And search in her open squares,
 To discover a man,
 If anyone practises fairness,
 Aiming at honour,
 And I will forgive.....

Jehovah, thine eyes are on honour....

I said,
 These, poor souls, have no sense....

So smites them a lion from cover....

The movement of the piece is well-defined, and comprises elements both of Jehovah and Jeremiah. Other examples are to be found in Prophecies No.31 and 35. We do not know what value the prophet placed upon his own contribution to the message, but it is clear from Ch.15.v.19 that at times he entertained serious doubts regarding it. The point to observe is that it was quite permissible to blend the guidance of Jehovah with the application or the comment of his prophet, both being couched in the same rhythm and both forming real and essential elements in the poem.

Still greater poetic license may be

observed in certain pieces, where the prophet places into the mouth of his people, not the words which they utter, but rather the words which he would fain they did utter. In this way he no doubt relieved the terrible tension of his own soul, for he longed to hear his people repenting and returning to Jehovah:-

See! We belong to Thee,
 For thou art Jehovah our God,
 Truly Deceptive are baals,
 The mob on the mountain,
 But alone in Jehovah our God,
 Is the saving of Israel...(Prophecy No.17)

This highly poetical usage, appearing in the midst of a Word of Jehovah, reveals the breadth of view and freedom enjoyed by the prophet in his literary usages.

There are poems included in the collection that do not profess to be messages at all from Jehovah, but are quite plainly challenges thrown out by the prophet to stir the hearts of his people. These are designed to rouse them to activity of some kind, and may best be compared to Wordsworth's Poems on National Independence and Liberty. Such poems carry with them a direct command or urge a particular policy, and they clearly prove that while the prophet did ~~not~~ travel far from the Divine command and the revealed guidance of Jehovah, he could and did give political guidance. This appears from Prophecy No.19,

Tell it in Judah, proclaim and say,
 Blow ye a blast through the land,
 Cry to the full!
 say, Let us gather and enter
 The cities of strength.

Carry the banner to Sion!
 Flee and delay not!
 For disaster comes from the North
 And a crash tremendous.

And that Jeremiah had something definite to say to his people, when the invader had invested the city, can be illustrated from several of his poetic pieces. Even although his counsel may have been almost a counsel of despair, he did not hesitate to deliver it, as in Prophecy No.37:-

We have heard their rumour,
 Limp are our hands,
 Distress overpowers us,
 Nothing like childbirth.

Go not to the open,
 Nor the footpath tread,
 For armed is the foe,
 With terror around....

In such pieces there is a suspicion that there is more of the poet than the prophet, and they do indeed mark the transition point where Jeremiah passes from being the pure spokesman of Jehovah and becomes the lyrical man of verse. He was certainly the prey of the most intense and disturbing emotions, which found relief only in the exercise of poetry.

One of the deepest emotions in the soul of the prophet of Anathoth was that of religious doubt and agony, and this he expressed direct to God in outbursts of the most moving verse. These poems so far from being messages from Jehovah to Jeremiah are communications from the prophet to God. In Chapter 20 verse 7 we find Jeremiah in anguish charging Jehovah with misleading him, and verse 12 is a request addressed to God to

1. See George Adam Smith's J.E. p. 317 for a most sympathetic.

to take vengeance upon his enemies. Such pieces though not numerous are impressive by their intensity of feeling, and they are so unique in the prophetic writings that they form a class by themselves.

Closely related to these passionate outbursts of poetry, and yet quite distinct is the soliloquy. Study of the prophets is shewing that the soliloquy was a distinct artistic and literary device used in these writings; it has been shewn to be used with great dramatic power by the Second Isaiah,(1) and to an even greater degree Jeremiah was a lover of the soliloquy. Prophecies 48 and 49 are good examples of the usage, while 22, beginning with

O! Vitals of mine, I writhe!

must surely vie with any example in any literature. The prophet touched the level of despair that Hamlet knew, for in Ch.20 vv.14ff. he describes his feelings:-

Cursed be the day I was born,
The day mother bore me,
No blessing upon it!

Cursed be the breaker of news,
Who told to my father,
A boy is born you,
Completing his joy.

Let him hear a cry at morn,
A slogan at mid-day,
For sparing my life at birth,
Nor making my mother a grave.

Such lines are not addressed to anyone in

1. The Second Isaiah, C.C.Torrey, p.188.

particular: they are the genuine thoughts and feelings that animated the troubled soul of the man of God, and in them we see the movements of his mind as he faced the great problems of conduct and moral action. It is well for us that besides giving classical expression to the moral nature of the Divine and the holy will of God for Israel, he included also the deeper reaches of his own intimate experience, and in the form of a series of soliloquies, unmatched in the Old Testament, drew aside the veil that screened his soul from the public gaze.

It will thus be seen that Jeremiah, while a great and heaven-sent prophet, was a poet and an artist of no mean order, that he was a master of the minutiae no less than a creator of aesthetic values, and that while his outward world was tottering to its fall, he was rearing a palace of spiritual and artistic and literary beauty, where the most discerning of men still love to dwell.

27,

TRANSLATION.

GOD CALLS JEREMIAH: THE TERMS OF HIS COMMISSIONPROPHECY NO.1.Ch.1.4-9,17-19,10.TRANSLATION.

And the Word of the Lord fell upon me,

Before I formed thee within I planned thee,
And before you came forth I set thee apart,
A prophet to peoples I made thee.

And I said,

Alas! O my Lord,
No speaker am I,
I am but a lad.

But Jehovah replied;

Say not, 'I am but a lad',
For to all that I said, thou shalt go,
And all I command, thou shalt say,
Be not feared of their face,
For beside thee am I to deliver.

And Jehovah stretched his hand and touched my mouth, and
Jehovah said to me;

Behold! I place My Word in thy mouth,
And you are to gird up your loins,
You shall stand and declaim against them,
Be not scared at their face,
Lest I scare thee before them.
And I, behold! I have made thee,
To-day like a city of strength
Like a wall of brass to the Kings of Judah,
To her princes and folk of the land;
They shall struggle with thee, but never defeat thee,
For beside thee am I to deliver.
See! I appoint thee this day,
High over nations and kingdoms,
To tear up, tear down, and demolish,
To build up and to plant.

Prophecy No. 1.

Ch. I. 4-9. 14-19. 10.

Text:וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי¹

בְּמַרְסֵי אֶצְרָף בְּבִמְנֵן יִדְעִיתִי

וּבְמַרְסֵי גִצָּא מֵרַחֵם הַקִּדְשִׁיתִי

נָבִיא לְגוֹיִם נִתְּנָהּ וְ

וַיֹּאמֶר

אֵת אֲדוֹנָי²

לֹא יִדְעִי דְבַר

כִּי נֵצַר אֲנֹכִי וְ

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי

אֶל-תֹּאמֶר נֵצַר אֲנֹכִי

כִּי עַל-כֹּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ תִּלְךָ

וְאֵת כֹּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲצִוֶּךָ תִּדְבַר

אֶל-תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם

כִּי אֶתְּךָ אֲנִי לְהַצִּילָךְ³

וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה יָדוֹ וַיַּגַּע עַל-פִּי וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי

הִנֵּה נִתְּנָה דְבַרִּי בְּפִיךָ

וְאֵת גִּזְזוֹר מִתְּנִיךָ

וְקַמְתָּ וּדְבַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם

אֶל-תַּחַת מִפְּנֵיהֶם

פִּיךָ אֶחָתָךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם

1. Omit לאמר with LXX. S. Rothstein

2. Delete הנה הנה - a repetitive gloss.

3. Delete ויהי to be deleted - unsynchronical gloss.

4. Omit as an addition אצונו אצוני

Prophecy No. 1.

Yed.

2.

וְאֵנִי הִנֵּה נִתְגַּיֵּץ
חַיִּים לְצַד מִבְּצָר¹
וּלְחַוֵּמַת נְחֹשֶׁת² לְמִלְכֵי הַגּוֹיִם
לְשֵׁרֵיהֶם וְלֵאִים הָאָרֶץ³ :
וְנִלְחַמוּ אֵלַי וְלֹא יִכְלוּ-לִי
כִּי אֶגָּד אֲנִי לְהַצִּילָם :
רֵאה הַפְּקִדוֹת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
עַל-הַגּוֹיִם וְעַל-הַמַּמְלָכוֹת
לְנַחֵשׁ וּלְנַתּוֹץ וּלְהַאֲבִיד
לְבָנוֹת וּלְנִמוֹץ :

1 Omit. וְלִצְמוֹד בְּרִדוֹ with LXX. and Latin: S. Rotherstein.

2 Omit. עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ with LXX. dett.

~~3 Omit. עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ~~

3 Omit. לְכַתְּבָהּ with LXX. and Latin: do.

4 Omit. נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה dett. from V.

5 Omit. וְלְהַרְרוֹם - and the LXX. - an explanation S. Rotherstein.

PROPHECY NO.1.Ch.1.4-9,17-19. 10.EXPOSITION.

These verses may be taken together as a single prophecy, as they obviously belong to the origin of Jeremiah's ministry as a prophet. They indicate clearly that he received a definite call from God, who intended the prophet for a great destiny; no less than the bearing of His message to the peoples of the world. Jeremiah was unwilling to carry out this commission, pleading that he was both too young and too inexperienced as a speaker. But God will take no refusal, but commands him to go forward with his mission, assuring him of His Presence. By the symbolic action of touching Jeremiah's lips, Jehovah endows him with the message, and fortifies him to defy his enemies, like a brazen fortress, even though these enemies be the kings and princes of Judah. All people shall fight with the prophet, but in the end he shall win, because God is on his side. Indeed, the prophet will effect the end of many things and building up of many other things.

This call is interesting, because it proves that Jeremiah had a sense of destiny; he was sure that God meant him. It reveals also the timidity and backwardness of his personality, and a typical unwillingness to embark on so great a God-given mission. But notice should be taken of the overbearing power of the divine, which crushes every excuse and drives on the trembling prophet to his fate, and yet endows him at the same time with the message to deliver. In the rise and fall of nations the prophet will have a vital part to play- a fact which history confirms again and again, and God warns him that his own people will offer him a stubborn resistance. It is a large, stern, statesmanlike commission that God places in his hand.

THE INNER MEANING OF THE WAKE-TREE.

PROPHECY NO.2.

Ch.1. 11-12.

TRANSLATION.

And the Word of the Lord fell upon me, thus:

What are you seeing, Jeremiah?

And I said:

The rod of a wake¹ I am seeing.

And Jehovah said to me:

Well have you seen!
For I am awake,
To make good My Word.

¹ The name for the almond-tree

Prophecy No. 2.

Ch. I. 10-12.

Text.

וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר

מִה־אֶגֶּה רְאֵה יִרְמְיָהוּ

וְאָמַר

מִקֵּל שִׁקְרִי אֲנִי רְאֵה

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי

הִימָגַב לְרַגְלֹתַי

כִּי טָקַד אֲנִי

עַל-דְּבָרֵי לִצְטָתוֹ

⌚ *Agrius Latin, and LXX (Heb.)*

⌚ *Emitted*

PROPHECY NO.2.Ch.1.11-12.EXPOSITION.

While Jeremiah was in meditation one day, contemplating a tree, he hears Jehovah speaking to him. God enquires what he is looking at, and the prophet answers that he is contemplating an almond tree; a name which in the Hebrew has the sense of "being awake". Jehovah then makes the rod of the tree interpret His message to his prophet, for He is awake, like the tree, and He will make sure that His Word comes true.

This piece proves that Jeremiah was a psychic person, who was subject to both visions and auditions. Itz also portrays a favourite literary device of the prephet, namely "the play upon a word", for the "wake" refers to both the tree and to God. Notice also how in this contemplative mood, the prophet sees the inner significance of common things like trees.

THE INNER MEANING OF THE SEETHING POT.PROPHECY NO.3.Ch.1. 13-16.TRANSLATION.

And the Word of Jehovah fell upon me the second time, saying:

What are you seeing?

And I said:

A seething pot, with its face to the North.

And Jehovah said to me:-

From the North shall flame the trouble
 Against all that live in the land,
 For, behold! it is I that call
 To all the realms of the North.
 They shall come and take their place
 On Jerusalem's judgement seat,
 Against each circling wall,
 And against each city of Judah.
 I will utter my final decree,
 For all their abandoning Me;
 They paid homage to other gods,
 And bowed to the work of their hands.

PROPHECY NO.3.Ch.1.13-16.EXPOSITION.

Another psychic experience comes to the prophet, while he is gazing at a seething pot. God challenges him to state what he is gazing upon, and this being done, He explains the deeper meaning of the seething pot, which has its face turned to the North. The fact that the pot spills over towards the North indicates that from the North the trouble will emerge- or boil over-, for it is Jehovah who is calling the peoples of the North to attack Jerusalem and take over the rule of the city. This will be God's punishment for the false religion of the people of Israel.

This prophecy marks a further stage in definiteness, for now the prophet ^{knows} from what quarter the judgement of God will come. The North was the traditional point of the compass, from which the trouble of Palestine was supposed to emerge,¹ but in addition the Fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. was bound to give a suggestion to the perceptive mind of Jeremiah. The other details of the ~~Baby~~ ^{Fee} from the North, as shewn by F. Wilke (Das Skythenproblem in Alttestamentliche Studien fur Rudolf Kittel) indicate the Babylonians.

¹ Cf. the illuminating chapters on The Fee from the North in Prof. A.C. Lodd's *Jeremiah*, pp. 97-131.

ISRAEL'S EARLY LOVE AND GOD'S CARE FOR HER.

PROPHECY No.4.

Ch.2. 1-3.

TRANSLATION.

And the Word of the Lord fell on me thus:

Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem,
Saying, Thus saith the Lord;
I brood on the charm of thy youth,
The love of thy wedlock
Thy journey with me in the desert,
In the land never sown,
Sacred was Israel to God,
The first of the crop,
All that touch her shall suffer,
Evil o'ertakes them.

Saith the Lord.

Prophecy No. 4.

Ch. 2. v. 1-3.

וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר :

הֲלֹךְ וּקְרֵאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי רוּשָׁלַם

לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

זְכַרְתִּי לְךָ חֶסֶד נְעוּרֶיךָ

אֲהַבְתָּ כָּל־נִלְתֶיךָ

לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בְּמִדְבַר

בְּאַרְץ לֹא זְרוּעָה

קִדְשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל לִיהוָה

רִאשִׁית גְּבוּאַתּוֹ

כָּל-אֲכָלֶיךָ אֵשׁ מִן-

בְּאֵם יְהוָה :

רְעָה תִּבָּא אֲלֵיהֶם

PROPHECY NO. 4.Ch. 2. 1-3.EXPOSITION.

This piece, couched in the most touching terms, is the poetical expression of the prophet's theology. Jehovah has been the national God from the youth of the race, and He has been exclusively so. In these early times, when the people wandered in the desert no misunderstanding or disloyalty marred the serenity of their intercourse. A mutual pact existed between the two, and there was no thought of a third. So precious is Israel to Jehovah that he defends her against any threatening oppressor.

The charge of favouritism falls to the ground when it is seen that Israel chose Jehovah just as anxiously as Jehovah chose Israel, nor can it be disputed that in the Hebrew people God chose the spiritual aristocrats of the world to mediate His will to men.

The text requires no emendation.

GOD CHARGES THE NATION WITH INFIDELITY.PROPHECY NO. 5.Ch.2.4-13.TRANSLATION.

Hark to the Word of Jehovah,
Ye House of Jacob,
And all ye tribes,
Ye House of Israel.
Thus doth Jehovah speak;

What fault found your fathers in me,
That Me they estranged,
And off they went after phantoms,
Till phantoms they turned,nor said,
"Where is Jehovah that raised us
From the land of Egyptians,
Who guided us through the desert,
Through land of waste and pitfalls"?

And I brought you to the Garden,
To taste its fruit and bounty,
But ye came and stained my land,
And my domain ye made a scandal,
And the legal experts spurned Me,
The leaders rebelled against Me,
And the prophets foretold by Baal,
And after the worthless pursued.

Therefore, still make I charges against you,
The very sons of your sons do I charge.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
Just cross to the Isle of Cyprus and see,
To Kedar send and note full well,
And see if there be the like of this.
Does a people change its gods,
And they not gods at all?
But my people has changed its Glory,
For what has no worth.
Tremble, ye Heavens, at this,
And bristle up with horror,
For twain are the wrongs of my people,
Me they have left, the Fount of Fresh Water,
And hewn for themselves wells that are cracked,
That cannot hold water.

Prophecy No. 5.

Ch. 2. v. 4-13.

1

שִׁמְעוּ דְבַר יְהוָה בֵּית יַעֲקֹב

וְכָל מִשְׁפַּחֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

מֵה־מִּצְאוֹ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בֵּי יוֹלָד

כִּי רָחֳקוּ מֵעָלַי

וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרַי הַהֶבֶל

וַיִּהְיוּ בְלֹוּ וְלֹא אָמְרוּ

אֵיךְ יְהוָה הִמְעִילָה אֶתְנוּ

אֶל עֵרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

הַמּוֹלִיד אֶתְנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר

בְּעֵרֶץ עַרְבָּה וְשׁוֹחָה

בְּאֶרֶץ צִיָּה וּגְלִמְדָה

בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא צָבַר בָּהּ אִישׁ

וְלֹא יָשַׁב אֶדְמָה שָׁמַיִם

וַאֲבִיָּא אֶתְכֶם אֶל הַכְּרָמִל

לְאֹכְלֵי פְרִיָּה וְשׁוֹבָה

1. ... So Rothstein.

2. ... omitted in Lxx. So Rothstein.

Omit as expansion

ג

וּבְרָאוֹ וּבְשִׁמְאוֹ אֶתְעַרְצִי

וּנְחַלְתִּי שִׁמְמֶם לְתוֹעֵבָה :

וְתִפְשִׂי הַגּוֹרָרָה לֹא יִדְעוּנִי

וְהַרְצִים פִּטְעוֹ בְּגַ

וּחֲנֻגֵי אֵימָה נִבְאוּ בְּבַעַל

וְאַחֲרָי לֹא יוֹעִלוּ תִלְכוּ

לְכֵן עַד אָרִיב אֶתְכֶם

וְאוֹתִי גַּם בְּנִיכֶם אָרִיב :

כִּי עֲבְרוּ אֵי כַּתְיִים וַיֵּאוּ

וְקִדְרֵי שִׁלְחוּ וְהִתְגַּבְּנוּ אֶדְרֵי

וַיֵּאוּ הֵן הִיִּתָה כְּזֹאת :

הַהִימָד גּוֹי אֱלֹהִים

וְהִמָּה לֹא אֱלֹהִים

וְעַמֵּי הַמִּיד כְּבוֹדוֹ

בְּלוֹא יוֹעִיל

שְׁמוֹ שִׁמְמֶם עַל־זֹאת

וְשַׁעְרוֹי הַרְבֵּה אֶדְרֵי

Omit with LXX. So Rotherham

1 R. this instead of חרבו with LXX. edition
Suggested by Cornill. S.B.O.T. Polychrome Text.

Prophecy No. 5:

3

כִּי שָׁתִׁים לַעֲשֵׂה עֲלַי

אֶתִּי עֲזְבוּ מִקּוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים

וְנִחַצְבוּ לָהֶם בְּאֵרוֹת נִשְׁבָּרִים

לֹא-יִכְלוּ הַמַּיִם ;

a gloss. See
Prof. W.B. Stevenson

a gloss. See

PROPHECY NO. 5.Ch. 2. 4-13.EXPOSITION.

This is a sustained, dramatic indictment of the nation. Opening with a call to the entire country, he fires stinging rhetorical questions that can admit of only one answer, to be followed by unmitigated charges of wickedness, and so he rises to a thrilling crescendo by apostrophising the Heavens, and then the effort closes in a verse of pathos and beauty.

There is a play on the word "hebel", translated as "phantoms", a favourite device of the prophet to secure ridicule. The "Garden" is of course not the Garden of Eden but obviously the Promised Land.

The argument is that Israel has given its allegiance to other gods, but this is unreasonable, firstly because nations do not change their gods as a rule, and secondly because it brings dire consequences to their souls.

THE REAL REASON OF ISRAEL'S RUIN.Prophecy No.6.Ch.2.v14-19.TRANSLATION.

Is Israel slave or stepson?
Why is he plundered?
Against him bellow the lions,
They let out a roar,
They render his land a waste,
His cities they ruin.
Even the sons of Memphis and Daphnae,
Are shaving thy crown.
Is not this the result for thee,
Of leaving me, thy God?
What business have you with Egypt
To sip Nile-water?
What business have you with Asshur,
To sip Stream-water?

Prophecy No. 6.

Ch. 2. v. 14-19.

חֲצֵבֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם יֵלִיד בַּיִת

הוא מִדּוּעַ הִיָּה לְבַז :

עָלְיוֹ יִשְׁאָגוּ כַּפְרִים

נִתְּנוּ קוֹלָם

וְיִשְׁיִתוּ אֶרְצוֹ לְשֹׁמֵה

1. Omit 'על מבלי' for rhythm.

עָרְיוֹ נִצְתָּה²

גַּם-בְּנֵי-נֶחֱךָ וְתַחֲפֹנֶס

יִרְעִיךָ קִדְקֹד :

1. So Rd. instead of קדקד
suggested by Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

הַלֹּא-זֹאת תַעֲשֶׂה-לָךְ

3. Omit בעת מולכו בדרך
So Rothstein

3 עֲזַבְךָ אֶתִּי (נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה) אֱלֹהֶיךָ

2. Technical phrase
letter omitted.

וְעָתָה מֵה-לָּךְ וּלְדַרְךָ מִצְרִים

לְשִׁחוֹת מִשְׁחֹר

וּמֵה-לָּךְ וּלְדַרְךָ אֲשׁוּר

לְשִׁחוֹת מִי נֶחֱךָ !⁴

v. 19. is a prose expansion.

PROPHECY No.6.Ch. 2. 14-19.EXPOSITION.

The Nabopolassar Chronicle¹ makes it clear that at this time Egypt and Assyria were acting in concert, and the prophet asserts that Judah was placing its trust in this alliance, and therefore in the gods of these two world powers, to the ruin of their cities and the disgrace of their name. Friendless and alone, like a slave or a step-son, the land is plundered by the invader. The cause of their disasters is their lack of faith in Jehovah.

Here Jeremiah reveals his spiritual penetration, for when a nation deserts its religion it disintegrates. Moral power and courage, and the incentive to sacrifice and enthusiasm all wither when the religious motive is not there. This is more especially true of a higher religion like that of the prophets, in which moral values were so strongly developed.

¹ The Nabopolassar Chronicle, C. J. Gadd, 1923.

THE STUBBORN NATION DOES NOT SEE ITS SIN.PROPHECY No.7.Ch.2. 20-25a.TRANSLATION.

Of yore thou breakest thy yoke,
 Thou snappest thy thongs,
 And sayest "I will not be bound".
 And I, I planted thee choice,
 Seed wholly select;
 How have you come to be bitter,
 A grape gone wild?
 Yes! wash you with soda,
 And multiply soap,
 But deep is your guilt in my eyes.....

Saith Jehovah.

How can you say, "I am stainless"?
 "I never went after false gods"?
 See your career in the Valley!

Think what you did!
 A camel of spirit,
 Recrossing her tracks,
 An ass inured to the desert,
 In heat she scents the breeze,

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Her desire who can thwart?
 Not a single suitor need faint,
 In her month they can get her.
 Save then thy foot from exposure,
 Thy throat from the parching.

Prophecy No. 4.Ch. 2. 20-25a.

כִּי מַעֲוֹלֶם שָׁבַרְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ

נִבְרַחְתִּי מוֹסְרוֹתַיךָ

וְגַאֲמַרְי לֹא אֶעֱבֹדֶיךָ

וְאַנְכִי נִטְעַמְתִּיךָ שׁוֹרֵק

כִּלְהַ זֶרַע אֲמַת

וְאֵיךְ נִהַפְכַת לְסִדְרֵךְ

הַגִּפְתָּן נִכְרִיחַ

כִּי אִם תִּכְבְּסֵי בְּנֵתֵךְ

וְתִרְבִּי לָךְ בְּעִרְיֹת

נִכְבְּתָם עֲוֹנֶיךָ לְפָנַי

נִאֵם יְהוָה :

אֵיךְ גַּאֲמַרְתִּי לֹא נִטְמַאתִי

אֲחֵרֵי הַבְּעָלִים לֹא תִלְכְּתִי

וְאֵי וְרִפְתִּי בְּגִיחַ

דְּעֵי מַה עָשִׂיתִי

בְּכִרְחַ קִלְחַ

אֲשֶׁר כִּתְּבִי וְרַכִּיחַ

*Limit 20. 20 with holy: glass.**Linkas of סורי : gives clear meaning.
Suggested by Prof. G. B. Stevenson.*

Prophecy. No. 7.

וְצִדִּיק נִפְשׁוֹ כִּי יִצְטָרֵק
omit נפשו as addition.

פֶּרַא לַמֶּד מַדְבָּר

גְּאוֹתֵי שְׂאֵפֵי רוּחַ

גְּאֻנְתֵּי מִי יִשְׁבְּנָה

כָּל-מַבְקֵשֶׁה לֹא יִצְפֶּינּוּ

גְּחֻרְשֵׁה יִמְצְאוּנָה !

מִנְעֵי רִגְלֵי מִיֶּחֶף

וְגֵרֹנֶיךָ מִצְמָאָה !

וּבִרְבֵּךְ מִן ר. 4
See

PROPHECY No.7.Ch.2. 20-25a.EXPOSITION.

This is an effort to bring home to the people the sense of sin. They cannot claim merit for the past, for the past has been a record of consistent "breakaways". As an animal goes wild and breaks its trappings, as a plant of fine stock goes wild, so has the nation rejected the restraints placed on it by the worship of Jehovah. In reply to their protestations of innocence, the prophet points them to the Valley- probably the Valley of Hinnom, where other gods were worshipped- and likens them to a wild, careering camel and a witless ass. So far from stainless the nation has guilt ingrained in its nature, and God cannot condone it.

The prophet is very conscious that monotheism is a religion of restraint.

DISASTER REVEALS THE FUTILITY OF FALSE GODS.PROPHECY NO.8.Ch.2. 26-28.TRANSLATION.

Like the blush of a thief when discovered,
So blushes the House of Israel,
They, their kings and their princes,
Their priests and their prophets,
Who address a block as "My father",
And a stone, "Thou gavest me birth".
They have turned upon me the back,
But never the face.
Yet in time of their trouble they call,
"Up and preserve us!"
But where are the gods ye made you?
"Up! let them save you!"
For the sum of thy cities has reached,
Thy gods, O Judah.

Text

כְּבִשְׁתָּ בְּנָב כִּי יִמָּצֵא

כֵּן הִגִּישׁוּ גֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל

הָאָה מַלְכֵיהֶם וְשָׂרֵיהֶם

וְכִהְנִי הָאֵל מִגִּבְיָאֵיהֶם

אֲמַרְיֵם לֵאמֹר אֲבִי אֶמֶר

וְלֹא בֵן אֶמֶר יִלְדָה נִי

כִּי־פָנּוּ אֵלַי לְרָקִי

וְלֹא פָנִים

וּבְגַת רִצְתָם יֲאֲמְרוּ

קִימָה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ

וְאֵיהֶם אֱלֹהֵיהֶם³ צִשְׁתָּ לָךְ

יְקוּמוּ אִם יוֹשִׁיעוּךָ⁴

כִּי מִסְפָּר צְרִיף הוּא

אֵלֶיהֶם יִתְוַדָּה

- ! Add ! with Lex. Latin. Syriac. See Rothstein.
- ! 1st. Sing. Verbal Suffix. RD. Kellib.
- ! Omit the prose connective אֲשֶׁר
- ! Omit רִצְתָם לְעַמֶּךָ as redundant. See Professor W.B. Stevenson.

PROPHECY NO.8.Ch. 2. 26-28.EXPOSITION.

A thief really knows better than to steal, and when he is caught he blushes. Israel too knows better than to worship idols, and when the futility of the idols is exposed what can they do but blush? The "fair weather" gods can do nothing in the hour of need, but there is a trenchant reply waiting for them when they appeal to Jehovah, whom they have slighted. Thrown gods should be able to save them, for they have so many of them!

Notice the distinct dramatic touch in the piece, and the change of rhythm in the middle to reflect the change of emotion.

DISASTER HAS NO EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE.

PROPHECY No.9.

Ch.2. 29-30.

TRANSLATION.

Why do ye wrangle with Me?
You all have rebelled!
In vain I struck your sons,
A lesson they learned not.
A sword devoured your prophets,
Like a lion destructive.

Prophecy No. 9.Ch. 2. 29-30.

לִמָּה תִרְיֹגוּ אֵלַי

כִּלְפֵיכֶם פִּשְׁעֵיכֶם גִּי' 1

לְשׂוֹא קִפְתִּי 2 גְּבִיכֶם

מִוִּסֵּר לֹא לִקְחוּ 3

אֲכַלְהָ חֶרֶב 3 נְבִיאֵיכֶם

כַּאֲרִי 4 מִשְׁחִית 5

1. Omittit יהוה as an addition.

2. אָר - A prose addition, letter omitted from poetry; spoils metre.

3. כֶּם suffix conforms the reuse and seems a ditto-graph of כֶּם נְבִיאֵי. So LXX, Latin and Syriac.
So Rothstein, Peake, etc.

PROPHECY No.9.Ch. 2. 29-30.EXPOSITION.

The nation may try to evade the charge by legal quibbles- the term is a legal term especially in Proverbs- but the fact of rebellion is indisputable. Jehovah corrected them by striking the young men in battle- such is the inference of the original- and by making an example of the prophets, presumably the false prophets. A well-supported emendation in the text changes the sense of the last lines of the piece.

ISRAEL FORGETS GOD AND HIS BOUNTIES.

Prophecy No.10.

Ch.2. v.31-32.

TRANSLATION.

A desert am I to Israel?
A land unilluminated?
Why do ye say, "We are off;
Nevermore to return unto thee?"
Does a maiden forget her adornings?
Or a bride her bands?
Yet my people forget^{me} for days
In number untold.

Prophecy No. 10.Ch. 2. 31-32.Text.

הַמְדַבֵּר תִּיחַ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל¹

אֶם אֶרֶץ מֵאֲפֵלִיָּה

מִדֹּוֹ-צֶמֶד² אֲמַרְגֵם עֲבַרְנוּ

לֹא נָבֹוא עוֹד אֵלֶיךָ !

הַתְּשַׁכַּח בְּתוֹלָה עֲדִיג

כֹּלֶה קִשְׁרִיָּה

לְעַמִּי שְׂכַחְוִי יָמַי

אִין מִסְפֵּר !

¹ The words וְלֹא יִרְאוּךָ יְדַבֵּר, s. reconstructed by Volz from הַדּוֹר / do not belong here. It is a corrupted line of a lost prophecy.

² Better than the same: צֶמֶד וְצֶמֶד מִדֹּוֹ. Suggested by Rothstein.

PROPHECY No.10.Ch. 2. 31-32.EXPOSITION.

There is something strikingly original in the opening question. That a God could ever be a desert seems irrational, and yet Israel shunned its God just as a man might shun a pathless waste or a pitch-black country. Could it be that Jehovah frightened worshippers away from Him? Certainly the people ran off as if in terror, and Jehovah slipped out of their minds altogether. In the popular mind in our own age there is the same dread of moral religion as of an uninviting and pathless waste or a dreadful and dark region.

Notice how the poetic instinct can relieve the note of complaint by picturing the happy bride decking herself for the wedding. No bride would ever forget the dress that sets her off; yet Israel forgets its God, its true pride and glory.

GOD DISAPPROVES OF THE EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE.

PROPHECY NO.11.

Ch.2.36-37.

TRANSLATION.

How very exhausted you are,
Your policy shifting!
At the hands of Egypt you blush,
Just as you blushed at Assyria.
Out of this thing shalt thou come,
With thy hands on thy head,
For Jehovah has spurned thine allies,
No success at their hands!

Prophecy. No. 11.

Ch 2. 36-37.

מה תגזל מאד לשנות בדרכיך:

גם מאצרים גבשי

כאשר בשנת מאפור

גם מאת זה גצאי

ויגדל על ראשיך:

כי מאס יהוה במבטחך

ולא תצליחי להם:

PROPHECY No.11.Ch.2. 36-37.EXPOSITION.

This is a threat that the nation will suffer disaster from its Egyptian alliance, and the prophet offers his sympathy for a country that is constantly shifting its diplomatic policy. It must be recalled that Egypt and Assyria were at this time allies in an endeavour to crush the rising power of Babylon. Assyria was a disappointment to Judah, and the prophet promises that Egypt will be the same, and his promise was fulfilled in 586.B.C.

The typical gesture of grief and shame in the East is placing the hands on the head.

It is a declaration that the nation ought not to rest upon the strength of other countries, but upon its own courage and its great God. The day came when Jeremiah unblushingly advocated the claims of Babylon as the friend and helper of Judah.

THE NATION TREATS ITS APOSTASY LIGHTLY.PROPHECY No.12.Ch. 3.1.Translation.

If a man divorces his wife, and she leaves him and belongs to another man, can she really return to him again? Is that woman not thoroughly polluted? And yet you, who have played the harlot with many lovers, would dare to come back to me! Saith Jehovah.

Prophecy. No. 12

Ch. 3. 1.

לֵאמֹר הֵן יִשְׁלַח אִישׁ אֶת-אַשְׁמוֹ וְהִלְכָה ^{1A.}

מֵאֵמוֹ וְהִי תֵהָא לְאִישׁ-אֲחֵר הַשֵּׁיב גִּשְׁוִיג

אֵלָיו עוֹד הֵלֹא חֲנוּךְ גַּחְנוּךְ הָאֵשׁ הַ

הָיָא
וְאֵג זְנִיָּה רַצִּים רַגִּים וְשׁוֹב ~~הָיָא~~

אֵלָי נָאֵם יְהוָה !

1A. Omit לֵאמֹר as meaningless connective.

1. Lxx. gives clearer sense. So Rothstein suggests.

2. Following Lxx. instead of הָאֵשׁ. So Peake suggests.

PROPHECY No.12.Ch. 31. 1.EXPOSITION.

This verse appears to be a prose precis of the following verses of poetry, and may or may not be Jeremianic in origin. There is no cogent reason why the prophet should not have used the medium of prose just as he used verse.

It is one of the prophet's favourite a fortiori arguments. If a polluted woman cannot expect to get back to her husband, how can polluted Israel hope to be received by an outraged God?

Although couched in what is termed the Deuteronomic style, it need not necessarily be associated with that Code or school of thought. It is typically Jeremianic in thought and spirit.

THE NATION IS DEALING DOUBLY WITH JEHOVAH.PROPHECY No.13.Ch. 3. 2-5.TRANSLATION.

Lift thine eyes to the heights and see,
 Where not wast thou ravished?
 On the roadsides you waited for them,
 Like an Arab in the desert.
 Thou hast spoiled the land with thy lustings,
 Too many friends are thy snare,
 The brow of a harlot is thine,
 You refuse to be shamed.
 Hast thou not called me, "My Father",
 "Friend of my youth"?
 "Will He always hold back,
 "Or forbear evermore?"

Thus have ye spoken,
 But wrongs have ye done to your utmost!

Prophecy. No. 13.Ch. 3. 2-5.Text.

שֵׁאֵי-מִינֶיךָ עַל-שִׁפְיָם אֵרָא.

אִיפֹה לֹא שָׁגַלְתָּ

עַל-דַּרְכֶיךָ יִשְׁבַּח לְהֵם

פְּצַרְבֵי בְּמִדְבָּר

וּבְחֲנִיפֵי אֶרֶץ בְּזוֹתֶיךָ

וּרְצִיךָ רַבִּים מִלְּקוֹחַ לֶךְ

וּמִצַּח חֹנֶה הָיָה לֶךְ

מֵאַנַּח הַכֹּלֵם

הֲלֹא קָרָאתָ לִי אֲבִי

אֶלֹהֶיךָ נִצְרִי²

הִנְמֹור לְעוֹלָם

אִם יִשְׁמַר לְנִצַּח

חֲנֹה דְבַרְךָ³וּבְעֵשִׂי הַרְצוֹת וּבְאֶבְלִי⁴

1. This reconstructed text is based on LXX. So Duham restores text.

2. Omit מֵאִתָּה as a later insertion. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

3. Omit אֲבִי with LXX.

4. Change of pointing from הָבִיחַ yields excellent sense. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

PROPHECY No.13.Ch.3. 2-5.EXPOSITION.

The worship of gods other than Jehovah was always regarded by Jeremiah in terms of a sexual image. Spiritual infidelity was as loathsome to the pure soul of Anathoth as marital infidelity. Just as the Arab lurked about the tracks of the desert, ready for spoil, so Judah haunted the places where she played false to Jehovah. It is probable that the "heights" referred to were scenes of vulgar devotion to the baals or local gods. So accustomed is Israel to worshipping other gods that she is unconscious of being false to Jehovah, and this is the tragedy in the eyes of the prophet. It is the old charge of hypocrisy.

A CALL TO ISRAEL TO REPENT AND RETURN.PROPHECY No.14.Ch. 3. 6-13.Prose.

This prose piece, despite its resemblances to Deuteronomic diction, has the phraseology of Jeremiah embedded in it. "Stocks and stones", "turning to Jehovah", "Under each green tree", and "rebellion" all are the literary stock-in-trade of the prophet. Usually in his poetry he makes no distinction between Israel and Judah: here his contention rests vitally upon the distinction.

As against those who would deny this piece to Jeremiah on the ground that it is merely a Deuteronomic paraphrase, it may be urged that the Deuteronomic style was not the perquisite of a school, but the essential literary style of a whole age, just like the Elizabethan in English, and that if Jeremiah wrote in prose, he would use no other style.

The thought of the passage is clear. Northern Israel, which went into Exile in 721 B.C., is instanced as a warning to Judah. Moral and spiritual faithlessness, which caused God to exile the Northern Kingdoms, will also be the ruin of Judah.

A CALL TO THE EXILES TO RETURN.THE ARK WILL BE FORGOTTEN.PROPHECY No.15.Ch. 3. 14-17.Prose.

Verses 17 and 18 are inconsistent with Jeremiah's thought-world, and do not belong to the prophecy in its original form.

It is clear that the destruction of Jerusalem has taken place, and the Temple along with the Ark is destroyed. The nation is in exile. Now the prophet's hope shines clearer than ever in the dark hours of the nation's life. Firstly, he assures them that they will certainly return from exile, not perhaps in large numbers- one from a city and two from a tribe- and that they will find the Ark quite unnecessary to their religious life. It is the bold message of a faith that could triumph over every disaster.

GOD ADOPTED ISRAEL AS A SON: IT HAS
BETRAYED HIS LOVE.

PROPHECY NO. 16.

Ch. 3. 19-20.

TRANSLATION.

As for Me, I had meditated,
How shall I rank thee as sons?
So I gave thee a land of delight,
A gift, the beauty of nations.
And I thought, "My Father" you'd call Me,
And from me ye never would turn.
But, alas! as a woman betrays her sweetheart,
Even so has betrayed me the House of Israel,

Saith Jehovah.

Prophecy No. 16.Ch. 3. 19-20.Text.

וְאָנֹכִי אֹמְרִי

אֵיךְ אֲשִׁיתֶיךָ בְּבָנִים

וְאֶת־לֶךְ אֶרֶץ חַמְדָּה

נְחֻלַת צְבֵי גֹיִם

וְאָמַר אָבִי תִקְרָא-לִי

וְיֹאחֲרֵי לֹא-תִשׁוּבִי :

אֲכַן כְּאִשֶׁר בְּגֵדָה אֶשֶׁה בְּרַעַם³

כֵּן בְּגֵדָתְךָ גֵי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל : נֶאֱמַר : הִזֹּה :

¹ Consult Ch. 24 for sense and LXX reads אֶלֶה אֶלֶה a later addition.

² LXX reads אֶלֶה . Suggested by Rothstein:

³ Read ר for ב , which are commonly confused. So LXX , Syriac, Targum + Rothstein:

PROPHECY No.16.Ch.3. 19-20.EXPOSITION.

This brief and yet beautifully complete piece illustrates the prophet's ingenious use of rhythm, for he starts with the matter of fact two stress line, swelling out at once into the sweep of the three beats, and concludes with the fullness and roundness of the irresistible four beats.

Jehovah's plan was to place Israel on a par with other nations of the world, and to do this He had to secure for them a land of their very own. He did this, expecting the nation would gladly acknowledge Him and cleave to Him, but despite the beauty and delight of Palestine, they lightly scoffed his care and affection in the style of a wanton woman.

Notice that God takes the initiative throughout, an idea that is fundamental to the New Testament likewise.

Notice also the resemblance between "my Father" here and in the New Testament.

LET ISRAEL RETURN TO GOD: HE PROMISES
THEM BLESSING.

PROPHECY No.17.

Ch.3.21- 4.2.

TRANSLATION.

On the heights re-echoes weeping,
The pleadings of Israel's sons,
Because they have lost their way,
Forgotten their God.
"Return! ye retrograde sons,
Let Me cure your relapses".

"See! We belong to Thee,
For Thou art Jehovah our God,
Truly, deceptive ~~are~~ baals,
The mob of the mountain,
But truly in Jehovah our God
Is the safety of Israel.
The baal has devoured the toil of our fathers;
Sink we in shame, heaped o'er with reproach,
For our God have we wronged,
Nor paid heed to the voice of Jehovah."

If thou wilt return, Israel,
Saith Jehovah,
And clear out your idols before Me,
Nevermore to go wrong,
And swear "By Jehovah",
With honesty, justice and virtue,
Then blessed through thee are the nations,
And in thee shall they glory.

Prophecy. No. 14.Yesh. A. 9. 21-4. 2.

עַל־שְׁפִייה נִשְׁמַע בְּכִי

תַּחֲנַחֲבֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

כִּי הֵעוּ אֶת־הַרְפֶּכֶם

שִׁכְחוּ אֱלֹהֵיהֶם

שִׁיבוּ בָנִים שׁוֹבְבִים

אֲרַפֶּה מִשִּׁיבוֹתֵיכֶם

חֲנָה אֲנַחֲנוּ לָךְ

כִּי אָתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

אֲכַן לְשִׁקְרֵיכֶם בְּעֵלִים

הַמִּין הָרִים

אֲכַן בְּיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

תִּשׁוּצֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל

1. Omit קול as unnecessary, meaningless, Superfluous. Suggested by Prof. W. B. Stevenson.

2. Omit אֶת־יְהוָה for rhythm.

3. Correct spelling אֲרַפֶּה

4. On basis of LXX change from חֲנָה אֲנַחֲנוּ לָךְ Suggested by Rothstein:

5. This makes better sense than לְשִׁקְרֵיכֶם מִגְּבֻעֵיכֶם. S. Prof. W. B. Stevenson.

והבֹּשֶׁת אֵכֹלָה יִגְעִי אֲבוֹהֵינוּ⁶

בִּשְׂכַבְתָּ בְּשִׁמְנוֹ וְהִכְסֵנוּ כְּלִמְתָנוּ⁷

כִּי לִיהוָה לֹא אֱלֹהֵינוּ חֲזָאנוּ⁴

וְלֹא שָׁמַצְנוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ³

אֶם גִּשְׁוֹב יִשְׂרָאֵל נָאֵם יְהוָה אֵלַי⁵

נָאֵם יְהוָה

וְאֵם גָּסִיר טְקִי צִיָּה מִפְּנֵי

וְלֹא תִכְוֶד

וְנִשְׁבַּעַתְּ חַיֵּי יְהוָה

בְּאֵמַת בְּמִשְׁפַּט וּבְצַדִּיקָה

וְהִתְבַּרְכוּ בְּךָ בָּנִים⁹

וּבְךָ תִתְלַלְלוּ !

6 Ovid: מנצורינו against rhythmic sense. So Peake.
Also: בביתיהם ארץ ארץ is an expansion

7 אנו --- אנחנו is an expansion, which relaxes the thought 74. Ovid: אלהינו

8 שנים תשוב is ditto-graphy of first.

78. Ovid: אלהינו balance

9. No sense in 92. Waw & Kaf often confused. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson

PROPHECY NO.17.Ch.3.21- 4.2.EXPOSITION.

The prophet hears the cry of those who are on the heights-probably the high places of baals-weeping in despair, for they have lost their way, but his poetic insight perceives that it is really their God Jehovah they are looking for, and he seems to hear Him urging them to return. Then, by a strong poetic conceit, Jeremiah hears Israel confessing with shame its sin of apostasy, while in reply the voice of Jehovah promises the nation world honour.

The quaint and dramatic use of dialogue in this piece is worth noting, and also the skilful way by which each dialogue expresses a movement of thought in the mind of the poet. God takes the initiative by inviting them to return; they respond with repentance, and He replies with the promise of a high place among the nations.

It is a matter of historic fact that the world has been blessed by the Hebrew conception of a moral and holy God.

JUDAH MUST CULTIVATE THE RELIGION OF
JEHOVAH OR SUFFER.

PROPHECY NO.18.

Ch.4. 3-4.

TRANSLATION.

For thus hath spoken Jehovah,
To Judeans and people of Jerusalem:-

Plough up your unploughed land,
Nor sow among thorns,
Turn up for Jehovah, (1)
And scatter your hardness of heart,
Lest belch like fire His anger,
And blaze with never a quencher.

1. The root besides meaning "strip off" has also the meaning "scrape or turn up" See B.D.B. p.576.

Prophecy No. 48.Text.Ch. 4. 3-4.

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה

לְאִישׁ הַיְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ שָׁלֵם

נִירוּ לָכֶם נִיר

וְאֶל-גִּזְרֵי אֵל-קָצִים

הַמָּלוּ^{1A} לִיהוָהוְהִסְרוּ שְׂרִירֹת² לַבְּגָדִים³

פִּי/גִצָּא כָּאֵשׁ חֲמָתוֹ

וּבְצָרָה וְאִין מִכְבָּה⁴ !

1. Insert following $\text{לְאִישׁ הַיְהוּדָה}$ following $\text{לְאִישׁ הַיְהוּדָה}$. 1A Point הַמָּלוּ הַמָּלוּ of הַמָּלוּ
2. Read $\text{לְאִישׁ הַיְהוּדָה}$ as $\text{לְאִישׁ הַיְהוּדָה}$ and אֵשׁ . Suggested tentatively by בֹּתְשֵׁתִין
3. Omit $\text{לְאִישׁ הַיְהוּדָה}$ as repetition of v. 3.
4. An obvious addition by later scribe. מִכְבָּה

PROPHECY NO. 18.Ch. 4. 3-4.EXPOSITION.

With a few well-authenticated but vital changes, this piece yields admirable thought. The rural mind of the prophet sees tracts of the nation's soul left barren and uncultivated, and he summons it to "drive the coulter deep" and carefully cultivate this land, devoted to Jehovah. Such plough-means the ploughing up of their own hearts, so that there is no hard crust left. If the nation refuses, terrible punishment will be administered by Jehovah.

The analogy is beautifully suggestive. The nation has moral and spiritual resources lying undeveloped, and waiting for the hand that is willing to work them. The moral teaching of Jehovah is like a plough driving through a man's soul; it turns things upside down and seems cruel. The idea is worked out by John Massfield in the Everlasting Mercy.

The warning not to sow among thorns is the seed-thought which blossomed later in the lovely parable of the Sower, told by Jesus.

THE NATION MUST RALLY AND FACE THE INVADER.PROPHECY No.19.Ch.4.5-8,13-18.TRANSLATION.

Tell it in Judah, proclaim and say,
 Blow ye a blast through the land,
 Cry to the full.
 Say, "Let us gather and enter
 The cities of strength;
 "Carry the banner to Sion,
 Flee and delay not,
 "For disaster comes from the North
 And a crash tremendous".

Up mounts the lion from cover,
 The feller of nations,
 He is up and out from his spot
 To turn thy land into waste,
 Thy cities shall burn,
 With never a dweller.
 For this gird on sackcloth,
 Beweep and bewail,
 For none returns the heat
 Of God's anger from us.

See! like a cloud he arises,
 A whirlwind his chariots,
 Swifter than eagles his horses.
 "Woe be to us!
 "We are spoiled",
 The shout of a scout from Dan,
 A sentry from Ephraim's height.
 Impress on the proud, "Beware",
 Announce to Jerusalem,
 "Invaders have come from the land of beyond,
 And raised against towns of Judah their voice.
 They patrol in the open,
 They face her all round,
 For Me she defies" saith Jehovah.
 Cleanse from evil your heart, O Jerusalem,
 To be worthy of saving.
 How long will you harbour within you,
 Your troublesome plots?
 Your life and your actions
 Have brought these on thee.
 This thy woe is so bitter,
 That it pierces to the heart.

Prophecy. No. 19.

Text.

Ch. 4. 5-8 & 13-18.

תִּגְדּוּ בְּהוֹדָה¹ הַשְּׁמִיּוֹת וְאָמְרוּ

וּמִקְצוֹ שׁוֹפֵר בְּאַרְץ

קְרָאוּ מִלְאוּ

וְאָמְרוּ הָאֵסֶפֶן וּנְבוֹאָה

אֶל-עֲרֵי הַמְּבַצֵּר

שְׂאוּ-נֶס צִיּוֹנָה

הַעֲזִיבוּ אֶל-גַּעְמֵהֶם

כִּי-רָצָה² הָאֵל הַמְּצַפּוֹן

וַיִּמְבֵּר בְּדוֹל

עַל־הָאָרֶץ מִסְבָּכּוֹ

וַיִּשְׁחִית בָּוֶם

וְנֶסַע יֵצֵא מִמֶּקְמוֹ

לְשׂוֹמֵם אֶרֶץ לְשׂוֹמֵה

עֲרִיף גַּעְזִינָה

מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב :

עַל-זֵאת חֲבְרוּ מוֹקִים

¹ Limit וְאָמְרוּ for rhythm reverse S. Peake.

² Drop the 1 waw So Bar and MSS.

³ Omit מִבְּרָא for בִּיָּה R. So Prof. W. B. Stevenson.

2.

ספרו והיללו

כי לא-שב חרון

אף-יהוה אמנו :

הנה כענן⁴ יצלה

v. 13.

וכפפה מרכבותיו

קלו מנשרים סוסיו

אוי לנו כי שדרנו

כי קול מגיד מדן

v. 14.

ימשמע⁵ מהר אפרים

הזכירו לגאיה הנה

השמעו על-רועלם

נצרים באו מארץ⁷ המרחק

ויגנו על-ערי יהודה קולם

שמרו⁸ שדי

היו עליה⁹ מסבג

כי אתי מרתה נאם יהוה¹⁰

⁴ R. sing. LXX, Syriac, Yargum, Vulgate. - S. Rostkén

⁵ *Qaid* און. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

⁶ Slight change from גויה gives excellent sense. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

⁷ Omit מ as dittography. Read מאב. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

⁸ שמרו. Read כעמרי. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

כִּבְּסֵי מַרְעָה לִבְּךָ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

ו. 14

לִמְצֵן גִּישָׁעִי

צַד־מֵתֵי גִלְיָן בְּקִרְבְּךָ

מַחֲשָׁבוֹת אוֹנֶךָ

דַּרְכֶיךָ וּמַצְלִילֶיךָ

15

צַדִּיק אֱלֹהֵי לֵוִי

זֹאת רַצְתָּךְ כִּי מֵר

כִּי נִרְאָה עַד-לִבְּךָ :

צ. ט. 1. S. Rothstein suggests.

PROPHECY NO.19.Ch.4.5-8,13-18.EXPOSITION.

This is the finest exhortation of the poet. It thrills with emotion, and marches forward to an inevitable close. It opens like a trumpet blast, calling the nation to retreat to the cover of the impregnable Sion. The invader sweeps down from the North, and nothing can stay him. One thing only can save the nation: let Jerusalem repent and do right.

The invader from the North was not the Scythian, but Babylon (See Fritz Wilke, Das Skythenproblem in Jeremiabuch, in Alttestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Kittel, Leipzig, 1913). This would indicate that the piece, which has all the first fine rapture of prophecy, is to be placed about 612 B.C., the new date for the Fall of Nineveh and the rise of Babylon, or if not certainly 605 B.C. the date of the Battle of Carchemish.

This is also a splendid illustration of how the poet rings the changes of emotion by sudden and unexpected changes in the rhythm.

DESPAIR AND DISILLUSIONMENT WILL SEIZE
THE NATION.

PROPHECY No.20.

Ch.4. 9-10.

TRANSLATION.

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah, that the courage of king and prince shall fail, the priests shall be shocked and the prophets bewildered. And they shall say, "Ah! Lord God, indeed right well have you cheated this people and Jerusalem, saying, "Well will it go with you", and look! the sword touches to the quick.

Prophecy. No. 20.Ch. 4. 9-10.Prose.

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נֹאֵם יְהוָה אֲבָרָךְ

לִבְהַמְלִיךְ וּלְבַהֲשִׁירֶיךָ וּנְשִׂאוֹתֶיךָ הַכֹּהֲנִים

וְהַנְּבִיאִים יִתְמָהוּ : וְאָמְרוּ אִתָּם אֲנִי

יְהוָה אֲכַן הַיָּא הַשֵּׂא הַשֵּׂא לְצַדִּיק הַזֶּה

וְלִירוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יְהוָה לָכֶם

וְהָיָה נִבְעָה חֶרֶב צַדִּיקֵי הַנְּפִשִׁים²

1. G^a A. Rō (פסוק 10). S. Rottstein

2. Lxx, Syr. Jacqum, Vulgate (verset 10) S. Rottstein

DESPAIR AND DISILLUSIONMENT WILL SEIZE
THE NATION.

PROPHECY No.20.

Ch. 4. 9-10.

PROSE.

Although couched in prosaic language this section breathes a daring idea, which could only have come from the prophet. He pictures the time when the leaders of the nation in sheer bewilderment and terror will turn upon Jehovah and accuse Him of misleading them. They will assert that He assured them all would be well, whereas they have found disaster and ruin.

Jeremiah, in another place, charges God with misleading him personally, and this indicates that he tended to think along such unconventional lines. (See Ch.20.v.7.)

The truth is that it was the false or time-serving prophets who promised such rosy dawns to the nation, and not Jeremiah.

There is a clear Jeremianic idea at the core of the passage.

GOD'S TERRIBLE SIROCCO.PROPHECY No.21.Ch.4. 11-12.PROSE.

The sirocco-perhaps an actual occurrence in the experience of the prophet- is a "thought-starter" and opens up a fresh idea of moral and spiritual cleansing of the people. Although expressed in prose, quite possibly the prose of the prophet, the idea is a poetic one, and the form is exceedingly dramatic, especially the end.

INVASION OVERPOWERS THE PROPHET'S MIND.PROPHECY No.22.Ch.4.19-21.TRANSLATION.

O Vitals of mine! I writhe!
 Walls of my mind!
 My mind is all a tumult,
 No silence for me!
 For the bugle-call I hear,
 The slogan of battle.
 Crash upon crash resounds,
 For spoiled is the land,
 In a flash are spoiled tents,
 In a moment my curtains,
 How long must I see the ensign,
 And hear the bugle-call?

Prophecy No. 22.Ch. 4. 19-21.Text.

מַצֵּי מַצֵּי אַחֲוֹלָה

קִירוֹת לְגִי

הַמָּה - לִי לְגִי

לְאַ-אֲחֵרֵי

כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפֵר שְׁמַעֲתִי

תְּרוֹצֵת מִלְחָמָה

שׁוֹפֵר עַל-שׁוֹפֵר נִקְרָא

כִּי שׁוֹפֵר הָאָרֶץ

פְּתָאֵם שְׁדָרוּ אֵהֱלִי

רַבֵּץ יִרְעֵתִי

צֶדֶק מִתִּי אֲרֹאֵה-נֶס

אַשְׁמָעָה קוֹל שׁוֹפֵר :

1. *Contra Point* '23. Original suggestion.

2. R. K. חולל S. R. Hosten.

3. R.E. 1st Serog. + on it '25.

PROPHECY No.22.Ch.4. 19-21.EXPOSITION.

This intensely personal effusion shows the poet at the height of his literary power. It is a marvellous revelation of his inmost feelings, and a perfect example of how invasion must have struck home to the average Hebrew. He is thrilled to the finest fibre of his being by the slogan and the trumpet, and as he looks around at his ruined country his heart reaches breaking-point.

Poetically, this is a gem that haunts the mind by its artistic finish, while it shows how the 3:2 beat can be sustained with telling and touching effect.

It is clearly an eye-witness speaking, and the invasion is probably the first attack of Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C.

INVASION DEVASTATES THE COUNTRY.

PROPHECY No.23.

Ch. 4. 23-26.

TRANSLATION.

I scanned the earth, and lo! confusion,
The heavens with never a light,
I scanned the hills, and behold! they quaked,
And all the hills were trembling,
I scanned, behold! no human being,
Each wing in heaven had fled,
I scanned, behold! the orchard desert,
Each city laid low.

Prophecy No. 23.Ch. 4. 23-26.

ראיתי¹ על-הארץ² ותנה גהו

ואל-השמים ואין אורם

ראיתי ההרים והנה רצשים

וכל-הגבצות התקלקלו.

ראיתי והנה אין הארם

וכל-צוף השמים נדדו

ראיתי והנה הכרמל המדבר

יכל-צרו נמצו³:

1. (omit ובהו with LXX.

2. Change את to על- for balance and unity to xxx S. Rottstein.

3. Omit /1990 to end as redundant. Idea is expressed fully in following verse.

PROPHECY No.23.

Ch. 4. 23-26.

EXPOSITION.

That Jeremiah could employ more than one metre to describe the desolation of war is proved by this prophecy. The 3:2 beat was used in Prophecy No.23, while here we feel the sweep of the long 4 beat line, and the effect is almost terrible. It is possible to feel the touch of the "numinous", as Otto would say.

It is probable that we have here a description of the effect of the invasion of 597 B.C.

THE INVASION IS GOD'S PLAN: HE DOES NOT REPENT.PROPHECY No.24.Ch.4.27-29.TRANSLATION.

Waste becomes all the land,
Yet a finish I make not,
For this lamenteth the land,
And dark is heaven on high,
For I have spoken and planned,
And I neither repent nor resile.
At the shouting of horseman and bowman,
Flees all the land;
They enter the thickets,
The cliffs they ascend,
Each city abandoned,
With never a dweller within it.

Prophecy No. 24.Ch. 4. 24-29.Text.

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה

שָׁמַח גֵּהִיחַ כָּל-הָאָרֶץ

וְכֹלֶה לֹא אֲעִשֶׂה

עַל-זֹאת תֵּאָבֵל הָאָרֶץ

וְקִרְרוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל

עַל כִּי דִבַּרְתִּי צְמֹתִי

וְלֹא נִחַמְתִּי וְלֹא-אָשׁוּב מִמִּנְחָה ;

מִקוֹל פֶּרֶשׁ וְרִמָּה קִשְׁת

בְּרוּחַ כָּל-הָאָרֶץ

בָּאוּ בַעֲבִיבִים וּבַכַּפִּיִם עָלוּ

כָּל-הָעִיר עֲזוּבָה

וְאִין-יֹשֵׁב בָּהֶן אִישׁ !

1A. Omit as needless connecting phrase, but omit 2

1. follows $\alpha\alpha$: $\tau\alpha\alpha\alpha$ $\alpha\alpha\alpha\alpha$ = כל-הארץ. So. Cornill, Leake, Rothstein.

PROPHECY No.24.

Ch. 4. 27-29.

EXPOSITION.

This passage is not^{as} Peake suggests "a mitigating gloss", but a vivid message hot ~~fr~~ from the heart of the prophet. The A.V. ambiguously translates the second half-line "yet will I not make a full end", but the exact meaning is the opposite of saving the nation. Jehovah, in fact, is not yet finished with His work of punishing the nation, and this meaning is confirmed by the line, "I neither repent nor resile". It is a grim prophecy.

The change in rhythm in the middle indicates the quick movement of the refugees, flying for their lives.

The God revealed here is a majestic and uncompromising Being, with something of iron in His nature.

APPEARANCES CANNOT DECEIVE THE ENEMY:
THE NATION COLLAPSES.

PROPHECY No.25.

Ch.4. 30-31.

TRANSLATION.

And you! what are you doing,
That you dress up in scarlet,
And deck you with trinkets of gold,
And widen your eye with cosmetic?
In vain you look pretty!
Rejected art thou of thy darlings,
Thy life are they after!

A voice as in labour I heard,
The scream of first travail,
The voice of the Maid of Sion agasp,
She spreads out her hands!
Alas for me! but it fainteth-
My soul at the slayers!

Prophecy. No. 25.Ch. 4. 20-31.Text.

וְאֵלֶּיךָ מֵהַיָּם

כִּי תִלְבַּשׁ שָׂנֵי

כִּי תִעַדִי צַדִּיקִים - זָהָב

כִּי תִקְרָא בְּפִיךָ צִיָּה

לְשׂוֹא אֶת־פִּי

מֵאֲסוּרֵי בַּיִת לְעַבְדֶּיךָ

כִּפְטֵךְ בְּקִשׁוֹ

כִּי קוֹל כְּחוֹלָה שְׁמַעְתִּי

צָרָה כַּמְבַכֵּירָה

קוֹל בַּת־צִיּוֹן תִּתְּפַח

תִּפְרֹשׂ כַּפֶּיךָ

אֲוִי־נָא לִי פִי - עֵינֶיךָ

כַּפְּטֵי לְהַרְגִים ;

Unit שדוד with LXX. Rothstein suggests probably delete.

Change צדק לזביל with LXX. So οὐκ ἐρασταί σου.

PROPHECY No.25.

Ch.3. 30-31.

EXPOSITION.

Judah had professed friendship to Egypt and Babylon by turns and not seldom at one and the same time, believing that such professions would secure her peace if not prosperity. The prophet resorts to the device of personifying his nation as a woman, who endeavours to increase her charms by artificial methods. She little knows that they mean to end her.

Dramatically, he hears a piercing scream; it is the painted and powdered beauty reduced to anguish and tears, overwhelmed with panic at the brutality of the invaders.

And such is the incarnation of Israel.

NO HONESTY IN THE CAPITAL:
INVASION IS THE PUNISHMENT.

PROPHECY No.26.

Ch.5.1-5b.Ch.4.22.Ch.5.5c-6.

TRANSLATION.

Rove through the streets of Jerusalem,
 Look well and make sure,
 And search in her squares,
 To find out a man;
 If anyone practises fairness,
 Adhering to truth,
 And I will forgive.
 But if "By Jehovah" they speak,
 Indeed, it is falsely they swear.

Jehovah, thine eyes are on truth,
 You strike, but they will not faint,
 You end them, they wont pay heed,
 They harden their faces like flint,
 They refuse to return.

As for me I concluded,
 Poor souls! THESE have no sense,
 They know not the way of Jehovah,
 The Law of their God.
 Off will I go to the leaders,
 And discuss it with them,
 For THEY know the way of Jehovah,
 The Law of their God.

But dull are my people,
 Me they ignore.
 Sons stupid are they,
 No sense have they got.
 Cunning are they to do wrong,
 Doing good they ignore.
 Yes! they have shattered the yoke,
 Burst asunder the thongs.

2.

So smites them a lion from cover,
A wolf of the waste despoils them,
A leopard preys on their cities,
All that go outside are torn,
For great are their sins,
And mighty their treason.

Prophecy No. 26Ch. 5. 1-56. 4. 22. 5c-6.Yes.

שׁוֹמְמוֹ בְּחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

וּרְאוּ-נָא וּדְעוּ

וּבְקִשׁוּ בְּרַחוּבוֹתֶיהָ

אִם-תִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ

אִם-יֵשׁ עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּם

מִבְּקֵשׁ אֱמוּנָה

וְאֶסְלַח לָהֶם

וְאִם חִי-יְהוּהוּ אֲמַרוּ

אֲכַלְנוּ לֶשְׂקֵר יִשְׁבְּעוּ

יְהוּהוּ צִינִיף לְאֱמוּנָה

הַכִּיֶּתֶה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא-חָלוּ

כָּלִיתֶם מֵאֲנוּ קַחַת מִיֶּסֶר

חִזְקוּ פְּנֵיהֶם מִסְּלֹעַ

מֵאֲנוּ לְשׂוֹבֵב

Prophecy. No. 26

Ch. 5. 1-58.

Text.

2.

ואני אמרתי

אך הליים חס נואלו

כי לא ידעו דרך יהוה

משפט אלהים

אלכה לי אל-הגדלים

ואדברה אגם

כי המה ידעו דרך יהוה

משפט אלהים

כי איל צמי

אותי לא ידעו

בנים סכלים המה

ולא נבונים המה

חכמים המה להרע

ולהטיב לא ידעו

אך המה יחדו שברו עול

נתקו מוסרות

עַל־כֵּן הִכַּם אֲדִיָּה מִיַּעַר

וַיֵּאָבֵד עֲרֵבוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל

נֹמֵר שִׁקְדַּי עַל־צִרְיָהֶם

כֹּל־הַיּוֹצֵא מֵהַנְּהַי יִמְרָק

כִּי רַבּוּ פִּשְׁעֵיהֶם

עַצְמוֹ מֵשְׂבֹתֵיהֶם !

Prophecy No.26.Ch.5.1-5b. Ch.4.22. Ch5.5c-6.EXPOSITION.

The Tester of the nation is seen at work here. He challenges the city to produce a single honest man, either from the dark and narrow alleys or from the bright open market places where the idlers were wont to gather. He incites the searchers to ransack every corner that no chance be lost of finding a man. There were plenty of men, of a kind, but not the real kind. Men who acted squarely and kept their word of honour were at a premium, and one alone was needed to save the city. What an indictment! Even when the people do promise by the sacred name of Jehovah, they break their word, and when moral punishment falls they cannot see the point of it. They wont take a lesson, but rather harden and feel offended.

The prophet's appeal to the influential people fares no better. They prove as dull and stupid as the rank and file. Although cunning in wickedness, they do not know the first thing about virtue and human kindness. In the final matters of life, "they have kicked the traces".

All this, says Jeremiah, is closely connected with the troubles of the nation and the straits in which it finds itself. Indeed this is the very cause of disaster. Behind every political and national issue Jeremiah believed there ^{was} a moral and religious issue. Sin and rebellion alone explained the national catastrophe, and virtue alone could reverse it.

GOD MUST PUNISH IMMORAL RELIGIONISTS.

PROPHECY No.27.

Ch.5. 7-9.

TRANSLATION.

How can I forgive you?
Your sons have left Me,
And sworn by unreal gods.
I sated them and they lusted,
In harlots' houses they dwell,
Stallions lusty are turned,
Each other's wives are they after!

Such people shall I not punish?
Saith Jehovah,
And on such a nation as this
Shall I not take revenge?

Prophecy No. 24

Ch. 5. 4-9.

Text.

אִי לְזָאת אֶסְלַח לָךְ

בְּנִי צַדִּיק

וְשָׁבוּ בְלֹא אֱלֹהִים

וְאֶשְׁבַּע אֹתָם וְיִנְאֻפוּ

יַבְבְּתִי זֹנוֹת תִּגְרְרוּ

סוֹסִים מִיִּזְנֵי הָיוּ

אִישׁ אֶל-אִשָּׁה רָצוּהוּ יִצְהֲלוּ

תַּעֲלֶ-אֱלֹה לֹא-אֶפְקְדֶ ^{a, b} נָאִם יְהוָה

וְאִם בְּנוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּזָה

לֹא-תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשִׁי

1 Read as is.

2 following LXX. So Rothstein

3 following LXX So Rothstein.

4 following Latin - LXX. καταμασ: So Rothstein

5 Read as is. need omit יְהוָה as alternative.

~~6 with the text~~

7 Cf. Isa. 46. 4. no object.

PROPHECY No.27.Ch.5. 7-9.EXPOSITION.

God is anxious to forgive the nation, but how can He, when it is so morally worthless? Instead of following virtue when they were prosperous, they broke the bonds of matrimony and became licentious. For God, therefore, there is no alternative.

Such conduct goes hand in hand with the desertion of the religion of Jehovah, for the gods they follow are "non-entities!"

It is possible to regard "harlots' houses" as the gods of the "nonentities" and in this case the rites would have been definitely immoral, but we possess too few facts regarding this worship of false gods to pronounce on the subject.

The famous question at the end is purely rhetorical: the answer is a resounding negative.

THE NATION DOES NOT TAKE GOD SERIOUSLY:
IT MUST SUFFER.

PROPHECY NO.28.

Ch.5. 10-14.

TRANSLATION.

Up through her vines, and despoil!
No stop must ye make!
Cut away their defences!
For none of Jehovah's are they.

For badly have broken with Me,
The Houses of Israel and Judah, Saith Jehovah.

They denied Jehovah, affirming, "Not He! "
"There comes upon us no evil,
"Sword nor famine we see".

Prophecy No. 28.Ch. 5. 10-14.Text

עֲלוּ בְּשָׂרוֹתֶיךָ וּשְׁתַּחֲוֶי

וּכְלֵה אֶל-בְּעֻשָׂיו

הַסִּירֹו נְמִישׁוֹתֶיךָ

כִּי לֹא לִיהוָה הֵמָּה

כִּי בְגֹר בְּגִדֹו בִּי

בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵית יְהוּדָה

נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה :

כַּחֲשׂוּ בִיהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא הוּא

לֹא-תִבּוֹא עָלֵינוּ רָעָה

וְחָרַב וְרָעַב לֹא נִרְאֶה!

PROPHECY NO.28.Ch.5. 10-14.EXPOSITION.

By rejecting the last two verses as a later addition, the idea of the piece gains in clearness and point. It is a ringing summons to all concerned to deal ruthlessly with Israel, to tear down her defences, since God has withheld His protection from His own people. They have played false to their God, never dreaming that He would avenge Himself upon them for their treachery. The "defences" were the strong branches that supported and protected the vines on the hills of Palestine, but now these were to be stripped away and the choice vine despoiled. Israel forgot that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.

By a fine poetic indifference, the piece is addressed neither to the prophet, nor to the nation, nor to the invader, but to all and sundry. It is the lyrical cry of the poet-prophet, who must deliver his message and give expression to his pent-up emotions, careless of the class or sect that hears.

GOD IS BRINGING A TERRIBLE INVADER.

PROPHECY No.29.

Ch.5. 15-17.

TRANSLATION.

Behold! I am bringing against you
A nation from afar,
A nation of unknown tongue,
None can grasp what it says,
All of them heroes.
It shall eat thy crop and bread,
It shall eat thy sons and daughters,
It shall eat thy crop and herd,
It shall eat thy vine and fig,
It shall shatter thy mighty cities,
Whereon ye rely.

Prophecy. No. 29.Ch. 5. 15-14.Text.הַנְּנִי יֵאָבֵא עַלְכֶּם⁴

גוֹי מִמֶּרְחֹק

גוֹי לֹא-תֵדַע לְשׁוֹנוֹ²

וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע מִהֶ-יְדַבֵּר :

כֻּלָּם גְּבוּרִים³

וְאָכַל קִצְרָף וְלַחֲמָף

יֵאֱכַל בְּנֵיךָ וּבְנוֹתֶיךָ

יֵאֱכַל צִאֲנֶיךָ וּבְקִרְיָךָ

יֵאֱכַל גִּפְנֵיךָ וְתַאֲנֶתֶךָ

יִרְשֵׁשׁ צִרֵי מִבְּצֻרֶיךָ

אֲמַחַב בְּמַח בְּהַמָּה (בְּחֶרֶב)⁵ :

1. Omit בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל as filling up and also יְהוּדָה So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

2. Omit גוֹי.....: with LXX.

3. Omit אִשְׁפְּנוּ בְּקִבְרֵי פְתוּחִים with LXX. - a gloss.

4. With Syriac, Vulgate read Singular for plural. So Rothstein.

5. Omit אֲמַחַב as unpoetical and untheological.

6. Omit as addition, an un-Hebraic construction.

PROPHECY No.29.Ch.5. 15-17.EXPOSITION.

God is here the God of history and of action. He causes the enemy to come and invade Palestine, and overturn every defence of the country. This involves the conception of a God of the world, as One that can summon nations "from afar". Such an invader devastates the entire land, demolishing crops and herds, and even the trusted fortresses will be levelled.

The passage belongs with 4.6., 4.7., 4.16. to the invasion group of prophecies. It cannot be Egypt because it comes "from the north", nor can it apply to the supposed Scythians, whose invasion, if it ever took place, was but a passing skirmish. Wilke (Das Skythenproblem in Jeremia Buch, see pp.222-254 of Alttestamentliche Studien für Kittel, 1913) has demonstrated that this group of passages refers to Babylon.

The terror is increased by the fact that the invader speaks a different language, and also the last line of defence, the fortresses, will be smashed. Thus only Jehovah is left as their defence.

GOD WILL TURN THE TABLES ON ISRAEL.PROPHECY No.30.Ch.5. 18-19.PROSE.

Although this piece is couched in prose it bears the stamp of originality, and reflects even though faintly a literary ingenuity. The folk who are worshipping the gods of strangers, will get more than enough of strangers: they will be their slaves. Just as they left Jehovah to serve strange gods in their own land, so they would serve strange men in a land not their own.

The phraseology may be stereotyped, but the idea rings true to Jeremiah's thought.

SIN HAS DISARRANGED THE VERY SEASONS.

PROPHECY No.31.

Ch. 5. 20-24.

TRANSLATION.

Tell this in the House of Jacob,
Announce it in Judah.
Mark this, O senseless people,
Eyes have ye got but see nothing,
Ears have ye got but hear nothing.
As ye should fear, saith Jehovah,
My presence should dread.

No thought in their minds:
"Let us fear Jehovah our God,
Who sends the autumnal shower,
The rain in the springtime,
The rotation of weeks,
The harvest He watches for us"

Your guilt has disarranged these:
Your sin has kept back the blessing.

Prophecy No. 31.Ch. 5: 20-24.Text.

הַגִּידוּ זֹאת גְּבִית יַעֲקֹב

וְהִשְׁמִיעוּהָ בִּיהוּדָה¹שִׁמְעוּ-נָא זֹאת עַמ־סֹכְלֵי²

עֵינַיִם לְהֵם וְלֹא-יִרְאוּ

אֵינַיִם לְהֵם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ³ ;

הָאוֹהֵי לֹא תִרְאוּ נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה

אֶם מִפְּנֵי לֹא-תִחִילוּ⁴

וְלֹא-אָמְרוּ בִלְבָבָם

נִירָאָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

הַנִּתָּן גִּטָּם יְיָ יוֹרֵה

וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּצִגוֹ

שְׁבַעַת חֻקוֹת

קִצְרֵי יִשְׁמַר-לָנוּ⁵ ;

עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם הִצִּי-אֱלֹהֵי

וְחַטָּאוֹתֵיכֶם מָנְעוּ-הַסּוֹבֵר⁵ ;¹ Omit לאמר with -א² Omit וְיִשְׂרָאֵל as later logons.³ Omit rest of v. 22 and v. 23 as later addition. Deuteronomus. So.⁴ Omit ! Reading text

Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

⁵ Omit חֲסִים : later correction.

PROPHECY NO.31.Ch.5.20-24.EXPOSITION.

The ideas in this passage move smoothly and clearly, if we omit the latter part of verse 22 and the whole of verse 23. This is a prose insertion, which fits ill with the poetry and it smacks too clearly of a later glossator of the Deuteronomic type. It looks very like a marginal comment that has been grafted into the text.

The message to the nation is definite. It must return to common sense, use its eyes and ears, and give respect to the God who does things. Unfortunately, the people never dreamed of thinking back from the seasons to the One who arranged the seasons with un-failing regularity. A modern version might be:-

Back of the loaf is the snowy flower,
 And back of the flour the mill,
 And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower
 And the sun and Jehovah's will.

The conclusion of the prophet is arresting. It is the sin of the people that has affected the seasons. This implies that the harvest has failed, with, no doubt, paralysing effects upon the whole country. The reasoning from the bad harvest back to a moral issue might appear crude to a modern mind. The natural world seems to be run by unchanging laws, and does not allow for interference even by God. It appears, however, that even physical laws do not cover all events, and the religious mind cannot admit that God is shut out from the world He made. It is a fact of human experience that material disaster does, and perhaps, should, lead men to turn to God.

GOD WILL PUNISH INJUSTICE.PROPHECY No.32.Ch. 5. 26-29.TRANSLATION.

My people are found to have villains,
Snares they lay down to destroy,
Men they take captive.
As a cage that is filled with birds,
So their houses are filled with plunder;
Thus are they great and wealthy,
They overstep justice,
They make no plea for the orphan,
Nor the case of the poor decide.

For this shall I not punish,
Saith Jehovah,
Or on such a nation as this
Shall I not take revenge?

Text:

כִּי נִחַצְאוּ בְצַמֵּי רִשְׁעִים

מִזִּקְשֵׁי הַצִּבּוֹר לְשַׁחַת

אֲנָשִׁים יִלְכְּדוּ¹;

כְּכֹלֵב מֵלֹא צוּף

כֵּן בְּתִיחַם מֵלֵאִים מֵרַמָּה

צֶלְפֶן בָּדְלוּ וַיִּצְשִׁירוּ;

גַּם עָבְרוּ דִין²

לֹא-יָבִנוּ דִין יְתוֹם³

וּמִשְׁפַּח אֲבִיוֹנִים לֹא שִׁפְמוּ;

הֲצֵל-אֱלֹה לֹא-אֶפְקֹד

נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה

אֵם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר כָּזָה

לֹא תִתְבַקֵּם נַפְשֵׁי;

¹ Follow Lxx. but read כמד. ילכדו. See Rothstein's reconstruction.

² Lxx with דברי רע. היה שמנו עשותו אמרו.

³ Lxx. ויזלחו אמרו.

PROPHECY NO.32.Ch.5.26-29.EXPOSITION.

The Septuagint gives welcome help at this point, for its reading is clear and simple. It omits reference to "lying in wait", "waxing fat" etc., and these seem to be words that are dispensable. The rhythm is improved and the meaning is plainer if these are deleted.

The nation as a whole is discovered to be misled by rogues and cheats, Not everyone is a villain, but the villains have their own way. As a hunter sets a snare, so do these rogues, but it is men and not beasts that they capture. In the prophet's mind is the contrast between human beings and the animal world. And much the same idea is carried on in the next verse, where the plunder in the houses of the wicked is compared with the cage-net full of birds. The birds have been snared into the cage, and the plunder has been snared into the houses. It can hardly be doubted that the prophet refers not to "deceit" but to the proceeds of deceit here, that is to plunder. The thought moves very naturally, for as a consequence of this ill-gotten gain, these people become important, so important that they pay no heed to the decisions in the courts of justice, they scorn the orphan, and when the poor seek redress they put the case off.

On five counts he indicts the people and asks the rhetorical question, if a God like Jehovah will endure such things. The assumption is, be it noted, that right living and pure justice are directly the affairs of God, and to fail there is to let down God. If men refuse to carry out justice and fairness and mercy, all Jehovah can do is to punish. There is something splendid in the very anthropomorphism of God wreaking vengeance on the villains of the nation.

DISASTER AND FRAUD AFFLICT THE LAND.

PROPHECY No.33.

Ch.5. 30-31.

A desolation and a shuddering
Falls on the land;
The prophets foretell by fraud,
And the priests are hand in glove,
And my people are fond it so;
But what will ye do at the last?

Prophecy. No. 33.Ch. 5. 30-31.Text.

שָׁמָּה וּשְׁצִוְרָהָ

נְתִיתָהּ בְּאַרְץ

חֲנֹבֵי אֵיךְ נִבְאוּ בְּשִׁקְרָה

וְהִכְתִּינֶנּוּ גְקִצוֹ יְדֵיהֶם

וְעָמִי אֶהְבֹּוּ כֵן

יִמְהֹוּ גַעְשׁוֹ לְאַחֲרֵיתָהּ !

PROPHECY NO.33.Ch.5.3031.EXPOSITION.

The wastage of the land affects the soul of the people with terror and dread, carrying a sense of blankness and shuddering, and this goes along with cheap and trite assurances from the time-serving prophets. The Septuagint reading of "striking the hands" is just what is required to clear up the vague Masoretic Text. From Proverbs 6.1. etc., it appears that this action of striking the hands was symbolic of the clinching of a bargain, and this fits well on to the fraud of the prophets. It thus means that the whole organised religious community was playing a game of its own. The very guardians of morality and religion were combined in a conspiracy to mislead the whole nation.

When the light of/nation is darkness, there can only be one end to it. The issue would be disaster, but what will the complacent nation do when the blow falls? This is the unanswerable question Jeremiah levels at his people.

RALLY TO THE CAPITAL: THE INVADER APPROACHES.PROPHECY No.34.Ch.6.1-8.TRANSLATION.

Seek safety! Sons of Benjamin,
 In the heart of Jerusalem,
 In Tekoa blow ye the bugle,
 On the Vine-house lift up a light,
 For trouble peeps from the North
 And a crash tremendous.

The soft and languorous one I destroy,
 The Daughter of Sion.
 Against her advance the captains,
 They pitch about her their tents,
 Their followers around,
 They lead each one his band.

"Prepare against her for battle!
 "Up! and storm at noon-day!
 "Alas! but the day's on the turn!
 "And the shadows of eve are lengthening!
 "Up! and storm by night-time;
 "And let us demolish her strongholds,
 "Cut down her wood, and throw up
 At Jerusalem a mound".

The city doomed for judgement!
 All is oppression within her.
 As a well keeps fresh its water,
 So she keeps fresh her evil.
 Outrage and pillage resounds,
 I see illness always and wounds.

Take heed, O Jerusalem,
 Ere My soul is severed from thee,
 Ere I make thee a waste,
 A land with no dwelling.

Prophecy No. 34.Ch. vi. 1-8.Text.

הַצִּדּוֹ בְּנֵי בְנֵי־מִן
 בְּקָרֵב רֹאשׁ־לֵם
 וּבְתִקְוֹצַ תִּקְצוּ שׁוֹפֵר

וְצַל־בֵּית הַכֹּהֵן שָׂאוּ מִשְׂאֵה

כִּי רָצָה נִשְׁקָפָה מִצִּפּוֹן

וְשֶׁבֶר גְּדוֹל :

תְּבוּהַ וְהַמְצַנְגָה דְמִיתִי

בְּתִצִּיּוֹן

אֵלֶיהָ יָבֹאוּ רָעִים²

תִּקְצוּ צִלָּהּ אֶהְלִים

וְצַדִּיקֵיהֶם סָבִיב

רָצוּ אִישׁ אֶת־יָדוֹ

קִדְשׁוֹ וְצִלָּהּ מִלְחָמָה

קִדְמוֹ וְנִצְלָה בְּצַחֲרֵים

אוֹי לָנוּ כִּי פָנָה הַיּוֹם

כִּי יִבְטְאוּ צִלְלֵי צַרֵּב

¹ Change to 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. S. Prof. W. B. Stevenson.

² Translating to after the S. R. Haskeim:

קומו ונעלה בלילה

³ ונשחיתה ארמנותיה

כרתו ⁴ צעה וטפכו.

על ~~העיר~~ ירושלים סלולה

היא הציר הפקד

כלה צעק בקרבה

כהקיר באר ⁵ מימיה

כן הקרה רצתה

חמס ושר ישמע בה

על פני גמיר חלי ומכה :

הזסרי ירושלה

פן תקצ נפסי מאץ

פן אשימץ שמיץ

אדן לא נושבה :

³ Omit 23.../2 as addition.

⁴ with xxx, Latin Syriac read for צעה. S. Rothstein.

⁵ מן 117. Rothstein's suggestion.

PROPHECY No. 34.Ch.6. 1-8.EXPOSITION.

This piece belongs to the group of invasion passages, which occur in the ~~XXXXX~~ ^{first} half of the book of Jeremiah. After the opening words of advice to flee to safety in the capital, there is a description of the approach of the enemy to the city. He comes thundering down from the North and the delicate and dainty Jerusalem cannot stand up against him. If we read "shepherds" as leaders (cf.17.16) then the army surrounds the city by divisions or companies, each under its commander, who marshals his force and orders the advance. The city withstands the first attack in the middle of the day, but again they attack at night, and to help the scaling of the walls they hew down the trees and raise a mound against the wall of the city.

Such is the kind of punishment that is falling on the city, because tyranny abounds within, and just as a well is always bringing forth fresh water, so Jerusalem supplies fresh evils. Still the violence goes on inside the walls, combined with the sickness born of siege and the wounds of the fighters.

But even yet it is not final. The land will not be desolated, if the ~~people~~ city take its lesson and changes its ways.

Two points are worth noticing in this fairly long and rousing piece. The prophet had advice to offer before the military menace...Seek safety, and he had advice to give on the moral menace that lay at the back of the military one....Take heed. He was no mere visionary.

A subtle meaning lies behind the command, 'Prepare against her for battle'. It really means 'Proclaim the jihad against her'. The enemy was fighting a holy war against the holy people of God. What a paradox! The people from the North were actually doing the consecrated work of God.

THE PROPHECY'S STRONG EMOTIONS AT THE CONDITION OF
THE NATION.

PROPHECY No.35.

Ch.6.9-15.

TRANSLATION.

Glean well, glean well, like a vine,
 What is left of Israel!
 Turn again thy hand like a gleaner
 Back again on its tendrils!
 To whom can I speak that will hear?
 Behold! how closed is their ear,
 Unable they to pay heed.
 Lo! the Word of Jehovah is scorned,
 No joy have they in it.
 The Wrath of Jehovah imbues me,
 I tire of the strain.
 Pour out on the lad of the street!
 On the circle of striplings together!

Both men and women are taken,
 The old and long-lived alike.
 Consigned are their homes to others,
 The fields and the women together,
 I am lifting My Hand,
 To folk of the land.
 From their least to even their greatest
 Everyone is grasping and greedy,
 And from prophet even to priest
 Everyone is making up lies.
 And they heal my nation's fracture
 But flippantly, and say,
 "Tis whole! Tis whole!"
 But it is not whole.

They blush, but the idols they made

 No blush do they shew,
 No insult they feel.
 Thus they shall fall with the falling,
 In the time I afflict they collapse,

Saith Jehovah.

Prophecy No. 35.Ch. 6. 9-15.Text.

עֹלְלוּ עֹלְלוּ כַגֹּפֶן

שְׂאֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

הַשֵּׁב יָדְךָ כְּבֹצֵר

עַל-סִלְסֹלֹתָיו

עַל-טֵי אֲדַבְרָה³ וְיִשְׁמַע

הַנְּהַ צְרֹלָה אֲזַנְנִי

וְלֹא יִזְכְּלוּ לְהַקְשִׁיב

הַנְּהַ דְבַר-יְהוָה לְחַרְפָּה

לֹא יַחְפְּצוּ בּוֹ

חַמָּה יְהוָה מְלֹאֵתִי⁵

כִּלְאֵי הַכֵּל

שִׁכְנִי עַל-עֹלְלֵי בְחוּץ

וְעַל סוּר בְּחֹרֵיב יִחַדּוּ
עַל-טֵי אֲדַבְרָה³ וְיִשְׁמַע1. עַל repeats the command. $\text{עַל} \text{עַל} \text{עַל}$ 2. Reads עַל with עַל . So Rothstein3. עַל is unhyphenated & interrupts the עַל עַל עַל 4. Omit עַל as dittography. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.5. עַל is unnecessary & unpoetical.

Ch. 6. 9-15

Text:

(2).

כִּי אִישׁ יֵצֵא אֶת־אִשָּׁה יִלְכְּדוּ.

יִזְקוּ עִם־מַלְאָכֵי מַיִם :

וְנִסְבּוּ בְתֵיהֶם לְאַחֵרִים

טְדוֹת וְנָשִׁים יִחַדּוּ

כִּי אֶת־אֶת־יָדָיו

עַל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ

כִּי מִקְצֶנְתָם וְצַד־גְּדוֹלָם

כֹּל בּוֹצֵעַ בֹּצֵעַ

וְיִמְנָבֵיא וְצַד־כֹּחַ

כֹּל עֹשֶׂה טָרָר

וְרָפָא אֶת־שֵׁבֶר צַמִּי

עַל־נַקְלָה לְאָמַר

טָלוּם טָלוּם וְאֵין שָׁלוֹם :

⁶ b. *no interpolation. So Prof. W. R. Stevenson.*

⁷ *Latin addition. נאם יהוה*

3.

הוֹבִישׁוּ כִּי תוֹצֵגָה עֵשׂוֹ.

גַּם בּוֹשֵׁ לֹא בּוֹשׁוּ.

גַּם הַכֹּלִים לֹא יִדְעוּ.

לֶכֶן יִפְלוּ בַּנְּפִלִים.

אמר יהוה :

בצת פקדתיים יכשלו.

PROPHECY No.35.Ch.6. 9-15.EXPOSITION.

This strong and virile piece, so beautifully varied in its rhythmic changes, opens with a dramatic apostrophe, calling for an even more trenchant dealing with the unrepentant nation. It is clear that the prophet's cry is going unheeded, and the very repression of his message intensifies his anguish. It was the peculiar cross that he carried that while his heart was full of his message it was scorned by the rank and file of the people. This anguish is heightened by the sight of homes and fields lying wasted, and forms one angle of Jeremiah's triangle. The other two are the vengeance of God and the corruption of the nation: within these three angles the thought of the prophet constantly operates.

The count against society is direct and severe; the laity are unscrupulously greedy, the clergy are fabricators of lies, who bolster up the courage of the nation with a cheap and worthless optimism. A striking contrast is drawn between the people, with their blushes of shame, and the idols, which are so dead and futile that they cannot blush.

DISASTER WILL BRING THE NATION TO ITS PRISTINE
RELIGION.

PROPHECY No.36.

Ch.6.16:20-21:17-19.

TRANSLATION.

Thus saith Jehovah:-

Stand in the highways and look!
And ask for the pathways of old,
Why bring me incense from Sheba
And cane from a far-away land?
Your gifts are not welcome,
Your rites do not please.

Behold! I will place for this people,
Stones over which they will stumble,
Fathers and sons alike,
Dweller and neighbour shall perish.
And I will set over you watchmen.

Hark! to the call of the bugle!
But they said, 'We heed not'.

Therefore, listen, ye nations,
Behold! I am bringing evil
Against this people,
The fruit of their treason,
For my words they heed not,
My direction they spurn.

Prophecy. No. 36.Ch. 6. 16; 20-21, 14-19.Text.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

צִמְדוּ עַל-דְּרָכֵיכֶם וּרְאוּ

וּשְׂאֲלוּ לִנְתִיבוֹת צוֹלָם¹לְמַה לִּי לְבוֹנָה מִטֵּבָא תְּבֹאוּ²

וּקְנֵה מֵאֶרֶץ מֵרָחֵק

צִלוֹתֵיכֶם לֹא לְרִצּוֹן

וּזְבַחֵיכֶם לֹא-עֲרִבוּ לִי³ :

הֲכֵנִי נָתַן אֶל-הַצֶּמֶס הַזֶּה

מִכְשָׁלִים וּכְשָׁלוֹ בָּם

אֲבוֹת וּבָנִים יַחַד

שָׁכַן וּרְצוּ יֹאבְדוּ :

וְהַקְמַת צִלְיֵיכֶם צָפִים

הַקְשִׁיבוּ לְקוֹל שׁוֹפֵר

וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נִקְשֵׁב

לְכֵן שָׁמְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם⁴

omit rest of verse. 16 as interpolation.

זף is unorthodox: makes line 16, long. omitted in LXX.

LXX, Latin Syriac, Vulgate minus plural Highil. So Rotherham.

Omit וַיֹּאמְרוּ with Latin & LXX.

לְכֵן כה אמר יהוה is a Latin addition.

Rest of verse is corrupt and hardly intelligible.

Prophecy. No. 36.Ch. 5. 16 : 20-21 : 14-19.Text:2.

הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מֵבִיא רָצָה

אֶל-הָעַם הַזֶּה

פְּרִי מִשׁוּבְתֶם

כִּי עַל-דַּבְּרֵי לֹא הִקְשִׁיבוּ

וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי מֵבִיא בָּהֶם :

lxx makes best sense. So Rothstein suggests

read [ח / ב /]

PROPHECY NO. 3b.Ch.6. 16: 20-21: 17-19.EXPOSITION.

The cry of the prophet, like that of all reformers, is back towards a pristine purity. Like Mohammed and Knox and Calvin, Jeremiah invokes the example of the earliest times as the norm of religion. The earliest religion, before incense and aroma from Sheba, was the purest and best. This along with vii. 22, and viii.8 gives the prophet's view of the sacrificial system, which is that it is unessential to the best religion. Perhaps the ornate worship of the Temple may be regarded as the stones of stumbling, set by God, that will bring down the nation. Spies, the advance guard of the invader, sound the bugle, but the people refuse to pay heed. God has no alternative but to bring home his warning to the heart of the nation by disaster, which is at once the aftermath of their apostasy and the retribution of Jehovah.

THE INVADER SPREADS PANIC: LET SION REPENT.PROPHECY NO. 37.Ch.6. 22-26.TRANSEATION.

Thus saith Jehovah:-

Behold! a people has come from the north,
 A nation stirs from the corners of earth,
 Bow and dart they can handle,
 Savage and ruthless they,
 Their voice like the sea keeps roaring,
 On horse and chariot mounted,
 Like the flame of battle around thee,
 O maiden of Sion.

We have heard their rumour,
 Limp are our hands,
 Distress overpowers us,
 Writhing like childbirth.

Go not to the open,
 Nor the footpath tread,
 For armed is the foe,
 With terror all round.
 Maid of my people! wear sackcloth,
 Besprinkle with ashes,
 The mourning of solitude make you,
 Wailing most bitter,
 For suddenly shall come
 The spoiler upon us.

Prophecy. No. 34.

Ch. 6. vs. 22 - 26.

Text.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

הִנֵּה יָעַם בָּא מֵצִפּוֹן

וְגוֹי יִצוֹר מִיִּרְכַּת אֶרֶץ

קִשְׁתוֹ וְכִידוֹן יִחְזִיקוּ

אֲכַזְרִים וְלֹא יִרְחֲמוּ.

קוֹלָם כִּי־יִהְיֶה

עַל-סוֹסֵיהֶם וְרוֹכְבֵי עֲרוֹץ

כִּי־שֶׁ מִלְחָמָה וְעַל-יָד

בֵּית-צִיּוֹן :

שֶׁמֶטְצֵנוּ שֶׁמֶטְצֵנוּ

רַפּוֹ יִדְבְּנוּ

צָרָה הַחֲזָקָתֵנוּ

חֵיל כִּי-יִלְדָה :

1 with LXX read > אֶרֶץ
 2 delete גדול with LXX.
 3 Omit יִהְיֶה or any thing. No plural אֲכַזְרִים.
 4 Add LXX. to end of verse. So Rothstein suggests.
 5 LXX, Latin, Syriac, & Arabic read יָד לְ

Prophecy. No. 34.Ch. 6. vs. 22-26.Text.אֶל־גִּצְאוֹ⁶ הַשָּׂדֶהוּבְדַרְךְ אֶל־גִּלְכוֹ⁷

כִּי חָרַב לְאֵיב

מְגוֹר מִסְבִּיב

בְּתַעֲמֵי חַגְרֵי־טֶק

וְהַתְּפִלְשִׁי בְּאֶפֶר

אֲבֵל יַחֲדַעְשִׁי־לֶךְ

מִסְפֵּד תִּמְרוֹרִים

כִּי פִתְאֹם יָבֵא

הַשָּׂדֶד עַל־נְוֹ⁸⁶ Follows LXX. Syriac, Vulgate with plural.⁷ Same as ⁶.

PROPHECY NO. 37.Ch. 6. vv. 22-26.TRANSLATION.

The message from Jehovah announces the coming of the enemy from the North, who excel in handling the bow and the javelin, and who, if we follow the Septuagint, are equipped with chariots and horses. The noise of such a host vies with the thunder of the sea, and as it encircles the city it seems like the fire of war that shall eat up everything.

Terrible rumours have scared everyone, until nerves get the better of the population, and they are able to do nothing in face of the overwhelming terror. Both the open country and the main roads are in the hands of the terrorising foe.

This state of things gives reason and urgency to the prophet's call to repentance. There is, in fact, nothing left but their eyes to weep with. It is time now to ~~XXXX~~ affect the garments of mourning and experience the loneliness of grief. Meantime the enemy is preparing for his last spring at the prey.

This is a fine specimen of the prophetic message. It is finished and moves forward logically with poetic measures to its climax. It displays the usual method of describing the political danger ~~XXX~~ followed by the call to humiliation. It should be carefully noted, however, that here there is no mention of apostasy or the vengeance of Jehovah, which goes to shew that the prophet did not press his theology into every piece he composed.

THE PROPHET IS THE NATION'S TESTER.PROPHECY No.38.Ch.6. 27-30.TRANSLATION.

A Tester I give to my people,
To know and to test their life,
All of them stubborn, vending their slander,
Everyone of them causing mischief.
Bellows blow the lead from their fire,
Vainly he smelts and smelts,
But the wicked won't smelt.
"Silver Disowned" they name them,
For disowned of Jehovah are they.

Prophecy No. 38.Ch. 6. 24-30.Text.בַּחֹן נִתְּתִיךָ בְּצַמִּי¹

וְהִרְצֵה וּבְחֹנֶךָ אֶת-דְּרָכֶיךָ

כִּלְמֵי סוֹרְרִים הִלְכִי וְכִילִי²

כִּלְמֵי מִשְׁחֵתֵי־יָדַי הֵמָּה

נֶחֱרַם מִפֶּחַח מֵאֲשֵׁרֶיךָ עֲפָרֶת⁴

לְטוֹא צֶרֶף צֶרֶף צֶרֶף

וְרָעִים לֹא נִתְּתִיךָ

כִּסְפֵךָ נִמְאָס קְרָאוּ לָהֶם

כִּי מֵאֵס יְהוָה בְּהֵם !

1. Smil מִבְּכִיר as corrupt & unorthodox.
2. with LXX Latin smil סְרִי.
3. מִכִּלְמֵי זְבַרְזֵל as intercalation with Rothstein
4. Regard as one word. Rothstein

PROPHECY NO.38.CH.6. v.27-30.EXPOSITION.TRANSLATION.

The idea worked out in this piece is fresh and arresting. The prophet is appointed the analyst, or better the metallurgist of the nation, for with so much stubbornness and slander there is a need for dividing the good from the bad. Just as the smelter blows the bellows and tries to find the silver, only to find that everything is lead, so the prophet finds the wicked cannot be separated from the good because there is no good. Men despise the metal as rejected, as counterfeit, and so God rejects the people of Israel.

This is a new idea that Jeremiah bodies forth. No other prophet before him had hit upon it. Only occasionally in Psalms and Job does it appear, in Zechariah and Malachi. But ~~no~~ Amos or Isaiah had coined it. And yet how accurate and arresting it is! The prophet was perpetually shewing up the wicked and yet searching for the pure in religion and ethics.

GOD'S HOUSE A DEN OF ROBBERS.PROPHECY No. 39.Ch.7. 1-15.EXPOSITION.

This passage, though not couched in poetic form, undoubtedly contains the kernel of a message that was spoken in the Temple. It is addressed to Judah, and promises that if there is an improvement in the conduct of the people, the land shall not be taken from them. The inference is that the land is threatened, probably by the Babylonian invader. It was a false security to depend upon the fact that the Temple was standing, even although Isaiah had preached the inviolability of Sion. The only security was high morality, and yet the Temple itself was the screen for all kinds of abuse and violence, which made it resemble a rendezvous of robbers. The appeal culminates with crushing effect in the example of Shilo, a most telling and terrifying lesson to the remnant of Judah.

THE RITES OF FALSE RELIGION ANGER GOD.PROPHECY NO.40.Ch.7. 16-20.EXPOSITION.

This piece, although in prose language, seems to be a transcript from the soul of the prophet. It records the words addressed by Jehovah to Jeremiah, and issues the startling command to stop praying for the chosen people. And with good reason, for everybody in the country is busy in doing something to help the worship not of Jehovah but of the Queen of Heaven. This cult was of Babylonian origin and was clearly as obnoxious to the prophet as that of the local baalim. The passage might be taken to indicate how zealous the people were in their devotions to the goddess, and also how poor they were, when all the preparation had to be done with their own hands.

The vividness and strength of the piece predisposes one to forget it is couched in prose, and indicates sufficiently its authentic nature.

GOD HAS EVER REQUIRED OBEDIENCE AND NOT SACRIFICE.PROPHECY NO. 02.Ch.7. 21-29.EXPOSITION.

The whole of the burnt-offering was given to Jehovah, while part of the sacrifice went to Jehovah and part to the worshippers. The prophet now urges the people to regard these offerings as secular and not sacred, because Jehovah never expressed any desire for them. At the beginning of the racial history all that existed was a simple pact between Jehovah and the people of Israel; if the people were true to their God then He would guide and prosper them. They ~~yr~~ disowned their God- and of course declined instead of progressing- in spite of the fact that God sent prophets to give them guidance in ample time to avoid calamity. Thus the double shame ensues of disowning the very God they have chosen and also of being so dull as to learn no lesson from experience. A low standard of integrity prevails.....Probably a half-line is lost to parallel this one.

The four half-lines of poetry that end the passage tingle with peetic passion and are obviously genuine. They call upon the people to adopt the mourning attitude for the fact that God has rejected the people,

Shear off thy lock and fling far,
Lift up on the heights a lament,
For spurned has Jehovah and left
The race of his wrath,

TOPHETH-WORSHIP WILL BRING RETRIBUTION.PROPHECY No.42.Ch.7.30-8.3.EXPOSITION.

This charge against Judah is two-fold. Firstly, they have contaminated the Temple with the worship of other gods, which shows the spirit of syncretism creeping into the national faith, and secondly they have gone to Ben-Hinnom and erected a special place of worship. Topheth seems to mean "fire-place"(Isa.30.33), and the worship clearly involved human sacrifice, probably in imitation of Phoenician practices. Jehovah not only repudiates such rites, but he vows punishment on the nation that carries them out, death so great that Ben-Hinnom will be filled, and exile so bitter that death will be better.

Despite the familiar phrases, the piece may be regarded as a genuine specimen of Jeremianic protest against the nation's decadent religion.

JERUSALEM LACKS THE COMMON SENSE
TO RETURN TO GOD.

PROPHECY No.43.

Ch.8. 4-7.

TRANSLATION.

For thus saith Jehovah:-

Does anyone fall and not rise?
 Or go wrong, without turning back?
 Why does Jerusalem go wrong,
 For ever go wrong?
 They cling to their wile,
 They refuse to return.
 I hearkened and listened,
 Not a word did they speak,
 Not a man would repent,
 Saying "What have I done,"
 Everyone turns on his traces,
 Like a horse careering in heat.
 Even the stork in the heavens
 Is aware of her time;
 Turtle and swift and swallow
 Watch for the time of return,
 But my people know not
 The Doom of Jehovah.

Prophecy No. 43.Ch. 8. 4-7.Text.

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה

חֵפֶז וְלֹא יָקוּם

אִם יָשׁוּב וְלֹא יָשׁוּב

מִדַּע טוֹבָה יְרֵשׁ לָם

מִשְׁבַּח נִצְחָה

הַחַזִּיקוּ בְּתַרְמִיתֵם

מֵאֲנֵי לְשׁוֹב

הַקְּטַבְתִּי וְאֶשְׂמַע

לֹא יִכָּן יִדְבְּרוּ

אֵין אִישׁ נֶחֱם

לְאָמַר מֶה עָשִׂיתִי

כִּלּוֹ שֶׁגַּב בְּמַרְצָתֵם

כִּסִּיט שׁוֹפֵף בְּמַצְהָלָתוֹ

1. Omit with LXX and insert אליהם אלה. So Rothstein.

2. Adopt singular with LXX, Latin & Syriac.

3. Omit וְאֶשְׂמַע as an insertion. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

4. LXX gives smoother reading than S. Rothstein.

5. לְאִישׁ נֶחֱם omitted as unhebraic.

6. כִּלּוֹ אֵין אִישׁ

7. LXX gives more intelligible reading. So Rothstein.

Prophecy. No. 43.Ch. 8. v. 4-7Text:

גַּם חֲסִידָהּ בְּשֵׁמֶיהָ

יִדְעָה מֵאַרְצָהּ

וְתִרְוֶינָהּ וְיִצְנֶהּ

שְׁמֵרֶיהָ אֶת בְּאֵנָהּ

וְאַיִן לָא יִדְעוּ

אֶת מִשְׁפַּחַת יְהוָה !

1. head singular with 1st fem. suffix. 2. 1st fem. suffix. Rothstein suggests:
 3. 1st fem. suffix. So Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

PROPHECY NO. 43.Ch.8.4-7.EXPOSITION.

This appeal is based upon common sense. A man who stumbles has sense enough to get up again, and a man who loses his way generally tries to find his way back, but the nation in matters of religion has lost even this common modicum of reason, for they persist in their wickedness, imagining themselves to need no repentance. The prophet's last thought is even more despairing, for he concludes that even the sense of animals, the instinct of the seasons, is lacking in his people.

The concluding verse, with the shortened metre is very effective in pathos.

GOD'S LIVING WORD IS SCORNEO IN FAVOUR OF DOCUMENTS

PROPHECY No. 44.

Ch.8. 8-9.

TRANSLATION.

How can ye say,
"Experts are we,
"The Guidance of God is with us"?
With deceit works the pen,
Deceit of the scribes!
Shamed and confused, they are trapped,
For the Word of Jehovah they spurn;
What learning have they?

Prophecy. No. 44.Ch. 8. 8-9.Text.

אִכָּה תֹאמְרוּ.

חֲכָמִים אֲנַחְנוּ.

וְתוֹרַת יְהוָה אֲגִנוּ.

לְשִׁקֵּר עֲשֵׂה צֶמֶד¹שִׁקֵּר סִפְרֵיג¹ !הַבִּיטוּ² וְחַגְלוּ³ וְלִכְרוּ⁴כִּי בִדְבַר יְהוָה אֲסִרוּ⁵.

חֲכָמֵי מֶה לָּהֶם !

1. אִכָּה תֹאמְרוּ should be omitted with LXX and Latin.

2. חֲכָמִים interrupts sense & mars the rhythm - better omitted.

3. Add ! with LXX and Syriac. So Rothstein.

4. LXX, Latin, Syriac, Vulgate, & Symmachus all read כִּי לִכְרוּ וְחַגְלוּ. So Rothstein.

5. Omit ! with LXX.

PROPHECY NO. 88.Ch.8.8-9.EXPOSITION.

It is a proof of the importance of this passage that it bears traces of tampering..The very fact that it charges the scribes with falsehood is enough to attract the pen of the later legalists. With the help of the Versions however it is possible to make the meaning clear.

Already a code of sacred law existed in Israel, and those who handled it claimed, like all experts, to be authorities. They urge that they and they only know the Divine will. Jeremiah's answer is that the written law has been twisted by the deceit of the scribes, and therefore cannot be relied on. The legalists therefore are in a hopeless position,

Against the Law of Jehováh the prophet sets by contrast the Word of Jehováh, that is the living and vibrating message that God is sending for the present situation of the nation, and this vital message is just the very thing the legalists reject. No wonder that Jeremiah argues that they have no real learning at all, when they cannot ^{recognize} God's living word.

A FRAGMENT: IDENTICAL WITH CH.6.13-15.

PROPHECY No. 45.

Ch.8. 10-12.

TRANSLATION.

Therefore I will give their wives to others;
their fields to new owners.

160.

Prophecy No. 45.

Ch. 8. 10-12.

Text.

לִכְן אֵתֶן אֶת־נְשִׂיהֶם לְאַחֲרֵיהֶם

שְׂדוּתֵיהֶם לְיִרְשֵׁיהֶם

1 108-12 are omitted in 108 from a duplicate of 108-12

161.

PROPHECY No.45.

Ch. 8.10-12.

EXPOSITION.

The first half of verse 10~~a~~ is suggestive of prose, and adds little except the usual threat for disobedience to the guidance of Jehovah. The rest of this prophecy is clearly taken from Ch.6. vv.13-15, and it seems that some scribe has simply taken that earlier message and appended it here as a suitable conclusion to Ch.8.8-9.

THE FALL OF THE NATION AND
THE FALL OF THE YEAR.

PROPHECY No.46.

Ch.8. v.13.

TRANSLATION.

I will finish them off,
Saith Jehovah,
Not a grape on the vine,
Not a fig on the tree,
And the foliage fallen.

Phoen. No. 46

Ch. 8. v. 13.

Text:

אֶסְרֵי אֶסְרִים נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה

אֵין עֲנִים בְּגִפֶּן

וְאֵין גִּאֲנִים בְּגִאֲנָה

וְהַצֹּלָה כִּבְלֵי

PROPHECY NO. 46.Ch. 8. v. 13.EXPOSITION.

We have not here a complete piece of prophetic poetry, but only a fragment, and yet short as it is it is graphic enough. The brief words betray the disappointment of the husbandman looking for some sign of fruit and finding none. The very leaves of the tree are blasted. God has no alternative but to end them.

Can we see in this pregnant piece the seed that finally blossomed into the striking parable of Jesus in Luke 13. 6-9. ? If so, then it throws not a little light on the method of Jesus' treatment of Old Testament teaching. Out of a trifling hint the greatest minds are able to fashion something richer and more compelling.

As spoken for the best,

It never is done,

As a thing of healing.

THE NATION IS DOOMED TO SUFFER INVASION.PROPHECY No.47.Ch.8.14-16.TRANSLATION.

Why are we sitting still?
 Rally together!
 Let us enter the cities of strength,
 And there be undone!
 For our God has doomed us,
 And slaked us with gall,
 For we sinned against God.
 We hoped for the best,
 Yet never a boon,
 For a time of healing,
 And behold! a shock!
 From Dan resounds the snort of his steeds,
 At the sound of the neighs of his stalwarts
 Trembles all the land,
 He comes and devours both land and produce,
 Both city and people.

Prophecy. No. 44.

Ch. 8. 14-16 (14.)

Text.

עַל־מָה אֲנַחְנוּ יֹשְׁבֵי

הָאָרֶץ

וְנִבּוֹא אֶל־צָרֵי הַמִּבְצָר

וְנִדְמָה־שָׁמָּה

כִּי־אֱלֹהֵינוּ הִדְמָנוּ

וְיִשְׁקֵנוּ מִי־רֹאשׁ

כִּי־חֲצֵאנוּ לַיהוָה !

קִוּוּ לַשְּׁלוֹמִי וְאִין זֹבֵב

לְצַח מִרְפָּה וְהִנֵּה בְצַח

מִדֵּן נִשְׁמַע נִחְרָה סוֹדֵינוּ

מִקּוֹל מִצְחָלוֹת אֲגִירֵינוּ

רַעֲשָׁה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ

וְיִבּוֹא² וַיֹּאכַל אֶרֶץ וְעִלּוֹאֶהָ

צָר וַיִּשְׁבֵּי גֵב !

[כִּי־הִנְנִי מִשְׁלַח בְּכֶם

נְחֹשֶׁת צַפְצָנִים

אִין לְהֵב לְחַט³

וְנִשְׁכּוּ אֶתְכֶם⁴]⁵

¹ Omit יהוה with LXX.

² R. Singular with LXX.

³ Omit אֶתְכֶם as brosis

⁴ נִשְׁכּוּ אֶתְכֶם

⁵ This verse does not seem to belong to 14-16.

PROPHECY No. 47.Ch.8. 14-16(17).EXPOSITION.

A breath of excitement passes across this piece, for the distracted people are speaking. The enemy advances down from the north, and for safety the scattered groups rally and make for defended places. It is better to die there making a last stand than go down like a ninepin in the open. In any case there is no hope, for God has been wronged and takes His vengeance on Israel. Every hope was blighted, and things instead of mending developed into a panic. Nearer and nearer comes the foe, for the snorting and stampeding of hoofs echoes from as far off as Dan. The thud, thud, thud makes the ground quake. The crops of the field and the citizens in the town simply disappear before the onslaught.

The verse referring to the coming of the venomous serpents can hardly **have been delivered** along with the passage as a whole, for it breaks the thought which as a matter of fact is already complete and rounded.

... break of my nation I break,

... had gripped me,

... in Israel?

... secret

THE ANGUISH OF THE PROPHET OVER THE STRICKEN NATIONPROPHECY No.48.Ch.8. 18-23.TRANSLATION.

Never a cure for my anguish!
 For me the sick heart!
 Hark! the cry of my daughter people,
 From a far-away land.
 "Is Jehovah not in Sion?
 Her King not there?
 Passed the harvest: gone the summer,
 And we not saved! "

In the break of my nation I break,
 Horror has gripped me,
 Is balm not in Gilead?
 Is a healer not there?
 Then why does not grow
 New flesh on my people?
 Would that my head were waters!
 Mine eyes the fountain of tears!
 I would weep by day and by night
 For the slain of my people.

Prophecy. No. 48.Ch. 8. 18-23.Sept.

מַבְלִי גֵהָה עָלַי יְגוֹן

עָלַי לִבִּי דָוִי

הִנֵּה יְקוּלָה (שְׂוֹצֵת בֶּכֶה עַמִּי

מֵאַרְצֵי מִרְחָק

הִנֵּה הִיא אֵין בְּצִיּוֹן

אִם מַלְכָּה אֵין בָּהּ

עֶבֶר קָצִיר כֹּלָה קִיץ

וְאֵנְחָנוּ לֹא נוֹשְׁעֵנוּ

עַל-שִׁבְרֵי בֵּית עַמִּי הַשְּׁבֵרֹת

שִׁמְחָה הַחֲזִיקְתִּי

הַצִּיר אֵין כִּגְלָעַר

אִם רִפָּא אֵין שָׁמַי

כִּי מִדּוּעַ לֹא עָלְתָה

אֲרֻכָּתָה בֵּית עַמִּי

מִיִּיּוֹן רִאשֵׁי מַיִם

וְעֵינַי מִקּוֹר דְּמַצָּה

וְאַבְכָּה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה

עַל-חֲלָלֵי בֵּית עַמִּי

1. Text difficult: LXX of Latin give best sense as here (divina). S. Rothstein.

2. Rd. per עלי with Aquila Symmachus. S. Rothstein

3. LXX reading singular is preferable. cf. 4. 16 and 6. 20

4. A lost line coarces in here unconnected with piece.

5. קדרות is a variant. -superfluous. S. Prof. W.B. Stevenson.

6. את is never used with בכה (See B.D.B. p. 113)

7. יקול is an alternative. line too full:

PROPHECY NO.48.Ch.8.18-23.EXPOSITION.

This is a poetic gem among the prophecies of Jeremiah, for when stripped of additions and glosses it becomes clearly a passionate lyrical outburst. By it we can plumb something of the depth of the prophet's emotions.

Evidently the blow has fallen upon the nation, for the cry of the people comes "from beyond". Jehovah is not in Sion, else it would not have fallen. The fighting is over for another year, for winter is approaching and there is no hope of help. The nation is broken and with it breaks the heart of the prophet. With the fracture of the nation arises the need for a healer and medicine, but there is no balm to cure it and no physician. There is no sign of the flesh healing.

With perfect poetic instinct he returns to his first anguish, and longs that he could fully express in tears the passion of his heart.

The historic background presupposed by these lines would resemble that of the period immediately after the first captivity of 597 B.C.

THE PROPHET LONGS TO ABANDON HIS DISHONEST PEOPLE.PROPHECY NO.49.Ch.9. 1-5.TRANSLATION.

Would that I had in the desert
 An inn of wayfarers,
 I would leave my people,
 Go out from among them,
 For all are immoral,
 A circle of cheats,
 They release their tongue
 Like a bow of deceit,
 With never a virtue,
 They master the land.
 For from wrong to wrong they go on,
 And me they ignore.
 Let each of his neighbour beware,
 Nor in any brother have faith,
 Everyone cheats and cheats,
 Each friend goes and gossips,
 Everyone swindles his fellow,
 The truth they won't tell.
 They train their tongue to tell lies,
 They wander and tire of returning;
 Loan upon loan,
 Cunning on cunning,
 They mean to ignore me.

Prophecy No. 49.

Ch. 9. 1-5.

Text.

לִי יִגְנִי בְּאֶרֶב

מִלֶּן אֲרָחִים

וְאֶעֱזֹבָה אֶת-עַמִּי

וְאֶלְכָה מֵאֶתֶם

כִּי כֹלֵם מִנְאֲפִים

עֲצַרְתָּ בְּגֵדִים

וַיִּדְרֹכּוּ אֶת-לְשׁוֹנִם

בְּקֶשֶׁת שִׁקֵּר

וְלֹא לְאֵמוּנָה

גִּבְרוּ בְּאוֹץ

כִּי מִרְעָה אֶל־רְעָה יֵצְאוּ

וְאוֹבֵי לֹא יִרְצוּ²

אִישׁ מִרְעָהוֹ הִשְׁמִרוּ

וְעַל-כָּל-אֶחָ אֶל-הַבְּמֹחוֹ

כִּי כָל-אֶחָ עֲקֹב עֲקֹב

וְכָל-רֵעַ רֵכִיל יִהְיֶה

1 For קֶשֶׁת S. LXX, Latin, Jerome, Vulgate & Rotherham.

2 Follow LXX omitting יהיה

Prophecy. No. 49.

Ch. 9. 1-5.

Vulg.

(2)

וְאִישׁ בְּרַעְהוּ יִהְיֶה³

וְאָמַת לֹא יִדְבְּרוּ

לְפָנָיו לְשׁוֹנֵם דְּבַר שֵׁקֶר

הַצִּוּי נִלְאָן טוֹב⁴

נִשְׁךְ בְּנִשְׁךְ

מִרְמָה בְּמִרְמָה⁴טֶאֱנֹן דַּעַת אוֹרֵי⁵ !³ Sing. is preferable with Vulgate LXX.⁴ 4. Follow LXX. נִשְׁךְ is = ΤΟΚΟΣ. This is an original reconstruction.⁵ Omit יִהְיֶה טוֹב with LXX

PROPHECY No.49.Ch.9. 1-5.TRANSLATION.EXPOSITION.

This strong indictment of the nation makes no exception in its sweeping asseverations. The prophet longs to get away from the sight of such men. They evidently cannot be saved; they are past redemption. He proceeds to draw out the list of wrongs; immorality, imposture, swindling, social wrongs are practised by the very people in power, and the will of God is ignored.

It behoves everyone, says the prophet, in such a society to trust nobody, neither neighbour nor brother, for cheating, scandal and lies are rife. Their tongues tell lies of their own accord, so well-trained are they! They get lost in their intricate money dealings, their usury and "bluff". They are determined on one thing namely to ignore Jehovah.

The ~~place~~ ~~is~~ ~~complete~~ in itself, and finds its best setting not in the later days of clash and invasion, for there is no echo of war in it whatever, for in the earlier period, when the prophet is making his estimate of the nation's religion and morals. [In addition we seem to have the lingering echo of his desire to "cut and run" from the Divine commission, He had yet to find that it was useless to run away from God.]

DISASTER WILL TEST THE GOOD AND BAD IN THE NATIONPROPHECY NO. 50.Ch. 9.6-8.10.TRANSLATION.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah:-

Behold! I smelt and I test them!
 How else can I act
 Through the wrong of my people?
 A piercing shaft is their tongue,
 Deceit the words of their mouth.
 Peace with his fellow he talks;
 In his mind he lays him a trap.
 For these must I not punish?
 Saith Jehovah,
 Or on such a people as this
 Never take vengeance?
 I will make of Jerusalem ridges,
 The haunt of the jackal,
 The cities of Judah make waste,
 With never a dweller.

Prophecy No. 50.Ch. 9. 6-8. 10.Text.

לִכְן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

הֲנִי צוֹרְפֶם וּבַחֲנֻמִּים

כִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה / מִפְּנֵי רֵעִת גֵּת צִמִּי

חֵץ שִׁחַט לְשׁוֹנֵם

מִרְמָה דִּבְרֵי פִיהֶם

שְׁלוֹם אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ דִּבֵּר

וּבְקִרְבוֹ יָשִׁים אֲרֵבּוֹ!

הַעֲלֵ-אֵלֶּה לֹא-אֶפְקֹד-בָּם

נֹאֵם יְהוָה

אִם בְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר כָּזְבָה

לֹא תִתְנַקֵּם נַפְשִׁי!

וַנִּתֵּן אֶת-רוּשְׁלֵם לְגֹלִים

מִצֵּן גֹּלִים

וְאֶת-צָרֵי יְהוּדָה אֶתֵּן שְׂמֵלָה

מִבְּלֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי

1. Add אֶתֵּן אֶתֵּן לְשׁוֹנֵם לְשׁוֹנֵם. S. Cornill Rothstein

2. Reading etc.

3. LXX of Latin so read. S. Rothstein

PROPHECY No. 50.Ch. 9.6-8.10.EXPOSITION.

While here we have the usual protest against the lying tongue and all forms of deceit, a notable idea takes shape in the "refining and proving" of the nation. We pass from mere indictment and denunciation to a moral estimate of suffering and national disaster. The prophet makes plain that God can do no other than test His people with trials in order to purge the nation of its wrong. When God visits he "visits" to test and search. And the vengeance He takes will be sore; no proud citadel left on Sion, but only mouldering heaps, and the stealthy jackal haunting the ruins of the country towns.

ALL LIFE HAS GONE FROM THE LANDSCAPE.

PROPHECY No.51.

Ch.9.v9.

TRANSLATION.

For the mountains lift ye a dirge,
For the grass of the wilds a lament,
For barren are they of men,
None hear the lowing of cattle,
Both the birds of the air and the beasts,
Have fled and gone.

Prophecy No. 51.Ch. 9. v. 9.Text

צֶל־הַהָרִים שֹׁאוֹ בְּכִי¹

וְעַל־נְאוֹת מְדַבֵּר קִנְה

בִּי נִצְהוּ אֲבֵלֵי־אִישׁ²

וְלֹא שֹׁאוֹ קוֹל מִקְנֵה

אֶצְוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְצַד־בְּהֵמָה

נִדְרֵי הַלְכוֹ³

1. Syriac, Latin LXX read Imperative Plural. נִצְהוּ. S. Rothstein

2. 'בִּי' is an addition - not found in Latin or LXX.

3. omit לִבְרִי with LXX and Latin.

4. Verse 11. is a comment on the prophecy. Ch. 9. v. 1-8 and 12.
Verses 12-15 is a prose version of Ch. 23. 15.

PROPHECY NO. 51.Ch.9.v.9.EXPOSITION.

It is doubtful if we are justified in taking this as a lament "for" the mountains. It might equally well be taken to mean "on" the mountains. In fact 7.29 would induce us to the latter interpretation. The general impression of the piece, truncated though it be in its present form, points however to a devastation of the whole land. The grass is scorched, the cattle have famished and died and not a stir of life can be seen. It is a pathetic picture of the fair and smiling land of Palestine.

It rings true as a picture of actual conditions the prophet himself saw. It is not a prophecy of the future.

At the same time, we have to remember that the condition of the country may be due to an invading enemy, quite as much as to drought.

THE ELEGY OF DEATH.PROPHECY NO. 52.Ch, 9. 16-21.TRANSLATION.

Thus saith Jehovah:-

Call for the wailers to come,
 To the experts send to give voice,
 To lift for you a lament,
 That your eyes may run with tears,
 And your eyelids gush with water.
~~For~~ the sound of lament resounds in Sion,
 "How ruined we are!"
 We blush indeed for we leave the land,
 Cast out from our homes".

But hear, O Women, the Word of Jehovah,
 Take in with your ear the word of ~~His~~ mouth,
 And teach to your daughters a wail,
 Each woman her neighbour a dirge,
 For up went Death through your lattice,
 Went into your palace,
 Clearing the child from the street,
 The youths from the squares,
 And strewn are the bodies of men
 On the face of the field,
 Like sheaves behind the reaper,
 With never a gleaner.

Prophecy. No. 52.

Ch. 9. v. 16-21.

Yesh.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

קִרְאוּ לַמְּקוֹנְנוֹת וְהַבּוֹאִינָה

וְאֵל-הַחֲכָמוֹת שְׁלַחוּ וְגִבְעֵנָה

וְתִשָּׁנָה צְלִיכִים נְהִי

וְהִדְרִנָּה צִינִיכִים דַּמְצָה

וְעַצְפֵיכֶם יִזְלוּ-מֵיָם :

כִּי קוֹל נְהִי נִשְׁמָע בְּצִיּוֹן

אֵךְ שִׁדְדֵינוּ

בְּטָנוּ מֵאֵר כִּי צִזְבְּנוּ אֶרֶץ

וְהַשְׁלַכְנוּ מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֵינוּ :

כִּי שָׁמְעָה נְשִׁים דְּבַר-הוֹדָה

וְהִקְחָנָה אֲזִנֵיכֶם דְּבַר-פִּי

וְלִמְדָנָה בְּנוֹגֵיכֶם נְהִי

Omit באמר with LXX.

Also ! with Syriac & LXX. So Rothstein

LXX φασθῶσθε = נבא. This is an original reconstruction.

Omit והמהרבה with LXX.

LXX = Latin read 2nd person.

2nd person for 1st. LXX. Latin.

Same.

LXX reads בן for בן. So Rothstein.

Omit כִּי with LXX. Read הִפְחֵל 1st plural. So Rothstein.

LXX, Syriac, Vulgate read 2nd fem. plural.

ditto

LXX reads 2nd person.

ditto.

Ditto

Prophecy. No. 52.Ch. 9. v. 16. 21.Text:2.

לְהַכְרִית עוֹלָל מִחוּץ

בְּחַדְרֵי מִרְחֻבוֹת

וּנְפִלָה נְבִלַת הָאָדָם

עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה¹¹

כְּצִמְרֵי מֵאֲחֵרֵי הַקְּצוּצִים¹²

יֵאֵן מֵאֲסֵרְךָ !

¹¹ Omit כדמן as unorthodox. LXX reads οἱ παραδοξοί. So Pentec.

¹² Omit ! with LXX.

PROPHECY No. 52.Ch. 9. v. 16-21.EXPOSITION.

This is the finest example of the poetic powers of Jeremiah. The more we consider it the more we realise how much we must have missed of the beautiful outpourings of this great spirit.

Notice how exquisitely complete the piece is. It begins with a summons to mourning in the professional and recognised fashion, so that the effect of this wailing may cause everyone to weep, after the volatile Oriental fashion. But there is reason for all this weeping, for the capital is full of people who are heart-broken at the ruined city and who feel the shame of going into exile. But the prophet calls on the woman to use not the time-honoured exclamations of lamentation, but rather to use the Word of warning that Jehovah has sent. He even summons them to pass on this message to others. Then comes the loveliest and most pathetic picture in prophetic poetry. Death, says Jeremiah, is stealing up the wall and creeping in the windows; not even the palace is proof against Death. The streets are empty of young life, and the idling fellows of the ~~open~~ public squares are gone. Outside on the surface of the ground beyond the city the dead bodies are ~~gathered~~ heaped like newly-cut grain, but unlike the grain there is no one to gather them together and care for them.

Notice again how the stresses are arranged. The beginning is a succession of three beats, for it is a summons and a call. But each time the two beat line occurs we have a pathetic detail, until at the end comes the most touching fact of all, namely that nobody cares.

THE BEST BOAST IS A GOD OF JUSTICE.

PROPHECY No.53.

Ch.9.22-23.

TRANSLATION.

For thus saith Jehovah:-

No boast of the wise in his wisdom,
No boast of the strong in his strength,
No boast of the rich in his wealth,
But in this let him boast who boasts-
In thinking and knowing that I am Jehovah,
Who does kindness and justice and right on the earth,
For in these I delight saith Jehovah.

Prophecy No. 53.Ch. 9. v. 22-23.Yekt.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

אֶל-יְתַהֲלַל חֲכָם בְּחִכְמָתוֹ

וְאֶל-יְתַהֲלַל גִּבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ

אֶל-יְתַהֲלַל עֲשִׂיר בְּעֲשָׂרוֹ

כִּי אֵם בְּזָאֵה יְתַהֲלַל הַמַּתְהַלֵּל

הַטֹּפֵל וְיִרְעַ ~~כִּי~~² כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָהעֲשִׂיהַ חֲסִד וְיִמְאֵפֵ ³ וְצִדְקָה בְּאֶרֶץ

כִּי בְּאֵלֶּה חֲפָצָתִי נֹאֵם יְהוָה

1. Omit ה article to harmonise with חֲכָם and עֲשִׂיר.

2. Lxx omits כִּי

3. All 1 with Lxx אֲנִי יְהוָה

PROPHECY NO. 53.Ch. 9. v. 22-23.EXPOSITION.

This piece reveals the prophet not in the elegiac strain, but in the strong line of denunciation and exhortation. It is a protest against the exaltation of the three great human forces, cunning, physical force and money. Over against these Jeremiah glorifies the three great spiritual forces of kindness, justice and integrity, for behind these three stands Jehovah.

It is extraordinarily difficult to suggest an appropriate historical background for such a rounded and complete piece. It is obvious that certain sections in the country had been boasting, perhaps of diplomatic triumphs, perhaps of feats of arms, perhaps of buying off the enemy. The boastful days belonged rather to the days before the good king Josiah died. And yet the years of Zedekiah were the very days when every wile was used to prop up the falling dynasty, both political cunning, and feints of armies, and money tributes.

The poem lays emphasis on the true righteousness which exalts a nation.

THE FUTILITY OF CIRCUMCISION.PROPHECY No. 54.Ch. 9. 24-25.EXPOSITION.

This short prose section, based apparently upon a distinctive Jeremianic idea, foretells the time when circumcision will avail nothing to shield Israel from danger. God will punish the people of Egypt, Edom, Ammon and Moab-uncircumcised people-no more severely than he will punish Judah itself, for Judah though circumcised outwardly is not so in heart.

It is a bold thought and a definite challenge to the religious ritual of his generation.

Jehovah contrasted with idols.PROPHECY NO.55.Ch.10.1-10.12-16.TRANSLATION.

Thus saith Jehovah:-

The faith of the world do not follow,
The signs in the heavens do not fear,
Though the nations may tremble for them,
For the rites of the people are empty.

For a tree from the forest is felled,
It is worked by a woodman's axe,
With silver and gold embellished,
Silver refined from Tarshish,
And gold conveyed from Ophir,
Violet and purple their clothing,
With nails and hammers made firm,
They fix it up lest it rock.
Like a scarecrow they cannot speak,
They are carried, they make not a step.
Have no fear of them they are harmless,
To do even good they are helpless.

Jehovah, He made the earth by His might,
He set up the world by his skill,
He stretched the heavens by his reason.
The waters roar in the heavens;
He raises the mists from the ends of the earth;
The lightnings He makes into rains,
And he brings out winds from his treasures.

Dull is each man through knowledge,
Shamed each smith through the idol,
For false his image, with never a breath,
Empty are they the objects of laughter;
In the time of their trial they perish.

Unlike these is the Portion of Jacob,
For the Maker of all is his by right,
Jehovah's His name.

Prophecy No. 58

Ch. 10. 1-10, 12-16.

Y. 101.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

אֶל-דֶּרֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם אֶל-גְּלִמְדוֹ

וּמַאֲתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-גִּחְתּוֹ.

כִּי יִחַתּוּ הַגּוֹיִם מֵהֵמָּה :

כִּי תִקְוֶה הַצִּמִּיּוֹת הַבֵּל הוּא

כִּי־עַץ מִי־צֵר כְּרוֹת²

מִצִּיָּה³ חֲרָשׁ בְּמִעְצָד⁴ :

בְּכֶסֶף וּבַזָּהָב מִיָּפֶה⁵

בְּמַסְמְרוֹת וּבְמַקְבּוֹת יִחַזְקוּ⁶

יִנְיַחוּ. וְלֹא יִפִּיק :

כְּתֹמַר מִקְשָׁה הֵמָּה וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ

נִשְׂוֹא יִנְשְׂאוּ⁷ כִּי לֹא יִצְעֲדוּ.

אֶל-תִּירְאוּ מֵהֶם כִּי לֹא יִרְצוּ

וְגַם-תִּיַעֲבֹב אֵין אֲתֵם ;

כֶּסֶף מְרַקֵּץ מִגְרִשֵׁי־שָׁמַיִם

יִבָּא וְזָהָב מֵאֹפֶיךָ⁹

תִּכְלֹת וְאַרְבָּמָן לְבוֹשֵׁם ;

omit at 11

1. Omit שִׂרְאֵל שֶׁאֵין שֶׁאֵין no better expansion. LXX omits יְהוָה

2. LXX, Latin & Syriac all read passive כְּרוֹת מִן כְּרוֹתוֹ So Rothstein.

3. Omit יָד with LXX & Latin.

4. LXX reads passive instead of יִפְתּוּי. Omit לְבוֹשֵׁי־שָׁמַיִם. So Rothstein.

5. Read singular suffix with Yargum rather than plural

6. Following LXX. B. So Rothstein

7. So read מִן אֹפֶיךָ - a derival error. So Cornill:

8. So read מִן אֹפֶיךָ מִן אֹפֶיךָ.

Omit verses 6-8 with LXX.

9. Read מִן אֹפֶיךָ מִן אֹפֶיךָ So Peake.

omit מִן אֹפֶיךָ מִן אֹפֶיךָ

LXX omits כֹּלָה כֹּלָה

Prophecy, No. 58

Ch. 10. 1-10. 12-16.

Sept.

2.

יְהוָה לַעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכַחוֹ ^{10.}

מִכֵּן תִּבְלַע בְּחִכְמֹתָיו

וַיִּגְבְּוּנְתוּ נַמְה שְׁמַיִם !

תִּמְאוּ מֵיָם בְּשָׁמַיִם ^{11.}

וַיִּצְלַח נִשְׁאֵיב מִקְצֵה אֶרֶץ

בְּרִקֵּב לְמַעַר צִשׁוּךְ

וַיִּצְא רִזְחַת מֵאֲצִרְתָּיו ^{12.}

נִבְצַר כָּל־אֲדָם מִדְּצִת

הַבֵּישׁ כָּל־צִרְקֵי מִפְּסֵל

כִּי־שָׁקַר נִסְכּוֹ וְלֹא רִיחַ בָּם :

הַבֵּל הֵמָּה מִצִּשׁוּךְ ^{13.} תַּעֲגֻצִים

בְּצִת פִּקְדֹתֵם יֵאֲבְדוּ !

לֹא־כִאֲלֵה חִלְקֵי יַעֲקֹב

כִּי יִצְרֵר הַכֹּל הוּא נִחְלָתוֹ ^{14.}

יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ !

verses 12-16 found at 51. 18-19.

LXX with Syriac LXX.

Latin - LXX omit תִּתֵּן לְקוֹל

Substitute תִּתֵּן לְקוֹל for תִּתֵּן לְקוֹל. So Rothstein suggests.

Syriac - Jarqum, LXX Latin read plural. So Rothstein

LXX - Syriac read plural. So Rothstein

with LXX omit צְבָאוֹת וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה.

PROPHECY No. 55.Ch. 10.1-10.12-16.EXPOSITION.

Three points have been urged against accepting this piece as belonging to Jeremiah. It is supposed to interrupt the flow of thought from 9.22. to 10.17. But 9.22 is obviously the end of a prophecy, and in any case 9.23.-24, which is certainly Jeremianic, also interrupts it. It must be realised there is no continuity of thought running through long passages and chapters. Each prophecy stands entirely by itself. It is supposed in the second place to presuppose conditions of exile, with heathen gods all round. It does not say so. We know that influences from Babylon and Egypt were playing powerfully on the religion of Jerusalem, and these are sufficient to evoke the warning of Jeremiah in these terms. It is supposed in the third place that this style is not Jeremiah's. Apart from the words for 'nails' and 'hammers', which are obviously indispensable, the vocabulary is Jeremiah's and the metre and style are just as much his as any other writer. If we are not to be swayed by a theory, we cannot withhold this piece from the prophet.

It is one of the most sustained pieces in the book, and is a direct attack upon idols. From it we gather valuable details in regard to the idolatry of the period. The gods referred to can hardly be the Baalim, since these were agricultural for the most part, and also "the nations" may be reasonably identified with Babylon and Egypt. The Hebrew sense of exclusiveness appears here. Israel must not sink to the level of the world, and the reason is obvious. The religions of the outside world are futile and absurd.

Against the dumb and helpless idol he places his magnificent God, who created the world and rules the day and night, governing the lightning and controlling the wind, and after centuries the grandeur of his conception is not dimmed. Nowhere is the intellectual superiority of the prophet so apparent as here, and his monotheistic religion becomes irresistible. Notice ~~the~~ how apart from any moral predicates, Jehovah stands out supremely as the only God worthy of the human intellect. And this splendid monotheism, we often forget, is the mother both of philosophy and science.

Ch.10.v.11.

AN ARAMAIC MARGINAL NOTE ADDED LATER.

Thus shall ye say unto them, "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens".

A SUMMONS TO PREPARE FOR EXILE.

PROPHECY NO. 56.

Ch. 10. 17-18.

Translation.

Take up from the ground thy bundle,
Thou dweller besieged!

For thus saith the Lord, Behold I am on the
point of slinging out those who dwell in this land, and I
will harass them in order that they may find me.

Prophecy No 56.

Ch. 10. 14-18.

Text.

אֶסְפִּי מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן

וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּמִצְרָיִם

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה

הֲנִי קוֹלֵךְ אֶת־יֹשְׁבֵי אֶרֶץ הַצִּדְוֹת

וְהִצַּרְתִּי לָהֶם לְמַעַן יֵצְאוּ

1. Adopt line

2. Omit בְּמִצְרָיִם with לֵאמֹר of Latin

3. Cf. 29.13 פֶּן יֵצְאוּ without an object. Also Deut. 4.29.

PROPHECY No.56.Ch.10.17-18.EXPOSITION.Translation.

The first verse is a fragment of some summons to the beleaguered city of Jerusalem, but it consists of no more than the opening verse. Curiously, though poetic, this verse is linked to a verse of prose, which however continues the sense most admirably and probably synopsis the content of the prophet's message. It can hardly have been written or even dictated by Jeremiah, for he would surely have given his own poetic version. If we compare Jer.29.13 and Deut 4.29. it seems feasible that the text of ~~1836~~ is quite sound as it stands.

The nation, now besieged in the capital, is called upon to gather its bundle of earthly belongings together, and make ready to depart from Palestine, for **Hehovah** has determined to hurl them from the land. Not only exile awaits them, however, but also trouble and ~~dist~~ distress, for only by chastisement can the nation find God. And it is quite true that suffering may be the road to God.

THE NATION STRICKEN: THE LEADERS POWERLESS.PROPHECY NO. 57.Ch. 10. 19-21(22).TRANSLATION.

Woe is me! I am broken,
 Sick of my wound.
 And I said,
 Yes, let me bear my sickness.
 My tent is plundered,
 And all my tent-ropes are snapped,
 And my flocks are no more;
 No one to re-pitch my tent,
 Or hang up my curtains,
 For stunned are the shepherds,
 And Jehovah they seek not.
 Thus are they powerless;
 All their flock is dispersed.

Hark! A sound! Behold, it approaches,
 A rattle loud from the land of the North,
 To make of Judah a desert,
 The home of the jackal.

Prophecy. No. 54.

Ch. 10. 19 - 21 (22).

Text.

אֹי לִי עַל־שִׁבְרִי

נְחֻלָּה מִבְּתִי

וְאֲנִי אִמְרֵתִי

אֶךְ זָהָה וְאֵשׁ אֲנִי!

אֶהְיֶה שֹׁדֵד

וְכָל־שִׁבְרֵי נַקְדִּי

וְיֹצְאֵנִי אֵינֶם²

אֵין נִשְׁמָה עוֹד אֶהְיֶה

וְיִמְקִימֵה רִיעוֹתַי

כִּי נִבְצְרוּ הָרְעִים

וְאֵת־יְהוָה לֹא דָרְשׁוּ

עַל־כֵּן לֹא־הִשְׁכִּילוּ

כָּל־מַרְעִיתֶם נִפְוָצָה!³

קוֹל שְׁמוֹנָצְה הִנֵּה בָּאָה

וְרִצְוֹתָ גְדוֹל מֵאַרְץ צָפוֹן

לְשׁוֹמֵם⁴ יְהוּדָה שְׁמֵמָה

מִצִּיּוֹן גְּנִיבָה!

¹ Syriac Version, Vulgate etc read this part חלל. So Rotherham.

² Septuagint of Latin read this part וְאֵשׁ אֲנִי. So Rotherham

³ Omit var. with Rotherham.

⁴ Omit אֵשׁ אֲנִי as a prose addition.

PROPHECY No.57.Ch.10.19-21.(22).EXPOSITION.

It is possible that the last verse of this piece belongs to another prophecy, since the nation is depicted as already ruined. But this last verse at the same time yields a deeper meaning to the whole if we retain it. The first blows of the enemy have been struck at Palestine; the nations reels and staggers under them, but retains enough courage to sustain them. No sooner, however does she ~~determine~~ to hold out than the rattle of the chariots falls upon her ears and the army from the North is at hand ~~to~~ completely devastate the land. The rattle is the rattle of an army(Cf. Jer.47.3 and Nahum 3.2.).

The nation is sickening of the wound of invasion, the homes are levelled, the flocks gone. A people with resource might have pitched their tents again and ~~hanged~~ up the curtains, but the leaders are stupefied. Every measure they take meets with failure. The real point, however, is that they are not depending on Jehovah, and because of this their confidence and resource, both physical and moral, are gone. If they really sought God, they would feel his strength behind them and take courageous and adequate remedies. Without God they are stunned and unnerved, while the rank and file of the nation is ~~hurled~~ to exile.
carried

MEN NEED JEHOVAH'S GUIDANCE.PROPHECY No. 58.Ch.10.23-24(25).EXPOSITION.

The last verse, asking for God's wrath on the nations, is clearly a later gloss, quite out of the spirit of Jeremiah, and with no real connection with either preceding or succeeding verses.

The piece hangs well together as a confession by the nation that it is powerless to do the right thing, and as a recognition of the essential justice of God's chastisement. The impotence of man comes, not so much from Jehovah's overpowering might as from the weak will of human beings. Mankind needs correction from God, and while it may be sore and painful, it is necessary and helpful.

The use of the first person singular is the prophet's poetic way of speaking of the nation and for the nation. The best instincts and feelings of the people, come, as it were, to expression in his words.

NATIONAL DISASTER WILL FOLLOW THE BREAKING OF
THE EGYPTIAN COVENANT.

PROPHECY No.59.

Ch.11.1-12(13-14).

Prose.

This prose piece is generally cited to prove that Jeremiah had a connection with the Deuteronomic Reformation of 622 B.C., the assumption being that the "covenant" referred to here is the "Book of the Covenant" referred to in 11.Kings 23.2. Some scholars even assert that the prophet may have gone round Judah advocating the Reform of Josiah.

It is necessary to note however that Jeremiah makes no reference to any book at all, and on the contrary uses the word for "covenant" several times without any reference to any reform, as at 31.16, 14.21, 22.9. 32.40. Indeed, a study of 11 Kings 23 reveals the interesting fact that the covenant there mentioned is not the Egyptian Covenant at all, but the one made by Josiah at the pillar in the Temple. The covenant, therefore, referred to by Jeremiah and that by 11.Kings 23.2 are two quite different things.

If, as is likely, the prophet was called not in 626 B.C. but in 616, then the Reform was an old affair in the public life of the people, and had no doubt passed out of memory. Nor must we forget that Jeremiah had a living message of his own, which permitted little room for second-hand revelations.

It looks as if the piece ~~was~~ composed of phrases from the Deuteronomic school of writers, with here and there a reminiscence of the prophet's words, as in verse 13, where we seem to have 2.28 dressed up in a prose form. The conception of the covenant can be found full blown in Jer. 2.2. We have then nothing new here, but only poetical material done into prose.

The message, addressed to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, denounces those who have broken the old

PROPHECY No. 59.EXPOSITION.

2.

covenant made in Egypt between God and Israel. Jehovah had kept His promise to give them a land flowing with milk and honey. Jeremiah is then commanded to proclaim this same ancient covenant again throughout the land, and in doing this he is continuing the work of Jehovah, which has been going on since the Egyptian captivity, for God has constantly been requiring obedience, presumably through his prophets. But the nation paid no heed. Specifically, the nation is following other gods than Jehovah, thus breaking its agreement with its own God. God means to punish them by sending disaster on them, and then they will see how useless these gods are to them. Not that they have not enough of these useless gods: they have as many gods as cities, as many altars as streets.

TEMPLE GIFTS CANNOT SAVE FROM DOOM.PROPHECY No.60.Ch.11.15-17A.TRANSLATION.

Why is my Love in my House?
She has done such wrong!
Can vows and holy flesh
Avert thy retribution,
Or can ye by these escape
At the call of tumult tremendous?

An olive fresh and fruitful,
Jehovah called thee by name.
He has lit a fire against it;
Burned are its branches,
And Jehovah that planted thyself
Has decreed against thee disaster.

Prophecy. No 60.

Ch. 11. 15-14A.

Text:

1A. מִהַ ¹יְדִידָתִי ²גְּבִיתִי
 לְעֶשְׂתָּה ³מִזְמָה
 הַנְּדָרִים ⁴וּבִשְׂרֵי קֹדֶשׁ
 יַעֲבִירִי ⁵מִצְלִיךְ רַצְתִּיךָ
 אֹו בְּאֵלֶּה ⁶תְּצוּנִי
 לְקוֹל הַמִּלְלָה ⁷גְּדוּלָהּ
 זֵית רַעֲנָן ⁸יִפֶּה פְרִי
 קָרָא יְהוָה ⁹שִׁמְךָ
 הַצִּית אֵשׁ ¹⁰עָלַי
 בְּצַרוֹת ¹¹דְּלוֹתַי
 וַיְהוֶה ¹²הַנּוֹשֵׁץ אֹתְךָ
 דִּבֶּר עָלֶיךָ ¹³רַעַה

1A. LXX reads for יְדִידָתִי? Reconstruction by Prof. W.B. Stevenson. of verse 15.

- 1. R. this for צִיִּיִּתָּה with LXX, Syriac.
- 2. מִזְמָה מִזְמָה הַזֶּה with LXX Syriac.
- 3. מִזְמָה מִזְמָה with LXX.
- 4. Vrs read מִצְלִיךְ
- 5. Omit יִפֶּה with Latin & LXX, read יִפֶּה רַעֲנָן with Vulgate, Latin & LXX.
- 6. So reads LXX.
- 7. Transpose from 16 B.
- 8. Omit רַעֲנָן with LXX.
- 9. Better reading than עָלַיךְ So LXX & Rotherstein
- 10. LXX Vulgate so read. So Rotherstein
- 11. R. Masoretic ending. Omit
- 12. Omit מִצְמָה with LXX.

1A-7.

PROPHECY No.60.Ch.11.15-17A.EXPOSITION.

With the aid of the Septuagint the clear sense of this piece becomes apparent. Jeremiah joins hands with Micah(6.7) and Isaiah(1.12) in protesting against the insincere worship of the House of Jehovah. After following their own selfish desires and secret plans, the worshippers come with gifts to the altar, hoping by these to placate Jehovah. The true Jeremianic touch- distinct from preceding prophets- is seen in the endearing term "My Love". Sadness and not irony is suggested by it. Cf. 12.7. e/

The theme changes to the symbolism of an olive tree, fresh and fair, which, though blossoming and beautiful when planted, the Great Planter is compelled to burn down. Perhaps burning suggests that mere cutting was not enough, but like a bush infected with disease, the whole tree had to be burned into ashes. He who planted the tree has the right to burn it, but to Him the task must be so much the sadder.

PLOTS AGAINST THE PROPHET'S LIFE.PROPHECY No.61.Ch.11.18-20.TRANSLATION.

Jehovah told me and so I knew;
 Then I saw through their actions:
 But I like an innocent lamb
 Was led on for killing.
 Against me they plotted plots;
 "Fell the tree in its prime!
 "Cut him off from the land of living!
 "That his name be recalled no more!"

But Jehovah who judges aright,
 Who tries the feelings and thoughts,
 Let me see thy vengeance on them,
 For to ~~them~~ have I shewn my case.

Prophecy No. 61.

Ch. 11. 18-20.

Text.

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִצְחָק וְאֶרְצָה ^{2-A}

אֲזַי אֶרְאֶתָּם מֵעַל לֵיהֶם ¹⁸

וְאֲנִי כִכְבֹּשׁ אֶלְוִיָּהּ

יִבְלֶה לְזַבְחֵי

צִלֵּי חֲטָאֵי מִחֲטָבוֹת

כִּי־יִתֵּן עֵץ בְּלַחֹ ²

וְנִכְרְתוּ־מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים

וְשָׂמוּ לֹא־יִזְכֵּר צוּרִי

וַיְהִי־טִפֹּס ³ צֶדֶק

בְּחֹן כְּלֵוֹת וּלְבַ

אֶרְאֶה נִקְמָתָךְ מִהֶם

כִּי־אֶלְפָּךְ גָּלִיתִי אֶת־רִיבִי

18 So LXX Latin. So Rothstein

19 LXX Latin. Syria omit!

2 Omit כי ולא ידעתי כי with LXX Latin.

3 Gives better sense than בלחום. So Cornill.

4 Omit ויאזכר with LXX

PROPHECY No.61.Ch.11.18-20.EXPOSITION.

This is like a leaf from the autobiography of the prophet, and carries its genuineness on its face. It deals with no national issue, but ~~with~~ a purely personal conflict in the life of Jeremiah. It is obvious that the delivering of the message of Jehovah has raised up ~~a~~ ~~lot of~~ enemies against the prophet, who lay plans to ambush him and take his life. The simple-hearted prophet never suspected any danger, and was amazed and grateful when the plot came to his ears. It is significant that he gives Jehovah the glory of revealing the secret to him, although this does not preclude an ordinary human agency, such as some friend at court.

The close living contact of Jeremiah with his God is revealed in the understanding that existed between the mind and motives of the prophet and the righteous nature of God. He has already made a clean breast of everything to Jehovah, and is willing to abide by His judgement. All the prophet has declaimed has been for the sake of his God. His one motive has been the glory of Jehovah, and now when that Word of Jehovah has stirred up enemies, it is for Jehovah to defend his servant. Thus the prophet finds refuge in his God.

To call down vengeance on His foes may appear small-minded and weak, but we have to remember that his ~~age~~ was cruel and unscrupulous, and in addition he was a prophet not by choice but by the compelling spirit of Jehovah, whose business it was to justify his message and his prophet.

RETRIBUTION SHALL COME ON MEN OF ANATHOTH.PROPHECY No.62.Ch.11. 20-23.EXPOSITION.

The men of Anathoth had evidently not only laid a subtle plot for Jeremiah, but had also told him frankly to abandon his prophesying, or else they would take his life. It is clear that the experience had affected the prophet deeply. It is dangerous to silence the word of God, however, and Jehovah himself comforts Jeremiah by assuring him that He means to punish the people of Anathoth. The young and active men shall die in battle, and the rest shall die of starvation. Total extinction shall be the lot of the village. This message or revelation, coming with all the force of the prophet's prestige, must have had a profound effect.

The year of their punishment came in due course, with all the inevitability of law, and even in the pages of the Book of Jeremiah (Ch.32) we can hear the trampling of the invaders' feet in the village street of Anathoth. The prophecy was grimly fulfilled in 586 B.C.

The fact that this prophecy is couched in terms of prose and not poetry, and yet is so obviously genuine and to the point, increases confidence in the prose sections as prose. At the same time, this does not mean that Jeremiah himself wrote the prose, although he may have. It is clear from the Septuagint that this piece has been re-touched by later editors, but the core of the prophecy is sound.

JEREMIAH APPEALS TO THE JUSTICE OF GOD.PROPHECY No.64.Ch.12.1-3.TRANSLATION.

Impartial art Thou, O Jehovah,
 When I make my appeal unto Thee.
 Yet cases there are I dispute with Thee;
 Why do the ways of the wicked succeed?
 Untroubled are all the treacherous traitors.
 You plant them, yes, ~~and~~ they take root,
 They seed, yes, they bring ^{forth} fruit.
 Often art Thou in their mouths,
 But far from their feelings.

But thou, O Jehovah, dost know me,
 Thou hast proved my heart is with Thee.

Drag them off like sheep for slaughter,
 Set aside for the day of their slaying.

Prophecy No. 63.

Ch. 12. 1-3.

Text.

צִיִּיק אֶתְהּ יְהוֹה

כִּי אָרִיב אֵלַיךְ

אֶךְ מִשְׁפָּעִים אֲדַבֵּר אֹתְךָ

מִדְּוַע דְּרַךְ רְשָׁעִים צִלְחָה

שְׁלוֹ כֹל־בְּרִי בְּרִי :

יִצְעַקְתָּ גַם שְׂרָשׁוֹ

יִלְדוּ גַם־צִשׁוֹ פְּרִי

קָרוֹב אֶתְהּ בְּפִיהֶם

וְרָחֹק מִכְּלוֹתֵיהֶם :

וְאֶתְהּ יְהוֹה יִדְעַנִּי²

בְּחֹנֶה לְבִי אֶתְךָ³

הַתִּקֶּה כִּצְאֵן לְמִבְּחָה

וְהִקְרַנְיִים לְיוֹם הַרְגָתָם⁴

¹ Latin LXX-manuscript. הוֹלִיבֵנו. ἐπιμαρτυροῦσθε. Rottstein suggests

² Omit with LXX.

³ Omit ! with LXX

⁴ Read 3rd plural suffix with LXX.

PROPHECY No. 64.Ch. 12. 1-3.EXPOSITION.

This is an intimate monologue of the prophet, addressed to his God, which reveals the serious religious doubts that gnawed like a worm at the heart of his faith. He begins from the belief that God is absolutely just and impartial, but he cannot reconcile this with instances of wicked men achieving success in the world. God gives them their position in life, and they thrive in it, using the name of Jehovah frequently, but actually they are out of touch with Him. The wicked, it should be observed, are not people beyond the pale of religion. God planted them, and they use His name. For this reason they cannot be the men of Anathoth, but are most probably the false prophets, who were recognised as of divine origin and as speaking in the name of Jehovah.

In contrast with these, the prophet knows that he is in the closest understanding with his God, since He has proved him time and again, and each time Jeremiah has been utterly loyal.

Little wonder that he feels the only option for God is to exterminate such hypocrites, and he prays God to deal with them as the butcher deals with the sheep. Just as the prophets imagined themselves as "set aside" for their peculiar function, so Jehovah will set them aside alright-but for slaughter.

A CRY FOR BETTER TIMES.

PROPHECY No.64.

Ch.12.4.

TRANSLATION.

How long will the land languish?
And every herb of the field dry up?
Through the wrong of its dwellers,
Swept off is beast and bird,
For they say,
He heeds not our ways.

Prophecy. No. 64.

Ch. 12. 4.

Text:

צֶדֶד־מֵתִי תֵאבֵל הָאָרֶץ

וְכֹל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה יִיבֹשׁ

מֵרֶצֶת יֹשְׁבֵי־בָהּ

סִפְתָּהּ בְּהֵמָה וְצֹרֶן

כִּי אָמְרוּ

לֹא יִרְאֶה אֲרֻחֹתֵינוּ³ :

1. LXX reads τὸς ὁ κοκκῶς τῶν ἀγρῶν. Better than וְכֹל־הַשָּׂדֶה.
2. Syriac, Peshitta, Vulgate read singulars for מֵ.י. plural. So Rothstein.
3. LXX Latin reads instead ἀρχαῖα. So Rothstein.

PROPHECY No. 64.Ch.12.4.EXPOSITION.

It is clear that drought has afflicted the whole country, bringing with its terrible toll of suffering, and the heart of the prophet is urged to make an appeal for the cessation of the drought. He was no doubt echoing the words of everyone in city and country, when he said this.

But the drought does not puzzle him. It has its explanation in the inherent wickedness of the people themselves. They imagine that Jehovah is indifferent to whether they are good or bad. The weather they think will never fail. Now they ought to see that Jehovah does care about their mode of life, and sends the drought to correct them.

The prophet's philosophy is adequate for each tragic event, and from each he draws his unwavering and unchanging moral.

Prophecy No. 65:

Ch. 12. 5:

Text:

אֶת־רַגְלֵי־מִרְצָה וְלֹא־אֵץ

אֵץ גַּתְחַרָּה אֶת־הַסּוּסִים

וּבֶאֱרַץ שָׁלוֹם³ לֹא־תִבְטַח³

אֵץ תַּעֲשֶׂה בְּרֵאשׁוֹן הַיְרֵדָן !

1. Omit כִּי with LXX.

2. Omit ! with LXX.

3. LXX οὐ βεβαιώσεται : better than בְּרֵאשׁוֹן. S. Rothstein.

PROPHECY NO.65.Ch.12.5.EXPOSITION.

This is undoubtedly a divine answer to the queries of the prophet, and indeed it offers him little comfort, if comfort he sought from his God. It is rather a summons to the prophet to brace himself for still worse and more trying conditions than he has yet known. Jehovah knew his man, for Jeremiah was certainly the type of man who can go a long way after he is tired. It would never do for the prophet to be timid and afraid in a perfectly safe and secure country, for how then could he face the dangers from wild beast and robber which awaits the traveller in the thick undergrowth of the Jordan valley?

What was the query of the prophet? It may have arisen from the state of drought, or the approach of the invader, or the attacks of his ~~enemies~~ personal enemies, or from all three. We have no grounds for attaching it to any one to the exclusion of the others.

A WARNING AGAINST THE PROPHET'S FAMILY.

PROPHECY No.66.

Ch.12.6.

TRANSLATION.

Even thy brothers and thy home,
Even they have deceived thee,
Even they cried after thee loudly.
No faith put in them,
Though they utter fine words to thee.

Prophecy No. 66

Ch. 12. 6.

Yest.

כִּי גַם-אֲחֵי וּבֵית-אֲבִיךָ

גַּם-הָיְתָה בְּגֵרֹוּ בְּךָ

גַּם-הָיְתָה קְרָאוּ אַחֲרֶיךָ מֵלֵא

אֶל-מֵאֵן בְּךָ

כִּי יִדְבְּרוּ אֵלֶיךָ מִבֹּת:

PROPHECY No.66.Ch.12.6.EXPOSITION.

This is the actual revelation, given by Jehovah, referred to in Ch.11.v.18, and is a warning to the prophet to put no trust in the promises of his family at Anathoth. They were the ones who raised the hue and cry after the prophet, although they ~~xxx~~ spoke as friends to his face. Like Jesus, Jeremiah found his blood relatives an offence and a stumbling-block.

It is clear that the prophet had been putting his faith in his brethren, relying no doubt on the blood-relationship and in their fine words. It was a severe shock to him, when it dawned upon his mind that even his own flesh and blood were willing to see him despatched, presumably by the men of Anathoth.

JEHOVAH RENOUNCES HIS PEOPLE.PROPHECY No.67.Ch.12. 7113.TRANSLATION.

I have given up My House,
 I have cast off My Own,
 I have placed the Loved of My Soul
 In the hand of her foes.

My Own has become
 As a lion in lair,
 She has raised against Me her voice,
 Therefore, I loathe her.

Is My Own a bird that is spotted?
 With birds that prey all round?

Go, gather each beast of the field,
 Bring them in to devour.
 Shepherds in number have ruined My Vine,
 Have trampled My Plot,
 They have made the place of My Joy
 A wild desolation,
 They made it a waste,
 It mourns all round me,
 All wasted the land,
 And no man takes it to heart,

On every height of the wilds,
 Arrive the plunderers,
 For Jehovah's Sword is devouring
 From end to end of the land,
 No peace for mankind.
 Wheat have they sown,
 But thorns have they reaped,
 Their plots have miscarried,

PROPHECY No.67.

Ch.12.7-13.

TRANSLATION.

2.

They blush at their outcome-
Hot wrath of Jehovah!

Prophecy No. 64

Lev. 12. 4-13.

Text.

עֲזַבְתִּי אֶת־בֵּיתִי

כַּמִּשְׁתִּי אֶת־נַחְלָתִי

נָתַתְתִּי אֶת־יְדֵיךָ נַפְשִׁי

בְּכַף אֵיבִיךָ ;

הִתְהַלַּחְתִּי לִי נַחְלָתִי

כְּאֵרֶיךָ בְּיַצֵּר

נִתְּנָה עָלַי קְוֹלָה

עַל־כֵּן שִׁנְאַתִּיךָ ;

הַיֵּשׁ צָבוּעַ נַחְלָתִי לִי

הַיֵּשׁ סָבִיב עָלַי

לִכְוֹ אֶסְפוּ פְלִתֵיךָ הַשָּׂדֶה

~~לִכְוֹ אֶסְפוּ כָל~~

הַתִּיבִי לֶאֱכֹלָה ;

רַעִים רַבִּים שִׁמְתוּ כְרָמִי

בְּסִסּוֹ אֶת־חִלְקָתִי

כִּתְנוּ אֶת־חִלְקָתְךָ חֲמֹדֵי

לְמַדְבַּר שְׂמֵמָה !

Prophecy. No. 67.

Ch. 12. 4-13.

Sept.

2.

שמה לשמה
שמה לשמה

אבלה עלי
אבלה עלי

כשמה כל-הארץ
כשמה כל-הארץ

ואין איש שם על-לב:

על-כל-שפיה במדבר

באו שדרים

כי חרב ליהוה אכלה

מקצה-ארץ וצד-קצה הארץ

אין שלום לכל-בשר:

זרצו חמים וקצים קצרו

נחלתם לא יעלו

ובטו מקבואת-ים

מחרון אף-יהוה:

3. 'And' is redundant, probably due to a copyist's error.
4. Better than 'כי'.
5. LXX reads 'כי' = 'כי'.
6. Better reading than 'כי'.

PROPHECY No.67.Ch.12.7-13.EXPOSITION.

Speaking for his God, the prophet declares that Jehovah has abandoned his covenant people, and rejected the nation with which He has identified Himself. This people, so dear to Him, He has handed over to the power of the enemy. Jehovah, who for so long has stood between them and their foes, defends them no longer. The reason is obvious. The nation has gone wild, and thrown off all restraint. like a lion in the jungle, and God's great love has turned to hatred and loathing.

The result of God's giving up of His people, is that like a strange bird among a flight of birds of prey, she will be devoured by the surrounding peoples. It behoves her to gather in the sheep and oxen into the cities for food for the beleaguered citizens. The shepherds refers most probably to the captains or leaders of the invading forces, and these have levelled the vineyards and turned a delightful spot into a waste. No wonder it grieves the heart of Jehovah.

The last two verses are Jeremiah's own message, for Jehovah is mentioned in the third person. The invading forces can be seen on the top of the ridges of the hilly country, and they devour the whole produce of the land and harry the population. And yet they are but wielding the sword of Jehovah, who in this way is punishing the nation. The fine crops they sowed yielded them nothing at all, and well may they be ashamed. All these things evidence the fact that Jehovah is angry with them.

The invasion of 597 B.C. is the only background against which we can place this piece with any degree of confidence. The Temple it will be remembered(My House) was robbed of all its fine vessels at that time(11 Kings 24.13.), which were taken to Babylon.

2.

To the mind of Jeremiah it was clear that the Babylonians could not possibly have stripped the House of Jehovah bare, unless Jehovah had first of all abandoned it.

The last verse gives colour to the suggestion that the Babylonians appeared in Judah between the time of sowing and reaping in the year 597 B.C.

...this is a threat directed against the small
 surrounding population of Judah, and
 also, after the capture of the nation had been
 taken into exile, might be referred in the

A THREAT TO THOSE WHO MEDDLE WITH ISRAEL.PROPHECY No.68.Ch.12.14-17.EXPOSITION.

This is a threat directed against the small surrounding peoples that flanked Judah, and who, after the cream of the nation had been taken into exile, might interfere in the affairs of the depleted land. It promises that if these nations, presumably the Moabites and Ammonites and others, follow Jehovah they shall be incorporated in the true Judah, but if not they shall lose their land like the exiles of Judah.

The piece has an exilic flavour about it, and the lip-service it requires is hardly consonant with Jeremiah's lofty and ethical ideas.

THE MEANING OF THE SOILED GIRDLE.PROPHECY No.69.Ch.13. 1-11.EXPOSITION.

This section records in prose the experience of the prophet, in which Jehovah instructs him to carry out a symbolic action. This consists of wearing a loin-cloth, unsoaked in water, and after wearing it for a time taking it to a place called Parah, where it was to be hidden in the nook of a rock. This the prophet does, but later when he returns for it, according to the word of Jehovah, he finds the cloth ruined. The meaning is that Israel was intended to be as close to Jehovah as a loin-cloth to a man, but the nation fell away, and so would be ruined like the cloth.

The "Parah" can hardly mean the Euphrates, as being beyond the reach of the prophet, but was perhaps a local spot near Anathoth. It carries the suggestion, however, that Israel would one day be taken to Babylon, with consequent contamination.

The experience would fall on a time before the Fall of Jerusalem, although it may have been edited into its present form.

THE WINE OF GOD'S WRATH.PROPHECY NO.70.Ch.13.12-14.EXPOSITION.

This piece, in prose, portrays the prophet as instructed to declaim that each earthen jar is to be filled with wine. If this appears a platitude, however, to the people- a thing they know already- Jeremiah is to point out its deeper implications, namely that each jar is really not a jar but an Hebrew, who will be filled with the wine of God's wrath till he reels and staggers, for Jehovah is determined to disperse the whole nation till it is destroyed.

The prophet was fond of taking a proverbial saying from the lips of the people and relating it to his message, as in 31.29 and 4.3., and it is more than likely that here also he takes a catch-word of the people and makes it serve his bigger purpose.

The idea of the wine of God's wrath is clearly expressed in 25.15, where it relates to the nations beyond Judah.

AN APPEAL BEFORE THE NIGHT OF DISASTER.PROPHECY No.71.Ch.13. 15-16.TRANSLATION.

Hear, and pay heed, nor be vain,
For Jehovah hath spoken,
Give to Jehovah your God the glory,
Before it turns dark,
And before your feet go stumbling
On twilight hills,
And ye long for a light,
That He changes to gloom,
And turns into darkness.

Prophecy. No. 41.

Ch. 13. 15-16.

Text.

שִׁמְעוּ וְהֶאֱזִינוּ אֶל-גְּבוּהוֹ

כִּי יְהוֹה הַרְבֵּר

גְּבוּ לַיהוֹה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד

גִּמְרֵם יִחַשְׁן

וּגְמֵרֵם יתְנַגְּפוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם

צַל-הַרִי נִשְׁתָּן

וּקְרִיתֶם לְאוֹר

וְשָׂמֶם לְצַלְמוֹת

2. וְנִמִּית לְצַרְפֵּל ;

1. Add ! with Syriac + LXX.

2. LXX reads και Τεθροσται: better than יִמִּית S. Rotherlein

PROPHECY No.71.Ch.13. 15-16.EXPOSITION.

This is a plea for God, made by the prophet direct to the hearts of his countrymen, and it is all the more pathetic and powerful, because while he is asking them to render obedience to Jehovah, he sees clearly the night descending on his nation, and the scattered remnants of his people, crouching in hiding on the cold dark hills of Judea. As they go they slip and stumble, and long for the day to come to see their way, but no day dawns, for God has turned the very light to darkness. It is a terrible picture, so terrible that we can almost hear the heart of Jeremiah breaking at the prospect.

The poetic flair that appears again and again in Jeremiah gives here an awesome and uncanny tone to his tender appeal.

A LAMENT FOR THE EXILES.PROPHECY NO.72.Ch. 13.17.TRANSLATION.

And if ye should pay no heed,
In hiding your soul shall bewail,
Caused by vainglory,
And drenched be your eyes with tears,
For the flock of Jehovah is captive.

Prophecy. No. 42.

Ch. 13. v 14.

Text.

וְאֵם לֹא תִטְמַעְוּהָ

בְּמִסְתָּרִים תִּבְכֶּה - נִפְשֵׁיכֶם

מִפְּנֵי גֹהַ

וְתִרְדְּנָה ² צִיֵּיכֶם ⁴ הַמָּצִיחַ

כִּי נִטְבָּה צֶדֶק יְהוָה :

1. Instead of נִפְשֵׁיכֶם : So LXX, Latin, + Aquila. So Rottstein.

2. Omitt here וְצִיֵּיכֶם הַמָּצִיחַ with LXX.

3. Instead of וְתִרְדְּנָה : So LXX, Symmachus, Syriac. So Rottstein

4. Instead of צִיֵּיכֶם : So LXX. So Rottstein.

PROPHECY NO.72.Ch. 13.7.EXPOSITION.

If the nation continues to make light of Jehovah and disregard His message, it will be driven to take refuge in the hills, and while there in hiding-places, it will weep and wail for the rest of the nation, which by that time will have been captured and carried captive to Babylon. All this tragedy will have been caused by the presumption and high-mindedness, which refused to return to Jehovah.

The piece may quite well be placed alongside 13.15-16, which it helps to complete. The reference to "hills of twilight" suggests that the secret hiding-places belongs to the same historical background. A military enemy, clearly, is envisaged by the prophet, and one with sufficient striking power to shatter the nation. The invasion of the Babylonians in 597 B.C. is the most likely occasion of the prophecy.

A SYSTEMATIC VIEW
OF
THE TEACHING OF JEREMIAH.

A SYSTEMATIC VIEW OF THE TEACHING OF JEREMIAH.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

God was the fundamental fact for all the prophets, and round Him centred all their thought and activity. The moral truths which they successively pressed home to their countrymen evolved naturally out of their conceptions and experiences of God. Their social teaching was based not upon the findings of reason, nor upon a system of philosophy; still less upon an analysis of human instincts and desires, but upon a definite and clear-cut conception of God. Jeremiah was not different from the rest of the prophets in this respect; indeed there is abundant evidence that he accepted fully the main ideas of the higher prophecy, particularly as expressed by Hosea, and his God was the same moral potentate that Amos and Isaiah had declared.

It is remarkable that there is no record of any prophet before the Exile preaching the idea of God as the Creator of the world. God had been conceived, of course, as the Sender of Rain in the early half of the eighth century (1), but this is a far cry from the noble conception of the Creator of the world. On the other hand,

1. AMOS, Ch.4.v.7.

the great prophet of the Exile amply illustrates this dogma, (1), in all its impressiveness, and it is probably fair to say that ^{this} large intellectual conception was beyond the mental reach of the pre-exilic Hebrews. Jeremiah seems to touch the highest point of intellectual power in pre-exilic thinking when he declares that Jehovah controls the elements of nature (2), and while the prophet did not attempt to trace back the world to the creating hand of God, he achieved a signal advance in seeing that all nature is subject to His will. He is thus within measurable distance of the doctrine of God as Creator, but he never quite reached it.

And yet it can be said with truth that the prophet did assume the Transcendence of Jehovah, for he ascribes to Him not only the ordering of individual human lives (3), but also the guiding of the destinies of whole nations (4). The break-up of the political world and the rise of Babylon after the Fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. were ascribed to Jehovah's influence. (5) God, therefore, transcends human powers and decides the fate of nations. This transcendence, however, is seen most clearly in the protection and blessings enjoyed by Israel as a nation, since its Captivity in Egypt, for it was their God Jehovah who shielded them from the perils of the Desert (6), after He had led them out of bondage (7). Not a human power, but the transcendent Jehovah alone had achieved this for them. The unbearable and overpowering

1. Isaiah, Ch.40.v.28.
2. Jeremiah.Ch.5.v.25.,Ch.10.vv.8-10.
3. Jer.Ch.1.v.5.
4. Jer.Ch.2.v.2.
5. Jer.Ch.1.v.15. Ch.3.v.15.
6. Jer.Ch.2.v.2.
7. Jer.Ch.2.6.,Ch.23.v.7.

nature of this transcendence is felt by the prophet when he receives his messages from Jehovah, for at these times contact with the Divine becomes almost unendurable.(1)

God, however, while above history in the prophetic thought and particularly so in the mind of Jeremiah, is not by any means separated from His world. Indeed, His supreme power is most clearly seen when He breaks into the historic process, as in the Deliverance from Egypt (2), and the destruction of Shiloh (~~3~~), and His action on the world of human affairs is designed to express His care for the people of Israel and His continued loyalty to the early vow of mutual devotion (4). While Jeremiah leaves no room for an Immanent God-at least in the sense of a spirit that comes to self-consciousness in the longings and strivings of men-for in his most intense moments Jehovah is always the Great Other (5), yet Jehovah was the Sender of the great succession of prophets, who revealed His message generation after generation to the people of Israel(6). These prophets were the points of contact between the transcendent Jehovah and the plane of human affairs. It needs, further, to be emphasised that no action on the part of the prophet could by itself secure the Divine message. It was purely on the initiative of Jehovah that Israel learned the will of its God. It is always "The Word of the Lord came to me..". (7). God on His own takes action. The prophet, indeed, is only too keenly conscious of human

1. Jeremiah, Ch.17.v.17, Ch.23.v.9.
2. Jer. Ch.2.v.6.
3. Jer. Ch.7.v.12.
4. Jer. Ch.2.v.5,v.8.,v.20.
5. Jer. Ch.17.v.17.
6. Jer. Ch.7.v.25.
7. Jer. Ch.1.v.4.,v.11.

impotence before the power of Jehovah (1), and he recognises that even the prophets were but mere spokesmen of the Omnipotent Divinity.

And yet, transcendent as Jehovah is to the mind of Jeremiah, he, like all his race, looked upon God as essentially a Person. Indeed, Jehovah was His personal and distinguishing name, and all the attributes of personality were assigned to Him. Jehovah was able to remember (2), to hear (3), to speak (4); He could be angry (5) and could harbour vengeance (6). Indeed, there were moments of high tension in the soul of the prophet when it seemed that God had strangely misguided not only the prophet but also the people (7). It may be thought an extreme anthropomorphism to ascribe deception to God, and yet the prophet seems to have felt no inconsistency in holding both to the Omnipotent and the Personal Jehovah. He was mighty and Terrible just in the specifically human traits, nor is it easy to see how the limited human mind can ever conceive the Divine in other but human terms. The right and the wrong of anthropomorphism is only a question of degree. In holding to the personality of Jehovah, therefore, the prophet was on surer ground than he suspected; so sure indeed was the ground that he was able to build on it a solid moral and spiritual religion.

The personality of Jehovah being

1. Jeremiah, Ch.23.v.24.
2. Jer. Ch.2.2.
3. Jer. Ch.7.v.16.
4. Jer. Ch.7.v.13.
5. Jer. Ch.4.v.8.
6. Jer. Ch.5.v.9. and Ch.9.v.9.
7. Jer. Ch.4.v.10 and Ch.20.v.7.

once posited, the prophets quickly and easily arrived at the moral character of their God. Just as Jeremiah ran out vengeance far beyond human limits, thus endowing God with revenge, so also he found in Jehovah the perfect moral ideal of man. In justice and righteousness He was transcendantly great. Fraud and oppression, immorality and double-dealing He abhorred and punished (1), and all forms of insincerity and overreaching He denounced (2). Here, indeed, we touch the central nerve and the final value of the prophetic theology, for without wasting thought on barren metaphysical problems, the prophets singled out the human virtues, carried them to the Nth power of excellence until these became attributes of the Divine. Jehovah to Jeremiah was the supremely Faithful, the supremely Just and Good One (3). The prophets, therefore, were in the first place particularly keen ethical discerners even before they were prophets, and this explains why, with history and their own moral sense to guide them, they saw that Jehovah could have little or no use for rites and sacrifices (4). It was to them clear as daylight that a Transcendant and Moral God could have no interest in offerings and religious ceremonies, especially when these were divorced from justice and the milk of human kindness.

It should be observed that if Jeremiah's conception of Jehovah hardly coincided with that of the Creator of All, it

1. Jeremiah, Ch.5.v.29.
2. Jer. Ch.8.v.8.
3. Jer. Ch.3.v.19., Ch.5.v.1.
4. Jer., Ch.7.v.22.

also was limited by its nationalism. Israel's God, of course, had been and still was an active Divinity, but He acted essentially for the sake of Israel. True, He was present in Egypt with Moses, but He was there only to lead His people out of Egypt(1). Not that Jehovah is chained unalterably to Israel, because He can bring another nation against it to punish and correct it(2), but His interest is primarily Israel. It was no business of Jeremiah to define Jehovah's interest in other nations, for His mission was necessarily to his own people. He may or may not have believed that Jehovah loved the Babylonians as sincerely as He did the Hebrews, but in the records before us it is clear that his central passion was for Israel and indeed for Israel alone. Indeed, the paradox emerges in the theology of the prophet that Jehovah seemingly possesses the power to guide the destiny of Babylon, and yet He makes Babylon subserve the destiny of Israel. Here we see the prophet's thought breaking its national barriers, but his heart was scarcely large enough to allow Babylon within the charmed circle of His favour. It is clear, then, that in Jeremiah prophetic theology was only on the threshold of that internationalism, which the Book of Jonah was to portray. It required the Exile to usher it into the larger sphere of a world religion.

But Jeremiah's supreme and unique contribution to theology was the experience of God he enjoyed. The personality of Jehovah for him was not merely a dogma in the tradition of the higher prophecy, as it was for Isaiah (3), but it was a vital fact almost every

1. Jeremiah, Ch.2.v.6., Ch.23.v.7.

2. Jer. Ch.8.v.17. etc.

3. Isaiah, Ch.6. vv.1.foll.

day of his life. There are sections of the book so intimate and deep that they have been termed his "Confessions", but they are indeed more than that, for while they record his own inmost thoughts they enshrine also the traffic between his own soul and God.(1) No prophet of the Old Testament enjoyed such a close and personal fellowship with God, and insofar as theology must be built upon the spiritual experience of man, Jeremiah provides the indispensable basis for a real and living religion. It is possible for man to be on the most intimate terms with Jehovah (2), and the idea of the New Covenant (3) is nothing more than the intellectualising of the prophet's deep personal experience of his God. After Jeremiah religion could never again be a crass and external affair, for his intense spiritual contact with God proved that He was in the heart of every man.

1. Jeremiah, Ch.15.vv.10-21.,Ch.20.vv.7-10.
2. Jer.Ch.17.v.9.
3. Jer.Ch.31.v.31.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN.

If Jeremiah's view of God is on the whole a tolerably optimistic one, his view of man is decidedly pessimistic. He, of course, accepts the typically Hebrew conception of man as made up of the breath of life (אֵל), a centre of consciousness termed the heart (לֵב), which may also extend to mean all mental processes, and also the emotions designated as both "reins" and "spirit". It is noteworthy that Jeremiah had singularly little use for the term רֵיחַ, except in the sense of "wind". Man is thus a sentient being, self-conscious and emotional, capable of thinking great thoughts and capable also of harbouring great stubbornness in his mind (1).

Now, in contrast to the great Potter man is the clay that is shaped by His great Hand. Taking his own people as typical of the world, the prophet portrays humankind as completely dependent on God. (2) He has no power or capacity to guide his own conduct; he is certainly anything but "the master of his fate" (3). He is entirely at the mercy of God, and can be moulded into whatever pattern He chooses (4). Men are more or less blind to the inner meanings of the events and occurrences of life, and they require light and knowledge to be revealed to them by the definite act of God. (5) Hence arises

1. Jeremiah, Ch.3.v.17 etc.
2. Jer. Ch.18.1-10.
3. Jer. Ch.10.v.23.
4. Jer. Ch.18.v.1-10.
5. Jer. Ch.1. v.11-12.

the need for revelation, and a revelation by Jehovah to particular and carefully chosen men, who in turn announce the content of the revelation to their fellowmen. Only through the goodness of Jehovah in giving such revelations is the human race guided in the right path.(1) In addition to blindness man suffers from weakness and helplessness,, which renders him incapable of carrying out the Divine will (2), but it is possible for God to re-inforce human personality by His own presence, and indeed to change a timid man into a force of invulnerable strength.(3)

Though man of himself lacks knowledge, fortunately, guidance is afforded and disaster to the nation is averted. Iſrael, for instance could never of itself have found its way across the Desert to the land flowing with milk and honey if Jehovah himself had not guided it(4). More specifically, God appoints prophets, who act as "watchmen" to warn and instruct humanity(5). So long as men are willing to accept the advice of these prophets all goes well with the world, but whenever this advice is scorned and repudiated, nothing but trouble and tragedy ensue.

Human nature, however, is inherently wayward and for ever deserting the valuable guidance revealed by the prophets. It cannot even distinguish between the false prophets, who manufacture their own messages, and the true prophets who deliver God's message. men persist in forgetting the Source of these revelations(6), and they stand convicted of

1. Jeremiah Ch.7.v.13.
2. Jer. Ch.1.v.17, and Ch.15.v.20.
3. Jer. Ch.1.v.18.
4. Jer. Ch.2.v.6.
5. Jer. Ch.6.v.17.
6. Jer. Ch.2. vv.31/32.

self-will(1), injustice(2), and greed(3). Not only are men guilty of abandoning Jehovah and breaking the yoke that tethered them to Him, but they cannot realise that this kind of thing is sin(4). When disaster comes on them as a punishment for sin, they confidently appeal to Jehovah to save them (5), and are blind to the fact that they must first repent of their sins. The punishment has thus no effect on their minds and fails to result in good(6). On the contrary, their hearts grow harder and their minds stiffer(7), and although the prophet makes it plain that not an honest man can be found in the length and breadth of the whole capital(8), they obstinately refuse to repent. A spring never stops putting forth fresh water and men never cease to put forth fresh wickedness. Indeed, it is as difficult for man to change his evil heart and nature as for the leopard to change his spots(9).

This is truly a black picture of man, for it looks as if man were beyond hope of recovery. He is unchangeably and irrevocably wicked. And yet, curiously enough Jeremiah assumes the dogma that threats and warnings can have an effect upon unregenerate hearts. And he is right, for his address in the Temple, in which he threatened Jerusalem with the fate of Shiloh(10), nearly cost him his life. This bludgeon of a threat may not have been the most desirable weapon to use, but it was only one of Jeremiah's methods. Indeed, the predominating note of his teaching is not

1. Jeremiah, Ch.5.v.23.
2. Jer.Ch.5.28.
3. Jer. Ch.6.v.13.
4. Jer. Ch.2.v.22.
5. Jer. Ch.2.vv.26-28.
6. Jer. Ch.2.vv.29-30.
7. Jer. Ch.4.vv.3/4.
8. Jer. Ch.5.v.1.
9. Jer. Ch.13-v.23. 10.Jer. 7.v.15.

that of threats, but is rather that of a sweet persuasion and a winsome appeal. He appeals to their sense of honour, and reminds them of all that Jehovah has done for them, and he shews that God has done nothing to deserve such cavalier treatment from his people(1). With tears and entreaties he pleads with his people to return to the fine old allegiance of Jehovah(2). God may command Jeremiah to cease praying for his people-they are past praying for-but still the prophet believes utterly that the cure for all the national ills is a pure and intimate knowledge of Jehovah(3). This knowledge includes not only an accurate conception of the moral character and moral requirements of God, but also a personal experience and certainty of the Divine(4).

Men will not only respond to such appeals, but they are made of such stuff that when material disasters overtake them they are capable of gaining in character and virtue. This is the deep truth the prophet teaches in his vision of the Figs(5), for he sees that men and women who have known little of life's discipline tend to degenerate, while those who have tasted hardship and even exile gain in worth and moral value. While those who had escaped captivity were congratulating themselves, Jeremiah's doctrine was that the best of the nation were undergoing the bitter trials of Babylon and that it was just these bitter trials that made them the best.

The prophet adheres to the faith that ultimately the nation will see its exceeding sinfulness, and will repent and return to the old loyalty (6). Either God's deliverance of them from Babylon will soften their hearts or else having repented the deliverance will follow- for on this point Jeremiah is not explicit- and so goodness will triumph at last.

1. Jeremiah, Ch. 2. v. 5.

2. Jer. 9. v. 1. 3. Jer. Ch. 9. v. 24. 4. Jer. Ch. 31. v. 31.

5. Jer. Ch. 24. 1-6. 6. Jer. Ch. 31. vv. 18-19.

This repentance and moral recovery will fit man to enjoy a material prosperity as well, and Jeremiah's doctrine of the future of the nation is a bright and confident one, for he sees a prosperous and happy nation arising which will be in perfect accord with its God, the giver of every material as well as spiritual blessing.(1).

But the true gauge of the prophet's doctrine of man is seen in his idea of the New Covenant, for here we see how implicitly he believes in the grandeur of mankind. It is in man, he asserts, to rise into personal touch with the Divine, and just as specially chosen men are meanwhile selected to stand between God and mankind, the day is not far distant when each man shall have the dignity and prerogative of direct and untrammelled intercourse with the Divine. Man as man can and will be lifted above his weakness, stubbornness, sin and folly until he experiences Divine fellowship and lives in a perfect understanding with his God.(2)

1. Jeremiah, Ch.31.v.6.

2. Jer. Ch.31.vv.31-34.

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN.

The assumption that lies underneath much of the prophet's thinking in relation to sin is that in the palmy pristine days of the nation sin was hardly evident at all. The early days were idyllic days of perfect love and loyalty between Jehovah and his people and nothing disturbed their happiness and joy.(1) That harmony was based and built upon a pact that bound Jehovah to Israel as His people and Israel to Jehovah as their God. It is not clear whether this pact or covenant excluded other nations, but it certainly meant that a special bond existed between these two parties to the pledge. This covenant, the conception of which is so fundamental to the religion of the Old Testament, was the only safeguard of Israel's happiness, and it needed no other, for as the character of this Jehovah revealed itself, the pact assumed larger and still larger implications until it related itself to all life spiritually, morally and socially. The singularly solemn feature of this covenant, also, lay in the fact that it was not so much a Divine fiat in the manner for instance of the Rainbow(2) nor a merely legal arrangement, but that it was similar to the marriage pact of the lover and the beloved(3). It was, indeed, a pact of love and affection, which was preserved unbroken in the youth of the Hebrew people.

Now, sin in the eyes of Jeremiah was essentially and primarily the breaking of this

1. Jeremiah, Ch.2.v.3.
2. Genesis, Ch.9.v.13.
3. Jer. Ch.2.v.2.

pact; it was disloyalty to a solemn and sacred vow. It was the falling away from early and holy ideals under various kinds of pressure and influence. The prophet, therefore, is constantly re-iterating the charge that his nation has broken its plighted word to Jehovah and thus committed sin(1). Not only does he press the charge of sin in a general way, but he deals in a full and revealing manner with specific forms of sin.

There is, for instance, the pure forgetfulness of God, or what we should to-day call "irreligion". It was not as if Jehovah remained in their religious life as one among many gods, but they actually have dismissed Him from their minds and their lives. He who is their peculiar pride, their only boast, their richest possession, they have blotted from their memories. As a sash adorns a maiden, so Jehovah adorns and glorifies Israel, and yet Israel has forgotten its glory for untold days(2). It is this utter neglect of the old and tender pact which constitutes in the mind of the prophet the gravity of his people's sin(3). If Jehovah were one on the pantheon of their eclectic faith, His name at anyrate would be remembered but no they have quite deserted and forgotten Him.

But the most obvious and undeniable proof of sin was the public worship of gods other than Jehovah. Insofar as the original pact was an exclusive pact, the inclusion of baals and other divinities in worship was a breach of the covenant, and therefore a sin. He charges the nation, therefore, with changing its god—a thing unheard of among the nations of the world-(4) and he accuses them

1. Jeremiah, Ch.14.10.

2. Jer. Ch.2v.32.

3. Jer.Ch.20.v.27.

4. Jer. Ch.2.v.11.

of wandering after the baals(1), which were most probably the agricultural gods associated with the land in the time of the Canaanites. He also singles out the religion of Moloch as peculiarly objectionable(2), and the snare of the rites of Astarte rouses him to a passionate protest, indeed the last and not the least vehement of his invectives (3). The worship of these false gods may or may not have been sexually immoral in themselves, for the facts hardly allow us to dogmatise on the point; to Jeremiah the sin lay not there, but in the fact that when other gods were acknowledged the pact with Jehovah was automatically broken. Sin was therefore in the first instance apostasy and infidelity to Jehovah.

The doctrine of sin, as advanced by the prophet makes no attempt to explain sin as due to heredity or to an ineradicable twist in human nature as such. He believes on the contrary that sin and the tendency to sin may be overcome, for these arise through lack of sufficient knowledge of God(4) on the one hand, and on the other a selfish stubbornness on the other(5). Men have dull and unperceiving minds(6), rendering them so blind that they stumble and fall(7). This spiritual blindness of theirs leads them to deny their sin and wrong-doing, and thus presents the prophet with the constant problem, which he never finally solved, namely that of creating a sense of sin in the hearts of his people(8).

Now the prophet's theology is based

1. Jeremiah, Ch.2.v.8.,v.23.,Ch.7.v.9. etc.

2. Jer,Ch.32.35.

3. Jer.Ch.44.v.17.

4. Jer.Ch.5.vv.1-5.

5. Jer,Ch.8.v.5.etc.

6. Jer.Ch.5.v.4.

7. Jer. Ch.6.v.21.

8. Jer.Ch.2.v.23.

upon two sweeping deductions that were made from the character of Jehovah. He argued that since Jehovah was not only a covenant God but a moral God, then everything that was not moral and righteous came under His condemnation, and amounted therefore to sin. The interests of morality are the interests of God, and all that is derogatory to morality is ipso facto derogatory to Jehovah and therefore sin. Thus the theology of Jeremiah leads straight to social ethics and social teaching. If infidelity to God is sin, then infidelity to man is sin likewise, and indeed the moral insight of the prophet revealed to him that this fidelity of man to man was the very stuff and fabric of society, for when during the advance of the Babylonians the slaveowners broke their word to their Hebrew servants, the prophet protested in the name of God(1). The miscarriage of justice was in the very same way a sin on the soul of the nation, for God's nature was just and therefore injustice in any form was a denial of that nature and therefore sin(2). And so as the implications of God's nature became apparent every form of civic or social wrong assumed the proportions of a sin against Jehovah.

Nor does this exhaust the categories of sin, as taught by the prophet, for he took a step further and shewed his penetration of mind by detecting a subtle third form of sin, more heinous perhaps than the other two. This consisted of a moral degeneracy that cloaked itself behind established religion. It may be a sin to use the pen deceitfully, but it is infinitely more heinous for a holy scribe to do so under the name of religion(3). To cheat

1. Jeremiah, Ch.34.v16.
2. Jer. Ch.5.v.28.
3. Jer.Ch.8.v.8.

is wrong for anyone, but doubly so when done by a priest(1). To tell a lie is a mean and contemptible thing, but for a man to pose as a prophet, and under the guise of religion to pass off a tissue of lies as a revelation from Jehovah; this was the height of hypocrisy (2); Here Jeremiah lays his finger upon a real and sinister form of sin, which he exposes in classical fashion, when he addresses the people in the Temple, for they seemed to imagine that after committing the most outrageous sins such as murder and theft they were free to claim the shelter and protection of the official religion.(3)

The prophet made a second sweeping deduction from the character of God. The physical world was in the hand of the Almighty. In addition to being a Covenant God and a Moral God, He was at one and the same time the Governor of the Seasons and the Dispenser of temporal blessings. This meant, for Jeremiah, that sin went hand in hand with national and individual trouble and loyalty to God went hand in hand with prosperity. It was, therefore, a quite logical process for him to regard as sin as the cause and mainspring of all the troubles of the nation, and there is in his mind a direct relation- almost that of cause and effect-between the committing of sin and the occurrence of some physical or national catastrophe. The drought, for instance, which is referred to in Chapter 14, is clearly regarded as the result of the sin of the nation(4). Sin as a matter of fact has the power to change and alter the seasons (5). Once grant that Jehovah is both Omnipotent and Moral and the conclusion is inevitable that loyalty to such a God spells comfort and happiness and disloyalty involves material loss and damage.(6) To scorn the Supreme Power Who gives the rain is to endanger the harvest.

1. Jer.Ch.8.v.10. 2. Jer.Ch.2.v.8., Ch.5.v.31

3. Jer.Ch.7.v.9. 4. Jer.Ch.14.v.7.

5. Jer.Ch.12.v.6. 6. Jer.Ch.5.v.24.

By exactly the same deduction the whole nation in its corporate life imperilled itself by falling away from the worship of Jehovah, for He possessed the power to move the world powers against Israel, and this in point of fact He is stated to have done(1). Sin, therefore, conceived as Jeremiah conceived it, carried with it the most condign punishment, and he was right in his prognostication that only exile could expiate the long period of national apostasy and infidelity to Jehovah.(2)

It may be difficult always to assert that physical catastrophe proves previous sin, either individually or nationally, but few can dispute that in teaching his countrymen that persistent and unrepented sin ends in national disaster, the prophet was a sound theologian and a careful logician. In any case it was a theology, and more especially a doctrine of sin, close to reality and amazingly confirmed by history.

1. Jeremiah, Ch.1.v.15.
2. Jer. Ch.13. vv.15-17.

THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION.

While it was the peculiar fate of the prophet to feel intensely the sin of his nation and to denounce it in the strongest possible terms, he also proclaimed a doctrine of redemption which was just as definite and just as positive. Jeremiah, perhaps more than any other prophet of his race, persisted in pleading with and persuading men to change from their way of life to a moral devotion to Jehovah. His view of sin and his view of redemption are, naturally enough, closely allied and indeed logically connected.

Although the actual term "redeem" occurs but twice in the records of Jeremiah's work(1), the whole conception runs through his thinking from beginning to end. Just as sin was primarily the breaking of the pact between Jehovah and His people, so redemption is the restoration of that special and exclusive connection; it is the return ^{of the} nation to a complete allegiance to the national God. (2). Redemption is ^{not} conceived as an individual movement, although Jeremiah was ~~an~~ outstandingly an individualist; ~~but~~ it will come about on a national scale and will amount to a national conversion to Jehovah(3). And so the prophet bends himself to the task of winning his people back again to their old loyalty, for in that alone lies their salvation. No less than twenty-four times in the written record does he plead with the people of Israel to return to the worship and service of Jehovah. It is clear that the prophet considered the be-all and end-all of his ministry to be the

1. 779 occurs at Jeremiah, Ch. 15v. 21, & 31. 11.
2. Jer. Ch. 24. v. 6.
3. Jer. Ch. 30. 22.

sincere and penitent return of men to the service and devotion of God.

But this spiritual return of the sinful was not merely an emotional experience, which was to end in itself; it involved and expressed itself in the cleansing of public and private life. Just as God loves kindness and justice and integrity of character, so these shall be practised by the redeemed, and no confidence shall be placed in cleverness, arms or wealth⁽¹⁾. The treachery and oppression that was rampant in the country, and which evoked the vengeance of the Almighty⁽²⁾, would be a thing of the past. The return would, in other words, be a moral return, and the redemption a moral redemption.

And just as this meant a cleansing of moral life, so it carried with it a complete change in the ordinary religious life of the people. Whereas there was a public and ornate worship, which centred in the Temple, so in the state of redemption, the Ark would be forgotten⁽³⁾, and the essentials of religion would be reduced to the simplest and yet most personal forms⁽⁴⁾. No priest, with his sacrifices would be necessary, nor would any prophet or even teacher be called for. Religion would again become, what in fact it had always been, a natural and uninterrupted contact with the Divine. Pilgrims would pay their homage of thanks in Sion⁽⁵⁾, but not to the detriment of their more personal faith. Religion would become, through this redemption, a simpler and yet more intense affair.

1. Jeremiah, Ch.9.v.23.

2. Jer. Ch.9.v.9.

3. Jer. Ch.3.v.16.

4. Jer. Ch.31.v.34. 5. Jer. Ch.31.v.6.

The most distinctive connotation of the word "redemption", and one which the prophet himself sanctioned, ~~was~~ is that of "The Return from Exile" (1). This is in logical^{accord} with his doctrine of God and of sin, for it is inevitable that One who has the power will recognise the practice of goodness which He loves. And so redemption means, along with spiritual and moral regeneration, also a revival in material prosperity and the bringing back of the Captivity. The one involves the other and the two go hand in hand. And it should be noted that this salvation is not merely the restoration of Israel to its ancient capital and country, but also agricultural prosperity and happiness(2). Thus redemption becomes in the mind and teaching of Jeremiah a manifold and impressive conception.

Not only has he clear ideas concerning redemption, but he knows very well the process. He is aware that certain changes must take place before certain results ensue. Here, indeed, begin his perplexities and problems. He soon finds that his people lack even the sense of sin(3), and it is this which prompts him to plead, to exhort and to threaten, and even to act in dramatic oriental fashion, if only he can start his nation into a sense of their sinfulness. He knows that redemption begins with this feeling of self-committed sin, hence his ardent desire to hear Israel acknowledging its guilt(4). This sense of sin leads naturally to a genuine repentance--indeed is its sine qua non-- and it hurts the heart of Jeremiah to see that with every evidence of sin about, his people will not repent(5). He sees clearly that confession and repentance will bring the sinful nation to a genuine return to Jehovah, who, having assured them of forgiveness(6),

1. Jeremiah, Ch.15.v.31., & Ch.31.v.11.
 2. Jer.Ch.31.v.5. 3. Jer.Ch.2.v.23.
 4. Jer.Ch.3.v.25.etc. 5. Jer.Ch.2.v.23.
 6. Jer.4.1. & Ch.3.v.1.

and being satisfied that truth and justice prevail in the country(1), will restore to them the blessings of material prosperity and will institute a New Covenant with Israel. The end of the process shall be a state in which Jehovah shall not only be the national God, although He shall be that in a much deeper measure than ever before, but also the individual and personal God of each soul.

In the most real sense it is God whom will effect this redemption. The prophet is merely the spokesman of Jehovah in this respect, for it is Jehovah who sends the drought and changes the seasons and stirs up Babylon to attack Jerusalem, and all these things He does with a view to developing in the soul of Israel a deep sense of guilt. And in case the people should fail to understand the meaning of these punishments, Jehovah sends his prophet to make the meanings plain. So dull and impervious are the minds of the people(2) that blow after blow must be struck before they realise how serious God is in the matter and indeed He has finally to banish them to exile before their final redemption is effected. Not only in explaining these chastisements and announcing forthcoming disasters is the prophet essential, however, ~~but~~ he is ^{also} the mouthpiece of Jehovah in uttering those tender words of invitation and affection that are calculated to recapture the heart of Israel(3). And it is clear, ~~xxx xxx~~ ~~xxxx~~, that in addition to the messages of Jehovah, the prophet added his own impassioned appeals(4).

~~The~~ Redemption, on its spiritual side, is likewise the work of Jehovah, for He it is

1. Jeremiah, Ch. 5. v. 1.
2. Jer. Ch. 4. v. 22.
3. Jer. Ch. 4. v. 1.
4. Jer. Ch. 8. v. 18.

who takes the initiative, first by sending the prophet(1), second by inviting the nation to return to the old alliance(2), third by assuring them of forgiveness(3), and fourth by delivering them from exile(4). And yet, while Jeremiah is conscious that Jehovah is the active agent in the securing of redemption, he is not less conscious that even the blows directed against the hardened heart of Israel make little impression. Although he believed firmly in his doctrine of redemption and in the power of Jehovah to carry it through he saw little in his lifetime to evidence a change of heart or a change in the national doom. It is probable that his own pleading words and still more, his own pathetic life did more to melt the hearts of the best in Israel than any other influence in the story of the nation. The finest spirits of the nation, reflecting in exile on the amazing accuracy of the prophet's forecasts and on the equally amazing cruelty of their attitude towards him, must have become subtly conscious of terrible guilt.

Jeremiah was remarkable among his contemporaries by the fact that he took such a serious view of sin, and while he never ceased to preach the willingness of God to forgive sin, he gives us reason to believe that this sin, at least from the people's side, involved expiation. This becomes clear when two prophecies are placed side by side. In the vision

1. Jeremiah, Ch.1.v.7.
2. Jer. Ch.4.v.1.
3. Jer. Ch.3.v.22.
4. Jer. Ch.15.v.21.

of the Baskets of Summer Fruit(1) we have the idea crystallised that exile alone could atone for the sins of the nation; this in fact is the necessary means of expiation. Again, from the prophecy, which limits the exile to the seventy years (2), it is clear that the Captivity does not involve the end of the nation as it might easily have done, but in the view of Jeremiah-or if one prefers it, in the view of God- seventy years will be sufficient time for the expiation of the nation's sin. The prophet did not explicitly preach this idea of expiation, according to our records, but this does not mean that the idea was not there. Indeed, it is plain the doctrine was in his mind and in his teaching, and it required only the eloquence of the great prophet of the Exile to clothe it in classic phraseology and beauty.(3).

1. Jer. Ch. 24. 1ff.
2. Jer. Ch. 29. 10. ff.
3. Isa. Ch. 40. 2. ff.

GOD AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

The first prophet of the Old Testament who taught ^{with clearness} individual responsibility was Jeremiah. By his daring treatment of the old slogan "The fathers have eaten grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" he shewed that the prophetic tradition was breaking away from its old moorings and heading for the open sea of religious doubt and perplexity.(1) No doubt the loneliness of the man and his lack of spiritual fellowship with his kin developed within him a strong individual life, of which he became increasingly aware, and it is evident that he considered the cause of Jehovah in the world to rest on his shoulders and on his shoulders alone.(2) So far from God dealing only with the nation as a unity, he knew through his own experience that messages with a purely individual reference came from the Divine. His own call,(3), the doom of Hananiah(4), the guidance designed for Zedekiah(5), all these pointed to the fact that Jehovah dealt directly with specific persons and for specifically personal reasons. The individual as an individual was thus an object of interest to God.

In those passages of the book, which refer to the intimate experiences of the prophet, it is evident that he cherished a double view of God. He did not quite free himself from the numinous conception, wherein

1. Jeremiah, Ch.31.29.
2. Jer. Ch.20.v.12.
3. Jer, Ch.1.v.5.
4. Jer. Ch.28.15.
5. Jer. Ch.38.v.17.

God was an insufferable presence, against Whom it was futile to struggle(1), and Whose word made him stagger like a drunken man(2). Here we have the last remnant of the ecstatic lingering on in the emotional experience of the conscious moral personality, the sign and token of the divine afflatus. God in this experience was overpowering and superpersonal. But in addition to this, God spoke to the conscience and mind of Jeremiah, passing moral judgements and revealing definite knowledge(3), and so He was also intensely and intimately personal. It is the glory of the prophet that he never allowed his intensely emotional and ecstatic experience to blind his moral sensitiveness and power.

Jeremiah's contact with Jehovah pressed home upon him the tremendous truth that he was not a free agent, but was predestined by God. He tries again and again to assert his own divergent will, but again and again God compels him to carry out His will. In this sense of predestination he is of course at one with the great religious geniuses. The consciousness that one's life and movements, even one's thoughts, are determined by the Divine, carries with it a feeling of utter and complete dependence, and this is exactly how the prophet feels in the course of his career.(5) The governing hand of God is seen and felt also when the prophet's life is in danger, and He foils the plot of his enemies(6). Both on the positive side, when Jehovah urges him to act and prophesy, and on the negative side, when Jehovah defends his life from danger, it is clear that man is

1. Jeremiah, Ch.20.v.7.
2. Jer. Ch.23.v.9.
3. Jer. Ch.11.v.18.
4. Jer. Ch.1.v.5.
5. Jer. Ch.10.v.23.
6. Jer. Ch.18.v.18.

completely dependent on his God.

The individual, of course, was not a free agent by the very fact that it was through the channel of the individual that Jehovah revealed himself and his message to men. There is not enough material available to justify us in saying that every individual is predestined and completely dependent on the Divine according to the mind of the prophet. There is warrant only for stating that Jehovah over certain persons, such as prophets, ^{exercises} ~~has~~ complete and absolute sovereignty.(1) This view, it will be noticed, is in strict accord with the historic line of Hebrew prophecy, for it was the first principle of that unique tradition that Jehovah used individual men as prophets to guide the destiny of His people. Such a doctrine involved a direct contact, such as speaking(2), enlightening(3), touching(4), filling with anger(5), and indeed the prophetic doctrine assumes that Jehovah comes into a full personal intercourse with human beings.

Now, this intimate attitude of Jehovah to man had as its correlative, especially in Jeremiah, a corresponding intimacy on the part of man towards God. It is in the words of the prophet of Anathoth that we find for the first time a full-fledged use of prayer, both intercessory and meditative(6). It is possible for the human soul to express petitions for God listens to man's prayers and answers them. When Jeremiah is forbidden to pray for

1. Jeremiah, Ch.1.v.17.
2. Jer. Ch.1.v.11.
3. Jer. Ch.11.v.18.
4. Jer. Ch.1.v.9.
5. Jer. Ch.6.v.11.
6. Jer. Ch.14.v.11. etc. Cf. F. Heiler's Prayer,

Israel, it proves that he had the desire and was in the practice of so doing. But the interesting and unique feature in ~~the~~ his religion was that while other great spirits had prayed to Jehovah as spokesmen of their nation, Jeremiah could and did speak to God in his own right as an individual soul. He did speak to God, it is true, as spokesman of his people, but this did not exhaust his converse with the Divine. Nor did even direct and personal petitions exhaust his spiritual life, for he indulged in soliloquy of the soul(1), and he carried on dialogues with the Divine(2). Both these facts point to a very highly developed individual life and place Jeremiah well in advance of his predecessors and contemporaries. It may be urged that these secret effusions of the prophet are highly charged with self-reproach, with emotional appeals to God, and with venomous hatred towards men, and yet it cannot be denied that here we have a genuine and individual life of prayer, which must be ranked of first importance among all the saints of the Old Testament.

The breakaway from communal religion, which is so evident in the soul of Jeremiah, carried with it also the perplexities no less than the pleasures of an individual faith. And in point of fact, just as the fullness of personal religion dawns on the soul of Jeremiah, so do also the problems of individual life and faith. He cannot understand why the wicked should prosper(3), or why his own endurance should be tested to the breaking point(4), or why he should be destined to fight against all the world(5), or why his life-work should yield no fruit(6). He assumes that God is righteous and indeed he states it in clear language(7), but whereas a public and national religion never thought of questioning this fundamental tenet, Jeremiah

1. Jer. 8.18ff. 2. Jer. 12.1-5. 3. Jer. 12.1.
 4. Jer. 15.12. 5. Jer. 15.10. 6. Jer. 8.20.
 7. Jer. 12.1.

is constantly finding it difficult to see how righteousness works out in his own personal experience. He is deceived by his enemies and almost led like a lamb to be killed(1). Although he has led a straight and honest life he finds that the world curses him(2). His whole life of self-devotion to the will and message of Jehovah yields such little fruit that he contemplates resigning his mission as a failure(3). Little wonder that he asks querulously if his God is not playing him false. Indeed so completely disillusioned does he become before the end of his career that he suspects Jehovah has been leading him on a false scent; in other words that his great mission of righteousness has been a form of self-deception(4). The poignancy of these doubts, so well attested by these ~~doubts~~ ^{words}, is indicative of the strength of the faith that lay behind the doubts, nor would it be fair and accurate to insinuate that the prophet was more of a doubter than a saint, but they shew that this pioneer soul that launched out on the spiritual waters on his own frail bark found it a perilous and perplexing venture. It was the price that had to be paid for advancing into a personal and individual religion.

There was still another ^{truth} emerged from the individualism of the prophet. So long as the nation worshipped in its corporate capacity in the Temple, it felt that Jehovah was there in actual fact. He was no nearer and no farther off than the Temple. The people never doubted this for one moment. Now, when

1. Jeremiah, Ch. 11. v. 19.

2. Jer. Ch. 15. v. 10.

3. Jer. 15. v. 19.

4. Jer. Ch. 20. v. 7.

the centre of religion moved, as it did with Jeremiah, from the external place of worship to the human soul, it was found that God was not always in the human soul as He had been always in the Temple. He is certainly a Divinity that is both near and far, so much so that nothing can be hid from Him(1), but the prophet came to realise that He was, in addition, a passing experience of the soul and not a constant and intensive presence there. He knew, as all religious natures know, that there are times when the Divine seems very near and there are other times when He seems very far away indeed. Now this truth is the direct outcome of Jeremiah's personal and individual religious experience (2).

1. Jeremiah, Ch.23.v.24.
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This popular work is the first to convey the poetical quality of the Hebrew, and always deserves consideration. No attempt is made to reproduce the precise beats of the original, and the divisions are too large.

The Book of Jeremiah in colloquial English, London, 1923. A.C.Welch.

This is more a paraphrase than anything else. and the poetry is ignored as poetry.

Prophecy and Religion, John Skinner, London, 1922.

Many pieces of the poetry are translated by Skinner and always very happily, but little heed is paid to the metre of the underlying Hebrew.

A New Translation of the Old Testament, James
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Helpful in the turning of English phrases,
but weak in the consideration of the under-
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This beautifully worded set of translations,
indicates the quality of the original. The
only translation that shows the brief nature
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INDEX.

INDEX.

- Anathoth, retribution on, 208.
Answer of Jehovah to prophet, 215.
Assyria's Evil Influence, 46.
- Betrayal of Jehovah, Israel's, 73.
Better Times, A cry for, 212.
Boasting in Jehovah, 185.
Brevity of Hebrew Poetry, 3.
- Challenge, The Poem as a, 23.
Circumcision, Futility of, 188.
Collapse of Nation, 101.
Common Sense, Lack of, 153.
Commission of Jeremiah, 28.
Confessions of Jeremiah, 242.
Cornill, C.H., ii.
Covenant with Israel, Early, 248.
Creator of World, God as, 236.
- Death, Elegy of, 181.
Devastation of country, 95, 178.
Disaster needed for character, 246.
Disaster will recall nation, 138, 246.
Disillusionment of Nation, 88.
Disloyalty as Sin, 249.
Documents of religion unreliable, 157.
Double-dealing with Jehovah, 68.
Doubt expressed in poems, 24.
Duhm, B., ii.

- Egyptian Covenant, The, 200.
 Egypt's Evil Influence, 46, 62.
 Elegiac metre, The, 10.
 Emotions of Jeremiah, The, 133, 168, 171.
 Exile Foretold, 194.
 Experience of God, Jeremiah's, 242.
- Fall of the Nation, 162.
 Family, The Prophet's, 218.
 Forgetfulness of Israel, 59, 249.
 Four-Beat Rhythm, 9.
 Fraud afflicts Land, 126.
 Futility of False Gods, 53.
- Gifts cannot avert doom, 202.
 Girdle, Soiled, 228.
 God as Redeemer, 257.
 Gods, Other than Jehovah, 249.
 Guidance of Jehovah needed, 199.
- Hardness of heart of Israel, 80.
 Harlot, Israel as a, 65.
 Hebrew Poetry, iii, 2ff.
 Historic Process, God in the, 238.
 Honesty Lacking, 104, 171.
- Idols contrasted with Jehovah, 189.
 Immorality in religion, 110.
 Individual and God, 260.
 Infidelity, Charge of, 41.
 Internationalism of Jehovah, 241.
 Intimacy of man with God, 262.
 Invader, Description of, 116.
 Invasion's effect on Jeremiah, 92, 98.
 Invasion of Palestine, 165.

Justice of God, Jer. appeals to, 209.
Justice, miscarriage of, 251.

Lament for Exiles, 233.
Leaders of Nation powerless, 196.
Lover, Jehovah as a, 38.

Man, Jeremiah's Doctrine of, 243.
Massoretic Text, ii.
Meddlers with Israel, 227.
Men need Guidance of Jehovah, 199.
Metaphor, Use of, 17.
Mohammed's Use of Rhyme, 21.
Moral Character of God, 240, 251.

Nation Stricken, 196.
Nationalism of Jehovah, 241.
New Covenant, The, 247.
Night of Disaster, The, 230.

Obedience required by God, 151.

Panic in Israel, 142.
Parallelism, 3ff.
Paronomasia, 16.
Perplexities of individual religion, 263.
Personality of Jehovah, 239.
Personification, Jeremiah's use of, 18.
Persuasiveness of Jeremiah, 246.
Plots against Jeremiah, 205.
Poetic licence, 23.
Potter, Jehovah as the, 243.
Predestination of Jeremiah, 261.
Prose of Jeremiah, i.
Pun, The, or Play on a Word, 161

Qina Rhythm, The, 6,9ff.

Rallying the Nation, 83,165.
 Redemption, The Doctrine of, 254.
 Redemption as Restoration of Pact, 254.
 Redemption as Return from Exile, 256.
 Renounces Israel, Jehovah, 221.
 Religious Poetry, 2.
 Return of Israel, The, 76,246.
 Revelations as poems, 21.
 Revelations, The Need of, 244.
 Revenge of God, The, 123.
 Rhetorical Question, The Use of, 19.
 Rhyme, iii.
 Rhythm, 5ff.
 Rites of Astarte, 150.
 Robbers, The Den of, 149.

Seething Pot, Poem on, 35.
 Septuagint, ii.
 Simile, The Use of, 17.
 Sin Affects Seasons, 120,253.
 Sin, The Doctrine of, 245,249,258.
 Sirocco of God, The, 91.
 Social Sins, 251.
 Soliloquy, The, 25.
 Strophic Construction, ii, 21.
 Stubbornness in Nation, 49,56,98.
 Suffering of the Nation, 113.
 Synthetic Parallelism, 4.

Tester, Prophet as The, 146.
 Tester, Jehovah as The, 175.
 Topheth Worship, 152.
 Torrey, C.C., 6ff.
 Transcendence of Jehovah, 237.
 Turn-Table of God, The, 119.

Wake-Tree, Poem on The, 32.
Wine of God's Wrath, The, 229.
Word of Jehovah Scorned, 157.
Words, Jeremiah's Use of, 15.