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THE CENTURY BIBLE

JEREMIAH

AND

LAMENTATIONS

THE CENTURY BIBLE

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The Century Bible

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Jeremiah
and
Lamentations

VOL. I
JEREMIAH I—XXIV

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
MAP AND INDEX

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

It is a singular thing that, while many commentaries have been devoted to the Book of Isaiah, the Book of Jeremiah should have suffered from an ungrateful neglect. In Germany some of the greatest Old Testament scholars have paid a worthy tribute to the supreme figure in the prophetic succession, and expounded his words with an insight and a thoroughness which are entitled to the warmest thanks. And among ourselves there are signs that the indifference with which Jeremiah has been regarded is yielding to an ampler recognition of his lonely eminence and the incomparable service he rendered to religion. Yet the last important English commentary on Jeremiah was that of Professor Cheyne, and it was published more than a quarter of a century ago. The writer sends forth the present work in the hope that many may find in its pages some help to the understanding of the book, and that through all the imperfections of his treatment some sense of Jeremiah's greatness may be borne in upon them. In a commentary written amid the unremitting pressure of multitudinous and exacting duties, and frequently interrupted by ill health, he fears that defects may remain which have escaped his notice. Yet if reverent enthusiasm for the man and ungrudging labour devoted to the task are qualifications for the work, he may at least claim to have deserved such success as these may merit.

In acknowledging the heavy obligations he owes to German scholars, the editor is bound to accord the first place to Wellhausen. For the detailed exposition of the book he naturally owes more to other writers. But it was Wellhausen's article 'Israel' in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* which first opened his eyes in his undergraduate days to the significance of Jeremiah. Later the impression was confirmed and deepened by the truly wonderful pages devoted to him in the same author's *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte*. In the preparation of his commentary he has been chiefly indebted to Graf, Giesebrecht, Duhm, and above all to Cornill, with whose standpoint he is glad to find himself largely in sympathy. Driver's translation has been constantly at hand, it has been specially helpful in ambiguous passages and for its exact discrimination of delicate shades of meaning.

October 14, 1910.

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INTRODUCTION

NAY but much rather let me late returning
Bruised of my brethren, wounded from within,
Stoop with sad countenance and blushes burning,
Bitter with weariness and sick with sin,—

Then as I weary me and long and languish,
Nowise availing from that pain to part,—
Desperate tides of the whole great world's anguish
Forced thro' the channels of a single heart,—

Straight to thy presence get me and reveal it,
Nothing ashamed of tears upon thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg thine hand to heal it,
Pour thee the bitter, pray thee for the sweet.

Then with a ripple and a radiance thro' me
Rise and be manifest, o Morning Star!
Flow on my soul, thou Spirit, and renew me,
Fill with thyself, and let the rest be far.

Safe to the hidden house of thine abiding
Carry the weak knees and the heart that faints,
Shield from the scorn and cover from the chiding,
Give the world joy, but patience to the saints.

F. W. H. MYERS: *Saint Paul.*

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

INTRODUCTION

I. The Life and Times of Jeremiah.

Since Jeremiah was still quite young when he became conscious of his vocation in the thirteenth year of Josiah, we may assume that he was born when the long reign of Manasseh was nearing its close. We may perhaps date his birth about 650 B.C. His birthplace was Anathoth, which was a city of Benjamin three or four miles from Jerusalem, but looking towards Ephraim. It was the city to which Abiathar was banished when he was deposed by Solomon from the priesthood of Jerusalem, and it is by no means improbable that Jeremiah, who is said to be of the priests that were in Anathoth, was a descendant of Abiathar and thus of Eli the custodian of the ark at Shiloh. If so his family would cherish some of the proudest memories in Israel, and additional point would thus be given to his reference to the destruction of Shiloh and the obsoleteness of the ark in the Messianic period. We can also well imagine that no little bitterness was entertained towards the rival house of Zadok, which since the days of Solomon had held the priesthood of the Temple. As a Benjamite it was natural for Jeremiah to feel much sympathy for Ephraim, since both Ephraim and Benjamin were the children of Rachel. He was the first to contemplate the possibility that the northern tribes might return from exile. The reign of Manasseh was specially characterized by syncretism in religion; that is, by the mixture of alien cults with the worship of Yahweh, Israel's national deity. Political subjection to Assyria had brought the

adoption of Assyrian forms of worship in its train, and the reign of Manasseh seems to have been marked by a fanatical excess in this respect. We ought not to infer that there was any conscious apostasy from Yahweh, but foreign deities were placed by His side. Opposition to the king's religious policy was treated as treason and visited with martyrdom. The worship of the Canaanite Baalim, the givers of fertility to the land, was pursued with unwearied devotion. Although Jeremiah must have been still quite young when Manasseh died, we have no reason to suppose that matters had changed at the time when he received his call. This came to him five years before the discovery of the Law-book which led to the reformation of Josiah.

It was not merely the religious situation, however, which was responsible for Jeremiah's appearance as a prophet. The tidings had come to Judah that a new and terrible danger threatened her from the north. A great migration of the Scythians from their home in the far north had been set in motion. They poured as a vast irresistible torrent over a large area of Western Asia. They were like locusts for numbers and rapacity, sparing neither age nor sex, leaving ruin everywhere in their train. It was a new kind of terror which these uncivilized hordes inspired in peoples long inured to the brutality of Assyria. No deliberate design of founding an empire seems to have animated them, and indeed they were not skilled in the art of war and won their conquests by sheer force of numbers and ruthless ferocity. They were not equipped for storming cities, but they could starve the inhabitants into surrender. They influenced political history mainly by weakening the power of Assyria and thus preparing for its ultimate downfall. We are told that their dominion lasted for twenty-eight years. Since the fall of the Assyrian empire was an event whose importance for the history of Judah can scarcely be exaggerated, the Scythian invasion would on that ground alone claim to be mentioned

in the story of Jeremiah's times. But their influence on Jewish history was not merely indirect. The tide swept nearer and nearer to Palestine, and Jeremiah like Zephaniah seems to have seen in these unwelcome visitors from the north the instruments of Divine judgement on Judah. In the vision of the seething caldron which followed his call he learnt that evil was to come out of the north, and that Yahweh was bringing all the kingdoms of the north against Jerusalem.

Such then was the situation in Judah when Jeremiah received his call. An apostate people on the one hand, the approach of the uncanny foe from the north on the other. It was not primarily the danger but the sin of Judah which filled her prophets with foreboding of her ruin, and since Jeremiah was convinced that the cup of her iniquity was full it was natural that he should identify the agents of God's vengeance with the Scythians. Such being the situation at the time of his call, we must now consider the call itself.

His call came to him in the thirteenth year of Josiah (627 or 626 B.C.). We have the story of it, probably from his own lips, at the opening of the book. It is a serious mistake to imagine that the narrative reflects the tragic experience of opposition in after years. Like Isaiah he begins his work with no illusion as to the response his message will evoke. We are at first struck with disappointment at the narrative, when we remember the vision of Isaiah and that of Ezekiel. There is no splendid awe-inspiring manifestation of God, the prophet is not penetrated like Isaiah with a conviction of his own uncleanness by its contrast with God's holiness, nor does he fall on his face like Ezekiel, overpowered by His radiant glory. Yet the narrative gains an effectiveness of its own by the very absence of accessories. God and the man are here alone in intimate conversation, no Seraphim or Cherubim mar the impressive simplicity of the scene. It is a fit prelude to the lifework of the prophet who first

clearly conceived religion as a personal relation between man and God. There is another instructive contrast between Isaiah and Jeremiah. The former offers himself for Yahweh's service, though when he volunteers to undertake it he does not know what his mission is to be. The latter learns the nature of his call and receives the summons to accept it direct from Yahweh, and does not overhear it as Isaiah had done, but he is reluctant to undertake the mission. His diffidence may be compared with that of Moses, on whom also the task had to be imposed against his will, though the reasons for self-distrust were not the same.

In the very moment of his call Jeremiah learnt that he was a child of destiny. His choice for his great work was no haphazard selection from the mass, as if all were equally fitted for the use of the Almighty, to whom the human imperfection meant no limitation. Nor had God's choice rested on him after he had displayed his quality. Even before his begetting God had planned his life, and had thus created him with the deliberate design of appointing him a prophet to the nations. Hence God lays stress on His own participation in his origin, since He would have him learn how He had Himself prepared him for his mission. The special line of ancestry from which he had come, the home into which he had been born, the conditions which had moulded him during his impressionable years, may be regarded as elements in this preparation; but the main stress lies on the nature with which God had endowed him and the personal experience of religion which we can detect in his earlier life.

His mission was naturally in the first instance to his own people, but earlier prophets had spoken concerning other nations, and this is explicitly included in the scope of Jeremiah's commission. He is made 'a prophet unto the nations.' But the work seems too great for the diffident youth, conscious of his own insignificance. Moreover, it had been the lot of earlier prophets, since

their message was pre-eminently of a threatening character, to arouse fierce opposition, and remembering his predecessors Jeremiah recoils from the task. But Yahweh rebukes the dread implied rather than expressed in Jeremiah's plea, and assures him of His presence as the guarantee of his safety. After this promise Yahweh put forth his hand and touched his mouth, saying, 'Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.' It is only a superficial resemblance to the narrative of Isaiah's call that we have here. The lips of Isaiah are touched, but it is by the seraph not by Yahweh; the live coal is placed on them, but the hand of Yahweh on the lips of Jeremiah: the object in the one case is purification, in the other the communication of God's word. It is rather with Ezek. iii. 1–3 that we should compare the present passage. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah receive the Divine word at the outset of their ministry. Yet the difference is characteristic. In Ezekiel we have the bizarre, in Jeremiah the simple; the later prophet thinks of prophecy as embodied in a literary guise; the earlier is faithful to the conception of it as an uttered word, and he does not shrink from affirming the direct contact of the Divine hand with his mouth. We are not to interpret the statement as a mere symbol. It is a genuine psychical experience which is here described. And its significance is great. Prophecy had been originally an intermittent phenomenon. The Spirit of Yahweh possessed the prophet and inspired the oracle he uttered, then withdrew from him. But now the word dwells in Jeremiah as his abiding possession, the ebb and flow of inspiration has passed away, and his personality is no longer subject to the invasion and retreat of the prophetic ecstasy. We may compare Deut. xviii. 18. Finally, he is set in authority over the nations, with destruction and construction as his appointed task. For the word of Yahweh in a prophet's lips was not a mere utterance, but endowed with a living energy which achieved its own fulfilment.

Hence the prophet is set over the nations to break down and to build, since by announcing their overthrow or re-establishment he brings it to pass.

We do not know whether the two visions which follow were immediately connected with each other or with his call. But the former is admirably adapted to the mood of Jeremiah at the time of his call. He can see in the world about him no sign that God is about to do anything, the rigour of winter reigns everywhere. But he has become a prophet, and it was the Hebrew prophet's deepest conviction that God was about to intervene in history in a striking and decisive way. To the prophetic consciousness, then, the death-stillness which seems to prevail is only apparent: while all others think God is asleep or inactive, the prophet knows, just by the fact that he is a prophet, that God has set His judgements already in train. And this conviction clothes itself in a form congenial to Jeremiah's temperament. It is characteristic of him that while many can discern God only in the great or the abnormal he sees in the homely and commonplace the sign of God's working. This vivid sense of the Divine element in everyday things is a mark of his greatness. Brooding on his vocation and all which it portended, he sees before him the rod of an almond-tree, and in response to the Divine inquiry utters its name. The English reader can at first see no connexion between the object and the lesson drawn from it, and when he learns that the Hebrew word for almond-tree is *shākēd* and that translated 'watch' is *shōkēd*, he is tempted to imagine that he has to do merely with a play upon words. That, however, would be a great mistake. The almond-tree bears the name here given to it just because, blossoming as early as January, it is the first to wake into new life after the sleep of winter. For the prophet the sight of the tree is more than a coincidence: Nature is a parable of God's working. Hence he sees in this harbinger of the spring a sign that the hard frost is about to break and new life to spring from

the soil. There is a suggestive parallel in Amos viii. 1, 2. Amos sees a basket of 'summer fruit' (*qayits*), and is told that the 'end' (*qets*) is come upon Israel. Here also we are tempted at first sight to see nothing but an assonance. The summer fruit, however, fitly symbolizes the end, for it means that the time approaches when it will be said 'the harvest is past and the summer is ended.' With Amos summer is passing into autumn; with Jeremiah winter is about to give place to spring. Probably we should not explain Jeremiah's experience as purely psychical. An almond-tree which he saw before him, with one of its branches just showing signs of renewed vitality, apparently constituted its physical basis. But we have not to do with a merely accidental experience, in which the prophet's meditations combine with the sight of the almond-tree to produce it. It was divinely planned with a view to the prophet's future ministry. It was his tragic lot to be doomed again and again to disappointment through seeming failure of his predictions. Hence at the outset this vision comes to him that he may hereafter be steadied by the memory of it.

The second vision is that of the seething caldron. The details of it are obscure (see notes on i. 13, 14), but the main lesson is clear. The earlier record of prophecy, as well as the call to his office, had prepared the prophet for the disclosure that his message was to be predominantly one of judgement, though the nations receive an unexpected prominence in his commission. Now he learns that judgement is coming on Judah from the north. For Yahweh is calling 'all the kingdoms of the north' to encamp against Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. So He will utter His judgements against them for their idolatry!

Then once more the prophet is warned not to suffer his shrinking diffidence to daunt him and make him faithless to his task. He must speak *all* that God commands him, not omitting the unpalatable home-truths or softening the harshness of their expression. If in his weakness he

falters, God will Himself punish him by stripping his cowardice naked to the scorn and malice of his enemies. Implicit obedience, high courage, unfaltering speech will serve him as a triple armour. Let him betray any hesitation and he will be lost. Yet in the critical moments through which he has still to pass it will not be simply his fearless bearing, his serene unconsciousness of peril that will save him. God appoints the mission and therefore accepts the responsibility for the security of His messenger. The assurance of the Divine protection is at once a challenge to his faith and the warrant for his courage. Faith and courage alike will be sorely tried. Kings, princes, priests, people will all be arrayed against him, but God will make him invincible. All their assaults will be foiled; he is like an impregnable fortress from whose walls the storming party is always forced to retreat.

To the earliest period of Jeremiah's ministry, that which succeeded his call, we may assign chapters ii–vi in their original form, together with the prophecies of the return of Ephraim which are embedded in xxxi; perhaps also the story of the loin-cloth (xiii. 1–11), if its original intention was to depict the spiritual and moral deterioration which had come to Judah from her connexion with Assyria and Babylonia. It is possible, as Duhm supposes, that ii–iv embodied the prophet's preaching before he removed from Anathoth to Jerusalem, while v and vi record the impression made upon him by his closer acquaintance with the capital after he had settled there. But since Anathoth was so near to Jerusalem, and the two were in intimate connexion with each other, it is scarcely probable that when he left his native place the prophet had much to learn concerning the profligacy and idolatry of the capital.

We have no information as to the effect produced by Jeremiah's tremendous indictment of his people and predictions of approaching destruction. His presage of disaster seemed on the point of being fulfilled to the letter.

For now the Scythians entered Palestine from the north and marched down the coast. As they drew nearer and nearer to Judah we may well believe that the prophet's anticipations found ready credence among the people. The Scythians, however, seem scarcely to have deviated from their route along the coast, which led to Egypt. For the time, at any rate, Judah was spared. When, however, they reached the frontier of Egypt their march was arrested. Perhaps, as Herodotus tells us, they were bought off by rich bribes from the king; possibly, as some modern scholars believe, he successfully opposed their further advance. They then retreated along the coast of Palestine, once more, it would seem, leaving Judah untouched.

While Judah again breathed freely after this great deliverance the position of Jeremiah must have been very difficult. For he must have seemed to the people to have been discredited by the failure of his predictions. The foe from the north had come, but it had also gone, while Judah remained unshaken. And if this was the popular estimate, what must the escape of Judah have meant to the prophet? It seemed as though God had placed him in a false position. He had sent him to deliver a message and then given the lie to his word. The loss of credit with his countrymen and the mockery which he had to endure must have been torture to his sensitive soul; but even harder to bear was the bewilderment in which God's apparent desertion must have involved him. For some years he seems to have been silent.

He next comes before us in connexion with the reformation introduced by Josiah on the basis of the newly discovered Deuteronomic Code (621 B.C.). To this situation we should probably refer xi. 1–8, xi. 18—xii. 6. In the beginning of this section Jeremiah is bidden proclaim to the people God's curse on those who are disobedient to the words of 'this covenant' made with their fathers at the exodus. He then receives a further

injunction, to preach the words of the covenant in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. It is generally believed that the covenant is to be identified with the Deuteronomic Code, which had been published in 621 and accepted by the people, and that Jeremiah not only exhorted the inhabitants of the capital to obey but undertook a mission to the cities of Judah with a similar object. The situation is far from clear. The people had accepted the new Law, and during the reign of Josiah it is not obvious why Jeremiah should undertake a task which was presumably rendered superfluous by the drastic measures with which Josiah enforced obedience throughout his realm. We might evade this if we were willing to place this work of Jeremiah in the reign of Jehoiakim, and suppose that he undertook the mission in consequence of the people's breach of the covenant, to which indeed verses 9 ff. seem to refer. It is, however, difficult to believe that Jeremiah still retained much enthusiasm for the Deuteronomic reformation, which he knew well was of all too superficial a character. But if he had ever sympathized with it, must he not have been conscious from the first of the gulf between himself and the reformers? The combination of the priestly with the prophetic standpoint, the emphasis placed on the purification of the cultus, the ruthless violence with which they carried through the policy of 'thorough', were alien from his temper.

It is not therefore surprising that Duhm, followed by Cornill, considers xi. 1–14 to be unhistorical. But in this drastic criticism such scholars as Giesebrecht, Budde, and Rothstein have refused to acquiesce. It is possible that 'this covenant' does not refer especially to the Deuteronomic Law. But, granted that it does, it seems quite credible that Jeremiah should have undertaken the rôle here assigned to him. For there was very much in the Law with which he would be in full sympathy. Its monotheism, its horror of idolatry, its warm humanitarianism, its lofty morality, its abhorrence of heathen

abominations, its demand that life should be controlled by wholehearted love of God, to these Jeremiah would say 'Amen' with all his soul. But even the reform of the cultus presented several points of contact. The worship of the high places was very repugnant to him, hence he might welcome its abolition. The concentration of worship at the Temple, cleansed of its pagan impurities and controlled by the religious principles enunciated in the Law, might seem beforehand to offer what he would regard as an ideal solution, unless we imagine that he thought religion was to be a disembodied spirit, set free from any visible incarnation. And while we cannot suppose that he could have felt much enthusiasm for minor ritual precepts in themselves, he may have welcomed them as best adapted to lead a people steeped in ceremonial to a form of worship less stained by imperfection. Besides, we must beware of regarding Jeremiah as just an impracticable idealist. Every reformer discovers that he has to be content with less than the second-best, and to work with men whose motives and aims are other than his own. For the sake of the supreme end, personal preferences have to be set aside and measures accepted which have no attraction for him. Accordingly, we may well believe that Jeremiah did co-operate with the reformers, accepting, in obedience to what he took to be the Divine will, such injunctions as would not in themselves have commanded his respect.

And what confirms this conclusion is that we thus understand the murderous hostility of the men of Anathoth described in this section of the book. The Deuteronomic reformation involved the suppression of the local sanctuaries, that of Anathoth among them. We may well imagine the sullen resentment which this must have aroused in many places. But the feeling in Anathoth was peculiarly bitter, for here lived the deposed priesthood of the house of Abiathar, and the supremacy which belonged from the days of Solomon to the rival priesthood of Zadok and his descendants was now by the reformation turned into

a monopoly. What must have been the feelings of the Anathoth priesthood when they saw one of themselves defending a measure which exalted the upstart family that had supplanted their own primaeval priesthood, the earliest custodians of the ark? He must have seemed to his kinsfolk a traitor to his order, just as later he seemed a traitor to his people.

The hostility which Jeremiah experienced is noteworthy as having given rise to the first of those expostulations with God, the record of which confers such unique value upon his book. If the view be right that we should place xii. 1–6 before xi. 18–23 (see pp. 184 f.), Jeremiah complains to God of the prosperity which the wicked enjoy. Instead of receiving any light on his problem, any comfort for his sorrows, any encouragement for the future, he is warned that what he has as yet endured is but slight in comparison with the conflict which lies before him. Hitherto he has been engaged in a foot-race, and this has wearied him; but how will he do when he has to match himself with horses? In a quiet land he has taken to flight; how will he do when he has to thread the jungle of Jordan, where danger and terror are on every side, where the lion waits for the unwary, and in whose trackless thickets the traveller may so easily miss his way and be lost? For his kinsmen, although they speak him fair, are plotting against him and seeking his life. Till this revelation was made to him the prophet had no suspicion, he was going to his doom as trustfully as the lamb to its slaughter. He receives, however, the Divine assurance that punishment should fall upon his fellow-townsmen for their plots against his life.

And while the ties which nature had formed for him involved him in an experience so painful, he was forbidden to form new ties which might have lightened the burden he was forced to bear. He learnt that it was God's will for him that he should not marry. In this respect he is distinguished from other prophets. Marriage was for

Hosea a tragedy through which he learnt to comprehend the love of God; for Ezekiel it was a great happiness till the desire of his eyes was taken from him by a sudden stroke, and he was forbidden to mourn her loss (Ezek. xxiv. 15–24). Jeremiah, whose heart was so exquisitely fitted for love, and to whom a home would have been a welcome refuge from the scorn and cruelty of his fellows, was doomed to a life of loneliness uncheered by wife or children. And yet with deep sympathetic insight into a joy his vocation forbade him to share (xvi. 2), the prophet sees in a glad wedding the type of human happiness. He was not of naturally morose temper, nor had his isolation soured him; he looked at the felicity of others with no jaundiced eye, but only with the sad conviction that it would soon utterly cease. He felt this to be one of the penalties of his vocation, that he must have no share in the innocent pleasures of his fellows. He was filled with the Divine indignation; it was his mission to pour it on his people (vi. 11); hence he was doomed to a lonely life: for how with his dark foreboding of their impending doom could he participate in their lighthearted merriment, so soon to be stilled in death?

So far as we know, Jeremiah remained silent during the later years of Josiah's reign. For the king Jeremiah had a sincere respect, and we have from his pen a tribute to the sterling worth of his character and the equity of his administration (xxii. 15, 16). Some of the worst evils of which the prophet had complained were suppressed with a strong hand, and although he can hardly have been satisfied with the condition of things, he apparently felt no call to intervene with demands for repentance and reform. Social conditions were probably prosperous, and the people no doubt considered themselves to stand high in the favour of their God. But this happy time was roughly closed by a great tragedy, the death of Josiah at Megiddo in conflict with Pharaoh Necho, who, forestalling the imminent downfall of Assyria, was seeking to

appropriate much of her territory. It was hardly, we may conjecture, so much a quixotic loyalty to his suzerain the king of Assyria which led him to his fate, as an unwillingness to surrender his virtual independence for the new tyranny of Egypt. He probably undertook his disastrous expedition in the faith that God would give victory to his arms, and in such a conviction he would be encouraged by the prophets.

The death of Josiah and the subjection to Egypt which followed was an overwhelming tragedy for Judah. The confidence which had been inspired by the reformers was shattered at a stroke. Disaster followed disaster during the twenty-two years which intervened between the death of Josiah and the downfall of the State. Passing by Eliakim, the people set Jehoahaz his younger brother on the throne in place of his father. Their action was prompted, we may suppose, partly by the Egyptian leanings of Eliakim, partly by their well-grounded anticipations of what he would prove as a monarch. After three months' reign Jehoahaz was deposed by Pharaoh Necho and taken in chains to Egypt, where he died. The Egyptian king placed Eliakim on the throne, changing his name to Jehoiakim. We have the weightiest evidence for his misgovernment from the lips of Jeremiah himself (xxii. 13–19). In addition to the fine imposed by Egypt the people had to find money for the king's ostentatious buildings, and their misery was aggravated by his employment of forced labour without remuneration.

In his reign Jeremiah, who had only recently uttered his elegy on the pitiful fate of Jehoahaz, emerged from the seclusion in which for some years he seems to have remained. Taking his stand in the Temple court he exhorted his people to amend their evil doings. Secure in the favour of their God, and especially in the presence of Yahweh's Temple in their midst, the people felt that now the worst was over and that for the future they were delivered. The prophet warned them that unless

they reformed, God would destroy the Temple as He had destroyed Shiloh the ancient sanctuary of the ark. The prophets and priests wished to have him put to death for his blasphemy in threatening the destruction of the Temple, but he was befriended by the people and saved by the princes, who felt that his claim to speak in the name of Yahweh should secure him from death. Another prophet, the narrator tells us, Uriah, who repeated Jeremiah's message, was not so fortunate. Jehoiakim and the princes sought to put him to death, but he escaped to Egypt, from which, however, the king secured his extradition and then put him to death. The difference in the fate of the two prophets is probably to be explained on the supposition that Uriah definitely attacked Jehoiakim, which at this point Jeremiah seems not to have done. Only in this way can we account for the pertinacity with which Jehoiakim hunted him down.

It is perhaps to the early part of Jehoiakim's reign that we should assign the incident of the breaking of the earthen bottle in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, in sign of the destruction which was to come upon Jerusalem and Judah (xix). After he had executed his commission Jeremiah returned to the Temple and repeated this prediction of ruin. Thereupon Pashhur, the overseer of the Temple, had him beaten and put in the stocks. On his release, after a night of torture and humiliation, Jeremiah told the overseer that Yahweh had called his name Magor, that is Terror. It is perhaps as the immediate outcome of this experience that we have the wild outburst which we find in xx. 7–12. With a daring that attests his intimate familiarity with God, Jeremiah reproaches Him for the part He has caused him to play. With coaxing words He has enticed him into His service, taken advantage of his youth and inexperience, beguiled him with fair speeches, and he has weakly allowed himself to be overpersuaded. Weakly indeed, but how can a frail creature be other than weak and pliable as wax in the hands of the

Almighty? And having overcome his reluctance (i. 6 ff.), and betrayed him into this intolerable position, He has left him in the lurch. It is not his own word that he utters but God's, yet all deride him as a visionary fool. He is a Cassandra whose predictions of disaster are flouted by all. When he can no longer endure the scorn and violence which the proclamation of the word brings him, he resolves to renounce his vocation. But his resolutions are all in vain. There burns in his inmost soul the Divine fire, which will not smoulder or be quenched but must break out in flaming speech. If he seeks to restrain it, it turns upon him and tortures him. Those who posed as his familiar friends watched for his halting; they tried to lead him into treasonable utterances which to his ruin they might report to the authorities. Yet he still holds fast the conviction that Yahweh protects him like an invincible warrior, and will avenge His servant upon his enemies.

Meanwhile external politics were moving with great rapidity and on a colossal scale. Within a year or two after the death of Josiah at Megiddo, Nineveh had fallen and the empire of Assyria had reached its well-merited end. It remained for the Medes and Babylonians to divide the spoils. Syria and Palestine fell to the lot of Babylon, and Nabopolassar the king of Babylon was not likely tamely to submit to leaving them in the clutch of Egypt. Accordingly, in 605 B. C. his son Nebuchadnezzar advanced against Pharaoh Necho and defeated him in the famous battle of Carchemish, a victory which settled for generations the question whether Palestine should be under the sway of Egypt or of an eastern power. This year accordingly was one in which the prophet was specially active. The foe from the north, though it was the Babylonians rather than the Scythians, seemed now about to fulfil the prophecies which Jeremiah had uttered during these three-and-twenty years. It is to this date that we have to assign the twenty-fifth chapter in its original form, with such of the prophecies against the nations as may have been

uttered at this time. He gives the nations to drink from the winecup of God's wrath, Judah and Egypt, together with the surrounding peoples who would be involved in its downfall. Once again, however, there was a reprieve, and Jeremiah's anticipations that judgement would at last be executed were not fulfilled. Nabopolassar died, and Nebuchadnezzar felt that the establishment of his position required his immediate return to Babylon. Accordingly, instead of pushing south to conquer Egypt, he came to an arrangement with Pharaoh Necho by which the latter retained the independence of Egypt but surrendered his claim to his Asiatic conquests.

Jeremiah now dictated to Baruch his secretary the prophecies he had delivered during the twenty-three years of his ministry, in the hope that his people would still be warned and that repentance would avert the otherwise inevitable judgement. To an assembly of the people for a fast at the Temple, Baruch read the prophecies which he had written down. Their character was such that the princes felt that they must report the matter to Jehoiakim ; but, anticipating only too truly the king's resentment, they gave Baruch a friendly warning that he and Jeremiah should at once go into hiding. The king listened to the prophecies and at the end of every three or four columns cut the roll with a penknife and threw these portions into the fire till the whole was burnt, in spite of the intercession made by three of the princes. We are told that neither monarch nor princes were at all perturbed by the warnings in the roll. The king sent for the prophet and his secretary, but they had gone into hiding. Then Jeremiah dictated once more the contents of the roll, and there were added many like words.

Some uncertainty hangs over the precise relations between Judah and Babylon in the period which immediately followed the battle of Carchemish. Apparently an interval elapsed before Jehoiakim was required to acknowledge the suzerainty of Nebuchadnezzar, but eventu-

ally he did so and we are told served him for three years, after which he rebelled, presumably by withholding the tribute. Probably Nebuchadnezzar was not in a position to move at once against his rebellious vassal, so he appears to have set in motion some of the surrounding peoples to raid Jewish territory. It is to this that xii. 7–17 seems to refer. The Babylonian forces subsequently came against Judah, though before the decisive blow was struck Jehoiakim was dead. To this period, but still in Jehoiakim's reign, we should refer the meeting of Jeremiah with the Rechabites recorded in xxxv. The Babylonian and Syrian armies had forced the Rechabites to abandon their nomad life and take refuge in Jerusalem. From the fact that Jeremiah was in Jerusalem and was able to take the Rechabites to the Temple we may infer that the trouble in which he and Baruch had been involved with the king had passed by, and while no doubt the king regarded him with no more favour he had thought it well after the first burst of his anger was over to let the matter rest. True to their nomad ideal, which rested on the conviction that the settled life of agriculture involved unfaithfulness to Yahweh the wilderness deity, the Rechabites refused to drink the wine which Jeremiah offered to them. The prophet uses their loyalty to the command given by Jonadab their ancestor to condemn the disobedience of the Jews to Yahweh.

It is perhaps to the close of Jehoiakim's reign that we should assign xv. 10–21 in its original form. The prophet complains that he is an object of universal hatred, although he has given no cause for this hostility. So far from that, he would say 'Amen' to the curses they heaped upon him, if in the time of their distress he had not made intercession for his enemies. As Yahweh well knows, it was for His sake that he had borne reproach and persecution. He was so completely dedicated to God that his life was absorbed in his vocation. He had stood aloof from his fellows, living in isolation

because the pressure of the Divine hand was upon him, and he had been filled with the indignation of Yahweh which he was charged to pour out upon his people. He is racked with perpetual pain and his wound will not heal. Will Yahweh prove to him a lying stream and waters that are not sure? Years had passed since, in the fresh enthusiasm of youth, he had proclaimed Yahweh to his people as the reservoir of living waters. But the bitter experience of disillusion and discredit and apparent abandonment by God has intervened, and now he is driven to doubt whether He whom he had proclaimed as the unfailing fountain would prove to be but the stream in the desert on which the traveller depended only to find it dry in his hour of need. And, as once before, God sternly rebukes the faltering courage of His servant. He treats the remonstrance he had uttered as tantamount to the abandonment of his vocation, but gives him the opportunity to retrace his steps and once more to stand in His council as His prophet. But if he is to do this then he who was once appointed the assayer of his people must take his own nature in hand, smelt all the dross out of it that it may be pure gold all through. If he does this God will make him a fenced brazen wall against which the people shall fight in vain. Several other sections of the book should probably be attributed to Jehoiakim's reign (see p. 60), but it is uncertain in what period we should place them.

Death alone saved Jehoiakim from the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar. His rebellion was expiated by the captivity of his son Jehoiachin and the queen-mother after a three months' reign. The flower of the nation was taken to Babylon with them, and Jehoiakim's brother Mattaniah was placed on the throne, his name being changed to Zedekiah. Jeremiah himself was left behind, why we do not know. Perhaps he did not belong to the upper ranks of society; perhaps he was in hiding at the time; perhaps his antagonism to the king and his policy

was known to the victors. The new king was a man of quite different stamp from his brother. He seems to have been well-meaning but weak. His position was of course very difficult. The men of experience in government had gone into exile and the State was left to the control of those who were quite incapable of ruling it, but were not apprised of their own incompetence. Indeed, those who were left behind prided themselves on their superiority to those who had gone into exile, on the ground that they had been spared this fate. This led Jeremiah to utter his parable of the baskets of figs, in which he compared the exiles and those who had been left in Judah very much to the disadvantage of the latter, and pronounced judgement on them, while he promises that Yahweh will look with mercy on the exiles. Yet he was under no delusion as to the duration of their captivity. He sent a letter full of the sanest counsels to the exiles (xxix) shortly after they had been taken to Babylon, bidding them settle down in their new home and make the interests of Babylon identical with their own, for only after a lapse of seventy years would Yahweh bring them back from exile in spite of the promises of their prophets. This letter provoked a reply from Shemaiah, one of the false prophets in Babylon, in which he exhorted Zephaniah the overseer to put Jeremiah in the stocks and the collar. Zephaniah, however, instead of imitating the example of Pashhur, read the letter to Jeremiah, who replied with a denunciation of Shemaiah addressed to the exiles.

Somewhat later, in the fourth year of Zedekiah, ambassadors were sent from some of the neighbouring peoples, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, to plan a revolt against Babylon. The death of Pharaoh Necho had just taken place, and he was succeeded by his son Psammetichus II, who reigned 594–589 B. C. It is probable that the change of ruler in Egypt was connected with this meditated revolt. For Pharaoh Necho had remained honourably true to his agreement with Nebuchadnezzar,

but hopes were probably entertained that his successor would seek to regain the dominions which had been surrendered after Carchemish. Whether Psammetichus would have been willing to lead a coalition against Babylon, had he been free to do so, we do not know. But in any case his war with Ethiopia would have prevented his proceeding with such a design. This may be the explanation why the movement came to nothing. If the statement in li. 59 that Zedekiah went to Babylon in this year is correct, we may infer that Nebuchadnezzar had heard of the proposed coalition and that Zedekiah went to Babylon, either voluntarily or on the summons of his suzerain, to clear himself of complicity with rebellion and renew his allegiance. The prophets in Judah eagerly supported the movement for revolt. Jeremiah firmly opposed it. He put a yoke on his neck in sign of submission to Babylon, and warned the ambassadors to abandon their project. When Jeremiah appeared in the Temple wearing the yoke, Hananiah proclaimed to him in God's name that within two years the Temple vessels would be restored and the exiles would be brought back, for the yoke of Babylon would be broken. Jeremiah replied that he could wish it to be so, but the earlier prophets had spoken evil and the prophet who spoke of peace could be recognized as a true messenger of Yahweh only when his prediction was fulfilled. Hananiah replied by breaking the yoke on Jeremiah's neck, saying in Yahweh's name that thus the yoke of Babylon should be broken within two years from the neck of all the nations. The story continues that Jeremiah went his way without further reply, but that he was later sent to tell Hananiah that he should die that year as a penalty for false prophecy. This was fulfilled by his death two months later.

For some years no further attempts seem to have been made to secure independence, but in 589 Pharaoh Hophra succeeded Psammetichus as king of Egypt and once more Judah rebelled against Babylon. Zedekiah's action

appears in all the worse light that he not only owed his throne to Nebuchadnezzar but he had solemnly sworn fealty to him. For the breach of his oath he is sternly denounced by Ezekiel (Ezek. xvii. 11-19). The Babylonians laid siege to the city in 588. Zedekiah sent to the prophet to inquire of Yahweh if perchance He would deliver His people. The prophet assured him that the people would suffer from pestilence and famine and then they would be ruthlessly destroyed. He followed up his answer to the king with advice to the people. Life and death were before them; they might choose life if they would fall away to the Chaldeans, but if they remained in the city they could not be saved. Jeremiah has been much criticized for giving this counsel both then and at a later time, on the ground that, as his contemporaries complained, he weakened the hands of the city's defenders. Duhm agrees that he would have deserved death if he had given such advice, but argues that he cannot have done so since he indignantly repudiated the charge that he was himself acting in accordance with it (xxxvii. 14). In that passage, however, he was denying a definite assertion about his personal intention which was as a matter of fact untrue. He was not repudiating the principle which he here affirms. Besides, we must not overlook the difference between Jeremiah and the people. He knew his place to be in the doomed city. The captain may urge the passengers and then the sailors to abandon the sinking ship; his own place is on board till the last man has left. Jeremiah knew that the ship of State was foundering, but he had a loftier duty than to save his life. And why should he not have advised the people to surrender, when he was certain that resistance was hopeless? He was not the victim of modern military punctilio, common sense and humanitarianism were wholly on his side. It is quite true that those responsible for the defence were justified in their complaints of his utterances from their point of view; but Jeremiah was quite consistent in

drawing the practical inference from his prophetic certainty.

Egypt sent an army which compelled the Babylonians to retire. This naturally seemed to the Jews to warrant the hope that their independence might be secured. But when the king sent to the prophet he again warned him that the army of relief would return to Egypt while the Chaldeans would capture the city. So sure indeed was he that he said that even if the whole army had been smitten and only wounded men were left they would still rise up and take the city. During this interruption of the siege the wealthier Jews were guilty of a peculiarly base act. They had made a covenant to release their Hebrew slaves, but when the siege was raised they brought them back into slavery, conduct which met with the prophet's stern denunciation. At a somewhat later time in the same period Jeremiah was leaving Jerusalem, apparently to attend to his property in Anathoth, when Irijah, the officer at the gate, arrested him on the charge that he was deserting to the Babylonians. Such a charge had a superficial plausibility in view of Jeremiah's general attitude, and the princes had him beaten and imprisoned in the dungeon, where he remained for a long time. It is hardly probable that they seriously believed that Jeremiah contemplated desertion, but the charge was a pretext for muzzling a man whose attitude was so inconvenient and who had earned their hatred by his denunciation of the treatment they had accorded to their slaves. While he was there the king sent for him to learn if he had any Divine message. Jeremiah repeated that the king would be delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, but added a request that he might himself be removed from the dungeon. Zedekiah accordingly had him transferred to the court of the guard and gave orders as to his maintenance.

The Egyptian army had apparently returned to Egypt and the siege of Jerusalem had begun again. The complaint was now made to the king that Jeremiah's

advice to the people that they should desert to the Chaldeans was disheartening the soldiers, and his death was demanded. The king surrendered him to his enemies, and they put him in a cistern to perish. From this fate he was saved by Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, who drew him out of the cistern and restored him to the court of the guard. Another interview with Zedekiah followed, in which the prophet earnestly urged the king to surrender. Zedekiah replied that he feared that he might be handed over to the Jews who had deserted, and that they would mock him. The prophet reassured him on this point, warning him that otherwise he would be mocked by the women of the palace when the city was captured. We learn that while he was in confinement his cousin Hanameel requested him to buy his field in Anathoth, since he had the right of redemption. The prophet purchased it for seventeen shekels of silver, thereby asserting his conviction that although the exile was coming the Jews would again return to their land and houses, and fields and vineyards would again be bought.

After a prolonged siege Jerusalem was captured and burnt. Zedekiah saw his sons put to death and then he was blinded. While a large part of the people went into exile, Gedaliah was appointed governor of those who remained. Jeremiah was offered the choice either to go to Babylon, where he would be well treated, or to remain with Gedaliah in Judah. He chose to remain. It seemed as though the remnant might still enjoy good fortune. The governor appears to have been a man of high character and capacity, generally trusted by the people. Many fugitive Jews who had taken refuge in the surrounding countries returned to place themselves under his protection. The assassination of Gedaliah by Ishmael, a member of the royal house, was a disastrous blow to the little community. Ishmael's purpose of escaping with his captives to Ammon was, it is true, thwarted by Johanan, but the survivors, dreading that the Chaldeans might punish

them for Gedaliah's death, determined, in spite of Jeremiah's warnings, to go down to Egypt and compel the aged prophet with Baruch to accompany them. When they had come into Egypt Jeremiah buried great stones in front of the palace at Tahpanhes, and announced that Nebuchadnezzar's throne would be erected over them, for he would conquer Egypt. The people resumed in Egypt the worship of the Queen of Heaven, and the last scene in which Jeremiah appears to us is that in which he remonstrated with them for their idolatry, while they retorted that all their misfortunes were due to their abandonment of this worship. He reiterated his prophecy of judgement upon them, giving as the sign of its fulfilment the prediction that Pharaoh Hophra would be delivered into the hands of his enemies. With this scene the curtain falls. Whether Jeremiah lingered on a little longer and died a natural death, or whether, as a Christian tradition affirms, he was murdered by his infuriated people, we cannot say. The latter view is only too probable, and some scholars are of the opinion that Baruch's biography of his master closed with an account of his death, which for shame was excluded from the Book of Jeremiah.

If his own generation stoned the prophet, posterity honoured him with a splendid tomb. The deepening sense of his greatness found expression in the legend which grew around his name. It betrayed but little insight into his essential significance, but it attests the immense impression made by his personality and his career. The vindication accorded him by history established his claim to be Yahweh's true spokesman; the long slow martyrdom he endured in fidelity to his vocation soon cast a halo around his memory. Still more important was the influence he exerted on kindred souls. He left his mark on Ezekiel, though his temperament and point of view were in many respects so different. A spirit more nearly akin to his own was that of the great prophet of the exile to whom we owe Isa. xl–lv. Jeremiah is not, indeed, to be identified

with the suffering Servant of Yahweh, but some features in this delineation of Israel were drawn from his career. His teaching was echoed and developed in even fuller measure by some of the great psalmists. It was in Christianity that his conception of religion first received its due place. Jesus, in one of the most solemn hours of His life, went back to Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant and its realization in the shedding of His own blood. The term was taken up by Paul, and especially by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But Jeremiah's contribution to religion did not consist simply in his teaching. What he was and what he did were no less important than what he said. He was by nature an exquisite and sensitive spirit, too delicate and too fragile, it might have seemed, for the rough life of conflict in which his calling engaged him; too shy and nervous to face without shrinking the derision and curses of his fellows. He loved his people with that pure intensity of feeling and lucid insight which makes men's common patriotism seem a trivial and tawdry thing. He saw all their sin and folly with unblinded eyes, and recoiled from it with loathing. He would rather have taken the comfortless khan in the desert for his abode than breathe the poisoned air of his native land. Gentle and trustful, he seemed no match for the open violence or secret treachery which he again and again encountered. And yet through his long ministry of forty years he faced his foes with that loftiest courage which triumphs over nature, rebuked his people with relentless severity, and contradicted their dearest prejudices. There is no wrath so terrible as the 'wrath of the Lamb,' and Jeremiah's wrath was of that type. The feminine strain was very marked in his nature, in his love, his tenderness, the sure delicacy of his intuition, his reliance on a stronger arm, his exultation in submission to a stronger will after ineffective struggles against it. He knew what it was, like Paul, to kick vainly against the goad, and to bear about unceasing

pain in his heart for his kinsmen according to the flesh. Of kinsmen according to the spirit he had but few; none indeed, such was the penalty of genius, in the full sense of the term. It was his fate to be shut out from those joys for which his appreciation was so keen, for which he seemed so fitted by nature. He felt his isolation, his exclusion from the common life of his fellows, its innocent pleasures, its grateful relaxations. With a mind turned in upon itself or its relations with God, turned outward on the inevitable fate of his people and the sin to which it was due, he brooded in solitude. His spirit was always tense, strung to a high pitch; he and his vocation had become one.

It was his loneliness which forced him more and more upon God. In his relations with God he displays what a more timid reverence would feel to be a daring familiarity. But his awe was none the less deep, nor did he think too meanly of his privilege to stand in the council of God. He enters with intimate sympathy into His relations with Israel, the wounded love, the burning indignation, the readiness to forgive. And he in turn lays bare his soul to God. Startled at the disclosure of the evil possibilities of his own heart, deceitful and desperately sick, he prays the skilled Physician of Souls, who knows his malady through and through, to heal him. Or when his lot becomes too bitter, and he can endure it no longer, he turns upon God now with plaintive expostulation, now even with fierce resentment. And God shews him scant sympathy, rather He rebukes him for faltering and bids him brace himself for trials still more severe, rising above his human weakness in the faith that the Divine promise of protection would be fulfilled.

And thus we understand how Jeremiah came to be what he was, the greatest of the prophets. We are singularly fortunate in this, that no Old Testament character is so intimately known to us. It is not simply that we are well-informed as to many of the outward events of his life. The vital thing for us is that we are taken behind

the veil and see revelation at work; we know the inmost thoughts and feelings of a strangely attractive personality. To few men has it fallen to suffer with so keen an intensity, and few have been so singularly honoured in the work they have done for the world. There were other prophets who knew the secret of a lofty and splendid eloquence to which Jeremiah was altogether a stranger. There were poets whose reach and execution were far beyond anything that Jeremiah could attain. And yet there is no one in the Old Testament who speaks to our imagination and our sympathy as this lonely and tragic figure. He was not without great merit as a poet; he portrays Nature and human emotions with the hand of a master, and strikes the deep chords within us as but few have done. But it is the man himself who most appeals to us. We hear him crying to God to let the cup pass from him, and yet we see him forced to drain it to the dregs. We can tell one by one the bitter ingredients mingled in his draught: the dark sin of his people that had grown inveterate, the lighthearted folly with which it went dancing on the road to its inevitable destruction, the scorn and hatred heaped on him for treason to the country he loved beyond his life, the irritation at his rebukes, the incredulity of his warnings. We watch him as he staggers and totters under the weight of the cross to which God had doomed him, a lifelong agony for the sin and sorrow of his people, for God's pain and his own. It is God alone who can relieve him. But it was God who appointed his task, and would not relent. And thus we find in his book a new thing. Unlike other prophets, he has written down for us his emotions, his heartbroken appeals to God. Thus he became the prophet of personal religion because he had learnt the deepest meaning of religion in his own personal fellowship with God. So he rose to his conception of the New Covenant, and anticipated in that great prophecy the central truth of Christianity [1].

[1] For a fuller development of some points in this and the

II. The Teaching of Jeremiah.

It was not the manner of Hebrew writers to argue for the existence of God, or elaborately to define Him. They had little concern with speculative problems, and even the godless scorners who said 'There is no God' were guilty not of theoretical but of practical atheism. The task of their prophets and lawgivers was not to give them a firmer assurance of the reality of the God they worshipped, but to insist that the deities they set by His side were unrealities, and to purify their worship from materialistic and immoral elements. To this Jeremiah forms no exception. His own sense of God was so immediate and convincing, his consciousness of intimate fellowship so clear, that he would have been under even less temptation to doubt His existence than those who had derived their belief only from unquestioned tradition. The urgent questions were rather those suggested by the

following section the editor may be permitted to refer to what he has written in his *Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, pp. 11–15; *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 90–102; and his essay on *Messianic Prophecy* in *Lux Hominum*, pp. 58–61. Two estimates may be added from scholars who occupy an advanced critical standpoint: 'Nothing in the whole range of prophecy is more fascinating than his transparently veracious references to his intercourse with his God; the record of his agonizing mental experiences makes us all the more admire him for his ultimate self-subordination to the will of Yahwè, and his unhesitating acceptance of a perilous responsibility' (Cheyne, *Enc. Bib.* 3380). 'The salient features of Jeremiah's character are his sternness and his veracity, his loyalty and his courage, his sadness and his tenderness. . . . His physical courage may not always be equal to his spiritual intrepidity. His sensitive nature may shrink from actual suffering, and he may at times seek his safety in flight. But when the word of Yahwè comes, he consults not with flesh and blood, but proclaims his message regardless of consequences' (Schmidt, *Enc. Bib.* 2371).

heathen tendencies of his countrymen, the recognition of Canaanite and foreign deities, the assimilation of Yahweh to them, the disbelief in His moral government. Whether we should speak of Jeremiah as a speculative monotheist may be debated. But practically his position was indistinguishable from monotheism. The gods of the heathen are no gods, they are vanities. Yahweh fills heaven and earth, none can elude His vigilance. He is the God of nature, who has set the sand as a bound of the sea; its mutinous waves may toss and roar, but their chafing at His curb is all in vain. He gives the rains in their season and harvest at the appointed time. He is the God of history; all nations, even the mightiest, are at His disposal and the instruments of His will. His character is to be inferred rather from His government of the world and His attitude to the conduct of His people than from the definite statements made by the prophet, though these are not wholly wanting. A characteristic utterance is 'I am Yahweh, which exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight.' With all the assertions of His sternness towards sin there is constant reference to His goodness, grace, and readiness to forgive. These and other qualities, however, will be more fully brought before us in the sequel.

When Jeremiah first appeared before his countrymen as the spokesman of Yahweh, he tenderly recalled the happy relations between Israel and her God in the days of the nation's youth. Like Hosea, from whom he has derived the symbol of marriage to express these relations, he looked back to the nomad period as Israel's best and happiest age. Even after the long centuries of unfaithfulness, Yahweh remembers in her favour the love she showed Him as a youthful bride when He had rescued her from Egypt, the loyalty with which she followed Him through the uncultivated desert. And her love was met by an answering love; she was sacred to Him as the first-

fruits, which none might touch on pain of His vengeance. He led her through all the perils of the pathless uninhabited wilderness, and brought her into the fruitful land of Canaan. And then, as if He had given her just cause of displeasure, she turned away and went in pursuit of false gods, defiled His land and made it an abomination. Like a refractory ox she snapped yoke and thongs and renounced the service of her master. Forgetful of all His goodness she made light of her marriage vows, sinning with her many lovers on every lofty hill and under every leafy tree. It was no fault of His, who had planted her as a choice vine, that she had become a foreign vine. The fault was all her own. Yielding to the perilous fascination of the agricultural life she had gone after the Baalim, the givers of fertility as she fondly imagined. How madly she had acted! She had left the unfailing fountain of living waters and with much cost and toil hewed out cisterns in the rock, thinking thus the better to slake her feverish thirst with their foul and stagnant water, which too often leaked away, leaving but a filthy sediment. As if the hot lustfulness and wild tumultuous excitement of Baal worship, the delirious raptures of a sensual religion, could bring her contentment and rest! Let East and West be ransacked for any parallel to her conduct and none would be found. For no other nation ever changed its gods, though they were but nonentities. But Israel has changed her God, who is her glory, for that which cannot profit.

This had been the sad history of the northern tribes as well as of Judah. And when the Northern Kingdom had disappointed Yahweh's expectation of reform, He put her away and gave her a bill of divorcement. Judah might have taken warning by her sister's exile, but she plunged even more deeply into sin. The story of the girdle ruined by Euphrates water was apparently intended to symbolize the religious and moral corruption of Israel by Assyrian and Babylonian influences. In the reign of

Manasseh foreign cults had become more and more prominent. 'They did worse than their fathers,' such is the prophet's verdict on the later apostasy of his people. The sun and moon and all the host of heaven were zealously worshipped, and the women were especially earnest in the cult of the Queen of Heaven. The hideous custom of child-sacrifice was practised in the Valley of Hinnom. It would seem that the people intended these gruesome offerings of their children for Yahweh, but He repudiates with horror all responsibility for this misapprehension.

Jeremiah had probably been familiar in early life with the popular worship of the country districts in the time of Manasseh and Amon, and we have no reason to suppose that matters had altered much when he received his call. The reformation did not take place till five years later, and his earliest prophecies permit us to reconstruct in some detail the religious conditions with which he was confronted at the opening of his ministry. The justice of the prophet's indictment would apparently not have been granted by the people. They indignantly repudiated the charge that they had gone after the Baalim. In reply he points to their 'way in the valley,' by which he intends the sacrifice of children in the Valley of Hinnom; but they would have explained this as an example of their ardour in the service of Yahweh. To Jeremiah such a protestation counted for nothing. It seemed to him only a mark of Judah's deep insincerity. What mattered the mere name of the deity when the rites by which he was honoured were heathenish? And so he complains of the blandishments she lavishes on Yahweh, 'Hast thou not but just now cried unto me, My father, thou art the friend of my youth?' Yet all the while she is saying 'My father' or 'My mother' to stock and stone. The host of heaven, and especially the Queen of Heaven, are still assiduously worshipped. Judah is like a young she-camel at mating time, stung by passion, restlessly crossing and recrossing her tracks in her desire, uncontrollable with

her insatiable lust. Like a shameless wanton she races after her lovers till her shoes fall from her feet and her throat is parched by thirst. She professes her inability to reform, for all self-control is lost; she loves the strange gods, and after them she will go. Yet in the time of trouble it is from her own God that she claims deliverance; and, protesting her innocence, expostulates with Yahweh when calamity overtakes her, or reassures herself with the fond belief that His wrath will soon pass away; for she has learnt nothing from former chastisement.

But Yahweh views her conduct in a very different light. He sternly repels her deceitful endearments, and gives her unfaithfulness its dishonourable name. He answers her brazen assertion of her innocence with the threat that He will punish her for making it. How gladly, indeed, He would have dealt with her otherwise! He would have treated her as a son, waiving her inability as a daughter to inherit, and given her the goodliest heritage of the nations. But how can she expect Him to take her back? If a woman's first husband cannot receive her back after she has been divorced from him and united in legitimate marriage to another man, how can Yahweh receive her, who while still legally bound to Him has yet wronged Him by her sinful relations with many lovers? Her transgressions have been unpardonable, her guilt so ingrained that she cannot cleanse it away. Yet what would seem impossible to man is possible to God. Utterly defiled, irretrievably wicked as she seems to be, there is still an opportunity of repentance and amendment. On the bare heights, the scene of unnumbered sins, the prophet hears in imagination the brokenhearted wailing of his people in penitence for their unfaithfulness. And at once the inarticulate confession is met by Yahweh's gracious invitation to them to return, by His gracious promise that He will heal their apostasy. Then the people, who otherwise had not dared to address Him against whom they had

transgressed so deeply, respond with the cry 'We come to Thee, for Thou art our God,' and with the confession that the sensuous orgies of their worship had brought them no real satisfaction. In Yahweh alone is salvation; the Baalim had robbed them not of animal victims alone but of their sons and daughters. They would lie down overwhelmed by shame and confusion for their sin. Then Yahweh sets forth the conditions on which she may return to Him and judgement be averted.

Alas! it was only in imagination that the prophet heard his people weeping for their sins. They seemed deaf to his appeals. He still continues to preach amendment, but in vain. He reiterates his charges of idolatry. But now he enters more closely into other forms of sin. His observation has led him to a pessimistic verdict. Rich and poor, teacher and taught, are all alike. It is a foolish, sottish people, wise to do evil, but with no knowledge to do good. One might ransack Jerusalem and fail to find a single individual who acts justly or seeks faithfulness. Men wax rich by deceit, and grow sleek by oppression, they wrest justice from the fatherless and the needy. All are given to covetousness and false dealing. Jerusalem keeps her wickedness fresh as a cistern keeps its water cool. Violence and spoil, sickness and wounds are to be found in her. The sanctities of the home are set at naught by widespread immorality. The great men who know God's will are defiant and refractory, and have not the excuse of ignorance which may be urged for the poor. The religious leaders, the priests and prophets, have entered into an unholy conspiracy, and the people love to be misguided by them. They give medical attention to the wound of the people, but content themselves with a superficial treatment of the symptoms instead of the drastic surgery which its gravity demands. Thus the prophet's prolonged assaying of his people has brought him to the melancholy conviction that there is no pure metal in them. For such

a people, incredulous though it be of calamity, nothing remains except national destruction. No frankincense from Sheba, no calamus from a distant country, will be of avail to avert it; burnt offerings and sacrifices will prove unacceptable. The foe from the north comes on to inflict Yahweh's vengeance. The people are inflammable wood, and the prophetic word in Jeremiah's lips is the fire which will kindle them.

The Deuteronomic reformation made an end of idolatry and of the heathenish rites which had invaded the worship of Yahweh. The suppression of the local sanctuaries and the concentration of the cultus at the Temple did much to purify religion. We are not in a position to follow the course of the prophet's ministry in the later part of Josiah's reign, so we do not know how he would have estimated the character of the people during that period. But we have reason to believe that he would soon perceive that the wound of the people had again been too lightly healed. When we come to Jehoiakim's reign we have ample evidence. It is not clear indeed to what extent idolatry had returned or the worship of the local sanctuaries been restored. The great address delivered at the Temple at the beginning of the reign charges the people with sacrificing to the Baal and walking after other gods, and the description of the worship offered to the Queen of Heaven is at present incorporated in the report of that address, though it may not have originally been included in it. In the same address we find reference to the abominations which have defiled the Temple, and the sacrifice of children in the Valley of Hinnom. But we have to allow for the possibility that these allusions were rather to the state of things in the pre-reformation period, and further that they may be due in some measure to later interpolation. For the altercation which took place in Egypt between Jeremiah and the devotees of the Queen of Heaven strongly favours the view that there had been no revival of her cult in

Judah, since they trace their misfortunes, culminating in their present evil case, to its cessation. We need not, on the other hand, deny that a good deal of idolatry probably went on, or that worship may have been revived at many of the high places. This would, we may presume, be of an unofficial character, there would be no formal repeal of Josiah's reforms or any re-establishment of cults he had suppressed. And this applies to the subsequent reigns, during which, as we learn from Ezekiel, sun worship, animal worship, and the wailing of women for Tammuz were practised, unless here again we ought to regard the description as referring to what had gone on at an earlier time.

The attack on other forms of sin naturally assumes greater prominence in the post-reformation period, but there is little to add to what has been already said. Theft, murder, adultery, perjury, oppression of the defenceless, the maladministration of justice, constitute along with idolatry the black catalogue of crimes and vices, which unless they cease from them will bring on the Temple the fate of Shiloh, and on the Jews an exile like that of Ephraim. Elsewhere the prophet complains bitterly of the deceit and treachery which have undermined all mutual confidence and poisoned all social intercourse. While their sin assumed many forms, fundamentally it was the refusal to hearken to God's commands given through His prophets. He had been unwearied in sending them to recall His erring people to the ancient paths, that in them they might find rest for their souls. But as Yahweh's child, Israel had repaid His love with ungrateful disobedience, as His wife she had broken her marriage vows. It was in the wrong relation to God that the root of all the mischief was to be found. No lavish ceremonial or costly sacrifices, no loyalty to the Temple could commend to His favour a people stained with such sins. So valueless in His eyes are their sacrifices that He tells them to take the burnt-offerings, reserved for Himself alone, and eat these

as well as those sacrifices of which the worshippers partook; they were nothing but ordinary flesh robbed of all the sanctity which their consecration on the altar would otherwise have conferred.

But the most characteristic element in Jeremiah's doctrine of sin has not yet been mentioned, or he would not have made any essential advance on the prophets who preceded him. Gifted beyond all others with psychological insight and a keenness of introspection, he is not content with a merely empirical description of the manifestations which sin assumes. With delicate analytic skill he takes them back to their cause, which he finds in the evil heart of man, defiant of God's control, obstinate in taking its own course. Not, indeed, that this evil heart was an original factor in human nature. This might seem to be suggested by his famous question, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' For we might infer that he held evil to be as integral a part of man's nature as the colour of an Ethiopian's skin or the spots in a leopard's hide, and therefore as ineffaceable. But when he continues, 'then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil,' we see that the inference would be mistaken. Their moral inability was due not to any radical quality of nature, but to long-protracted habit. If the stork in the heaven knows her appointed times, if the turtle and the swift and the swallow observe the time of their coming, then surely man must have an instinct within him to guide him to God and to duty as unerring as that which prompts at the right season the migration of the birds. But, unlike them, he has disobeyed the instinct so that his heart has become blunted in its delicate susceptibilities to right and wrong, and can never, till it has been circumcised, recover its fine and true moral and religious sensitiveness. The heart of man, even in his own case, he knows to be 'deceitful above all things and desperately sick,' so intricate in its tortuous windings that God alone can search and know the man as he is in his inmost

self. And this preoccupation, with the heart as the source of conduct, this change in the centre of gravity from the outward to the inward, forced him into an individualism in his conception of sin corresponding to that which we find in his portrayal of the moral and spiritual ideal in his doctrine of the New Covenant. So he does not content himself with an indictment against society and the State. He singles out the individuals of whom society is composed, and pronounces all without exception unclean. If there were but one righteous man in Jerusalem God would pardon the city. Hence he addresses himself not simply to the nation as a whole, but he bids each individual turn from his evil way.

From his pessimistic estimate of his people there followed an equally pessimistic forecast of the future. Not, indeed, that he allowed his efforts for their regeneration to be paralysed by the gloominess of his outlook. Their case was in truth desperate, but he put a desperate energy into his pleadings with them. Their lighthearted optimism made him despair of influencing them. Entrenched in the dogma that Zion was impregnable, complacently assured of their good standing with their God, they treated his warnings as the dreams of a fanatic whom the event had often discredited. And in their refusal to believe such blasphemy as that the Temple would share the fate of Shiloh, that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the nation hurled into exile, they had the support of the official representatives of religion.

But though Jeremiah strove with such earnestness to wake his people from a slumber that could end only in death, in his heart of hearts he had all but abandoned hope. The very appearance of a true prophet had always been a presage of disaster, a sure indication that Yahweh was meditating some terrible judgement on His people. This judgement might be averted by timely repentance, but in the temper of Judah Jeremiah detected no sense of need, no consciousness of realities. From the outset his

message had been primarily one of breaking down and plucking up, and he never faltered in his conviction that God would speak His judgements against His people by the foe out of the north. The enemy sweeps on swift as a whirlwind, multitudinous and invincible, cruel and pitiless; the inhabitants flee for refuge into the fortified cities while invaders ravage the land, devouring their corn and fruit, their flocks and herds. But even in the cities they are not safe, for Jerusalem itself will not withstand the besiegers. Pestilence, famine, and sword will do their work and the remnant will go into exile. The city will become a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals. The dead will lie unburied on the ground with none to bewail them. The foe will take the bulk of the population in great masses as fish are captured in a net, and then they will hunt out those that are left one by one from every chink and cranny of the hills and rocks where they have taken refuge. Thus the land will be completely denuded of its inhabitants. The sound of merriment will be hushed, the voice of the bridegroom and bride, a deathly stillness will brood over the land unbroken by the sound of the mill, nor will the darkness of night be relieved by the light of the cottage lamp. It is as though chaos had come back: the heavens are shrouded in blackness, no human form meets the eye of the prophet as it ranges over the landscape nor any bird in the sky, the fertile country has become desert, the cities are beaten down. And those who escape with their lives and are taken into exile will envy the dead, so wretched will be their lot, as they are tossed to and fro among the nations, dashed against each other without pity, and pursued by the sword till they are consumed. Moreover, the fall of Judah will involve that of the surrounding peoples, who also will be made to drink the wine from the goblet of God's anger.

But punishment is not God's last word to Judah. True, His anger will not be spent so soon as the optimists imagine, for seventy years must go by before the

Babylonian empire falls. But at last the day of deliverance will dawn. In his early ministry Jeremiah had anticipated the return of the northern tribes and their joyous life in the land of their fathers. And for the exiles of Judah who have been taken to Babylon he expresses a similar hope. They must meanwhile make themselves at home in their new country and wait God's good time. But on these exiles, though not on those in Egypt, Yahweh has set His eyes for good and not for evil, and at last He will restore them to their own land. Israel and Judah will be reunited and live in peace and prosperity under native rulers. And this manifestation of God's might and favour will so far surpass the deliverance from Egypt that they will cease to say, 'As Yahweh liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' and will say, 'As Yahweh liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither He had driven them.' And over this people thus happily reunited there will reign the Messianic king. He is described as a righteous Shoot. He is of David's race and will fulfil the ideal of a just and wise monarch, who keeps his people in security and peace. He will bear the name 'Yahweh is our righteousness,' and realize, as Zedekiah did not, the ideal implied in the name. It is noteworthy that in Jeremiah's doctrine of the Messiah there is, as we should anticipate, a welcome absence of those unhallowed dreams of far-extended empire, of the heathen annihilated or crushed into abject slavery, such as stain so many Messianic forecasts in the canonical and post-canonical literature of Judaism.

Such, then, is his political ideal. And his religious and ethical ideal corresponds to it. Alike for nation and individual he deprecates all trust in the arm of flesh. In a beautiful passage he draws a contrast between the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm and whose heart departs from Yahweh, and the man whose trust is reposed in Him. And similarly he would have his people

abandon the vain hopes of help from foreign powers and rely on the living God alone. To Him alone glory belongs, and man must stand before Him in humility and awe. None should glory in his own wisdom, his might, or his wealth, but only in his understanding and knowledge of Yahweh, that it is He who executes kindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth. It goes without saying that the prophet took for granted in the happy future which he anticipated for the people a complete abandonment of all those vices and crimes which he had had such constant occasion to rebuke in his own generation.

But his supreme contribution to religion still remains to be mentioned. It corresponds in its inwardness to his conception of sin. This is his doctrine of the New Covenant[1]. It stands contrasted with the Old Covenant, that made by Yahweh with Israel at the Exodus, inscribed with God's finger on the Tables of the Law, or written in a book. That covenant Israel had broken, and Yahweh had cancelled it before all the world by the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the nation. But He had annulled it, not because the sin of Israel had so wearied Him that His patience was exhausted, but because Israel had proved unequal to the demand it made. An external law had proved a failure, man's evil heart had paralysed its power to control the conduct of nation or individual. A new method had accordingly to be tried, which should deal radically with the seat of the evil. Since it was the stubbornness of the heart, its obstinate defiance of God's commandments, which had made the Old Covenant so ineffective, He would inaugurate a New Covenant and secure its success by capturing the stronghold which had so long maintained rebellion against Him, the heart which is the citadel of man's being. He would put His laws in men's inward parts and write them on their heart. This

[1] For further discussion of the problems connected with it see the notes on xxxi. 31–34.

must be read in the light of what is said elsewhere, which implies a transformation of the heart. It is not the writing of Divine commands on a heart which is still rebellious that is intended. The heart is itself renewed, so that there is no conflict between the Divine injunction and the nature which is summoned to fulfil it. It is a circumcised heart, a heart from which the old moral and religious insensibility has been removed. The law of God and the heart of man no longer stand opposed to each other as external and internal. Man does God's will naturally and spontaneously because it is his own will, it has become an integral part of his personality, the law of his nature. In other words, it is not merely an intuitive knowledge of God's will that is intended. This would be secured by the writing of the law on the unregenerate heart, but the problem of obedience would be as far as ever from solution. Only when the heart itself had been renewed, when its refractory hostility to God's behests had been subdued, would not only the knowledge of His will but the conformity to it be achieved.

Yet we must not undervalue the advance in the matter of knowledge which the New Covenant marked over the Old. A Code of Laws designed for large masses of people is inevitably of a generalizing character, it is lacking in flexibility and delicate adjustment to individual conditions. To correct this defect of rough approximation the legislator might look to a developed system of casuistry constructed with the aim of registering and legislating for all possible cases. But such an aim is quite unattainable in view of the variety and complexity of the characters and conditions themselves, and still more of the intricate situations to which their interaction gives rise. Conduct would become for the expert a matter of painfully regulated conformity with this code, from which all the bloom and aroma of unconsciousness and spontaneity would have departed. The ordinary man, on the other hand, would have to content himself with such vague

extensions and applications of the law as his personal circumstances and temperament or the lessons of experience might suggest. What is really required is the power of instinctive and instantaneous self-adjustment to every situation as it arises, the knowledge of the exact response that should be made to the stimulus which each brings with it. Such an ideal it is the purpose of the New Covenant to attain. Thus what the Law could not do, in virtue of its general and external character, God would accomplish under the New Covenant, by giving men a heart to know Him (xxiv. 7), and then placing within this renewed heart His law as the spring of all action.

It is clear that if God gives to each a heart to know Him, no need would any longer exist for one to exhort another to acquaint himself with God. All would know Him from the least to the greatest. The relation of God to the individual would be immediate and direct, independent of the State or official order of religious teachers. It would nevertheless be a mistake to interpret Jeremiah as the prophet of an atomistic individualism. An individualist he was, and that in full measure. But the New Covenant itself is made with the nation. The religion remains the religion of Israel, a national religion. God and Israel are still the contracting parties to the New Covenant as to the Old. But the individualism which characterized the New made the religion national in a sense unattainable under the Old. For when the religion rested on external guarantees and was expressed in external institutions, while its laws were imposed by an external authority, when moreover the people was contemplated as a unit, without reference to the individuals of whom it was composed, then it was national, but in a general and superficial sense. Only when every individual in the mass is renewed in heart and his will brought into harmony with the Divine will, can the nation itself be truly called religious. Through its individualism

the religion first became national in the full sense of the term.

What, then, of the dark apostasy which through their long history in Canaan had stained the history alike of Judah and Israel? What of the sins which had been committed by those who thus experienced this renewal of heart and implanting of the Divine Law? A complete amnesty is promised, God will pardon their iniquities and remember them no more. Only with such forgiveness and forgetfulness could happy relations between them be restored. Nothing is said in the passage of the conditions which made pardon and oblivion possible. It is of course assumed that the people have turned to God in penitence for their rebellion and with fervent determination to obey His will. But Jeremiah, like the Old Testament writers generally, while he recognizes that punishment is often inflicted on sin, seems to feel no difficulty in the Divine forgiveness of sin on the sole condition of repentance.

We cannot easily overestimate the significance of Jeremiah's doctrine of the New Covenant. It is the supreme achievement of Israel's religion, and its author was the loftiest religious genius who adorned the line of the prophets. For whereas other prophets did much to interpret religion and enforce its demands, he transformed the very conception of religion itself. Hitherto religion had been the concern of the nation with its God, the individual had no independent standing before the Deity. Not, indeed, that what we call personal religion was unknown, but that the stress lay on the national relationship, and the individual had no claim on his God apart from his connexion with his people. Jeremiah shifts the emphasis from the nation to the individual. The essence of religion he discovers in a personal relation to a personal God, where in fact it lies. Each knows God for himself, in the heart of each God places His law. His doctrine was thus an anticipation of the Gospel in that it asserted the worth of the individual to God and the personal character of

religion, in its assurance of forgiveness, its transcendence of legalism, and the inwardness of its ethic. It might seem as if even Jeremiah failed to rise above the nationalism from which the religion of Israel never succeeded in escaping, since he still regards the covenant as made with Israel and Judah. But here it is necessary to distinguish between kernel and husk. It is true that his doctrine as stated in this passage is justly charged with this limitation. Elsewhere indeed he anticipates a conversion of the heathen (xii. 15, 16; xvi. 19, 20). This anticipation, however, perhaps scarcely coincides with universalism in the full sense of the term. But it could hardly be expected that even Jeremiah should take the step from nationalism into universalism, for which he would have felt no warrant, even if the thought had dawned upon him, and for which in fact the time had not come. Yet while formally religion remained national in his doctrine, essentially the national restrictions were surmounted. For religion, as he conceived it, was really independent of race and country. It needed no external embodiment, even the ark had ceased to possess any spiritual value. Religion, as he defined it, was not fitly confined to a single people; it was not a relationship between God and the Israelite, but between God and man. The universalism of Christianity was logically implicit in it.

The verses in which the doctrine is enshrined are not isolated in Jeremiah's teaching. They are the outcome of no transient flash of insight, which lit up for him spiritual depths he had never before explored. They are the ripe fruit of long experience, of deep meditation on the ultimate realities of the spiritual life. It was not given to him that he should clothe his thoughts in their most radiant expression. But if to the author of the seventy-third Psalm it was granted to utter once for all the blessedness of the soul to which naught in heaven or earth seems precious save fellowship with the living God, he strikes in that utterance a note made possible by Jeremiah.

The experience was verified by the Psalmist; it had been discovered by Jeremiah. He was the first to break through the crust of nationalism to the glowing centre of religion. And he who first proclaimed the truth that religion is in its essence the communion of the individual with God, must for ever rank as one of the world's supreme discoverers in the greatest of all realms.

III. The Book of Jeremiah as Literature.

If we take the book as it stands, our estimate of its literary quality cannot be very high. No clear principle seems to have determined its arrangement, so that any one who reads the book straight through finds himself in a state of constant bewilderment as he moves backwards and forwards along the prophet's career, or, still worse, has no clue to the situation or period of the prophet's life reflected in the portion he may be reading. But even if the book were arranged in its chronological order and the circumstances which gave rise to each section were precisely known, the reader might still complain with justice that its style is often diffuse and pedestrian, it abounds in stereotyped formulae and constant repetition, and draws not a little on earlier writings. It is accordingly not strange that a rather unfavourable verdict has commonly been passed on Jeremiah's literary power. When all is said, it may be admitted that he was not Israel's supreme poet as he was her supreme prophet. Nevertheless his rank is high. Neither he nor Baruch is responsible for the book as it stands. The general arrangement is due to later editors, and there is a good deal of later matter in the book. The responsibility for the diffuse and conventional style rests to some extent on the heads of the supplementers. Large portions of the book are from the hands of Baruch, and it would be useless to form any opinion of Jeremiah's literary gift from these. We must draw exclusively on those portions of the book which

contain Jeremiah's own utterances. When we limit ourselves to them the impression of literary greatness we receive is much higher. Of course, much will depend even then on our critical results. The more we eliminate from Jeremiah's own work those passages which are of slighter literary worth, the higher our estimate of his poetical genius naturally rises. This process probably has some justification up to a certain point, but Duhm has pushed it to an extreme, and it may be doubted whether some of the scholars who refuse to go his length have not gone too far in his direction. Students of our own literature will readily recall examples of poets, whose greatness none will question, from whom we have a mass of inferior work. At his best he reached a lofty height. But he was a prophet before he was a poet, and when the word burned within his heart he must utter it without tarrying till his lips also were touched by the Muse of poetry with a living coal from her altar.

Without entering at length into the vexed question of Hebrew metre, it may be said that Jeremiah displays a marked leaning to what is known as the Qina rhythm. A fuller description of this rhythm must be reserved for the introduction to Lamentations; here it may suffice to say that it is written in long lines divided into two unequal parts, the longer part of the line standing first. The presence of this rhythm in Jeremiah's oracles is often beyond all reasonable dispute, and when it has been disturbed it can frequently be restored by a simple and otherwise plausible emendation of the text. Apart from the letter to the exiles in Babylon, Duhm considers that we have nothing from Jeremiah's lips except sixty short poems written exclusively in this rhythm. Other scholars have refused to accept this drastic criticism. At present the whole question of Hebrew metre is in debate, and among those who believe that there was such a thing as a Hebrew prosody there exists a radical divergence even on fundamental issues. And while it may be granted that

Jeremiah shows a natural tendency to fall into rhythm, there are passages, the authenticity of which we have no valid reason for disputing, which cannot without undue violence be reduced to a rigid metrical scheme. Moreover, there are cases where metrical correctness is secured at the loss of literary effectiveness. For example, Duhm's reduction of the wonderful passage iv. 23–26 to Qina verses involves, in the present writer's judgement, a distinct loss in poetical beauty.

The diffuseness which characterizes the book as a whole is apt to conceal from us how great a master of style Jeremiah was. His prophecies abound in concise and pregnant utterances which it is not easy to forget. Some examples may be quoted: 'Is not my word as fire? saith Yahweh; and as a forge-hammer that shatters the rocks?' (xxiii. 29). 'For two evils hath my people committed; Me have they forsaken, the fountain of living waters, to hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which hold no water' (ii. 13). 'An appalling and horrible thing is come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests teach at their beck, and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?' (v. 30, 31). 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved' (viii. 20). 'If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how wilt thou strive with horses? And if in a land of peace thou fleest, then how wilt thou do in the jungle of Jordan?' (xii. 5). 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil' (xiii. 23). 'Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou indeed be unto me as a lying *stream*, as waters that are not sure?' (xv. 18).

The prophet's style is a reflection of his personality. It is marked by deep sincerity and freedom from all that is artificial. It is an indication of his greatness that he should see the principles of the Divine action expressed

in the most commonplace things. He draws his lessons from ordinary objects, from the scenes or occupations of everyday life. The almond-tree bursting into new life after its winter sleep, the caldron boiling on the fire, the refiner purifying the precious metal from its dross, the potter remaking the marred vessel, the fowler snaring the birds, the farmer breaking up his fallow ground, the fisherman taking great masses of fish in his net, or the hunter pursuing his victims one by one in the crannies of the hills, the robber sheltering in his cave, the Arabian lurking for plunder by the wayside, the thief disappointed when he is baulked of his spoil by discovery, the debtor and creditor with their mutual hatred,—all of these are pressed by the prophet into the service of his mission. Although he was excluded from the common life of his fellows and could not share their joys or sorrows, he yet watched them at their occupation or their pleasure with close and sympathetic observation. He may not go into the house of mourning, but he knows the common expressions of grief. Merriment is equally forbidden to him, but he has watched with delight the supple movement of the virgin as, adorned with timbrels, she rejoiced in the dances of the merrymakers. He has noticed that no bride, however forgetful she might be, forgot her sash. He has observed the division of labour in the family cult of the Queen of Heaven: how the children gather the firewood and the fathers kindle it, while the women knead dough to make cakes for their divinity. We learn of some familiar gestures from him, the covering of the head in sign of grief, the smiting on the thigh in sorrow or astonishment, the hands on the head in shame and distress. He draws some of his metaphors from his observation of travel. He notes how the wayfarer who passes through the land enters into no intimate relations with the people. If the traveller misses his path he must return to the cross roads to inquire. The perils of a journey supply him with several illustrations. Zedekiah is like the traveller who

has strayed from the path and finds his feet suddenly sinking in the swamp. In his dependence on Yahweh the prophet has himself been like the traveller who has counted on a brook or spring but fears that its waters may run dry. The prophets are compared to men who are overtaken by the darkness and find the ground, hitherto smooth, become slippery under their feet; they cannot halt or return, but stumble on till they fall. We have a similar but even finer description in xiii. 16. Here Jeremiah flashes before us a picture of travellers on the mountains, who ramble with lighthearted confidence, till suddenly the sky is overspread, and there is a gloom like twilight. They still move on with stumbling feet, but warned by their experience, resolve to wait till the sky clears again. But as they tarry the gloom deepens till thick darkness settles down upon them. In this connexion we may observe how distasteful the pathless desert was to him, with its pits for the unwary, its drought and scanty herbage, which like the dwarf juniper just held on to life; the violent stifling sirocco which blows from it; its depressing loneliness, or the still more unwelcome presence of the Bedouin robber. Equally uncongenial was the tangled jungle that fringed the Jordan, where the lion lurked or whence he was driven by the flood of the river. He had also the usual Hebrew dislike of the sea which finds such striking expression in the Book of Job. Jeremiah, like Job, is most deeply impressed with the unquiet tossing of the sea in impotent mutiny against God's iron hand.

But while he dislikes the desert, the jungle, and the sea, he betrays the fullest sympathy with country life, which he had observed very closely. Birds and beasts, trees and shrubs, the permanent features of the landscape, pastoral and agricultural life, all supply him with illustrations or material for his descriptions. The instinct of the birds for migration at their appointed time enforces the conviction that man has a similar instinct for God. He has noted how the birds of prey turn upon a bird of

plumage unlike their own. Riches forsake him who has gained them unlawfully, just as young birds desert the partridge who has hatched eggs in another bird's nest. A city nestled in an almost inaccessible retreat is compared to a bird which has made its nest in the cedars of Lebanon. The wicked who seek to take men in their toils are compared to the fowler who catches birds in his trap. When chaos seems to have resumed its sway the lover of the birds observes that they have vanished from the sky. The drying up of the pastures in the drought is so extreme that even the hind forsakes her newborn young. The wild ass gasps for air on the bare heights like the crocodile with its head out of the water, while its eyes fail for want of food. If the people break loose from control like oxen, the lion from the jungle will slay them, the wolf of the desert will spoil them, while the leopards give out their cry and lurk in the field outside the city to slay all that come out. Rebellious Judah is compared to a lion which has turned fiercely on Yahweh, and Ephraim after its restoration confesses that it has been as a calf untrained. Or again, Judah in her passion for false gods is likened to the she-camel at mating time restlessly interlacing her ways. Jeremiah compares himself, in the unsuspicious confidence he reposed in his false friends, to the lamb led to the slaughter.

Judah is like a luxuriant olive tree fair with goodly fruit, over which a violent thunderstorm has broken, so that the lightning has burnt its foliage and snapped its boughs. The destruction of a city is described as the kindling of a fire in a forest that shall devour all that is round about her. The royal house is compared to districts so rich in timber as Gilead or the summit of Lebanon, but it will be turned into a wilderness. Israel is often spoken of as a vine or a vineyard, though planted as a choice vine it turned into a wild vine. While the dwarf juniper in the desert just contrives to eke out a bare subsistence, the tree planted by the waters, which sends its roots to the stream, keeps

its foliage green in the time of drought and bears its unfailing fruit. When there has been a failure in the grain harvest followed by a failure of the fruit, famine stares the people in the face. The prophet has watched the farmers at work and observed how the good farmer breaks up the fallow ground and does not sow among thorns, while others who are more careless sow wheat and get a harvest of thorns. He has watched them threshing their wheat, and seen how, when the violent wind comes from the wilderness, it sweeps away grain and chaff alike.

He is rich in metaphors, many of which have already been quoted. It will have appeared that he draws his illustrations most readily from the common life about him: the life of the shepherd, the herdsman, the ploughman and the artisan, the beasts of the field and the fowl of heaven. It is noteworthy that military metaphors are rare with him, though he lived in a time of war and we have powerful descriptions of the horrors of invasion from his pen. He himself is made by God a fortified city and a brazen wall which is impregnable against the assaults of the enemy. He describes slanderers as bending their tongue as a bow, the slanders being the arrows they aim at their victims; though later the tongue itself is described as a deadly arrow. When describing the foe out of the north he indicates how deadly is the rain of its arrows by saying that their quiver is like an open sepulchre. Illustrations from disease and the art of healing are slightly more frequent. The prophets are compared to physicians who heal the people's hurt too lightly. Seeing that new flesh has not replaced the old flesh in the body politic, the prophet enquires 'Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there?' He asks God to heal the desperate sickness of his deceitful heart; or, again, he complains that his wound is incurable and refuses to be healed. Of metaphors derived from agriculture we may add to those already mentioned the comparison of the exiles and those who remained in Judah to the good figs and the bad figs

respectively. In the exquisite description of the return from captivity he expresses the happiness of the people in the words "Their soul shall be as a watered garden". Especially fine is his personification of Death as the Reaper (ix. 21–23). No home can keep him at bay, for he steals in through the windows; no wealth can bribe him, for he rifles the palaces. No pity for weakness, no love for the tenderly cherished causes him to falter or discriminate: the ruthless scythe cuts down the children. Another personification which may be mentioned here is that which we find in vi. 1: as the prophet looks towards the north suddenly there flashes on his gaze the sinister figure of Disaster surveying the land she is about to devastate. Of metaphors from the animal world we may add the comparison of the foe to serpents who foil all the arts of the charmer, and of Jerusalem to a shepherd entrusted with a beautiful flock. A wealth of metaphors is naturally devoted to the relations between Yahweh and His people. She was at the first Yahweh's affectionate bride, but later proved unfaithful to Him. She was sacred to Him as the firstfruits which a man touched at his peril (interesting as Jeremiah's single illustration drawn from the cultus). Jerusalem keeps cool her wickedness as a cistern its water. The iniquity of Judah is too deeply ingrained to be purged away, her sin written with an iron stylus and diamond point on her heart. Her conduct is as unnatural as if the everlasting snow were to forsake the mountains or the cold streams of the hills run dry. Her forgetfulness of her God is as inexplicable as if a maid forgot her ornaments or the bride her sash. Yet Yahweh had been no barren wilderness to His people, no land of deep darkness where they might wander in hopeless perplexity. The close union between the two is symbolized by the loin-cloth which since it has become spoiled must be cast aside. Similarly Yahweh says of Jehoiachin that though he were as closely attached to Him as the signet-ring of His hand, He would nevertheless cast him away. He will be thrown away

like a cheap terra-cotta image which had been broken or a worthless vessel. The destruction which is to come on Judah is compared to the laying of a tent in ruins, or the ravaging of a vineyard so that there are no grapes on the vine, no figs on the fig-tree, while the leaf fadeth. In her attempts to cajole the enemy she is likened to a faded woman vainly seeking by brave finery and darkening the edge of the eyelids to make herself charming to her sated lovers. The pitifulness of her fate is like that of the mother with seven children who from that height of bliss is cast by their sudden and simultaneous death into the depths of misery; her sun has gone down while it was yet high noon. The compulsion of the Divine word within the prophet is likened to a fire in his bones. So too the same metaphor is used of it with another application. It is like a fire which burns the people, who are as inflammable as wood. In another place it is compared to fire and to a forge-hammer which shatters the rocks.

Jeremiah has great power in description. As examples of this we might refer to his description of the wilderness (ii. 6), or of the raging sea (v. 22), or the vivid pictures of the invaders and the desolation which they bring, culminating in the splendid and powerful vision of the return of chaos (iv. 23–26). But he is even greater in the expression of emotion. His power of indignant remonstrance is shown again and again in the course of his addresses to the people. As an illustration of his invective we might refer to his attack on Jehoiakim in xxii. 13–19. But he is supreme in the expression of passionate grief, all the more that his emotions were so much deeper than words could express. There is his pain for the sin and suffering of his people, the overpowering distress which finds an almost inarticulate utterance in iv. 19, 20. The dirge on the desolation of the mountains and pastures in ix. 10, or the dirge of the mourning women in ix. 17–22, which closes with the figure of Death the Reaper may be mentioned. Or again, the weeping for those who are slain

by the sword or sick with famine in xiv. 17, 18. Above all there is the wonderful passage viii. 18—ix. 1, with its classical expression of passionate sorrow for its climax, 'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!' But it is not only his own emotion which he describes. In iii. 21 we have a moving account of the penitent lamentation of Judah for its sin, and we may place by the side of it the figure of Rachel weeping in her tomb at Ramah and refusing to be comforted for the children she has lost. The prophet appears perhaps in a less attractive mood when he curses the day of his birth, but at least the vehemence of his utterance is a sign how deeply his feelings were stirred.

IV. The Origin and Growth of the Book of Jeremiah.

Attention has already been called to the lack of arrangement which the book presents. It contains prophetic addresses and a series of narratives. The former are collected mainly in its earlier, the latter in its closing part. Yet to this general rule there are numerous exceptions. There is further a bewildering disregard of chronology in the order. The prophecies are often undated. We are more fortunate in the biographical sections, but here the lack of chronological arrangement, which we are frequently left to infer from internal indications in the prophecies, is made patent by the chronological data themselves. It would be a hopeless attempt to fathom all the reasons for the present arrangement, though in several instances it is possible to guess with some plausibility the grounds on which certain sections of the book were placed in juxtaposition.

It has been usual with recent critics to start in their investigation from the narrative which relates the writing of the roll in the fourth year of Jehoiakim and the rewriting

of it with numerous additions after the king had destroyed the original (xxxvi). Its historical trustworthiness is generally accepted. Pierson, it is true, put forward twenty-one arguments against it, but scholars have generally endorsed Kuenen's rejection of them. Schmidt, while admitting that some are of little weight, says that 'taken as a whole they are not without a certain cumulative force' (*Enc. Bib.* 2387), and considers that the story supplies us with no trustworthy clue to the composition of the book. We shall, however, be well advised to accept it and seek to reconstruct, so far as we may, the contents of the roll destroyed by Jehoiakim. That after the battle of Carchemish, which opened a new epoch in the politics of the world, Jeremiah should have brought together the utterances of his ministry, so that in their collected form they might make a last powerful appeal to his people, is perfectly natural. From this roll we should necessarily exclude all those prophecies which we had reason to suppose were later than 605 B. C. But it does not follow that the whole of Jeremiah's utterances found a place in the roll. It was designed to bring Judah to repentance by an announcement of the evil which Yahweh purposed to bring upon her. Thus prophecies on the northern tribes need not have been incorporated (we should read 'Jerusalem for 'Israel' with the LXX in xxxvi. 2), or those which concerned individuals. But such prophecies as Jeremiah had spoken with reference to Judah during that period would be reproduced in it. The prophecies 'against all the nations' were also to be included, since there is no warrant for the omission of these words (xxxvi. 2), inasmuch as the nations were involved in the downfall of Judah. Yet we ought not to press the phrase 'all the words that I have spoken unto thee' to imply that the collection was complete. The roll seems to have been brief, and the prophet had many like words to add when it was rewritten.

The question then arises, What prophecies may be assigned to the period indicated? In many cases we are

left to fix the date by internal indications alone, and these are sometimes of a precarious character. The date of each section is discussed in the Commentary, and the reason for the dates assigned to any given section must be sought in the introduction to it. But one or two considerations of a more general character may be touched upon at this point. We cannot date Jeremiah's utterances by the type of doctrine they contain. We have no evidence for such theological development or change as would serve us for a criterion. The relation of his prophecies to Deuteronomy is a very complicated question, which may be mentioned here, although it does not so much affect the question as to the reconstruction of the roll burnt by Jehoiakim. If we took the view that the Law-book found by Hilkiah was written after Jeremiah began his ministry, then the question would have to be raised in particular cases whether Jeremiah had influenced the Deuteronomist or had been influenced by him, and the result would have to be taken into account in determining the date, those prophecies where Jeremiah was the original belonging to his earliest period, those where he borrowed from Deuteronomy being subsequent to its discovery. Those, however, who hold with the present writer that the Law-book was earlier than the time of Jeremiah but remained unknown to him till its discovery, would seem obliged to place those prophecies in which its influence is discernible after the reformation. Matters, however, are not quite so simple. For an examination of the prophecies which we have reason to regard as belonging to the pre-Deuteronomic period show clear signs of revision in their present form. It is only natural to assume that when in 604 B.C. Jeremiah dictated his earlier prophecies he added to them or modified them to suit the time when he was writing. Accordingly the presence of Deuteronomic elements must not be taken to mean that an address as a whole is necessarily post-Deuteronomic. Moreover we cannot forget that it is especially in the additions of later

editors that the Deuteronomic phraseology tends to be most pronounced. The generally accepted view that the Law-book found by Hilkiah is to be identified with the nucleus of Deuteronomy is here adopted. If the view put forward by Kennett were correct, that the Deuteronomic Code is later than Jeremiah, the question would assume an altogether different aspect. But though this is a tempting suggestion to one who would gladly claim an even fuller originality for Jeremiah, there seems to be no sufficient reason for abandoning the usual view. At the same time it ought to be remembered that our Book of Deuteronomy contains a good deal more than the book on which Josiah's reformation was based.

If the results reached in the course of the Commentary are sound, the earliest prophecies of Jeremiah are to be found in ii—vi, xiii. 1–11, and those portions of xxxi which deal with the return of Ephraim. These sections of the book have for their theme the religious and moral corruption of Judah, with its punishment by the foe from the north, and the return of the northern tribes from exile. To the period immediately following the discovery of the Law-book and its acceptance by the people we should refer xi. 1–8 and xi. 18—xii. 6. To the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign vii. 1—viii. 3, viii. 4—ix. 1, xx. 7–13, xxii. 10–12 probably belong; perhaps also ii. 14–17. To the period immediately following the battle of Carchemish we should assign xxv and xiii. 20–27, together with such of the prophecies on the foreign nations as we may believe to have been written by Jeremiah by that time. After Jehoiakim's rebellion we should place xii. 7–17 and xv. 10–21. The following prophecies apparently belong to the reign of Jehoiakim, but we have nothing definitely to fix the period: ix. 2–22, x. 17–24, xi. 9–17, xiii. 15–17, xviii. 13–20, xxii. 13–19. From the brief reign of Jehoiachin we have xiii. 18, 19, xxii. 24–47. To the beginning of Zedekiah's reign we should refer xxii. 28–30 and xxiv. To 596–5 B.C. we should assign the correspondence with

the exiles in xxix, and to 594–3 xxvii, xxviii. The curse on the day of his birth, xx. 14–18, may come from the troublous period towards the close of Zedekiah's reign. xxiii. 1–8 probably belongs to Zedekiah's reign, but it cannot be dated more precisely. After the destruction of Jerusalem we have xxxi. 27–34. In addition to these passages we have several the date of which cannot be fixed with any confidence: ix. 23–26, xiii. 12–14 (probably later than xxv), xiv. 1—xv. 9, xvi. 1—xvii. 18, xviii. 1–12, xxi. 11–14, xxii. 1–5, 6–9, 20–23, xxiii. 9–32.

In reconstructing the roll written in the fourth year of Jehoiakim we may assume that it included the account of his call in the first chapter, and the prophecies spoken with reference to Judah and the nations delivered up to that time. What these were we have seen to some extent definitely, but a large element of uncertainty remains, since we do not know how far we should include the prophecies which belong to the reign of Jehoiakim but the date of which is uncertain, and similarly those which we have reason to regard as genuine but cannot attach with confidence to any definite period of the prophet's life. Accordingly, while we may be fairly certain as to much which the roll contained, there remains a large margin of uncertainty whether considerable sections of Jeremiah's prophecies were included in it. It presumably opened with the account of his call and closed with the oracles on the foreign nations, so far as they had been uttered at this time, preceded by xxv. in its original form. The prophecies contained in it stood, we may suppose, in much the same order as at present. When the roll was rewritten we are told that there were added many like words. The second edition of the roll possibly contained some of the prophet's personal confessions and the attack upon Jehoiakim, together with the passages which deal with the restoration of the northern tribes. But if we are to suppose that the addition of the many like words was not a process extending over a consider-

able period we must assume that their contents are to be sought in those prophecies from which the original edition of the book had previously been taken. Which of these prophecies were inserted in the first roll, which were added in the second, is a question on which only precarious conjectures can be offered. During the years which remained, we may suppose that from time to time Jeremiah dictated the other prophecies now incorporated in our book.

In addition to the prophecies of Jeremiah we have a series of narratives dealing with incidents in his career. These seem to have been written by an eyewitness who had an intimate acquaintance with the events and was in sympathy with the prophet. It can hardly be doubted that we owe them to Baruch. They are of the utmost value, and give us information on many episodes in Jeremiah's life of which we should otherwise be ignorant; they illuminate his character for us, and cast not a little light on his prophecies. It is regrettable that the prophecies are not dated with the same precision as the narratives; in many cases, indeed, are not dated at all. Although Baruch wrote down the prophecies and was the author of the biographical sections he does not seem to have united the two in a single work, otherwise the remarkable lack of arrangement to which attention has been already called would hardly have characterized our book. It is more likely that prophecies and biography maintained an independent existence for some time, during which they received not a little expansion. When the two works were combined it is impossible to say. Cornill considers that the author of the oracle on Babylon, l. 2—li. 58, must have had i—xlix before him essentially in its present form. This oracle on Babylon has been commonly assigned to the close of the exile, but Cornill regards it as a later work (see the introduction to these chapters).

For the critical problems which arise in connexion with individual sections reference must be made to the introduc-

tions devoted to them in the course of the Commentary. In spite of some attacks on the authenticity of certain portions it was commonly recognized till recently, especially since the publication of Graf's Commentary, that the book was substantially authentic. The only sections generally (though not universally) rejected were x. 1–16, xvii. 19–27, and l—li, together with lii which was derived from the Second Book of Kings. This position was considerably modified by Giesebrecht, Stade, Kuenen, Schwally, Cornill, and Smend. Duhm's criticism, however, went far beyond the position reached by these scholars, and was as revolutionary for this book as it had been for the Book of Isaiah. He considers that we have from Jeremiah himself, apart from the letter in xxix, only sixty short poems written in Qina rhythm, amounting to about two hundred and eighty verses. To Baruch's biography about two hundred and twenty verses are reckoned. Roughly speaking, then, five hundred verses belong to Jeremiah and Baruch, and this leaves eight hundred and fifty, that is somewhat less than two-thirds of the book, to later editors and supplementers. The two chief Commentaries on Jeremiah which have been published since Duhm's work, those of Cornill and Giesebrecht (2nd edition), while exhibiting considerable traces of Duhm's influence both occupy a much more moderate position, and Budde in his *History of Ancient Hebrew Literature* similarly expresses the view that Duhm has gone a great deal too far in a negative direction. Erbt, in his stimulating and original work on *Jeremiah and His Time*, also reaches pretty negative conclusions. His metrical theories have been derived from Sievers, and are accordingly quite different from those of Duhm, Cornill, or Giesebrecht. And he frequently breaks up into fragments sections which other scholars treat as unities. Cheyne has expressed the opinion, in which he agrees with Duhm, that 'the only parts of Jeremiah which can be confidently set down to that prophet are metrical in structure' (*Enc.*

Bib. 3878). An even more radical position than Duhm's is that taken up by Schmidt in his articles in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. Unfortunately the Introduction to the Book of Jeremiah promised in those articles has not yet appeared, so that the ground on which many of his critical conclusions rest are not available for examination. But so far as reasons are given or may be inferred, the present writer has not been able to feel their cogency. It ought no doubt to be admitted that the expansion which the works of Jeremiah and Baruch have received is by no means inconsiderable, but it may be questioned whether we are justified in going even so far as Giesebrecht or Cornill. The affectionate admiration which the prophet inspires not unnaturally prompts his expositors to restore his writings to a form more worthy of him. But this praiseworthy impulse needs to be controlled by considerations of a more objective character. In view of the striking disagreement on the question of metre which still prevails, it is especially necessary to be cautious in rejecting the authenticity of passages on metrical grounds exclusively.

V. The Text.

The problems presented by the differences between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint (LXX) translation are of unusual interest, but at the same time of such difficulty that the most opposite solutions have been propounded for them. The most striking variation is the insertion of the prophecies against the foreign nations (xlvi—li) after xxv. 13 in the LXX. This will be considered in the discussion of xxv. Here it may simply be said that the prophecies against the foreign nations also stood at one time, it would seem, after xxv. 13 in the Hebrew text. That, however, is not their original position, which was probably at the close of xxv. The order of these prophecies also differs. For a discussion of the question which is to be

preferred, the introduction to xlvi—li may be consulted. There are a few long and very many short passages or short expressions which are found in the Hebrew but are absent from the LXX. There are some additions to the Hebrew, but these are not numerous. Graf calculates that about 2,700 words of the Hebrew text, amounting to an eighth of the whole work, are not expressed in the LXX, while the additions made by the LXX to what we find in the Hebrew are very insignificant. Giesebrecht calculates that only about a hundred words of the LXX are absent in the Hebrew. This astonishing divergence between the two texts has naturally given rise to a prolonged controversy. Some scholars, especially Movers, Bleek, and Workman, give the preference to the LXX; while others, especially Graf, Keil, and Orelli, give it to the Hebrew. The extreme position may be seen in Graf's almost savage onslaught on the LXX translator in the Introduction to his Commentary, a position all the more significant that he began his investigation with the most favourable view of the LXX. Workman, in *The Text of Jeremiah*, follows Graf's attack from point to point and is equally emphatic in preferring the Greek to the Hebrew.

The problem is certainly very complicated, so much so that Cornill abstains from a general discussion of it in his Commentary on the ground that it cannot be satisfactorily treated except in a monograph which bases its conclusion on a thorough and systematic examination of all the LXX material. It is desirable, however, to offer some general remarks on the question. The truth, we may safely assume, lies between the two extremes. On the one hand, Graf's indictment of the translator was far too severe. Very frequently the Hebrew contains favourite modes of expression or oft-repeated formulae which are omitted in the LXX. Thus the phrase 'saith Yahweh' is omitted sixty-four times. Instead of 'Yahweh of Hosts,' or 'Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel,' we usually have simply Yahweh. The name Nebuchadnezzar is omitted twenty-

three times out of the thirty-six in which it occurs in the Hebrew. Where we have two or more synonymous expressions the LXX often reduces the number, and it omits pleonasms. Graf argues that we can quite understand the omission of these redundancies by a translator who aimed at greater brevity or conciseness; but we cannot account for their insertion on so large a scale as we find in the Hebrew text if they were not an original element in the book. This is undoubtedly a telling argument, especially to a modern reader, for whom the insertion of so much that is superfluous would seem an incredible proceeding. But against this *a priori* judgement we have to set considerations of an opposite character. It frequently happens that modern critics, with their metrical tests and keener eye for glosses, strike out on independent grounds words or clauses as additions which are absent in the LXX. And even if we refuse to find anything like so much expansion of Jeremianic matter as some of the more advanced critics, it is probable that the impression of diffuseness which the Hebrew constantly gives in contrast to the LXX is largely due to later editors or scribes. Moreover, the Commentary will show that the Greek text in many instances preserves the more original form. But it would be as great a mistake to argue for the general superiority of the LXX as for that of the Hebrew. Workman contends that the Greek translators faithfully rendered the text which they had before them, so that their variations must be accounted for not by any intentional divergence from the Hebrew but by the fact that they had a different Hebrew text from that which we possess. He also regards the text which the translators had before them as much purer than the present Hebrew text, and has attempted to reconstruct the original Hebrew by retranslation of the LXX where the two texts differ. His theory has been sharply criticized by Driver (*Expositor*, May, 1889) and H. P. Smith (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1890), who give cogent reasons for the belief that many of the variations were due

to the translators and represented no difference in the original, the retranslations being in such cases so much lost labour. The problem has been discussed in detail and with great thoroughness by Streane in his volume *The Double Text of Jeremiah*. He acquits the translators of the carelessness or intentional alteration which have often been charged against them. He argues that their aim was to give a close rendering of the text they had before them, their literal reproduction of the original often amounting to a fault. So far as their omissions are concerned he considers that they were generally in the right. As to the variations, he says that many causes must be invoked to account for them, not, as Workman considers, a single cause. The conclusions to which his detailed examination has brought him may be briefly indicated. The translators, he says, worked on manuscripts which were fairly accurate but occasionally badly preserved. Their text was not modified by the tendency to diffuse expansion so much as the Palestinian copies. Where they did not faithfully render the text they had before them they were swayed by various motives, such as the desire for smoothness, the wish to interpret as well as to translate, the influence of national or local feeling, or the avoidance of harsh language about Jeremiah or the Jews. Unintentional deviations from the original might be caused by the illegibility of the manuscript, by ignorance of the meaning of words, by slips of eye or ear, by derivation of forms from the wrong root, by misunderstanding of contractions, by incorrect vocalization of the consonants.

A very impartial examination is given by Kuenen in his *Introduction* and by Giesebrecht in his *Commentary*. Kuenen says that both the defenders and the opponents of the LXX are guilty of exaggeration. The translator was certainly not free from arbitrariness. His idea of reliability and accuracy was not ours, and his knowledge was inadequate for the task. Nor can he be acquitted of the desire to simplify and abbreviate his text. On the

other hand, the Hebrew has frequently experienced interpolation from which the LXX has remained free. In more than forty cases the Hebrew text is characterized by repetitions (of which Kuenen gives a list), and we should accordingly expect that the translator, if he had made a practice of striking out what was superfluous, would have omitted the majority or at least many of these. But this happens only in certain cases, in some of which there are cogent reasons against the originality of the repetition.

Giesebrecht considers that the manuscript from which the translators worked had been carelessly written, and was often characterized by confusion of consonants, transpositions and omissions of letters, words, sentences, and even whole sections. Yet for much of the variation the translator rather than his manuscript must be held responsible. He dealt freely with his text, and he had an imperfect linguistic equipment, especially on the lexical side, so that he frequently had to content himself with giving a rough and ready rendering rather than a close and accurate translation. Nevertheless he often preserves the better text, especially in the matter of omissions. What he has over and above the Hebrew text also contains good material.

From these representative judgements we may perhaps conclude that no general preference for one text or the other ought to be entertained. Sometimes the Hebrew preserves the original text, sometimes the LXX, and each case must be decided on its merits in the light of the general considerations which have been enumerated. Nor can it be said with any confidence which of the two preserves the greater number of original readings. In the great majority of instances the difference is intrinsically trivial. It is in their mass, and to a certain extent their distribution, that they become important. It may be added that H. St. J. Thackeray, in some articles in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. iv, has given reasons for the belief that the LXX translation of Jeremiah is the

work of two hands, the former of whom rendered i—xxviii, the latter xxix—li. The former of the two he considers to have been the more competent. He finds evidence which suggests that he may have revised to some extent the latter part of the work, and that he should perhaps be identified with the translator of the greater part of Ezekiel and the whole of the Minor Prophets. The first half of the Book of Baruch he assigns with confidence to the second translator of Jeremiah. He leans to the opinion that the book was divided into two parts and assigned to different translators with a view to the more speedy accomplishment of the task, so that the translations were made at the same time. He returns to the subject in his *Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint.*

Where the LXX and other Versions, of which the Old Latin is the most noteworthy (see the valuable appendix to Streane's *The Double Text of Jeremiah*), do not present any variation from the Hebrew but we nevertheless have reason to suppose that the Hebrew text is corrupt, the original reading can be restored only by conjectural emendation. That this method is attended with serious drawbacks cannot be denied, and it is only very rarely that an emendation carries a moral certainty with it. There are many conjectures, however, to which a high probability attaches. The rest range through all degrees of probability or improbability. An emendation is sometimes indirectly suggested by the LXX where on re-translation a Hebrew text is produced which, while it is not the original, yields the probable original with a very easy emendation. Where a passage can be regarded with some confidence as written in metre, we have a help both in detecting corruption or the addition of glosses and limiting the licence of conjecture.

VI. Selected Literature.

Of the older commentators it is enough to name Calvin. The chief modern commentaries are naturally in German. The following may be enumerated: *Ewald, Hitzig, Graf, *Nägelsbach (in Lange), *Keil, *Orelli, Giesebrecht, Duhm, Cornill.[1] The English commentaries are all old, those by Payne Smith (*Speaker's Commentary*), Streane (*Cambridge Bible*), and Cheyne (*Pulpit Commentary*) may be mentioned here, but there is a recent work by Brown in the *American Baptist Commentary*. In the *Expositor's Bible* the book has been treated by C. J. Ball and W. H. Bennett. Of works dealing with the career and teaching of the prophet the following may be selected: Cheyne, *Jeremiah* (in *Men of the Bible*); Marti, *Jeremia von Anathoth*; Erbt, *Jeremia und seine Zeit*; Bruston, *Le prophète Jérémie et son temps*; Ramsay, *Studies in Jeremiah*; Findlay, *The Books of the Prophets*, vol. iii; Gillies, *Jeremiah: The Man and His Message* (a work largely influenced by Duhm and Erbt). Translations are given in several of the Commentaries. Other translations are: (a) into German: Reuss, Rothstein (in Kautzsch the third edition is enriched with much fuller introductions and notes), Duhm; (b) into French: Reuss; (c) into English: Rotherham (in the *Emphasized Bible*), Buchanan Blake (in *How to Read the Prophets*), and Driver, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, a revised translation, with introduction and short explanations*; also Kent in *The Student's Old Testament* (received too late for reference in the present Volume). A useful edition of the Revised Version, with brief annotations and introduction, is contained in Woods and Powell's *The Hebrew Prophets*, vol. ii; unfortunately it makes no use of the most important German commentaries, Keil's work hardly belonging to that

[1] Those marked with an asterisk have been translated into English, but in the case of Orelli later editions have appeared in German.

category. The most serviceable edition of the Hebrew text is in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, but Cornill's edition in the *Sacred Books of the Old Testament*, together with his *Die metrischen Stücke des Buches Jeremias reconstruiert* and Giesebrecht's *Jeremias Metrik*, should also be consulted. On the textual criticism, in addition to the discussions in introductions, commentaries, and dictionaries, it may be enough to mention Movers' *De utriusque recensionis vaticiniorum Jeremiae Graecae Alexandrinae et Hebraicae massorethicae indole et origine commentatio critica*; Workman, *The Text of Jeremiah*; Streane, *The Double Text of Jeremiah.*

Further discussions may be sought in the Introductions to the Old Testament, especially those by Kuenen, Driver, König, Cornill, Bennett, M'Fadyen; in histories of Israel (above all Wellhausen's *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte*); in works on Old Testament theology or the history of the religion of Israel (especially Smend and Stade); in dictionaries (especially Hastings's and the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*) and articles in periodicals, notably in the *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.*

The English student who knows no language but his own has unfortunately no recent British Commentary apart from the present work. He can, however, with the aid of books and articles, especially Driver's exact translation, A. B. Davidson's valuable article in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and the sympathetic expositions of Findlay and Gillies, gain a fairly adequate conception of Jeremiah's personality and work. The student who can read German has at his command exegetical literature on the book of the highest rank. Of the older works, Graf's full and thorough Commentary is the most important, and should not be neglected. Orelli is unduly conservative, but his Commentary, especially in its most recent edition, is a really useful work. The first edition of Giesebrecht's Commentary marked a considerable advance, and in the recent second edition he has frequently,

though perhaps not so often as one could wish, discussed the views which have been put forward in the meantime. Yet while suggestive, stimulating, and balanced, like everything he writes, it is perhaps less noteworthy than some of his other works. Duhm's Commentary opened a new era in the criticism of the book. However true it may be that his views are too often arbitrary and controlled by theory, it must be said on the other hand that his insight, his power of sympathetic exposition, his intense admiration for Jeremiah, combine to make his work one of the most valuable ever devoted to the interpretation of this book. The most helpful of all Commentaries is the masterly work of Cornill. He has been deeply influenced by Duhm, to whose genius he pays the most generous tribute. But he retains his independence, is less revolutionary, less ridden by theory. He has devoted to his task the labour of many years, inspired and sustained by glowing enthusiasm for the prophet. His Commentary is a model of clear, penetrating, and sympathetic interpretation. He who can procure only one large work should unquestionably select this. It is greatly to be wished that it might be made accessible to the English reader.

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS

J. Prophecies or narratives of which Jeremiah was the author.
S. Additions by supplementers.
JS. Jeremianic text worked over by supplementer.
B. Baruch's memoirs of Jeremiah.
BS. Text of Baruch worked over by supplementer.
R. Redactor.
I. Author of x. 1-16.
K. Author of xvii. 19-27.
E. Extracts from the Second Book of Kings.

The above symbols should be used in connexion with

what is said in the introductions and notes on the various passages. Where a section is assigned by its symbol to Jeremiah or Baruch, it must not be inferred that it has been untouched by later editors. It would, however, have led to undesirable complexity if every intrusion of the supplementer had been indicated by the insertion of a symbol in the text. Besides, in many instances it is an open question whether clauses or sentences ought to be treated as insertions. In cases where JS and BS are employed it will be understood that a substantial element is probably to be assigned to the supplementer. Those renderings in the R.V. margin which the editor prefers to the renderings in the text are indicated by †.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

B. C.

639. Accession of Josiah.
c. 630. Scythian migration begins.
626. Call of Jeremiah.
621. Discovery of Deuteronomic Law.
610–594. Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt.
608. Death of Josiah.
608. Three months' reign of Jehoahaz (Shallum) and deportation to Egypt.
608. Accession of Jehoiakim (Eliakim).
607. Fall of Nineveh and destruction of Assyrian Empire.
605. Egypt defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish.
605. Nebuchadnezzar becomes king of Babylon.
604. Baruch writes the roll containing Jeremiah's prophecies.
603. Roll burnt by Jehoiakim and rewritten with additions by Baruch.
c. 598. Jehoiakim after three years' submission rebels against Nebuchadnezzar.
597. Death of Jehoiakim.
597. Three months' reign of Jehoiachin.
597. Jehoiachin and the flower of the nation taken captive to Babylon.
597. Accession of Zedekiah (Mattaniah).
594–589. Psammetichus II king of Egypt.
593. Surrounding peoples send ambassadors to Jerusalem to plan revolt against Babylon.
589–564. Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt.
c. 588. Revolt of Zedekiah.
586. Destruction of Jerusalem, and second captivity to Babylon.

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

JEREMIAH

[R] THE words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the 1

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i. 1–19. THE CALL OF JEREMIAH.

It is probable that this account of Jeremiah's call about the year 626 B.C. was dictated by the prophet himself. Duhm has felt himself forced to the conclusion that, while the chapter may possibly incorporate some material from Jeremiah's poems and Baruch's biography of the prophet, it is of post-exilic origin. The main objection he urges against the view that we owe the story of his call to the prophet himself is the lofty mission assigned to him in verse 10. There he is set in authority over the nations and kingdoms. So exalted a function he thinks Jeremiah was not conscious of fulfilling. It may be freely admitted that in a narrative perhaps written down twenty-three years later we have not a minutely accurate transcript of what took place, but one coloured by the prophet's subsequent experiences. But we have strong reasons for the view that the main thoughts may be accepted without hesitation. The tiny Jewish state had been caught into the current of universal politics, its career was inextricably blended with that of the nations. Hence in the nature of the case a prophet to Judah was a prophet to the nations. The word he uttered about Judah inevitably had a range beyond it, for what affected the smaller affected also the larger area. And in the fact that he prophesied over other peoples we may see that he was conscious of exercising a ministry, which was not restricted to Judah. Such a limitation would indeed have been strange, when we remember how Amos, and Isaiah before him, had uttered oracles concerning the nations. And Jeremiah was fully aware that the horizon of his predecessors was not bounded by Israel. He says to Hananiah, 'The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, of evil, and of pestilence.' If, however, it is urged that Jeremiah is not simply charged with uttering prophecies about the nations, but is said to be actually set over them, and that such a position is too great, the answer lies in a truer understanding of Hebrew ideas of prophecy. It was not a mere prediction that the prophet uttered, the bare description of some future event. Since it was the word of God, it was filled with His

priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

Divine energy. It passed from the prophet's lips into an independent existence of its own, and itself accomplished the task which God had appointed for it and did not return to Him void. We find this thought in Isa. lv. 10, 11, in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii), and in Zechariah's vision of the flying roll (Zech. v. 1–4). It receives a very striking expression in Heb. iv. 12–14 (see the editor's note on this passage). Jeremiah himself describes the words of God in his mouth as a fire to consume the people (v. 14) and as a hammer to shatter the rocks (xxiii. 29). Accordingly we need feel no hesitation on account of the position assigned to him. The word he proclaims determines the destinies of the peoples. And one consideration pleads strongly for the belief that we have here the prophet's own account of his call. For if we owed it to a later writer, he would in all probability have modelled his description on the call of Isaiah and Ezekiel. We should have had a far more splendid and impressive picture. He would not have been content to initiate the great prophet into his life-work in a manner so commonplace. Cornill has also pointed to Isa. xlix. 1 as a proof that the author of the Servant of Yahweh passages (i.e., as he thinks, the Second Isaiah himself) has drawn from the description of Jeremiah's call, and therefore that Jer. i. 5 lay before him in exactly its present form. If so, the Jeremianic authorship of the passage receives strong attestation.

i. 1–3. Title describing the book as containing the words of Jeremiah of Anathoth, received by him in the reign of Josiah and his successors.

4–10. Yahweh told me that before my birth He had predestined me to be a prophet to the nations. I pleaded my youth as a reason why I should not go, but He sent me on my mission and bade me be undismayed. Then He placed His words in my mouth and gave me a commission over the nations.

11, 12. By the vision of the rod of an almond tree Yahweh taught me that He was wakeful to fulfil His word.

13–19. By the vision of a caldron I learnt that evil would come upon Judah from the north, and that its kings would be the instruments of Yahweh to inflict His judgements on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. Yahweh bade me utter His word without fear, and assured me of His protection against all my enemies.

1–3. These verses create critical difficulties. Verse 2 refers to Jeremiah's call, whereas the following verse seems to presuppose that it refers to an experience similar to those enjoyed in subsequent reigns. Moreover, as the text stands, the whole of Jeremiah's

to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Jo- 2
siah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth
year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim 3

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prophetic activity in the reign of Josiah after his thirteenth year is passed over in silence. Originally then the title simply asserted that the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. This title referred simply to chap. i, but it was taken to have a wider scope by an editor who wished his readers to understand that Jeremiah prophesied in later reigns also, and therefore added the third verse. The original title has been reconstructed as follows by the help of the LXX: 'The word of Yahweh which came to Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.'

1. The words. The plural occurs also in Amos i. 1, and is taken by several in both places to mean 'The history,' but the translation in the text is probably correct; the reference is to Jeremiah's prophecies, though the book contains a good deal of biographical material.

Hilkiah is by some identified with the chief priest of that name, famous for his discovery of the 'book of the Law' in the Temple in the eighteenth year of Josiah (2 Kings xxii), and therefore a few years later than Jeremiah's call. But this is unlikely. We should have expected some indication of the relationship, and the rest of the verse suggests that Jeremiah did not belong to the Jerusalem priesthood. His family resided at Anathoth.

of the priests. Probably it is Jeremiah rather than Hilkiah who is so described. The form of expression is apparently chosen because Jeremiah, while of priestly lineage, did not himself act as priest.

Anathoth: to be identified with Anâta, which lies three or four miles (1¼ hours) north-north-east of Jerusalem. It was the home of Abiathar, the priest and loyal follower of David, after Solomon thrust him out of his office and banished him to his estate. If, as has been suggested, Jeremiah traced his descent from Abiathar, he was a member of the family which in its earlier days had custody of the ark.

2. Josiah came to the throne 639 B.C., Jeremiah's call may be dated in 627 or 626. Winckler's denial that the date is trustworthy is arbitrary scepticism.

3. Nothing is said of the prophecies uttered by Jeremiah after the destruction of Jerusalem. It has been inferred that this verse was prefixed to a collection made in the interval between the fall of Jerusalem and the murder of Gedaliah, but this is very pre-

the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah; unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

4 [J] Now the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before
thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I
6 have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then

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carious, and it is safer to assume that we have here an addition from the hand of some reader or editor.

4. On this narrative of Jeremiah's call, see the Introduction, pp. 5–10.

5. Similarly the Servant of Yahweh (i.e. the historical Israel) speaks of himself as chosen for his work before his birth (Isa. xlix. 1, 5), while Paul, who like Jeremiah expresses the conviction once only, speaks of himself as set apart for his mission before his birth (Gal. 1. 15). It is very noteworthy that in each of the three cases, this predestination is connected with a task to be performed for the heathen, though Jeremiah is not sent, like Paul, to preach to the Gentiles.

knew thee: i. e. chose thee. The same word is used for the election of Israel in the great utterance of Amos, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth' (Amos iii. 2), also in Hos. xiii. 5 (at any rate according to the present text).

sanctified. The term has no ethical meaning; it simply implies that God consecrated him for His service.

unto the nations. On the scope of Jeremiah's mission and the suspicions which the description of it has aroused, see the introductory note to this chapter. There is no need to strike out 'unto the nations,' with Rothstein, or to emend the text with Stade and read 'to my nation.' Had this been intended we should almost certainly have had 'to my people,' this term rather than 'my nation' being the customary designation. It is true that the expression 'a prophet unto the nations' might suggest a mission exclusively or predominantly to them, and this would not harmonize with Jeremiah's actual function, but a Hebrew prophet would understand that he was sent in the first instance to his own people.

6. Duhm considers the reluctance here expressed to imply the conception that prophetic speech is based on ripe experience rather than ecstatic inspiration, since Jeremiah pleads his youth which is inconsistent with the former but not with the latter, inasmuch as the young may be inspired just as well as the old. Since he

said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I
am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am 7
a child: for [a] to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt
go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt
speak. Be not afraid because of them: for I am with 8
thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD 9
put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and the

[a] Or, *on whatsoever errand*

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doubts whether this was Jeremiah's own view, he urges this as one of the reasons for suspecting the authenticity of the narrative. But obviously Jeremiah may have thought of the prophetic gift very differently before he experienced it from what he felt afterwards. Moreover it is by no means clear that his reluctance sprang from a sense of his inexperience. It is rather the consciousness of insignificance, the shrinking of a sensitive and timid nature, which God rebukes in His reply (cf. verses 17–19). The case is naturally different from that of the much older Moses who urges his lack of eloquence as his reason for refusing the commission to go to Pharaoh.

Lord GOD: properly 'Lord Yahweh.' Inasmuch as the word which was usually substituted for Yahweh in reading immediately precedes, the Jews substituted Elohim, i.e. God, for it, and the English Version has adopted this, indicating that Yahweh is in the original by printing in capitals.

a child. The Hebrew word was used in a wider sense than that in which the English term is employed. The LXX brings out the sense by rendering 'too young.'

7. When God chooses the messenger, appoints the mission and dictates the message, what matter the limitations of His servant? It is He who is pledged to secure success.

to whomsoever: probably this rendering is to be preferred to that of the margin 'on whatsoever errand,' though it involves the awkwardness of translating the same words 'whomsoever' in this clause, and 'whatsoever' in the next. If we followed Giesebrecht in deleting 'because of them' in the following verse as taken from 17 and disturbing to the metre, the margin would be preferable and the text somewhat smoother.

8. This verse makes it clear that timidity rather than the sense of inexperience is the cause of Jeremiah's reluctance. It is therefore natural that Duhm should suspect it, but the fact of its partial repetition in 19, and its similarity to part of 17, are quite inadequate reasons for striking it out.

LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy
10 mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and
over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and
to destroy and to overthrow; to build, and to plant.
11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of
12 [a] an almond tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou

[a] Heb. *shaked.*

10. The loftiness of Jeremiah's position as God's vicar on earth, and the mighty work he is to achieve, are explained by the Hebrew conception of prophecy as effecting its own fulfilment; see the introductory note to this chapter (pp. 77 f.). The sense of lofty vocation is not inconsistent with humility. Jesus could describe Himself as 'meek and lowly in heart,' though He claimed in the same breath to stand in a unique relation to God. In view of the character of Jeremiah's work more stress is naturally laid on its destructive than on its constructive side, four verbs being used to express the former, while two only are employed for the latter. It is true that the LXX omits 'and to overthrow,' and probably it was not read by the author of Ecclus. xlix. 7. It is accordingly omitted by some modern scholars from the Hebrew text. But this omission disturbs the balance of the sentence. Examples of both sides of his mission will meet us in the course of the book.

set thee: literally 'made thee an overseer;' it is his function to act as Yahweh's deputy.

11–19. In the rest of the chapter we are concerned no longer with judgement on the nations but with judgement on Judah, and with the nations only as the instruments of this judgement. The arguments by which Duhm seeks to establish that this also is later seem to the present writer too slender to bear the weight of such a conclusion.

11. On the meaning of this vision see the Introduction, pp. 8 f.

a rod of an almond tree. This is the rendering usually adopted. The word translated 'almond tree' is, with the probable exception of Eccles. xii. 5, elsewhere used in the sense of 'almond.' Accordingly, since Eccles. xii. 5 is doubtful, some scholars deny that the rendering 'almond tree' is justified. They take the word as a participle from the verb *shākad* ('to watch' or 'wake') and point *shōkēd*. In this way we have precisely the same word as in the following verse. But probably little difference was made in pronunciation between *shākēd* and *shōkēd*, and 'a wakeful stem' is not a very happy phrase for a stem which is just beginning to bud.

12. We may compare the impassioned appeals to Yahweh

hast well seen: for I [a] watch over my word to perform it.
And the word of the LORD came unto me the second 13

[a] Heb. *shoked.*

from psalmists and prophets that He should awake from His sleep to save His people, also Luke xviii. 7, Rev. vi. 9–11, Mark iv. 38. Jeremiah knows that Yahweh needs no such cries, He is moving already towards the fulfilment of His purpose. The thought recurs in xxxi. 28, xliv. 27.

13–14. The second vision teaches the prophet that judgement is to come from the north. It is not easy to understand the description given or the precise application of the details. The most obvious view is that the face of the caldron is the side which faces the spectator, this is 'from the face of the north,' i.e. apparently the caldron is itself in the north. It is 'blown upon,' i.e. the flame is fanned under it to make it boil. When it boils over, the mischief which is brewing in it will be poured out over the south and especially over Judah. This interpretation (cf. G. A. Smith: 'the ominous North was once more boiling like a caldron,' *Jerusalem*, ii, p. 228) may be correct, but it is exposed to objections. The expression 'and its face is from the face of the North' (so literally) is both clumsy and obscure. The word rendered 'north' is strictly 'northward,' but this need not be pressed, since the locative form may be employed simply in the sense of 'north.' Both objections are removed by Duhm's interpretation. He translates 'and its face is turned northward' (pointing *mophnē* instead of *mippᵉnē*). Luzzatto, followed by Perles, had already made a similar suggestion (*mophnīm*). Duhm supposes that the caldron is supported on three sides by stones, while the fourth side is open and the fire is fed from it; this open side or face looks north; the fuel and flame therefore come to the caldron from the north. The figure is in that case quite different. The idea is not that the scalding contents of the pot will pour down on Judah from the north, but that the fire and fuel which make it boil are brought from the north. The caldron will then be thought of as in Judah, its inhabitants are thought of as within it, while the fuel which makes it boil represents the enemy. Against this it may be urged that the face is said to be the face of the caldron, not that of the fireplace. But what is the face of the caldron? It might be used for the spout or lip of a vessel, but the caldron was, it would seem, a very large vessel (see 2 Kings iv. 38), and would presumably have no lip. With some hesitation the present writer adopts Duhm's suggestion. We have then an excellent commentary in Ezek. xxiv. 3–14, cf. xi. 3. It was in fact common among older interpreters to regard the Jews as corresponding to what was being boiled in the pot, but the interpretation of the fire

time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething caldron; and the face thereof is from the north.
14 Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north evil
[a] shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.
15 For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the

[a] Heb. *shall be opened.*

as the Chaldeans, and that which overflows as the people sent into exile, was hardly warranted by the terms of the passage.

13. seething: literally 'blown upon;' a fan made of feathers was used to fan the flame beneath the caldron.

caldron: a large vessel like our boiler or copper, as we see from the story of the poisonous wild gourds in 2 Kings iv. 38–41, where the word is used of the pot in which the meal for Elisha and the sons of the prophets was cooked.

14. the north. All that is clear to Jeremiah at present is that trouble is to come from the north. From the north had already come the successive invasions of Assyria, into the north the ten tribes and the Judaean captives of Sennacherib had disappeared. In Jeremiah's time Assyria was loosening its hold on Palestine, and the Babylonians, with whom he later learnt that the foe from the north was to be identified, were not as yet apparently before his mind in this connexion. If he thought of a definite enemy it was probably the Scythians. The north was looked upon as the home of the mysterious and uncanny, from which such a portent as the Scythian invasion might naturally be expected. Duhm sees an apocalyptic trait in this reference to the foe from the north, but this is uncertain, and the inference that the passage must be late even more precarious.

break forth: the literal rendering of the Hebrew is 'be opened,' but its use in the sense 'be let loose' is rather questionable. Houbigant proposed 'shall be blown' (*tuppaḥ*), i.e. kindled. This corresponds to 'blown upon' in verse 13, and harmonizes with the LXX. It is adopted by several scholars, and should probably be accepted. It involves the omission of one consonant.

15. Duhm finds in this another feature of the later apocalyptic, according to which the nations were to gather at Jerusalem to execute judgement and then themselves be destroyed. This thought was, it is true, characteristic of the later eschatology, but it is not clear that the reference to the kingdoms of the north would not suit quite well the conditions of Jeremiah's time. It might perhaps have been felt to be a sufficiently accurate description of the Scythians, even though in v. 15 they are spoken of as a single nation (see note on v. 15). It would suit the Babylonians

north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. And I will 16
[a] utter my judgements against them touching all their wickedness; in that they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands. Thou therefore gird up thy 17
loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command

[a] Or, *speak with them of my judgements*

even better. The great empires of Assyria and Babylonia contained many subject peoples, and the monarch bore the title 'King of kings,' his vassals being themselves kings, cf. Isa. x. 8. We have an excellent parallel to this assembling of the nations at Jerusalem in a much earlier prophet, if, as is probable, Isa. xvii. 12–14 belongs to Isaiah.

For **all the families of the kingdoms** we should probably read, with the LXX, simply **all the kingdoms.** 'Families' is perhaps a variant of 'kingdoms.'

set every one his throne. Seats were set for the administration of justice; here the thought is of the penalty to be inflicted on the captives. The gate is often used in the Old Testament to designate the judgement-seat. The expression does not mean to besiege; the capture of the city is thought of as already accomplished. Accordingly Giesebrecht may be right in regarding as a late addition the last two clauses of the verse which suggest a siege.

16. Jeremiah reminds us of Hosea, in that he lays the chief emphasis on religion. He is as sensitive to the moral shortcomings of his people as the most ethical of his predecessors. But he finds the root of Judah's misconduct in its wrong relation to God. Hence his passionate denunciations of idolatry, which is here singled out as the cause of the Divine judgement on Judah.

utter my judgements against them: the margin **speak with them of my judgements** more correctly renders the Hebrew. In itself the expression simply means that Yahweh will dispute with them in judgement. Naturally the righteous God will have right on His side, and when He has won His case, penalty will follow suit. But this is not expressed, though it is involved.

burned incense: rather **offered sacrifice;** the word is used for any kind of sacrifice that went up in smoke, of course including the incense offering.

thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before
18 them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced
city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls, against the
whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes
thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people
19 of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they
shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith
the LORD, to deliver thee.

2 2 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go, and

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18. an iron pillar: omitted by the LXX; perhaps correctly, for it does not suit so well the metaphor of a siege.

walls: the LXX reads the singular, and this is preferred by several scholars.

ii. 1—iii. 5. ISRAEL'S UNPARALLELED UNFAITHFULNESS TO HER GOD.

With this chapter a section seems to begin which closes with chap. vi. It embraces more than one discourse, and, while it represents Jeremiah's earliest prophecies, contains some later elements. It will be simplest to treat the critical problems as they arise. The first break comes at iii. 6. The first portion, ii. 1—iii. 5, belongs apparently in its original form to the time immediately succeeding his call. But it bears marks of the revision which the prophet gave it in the reign of Jehoiakim.

ii. 1, 2^a. Title.

2^b, 3. Yahweh remembers Israel's love for Him when she was His youthful bride in the wilderness, the untilled land. She was sacred to Him as the firstfruits; woe to any who violated that sanctity.

4–13. What fault was there in Yahweh that the Israelites left Him to follow empty idols and themselves become like them? They forgot Him who had led them through the perils of the trackless and desolate wilderness, and when He brought them into the goodly land of Canaan they defiled it. Priests ignored Him, rulers rebelled against Him, prophets spoke in the name of unprofitable idols. So Yahweh will contend with them and their descendants. Let them send to Cyprus or Kedar, and see if there has been any parallel to the conduct of Israel. The heathen remain true to their gods, though they are but false gods, but Yahweh's people have exchanged Him for worthless idols. Well

cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD,

may the heavens shudder at conduct so ungrateful! For Yahweh's people have wrought two evils, forsaken Him, the reservoir of living waters, and hewn out leaking cisterns, which do not even retain their stagnant water.

14–19. Is Israel a slave? No, but why then has he become a prey? The lions have roared against him, and wasted his land; Egypt afflicts him. It is Israel's abandonment of Yahweh which has brought this about. And why [from his own failing cisterns] does he turn to the Nile and the Euphrates? His sin shall punish him; let him learn how bitter a thing is apostasy.

20–28. Of old time Israel threw off restraint and went wantonly astray in idolatrous worship. Yahweh planted it a choice vine; it has changed to a strange vine. No washing can cleanse away its deep stains. How can the people deny that they are defiled with the Baalim, and that in face of their conduct in the Valley of Hinnom? They are like a she-camel driven by the sting of uncontrollable lust, seeking and not needing to be sought. Vain the admonition not to run the shoes off the foot and the throat parched with thirst; nothing will deter Israel from her pursuit of strange gods. Yet Israel and its leaders will be bitterly disappointed, who call stocks and stones their parents and have turned their back on Yahweh. They appeal to Him in the day of their trouble; but let their multitude of manufactured gods save them if they can!

29–37. Why do they find fault with Yahweh? Their own rebellion is to blame. Chastisement has proved useless, the sword has slain the prophets. Yahweh has been no desert land to Israel, or land of dense darkness: why then do His people stray from Him? so ungratefully forgetful, so schooled to wickedness, guilty of the blood of the poor. Protestations of innocence, and political scheming, will alike prove unavailing.

iii. 1–5. A man cannot return to his divorced wife, who has become the wife of another: how can Israel, the wife adulterous with many lovers, return to Yahweh? Her lust has been insatiable, and punishment has left her still shameless, still claiming Yahweh as the companion of her youth and deprecating His anger, but persistent in her sin.

ii. 1, 2a. The LXX reads simply, 'And he said, Thus saith the Lord;' this is too brief to be the original heading, yet the Hebrew presents difficulties, since what follows is scarcely an address to the people. Giesebrecht considers that 'Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying' should be regarded as a later insertion.

2. The Pentateuchal narratives, on the contrary, emphasize the

I remember [a] for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love
of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the
3 wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel *was*
holiness unto the LORD, the firstfruits of his increase: all

[a] Or, *concerning*

rebelliousness of Israel in the wilderness, and Ezekiel endorses this darker judgement, seeing in Israel's history from its sojourn in Egypt onwards nothing but unredeemed wickedness, and he is followed in this by some of the later Psalmists.

kindness: a very rich and beautiful word, often used of God's lovingkindness. Several, including Graf, have so explained it here of God's love for Israel. But all the recent commentators interpret it as Israel's love to God. This is much the more probable view, since the phrase to remember something for a people implies that it was a characteristic of that people. It is supported by 'how thou wentest after me.' The sense is unusual, but is apparently found in Hos. vi. 4, 6, Isa. lvii. 1.

in the wilderness: so full of the dangers graphically enumerated in verse 6. In the time of difficulty she cleaves fast to her God, and follows Him cheerfully through all the perils and privations of the desert.

in a land that was not sown: where they were fed, according to the ancient story, with the manna and water out of the rock.

3. Israel's loyal love to Yahweh was answered by His devoted care and protection of her. She was holy to Yahweh. The term **holiness** has here no moral significance; she was set apart for Him alone, like the firstfruits which no man might eat save the priests, and they only as God's representatives living on His bounty (Num. xviii. 12, 13). Those who transgressed this restriction on the firstfruits were visited with penalty. So Yahweh jealously maintained His sole right in Israel; all who devoured it were found guilty and punished. At the outset all nations were alike 'common,' i.e. not specially appropriated by Yahweh. Israel's national consciousness was bound up with the belief in its election: 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth' (Amos iii. 2).

firstfruits of his increase: Ex. xxiii. 19, Deut. xxvi. 2–11. The firstfruits of Yahweh's produce might seem to imply that the other nations would constitute the remainder of His harvest, and all nations alike ultimately become holy to Him. But the thought is concerned rather with the consecration of Israel than with Yahweh's proprietorship of all nations; we should accordingly render 'his firstfruits of increase.'

that devour him shall be held guilty; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.

Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and 4
all the families of the house of Israel: thus saith the 5
LORD, What unrighteousness have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? Neither said they, 6
Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt; that led us through the wilderness, through a

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4. Duhm considers that 3 finds its true continuation in 14 and regards 4–13 as an inserted passage, but on rather *a priori* grounds as to what Jeremiah can and cannot have written. The failure of the Qina rhythm, which is perhaps resumed in 14, prejudices him against its ascription to Jeremiah. Later commentators have accepted it as substantially Jeremiah's, so also Erbt. Cornill thinks its authenticity is guaranteed by the use made of it in the Song of Moses. Orelli reverses the relationship, but regards the present passage as by Jeremiah. It is not easy to believe that such a section can be the work of any later editor; the thoughts are those of Jeremiah, worthy of him alike in character and expression. We see from verse 20 that he dated Israel's apostasy far back in the past.

There is no need to regard verse 4 as a later insertion. Jeremiah addresses collective Israel, the northern tribes were an object of special interest to him, though they had gone into exile nearly a century before.

5. Surely it was not without reason that Israel left Yahweh for idols? Yes, without reason; there was no unrighteousness in Yahweh to excuse their apostasy.

vanity: the word literally means 'breath,' then 'nothingness.' It is a characteristic term of Jeremiah for the false gods, in contrast to the living and true God. It is the cognate verb which is rendered **are become vain** at the end of the verse, and the thought suggested is that, by following these empty divinities, Israel participated in their character. Like god, like people.

6. They did not meditate on Yahweh's rescue of them from Egypt, and His safe guidance of them through the perils of the pathless desert. The dangers and terrors of the wilderness are described with a touch of poetical exaggeration, natural to one who regarded it from the standpoint of settled life; cf. Isa. xxx. 6.

land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought
and of [a] the shadow of death, through a land that none
7 passed through, and where no man dwelt? And I
brought you into a plentiful land, to eat the fruit thereof
and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye de-
filed my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.
8 The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that
handle the law knew me not: the [b] rulers also transgressed

[a] Or, *deep darkness* [b] Heb. *shepherds.*

pits: i.e. the cracks or fissures in the ground, into which the traveller might easily stumble and perish.

the shadow of death. This interpretation of the term has been strongly defended by Schwally and Nöldeke. Usually modern scholars point the consonants with different vowels, and translate 'deep darkness,' as in the margin. (See note on Job iii. 5.) The expression is in any case metaphorical; just as in deep darkness men cannot see their way and stray blindly hither and thither, so in the trackless desert they may easily lose themselves and wander in bewilderment. The LXX renders 'unfruitful,' but it is questionable if the translator found a corresponding Hebrew word in his text, and it would spoil the assonance in the present Hebrew text to adopt it.

7. Delivered from the wilderness, they were brought into Yahweh's land, the fruitfulness and security of which stood in happy contrast to the barren and dangerous desert. The land was placed at their disposal, but they used their opportunity to defile it with idolatry and wickedness (cf. Ezek. xx. 27–29).

mine heritage: i.e. the land of Palestine, as in Ps. lxxix. 1. Generally the term refers to the people, but the parallelism does not permit this here. To the consciousness of the early Hebrews Yahweh was pre-eminently a wilderness Deity. This largely accounts for their adoption of the worship of the Canaanite Baalim, whose favour was regarded as necessary to the success of the crops, although this did not mean conscious defection from their national God. Gradually they came to recognize Palestine as Yahweh's land.

8. It is a common feature of an earlier period to find the official representatives of religion, the priests and prophets, denounced by the prophets of a higher type, such as Micaiah, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. The tradition is continued by Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

handle the law: the phrase suggests a law-book, not necessarily the Deuteronomic Code, but collections of rules, which were

against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit. Wherefore I will 9
yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead. For pass over to the isles 10
of Kittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently; and see if there hath been such a thing.
Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which yet are no gods? 11
but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, 12
and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the

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in circulation among the priests, and which formed a basis for the later legislation.

the rulers: literally 'shepherds,' i.e. the kings and princes. For 'transgressed' it would be better to render 'rebelled,' especially since it is said of rulers.

by Baal: this rendering suggests that there was a god who bore the name Baal as peculiarly his own. Probably this was not the case; the word is not a proper name but an appellative, borne by the local deities of the various districts of Palestine. The true rendering is 'by the Baal,' and here it is employed as a collective designation of these local deities, rather than with special reference to Melkart, the Baal of Tyre, whose worship was fostered by Ahab and fanatically promoted by Jezebel.

things that do not profit: i.e. the idols, who in the time of distress could bring no help to their worshippers, but only ruin.

9. plead: an archaism for **contend,** which should have been substituted here and elsewhere. See Driver, pp. 336 f.

10. The Kitians were properly the inhabitants of Kition, i.e. Larnaka in Cyprus. 'The isles of the Kitians' (as the phrase may better be rendered) means Cyprus and other islands in the West. Kedar is used apparently not simply for the tribe which went by that name, but for the Arabian tribes generally. The prophet means, Inquire both in the West and the East.

11. If the nations changed their gods, it would be but the substitution of one nonentity for another, yet each remains loyal to its own; how incredible the folly and ingratitude which has made Israel an exception to the rule, and caused her to exchange Yahweh, her glory, for useless idols!

12. Cf. Isa. i. 2.

be ye very desolate. An alternative rendering would be 'be ye dried up,' which is explained to mean, be ye stiff with horror, a sense which the word does not bear elsewhere. The R.V. is also

land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought
and of [a] the shadow of death, through a land that none
7 passed through, and where no man dwelt? And I
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13 LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they
have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and
hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold
14 no water. Is Israel a servant? is he a homeborn *slave*?

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unsuitable; we should probably follow the LXX and render the whole clause, 'Be appalled, O ye heavens, at this, and shudder exceedingly' (so Driver and other scholars).

13. The folly of the people is exposed in a very effective metaphor. They have ready at hand a reservoir in which living waters are stored up, pure, cool, perennial, and plentiful. And they leave this living water, drawn from streams and fountains, which they can have without labour, without money or price, and with great toil and expense hew out cisterns in the rock and store their water in them. This water, flat, stagnant, putrid, they prefer to the springing water from the fountain. But these rock-cisterns were very liable to crack, and thus the indescribable liquid they have stored with such trouble leaks away and is lost (see Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 287). So Israel, whose national existence was based on its relations to Yahweh, who had equipped it with all its vital energy, turns from Him to dead idols (cf. 27). How much happier could she have said, 'All my springs are in Thee!'

14–17. Ewald regarded these verses as a later insertion, on the ground that they break the connexion between 13 and 18. He thought that they were inserted by Jeremiah at the close of his life in Egypt. Cornill also considers that, while unquestionably Jeremiah's composition, they did not originally belong to this context. There is no clear connexion between 13 and 14, whereas 18 links on admirably to 13; Israel finds its cisterns broken and goes to the Nile and the Euphrates. Moreover it is difficult to harmonize the situation presupposed in 16 with that presupposed in 18. This might be met by treating 16 as an insertion made by Jeremiah when the roll was re-written. But, in view of the interruption of the connexion between 13 and 18, it is simplest to suppose that the verses, while written by Jeremiah, owe their present position to a compiler, who was guided by the observation that 16 and 18 both speak of Egypt. Schmidt (*Enc. Bib.* 2385) regards 14–19 as a late insertion, written perhaps in the beginning of the period of the Seleucidae, 198–143 B.C. (loc. cit., 2392).

14. The questions require a negative answer; Israel has not become a prey on account of its servile position, but for some other cause. We must not suppose that the prophet expects an affirmative answer, and explain 'servant' to mean 'servant of Yahweh' (so Hitzig) or 'homeborn' to mean a son of the house. The R.V. 'homeborn *slave*' gives the sense which the word always

why is he become a prey? The young lions have roared 15
upon him, and [a]yelled: and they have made his land
waste; his cities are burned up, without inhabitant. The 16
children also of Noph and Tahpanhes have [b]broken the
crown of thy head. Hast thou not procured this unto 17
thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God,
when he led thee by the way? And now what hast thou 18

[a] Heb. *given out their voice.* [b] Or, *fed on*

possesses elsewhere. The slave who was born into slavery was not likely to escape from it, even though the Hebrew slave of a Hebrew master; but the Book of the Covenant prescribed that the Hebrew slave who had been a freeman might regain his liberty at the end of six years (Exod. xxi. 2–4). Israel is a son, not a slave.

15. The reference is apparently to the earlier devastation inflicted by Assyria.

his cities are burned up: an alternative reading is 'are laid waste;' some scholars prefer it. Duhm transfers the clause to the close of the preceding verse, taking it of course as interrogative. He thus secures in 14, 15 two regular Qina stanzas.

16. The verse may be rendered as a prediction or a statement of what is actually happening, but the context greatly favours the latter. If it describes an existing situation, that can only be the battle of Megiddo, followed by the suzerainty of Egypt. But at that time the Assyrian empire had ceased to exist, and the Jews would not be found seeking help from Egypt. Accordingly 16 seems to spring from another situation than 18.

Noph (xliv. 1, xlvi. 14, 19): probably Memphis, the capital of lower Egypt. **Tahpanhes** is Daphne, or Defenneh. See xliii. 7–9, xliv. i, xlvi. 14.

broken: this implies a different vocalization from that in the present text, which gives the sense 'fed on,' as in the margin. Although the latter is accepted by several scholars, the phrase 'have fed on the crown of thy head' is too strange to be probable. 'Broken' is perhaps too strong. It is simplest to transpose two consonants and substitute 'make bare' (*y'ʿaruk*), cf. Isa. iii. 17. We do not know, it is true, that the verb bore this sense, but it seems to be sufficiently attested by the fact that the word for 'razor' is derived from it. The historical circumstances to which Jeremiah refers are probably the defeat and death of Josiah at Megiddo, and the brief subjection of Judah to Egypt. In that case this verse (and perhaps 14–17) dates from a later period in Jeremiah's career than the bulk of the chapter.

17. when he led thee by the way: i.e. in the time of the

to do in the way to Egypt, to drink the waters of [a] Shihor?
or what hast thou to do in the way to Assyria, to drink
19 the waters of [b] the River? Thine own wickedness shall
correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee:
know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and a bit-
ter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that
my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.
20 For of old time [c] I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy

[a] That is, the Nile. [b] That is, the Euphrates.
[c] †Or, *thou hast*

wilderness wandering and the entrance into Canaan. But this was the time of Israel's loyalty, moreover it is not the wickedness of a distant past which is responsible for its present misfortune. The words are absent in the LXX, and the syntax of the Hebrew is very strange, though a slight emendation would cure this. They are almost certainly no part of the original text, but, as Movers and others have pointed out, have originated through a scribe's blunder. He wrote the first four words in the Hebrew of the next verse twice over.

18. The thought is linked to 13. Israel has forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns, which nevertheless leak so that they are left only with the muddy dregs. Accordingly they turn to the Nile and the Euphrates. The point is not so much that they leave Yahweh for the idols of Egypt and Assyria as that they fly to these powers for political help. Similarly Hosea had reproached the Northern Kingdom for oscillating like a silly dove between Egypt and Assyria, and Isaiah had been forced to oppose similar tendencies in Judah. While the primary stress in the passage is on political relationships, it should be remembered that in antiquity these often involved mutual recognition of deities.

Shihor is not the stream which separates Egypt from Palestine, as in Joshua xiii. 3, 1 Chron. xiii. 5, but, as the margin rightly says, the Nile, in which sense it is perhaps used in Isa. xxiii. 3. 'The River' is the Euphrates.

19. Duhm omits the words 'and thy backslidings shall reprove thee,' and is thus able to translate 'misfortune' instead of 'wickedness.' In that case we get an excellent sense: disaster alone will bring the people to their right mind. The continuation in this and the following verse rather favours the present text. Sin brings its own punishment.

20. I have broken. We should unquestionably adopt the marginal translation, 'thou hast broken,' as practically all recent

bands; and thou saidst, I will not [a] serve; for upon
every high hill and under every green tree thou didst bow
thyself, playing the harlot. Yet I had planted thee a 21
noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou
turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto
me? For though thou wash thee with lye, and take thee 22
much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith
the Lord GOD. How canst thou say, I am not defiled, 23

[a] Another reading is, *transgress.*

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scholars do, following the LXX and Vulgate. There is no suitability in a reference to God's breaking of the Egyptian yoke at the time of the Exodus, either as an explanation of 19, or as explained by 20[b]. The meaning is that of old Israel threw off all restraint. We should no doubt retain the reading 'I will not serve,' which suits the statement that she had snapped her yoke. The other reading 'I will not transgress' is quite out of harmony with the context, and the Hebrew word is not used elsewhere in this absolute sense.

every high hill. The worship at the high places, even when offered to Yahweh, had a tendency to be assimilated to the licentious cult of the Baalim; the description given in the latter part of the verse is literally as well as figuratively accurate.

21. It was not God's fault that Israel had thus gone astray. He had set her at the outset on the right path. With a reminiscence of Isaiah's parable of the thankless vineyard (Isa. v. 1–7), Jeremiah insists that it was a vine of excellent quality, a Sorek vine of genuine stock, which Yahweh planted, from which good fruit might have been expected. The Hebrew is harsh and ungrammatical. The simplest emendation, though somewhat precarious, yields the sense: 'How hast thou turned to a foul-smelling thing, a strange vine.' Gillies translates 'How art thou then turned to bitterness, A degenerate vine.' (reading *lim^{e}rōrōth gephen*).

22. lye. The word so rendered means 'natron,' a mineral alkali; the word rendered 'soap' stands for a vegetable alkali. The guilt of Israel is such that no washing will remove it. Cf. Lady Macbeth's pitiful words on the blood-stains from which nothing will cleanse her hands.

marked: or **ingrained.** The Hebrew word occurs only here in the Old Testament. The Versions agree in taking it to mean 'filthy,' 'stained,' and this sense, which is supported by the Aramaic, is required by the context.

23. In this verse Jeremiah quotes and rebuts a statement made

I have not gone after the Baalim? see thy way in the
valley, know what thou hast done: *thou art* a swift
24 [a] dromedary traversing her ways; a wild ass used to the
wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind in her desire; in

[a] †Or, *young camel*

by the people, to the effect that they are not guilty as he says. But the meaning is not clear. They may feel the charge that they have gone after the Baalim to be an unwarranted description of their conduct in keeping up old forms of worship. They may in that case possibly have recognized that they were no part of the religion of Yahweh, and yet have refused to regard them as a form of Baal-worship. More probably, however, the difference between people and prophet lay in this, that they emphasized the destination, he the quality of their worship. If the worship was rendered to Yahweh they felt that it ought not to be described as Baal-worship; Jeremiah insists on the contrary, that to serve Yahweh with the heathenish and immoral rites of Baalism is no better than downright worship of the Baalim. The name they gave to the deity was unimportant; their Yahweh was not his Yahweh, but no better than a Baal. Had the passage been written after Josiah's reformation, the meaning would apparently be that, whatever had been the case previously, the Baalim had now been abandoned for Yahweh. But this is unlikely, and less suitable to the context.

I have not gone. Duhm omits these words; if rightly, the people are not denying their worship of the Baalim, but that such worship involved any defilement.

thy way in the valley: i.e. the sacrifices to Molech offered in the Valley of Hinnom (see note on vii. 31).

dromedary: better **young camel,** as in margin. The word is used for a camel which has had no foal.

traversing: a better rendering would be 'interlacing.' She is continually driven to and fro by the sting of passion; she does not go forward quietly on her appointed way, but moves restlessly backwards and forwards, crossing and recrossing her old tracks, impelled by low desires.

24. If the text is correct, we may suppose either that Israel is now compared to a wild ass, as previously she had been to a camel, or that the camel is herself compared to the wild ass snuffing up the wind. The latter is very unlikely, a metaphor within a metaphor is awkward. The Hebrew for wild ass is irregularly written, the unpointed text suggests 'a heifer.' Duhm thinks a heifer is intended, and argues that the context requires an animal naturally tame but leading for a time the wild desert-life. Israel

her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek
her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall
find her. Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy 25
throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no;
for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go. As 26
the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of
Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their
priests, and their prophets; which say to a stock, Thou 27
art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast [a] brought [b] me

[a] Or, *begotten me* [b] Another reading is, *us.*

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was originally pious, but subsequently snapped her yoke. This does not suit the wild ass, which never wears the yoke at all. Cornill, followed by Rothstein, omits the first part of the verse (as far as 'desire'). He thus avoids the difficulties of the present text, and the passage runs much more smoothly. It may have been inserted from xiv. 6.

occasion: the word occurs nowhere else in Hebrew. Probably it means 'rut.'

will not weary themselves. The desire on her part is so intense that those who pair with her need give themselves no trouble to find her. In the month of mating she will seek them, they will not need to seek her. So Judah in her idolatrous passion runs after her lovers, i. e. the false gods.

25. The prophet further rebukes Israel's shameless passion. There seems to be no reference to the practice of approaching the altar with bare feet and calling to the deity with loud voice till the throat is parched. Possibly the point is that the sandals were removed when one wished to run more quickly, but more probably the meaning is 'Do not run the shoes off your feet.'

There is no hope. Israel rejects the injunction as all in vain, she has lost her self-control and is at the mercy of her passions.

strangers: i. e. strange gods.

26. The thief who is caught is disappointed of his booty and has nothing but confusion and penalty for his pains, so Israel will gain nothing better from her trust in the idols; cf. Isa. i. 29-31.

27. By **stock** and **stone** idols of wood and stone are intended, including perhaps the Asherah or wooden pole and the obelisk or stone pillar. There is no thought that the deities thus identified with the material images are the human ancestors who are worshipped as divine. Fatherhood and motherhood express the relation of deity to worshipper, not of ancestor to descendant.

forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not
their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say,
28 Arise, and save us. But where are thy gods that thou
hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in
the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of
thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.
29 Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have trans-
30 gressed against me, saith the LORD. In vain have I

Duhm rightly remarks that ancestor-worship had as good as no significance for Israel.

brought me forth: should be adopted rather than margin 'begotten me' (or 'us'). The stone is addressed as mother because the Hebrew word for 'stone' is feminine.

Arise, and save us. It must be remembered that, however prone to idolatry the Israelites were, they still regarded Yahweh as their national deity, on whose help they had a right to count. The extirpation of the worship of the Tyrian Baal had expressed the conviction, which Elijah had burnt into the consciousness of Israel, that Yahweh alone was Israel's God. But contact with Assyria had altered Judah's attitude. New cults had been imported, especially that of the Queen of Heaven, and found favour with the people. The sense of Yahweh's 'jealousy,' of His intolerance of companion deities, had been weakened, and while they worshipped other gods, they still regarded Yahweh as charged with the responsibility of their safety.

28. The prophet recognizes that a people may rightly look to its deity for deliverance, but draws the conclusion that the gods worshipped by Judah should honour this obligation or cease to be worshipped. She had no right to make a demand on Yahweh which she did not make on the gods she set by His side. The divided allegiance did not match the undivided claim.

The last portion of the verse is also found in xi. 13. The LXX adds here, 'and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem they sacrifice to the Baal,' which agrees with the continuation in xi. 13 according to the LXX text of that passage. Ewald and Cornill adopt this.

29. What right, then, had the people to complain against Yahweh because of their misfortunes? What else did their rebellion deserve? 'Plead' is here very misleading; the Hebrew means to 'expostulate.'

30. The verse is rather difficult, and has been variously explained. The **children** must not be understood literally, nor is

smitten your children; they received no [a] correction:
your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a de-
stroying lion. O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. 31
Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? or a land of [b] thick
darkness? wherefore say my people, We are broken loose;

[a] Or, *instruction* [b] Or, *darkness from Jah*

there a reference to the young warriors slain in battle. They are the members of the community generally, without reference to age; they had been smitten, but learnt nothing from their correction. Giesebrecht reads 'your fathers,' which involves only a trifling emendation, but it seems less suitable to the context.

The latter part of the verse is commonly supposed to refer to the killing of the prophets in Manasseh's persecution. If this had been the sense, it is more likely that 'my prophets' would have been said. Probably we should read with the LXX 'the sword,' and explain that the sword of Yahweh had slain certain false prophets, of whom we have no information elsewhere.

31. Once more Yahweh insists that Israel's defection was justified by no defect in Him. He had not been to His people an unprofitable, unkindly desert land, nor a land of dense darkness, where they might easily miss their way. He had satisfied their needs by His bounty. For though He had been their desert-deity, it was He and not the Baalim who had given them 'the corn, and the wine, and the oil' (Hos. ii. 8). He had also been their light, guiding them by the clear, sure word of prophecy. Perhaps the thought may also be present that Yahweh has not been to His people a gloomy and terrible wilderness, otherwise they might excusably have shrunk from Him.

The beginning of the verse is probably corrupt. The Hebrew means 'O generation that ye are, see the word of Yahweh.' The construction is possible, but Yahweh's reference to Himself in the third person is strange, as is the expression 'see the word.' The LXX reads 'hear the word,' and for the preceding words gives 'and ye did not fear,' connecting this with 30 where it makes good sense. It is not quite easy to see, if the LXX represents the original, how the present Hebrew text originated. The opening sentence is regarded by Duhm and Cornill as a later addition, but it does not much relieve the difficulties to make a later editor responsible for them.

thick darkness: the margin 'darkness from Jah' (i.e. Yahweh), cf. 'flame of Yah,' Song of Songs viii. 6, seems to give the sense of the Hebrew, but since this is strange on Yahweh's lips we should probably omit a letter and read simply 'darkness.'

broken loose: this seems to be the meaning of the Hebrew,

32 we will come no more unto thee? Can a maid forget
her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have
33 forgotten me days without number. How trimmest thou
thy way to seek love! therefore even the wicked women
34 hast thou taught thy ways. Also in thy skirts is found

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and is sufficiently guaranteed by Arabic, so that no emendation is necessary. The LXX renders 'We will not be ruled over.'

32. Israel's conduct is as incomprehensible as that of a maiden who forgot her ornaments or a bride who forgot her sash.

attire: i.e. headband (as in Isa. iii. 20, A.V.), see Aldis Wright's *Bible Word-Book*. But while the precise meaning of the Hebrew word, which occurs elsewhere only in Isa. iii. 20, is unknown, it must have been a kind of girdle which formed an indispensable part of the bride's attire. The Revisers translate by 'sash' in Isa. iii. 20, and this ought to have been substituted here.

33. trimmest suggests rather more than the Hebrew, which means to make good or right; her course is rightly designed to reach a wrong goal. The R.V. rendering of the latter portion of the verse gives a good, caustic sense; she has attained such a mastery, that even the experts in immorality are her pupils. But it would be better to translate 'therefore to evil things thou hast accustomed thy ways.' The LXX, however, presupposes a rather different text, 'therefore thou hast done wickedly in corrupting thy ways,' and this is supported by the contrast we thus gain with the verb in the first clause.

34. This is a very difficult verse. If we retain the present Hebrew text the meaning is apparently as follows: I have found your garments stained with the blood of the innocent poor: you did not find them breaking into houses, in which case you might justifiably have killed them (Exod. xxii. 2), but you slew them on account of their opposition to all these heathenish practices of yours. This reads in a good deal, and the text is almost certainly corrupt especially at the end of the verse. 'All these' needs to be defined, it may be these practices, or these garments, i.e. 'thy skirts.' Orelli makes the tempting suggestion that two words have fallen out, and that the text originally ran 'concerning all these things I will contend with thee.' This may be correct; in any case it is preferable to the LXX punctuation 'upon every oak,' for if they had been engaged in idolatrous worship Jeremiah could not have described them as innocent. There are other interpretations, but none of them probable. The corruption seems to be at present incurable.

in thy skirts: the LXX reads 'on thy hands,' and omits **poor.**

the blood of the souls of the innocent poor: [a] I have not found it at [b] the place of breaking in, but upon [c] all these.
Yet thou saidst, I am innocent; surely his anger is turned 35
away from me. Behold, I will enter into judgement with
thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Why gad- 36
dest thou about so much to change thy way? thou shalt
be ashamed of Egypt also, as thou wast ashamed of As-
syria. From him also shalt thou go forth, with thine hands 37
upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy con-
fidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.

[d] They say, [e] If a man put away his wife, and she go from 3

[a] †Or, *thou didst not find them* [b] See Ex. xxii. 2. [c] Some ancient authorities have, *every oak.* [d] Heb. *Saying.* [e] See Deut. xxiv. 1-4.

35. Giesebrecht thinks that this verse is unsuitable in its present position, and suggests that originally it may have stood after iii. 1. It is better, however, where it is, and iii. 1 and iii. 2 ought not to be separated. In reply to Israel's protestations of innocence (see 23) and assurance that Yahweh's anger has passed away, He announces punishment for this assertion of guiltlessness (cf. 1 John i. 8-10). The view that prosperity and righteousness were closely associated seems to have emboldened the Jews to make this assertion. They infer from their good fortune that Yahweh is not angry with them.

36. The present pointing of the Hebrew word may be defended, though 'gaddest about' is too strong a translation. The LXX presupposes a different pointing, which should probably be accepted: 'How light a matter thou esteemest it to change thy way!' The reference is not to constant change of policy. We do not know what historical situation lies behind the allusion to the disappointment experienced from Assyria, or of the negotiations with Egypt which are expected to end in similar disappointment.

37. The hand on the head is a sign of deep shame and distress; cf. 2 Sam. xiii. 19.

in them: this is the view generally adopted, though the Hebrew is peculiar, and some improve it by a slight change in the text. Cornill connects it with the first word of the next chapter (see note), and reads 'to escape.'

iii. 1. They say. The Hebrew means 'saying,' and it is commonly recognized that the text is corrupt or incomplete. It

him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her

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cannot be connected with 'hath rejected' in the preceding verse, because another clause with a different subject has intervened, and because there is no natural connexion between the statement in ii. 37 and the question in this verse. Usually the word comes at the end of such a formula as 'And the word of Yahweh came to me,' or 'And Yahweh spake unto me,' and since we have a similar heading to this in 6 without 'saying,' it has been conjectured that originally it stood in a slightly different form at the beginning of the chapter: 'And the word of Yahweh came unto me in the days of Josiah the king, saying.' It may be questioned, however, whether a title is in place here. If a new oracle begins here, such a heading is appropriate, not, however, if there is no break between this verse and the preceding chapter. The LXX and Syriac and one Hebrew MS. omit the word. It may have originated as Cornill suggests (see note on ii. 37). Reifmann's suggestion, adopted by Perles, that the word is an abbreviation of 'Go, say,' avoids the difficulty of the present text, but the text thus gained is too abrupt.

It is generally thought that there is a reference to Deut. xxiv. 1-4, which forbids a husband to take back a woman to wife whom he had previously divorced; such conduct is abomination to Yahweh, and causes the land to sin. This is thought to explain the curious fact that while the verse begins with a reference to the return of the husband to the wife, the application reverses the relationship and speaks of Israel's return to Yahweh. The pollution of the land is also supposed to be a reference to the law in Deuteronomy. It is, however, very questionable whether there was any reference to Deut. xxiv. 1-4, at least in the original text of this passage. Quite apart from the question whether the Code had at that time been published, there is a difference between the two cases, in the fact that Israel has not been divorced. Moreover we should probably read with the LXX 'that woman' instead of 'that land,' which has probably arisen through assimilation to Deut. xxiv, and perhaps 'shall she return to him' instead of 'shall he return unto her.' In earlier times, the legitimate marriage of the divorced wife with a second husband seems not to have been a bar to renewal of the old relations (cf. the case of David and Michal). Jeremiah, however, regards the woman as defiled for her former husband by her union with another man; but whether this union is legitimate or illegitimate he does not say, so that it is not clear whether he is contemplating the same case as the Deuteronomist. His argument is apparently this: If a man divorces his wife and she lives with another man, how can her first husband take her back, defiled as she is for him? But Judah's case is still worse, for she has not been divorced and has contracted an adulterous union not with one lover but with many. How can she expect

again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? But
thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; [a]yet
return again to me, saith the LORD. Lift up thine eyes 2
unto the bare heights, and see; where hast thou not
been lien with? By the ways hast thou sat for them, as
an Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted
the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness.
Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there 3
hath been no latter rain; yet thou hadst a whore's fore-
head, thou refusedst to be ashamed. Wilt thou not from 4

[a] †Or, *and* thinkest thou *to return &c.?*

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the old relations with Yahweh to be restored, since He must regard her as utterly defiled?

yet return. This is certainly incorrect. It is no gracious invitation that we have here, any more than in Isa. i. 18, but an indignant rebuke of the idea that she might return to Yahweh as a matter of course. The margin 'and *thinkest thou* to return' gives the sense, but not forcibly enough; the sense might be expressed thus 'and return to me? saith Yahweh!'

2. the bare heights, a favourite expression of Jeremiah's, are the hill-tops denuded of trees, which were congenial spots for worship. There Yahweh's people went wantonly astray after the false gods.

an Arabian: i.e. a steppe-dweller; there is probably no reference here to the fact that these highway robbers belonged to the tribe known as the Arabians (xxv. 24). The point of the comparison is the lying in wait by the wayside; the Arabian's object is of course different.

3. Cf. Amos iv. 6–11. The latter rain generally fell in March or April. But the LXX presupposes a different text, 'And thou hadst many shepherds as a stumbling for thee.' On the basis of this Duhm restores the text 'And thy many friends were a snare to thee.' This suits the context, and this or a similar sense is probably to be accepted. The friends are the lovers or false gods, through pursuit of whom Israel had fallen into misfortune.

4. The shamelessness with which the prophet has just charged her, is displayed in the fact that she uses endearing language to Yahweh at the very time when she is ardent in her devotion to other gods. Many consider that this reflects the new conditions introduced by the Deuteronomic Reform, which disappointed the prophet by its superficial character. But it would probably suit the earlier period, for even in the worst times of

this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the [a] guide of
5 my youth? Will he retain *his anger* for ever? will he
keep it to the end? Behold, thou [b] hast spoken and
hast done evil things, and hast [c] had thy way.
6 Moreover the LORD said unto me in the days of Josiah

[a] †Or, *companion* [b] †Or, *hast spoken* thus, *but hast done &c.* [c] Heb. *been able.*

idolatry yet experienced, Israel seems not to have wavered in the conviction that Yahweh was her national God. And the reproach would be even more appropriate then than at a time when the worship of false gods had been suppressed. We must, of course, remember that the people as a whole did not readily rise to the exclusive standpoint of the prophets, and saw no inconsistency in combining the worship of Yahweh with that of the local Baalim, even when it rejected the worship of a foreign deity such as the Baal of Tyre. And in the time of Manasseh foreign cults had been introduced to a quite unexampled degree.

Wilt thou not. This rendering gives an entirely false sense. It is no appeal to Israel's better feelings which Jeremiah makes here, but a caustic accusation of her deceitfulness, in using wheedling language to the husband whom she is all the while betraying. We should render 'Hast thou not just now called me my father, the companion of my youth?' (adopting a slight change from the LXX). Duhm omits 'my father,' which he thinks has been introduced from 19, as unsuitable to the representation of Yahweh as the companion of Israel's youth, and the whole description of Israel's unfaithfulness. Both relationships were, it is true, asserted by Hosea, though not in such close juxtaposition.

5. The former part of the verse is usually taken to be a continuation of Israel's words, asking if Yahweh's anger is to endure for ever. Yahweh then retorts that, while uttering excellent sentiments, her conduct has been utterly bad (cf. the light-hearted optimism in Hos. vi. 1-3 and its rebuke in vi. 4). This is probably correct, though Duhm with some alteration gets the sense, 'Will anger be retained for ever, will it be kept till the end?' taking this as Yahweh's question to Judah.

had thy way: literally **been able.** Duhm takes the closing words to mean 'thou hast done evil to the uttermost.' Erbt suggests 'thou hast been crafty against me.'

iii. 6-18. ISRAEL, LESS GUILTY THAN JUDAH, INVITED TO RETURN.

These verses present a very difficult problem, for which several solutions have been offered. The main theme of the section is

the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel

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that Judah has taken no warning by the fate of the Northern Kingdom, but has also gone wantonly astray after false gods; therefore since Israel has been less guilty than Judah, Yahweh invites her to confess her sin and return from exile. The term 'Israel' is accordingly used here in the narrower sense to designate the ten tribes, and thus excludes Judah which is placed in direct contrast with it. In ii. 1—iii. 5, on the other hand, the term is not employed in this limited meaning. It is used of the elect people as a whole, but since with the captivity of the ten tribes their relationship to Yahweh was annulled or at any rate suspended, and the Southern Kingdom alone remained to represent the people of God, the title 'Israel,' which expressed the theocratic idea, was restricted to it, so far as Jeremiah was addressing his contemporaries or dealing with the history after the fall of Samaria. The same is true apparently of the section which follows iii. 18. Accordingly Stade, whose view has been accepted by Kuenen, Cornill, and Driver, considered that iii. 6 ff. did not originally belong to its present context, and that before its insertion iii. 19 immediately followed iii. 5, as is indeed suggested by the antithesis implied in the opening words of 19. Duhm, however, thinks that this distinction between the ten tribes and Judah is due to a redactor. Jeremiah meant by the return of Israel Judah's return to God, but the redactor misunderstood him to refer to the return of the ten tribes from exile. Only 12^{b} and 13 are left to Jeremiah, the redactor being responsible for the rest. He was influenced, he thinks, by Ezekiel's similar unfavourable verdict on Judah in comparison with Israel. But it is more probable that Ezekiel was indebted first to Jeremiah. The older prophet's relationships were with the Rachel tribes, and his sympathies were naturally drawn to his exiled kinsfolk. Moreover he could not fail, as he thought of Israel's history, to be struck by the apparent inequality of God's dealings with the two kingdoms. Israel's punishment had not been unjust, but the subsequent sin of Judah in the reign of Manasseh merited an even heavier punishment. Even if he contemplated exile for Judah, he believed in her restoration, and justice involved a similar restoration for the less guilty Israel. But at the period to which this oracle belongs he seems to have hoped that Judah's exile might be averted by repentance. All the more imperative that the privilege of return upon repentance should be offered to Israel. We may therefore regard the thought as genuinely Jeremianic, and treat this section as a whole as the prophet's work dating from the reign of Josiah. Giesebrecht, however, does not admit that it closes with iii. 18, or that iii. 19 should immediately follow iii. 5. He believes that

hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain
and under every green tree, and there hath played the
7 harlot. [a] And I said after she had done all these things,
[b] She will return unto me; but she returned not: and

[a] †Or, *And I said, After she hath done all these things, she &c.*
[b] Or, *Let her return unto me*

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iii. 1–5 is an independent prophecy, and takes iii. 6—iv. 2 as a unity, apart from later insertions. He finds too marked a contrast between iii. 1–5 and iii. 19 ff. to admit of their being taken as a single oracle, and he considers that Jeremiah does not apply the term Israel to Judah alone. Nevertheless it is probably best to abide by the view that originally iii. 19 stood immediately after iii. 5, and that iii. 6–18 is as a whole the work of Jeremiah, but has properly no connexion with its present context. The question of later insertions may be deferred.

iii. 6–18. Yahweh had thought that apostate Israel would forsake her idols and return to Him. But when she failed to return and He had divorced her, faithless Judah took no warning by her sister's fate, but polluted the land with her idolatry and returned to Yahweh only in hypocrisy. Since Israel therefore was more righteous than Judah, He bade me invite her to confess her sin and return, and He would bring the repentant remnant to Zion, and give them shepherds who would feed them with true knowledge. The ark will in the days of the nation's prosperity be missed no more. All nations, forsaking their stubborn way, shall come to Jerusalem, and Judah and Israel shall return from the north country to Palestine.

6. The section as a whole seems to be correctly assigned to the reign of Josiah.

backsliding: the Hebrew word is a noun; more literally we might render 'apostasy Israel,' as if Israel were the very incarnation of the quality. 'Backturning' would preserve better the play on the double sense of the root, which runs through the passage, (a) turn the back on Yahweh, and (b) return to Him. (See Driver's note, p. 340.)

hath done: better **did,** similarly 'went up' and 'played.' The Northern Kingdom had come to an end about a century before, so that the tenses in the R.V. give a false impression.

7. This hope of her reformation was not a mere expectation which Yahweh had done nothing to realize, for as Jeremiah elsewhere insists, He had sent prophet after prophet to recall her to the true path.

her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And [a] I saw, when, 8
for this very cause that backsliding Israel had committed
adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of di-
vorcement, yet treacherous Judah her sister feared not;
but she also went and played the harlot. And it came 9
to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that the
land was polluted, and she committed adultery with stones
and with stocks. And yet for all this her treacherous 10

[a] †Some ancient authorities have, *she saw that, for &c.*

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8. I saw: this makes no good sense; we should read with the Syriac 'she saw,' i.e. Judah saw that Israel was divorced for her unfaithfulness. Duhm thinks the reference is to Yahweh's abandonment of Shiloh (vii. 12 ff., xxvi. 6, 9) and choice of Jerusalem as His dwelling (Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68). But since the palmy days of the northern tribes all came after the destruction of Shiloh, it is most unlikely that the writer should regard this as Yahweh's manifest repudiation of Israel. The only natural reference is to the exile in 722 (cf. Isa. l. 1), by which she was driven out of Yahweh's house and land (Hos. ix. 3, 15). For the 'bill of divorcement' cf. Deut. xxiv. 1, 3.

9. lightness: this is probably the meaning if the text is correct, though the word does not occur elsewhere, and the sense will be 'her light-hearted unfaithfulness.' It might mean 'voice' or 'report,' but this is improbable. A slight correction (*qᵉlon*) would yield the sense 'through the disgrace,' and some give this sense to the present term. Perles (*Analekten*, p. 72) thinks we should read *kol* (instead of *qol*), 'through all her,' &c.

the land was polluted: the pointed text can only mean 'she was polluted with the land.' The pointing should be changed and we should read 'she polluted the land' (so Targum and Vulgate).

10. Apparently the reference is to the failure of the Deuteronomic Reformation. Cornill thinks that it ascribes the downfall of Judah to it. He urges that while Jeremiah would have shared the conviction that no reformation would have been of any avail apart from a change of heart, he could not have said that if undertaken with all the heart the reform would have saved Judah. Accordingly he treats the verse as a later insertion. But this is very questionable, for it is by no means clear that the passage looks back on the downfall of Judah as an accomplished fact, and Jeremiah soon realized the superficial character of the reform. The

sister Judah hath not returned unto me with her whole
11 heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. And the LORD
said unto me, Backsliding Israel hath shewn herself more
12 righteous than treacherous Judah. Go, and proclaim
these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou
backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; I will not [a] look in
anger upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, I will
13 not keep *anger* for ever. Only [b] acknowledge thine ini-
quity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy
God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under
every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith

[a] Heb. *cause my countenance to fall upon you.* [b] Or, *know*

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verse is meant to form the basis for the judgement in the next verse.

her treacherous sister Judah. We should read simply **treacherous Judah,** with the LXX. The pronoun can only refer to Israel, but Judah is the antecedent, so that 'her sister' is simply an intrusion from 7, 8, where also the LXX omits it.

11. Israel is more righteous, since Judah might have profited by the warning of her sister's fate, but she went on in her sin, and then added insincerity to her other offences by pretending to return to Yahweh. Ezekiel says that Jerusalem, by the abominations she has committed, has justified her sisters Samaria and Sodom. They are righteous when compared with her.

12. So Jeremiah is bidden turn his gaze towards the North, into which a century earlier the exiles had disappeared, and utter that prophetic word of Yahweh which will not return to Him void, summoning the captives to come back to their own land.

13. acknowledge: marg. **know** is the literal translation; the R.V. text gives the sense.

scattered thy ways is a strange phrase; we may perhaps compare ii. 23, 25. Cornill's suggestion 'lavished thy love' is ingenious, but the sense imposed on the verb is dubious.

14–18. This section creates serious difficulties. Apparently the meaning is not that the whole of the exiled tribes are to return to Palestine and then a chosen few of these were to be brought to Jerusalem, but that only a small remnant would return from exile and these would be taken to Jerusalem. This is presupposed by 16; the tiny community is not to be limited to Zion, but to spread abroad in the land. But according to chap. xxxi it is a great

the LORD. [8] Return, O backsliding children, saith the 14

company, the whole of Israel it would seem, that is to return, and they will dwell upon the mountains of Samaria and the hills of Ephraim. This is obviously the more natural anticipation, but it is difficult to imagine that Jeremiah expected a feeble remnant of the northern tribes to come back to Palestine and settle in Jerusalem. It would be possible to mitigate this difficulty by reading 'bring them,' were it not that 16 presupposes that only a few will at first dwell in the land. The closing verses, 17, 18, have been for long an object of suspicion. Jeremiah does not elsewhere represent the idolatry of the heathen as due to their stubbornness, and it is questionable whether he expected all the nations to be gathered to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh. The thought that Jerusalem will be the throne of Yahweh, apparently in contrast to the cherubim over the ark, is also not too readily to be ascribed to a prophet who sets aside material media for the worship of Yahweh. Further 18 represents Judah as returning with Israel from the exile. This is not in harmony with the rest of the section, which suggests different treatment of the two. Are we then to take the same view of 16? There is not a little to suggest this. Many consider that it presupposes that the ark had perished and was missed by the people. This is not certain, but if it be granted, it does not follow that Jeremiah could not have written it, since it is quite likely that the ark had disappeared before his time. The verse seems also to be linked to the context, and should therefore, it may be argued, fall under the same judgement. But this may be accounted for by the view that the passage has grown up round a genuine Jeremianic nucleus. The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple had been prophetic certainties to Jeremiah long before they happened, and he must have meditated on the future relations between Yahweh and His people. The popular religion identified the ark with the presence of Yahweh. Such a conception must have been utterly repulsive to Jeremiah, with his spiritual view of religion. The blessed future to which he looked forward was the era of the New Covenant, the ark was the ark of the old covenant; how natural for the dissolution of the covenant to be associated with that of its material embodiment! Moreover the ark conferred, in the eyes of the people, its peculiar sanctity on the Temple. And there is a striking parallel between the attitude taken by prophet and people to the ark, with that taken by them towards the Temple. The exclamation 'The ark of the covenant of Yahweh,' corresponds to the other popular watchword 'The temple of Yahweh are these' (vii. 4); and while the present passage does not predict that the ark will be destroyed, it presupposes or contemplates its destruction. If then the verse stood alone, there would be no reason for

LORD; for I am a husband unto you: and I will take
you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring
15 you to Zion: and I will give you shepherds according to
mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and
16 understanding. [J] And it shall come to pass, when ye

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rejecting it, but strong reasons for regarding it as genuine, all the more that it is not the type of utterance characteristic of the later period. But it does not stand alone. The contrast implied in 17 between Jerusalem and the ark as the throne of Yahweh may well be due to a later writer who failed to grasp the depth of Jeremiah's words. And the words 'when ye be multiplied and increased in the land,' which connect the thought with 14, seem to be another editorial link. They imply that when the people were few and settled in Zion they would desire the ark, but when they grew numerous and overspread the land they would dispense with it. But such a thought is extremely strange in itself. Accordingly the present writer is of opinion that the saying on the ark is authentic, but that 14, 15 with 17, 18 are a later insertion, together with the clause 'when ye be multiplied and increased in the land.' It is, of course, not easy to understand how the genuine oracle became detached from the context in which it presumably stood, but every solution is encumbered with difficulties.

14. I am a husband. The verb occurs in the present text of xxxi. 32, where it is often taken to mean 'reject.' Whether this view be correct or not in that passage (see the note), it is certainly incorrect here, though some have so interpreted it. It means 'I am a baal,' and this word embraces the ideas both of lord and husband. The writer chooses it probably with reference to the worship of the Baalim, to indicate that Yahweh is Israel's true husband and lord. The Israelites used to speak of Him as their Baal, but the peril of confusion with the local Baalim was such that in Hos. ii. 16, 17 we read 'thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth.'

two of a family. The family or clan must mean here a large subdivision of the tribe, including more people than the 'city.' The term 'city' was used for quite small places.

15. shepherds: i.e. kings, see xxiii. 1–8, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Their function is to be teachers.

16. The sense of the original oracle of Jeremiah was that when the New Covenant has been instituted, each will have direct and first-hand knowledge of God, so that the ark which guaranteed and mediated His presence with the nation will be obsolete. The

be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD; neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they [a] visit it; neither [b] shall *that* be done any more. [8] At that 17
time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. In those 18
days the house of Judah shall walk [c] with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I gave for an inheritance unto

[a] †Or, *miss* [b] †Or, *shall it be made any more* [c] Or, *to*

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individual has become the religious unit. On the history of the ark, see *The Religion of Israel* in *Century Bible Handbooks*, pp. 19–22 and the Appendix to *Samuel* by Prof. A. R. S. Kennedy, with his article 'Ark' in Hastings's *One Volume Bible Dictionary*. In the Second Temple its place was taken by a stone. There is a curious irony in the story of 2 Macc. ii. 4 ff. that Jeremiah hid the ark in a cave on Mount Nebo, together with the tabernacle and altar of incense—Jeremiah, of all people!

shall that be done any more: the margin should be substituted; the meaning is that a new ark will not be made to take the place of the old.

17. The later writer seems to have understood Jeremiah's oracle to mean that the ark over which Yahweh was enthroned between the cherubim would be no longer needed, since Jerusalem itself would become His throne.

to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: omitted by the LXX, probably correctly. 'To the name' is generally taken to mean 'because of the name,' but this is dubious.

18. Judah will return with Israel from exile. This presupposes that the return of Israel is to take place after the overthrow of Judah and the expiation of her sin by an adequate captivity. The standpoint of the author is apparently post-exilic, the return from the Dispersion is a common element in the later delineations of the future. Cf. the similar prophecy, Hos. i. 11, itself in all probability a late passage, and for the reunion of Israel and Judah, Ezek. xxxvii. 16–28, Isa. xi. 12–14.

19 your fathers. [J] But I said, How [a] shall I put thee

[a] †Or, *would . . . nations!*

iii. 19—iv. 4. BROKEN-HEARTED PENITENCE, FOLLOWED BY AMENDMENT, WILL BE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED.

We now return to the prophecy which was interrupted by the insertion of iii. 6–18. This section probably closes with iv. 4, rather than iv. 2, since a new prophecy apparently begins with iv. 5.

iii. 19, 20. Yet how gladly Yahweh would have treated His daughter Israel as a son, endowing her with a son's inheritance! But she has disappointed His faith in her loyalty, and gone astray from Him.

21–25. But hark! there is on the heights the sound of tearful entreaty; it is the cry of Israel, penitent for her sin. Graciously Yahweh bids her return to Him, and He will heal her apostasy. Israel turns to Yahweh her God, confessing how vain were her tumultuous orgies in honour of the heathen gods, how Yahweh alone was her help; idolatry had been her ruin, she is overwhelmed with shame for her rebellion.

iv. 1–4. If Israel will abandon her idols, and sincerely swear fealty to Yahweh, then the nations will invoke blessings on themselves in His name. Let Judah prepare the soil for the good seed, and sow it where the thorns will not choke it, and circumcise the heart, otherwise the evil of her doings will cause her to be consumed with the inextinguishable fire of Yahweh's anger.

19. This verse should be read in immediate connexion with 5. It is rather obscurely expressed. The R.V. suggests that Yahweh asks how He can place Israel among the children, i.e. the other nations, and give it an inheritance. The margin is better; it is not a question, but the expression of a deep desire. The probable meaning of the verse was first pointed out by Duhm, whose interpretation has been generally accepted. Israel is Yahweh's daughter, for here she is referred to as a woman, and it was not usual for daughters to inherit (Num. xxvii. 1–8). But He would put her among sons, i.e. treat her as a son and grant her an inheritance, setting aside, as Job did with his daughters, the usual inability of daughters to inherit. 'Children' should be 'sons,' since the point of the passage is the contrast with daughters. Graf missed the contrast, but otherwise gave the right explanation. We need not inquire who 'the sons' are, whether heathen nations or angels; the prophet is simply concerned with Israel, and means no more than how joyfully would Yahweh deal with Israel as a son. It is not necessary to discuss other interpretations of the passage.

among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, [a] a goodly heritage of the hosts of the nations? and I said, [b] Ye shall call me My father; and shall not turn away from following me. Surely as a wife treacherously de- 20
parteth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. A voice is 21
heard upon the bare heights, the weeping *and* the supplications of the children of Israel; for that they have perverted their way, they have forgotten the LORD their God. Return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your 22

[a] †Or, *the goodliest heritage of the nations* [b] †Another reading is, *Thou shalt . . . and shalt not &c.*

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a goodly heritage of the hosts of the nations: the margin is better. The literal rendering is 'heritage of the beauty of the beauties of the nations,' the word translated 'hosts' being rather the plural of the word for 'beauty.' Cp. Ezek. xx. 6, 15, Dan. xi. 16, 41, and (with 'land' omitted) viii. 9.

20. husband: literally 'friend,' perhaps intentionally chosen as a vaguer term in preference to wife, since Israel has just been spoken of as daughter.

house of Israel: not Israel as distinguished from Judah, but Israel as the general name for the people of Yahweh. Practically it is equivalent to Judah, which after the fall of the Northern Kingdom remained the sole representative of the elect nation.

21. And now in a moving passage Jeremiah depicts the passionate penitence of the people. In place of the light-hearted claim to have amended their ways, and the confident assumption that Yahweh's anger was a mere passing mood, we see them broken and ashamed. At first it is but the inarticulate weeping that we hear, the contrite heart relieves itself in moans and tears, before it composes itself to fashion its emotion in speech. Moreover, crushed as they are with the consciousness of their sin, they dare not address their deeply-injured God. Only when they hear His gracious invitation and promise do they present themselves to Him, confessing the vanity and hurtfulness of idolatry.

the bare heights: not in the land of exile, as Giesebrecht thinks, but in Israel. The weeping so finely described is on the high places; the scene of her idolatry is the scene also of her penitence.

22. Cf. Hos. xiv. 4. The LXX, probably under the influence of vi. 14, viii. 1, seems to have read for 'your backslidings' 'your

backslidings. Behold, we are come unto thee; for thou
23 art the LORD our God. Truly in vain is *the help that is looked for* from the hills, the [a] tumult on the mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.
24 But the [b] shameful thing hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their
25 sons and their daughters. Let us lie down in our shame, and let our confusion cover us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day: and we have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

[a] Or, *noisy throng* [b] Heb. *shame.* See ch. xi. 13.

breaches,' the same word as that rendered 'hurt' in those passages.

23. The general thought is that the hills, where the worship of the high-places was carried on, can afford no help: this comes only from God. The expression, however, is difficult, as is suggested by the italics in the R.V. The Hebrew text is literally 'Truly in vain from the hills, the tumult the mountains.' A change in pointing gives for the last clause 'the tumult of the mountains.' Some follow the Versions, and read 'Truly in vain are the hills, the tumult of the mountains.' Driver considers that Hebrew idiom would not say absolutely that the hills were in vain, but would specify what in connexion with them was in vain. Accordingly he inserts a word to balance 'the tumult,' rendering 'Truly in vain is [the sound] from the hills, the tumult on the mountains.' The wild ecstatic religion practised in the popular nature-worship could bring no real satisfaction and peace.

tumult: margin **noisy throng**; the sense is not affected.

24. the shameful thing, literally **the shame** (*bosheth*). Since 'shame' is used here for the Baal, but in the next verse in its proper sense, it is not unlikely that Jeremiah actually wrote 'the Baal' and that the substitution of *bosheth* made by the Jews in reading has here been taken into the text: cf. Ishbosheth for Ishbaal, Mephibosheth for Meribaal (as the name should probably be spelt). The reference is to the days of Manasseh, when idolatry claimed not animal victims alone but the worshippers' own sons and daughters. The words 'from our youth,' however, are an unsuitable limitation, and have probably been accidentally inserted from 25.

25. It is not clear whether 'from our youth' has an individual or a national reference. If the latter the words, with the remainder

If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, unto me 4
shalt thou return: and [a] if thou wilt put away thine

[a] †Or, *if thou wilt put . . . and wilt not wander, and wilt swear . . . then shall the nations &c.* or, *then shalt thou swear . . . and the nations &c*

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of the verse, may be a later addition, since the phrase in 24 seems to refer to the youth of those who are speaking. But there is no need to suppose that only post-exilic Jews confessed the sins of their ancestors as well as their own.

iv. 1, 2. To this heart-broken confession we now have Yahweh's reply. The rendering in R.V. text, though accepted by several recent scholars, is difficult. It apparently involves two senses of 'return.' In the first instance the meaning is, If thou returnest to God from thy evil way; the clause 'unto me shalt thou return,' must express a return to God in a different sense, perhaps a return from exile to Yahweh's land, and such a double sense is improbable. Those who adopt this view usually translate verse 2, 'And shouldest thou swear . . . then shall the nations,' &c. In favour of this view it may be said that then we get three parallel sentences, each expressing a condition to be fulfilled by Israel with the reward that will follow, and the balance is better preserved than on the alternative view. The latter is partially represented in R.V. marg., but we ought to extend the correction to the first clause also, and render 'If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, yea, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, and wilt not wander, and wilt swear . . . then shall the nations,' &c. In that case we have a threefold condition, followed by a promise in the last clause. It is objected that the verb rendered 'wander' does not bear the moral sense of wandering from God, but in view of its rarity it is questionable if this restriction is justified. A simple emendation, *tarud* for *tanud*, 'and wilt not break loose' (ii. 31), would, as Driver says, remove this objection. We should probably accept this translation of the two verses, and thus avoid the awkwardness of giving a double sense to 'return' in the first clause. The margin gives a second alternative to the text 'if thou wilt put . . . and wilt not wander, then shalt thou swear . . . and the nations,' &c. This is not so good.

Cornill regards the two verses as a later insertion, mainly on the ground that the demand made is too slight to meet the requirements of the situation. Only in 3, 4, which are among the grandest in the prophetic literature and comprise Jeremiah's whole theology in a couple of brief sentences, does the speech reach a worthy close. Giesebrecht considers that iii. 19-25 are addressed to the ten tribes in exile, and therefore closes the speech with iv. 1, 2, taking iv. 3, 4 with the address to Judah as beginning a new rather than

abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not be
2 removed; and thou shalt swear, As the LORD liveth, in
truth, in judgement, and in righteousness; and the nations
shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they
glory.
3 For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and to

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as closing the preceding prophecy. But these verses are far more effective as the climax to the latter than as the introduction to the former. While this is the case, there is no serious difficulty in retaining iv. 1, 2, especially as 3, 4 would follow abruptly on iii. 25.

abominations. Driver renders 'detestable things,' as in A.V. of Ezek. v. 11, vii. 20, where it is joined with another word which means 'abomination,' and in Ezek. xxxvii. 23, where it stands by itself. See article 'Abomination' in Hastings's *Dict. of the Bible.* The word embraces the whole idolatrous worship of Judah.

be removed: if this rendering is adopted, the meaning is that Israel will not be driven any longer from Yahweh's presence like Cain. More probably we should render 'wander,' and take the word in the sense of wandering from God. In either case we should connect the word translated 'out of my sight,' literally 'from before me,' with this clause not the preceding.

swear: no longer as a mere formula, but with a heart wholly loyal to God.

in him: we might render **in it.** Neither is quite suitable. If God is referred to, we should expect 'in me;' if Israel, 'in thee.' The former is suggested by Isa. lxv. 16, 'shall bless himself in the God of truth,' the latter more strongly by the parallel passages in Genesis (xii. 3, &c.), 'in thee shall all the families of the earth bless themselves;' i.e. Israel's blessedness will be such that all nations will desire a similar blessedness for themselves. The third person may be due to Gen. xviii. 18, if Jeremiah may be supposed to have been familiar with this. On the other hand, the word 'glory' is not so applicable to Israel, though it is not confined to glorying in God.

3, 4. What is involved in the conditions laid down in the preceding verses receives here a classical expression. The ground, which has lain so long untilled, must be broken up. The hard unresponsive disposition must bear the discipline of plough and harrow, and be thoroughly prepared to receive the good seed. But that is not enough, for the soil is encumbered with evil growths, and unless these are cleared away, they will choke the seed and prevent it from ripening and bearing fruit. The people must break with their past, remain no longer unaccustomed to

Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and 4
take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury go forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings. Declare ye in Judah, and publish 5

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goodness, and give the new seed the most ample opportunity of unhindered growth.

It would be better to read with five MSS., with the LXX and other Versions, 'and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.'

Break up your fallow ground: the phrase may have been borrowed from Hos. x. 12, but possibly it was current among the people.

4. Circumcision qualified a man to enter into the covenant relationship in which Israel stood to Yahweh. This was an external circumcision corresponding to the external nature of the covenant. Jeremiah demands an inward circumcision, a cleansing and dedication of the heart. Such a doctrine naturally points the way to his supreme contribution to religious thought, his epoch-making conception of the New Covenant (xxxi. 31–34), in which he approximates to the New Testament. If the men of Judah thus make for themselves a new heart, all may yet be well. If not, judgement must be executed.

iv. 5–31. A TERRIBLE FOE WILL INFLICT THE UTTERMOST PENALTY ON JUDAH.

Jeremiah had in imagination heard the penitent weeping of his countrymen on the scene of their transgression, and demanded from them a radical reformation, a renewal of the heart. But of this deep repentance, on which his hope had fondly rested, there was no sign, and now the prophet proclaims the doom. The Scythians are approaching, the agents of Yahweh's vengeance. The prophecies which deal with the Scythians are continued to the close of the sixth chapter. While they were uttered about 626 B.C. they bear the mark, in their present form, of the revision to which they were subjected in the reign of Jehoiakim. They are apparently somewhat later than ii. 1—iii. 5, iii. 19—iv. 4, for the references to the approaching judgement are more definite in their description.

iv. 5–10. Summon the people to take refuge in the fortified cities, for destruction is coming from the north. The lion has come from his lair, a destroyer of nations, to lay the cities in utter ruin. Lament for this calamity, since Yahweh's anger is not

in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land:
cry aloud and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go
6 into the fenced cities. Set up a standard toward Zion:

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turned away. Bewilderment will seize the king and the leaders of the people, and they will complain that Yahweh has deceived His people with false promises of peace.

11-18. A hot blast of judgement comes against Judah, too strong to carry away the chaff and leave the grain. The multitudinous hosts sweep on swiftly to the doom of Judah. Renounce thy sin, Jerusalem, that ruin may be averted. The tidings come from the north that the besiegers are on their way. It is thy rebellion which has brought this trouble upon thee.

19-22. My heart is torn with emotion at the battle-cry, all the land is spoiled. The people are besotted, and wholly abandoned to evil.

23-28. I gazed at the earth, and it was chaos; at the heavens, and they had no light; at the mountains, and they swayed to and fro. I gazed, there was no man, and the birds had fled. The fertile land was a wilderness, the cities destroyed. Yahweh will make the land a desolation, though not irretrievably. Earth and heaven will mourn, but this is His settled purpose.

29-31. The inhabitants forsake the cities, and seek refuge in the rocks and thickets. Vainly dost thou seek to fascinate thy lovers, Jerusalem; they seek thy life. I have heard Zion's voice shrieking in her uttermost anguish: 'Alas, I faint before my murderers!'

iv. 5. The text can hardly be in its original state. The proclamation would not be made in Jerusalem that the inhabitants should flee for safety to Zion. It is awkward that one group of people should be told to bid a second group say to a third group 'Assemble yourselves,' &c. We should also expect those addressed in the first clause to be bidden to blow the trumpet. Duhm strikes out the introductory words and begins the passage with 'Blow ye the trumpet,' he also omits the second 'and say' which adds to the clumsiness of the present text. This greatly lightens the verse, but is a rather violent remedy. Giesebrecht simply strikes out 'and in Jerusalem,' and very cleverly suggests that the first 'say ye' has really originated from 'saith Yahweh,' with the abbreviated form of which it is nearly identical. He thus gets the text 'Declare ye in Judah and publish, saith Yahweh. Blow ye,' &c. This is a very probable emendation.

the trumpet: i. e. the horn.

6. While the country people of Judah flee into the other fortified cities as well, they naturally go for the most part to

flee for safety, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction. A lion is gone up from 7
his thicket, and a destroyer of nations; he is on his way,
he is gone forth from his place; to make thy land desolate, that thy cities be laid waste, without inhabitant.
For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for 8
the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.
And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, 9

Jerusalem; hence the command to 'set up the standard toward Zion,' in order to guide them.

flee for safety: better, **bring (your households) into safety** (Driver): cf. Isa. x. 31, R.V. marg., 'make *their households* flee.'

destruction: literally 'breaking' or 'breach,' a favourite word with the prophet and his contemporaries.

7. Under the metaphor of a lion's attack the conqueror's onslaught is described. He is a destroyer of nations; this trait is thought by some to suit Nebuchadnezzar better than the Scythians, and therefore to have been introduced by the prophet when he published his prophecies in the reign of Jehoiakim. But if the view taken in the next note is correct, it is better to suppose that the Scythians are intended.

thy land: it would be better to read 'the earth,' and omit the rest of the verse 'that thy cities,' &c., which may have been added from ii. 15, ix. 11. The prediction that the cities are to be utterly destroyed does not suit very well the injunction to flee into them.

9. Duhm considers 9-11[a] as a later insertion, partly on account of the change in metre, partly because it is unlikely that after Jeremiah has by his highly effective description set us right in the midst of the excitement created by the enemy's approach, he should calmly postpone it to the indefinite future. 'In that day' is, he says, a mere phrase with which the later supplementers so regularly introduce their additions that it is usually a sign of non-authenticity. But, except on the unwarrantable hypothesis that Jeremiah invariably wrote in a single type of metre, the metrical argument cannot settle the question; moreover 'in that day' is found in passages which there is no reason to suspect, some of which are in fact retained as original by Duhm himself. If the change of rhythm justified the assumption that the prophecy as originally composed was without these verses, they might well have been inserted when he dictated over again the contents of the roll burnt by Jehoiakim (xxxvi. 2).

that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the
10 prophets shall wonder. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword
11 reacheth unto the soul. At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A hot wind from the bare heights in the wilderness toward the daughter of my

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heart often means 'intelligence,' but here perhaps 'courage.'

10. The present text represents Jeremiah as reproaching Yahweh for misleading the people by promises of peace. Jeremiah, however, did not prophesy of peace but of calamity. Orelli thinks the reference is to Huldah's prophecy (2 Kings xxii. 18–20). But this is most unlikely, since that is fundamentally a prophecy of disaster. Nor does Jeremiah think of Yahweh as putting a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets (1 Kings xxii. 20–23). We should adopt the reading of the Arabic Version, 'And they shall say.' The reference is to the false prophets, who persistently predicted good fortune, and did so in the confidence that they were uttering Yahweh's word. When overwhelming disaster gives the lie to their optimism, they will turn upon Yahweh, accusing Him of deceiving His people.

11, 12. The main drift of the sentence is clear: the hot sirocco from the desert shall burst on Judah with a blast too violent to winnow the chaff from the grain and carry it away. It will carry away chaff and grain alike. But the Hebrew presents several difficulties. The absence of predicate in 11^b may be best cured by reading, with Cornill, 'A hot wind comes from the wilderness' (LXX apparently did not read 'the bare heights'). The translation 'for me' is also dubious; according to usage we should render 'against me.' This is difficult, since the blast is directed against Judah. We must translate 'A full wind came from these against me,' i. e. the Jews had previously set a violent wind in motion against Yahweh, and in just retribution will be swept away by the sirocco (Giesebrecht). But this explanation of their fate is very abruptly introduced, and it would be better to omit 'shall come for me,' and render the previous words as in the margin, 'a wind too strong for this,' better 'for these,' i. e. for winnowing and cleansing (Gillies omits the word rendered 'for these' as due to dittography of the preceding word). For a vivid description of the sirocco see G. A. Smith's *Jerusalem*, ii, 12; it is abridged from Dr. Chaplin's account, or that given by E. F. Benson in the opening chapters of *The Image in the Sand*.

people, not to fan, nor to cleanse; [a] a full wind from these 12
shall come for me: now will I also [b] utter judgements
against them. Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and 13
his chariots *shall be* as the whirlwind: his horses are
swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.
O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou 14
mayest be saved. How long shall thine evil thoughts
lodge within thee? For [c] a voice declareth from Dan, 15
and publisheth evil from the hills of Ephraim. make ye 16
mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jeru-
salem, *that* watchers come from a far country, and give

[a] †Or, *a wind too strong for this* [b] See ch. i. 16.
[c] Or, *there is a voice of one that declareth &c.*

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13. The foe moves on, packed in dense masses like the clouds, his chariots swift as the hurricane, his horses swifter than griffons. The word rendered 'eagles' means griffons, a kind of large vulture very common in Palestine.

14. Duhm feels that the question 'How long shall thine evil thoughts,' &c., does not correspond to the description of the enemy as already coming, so he regards the verse as an interpolation (so also Erbt). Probably it was not in the original prophecy, but it may well have been added by Jeremiah when he dictated a second time the contents of the roll.

15. Dan was the northern, as Beersheba was the southern limit of the land. The foe comes from the north, hence the tidings of its approach is first heralded from Dan, then from the more southerly hill-country of Ephraim, which is nearer Jerusalem, about ten miles away. Instead of the margin, it would be better to render 'hark! one declareth.'

16. The reference to 'the nations' is very difficult. Why should they be told of the attack to be made on Jerusalem? Several render, 'Make mention concerning the nations, Behold there they are.' The nations will in that case mean the enemy. But this reads too much into 'Behold.' The text is probably corrupt. Duhm, Erbt, Cornill, and Giesebrecht are all agreed that 'from the hills of Ephraim' should be connected with this verse, but differ in their tentative restoration of the passage. Giesebrecht simply strikes out 'to the nations,' the others emend more radically. We must be content that we can recognize the main drift of the passage.

watchers. The word does not properly mean 'besiegers,'

17 out their voice against the cities of Judah. As keepers
of a field are they against her round about; because she
18 hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD. Thy
way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee;
this is thy wickedness; [a] for it is bitter, [a] for it reacheth
unto thine heart.

19 My bowels, my bowels! [b] I am pained at [c] my very
heart; my heart is disquieted in me; I cannot hold my
peace; because [d] thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound

[a] †Or, *surely* [b] Another reading is, *I will wait patiently.*
[c] †Heb. *the walls of my heart.* [d] †Or, as otherwise read, *my soul heareth*

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though if it is retained we must impose this sense upon it. Omission of the first consonant would give a word bearing this sense. We should probably alter the second consonant and read 'leopards' (*n*^{e}*merim*), with Duhm. 'Give out their voice' suits a wild animal; in ii. 15 it is used of young lions. The emendation accords with v. 6, 'a leopard shall watch over their cities.' Cf. Hab. i. 8.

17. The keepers of the field hardly suit the reference to 'leopards' in 16. Cornill suggests 'they are lying in wait on the field round about,' and this is probably the best restoration of the original text. The field is the open country round the city. Duhm attaches 'round about' to the preceding verse, and necessarily regards the rest of 17, 18 as an edifying insertion.

18. wickedness: i. e. the consequence of wickedness.

19. It is disputed whether in 19–21, which are unnecessarily regarded by Schmidt as a later insertion (*Enc. Bib.* 2388), the prophet or the people should be regarded as speaking. In spite of the plural 'my tents' (20), it is much the more probable view that the deeply emotional, sympathetic Jeremiah is here expressing his own feelings, just as in 23–26 he describes his own vision of desolation. The bowels are named as the seat of emotion.

I am pained. The reading in the margin, 'I will wait patiently,' gives no relevant sense. The alternative Hebrew text is correct, but we should render 'Let me writhe!' and take the next words also as an exclamation 'the walls of my heart!' Under the stress of his anguish he feels his wildly throbbing heart beating against its walls. We should adopt the margin, 'because my soul heareth,' in preference to the text, but more probably read 'I hear' and substitute 'my soul' for 'my heart.'

of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon de- 20
struction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: sud-
denly are my tents spoiled, *and* my curtains in a moment.
How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound 21
of the trumpet? For my people is foolish, they know 22
me not; they are sottish children, and they have none
understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good
they have no knowledge.

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was [a] waste and void; and 23
the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the 24

[a] See Gen. i. 2.

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20. is cried. The Hebrew may mean 'breach meeteth breach,' i. e. one breach follows upon another.

my tents: i. e. the tents of my people. The curtains are the tent-hangings.

23. Now follows one of the finest, most powerful descriptions in the prophetic literature. In vision the prophet casts his glance over the earth and sky. He looks and looks again, but there is nothing to reassure him, only what fills him with alarm and anguish. Giesebrecht, in his second edition, regards the whole passage as late. He alleges the lack of connexion with what precedes and the apocalyptic colouring, and finds a confirmation in the diffuseness of the metre. It is true that in 23–26 we have not a strict Qina rhythm, and Duhm's attempt to reduce the passage to regularity yields a less impressive text. But there is no valid reason for robbing Jeremiah of this splendid vision of judgement. Cheyne apparently regards it as post-exilic (*Enc. Bib.* 953), similarly Schmidt (loc. cit. 2390).

The prophet first looks at the earth, and sees that the primaeval chaos (Gen. i. 2) has resumed its sway. The word rendered 'waste' more properly represents something unsubstantial or unreal (see Driver's note on Gen. i. 2 in his commentary. He renders the expression here 'formless and empty'). And just as the primaeval chaos has recaptured the earth, so the primaeval night has blotted all light from the sky.

24. As he gazes on this scene of desolation, his mind begins to individualize the features in the landscape. And naturally he seeks to escape from this bewildering shock of universal change by turning to the massive mountains, the everlasting hills, which abide when ruin overtakes the more perishable works of Nature and the flimsy structures of man. The mountains are still there,

mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills
25 [a] moved to and fro. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man,
26 and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, [b] the fruitful field was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the
27 LORD, *and* before his fierce anger. For thus saith the LORD, The whole land shall be a desolation; [S] yet
28 will I not make a full end. [J] For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and I have not repented,
29 neither will I turn back from it. The whole city fleeth for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they go into the thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city is

[a] Or, *moved lightly* [b] Or, *Carmel*

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but they are swaying before the blast of God's judgement. It is a frequent element in the Old Testament theophanies.

25. And now his gaze is not directed to any object in particular (unless the object of 'I saw' has been accidentally omitted), but glances hither and thither to see if there is anything to which he may cling. But he is alone in the universe; mankind has vanished from the face of the earth, the birds fly no longer on the face of the firmament. The loving observer of Nature misses the birds from the landscape.

26. fruitful field: marg. Carmel, but the word is not a proper noun here.

thereof should probably be omitted.

27, 28. yet will I not make a full end. These words are probably a mitigating gloss, which is out of place before 28. There is no need to strike out the verses altogether. The order of the words in 28[b] has been disturbed: we should read 'For I have spoken and have not repented, I have purposed and will not turn back from it' (so LXX).

29. The flight before the enemy. For 'the whole city' we should read, with the LXX, 'the whole land.' At the close of the verse G. A. Smith reads 'And there is no inhabitant in it. All is up!' (*bāh nō'āsh* for *bāhēn 'īsh*).

thickets. The Hebrew word means a dark cloud or mass of clouds. This sense is impossible here, and the word is generally explained to mean thicket. Possibly the original text gave 'caves' (cf. LXX, which has a conflate rendering).

forsaken, and not a man dwelleth therein. And thou, 30
when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though
thou clothest thyself with scarlet, though thou deckest
thee with ornaments of gold, though thou [a] enlargest
thine eyes with paint, in vain dost thou make thyself fair;
thy lovers despise thee, they seek thy life. For I have 31
heard a voice as of a woman in travail, the anguish as of
her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the
daughter of Zion, that gaspeth for breath, that spreadeth
her hands, *saying*, Woe is me now! for my soul fainteth
before the murderers.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, 5

[a] Heb. *rendest.*

30. It is in vain that Jerusalem seeks to avert her fate by tricking herself out with scarlet raiment and gold ornaments, and making the eyes seem larger and brighter by darkening the rims of her eyelids with antimony. The enemy will not be cajoled by such charms. The reference to the 'lovers' does not suit the Scythians, but Judah's old allies the Babylonians. The verse presumably belongs to the revision of the prophecy in 605.

when thou art spoiled. Omitted by the LXX.

enlargest: Heb. **rendest.** For the practice, which is still common in the East, cf. 2 Kings ix. 20, Ezek. xxiii. 40, and the name of Job's daughter Keren-happuch, 'horn of eye-paint' (if the text is correct, see note on Job xlii. 14).

31. anguish: the sense required is 'a cry of anguish;' we should probably read, with the LXX, 'a cry.'

v. 1–31. The Utter Corruption of the People, and the Divine Vengeance.

Duhm considers that while the poems in the preceding chapter were composed at least partially, probably entirely, in Anathoth, those in this chapter were written in Jerusalem, where Jeremiah had recently settled. He thinks they betray a more intimate familiarity with the city and its inhabitants, which affected the prophet as Luther was affected by his residence in Rome. The oracles now take on a deeper ethical colouring, and the type of moral and religious life depicted is that of the city rather than the country (cf. Findlay's remark, 'this chapter reflects Jeremiah's first impressions of Jerusalem,' p. 185). Giesebrecht thinks that the difference discovered by Duhm is pure imagination. In view

and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth
2 justly, that seeketh [a] truth; and I will pardon her. And

[a] †Or, *faithfulness*

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of the fact that Anathoth was little more than an hour's distance from Jerusalem, it is hardly probable that Jeremiah would find that residence in the capital made much difference to his earlier estimate. 'Anathoth lies only four miles from Jerusalem, and its inhabitants have constantly been in the closest economic relations with their capital.' (G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, ii, 227.)

v. 1-9. If there is one righteous in Jerusalem, Yahweh will forgive. But though they swear by Yahweh's name, they do so falsely; in spite of disaster they are obstinate in their sin. I excused them, however, because they were poor and ignorant, but when I went to the great men who knew God's will, I found them transgressors. Therefore they shall be torn in pieces. How can Yahweh pardon such a people, idolatrous and sunk in moral corruption? Shall He not be avenged on such a nation?

10-19. Let the destroyers do their work on the faithless, sceptical people, who will not credit the prophetic word. That word shall be a fire to consume them. For there is coming a mighty people, of unfamiliar speech, death-dealing, who will ravage the land, devour the flocks, and destroy the cities. They have served strange gods in their own land, they shall serve strangers in a foreign land.

20-29. Will not the people fear Yahweh, who curbs the rebellion of the tossing sea? They are rebellious, unmindful of Yahweh's goodness. The wicked entrap men, their houses are full of ill-gotten gain, they keep the orphan and the needy from their rights. Shall Yahweh not be avenged on such a nation?

30-31. How appalling the situation! The prophets prophesy falsely and support the priests, the people are well content it should be so, but how will it all end?

v. 1. The synonyms are accumulated to indicate that however thorough the search for a righteous man in Jerusalem, it will not be rewarded by success.

a man: omitted in the LXX, it has perhaps originated by dittography of the two following words, written in an abbreviated form. If so, however, it is likely that the whole clause 'if ye can find a man' should be omitted.

and I will pardon her: on even easier terms than Sodom (Gen. xviii. 32). But Jeremiah is apparently the speaker, not Yahweh, so Duhm may be right in the view that the words should be omitted.

2. If they call Yahweh to witness that they are speaking the

though they say, As the LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely. O LORD, [a] do not thine eyes look upon [b] truth? 3
thou hast stricken them, but they were not grieved; thou
hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive
[c] correction: they have made their faces harder than a
rock; they have refused to return. Then I said, Surely 4
these are poor: they are foolish; for they know not the
way of the LORD, nor the judgement of their God: I will 5
get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them;
for they know the way of the LORD, and the judgement
of their God. But these with one accord have broken
the yoke, and burst the bands. Wherefore a lion out of 6

[a] Heb. *are not thine eyes upon.* [b] †Or, *faithfulness*
[c] Or, *instruction*

truth, this implies that they are His worshippers. But the unreality of their religion is clear from the fact that they use Yahweh's name to attest the truth of their lies.

surely: the usual text reads 'therefore' (*lāken*), but this gives no suitable sense, and the attempts to find a more appropriate meaning are dubious. 'Surely' (*'āken*) is read by twenty MSS., and gives a good sense. Duhm reads *lō ken*, and takes it to mean 'dishonest,' 'false.' He then connects the last word of the verse with what follows, reading 'O Yahweh, are thine eyes set upon falsity—not upon faithfulness?'

3. We do not know to what disaster reference is made. Giesebrecht suggests the slaughter at Megiddo.

4, 5. As he considers their evil way, the explanation comes to him that those with whom he has been in contact are the common people, who have had no adequate training in the requirements of God, and whose conduct is the less culpable on that account. But when he turns to the men of position, expecting that the conduct of these experts in religion and morality will conform to their loftier privileges, he is quickly undeceived. Hosea had traced the sin of Israel to ignorance, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge' (iv. 6), an ignorance for which the priesthood is to blame. The same charge against the priesthood is urged by Ezekiel. Those whose function it was to know the ordinance of Yahweh and communicate it to the people were the foremost in neglect of it.

judgement: i. e. ordinance (see Driver's note, pp. 344 f.).

6. The comparison of these spiritual magnates to oxen that

the forest shall slay them, a wolf of the [a] evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities, every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, *and* their back-
7 slidings are increased. How can I pardon thee? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had [b] fed them to the full, they committed adultery, and assembled themselves in troops at

[a] †Or, *deserts* [b] Or, according to another reading, *made them swear*

have broken the yoke and snapped their thongs suggests the metaphors (for the wild beasts are not to be literally interpreted) in this verse. The oxen have shaken off their bonds and roamed at large. But with the service of their master they have renounced his protection also; their witless straying brings them within reach of the beast of prey. The lion from the jungle of Jordan, the wolf of the steppes, the stealthy leopard, will convince them of their wicked folly when it is too late. Dante's allusion to this passage in the first Canto of the *Inferno* has been pointed out by various commentators.

a leopard: lurks a long while by the village, waiting till the unsuspecting victim comes within its spring.

7. The transition to the second person is abrupt, and we expect an indication that Yahweh is speaking. Duhm thinks the original reading was, 'How shall *I* pardon them? saith Yahweh, for they have forsaken me.' The last three consonants of the Hebrew for 'thy children' he regards as the initial letters of 'saith Yahweh, for.'

I had fed them to the full. This text is attested by the Massorah and the Versions, and is adopted by most modern commentators. In the main it yields an excellent sense; they pervert the prosperity which God's goodness has given them into an instrument of sin. Some MSS. read 'and I caused them to swear.' This seems to refer to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. They had sworn allegiance to Him, but had broken their oath. The phrase is rather general for so specific a sense, and we should have expected it to come before the preceding statements.

assembled themselves in troops: this is the general view of the meaning. It is not only somewhat hypothetical, but the noun with which it is supposed to be connected is always used in a military sense, and if the verb is derived from it, it conveys the unsuitable idea of attack and plunder rather than assembling in

the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses [a] in the 8
morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.
Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and 9
shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not 10

[a] Or, *roaming at large*

companies. The usual meaning of the verb is to cut oneself, to make cuttings in one's flesh. This is generally regarded as irrelevant here. G. F. Moore, however, adopts it, taking the reference to 'the harlots' houses' to be figurative; the apostate Jews who resorted to the idol temple 'wished to bring over the deity to their side by self-mutilation' (*Enc. Bib.* 972). This suits the previous mention of 'them that are no gods,' and impurity is often a symbol of idolatry. But 8 strongly favours the view that the language here is not figurative. We should accordingly follow the LXX, and read with many scholars 'they made themselves sojourners' or 'made themselves at home' (*yithgōrᵉru* for *yithgōdādu*, r and d being easily confused in Hebrew).

8. The text is difficult. The translation 'fed' follows the Hebrew written text; the verb occurs nowhere else in Hebrew, but it is frequent in some of the cognate languages in the sense 'to nourish;' the participle here means well-nourished, full-fed. The Qᵉre gives the participle of another verb, which is perhaps an equivalent of the word which follows. Most modern commentators prefer 'full-fed,' and this is probably best. Duhm prefers the Qᵉre, Giesebrecht thinks we have no certainty as to the text.

in the morning: this translation cannot be legitimately derived from the present text, which does not admit of a participle in the singular. The rendering in the margin, 'roaming at large,' is not open to this objection, since it takes the word as a plural participle, but the existence of the word is very dubious (see Driver's note, p. 345). Giesebrecht feels with reference to this word also that we can have no certainty, but we should probably acquiesce in the now generally accepted view that it should be taken in conjunction with 'horses' to mean 'stallions,' and render, 'They were full-fed stallions.' This requires a trifling correction of the text.

10. her walls. The Hebrew word as so pointed does not occur elsewhere. The ancient authorities adopt this translation, and it is defended by Graf, Giesebrecht, and Cornill. The metaphor is that of a vineyard, the walls are not specially appropriate. The alternative rendering is 'her vine-rows,' which, apart possibly from Job xxiv. 11, has only post-Biblical attestation. The context

a full end: take away her branches: for they are not
11 the LORD's. For the house of Israel and the house of
Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the
12 LORD. They have denied the LORD, and said, It is not
he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we
13 see sword nor famine: and the prophets shall become
wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done
14 unto them. Wherefore thus saith the LORD, the God of
hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make

favours this: the enemy are bidden ravage the vineyard, i. e. Judah (xii. 10, Isa. v. 1–7, cf. ii. 21, vi. 9).

make not a full end: see iv. 27; either the whole clause or the negative should be struck out.

take away. The LXX 'leave' would suit the preceding clause in its present form. But the Hebrew text expresses the prophet's meaning.

12. It is not he: literally 'Not he.' The precise meaning is difficult to determine. Some explain, It is not he who speaks through the prophets, but while this suits the next verse, it is not suggested by the immediate context. We must not be misled by the words 'denied the Lord' to put an atheistic sense on the phrase; such a mode of thought had no vogue at the time. Giesebrecht, on the basis of the LXX, thinks the meaning is, It will not happen, i.e. what has been proclaimed in verse 10. But we should probably take the pronoun to refer to God, rendering 'Not He!' and regard the phrase as a popular exclamation, something like our own, meaning He will do nothing of the kind, cf. Zeph. i. 12.

13. the prophets. On Jeremiah's own lips the word generally means the false prophets, though he uses it of earlier true prophets. Here, however, we have a continuation of the people's words in the preceding verse, and on their lips the term bears another meaning. The sense is, These prophets who predict evil, such as Jeremiah, or Zephaniah, or Uriah (cf. xxvi. 20–24), are empty, uninspired foretellers of disaster. Jeremiah's own conviction was that the characteristic note of prophecy had always been its gloomy outlook (xxviii. 8).

the word: this is no doubt the meaning (so LXX), though the Hebrew is oddly pointed.

shall it be: better **may it be**; it is a formula of imprecation. The clause is omitted in Codex A of the LXX, and struck out as metrically impossible by Cornill and Giesebrecht.

14. Because ye speak . . . in thy mouth: this very rapid

my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. Lo, I will bring a nation upon 15
you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is [a] a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they are 16

[a] Or, *an enduring nation*

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transition from the second person plural addressed to the people to the second person singular addressed to Jeremiah, is strange. The people are referred to in the context in the third person; we should read this here, 'because they speak.'

Here, as elsewhere, the word of God, spoken through the prophets, has an inherent energy assigned to it (see Introduction to chap. i). It is a fire (cf. xxiii. 29) which consumes the people, who are as combustible as wood.

15. The LXX much abbreviates this verse. It omits 'it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation,' and proceeds 'a nation the sound of whose language one shall not understand.' It also omits the first clause in verse 16. Duhm prefers the LXX, and the prolixity of the passage might appear to favour the view that it has been expanded. But the omitted clauses add to the effectiveness of the picture. The description of them as coming from afar recalls Isaiah's reference to the Assyrians (Isa. v. 26), and the allusion to the strangeness of their tongue recalls Isa. xxviii. 11 (cf. xxxiii. 19). Both traits suit the Babylonians, and the reference to the antiquity of the nation is specially appropriate to them. But since this prophecy probably belonged in its original form to the pre-Reformation period, when the Scythians were the foe whose coming Jeremiah announced, we should regard this description as referring to them, unless for some reason that is out of the question. It is urged that the Scythians were a young people. In Herodotus we read, 'As the Scythians say, theirs is the most recent of all nations' (iv. 5). In iv. 7 he tells us that they reckon a thousand years from their origin to the expedition of Darius against them. We cannot, however, suppose that Jeremiah had this information as to the view taken of their antiquity by the Scythians. He describes them as 'of old' and as 'mighty men,' using the same terms as in Gen. vi. 4. He may well have thought of the Scythians as a primaeval people like the Nephilim.

mighty. The word is used properly of a stream, and means 'never failing,' 'perennial.' (See Driver's *Deuteronomy*, p. 242.)

16. Their arrows are used with deadly effect.

17 all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest,
and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should
eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they
shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall [a] beat
down thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustest, with the
18 sword. [S] But even in those days, saith the LORD, I will
19 not make a full end with you. [J] And it shall come to
pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD our
God done all these things unto us? then shalt thou say
unto them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served
strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a
land that is not yours.

[a] Or, *impoverish*

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17. The translation '*which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat' is possible, but not natural, since it has no special point, and the act of eating is, in the other cases, attributed to the enemy; the obvious rendering is 'they shall eat thy sons and thy daughters.' This gives, however, a very unlikely sense, for the Scythians were not cannibals, and it is not advisable to impose a figurative sense on 'eat' in this clause, inasmuch as it bears a literal sense in the other clauses. The passage has close points of contact with Deut. xxviii. 49–53. Curiously there is in that passage a prediction of the eating of sons and daughters, but there it is the parents who eat them in the desperate hunger of the besieged. It is probable that the clause has been inserted here under the influence of Deut. xxviii. 53, or perhaps of Jer. iii. 24.

beat down. The word occurs only here and in Mal. i. 4, where Wellhausen regards text and meaning as doubtful. The R.V. gives the generally accepted rendering, and the text here is indirectly attested by the LXX. R.V. marg. (= A.V.) 'impoverish,' derives the form from another root and should be rejected.

18. From this verse to the end of the chapter Duhm recognizes nothing of Jeremiah's. Erbt takes much the same view, but admits that 22 may be from his hand. Schmidt strikes out 18, 20–29; Cornill, Giesebrecht, and Rothstein adopt a much more moderate position. All agree that 18 is a later addition, probably with justice, for such a mitigating announcement in this context greatly lessens the effect.

19. This is written in view of approaching exile, hence it probably belongs to the edition of 605; it is unnecessary to omit it,

Declare ye this in the house of Jacob, and publish it 20
in Judah, saying, Hear now this, O foolish people, and 21
without [a] understanding; which have eyes, and see not;
which have ears, and hear not: Fear ye not me? saith 22
the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which

[a] Heb. *heart.*

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with Duhm and Giesebrecht. The latter thinks that it comes from the same circle as Deut. xxix. 21 ff.

20–22. These verses were first rejected by Stade in 1883, and Cornill gave in his adhesion. Duhm adopted this view in his commentary, and Schmidt in his article in *Enc. Bib.* Cornill modified his position in his commentary. He was impressed by Giesebrecht's argument that 23 did not connect well with 19 and that 24[a] clearly referred to 22[a]. Since, however, all hangs together from 23, and nothing links well to 19, the rejection of 20–22 involves Duhm's conclusion that the rest of the chapter is late. For so heroic a measure Cornill was not prepared, accordingly he sifted the passage more carefully, rejecting 20, 21[b], and the greater part of 22 (after 'my presence'): in the last point he is followed by Rothstein. Giesebrecht, it is curious to note, has accepted Stade's view in his second edition. The passage makes upon him an impression of non-Jeremianic bombast, the metrical structure departs from that of Jeremiah, and there is much in detail that is questionable. It may well be asked, however, if even Cornill's criticism is not too drastic. 20 may be later, since such a style of address is not found elsewhere in Jeremiah. But there is no cogent reason for striking out 21[b], its repetition elsewhere does not prove that Jeremiah cannot have coined it, or that it must have originated with Ezekiel (xii. 2). For 22 see below.

21. foolish is struck out by Cornill. Apart from iv. 22 it occurs only in Ecclesiastes.

22. It is urged against this verse, apart from its somewhat cumbrous style, that the passages in the Old Testament which magnify the greatness of Yahweh in creation or the phenomena of Nature are of late origin, such as the creation passages in the Book of Amos. This argument may easily be exaggerated, since the idea of creation was not introduced so late into Hebrew thought as some have imagined, and the myth of the conquest and subsequent confinement of the rebellious ocean was primaeval. The points of contact with passages in the Second Isaiah, in Isa. lvi–lxvi, and in Job do not involve postponement to the exile or later, or the denial of Jeremiah's authorship. Besides, the verse connects admirably with what follows. The mutiny of the sea against God had its counterpart in Judah's rebellion, and Judah also will soon

have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, [a] by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it? and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail;
23 though they roar, yet can they not pass over it. But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they
24 are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in its season; that reserveth
25 unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have

[a] Or, *an everlasting ordinance, which it cannot pass*

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feel the curb of God's iron hand. It is true that the text presents difficulties, which are not apparent in the English translation, but the general sense is clear and free from objection.

by a perpetual . . . pass it. The margin treats 'ordinance' as in apposition to sea. It would perhaps be best to translate 'by a perpetual ordinance which it cannot transgress.'

the waves thereof toss themselves. The noun in the Hebrew really belongs to 'roar' in the next clause. The text should be translated 'though they toss themselves.' The verb, however, has no subject. If we read the singular, with the LXX, Old Latin, and Syriac, the subject would be 'the sea;' but the plural is finer and we should probably insert 'the waters thereof,' which has fallen out, cf. xlvi. 7, 8 (so Driver). Duhm considers that two variants have been combined, and striking out the inferior gets a text which runs more smoothly than the present, 'who have placed the sand as a bound for the sea, and though its waves roar yet can they not pass over it; though they toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail.' This may be correct, for the two groups of words which he treats as variants are more than half identical, and the awkward repetition of 'shall not pass over it' is removed. Yet the dissimilarity which exists between the alleged variants makes it hard to think that one originated from the other.

23. The heart of the people is like the rebellious sea.

24. rain: the general term for winter rain, which is further defined as early and latter, i. e. autumn and spring rain. The appointed weeks of the harvest are the seven weeks between the Feast of the Passover and the Feast of Weeks.

25. these things: an indefinite expression; the allusion is apparently to the things mentioned in the preceding verse, but whether to all the blessings or specifically to the appointed weeks of

withholden good from you. For among my people are 26
found wicked men: they watch, as fowlers lie in wait;
they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of 27
birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they
are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, 28
they shine: yea, they overpass in deeds of wickedness:
they plead not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, that
they should prosper; and the right of the needy do they
not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the 29
LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as
this?

[a] A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the 30

[a] Or, *Astonishment and horror*

harvest is not clear: the former is the more natural, failure of harvest was due to an earlier failure of rain. Cf. Amos iv. 6 ff.

26. The Hebrew text presents an unusual accumulation of difficulties, which cannot be discussed here. The R.V. gives the general sense. The LXX presents a simpler text, which is also shorter and avoids the worst difficulties: 'For ungodly men were found among my people, and they set snares to destroy men and caught them.' It is not clear whether the difference is due entirely to a difference in the Hebrew text, or whether difficulties are simply evaded in the LXX.

27. Just as the fowler snares his birds by deceit and fills his cage with them, so they acquire by deceit the wealth with which they fill their houses. 'Deceit' does not correspond to the treacherous mechanism by which the trap is sprung, but it means the ill-gotten gains of deceit, corresponding to the birds with which the cage is full.

28. The Hebrew text here also presents numerous difficulties, and the LXX varies considerably from it, mainly by omission. The R.V. seems to give the most probable sense of the present Hebrew text, but no confidence can be felt as to several details. The text is probably corrupt, and several attempts have been made to restore it.

they shine: the verb is supposed to mean 'to be smooth' or 'shiny,' if so the reference here is to their sleek condition, cf. Deut. xxxii. 15, Ps. lxxiii. 7, Job xv. 27, a sign to the Hebrews of the luxurious egoist who had forgotten God and exploited his fellows.

30. What all classes regard as perfectly normal, so completely

31 land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear
rule [a] by their means; and my people love to have it so:
and what will ye do in the end thereof?

6 Flee for safety, ye children of Benjamin, out of the

[a] †Or, *at their hands*

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has custom numbed their moral sensibilities, seems to Jeremiah with his soul so finely sensitive to ethical and spiritual values, a spectacle that should excite the deepest amazement and horror.

31. The priest and prophet are the official representatives of religion, against whose combined evil influence Jeremiah was not the first to protest. The worst feature is that the people (God's people!) are well content that this sinister alliance should work its baneful will.

bear rule by their means. It would be better to render as in the margin and interpret, the priests rule at the beck of the prophets, according to their guidance. Others translate 'bear rule at their side.' Buhl and Duhm, however, translate 'scrape into their hands,' i. e. the priests get money into their own pockets. The verb is used of Samson scraping the honey out of the lion's carcase (Judg. xiv. 9). It is more likely, however, that we should follow Hitzig and read 'teach' (*yōrū* for *yirdū*). Giving Torah or direction was one of the main functions of the priests.

vi. 1–30. The Invader brings Destruction on the Incorrigible People.

This chapter belongs to the same period as the preceding. Here also the Scythian invasion is the prophet's theme. But whereas in iv. 5 ff. the inhabitants are warned to escape to the fortified cities and Zion in particular, here the warning is given to leave Jerusalem since even there they will not be safe. Accordingly this chapter dates from a somewhat later time, and there appear to be marks of revision on republication in the reign of Jehoiakim.

vi. 1–8. Flee, Benjamites, from Jerusalem southwards, for ruin comes out of the north and Zion shall be ravaged. The invaders, having let slip the opportunity of a surprise in the noonday siesta, propose an assault by night. It is Yahweh who has ordained the siege to punish the unceasing wickedness of the city; let it take warning in time.

9–15. Utter ruin awaits Israel, for the word of Yahweh has become irksome to it. I am full of His fury, it will be poured out on all alike. For all are self-seeking and false, the leaders have healed the wound too lightly, unashamed at their sin they shall be put to confusion by disaster.

midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and raise up a signal on Beth-haccherem: for evil looketh forth from the north, and a great destruction. The 2

16–21. For they refused Yahweh's warning to walk in the way of safety, nor would they hearken to His messengers. So let the nations know that calamity is coming on this people for their disobedience. Yahweh takes no delight in their offerings, He will bring them to ruin.

22–30. A cruel and mighty nation is coming from the north against Zion, filling her with anguish and terror. Let her prepare herself for the bitterest lamentation. God has made Jeremiah an assayer of the people, but no matter how long the smelting continues, the dross will not be purged away.

vi. 1. It is not clear why Jeremiah should address the Benjamites and bid them flee from Jerusalem. The city belonged largely to Benjamite territory, hence 'children of Benjamin' might be a synonym for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Since Jeremiah himself belonged to Anathoth, which was situated in Benjamin, it is more probable that he is not addressing the whole population of the capital, but the Benjamite portion of it, especially those who had come, as he had done, from the country to settle in the city. He may have regarded these as less deeply corrupt than those who had been born and bred in the capital.

and blow . . . Beth-haccherem. It is probable that these words are an addition. Not only do they disturb the rhythm, but it is not easy to see why, if the flight is to be from Jerusalem, the trumpet should be blown in Tekoa, which lay twelve miles south of the capital. We cannot eliminate Tekoa from the text, for it is guaranteed by an assonance in the Hebrew, nor can we take it as a common noun cognate with the verb ('blow a blast') rather than as a place-name. It is very unlikely that two different sets of people are addressed, and that while the Benjamites are bidden flee from Jerusalem, the inhabitants of the south of Judah are to be warned by the trumpet in Tekoa. The whole of the passage is concerned with the attack on Jerusalem. Tekoa is chiefly famous as the home of Amos. The identification of Beth-haccherem is uncertain. If it is the Frank Mountain, three miles north-east of Tekoa, it would be fitly mentioned in connexion with Tekoa, since it was very suitable for a beacon.

evil looketh forth. This personification of Disaster is highly effective. It is also possible to translate 'evil is overhanging,' a less powerful expression.

2. The R.V. rendering is that usually adopted by those who retain the Hebrew text. But the text is suspicious in itself,

comely and delicate one, the daughter of Zion, will I cut
3 off. Shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her;
they shall pitch their tents against her round about; they
4 shall feed every one in his place. [a] Prepare ye war
against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto
us! for the day declineth, for the shadows of the evening
5 are stretched out. Arise, and let us go up by night, and
6 let us destroy her palaces. For thus hath the LORD of
hosts said, Hew ye down [b] trees, and cast up a mount

[a] †Heb. *Sanctify.* [b] †Or, as otherwise read, *her trees*

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and suspicion is confirmed by the wide divergence of the Versions from it. The rendering 'will I cut off' is dubious, and the word rendered 'comely' usually means 'meadow.' This sense harmonizes with the context, which represents the enemy under the figure of shepherds coming with their flocks to graze the country. Various suggestions for mending the text have been made, which cannot be discussed here. The general sense is that Zion is a meadow on which the enemy will pasture.

4. Prepare: literally **Sanctify.** War was esteemed a sacred matter, it was prepared for by sacrifices, the warriors were regarded as consecrated and placed under certain taboos. Hence the phrase 'to sanctify war' meant to begin hostilities. The enemy are vividly represented as addressing each other. First they propose an attack at midday, when the citizens will be taking their siesta; then, regretting that noon has slipped by, they plan an assault by night.

5. palaces. The LXX translates 'her foundations;' this may presuppose a different Hebrew text, but since the LXX does not elsewhere in Jeremiah render 'palace,' and in some other places renders as here, it is very precarious to infer that a different Hebrew text lay before the translator. Besides the expression 'destroy her foundations' would be too drastic; the Scythians might raze the buildings to their foundations, they would hardly destroy the foundations themselves.

6. The cutting down of trees in a long siege was permitted to the Hebrews by Deut. xx. 19, 20, provided they were not fruit trees, the destruction of which was prohibited. Duhm and Cornill regard the command to besiege Jerusalem as quite unsuitable to the Scythians, who might take a fortified city by assault but were unequal to conducting a siege. It would be appropriate to the Babylonians, but Cornill thinks that its unmetrical character

against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited; she is
wholly oppression in the midst of her. As a well [a] casteth 7
forth her waters, so she [a] casteth forth her wickedness:
violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually
is sickness and wounds. Be thou instructed, O Jerusa- 8
lem, lest my soul be alienated from thee; lest I make
thee a desolation, a land not inhabited.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall throughly 9
glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn again thine

[a] †Or, *keepeth fresh*

forbids us to suppose that it was added by Jeremiah when he published the prophecy after Jehoiakim's destruction of the roll.

this is the city to be visited. A strange phrase; if the text is correct, the clause is apparently a marginal gloss which has been taken by mistake into the text. The LXX reads 'Ah false city,' which gives a much better sense. Giesebrecht by a slight emendation of the Hebrew text reads 'Ah city of plunder.'

7. a well. There is an alternative reading 'a cistern.' The difference is important. The well is self-fed, whereas the cistern has its water stored within it from without. The point of the former metaphor would be that sin is a product of man's own nature, the latter figure implies that wickedness is an alien element, but is welcomed and kept fresh in man's own heart. Cornill infers from xiii. 23 that Jeremiah regarded sin as not man's true nature, though through evil habit it might become his second nature, hence he reads 'a cistern.'

casteth forth. This rendering does not suit the reading 'cistern,' which should probably be preferred, and is also inferior on other grounds to the marginal translation 'keepeth fresh.' Although the wickedness of Jerusalem does not spring from an unfailing source within herself but is an alien element, yet she cherishes it and maintains its native vigour.

9. According to the usual interpretation of the passage, the captivity of Northern Israel corresponded to the main gathering of the grapes. Judah was left as a remnant, and now it is to be thoroughly gleaned. A difficulty is created by the singular 'thine' for which we should have expected 'your,' since the gleaners are referred to in the plural. If the text is correct, the chief of the grape-gatherers, i.e. the leader of the foe, is addressed. It is simpler to assume, with Hitzig, Graf, and others, that a consonant has been repeated by mistake, and that we should read 'turning back the hand.' Duhm, however, followed by Cornill, strikes out

10 hand as a grapegatherer [a] into the baskets. To whom
shall I speak and testify, that they may hear? behold,
their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: be-
hold, the word of the LORD is become unto them a re-
11 proach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full
of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in:
pour it out upon the children in the street, and upon the
assembly of young men together: for even the husband
with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is
12 full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto
others, their fields and their wives together: for I will
stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land,
13 saith the LORD. For from the least of them even
unto the greatest of them every one is given to covet-

[a] †Or, *upon the shoots*

three words and gets the sense that Yahweh bids Jeremiah search the people as the grapegatherer examines the vine to see if any good grapes still lie concealed. Then for the sake of these few good people, the nation may still be spared, as Sodom would have been spared if ten righteous could have been found in it. The excision is defended on metrical grounds, but it is rather violent. Yet it gives a better connexion with what follows.

10. Jeremiah's reply to this command. The people are hopelessly inaccessible to the Divine message. Their inward ear needs to have its covering removed that it may hear the prophetic word. The expression is uncommon, but Stephen calls his judges 'uncircumcised in heart and ears' (Acts vii. 51).

11. pour it out: this can hardly be a prayer addressed to Yahweh by Jeremiah, such a prayer he would not have uttered, moreover the previous statement that he is full of wrath suggests that he will pour it out. Accordingly if we retain the imperative we must suppose that, when Jeremiah says that he can no longer hold in the wrath of Yahweh of which he is full, Yahweh interrupts him with the command to pour it out. But the alteration of a point gives the much better sense 'I will pour it out.' Since the prophetic utterance carries with it its own fulfilment, Jeremiah by announcing doom brings it to pass.

12. For 12–15 cf. viii. 10–12, where the present passage is very largely repeated. 12[b] is absent in the parallel passage, and is regarded as an insertion here by Duhm, Erbt, and Cornill.

ousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the 14
[a] hurt of [b] my people lightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. [c] Were they ashamed when they had 15
committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall [d] be cast down, saith the LORD.

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways and see, 16

[a] Or, *breach* [b] Another reading is, *the daughter of my people*, as in ch. viii. 11, 21. [c] †Or, *They shall be put to shame because they have committed abomination: yea, they are not &c.* [d] †Or, *stumble*

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14. Jeremiah here touches one of the most ominous features of the time, the incurable optimism of the religious leaders. They have 'healed,' or rather given medical treatment to the wound of the nation. But they have not been radical enough, they have contented themselves with a superficial healing over of the wound, while it was festering beneath the surface. 'Hurt' is properly 'breach' (marg.). For 'my people' many MSS. read 'the daughter of my people,' as in viii. 11, 21.

15. Duhm and Cornill regard this verse as a later addition, Erbt retains simply 'nay, they were . . . blush.' The reasons are partly metrical and stylistic, partly rest on the feeling that the contents are not Jeremianic.

The LXX reads 'at the time of their visitation,' implying a different vocalization of the original consonants. This is confirmed by viii. 12.

be cast down: better as in marg., **stumble.**

16. It was no fault of Yahweh that they have thus sinned unto death. He had urged them to return to the ways of antiquity, which would conduct them to prosperity. But they had met all His warnings and entreaties with a flat refusal to obey; hence their doom will be due to their own inexcusable defiance of His behests.

saith: the present tense gives a wrong sense; it is not a new utterance of Yahweh, but what He had spoken at an earlier time. We should translate 'said.'

in the ways: i. e. where the ways meet. They must return to the parting of the ways, and then learn which are the ancient paths; it is these which will lead them to happiness. This con-

and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and
walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but
17 they said, We will not walk *therein*. And I set watchmen
over you, *saying*, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet;
18 but they said, We will not hearken. Therefore hear, ye
nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them.
19 Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people,

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servative tendency in Jeremiah is a wholesome reminder that the prophets were not the conscious innovators they have sometimes been represented to be.

rest for your souls. Our familiarity with the phrase in the gracious invitation of Matt. xi. 29 tempts us to read a deeper meaning into it here than it really contains. It has not the spiritual significance it bears on the lips of Jesus. It is not the inward peace which the soul finds in fellowship with God, but the peace and safety which they will secure by adherence to God's commands.

17. It is questionable on metrical grounds if the verse is in its original form, but no satisfactory restoration has been proposed. The general sense is not affected by this uncertainty. We should probably read 'over them' for 'over you,' to avoid the awkward change of persons.

I set: the tense does not indicate action in the future, as Duhm urges, but repeated action in the past: 'I ever raised up' (Driver). The 'watchmen' are the prophets, who give warning of impending disaster.

18. The last part of the verse is corrupt. 'Congregation' should, according to the parallelism, refer to the nations, but such a use of the word is unexampled. It cannot refer to Israel in this context. The clause 'know what is among them' is intolerably tame and much too indefinite. Numerous emendations have been proposed. Graf suggested 'and know what I have testified against them' (cf. Aquila's rendering 'and know the testimony that is among them'). Rothstein, however, thinks we should read 'ye heavens' for 'ye nations.' His reconstruction is 'Wherefore hear, ye heavens, and bear witness against them.' This matches the appeal to earth in 19 (cf. Isa. i. 2, Deut. xxxii. 1), and escapes the difficulty caused by the summons to the nations, which has led Cornill to follow Duhm in the view that 18, 19 are a later insertion. It seems to be the best emendation yet proposed.

19. Perhaps something has fallen out after 'Hear, O earth,' corresponding to the clause which originally followed the similar invocation in 18.

even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. To what purpose cometh there to me frankincense from Sheba, and the sweet [a]cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me. Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people: and the fathers and the sons together shall stumble against them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country; and a great nation shall be stirred up from the uttermost parts of the earth. They lay hold on

[a] Or, *calamus*

thoughts: probably we should read 'turning away,' with the LXX.

my law. The Torah of Yahweh is not to be understood in its later technical sense of the Pentateuchal law, unless the passage is late, but it ought not to be regarded as late on the ground that this word is used. It means 'direction' or 'teaching' (cf. Isa. i. 9).

20. Cf. Amos v. 21–25, Isa. i. 11–14. An elaborate ritual and costly sacrifices gave Yahweh no pleasure, as the people fondly imagined, if they were dissociated from obedience to His commands. Sheba, in south-west Arabia, was the chief source from which incense was derived in antiquity. The 'sweet cane' or calamus (Isa. xliii. 24, Exod. xxx. 23), not to be identified with the sugar-cane, was used in the production of incense. It probably came from India. Duhm and Cornill think that Jeremiah is not attacking the sacrificial system, but the new-fangled ritual fashions, which seemed specially fitted by their costliness to win the favour of God. Accordingly they regard the latter half of the verse as a later insertion. This would be more plausible if 18, 19 were deleted, since then we should gain a more effective contrast between the 'old paths' and the novel fashions. But there is little warrant for such drastic handling of the text, all the more as they involve 21 in the fate of 18, 19.

22. A fine description of the invader now follows, recalling that in v. 15–17. The Scythians were, originally at any rate, intended.

bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their
voice roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses;
every one set in array, as a man to the battle, against thee,
24 O daughter of Zion. We have heard the fame thereof;
our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us,
25 *and* pangs as of a woman in travail. Go not forth into
the field, nor walk by the way; for *there is* the sword of
26 the enemy, *and* terror on every side. O daughter of my
people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in
ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most
bitter lamentation; for the spoiler shall suddenly come
27 upon us. I have made thee a [a]tower *and* a fortress

[a] †Or, *trier*

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23. spear: the word means 'javelin.'

as a man: Rosenmüller and Duhm explain 'as one man.' But more probably it means as a man of war.

24. The people of Jerusalem express the emotions with which they hear the tidings of the enemy's approach.

25. Go . . . walk. The Hebrew should be read as a plural rather than a singular; the warning is addressed to individuals rather than the population as a whole. The fields and ways will be unsafe because of the enemy.

terror on every side: a favourite expression; see xx. 10, xlvi. 5, xlix. 29, Ps. xxxi. 13. Cf. the graphic description in Job xviii, especially verse 11, 'Terrors shall make him afraid on every side.'

26. wallow thyself: so Aquila, followed by many modern scholars. The Versions usually render 'sprinkle thyself;' so Cheyne, Cornill, Driver (see his note, p. 347).

an only son: cf. Amos viii. 10, Zech. xii. 10. The word bears its usual sense; there is no reference to the wailing for Tammuz or Adonis (Ezek. viii. 14), though he probably bore in Phoenicia a name equivalent to the word used here. No wailing for a dead god who was to come to life again, could match the agony of bereavement felt for one's own son irretrievably lost, with no brothers to mitigate the sense of utter desolation, to perpetuate the family, or perform the last offices for the parent.

27. The translation implies a strange mixture of metaphors; it is not the function of a fortress to test the conduct of the people. The margin 'trier' is obviously correct; Jeremiah's function is

among my people; that thou mayest know and try their way. They are all grievous revolters, going about with 28
slanders; they are brass and iron: they all of them deal corruptly. The bellows [a] blow fiercely; the lead is con- 29
sumed of the fire: in vain do they go on refining; for the wicked are not plucked away. Refuse silver shall 30
men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

[R] The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, 7

[a] Or, *are burned*

that of an assayer, as 29, 30 clearly indicate. The translation 'fortress' is correct but quite unsuitable. Michaelis, followed by many scholars, pointed differently and rendered 'gold-washer,' but this is destitute of proof. The word is probably a mistaken insertion, occasioned partly by i. 18, partly by the fact that the word used here in the sense of 'trier' means 'tower' in Isa. xxiii. 13 (so a cognate word in Isa. xxxii. 14).

28. Here also the text is difficult. Duhm has dealt radically and cleverly with it, but this is not the place to discuss his reconstruction. It is not unlikely that the words 'they are all brass and iron' are an insertion, possibly from Ezek. xxii. 18-22, a passage which should be compared with the present. They stand awkwardly in their present connexion.

29. This verse also is not clear; the R.V. probably gives the approximate sense (cf. Isa. i. 25). Although the utmost is done to free the people from its evil elements, it is all in vain. Before quicksilver was known lead was mixed with the alloy which had to be purified, and the mixture was melted, then the bellows forced air on it. The lead was thus oxidized and formed a flux for the impurities (see Driver's note, p. 39, or the description by Gillies, p. 84). In this case the process is a failure, the impurities are not carried away by the lead, so that the silver remains unrefined.

30. On this note of rejection the present cycle of prophecies comes to a close.

vii. 1—viii. 3. THE TEMPLE NO GUARANTEE OF SECURITY; FAILING THE PEOPLE'S REFORM, IT WILL ITSELF BE DESTROYED.

At vii. 1 a new section begins which embraces vii-x. It includes distinct subsections, and a certain amount of later insertion. The first of these subsections is vii. 1—viii. 3. The date of the main portion is fixed by xxvi. 1 as 'the beginning of the reign

2 saying, Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and pro-

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of Jehoiakim.' In xxvi we have a description of the scene, but a very meagre report of what was said by Jeremiah. Here we have no account of the sensation excited by the prophet's threat that the Temple would be destroyed or of the imminent risk of death which he ran, but the address itself is summarized with some fullness. The identity of the two occasions is guaranteed by the presence in both chapters of the prediction that God would make the Temple a ruin like Shiloh. Duhm considers that almost the whole chapter is late, and that the address of Jeremiah (3–15) was composed by a writer on the basis of the brief notice of the incident in Baruch's biography of Jeremiah. The fundamental objection is that the address is not written in the metre in which alone Duhm believes that Jeremiah's prophecies are clothed. It is, however, a bold theory, and antecedently not very credible, that Jeremiah's spoken addresses were invariably uttered in metre. The contrary is more probable, even if he threw them into metrical form for publication. It is possible that it is the version in Baruch's biography that we have here. The detailed objections need not be mentioned at this point, and the question of possible insertions in this subsection may be treated at the points where it arises.

The speech was apparently delivered at a gathering at which not only the people of the capital but Judaeans from the country districts were present. It is not wonderful that it infuriated the priests and prophets, the official guardians of religion, united in defence of the established order. The centralization of the worship at Jerusalem, the conviction of Isaiah that Zion could not be overthrown which had been so brilliantly justified by the disaster that saved Jerusalem from capture by Sennacherib, caused a superstitious veneration to gather about the Temple. It was a kind of fetish which guaranteed the security of the city and the people. As the only legitimate sanctuary the material interests of the priesthood were bound up with it.

vii. 1–2. The following address delivered to Judah at the Temple gate.

3–15. Radical amendment of life will secure the Jews in possession of the land. They must not trust in lies and think that the possession of Yahweh's Temple will secure them against disaster while they commit all manner of moral and religious offences. Do they think Yahweh's house is a robber's shelter? If so, let them learn from the fate of Shiloh, Yahweh's ancient abode, that so He will do to His present house. He will banish them from His land as He has already banished Ephraim.

16–20. Yahweh will hearken to no prayer for the people. They

claim there this word, and say, [J] Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, [R] that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. [J] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, 3
the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings,
and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not 4
in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these. For 5

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make cakes to the Queen of Heaven and offer to other gods, but He will pour out His unquenchable anger upon them.

21–28. Let them eat their burnt offerings as well as their sacrifices, they are but flesh. For at the Exodus Yahweh made no demand for either, but only for obedience. Yet though He had warned them by His prophets, they responded only with stubborn defiance. And similarly his hearers will not hearken to Jeremiah.

29–34. Lament for Yahweh's rejection of His people. Judah has defiled the Temple, and burnt human sacrifices in Topheth. Therefore the valley of Hinnom shall be the scene of slaughter, and used for burial, while the beasts and birds shall prey undisturbed on the unburied. Then all gladness shall cease from Jerusalem, and the land shall become a waste.

viii. 1–3. The bones of kings and great men shall be taken from the tombs and spread before the host of heaven which once they had worshipped, and the scattered survivors will prefer death to life.

vii. 1, 2. Of these two verses the LXX has simply the words, 'Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah.' Since there was no reason for omitting the rest if the translator had it before him, we may probably infer that the Hebrew has been subsequently expanded by a scribe, who has drawn on xxvi. 1, 2.

the gate: in xxvi. 2 we read 'the court.' Probably one of the gates between the outer and inner court is intended; perhaps 'the new gate' (xxvi. 10). The people who had gathered, presumably for a festival or a fast-day, from the country as well as the capital, would throng the outer court. Speaking in Jerusalem, it was not unnatural for Jeremiah to say 'this place' (3), rather than 'this land' (but see 7).

4. For the repetition cf. xxii. 29, Isa. vi. 3. Here it gives the formula a kind of magical force. 'These' means this set of buildings which make up the Temple. The formula was true, but its implication was false (cf. Mic. iii. 11). The Temple was Yahweh's house, but it gave His worshippers no immunity from disaster. Only a radical change in conduct could secure this (5–7).

if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye
throughly execute judgement between a man and his
6 neighbour; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless,
and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place,
7 neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: then will
I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave
8 to your fathers, from of old even for evermore. Behold,
9 ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal,
murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn
incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye
10 have not known, and come and stand before me in this
house, [a] which is called by my name, and say, We are
11 delivered; that ye may do all these abominations? Is

[a] Heb. *whereupon my name is called.*

6. the stranger: the resident alien, who is frequently coupled in Deuteronomy with the Levite, the widow, and the orphan, i. e. the defenceless and the needy classes who were peculiarly exposed to ill-treatment and fraud, and whose claims to kind and equitable treatment were therefore specially emphasized in the Law. The earliest legislation similarly prohibits oppression of the stranger (Exod. xxii. 21, xxiii. 9).

9. Will ye steal, &c. Better, 'What! steal,' &c. We need not infer that we have a later writer exaggerating the misdeeds of the audience; the earlier prophets say similar things, and Jeremiah and Ezekiel give a very unflattering description of their contemporaries. The enumeration of sins is probably influenced by the Decalogue.

burn incense: this rendering is possible, but it would be better to translate 'burn sacrifices' (see note on i. 16). These were offered not 'to Baal' but 'to the Baal,' i. e. the Baal of the particular locality (see notes on ii. 8, 23).

10. which is called by my name: Heb. 'whereupon my name is called,' implying His possession.

that ye may do. The Hebrew is ambiguous; we might render 'in order that we may do,' but even if the worshippers are represented as making this cynical avowal, 'abominations' must be the prophet's substitute for their more specious description of their conduct. Probably, however, the R.V. correctly takes the whole clause as Jeremiah's indignant comment on their complacent assurance that they are delivered from peril by their piety.

11. Has God's Temple sunk so low in their estimation that they

this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith the LORD. But go ye now unto my place which 12
was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these 13
works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not: therefore will I do unto the house, 14
which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my 15
sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up 16

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value it most as a refuge from danger, such as other robbers find in their caves? The country was infested with robbers who made the caves their retreat.

12. If the Temple has become no better than a robbers' haunt, God will treat it as such and destroy it as He destroyed Shiloh (cf. Ps. lxviii. 60). We have no account of the fall of Shiloh; Wellhausen has conjectured that the narrative once stood in the place now occupied by 1 Sam. vii. This is more likely than the view that it was destroyed at the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom, in spite of the better parallelism this would give with the simultaneous destruction of the Temple and the overthrow of the Southern Kingdom. For Shiloh's pre-eminence consisted simply in its possession of the ark; it had lost all religious significance centuries before 722 B.C.

14. They trust in Yahweh's house rather than in the living God Himself.

15. out of my sight: the old conception of Yahweh as localized in Palestine colours the expression in this prediction of exile. Ephraim is here used for the northern tribes generally. The threat of exile is not at all strange on the lips of Jeremiah at this time.

all: should be omitted, as by LXX.

16-20. This passage seems to interrupt the Temple address. Intercession for the doomed people might naturally follow the

cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me:
17 for I will not hear thee. Seest thou not what they do in
18 the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The

communication of Yahweh's purpose to the prophet, just as Abraham pleaded for Sodom. But that in the course of his address to the people, Jeremiah should utter Yahweh's words to himself, with no formula to indicate the transition, is hardly natural. Accordingly, while it may quite well have been inserted here when the address was published, it is likely that it formed no part of it originally. It is also uncertain whether at this time the public worship of the Queen of Heaven was carried on as here described. Jehoiakim was a worthless king, and probably quite out of sympathy with his father's religious policy. Yet we have no explicit evidence to convict him of reinstating, or even permitting the re-introduction of idolatry. Apart from this, the impression we gain from xliv is that this form of worship had not been resumed after the reformation of Josiah, for in reply to Jeremiah's appeal that his hearers will not practise it, they retort that all their calamities are due to neglect of it. It is true that they speak of themselves, as well as their fathers, as having participated in it, but as the interval from the Reformation (621 B.C.) was less than forty years, many would, like Jeremiah himself, have been grown up at that time. Possibly, then, we have here a fragment dating from the pre-Reformation period. Cornill believes that the passage forms an integral part of the address, but that the reference is not to idolatry practised at the time, but at an earlier period. He explains the public idolatry, described in Ezek. viii, similarly. Others feel no difficulty in the view that the worship was carried on in Jehoiakim's reign.

16. The people's wickedness is so incurable that intercession is in vain.

18. The rendering 'queen of heaven' is that almost universally accepted by modern scholars. It involves an alteration in the pointing. There is another reading, 'work of heaven,' probably meant in the sense of host of heaven, and introduced to avoid the true interpretation. We have a fuller description of the cult in xliv, from which it is clear that while the husbands and children assisted in the preparations, the women were especially active in the service of the goddess. The identification of the Queen of Heaven is disputed. Probably she was Ishtar, who bore this name in Babylonia, and who is to be regarded as the planet Venus rather than the moon. The cult was of Babylonian origin, and probably imported into Judah in the reign of Manasseh. The description points to its prevalence among the poorer classes, who have to collect firewood and do all the work themselves. From

children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they pro- 19
voke me to anger? saith the LORD; *do they* not *provoke* themselves, to the confusion of their own faces? There- 20
fore thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Add 21
your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh.

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xliv. 19 we learn that the cakes 'pourtrayed' (R.V. marg.) the goddess. By this is meant, either that they were modelled to represent her, or that her image or symbol was impressed on them. The Hebrew word for 'cakes' may be of foreign origin, borrowed with the cult. (See further the articles 'Queen of Heaven,' in Hastings's *Dict. of the Bible* and the *Enc. Bib.*)

19, 20. How childish the thought that they can spite Yahweh by such conduct; Yahweh serenely lifted above all jealousy and petulance! Yet the wrath of Yahweh, though there is in it no vindictiveness for the slight thus placed upon Him, is a consuming fire of moral indignation, which will devour them. Thus the injury they would do to their God recoils on themselves.

21. The general meaning is that their sacrifices are worthless to God, they have no sacred element attaching to them, but are mere flesh. The specific sense may be that they may add one type of sacrifice to another, but Yahweh regards them as nothing better than flesh. But a far better interpretation is that He despises their service so utterly that they may take the burnt-offerings, which none might eat since they were entirely devoted to Yahweh, and add them to the peace-offerings which were eaten by the worshippers in a sacred feast. They have completely lost their sanctity, offered by hands so unclean, and are fit only for a common meal. This distinction between the two types of sacrifice—one of which, except the parts reserved for God, was eaten by the worshippers, and the other which was not eaten—gives a force to the words 'eat flesh' which they do not get on the alternative explanation.

22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them

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22. This verse is famous for its bearing on the criticism of the Pentateuch. The theory known as the Grafian theory, which regards the Priestly Code as the latest of the documents and subsequent to Ezekiel, is so-called since, although he had been anticipated by Reuss, Vatke, and George, it was revived by Graf. The work in which he developed his criticism was issued in 1865 (it bears the date 1866), but in his masterly note on this passage he had already (1862) made his position clear (see especially p. 123). The plain sense of the verse is that at the time of the Exodus God had not demanded sacrifice as part of the service due to Him. To escape this unwelcome conclusion stress has been laid on the precise specification of time, as if the meaning were that though God had given the Hebrews elaborate laws as to sacrifice in the wilderness, He had not given them on the day when they left Egypt. This crass piece of Rabbinism saves the Mosaic origin of these laws at the expense of turning our passage into nonsense, as if a Divine command could have been more sacred and binding if given on the day of the Exodus than if given somewhat later at Sinai. It is moreover refuted by the use of the phrase in the wider sense xi. 4, xxxi. 32, xxxiv. 13. Less obviously absurd is the explanation that we have here merely a grammatical idiom which simply means that God's main requirement was obedience, sacrifice was only a subordinate demand. But even if the possibility of the explanation be granted, and this is dubious, the verse thus interpreted does not fit the context, unless we suppose that if God's primary commands are obeyed, those which are secondary may be calmly neglected! And if Jeremiah recognized the Priestly Legislation as dating from the period of the wilderness, he would surely, in view of its very elaborate laws on sacrifice, have expressed himself in a less misleading way. It is urged on the other hand that the argument proves too much, since it would involve a denial of the Mosaic origin of laws in Deuteronomy and the Book of the Covenant, with which Jeremiah was confessedly acquainted. It must be granted that this reply is not without force. Yet the critical position must probably be maintained in view of the following considerations: There is a very marked difference between the attitude of the earlier Codes and the Priestly Legislation. In the latter the ritual system is of very high importance and sacrifice fills a prominent place, in the former sacrifice holds a relatively insignificant position. If it is urged that Jeremiah's language is inconsistent with the recognition even of this minimum, as Divinely ordained at the Exodus, it may be said that it is by no means clear that he would have affirmed such recognition. His later attitude to Deuteronomy is uncertain; he may have come to

in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I 23
commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined 24
their ear, but walked in *their own* counsels *and* in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and

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the conclusion that no sacrificial laws were given in the wilderness, and have reckoned the records of such among the instances where the false pen of the scribes had wrought falsely (viii. 8). In doing so he would rest not merely on his own instinctive discrimination of the false and the true, but on the implied assertion of Amos that Israel had not offered sacrifices in the wilderness (Amos v. 25). But if not, what would be a pardonable rhetorical exaggeration with reference to the earlier codes, especially remembering that the sacrificial laws of Deuteronomy were largely designed to prevent heathen abuses, would be gross when said of the Priestly Laws. A statement of this kind could pass when addressed to a people familiar with the Book of the Covenant and Deuteronomy, but it would have seemed flagrant to those who knew the Priestly Legislation. How could he have challenged with a mere *ipse dixit* the claim to Divine origin which it made for these laws, before a people who knew the Code and acknowledged the claim? It is highly improbable that we have to do here with a post-exilic insertion. An anti-sacrificial tendency in post-exilic Judaism is perhaps to be admitted, but an unequivocal denial of what Leviticus represented as historical fact is not likely to have been inserted after the Canon of the Law had been recognized.

23. The relation between Yahweh and Israel is based on a covenant, a mutual agreement resting on Israel's obedience to Yahweh's behests. Each takes the other for its own: Yahweh Israel to be His people, Israel Yahweh to be its God. The relationship is not one that rests on a necessity of nature, but on an act of choice. The verse contains no precise quotation from the Pentateuch, but summarizes the drift of several passages.

24. they: the reference is apparently to the fathers in the wilderness, but if so the judgement expressed differs from that in ii. 2.

in their own **counsels.** The Heb. is literally 'in counsels in the stubbornness of their evil heart.' The LXX omits 'in counsels,' and thus gives a better and smoother text. 'Counsels' has come into the text apparently from Ps. lxxxi. 12.

25 not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth
out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto
you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early
26 and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto me, nor
inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they did
worse than their fathers.
27 And thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but
they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto
28 them; but they will not answer thee. And thou shalt
say unto them, This is the nation that hath not hark-
ened to the voice of the LORD their God, nor received
[a] instruction: [b] truth is perished, and is cut off from their
mouth.
29 Cut off [c] thine hair, *O Jerusalem*, and cast it away, and
take up a lamentation on the bare heights; for the LORD
hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

[a] †Or, *correction* [b] †Or, *faithfulness* [c] Heb. *thy crown*.

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25. The LXX connects the former part of this verse (down to 'this day') with verse 24, and reads 'their fathers.' Cornill accepts this, but escapes the difficulty which arises from the abruptness of 25^b by treating 25^b, 26 as a later addition, a less drastic measure than Giesebrecht's excision of 24–26.

daily. The text means 'by day.' We may either duplicate the word (reading *yōm yōm* 'daily') or, preferably, strike it out as having arisen through dittography of the preceding consonants.

27, 28. Instead of 27, and the opening clause of 28, the LXX simply reads 'And thou shalt say to them this word.' It is probable that this represents the original much more nearly, though perhaps not precisely. Duhm recognizes genuine Jeremianic matter in 28, 29, but considers that 28 belongs to vi. 27–30. This rests on the unwarrantable assumption that vii. 1–27 is non-Jeremianic, but it is also excluded by the fact that any addition to vi. 30 would spoil the climax. Whether 29 is to be similarly judged is less clear to him.

29. The personified nation is addressed, or possibly Jerusalem (so E.V.). The hair (Heb. 'thy crown') was cut off in sign of mourning, as in Job i. 20, Mic. i. 16. For 'the bare heights' see note on iii. 21.

For the children of Judah have done that which is evil 30
in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abomi-
nations in the house which is called by my name, to defile
it. And they have built the high places of Topheth, 31

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30. The reference is specially to the idolatrous abominations introduced by Manasseh; see 2 Kings xxi. 2–9, and the account of Josiah's Reformation, 2 Kings xxiii. 4–14.

31. high places of Topheth. We should probably read the singular 'high place,' with the LXX, as there would be only one sanctuary in the valley of Hinnom. The etymology and meaning of Topheth (see xix. 6, 11–14; 2 Kings xxiii. 10) are unknown; Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, revised ed., p. 377, may be consulted, also the articles in the Biblical Dictionaries. The vocalization of the word is probably to be explained on the same principles as that of Molech. This is properly *melek* ('king') and designated Yahweh, but since it was considered that sacrifices of infants could not be offered to Yahweh, it was assumed that the king intended must be a heathen deity. Accordingly the word was pointed with the vowels of *bosheth*, the Hebrew word for 'shame,' which was often substituted for Baal (see note on iii. 24) as we see from Ish-bosheth for Ish-baal and Mephibosheth for Merib-baal (in both these cases baal stands for Yahweh). Similarly, to mark their horror of this rite of human sacrifice, the pronunciation Topheth was substituted for the original. What this was is uncertain, possibly *t'phath*. The word seems to mean 'fireplace;' cf. Isa. xxx. 33, where it appears in a slightly different form. The origin of this hideous custom is also disputed; some suppose it was Aramaic, others Babylonian, but perhaps it is more likely to have been derived from the Phoenicians, especially as we know of them, and only of them, that it constituted a regular and not merely an exceptional element in their worship. It came into vogue in Judah apparently in the time of Manasseh, though we have references to earlier isolated instances. The sanctuary was situated in the valley of ben-Hinnom (otherwise described as the valley of Hinnom, or the valley of the sons of Hinnom, or the valley, ii. 23, xxxi. 40). The meaning of Hinnom is unknown. It is a proper name, perhaps that of a former owner. Its precise situation is disputed. Some identify it with the Tyropoeon, others with the Kidron, the majority with the Wâdy er-Rabâbi. It was appropriate that the scene of such hellish rites, Ge-Hinnom (valley of Hinnom), should supply the name by which hell came to be designated, Gehenna (see Isa. lxvi. 24). It may be added that the victims were not simply passed through or over the fire, but were actually burned. They were first killed, however, as with

which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn
their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I
32 commanded not, neither came it into my [a] mind. There-
fore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall
no more be called Topheth, nor The valley of the son of
Hinnom, but The valley of Slaughter: for they shall
33 bury in Topheth, [b] till there be no place *to bury*. And

[a] Heb. *heart.* [b] †Or, *because there shall be no place else*

animal burnt-offerings, so that the opinion that they were burnt alive is incorrect. The last clause of the verse strikes the modern reader strangely, since it is surely obvious that Yahweh had commanded no gruesome offerings like these. But the Law contained a demand that the firstborn should be given to Yahweh (Exod. xiii. 2, xxii. 29[b], xxxiv. 19), though in the latter case direction is added that they shall be redeemed. These passages may have been misinterpreted, and Mic. vi. 7 shows that the question was seriously asked if by such sacrifice a man might come before God and atone for his sin. Most remarkable is Ezekiel's assertion that in consequence of Israel's disobedience Yahweh gave them statutes that were not good, so that they dedicated their firstborn (Ezek. xx. 25, 26).

32. Where they have butchered their children, they shall themselves be butchered, hence the name Valley of Slaughter will replace the older name. The concluding words of the verse are, however, difficult. If we could translate as in E.V., 'till there be no place,' we should get a good sense; so abundant will be the slaughter that the whole valley will be filled with the buried dead, and still multitudes will remain unburied and serve as carrion for beasts and birds. But the Hebrew means 'because there shall be no place else,' as in R.V. marg., i.e. they will bury in Topheth because all other burying-places are full. Such an exaggeration is intrinsically most improbable, besides it does not connect well with the earlier part of the verse, which describes the valley as the scene of the slaughter; the concluding clause suggests rather that the corpses were brought to the valley for burial from elsewhere. Duhm thinks the clause is an addition occasioned by the later use of the valley for burial. But we might retain it, if by emendation we could secure the sense given in the E.V.

33. When there is no longer room to bury, the corpses lie untended on the ground, with no Rizpah to scare away the birds and beasts. The threat was much more terrible to the ancients than to us, since they dreaded to be left unburied after death. It occurs often in this book, cf. also Deut. xxviii. 26, Isa. xviii. 6.

the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of
the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none
shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from 34
the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the
voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the
bridegroom and the voice of the bride: for the land shall
become a waste.

At that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the 8
bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes,
and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the
prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
out of their graves: and they shall spread them before 2
the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom
they have loved, and whom they have served, and after
whom they have walked, and whom they have sought,
and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be
gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the
face of the earth. And death shall be chosen rather than 3

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fray: an old word meaning to frighten, abbreviated from 'affray,' of which 'afraid' is the participle.

34. This mournful prediction meets us elsewhere in his prophecies (xvi. 9, xxv. 10, and its reversal in xxxiii. 11).

viii. 1. While many dead are left unburied, the enemy will even drag from the grave the bones of the kings and princes and other leading men, and expose them to the heavenly bodies they had worshipped in their lifetime. The motive of the act was not merely to rifle the tombs of the treasure and ornaments often buried with the rich and great, but to undo their burial and thus break their rest. For death did not snap the tie which bound the body to the shade, so that the pain and indignity inflicted on the bones were felt by the shade in Sheol; see note on Job xiv. 22, and cf. Amos ii. 1.

2. The human act is the instrument of the Divine derision. The heaping up of verbs descriptive of their devotion is sarcastic, the heavens look in cold indifference on the bleaching bones of their zealous devotees.

3. But those who are not slain will be harried by God's judge-

life by all the residue that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

4 Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD: Shall men fall, and not rise up again? shall one

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ments, and, wherever they may be driven, will in their misery prefer death to life; cf. Rev. ix. 6.

which remain should be omitted, with the LXX and Syriac; the Hebrew cannot be so construed: a word has been repeated from the preceding clause by mistake.

viii. 4—ix. 1. JUDAH'S UNNATURAL DISOBEDIENCE WILL BE PUNISHED BY RUIN.

This section seems to belong to the same period as the preceding. Cornill, in fact, thinks that it is really the metrical counterpart to the version of the Temple speech contained in that section.

viii. 4–9. Yahweh complains of the unnatural conduct of His people in that they will not retrace their steps, but go headlong in their evil way. The birds know the time of their migration and return, but Israel is ignorant of Yahweh's ordinance. They claim to know Him, and possess His teaching, but it is a teaching falsified by the scribes. The wise are discomfited, they have rejected Yahweh's word, and what is their wisdom?

10–12. Others shall possess their wives and lands, for all are self-seeking and false; the healers have healed the wound too lightly, unashamed at their sin they shall be put to confusion by disaster.

13–17. Utter destruction awaits them at Yahweh's hands. In their despair they propose to enter the strong cities, there to perish, a bitter doom for their sin. Their hopes are disappointed; the foe comes from the north, laying waste the land. No charmer can save them from the serpents' bite.

18—ix. 1. Would that I could be comforted! The exiled people inquire if Yahweh has forsaken Zion, but why have they vexed Him with their idols? The summer is ended, and they are still undelivered. I array myself as a mourner for my people's calamity. Is there no ointment, no physician, to renew my people? Would that my tears were inexhaustible, that I might weep without ceasing for the slain.

viii. 4. How contrary to Nature is Judah's conduct! If men fall, they rise again; if they go astray, they retrace their steps. But Judah obstinately keeps on in the wrong path.

turn away, and not return? Why then is this people of 5
Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they
hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and 6
heard, but they spake not aright: no man repenteth him
of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every
one [a] turneth to his course, as a horse that rusheth
headlong in the battle. Yea, the stork in the heaven 7
knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the
swallow and the crane observe the time of their coming;

[a] †Or, *turneth away in his course*

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5. Omit 'of Jerusalem,' with LXX; 'of' is not represented in the Hebrew.

slidden back: the connexion would be clearer if we rendered **turned away**, in harmony with 4.

6. It is not clear whether Yahweh or the prophet is the speaker.

turneth to his course: the margin is better, but perhaps we should follow Duhm and others in reading 'goeth about in his course.' Possibly a form of the same verb should be substituted in the next clause (*shoṭeṭ* for *shoṭeph*); the word translated 'rusheth headlong' means properly 'overfloweth,' and its appropriateness to a single horse is questionable: it would suit the impetuous rush of a troop.

7. This striking verse reminds the reader at once of Isa. i. 3, but it expresses a greater thought. It is no cause for wonder that the ox should know his owner, or the ass his master's crib. The daily familiarity would impress the knowledge on the bluntest perception. But how marvellous is the migration and the return of the birds, their accurate discernment of the season for flight, their unerring sense of direction! That is a divinely implanted instinct, obeyed without hesitation or demur. And if this instinct controls the life of the unreasoning birds, how much more should man guide his life in loyalty to the Divine command. For in him also is the sense of direction, the knowledge of right, the conscience which points him to God's will as the needle to the magnetic pole. 'What instinct is for the beast, that religion is for man' (Cornill). And if this is so with man, how much more with Israel, which has been left to the mercy of no natural instinct, nor yet to man's universal discernment of right and wrong, but has been the object of God's own prolonged training.

the swallow: better 'the swift.' 'The crane' may be the correct translation, but on the whole this is improbable. Perhaps

but my people know not the [a] ordinance of the LORD.
8 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is
with us? But, behold, the false pen of the scribes hath
9 [b] wrought falsely. The wise men are ashamed, they are
dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of

[a] Or, *judgement* [b] †Or, *made* of it *falsehood*

we should render 'the swallow,' though this is not free from objection.

8. This 'ordinance' of Yahweh they do indeed profess to know, not, however, as an inward impulse, but a written code. But this code is not what they take it to be; it has been falsified by the scribes. The opinion has been expressed by Marti and other scholars, including Wellhausen, Duhm, and Cornill, that Jeremiah is here referring to Deuteronomy. In that case his charge would probably not mean that he condemned the book as a forgery, but that he felt that in addition to much of a religious and moral character which received his hearty sympathy, there was much of a ceremonial character, in particular the centralization of the worship, which he regarded as the mischievous work of the scribes, possibly also insertions in Deuteronomy which were subsequently withdrawn. It is in favour of this reference that the possession of a written torah in which they boast as given by God, and ensuring their wisdom, admirably suits the Deuteronomic Code which had been accepted as binding law. But the passage is susceptible of a much less definite application. Jeremiah's attitude to Deuteronomy is very much a matter of speculation. No importance need be attached to Josiah's neglect of him in favour of Huldah at the discovery of the roll; he was still young, and probably not influential. He had a warm respect for Josiah and his administration. His prophecies exhibit much affinity with Deuteronomy; he may even have preached (xi. 1–6) in favour of its reforms in the cities of Judah (see the Introduction, pp. 11–14). It is more probable that he is referring to regulations, now no longer extant, which had been concocted by the scribes as Divine ordinances; possibly falsified copies of the Torah had been put in circulation. Findlay says, 'Israel now possessed a *Scripture*, recognized by all parties; already the heretics had learned to entrench themselves behind corrupted readings or crooked interpretations' (p. 188).

wrought falsely: perhaps the margin would be better, 'made *of it* falsehood;' the lying pen has turned the Torah into a lie.

9. The tenses in 9[a] are 'prophetic;' this is the doom that awaits them; their complacent optimism will be put to confusion.

the LORD; and what manner of wisdom is in them?
[8] Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and 10
their fields to them that shall possess them: for every
one from the least even unto the greatest is given to
covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest
every one dealeth falsely. [a] And they have healed the 11
hurt of the daughter of my people lightly, saying, Peace,
peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed 12
when they had committed abomination? nay, they were
not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore
shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their
visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. [J] I 13
will utterly consume them, saith the LORD: there shall
be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the
leaf shall fade; and [b] *the things that* I have given them
shall pass away from them. Why do we sit still? as- 14

[a] See ch. vi. 14, 15. [b] †Or, *I have appointed them those that shall pass over them*

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10 b-12. Substantially identical with vi. 13-15; 10[a] is parallel to vi. 12. The LXX omits the verses, and has been followed by Hitzig and most recent critics.

13 connects well with 9. The Hebrew of the first clause is uncertain; probably the pointing should be altered, but various alternatives are possible. The meaning is probably either that when Yahweh comes to gather fruit from them, He finds none (cf. Isa. v. 1-7), or that He will depopulate the land of its inhabitants, like a tree which is rifled of its fruit. But the latter does not suit so well the reference to the fading of the leaf, which suggests that the absence of fruit is due to the barrenness of the tree.

and the things . . . them. The three words of which this clause consists in the original are very suspicious; the LXX omits them, perhaps rightly. If they are retained, the text needs emendation, but the suggestions cannot be here discussed.

14. The prophet carries us forward to the time of terror, when the people escape to the fortified cities from the invader. So we have met a similar mutual exhortation in the earlier poems (iv. 5), but we need not on that account regard these verses as belonging

semble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us [a] be silent there: for the LORD our God hath [b] put us to silence, and given us water of [c] gall to
15 drink, because we have sinned against the LORD. We looked for peace, but no good came; *and* for a time of
16 healing, and behold dismay! The snorting of his horses is heard from Dan: at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones the whole land trembleth; for they are come, and have devoured the land and all that is in it;
17 the city and those that dwell therein. For, behold, I will send serpents, [d] basilisks, among you, which will not be charmed; and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.
18 Oh that I could comfort myself against sorrow! my

[a] †Or, *perish* [b] †Or, *caused us to perish* [c] See Deut. xxix. 18.
[d] †Or, *adders*

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to the Scythian period; their tone is more hopeless; escape is but the postponement of inevitable death.

water of gall: cf. Deut. xxix. 18; the Hebrew word for 'gall' is the name of a plant with a very bitter flavour. It cannot be identified with certainty.

15: repeated xiv. 19[b]; perhaps in its original place there.

16. The noise of the enemy's approach is heard from the extreme north of the land; cf. iv. 15.

17. The foe are described as serpents, but no art of the serpent-charmer will avail against them. The basilisk is a fabulous creature; the marg. 'adders' is nearer the mark, but is not strictly accurate. The cat-snake is suggested by Furrer (see Driver's note, pp. 351 f.).

18–ix. 1 is regarded by Schmidt (*Enc. Bib.* 2388) as a later insertion, on the ground that it 'apparently presupposes not only the exile of the people, but also the successive disenchanted hopes for the restoration of the monarchy.' The present writer feels that few passages in the book bear more certain signs of Jeremianic origin.

18. Again we have a moving utterance of the prophet's emotions at the calamity of his people. The beginning is probably corrupt. The literal rendering is 'My brightness in sorrow.' Various suggestions have been made; the best is, perhaps, 'Incurable is my sorrow,' since this has the support of the LXX.

heart is faint within me. Behold, the voice of the cry of 19
the daughter of my people [a] from a land that is very far
off: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her King in her?
Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven
images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, 20
the [b] summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the 21
hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt: I am
[c] black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there 22
no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why

[a] Or, *because of* [b] Or, *ingathering of summer fruits*
[c] †Or, *mourning*

19. The prophet apparently is carried forward in imagination to the time when the people is in exile and hears its bitter lament. Since, however, this seems to be out of harmony with the context, several recent scholars think that the meaning is 'from the wide-stretching land,' so that the exile is not in view, but the cry of the people all over their own land. The phrase is used in the same sense in Isa. xxxiii. 17. Giesebrecht agrees as to the sense required, but thinks it requires the elimination of 'that is very far off,' rendering 'from the land.'

her King: i. e. Yahweh.

20. To understand this famous verse we must remember that 'the harvest' and 'the summer' were quite distinct seasons in Palestine. The harvest lasted from April to June; 'summer' was, as the margin says, the 'ingathering of summer fruits.' If the harvest failed the people might still look forward to the fruit, but if the fruit also failed famine stared them in the face. Possibly the words may be a popular proverb employed by the people in a hopeless situation, possibly it originated with Jeremiah. In any case he puts it into the mouth of the people to express the despair to which they will be driven. 'Saved' gives occasion for the common misuse of the verse with an eschatological application; it would therefore be better to render 'delivered.'

21. More literally, 'for the breach of . . . am I broken,' i. e. broken-hearted.

black: marg. **mourning**; the prophet is clad in mourning attire. We need not interpret this literally.

22. balm. The balsam is not found in Gilead; mastic is probably intended, i. e. the resin of the mastic tree, which was one of the precious articles of commerce exported from Palestine, and was used in medicine. The question means, Is there no sovereign remedy to heal the wounds of Judah?

then is not the [a] health of the daughter of my people
[b] recovered?

9 [c] Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain
of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of
2 the daughter of my people! [d e] Oh that I had in the

[a] Or, *healing* [b] Or, *perfected* Heb. *gone up.* [c] [Ch. viii. 23 in Heb.] [d] [Ch. ix. 1 in Heb.] [e] Or, *Oh that I were in the wilderness, in &c.*

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health: is rather, according to the sense established by Fleischer, the fresh flesh with which the wound is healed over (see Driver's note, p. 352).

recovered. Render with Driver, 'why then is not the fresh flesh of the daughter of my people come up (upon her)?'

ix. 1. The division is here very unfortunate: the Hebrew division, according to which this verse closes the eighth chapter, is correct. With this passionate outburst of sorrow the noble lament of the prophet reaches its worthy climax.

ix. 2-26. THE TREACHERY AND IDOLATRY OF THE PEOPLE LEAD TO A PITIFUL DESTRUCTION.

This section is not a unity, since 23-26 were not originally connected with 2-22. They belonged apparently to another context, and along with the non-Jeremianic section x. 1-16 they interrupt the connexion between ix. 22 and x. 17. There is no evidence enabling us to fix with any certainty the date of ix. 2-22; it seems not to belong to Jeremiah's earliest period, for a good deal of unhappy experience lies behind it. It belongs perhaps, as is suggested by its position, to the reign of Jehoiakim, which it suits very well.

ix. 2-9. Would that I might escape to a desert khan from my people, treacherous and unfaithful all of them! Slander and deceit have poisoned the closest relationships. Therefore Yahweh will try them for their evil doing, their friendly words which mask the evil purpose of their heart.

10-16. All the land is an utter desolation, Jerusalem and the cities of Judah are in ruins. Who is wise enough to read the riddle of its destruction? It has come because of the people's idolatry; bitter is the draught Yahweh will make them drink. They shall be scattered among the nations, and consumed by the sword.

17-22. Call for the mourning women to raise the wail, that we may weep, 'How are we put to shame by spoliation and exile!' Death the Reaper has entered our dwellings; he has cut off the

wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might
leave my people, and go from them! for they be all
adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they 3
bend their tongue *as it were* their bow for falsehood; and
they are grown strong in the land, but not for [a] truth:
for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not
me, saith the LORD. Take ye heed every one of his 4
neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every
brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will
go about with slanders. And they will [b] deceive every 5
one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they
have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary
themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation is in 6

[a] †Or, *faithfulness* [b] †Or, *mock*

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children and the young, and their carcases lie neglected on the field.

23–26. Let none boast in wisdom, might, or wealth, but in the knowledge of Yahweh the kind and righteous ruler. The days are coming when Yahweh will punish the nations uncircumcised in their circumcision.

ix. 2. It is only a bare khan, destitute of all comfort, such as one might tolerate for a night's lodging on a journey, but would reject as a dwelling-place, for which Jeremiah sighs as a home. Better even such a lonely and wretched caravanserai than the city with its treachery, which has so eaten away the foundations of social trust that it is perilous to confide even in a brother.

3. Their tongue is like a bow with which they shoot their slanders at their neighbours. They misuse their power and do not use it for truth, i. e. 'faithfulness' (as marg.).

4. supplant. The Hebrew is identical with the name Jacob; there seems to be a clear reference to Jacob's treacherous treatment of his brother Esau. The descendants are like their ancestor, each 'Jacobs' his brother.

5. taught their tongue: trained it against its true nature and function.

6. The verse is difficult in the Hebrew. The LXX presupposes a different division of the consonants, which is probably to be preferred, and on the basis of it several scholars restore the text from the close of 5, 'they commit iniquity, they weary themselves

the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.

7 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how *else* should I do,
8 because of the daughter of my people? Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in his heart he
9 layeth wait for him. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

10 For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the pastures of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none passeth through; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled, they are gone.

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to return. Oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit; they refuse to know me, saith the Lord.' This is not entirely satisfactory, especially the phrase 'they weary themselves to return' suggests the wrong meaning. But the rest of the emendation is probably correct. Giesebrecht considers this and the following verse a later addition.

7. melt: i. e. smelt with a view to purification.

Usually scholars have rendered as R.V., but '*else*' is perhaps an illegitimate addition, and the meaning may be how severely will I act! Duhm, by simple transposition of two letters, gets the sense 'for how must I look away from my people.' The LXX reads 'the wickedness of my people.'

8. Read, with LXX, 'Their tongue is a deadly arrow; the words of their mouth are deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour, but in his heart,' &c. The parallelism gains greatly by this change.

9. See v. 9, 29.

10. In this verse, with which we should compare iv. 23-26, the first person indicates the prophet, in verse 11 Yahweh. The transition is very abrupt. It is better to read, with the LXX, 'For the mountains take ye up,' unless we unwarrantably deny the next verse to Jeremiah, or at least detach it from 10. In itself the first person is more effective.

burned up: we should probably read 'laid waste.'

And I will make Jerusalem heaps, a dwelling place of 11
jackals; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation,
without inhabitant. [JS] Who is the wise man, that 12
may understand this? and *who is* he to whom the mouth
of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it?
wherefore is the land perished and burned up like a
wilderness, so that none passeth through?

And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my 13
law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my
voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the 14
stubbornness of their own heart, and after the Baalim,
which their fathers taught them: therefore thus saith the 15
LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will feed
them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them
water of [a]gall to drink. I will scatter them also among 16
the nations, whom neither they nor their fathers have
known: and I will send the sword after them, till I have
consumed them.

[J] Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and 17

[a] See ch. viii. 14.

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11. Not the country districts alone but the cities also will be devastated.

12-16. Duhm regards these verses as entirely non-Jeremianic, Giesebrecht agrees with him. Cornill and Rothstein think we have rather to do with an expanded Jeremianic text. Certainly one cannot miss the contrast between the fine poetical passage which precedes and this rather prosaic passage, all the more that with 17 prose gives place to poetry.

12. Cf. Hos. xiv. 9.

15. wormwood and **gall** (viii. 14), metaphors for the bitter troubles in store for them.

17. The mourning women were those who were professionally employed in ancient as in modern times to sing the dirges after a death. They are mentioned as sharing in the lamentations over Josiah (2 Chron. xxxv. 25, cf. Matt. ix. 23). They had the power, as the next verse indicates, to stimulate grief and its expression in those who heard their wailing. They are also called 'wise

call for the mourning women, that they may come; and
18 send for the cunning women, that they may come: and let
them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our
eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out
19 with waters. For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion,
How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because
we have forsaken the land, because [a] they have cast down
20 our dwellings. Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye
women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth,
and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her
21 neighbour lamentation. For death is come up into our
windows, it is entered into our palaces; to cut off the
children from without, *and* the young men from the
22 streets. Speak, Thus saith the LORD, The carcases of

[a] Or, *our dwellings have cast* us *out*

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women,' which suggests that they dabbled in the healing and perhaps also magical and occult arts.

19. This verse creates difficulties. If the speakers have left the land and gone into exile, their lamentation can hardly be uttered out of Zion. We may perhaps translate 'we are forsaking.' The margin follows the rendering of the Jewish exegetes, it is that of the A.V., and among modern scholars is supported by Hitzig. It is usually rejected in favour of the text. Cornill regards the verse as a later addition, on the ground that it ruins the effect of the dirge in **21, 22.** Giesebrecht contents himself with transposing 19 and 20.

20. The dirges were sometimes traditional, sometimes they were improvised for the occasion. For this calamity no conventional elegy will be fitting, nor yet such as may at the moment spring to the lips of the mourners. Yahweh will Himself teach them the lamentation, and these women are to hand it down to their daughters (cf. **2** Sam. i. 18).

21, 22. death is sometimes used in the sense of pestilence, and has been so interpreted here, but probably it bears its usual sense.

Speak, Thus saith the LORD. These words are rightly omitted by the LXX. We should probably omit, with Duhm, the unaesthetic metaphor in the following clause, reading simply 'shall fall upon the open field.' The intrusive words disturb the figure. Budde, it is true, thinks that they add to the effect.

men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather *them*.

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in 23
his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might,
let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that 24
glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth, and know-
eth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkind-
ness, judgement, and righteousness, in the earth: for in
these things I delight, saith the LORD. Behold, the days 25
come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which
are circumcised in *their* uncircumcision; Egypt, and Ju- 26
dah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab,
and all that have the corners *of their hair* polled, that

23, 24. This oracle is out of place in its present context, but there is no reason to deny its Jeremianic authorship, with Duhm and Schmidt. The thought is quite in accord with what Jeremiah says elsewhere, cf. viii. 9, xvii. 5, 6, xxii. 13–16 (Giesebrecht).

25, 26. Another detached oracle. The fact that the Philistines are singled out in the Old Testament as 'uncircumcised,' shows that the other peoples with whom the Israelites were brought in contact practised circumcision. We know this with reference to the Egyptians from Herodotus (II. 104) and from Jos. v. 9, where Joshua, after he had circumcised the Israelites, says 'This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.' By 'the reproach of Egypt' he means their uncircumcised condition, which made them an object of contempt to the Egyptians. Edom, Ammon, and Moab, as tracing a common descent with Israel, might have been presumed to practise it, even if this passage did not give us definite information to that effect. The Arabs traced descent from Ishmael, whose circumcision is recorded (Gen. xvii. 23–26). Josephus attests the practice of it by the Arabians (*Antiq.* I. xii. 2). The phrase 'circumcised in *their* uncircumcision' has been variously explained, but it almost certainly means those who are circumcised in flesh but uncircumcised in heart. Judah cannot rely on a rite which she shares with the heathen, indeed the corresponding inward circumcision is as lacking in her as in them.

the corners of their hair **polled.** Cf. xxv. 23, xlix. 32. We learn from Herodotus (III. 8) that some desert tribes in Arabia shaved the hair off their temples as a religious rite. This explains the prohibition in Lev. xix. 27.

dwell in the wilderness: for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.

10 [1] Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto

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all the nations are uncircumcised. The clause is difficult, since a series of circumcised peoples has just been enumerated. If the text is correct, the phrase must be ethically and not literally interpreted: all the nations, whether they practise circumcision or not, are alike uncircumcised in the spiritual sense. The same is true of Israel, but there is this difference between the cases, circumcision was for Israel a covenant rite which dedicated the individual to Yahweh, hence it profited if it was accompanied by a corresponding spiritual experience. With the heathen it had no such significance, a circumcised heathen was none the less a heathen. But it is questionable if Jeremiah could have meant this.

x. 1–16. The Idols of the Heathen are Harmless Unrealities.

It is on all hands agreed that this passage did not belong originally to this context. It interrupts, like ix. 23–26, the connexion between ix. 1–22 and x. 17–25. Moreover, it presupposes an entirely different situation. In the rest of the section Jeremiah is attacking the fanatical trust of his countrymen in Yahweh's protection, based on the presence of His Temple in their midst. He also denounces their idolatry and predicts its punishment. In x. 1–16 the prophet addresses Jews who are apparently dwelling among the heathen and in danger of yielding to the temptation to accept idolatry. Hence the oracle is not addressed to Jews living in Judah, combining their worship of Yahweh with the cult of the Baalim and of foreign deities like the Queen of Heaven. It is spoken to those who are in exile or in the Dispersion. It is not in its original form. The LXX omits 6–8, and these do break the connexion and are apparently an expansion of the theme handled in 12–16. The LXX also omits 10, and inserts 9 rather earlier. Our judgement on these latter points depends to some extent on our treatment of the passage as a whole, and may be deferred. It has long been recognized by most scholars that the passage cannot come from the hand of Jeremiah. It is conceivable that he addressed the greater part of it to the Jews who had been taken into exile, and that this was expanded by a disciple (so Orelli). But the style speaks very strongly against this, and especially the striking similarity with sections in II Isaiah which deal with the same subject. This is so marked that Movers took the Second Isaiah to be the author, and although this view must be rejected

you, O house of Israel: thus saith the LORD, Learn not 2
the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs
of heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them. For 3
the [a] customs of the peoples are vanity: for [b] one cutteth

[a] Heb. *statutes.* [b] †Or, it is but *a tree which one cutteth*

(see Graf, pp. 171, 172), it is more defensible than the ascription to Jeremiah. Probably it belongs to the same period as the similar sections in II Isaiah.

x. 1–5. Let Israel not learn the ways of the heathen or dread the signs in the heavens. The peoples make idols and adorn them; they fasten them that they may not totter. They are like dumb scarecrows; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk; they should inspire no terror, for they can do neither good nor harm.

6–16. Yahweh is incomparable, the King of the nations, to be feared by all; none can be matched with Him in wisdom. They are all foolish. The idols are plated with silver and gold, clothed in violet and purple. Yahweh is God; the world trembles at His anger. Let the Jews say that the gods who have not made the universe shall perish from it. Yahweh made the universe by His power and wisdom; the elements obey His behest. His storm strikes man senseless, and the idol-maker is disappointed in his image, which is doomed to perish. Not so the God of Jacob, who is the Creator, Yahweh who has chosen Israel for His inheritance.

x. 2. the signs of heaven are apparently unusual phenomena, such as eclipses, and, still more, comets, which till quite recent times have inspired terror among the most advanced peoples, and even now do so in the more ignorant and superstitious strata of the population. Among the Babylonians especially, celestial phenomena were supposed to prefigure mundane events.

3. customs: Heb. **statutes,** is rather surprising in this connexion, and the construction which follows is peculiar. Several suspect the text; Giesebrecht reads 'the dread of the peoples is vanity:' this involves a rather improbable repetition of the root rendered 'dismayed.' Rothstein adopts this in his translation, but suggests 'the hope of the peoples' in his note.

Duhm calls attention to the transition from the heavenly signs to the description of idol manufacture, and infers that 3^b–5^a is an intrusion, the original poem, which he takes to have been 1–3^a, 5^b, 10, 12–16, dealing only with the heavenly bodies and, in contrast to these, the God of Israel. The abruptness is not to be denied, but it is all one great system of idolatry in its varied phases which the writer attacks.

a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the
4 workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with
gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it
5 move not. They are like a [a] palm tree, of turned work,
and speak not: they must needs be borne, because they
cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do
6 evil, neither is it in them to do good. [S] There is none
like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is
7 great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of the
nations? for [b] to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as
among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their
8 royal estate, there is none like unto thee. But they are
[c] together brutish and foolish: [d] the instruction of idols,

[a] †Or, *pillar in a garden of cucumbers* See Baruch vi. 70. [b] †Or, *it beseemeth thee* [c] Or, *through one thing* [d] Or, it is *a doctrine of vanities*

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4. move: better 'totter.' Cf. Isa. xl. 19, 20, xli. 7.

5. a palm tree, of turned work: the margin is much better, i.e., they are like a scarecrow. Cf. Baruch vi. 70, 'For as a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers keepeth nothing: so are their gods of wood, and laid over with silver and gold.' This chapter of Baruch is really distinct from Baruch, and is an Epistle of Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon (of course, not genuine). It is mainly occupied with an attack on idolatry.

be borne: i.e. in the idol-processions; cf. Isa. xlvi. 7.

6-8. On this insertion see the Introduction to the chapter.

There is none like unto thee. The Hebrew here and in 7 is indefensible, but the R.V. rendering may be obtained by the omission of a letter. A slight change of the vowels would give the sense 'Whence is any like unto thee?' which is not so good.

they: i.e. the heathen.

together: render 'one and all' (so Driver).

the instruction of idols, it is but a stock. The strangeness of the expression at once raises doubts as to the text. If it is correct, the meaning is apparently that the moral instruction derived from the idol is as worthless and impotent as the idol itself. Hitzig ingeniously took the verse to mean, Through one thing (see R.V. marg.) they become brutish and foolish, the refutation of the idols is 'It is wood;' i.e. the single phrase 'It is wood' suffices to refute the idolaters, and cover them with confusion

it is but a stock. There is silver beaten into plates 9
which is brought from Tarshish, and gold from [a] Uphaz,
the work of the artificer and of the hands of the gold-
smith; blue and purple for their clothing; they are all
the work of cunning men. [I] But the LORD is [b] the 10
true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting king:
at his wrath the earth trembleth, and the nations are not
able to abide his indignation.

[S] [c] Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have 11
not made the heavens and the earth, [d] these shall perish
from the earth, and from under the heavens.

[I] He hath made the earth by his power, he hath 12

[a] †According to some ancient versions, *Ophir.* [b] †Or, *God in truth* [c] This verse is in Aramaic. [d] Or, *they shall . . . under these heavens*

(similarly Orelli). But this imposes a dubious meaning on the Hebrew. No satisfactory emendation has been proposed.

9. The construction of the verse in the Hebrew favours the view that it is a gloss, and it is inserted in a different position in the LXX. It contains a further description of the manufacture of the idols. The wooden block is overlaid with silver and gold, and then clothed in costly raiment. Tarshish is probably the old Phoenician colony Tartessus in Spain, on the Guadalquivir. Spain was specially rich in silver. For Uphaz, which is mentioned elsewhere only in Dan. x. 5, and was there perhaps borrowed from our passage, we should probably read, with most modern scholars, Ophir, following the Targum and Syriac and some texts of the LXX.

blue: better 'violet.'

10. This verse is omitted in the LXX, but the translator may have felt that it disturbed the context. When 11, however, is eliminated, this verse fits on very well to 12, which cannot, in fact, well dispense with it. While the idols can do neither good nor harm, Yahweh is God in truth, the living God, the Creator.

11. This verse, which is written in Aramaic, is a gloss which is out of place between 10 and 12, and was, as the Targum indicates, designed to furnish the Jews with a reply they might make to those who urged them to participate in idolatry. On the type of Aramaic, see Driver's *Introduction*, 8th ed., p. 255.

12. First the poet asserts Yahweh's power and wisdom, as

established the world by his wisdom, and by his under-
13 standing hath he stretched out the heavens: [a] when he
uttereth his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the
heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the
ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain, and
14 bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries. Every man
[b] is become brutish *and is* without knowledge; every
goldsmith is put to shame by his graven image: for his
molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in
15 them. They are vanity, a work of [c] delusion: in the time
16 of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob

[a] Or, *at the sound of his giving an abundance of waters . . . when he causeth &c.* or, *he causeth &c.* [b] Or *is too brutish to know* [c] †Or, *mockery*

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manifested in the work of creation, and then as displayed in the storm.

13. The Hebrew is literally 'at the sound of his uttering,' but the unusual Hebrew should be corrected, to give the same sense as the R.V. Giesebrecht makes a further improvement by reading, instead of the next clause, 'the heavens are in tumult.' The voice of God is the thunder.

he maketh lightnings for the rain: the expression is rather curious, and the precise sense uncertain. The most obvious interpretation is that God makes the lightning to accompany the rain. But this is rather flat, and the meaning may be to produce the rain, the lightning like a flashing spear piercing the clouds, the bottles of heaven, and discharging their waters on the earth.

the wind: Duhm prefers to read, with the LXX, 'the light,' i.e. the lightning, but the Hebrew seems finer. For the 'treasuries' cf. Job xxxviii. 22.

14. Then when Yahweh displays His might in the storm, man is speechless in the presence of forces so vast. The idol-manufacturer is overwhelmed with confusion, for his image is but a lifeless thing, convicted of false pretence by its utter helplessness.

15. vanity: i.e. sheer unreality. They are 'a work of mockery,' befooling those who are simple enough to trust in them. The author looks forward to 'a visitation,' i.e. a judgement on the images, presumably when the Day of Yahweh breaks upon the world: cf. Isa. ii. 12–21 (especially 18, 20), xix. 1, xxiv. 21, 22.

16. We should probably read, with the LXX, 'For the former

is not like these; for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name.

[JS] Gather up [a] thy wares out of the land, [b] O thou 17
that abidest in the siege. For thus saith the LORD, Be- 18

[a] † Or, *thy bundle from the ground*
[b] Or, *O inhabitant* (Heb. *inhabitress*) *of the fortress*

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of all things is his inheritance;' in that way we get a parallel to the description of Yahweh as 'the portion of Jacob.'

x. 17-25. EXILE IS AT HAND: O YAHWEH, BLEND MERCY WITH JUDGEMENT!

Here the prophecy is continued which was interrupted at ix. 22. It is corrupt in text, and has suffered expansion at various points.

x. 17-22. Let the besieged prepare to depart, for Yahweh is hurling them out of the land. Woe is me for my pain, my tent is ruined, there is none to repair it. The rulers have neglected God, hence their flock is scattered. Hark! there is a rumour of the foe advancing from the North to devastate Judah.

23-25. It is not in man to order his way aright, yet let Yahweh correct the people only with measured chastisement, and pour out His fury on the nations for the havoc they have wrought on Jacob.

x. 17. The community is bidden take up her bundle from the ground, i.e. prepare to leave Jerusalem and go into captivity. The word rendered 'thy wares' (see on this Driver, pp. 354 f.) occurs here only, and is of uncertain meaning. Usually it is translated as in the margin, 'thy bundle,' and though this rendering is dubious it is better to abide by it than to take refuge in still more dubious emendation. This verse with 18 is regarded as a later insertion by Duhm, Cornill, and Rothstein, though Schmidt says they may be reminiscences from Jeremianic oracles introduced by an editor. He passes the same judgement on 22.

the siege: i.e. of Jerusalem.

18. Giesebrecht agrees that this verse is not original. It is certainly difficult to believe that Jeremiah wrote it in its present form. The former part is not so questionable, but the text of the latter can hardly be correct; 'that they may feel *it*' is literally 'that they may find,' but no object is expressed. The meaning may be, Yahweh distresses them that they may seek and find Him. It would be better, however, to alter the pointing and read

hold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this time, and will distress them, that they may [a] feel *it*.
19 [J] Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but
20 I said, Truly this is *my* [b] grief, and I must bear it. My tent is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.
21 For the shepherds are become brutish, and have not inquired of the LORD: therefore they have not [c] prospered,
22 and all their flocks are scattered. The voice of a rumour, behold it cometh, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah a desolation,
23 a dwelling place of jackals. O LORD, I know that the

[a] Heb. *find.* [b] †Or, *sickness* [c] Or, *dealt wisely*

'that they may be found,' i.e. overtaken by calamity, but the thought would be very unnaturally expressed. No satisfactory emendation has been proposed.

19-21. Schmidt regards these verses as 'the work of a poet who looks back upon the exile of the people, the cessation of the monarchy, and the partial occupation of the land by neighbouring nations as past facts, and desires the utter annihilation of the heathen, while pleading for gentler treatment for Judah. He speaks in the name of the community' (*Enc. Bib.* 2388). He takes the same view of 23-25.

19. The question is raised here, as in the similar passage iv. 19-21, whether Jeremiah himself or the people is the speaker. Here the following verse appears to be decisive in favour of the latter view.

20. The **tent** is the land in which the community lives; now it lies in ruins, the children have gone into exile, there is none to repair the disaster. Jeremiah speaks from the standpoint of the future. Possibly we should, with several scholars, insert 'my sheep,' with the LXX, and then strike out 'my children' as an explanatory gloss. This metaphor suits the next verse.

21. shepherds. See on ii. 8. There is no need to regard the verse (with Duhm) as an insertion.

23-25. Stade, followed by Duhm, Erbt, Schmidt, and Giesebrecht, regarded this as a later insertion. This must be granted without hesitation or regret so far as 25 is concerned. Jeremiah himself could not have uttered this prayer for Yahweh to pour out

way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh
to direct his steps. O LORD, correct me, but with judge- 24
ment; not in thine anger, lest thou [a] bring me to nothing.
[8] [b] Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know 25
thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy
name: for they have devoured Jacob, yea, they have de-
voured him and consumed him, and have laid waste his
[c] habitation.

[J] The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, 11

[a] Heb. *diminish me.* [b] See Ps. lxxix. 6, 7. [c] Or, *pasture*

His fury on the heathen, especially for their conduct towards Israel, since in this they acted as God's instruments. If it be urged that they exceeded their commission, this would not be Jeremiah's view, and it would imply that the exilic or post-exilic standpoint was not assumed but real. Even in the lips of the people he would not have placed a prayer which would have seemed to him so unwarranted. But there is no valid reason for striking out 23, 24, which Duhm admits might be authentic.

23. It is not clear whether the cause of man's inability is to be sought in the determination of his way by God or in his own moral weakness. In the former case he might plead not for mitigation of punishment for what he could not help, but for exemption, and would Jeremiah have attributed Israel's sin to the decree of God, who yet had been unwearied in sending His prophets to warn her that she should turn from her evil way? Rather it is the weakness of man which makes him a fit object for chastisement in compassion rather than in fury; cf. Ps. lxxviii. 38, 39.

The latter half of the verse should be slightly corrected, for the E.V. gives an illegitimate rendering. We should read 'it is not for man to walk and direct his steps.'

24. judgement here means 'in just measure;' the plea is against excessive, unmeasured punishment.

25. Repeated in Ps. lxxix. 6, 7; the words 'yea, they have devoured him,' which are omitted there, should be struck out here as due to incorrect repetition.

xi. 1—xii. 6. JEREMIAH'S ADVOCACY OF THE COVENANT: THE PEOPLE'S RELAPSE, AND PLOTS AGAINST THE PROPHET.

On the question of Jeremiah's relation to the Deuteronomic Reformation raised by this section see the Introduction, pp. 11-14.

2 saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak
unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jeru-
3 salem; and say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD,
the God of Israel: Cursed be the man that heareth not
4 the words of this covenant, which I commanded your
fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the
land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace, saying, Obey my

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xi. 1-5. Yahweh bade me speak to Judah and Jerusalem, and pronounce His curse on those who disobeyed the covenant He made with them at the Exodus, claiming obedience on their part and promising blessing on His own. I answered 'Amen, Yahweh.'

6-9. He bade me speak in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, exhorting the people to obey the covenant, taking warning by the penalty which followed the stubborn disobedience of their fathers.

10-14. Judah and Jerusalem have imitated the evil example of the fathers, so disaster will come upon them from which their gods cannot save them. For Judah has a god for every city, and Jerusalem an altar to the Baal in every street. Offer no intercession, for I will not hear their cry in distress.

15-17. Why does Yahweh's beloved visit the temple, wicked as she is? Will vows and sacrifices deliver her? Yahweh had called her a fair olive tree, but His lightning has blasted it, on account of idolatry.

18-23. Yahweh revealed to me their plots, of which I was as ignorant as the lamb led to the slaughter, not knowing that they plotted to destroy my life. O Yahweh, who searchest men's secret thoughts, do thou avenge me. Yahweh replies, The men of Anathoth who forbid thee to prophesy on pain of death, shall die without remnant.

xii. 1-6. Thou art righteous, Yahweh, yet why do the wicked prosper? Thou knowest my heart towards thee; doom them to the slaughter. How long is the land to suffer for the people's wickedness? Yahweh replies that the prophet must gird himself for a severer conflict; his own kinsfolk have been treacherous, let him not trust their fair speeches.

xi. 2. Hear ye. The plural is strange: we should probably read the singular, unless we invert the order of clauses and read 'Speak to the men of Judah . . . Hear ye,' &c. (Giesebrecht).

4. the day that I brought them forth: i.e. the Exodus period; cf. vii. 22.

the iron furnace: not a furnace made of iron, but one in

voice, and do them, according to all which I command
you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:
that I may establish the oath which I sware unto your 5
fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey,
as at this day. Then answered I, and said, Amen, O
LORD.

And the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words 6
in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem,
saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.
For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day 7
that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even
unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey
my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, 8
but walked every one in the stubbornness of their evil
heart: therefore I brought upon them all the words of
this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they
did them not.

And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found 9

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which iron is smelted. It is a metaphor for bitter affliction; cf. Deut. iv. 20, 1 Kings viii. 51, Isa. xlviii. 10.

do them: the pronoun has no antecedent; we should omit it as a mistaken insertion from 6 and read 'do according,' &c. (so LXX).

6. Largely a repetition of 2, but it definitely indicates that Jeremiah's mission was to be of a peripatetic character. He, like Isaiah (cf. Isa. v. 1–7), could address the men of Judah as well as the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the capital itself, when they came to it from the country districts. But this verse makes it clear that he was to visit the cities of Judah. Giesebrecht omits it along with 7, 8. The latter, with the exception of the final clause of 8, are omitted in the LXX, and so far Giesebrecht is supported by its evidence, and the verses are written in a very conventional style. But 6 is probably authentic, since it alone gives us the clue to the hostility he provoked at Anathoth. Schmidt omits 7, 8.

9. With this verse we seem to be transported to another situation. We hear nothing in detail of the mission on which the prophet is dispatched, but Yahweh's complaint of Judah's relapse into apostasy. Accordingly we have to do in this section with

among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of
10 Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of
their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and
they are gone after other gods to serve them: the house
of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my cove-
11 nant which I made with their fathers. [S] Therefore thus
saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which
they shall not be able to escape; and they shall cry unto
12 me, but I will not hearken unto them. Then shall the
cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and
cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they
shall not save them at all in the time of their [a] trouble.
13 For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods,
O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of
Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the [b] shameful thing,
14 even altars to burn incense unto Baal. [J] Therefore
pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer
for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they
cry unto me [c] for their [a] trouble.
15 [d] What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing

[a] Heb. *evil.* [b] Heb. *shame.* See ch. iii. 24. [c] Many ancient authorities have, *in the time of.* [d] The text is obscure.

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a state of things which apparently emerged after the death of Josiah, when the work of the Reformation was partially, at any rate, undone.

conspiracy: as if they were leagued in treacherous alliance against the Divine King whom they had sworn to obey. They had been faithless to the covenant which they had solemnly pledged themselves to observe.

10. turned: implies that for a time they had abandoned the evil practices of their fathers, presumably after the Reformation. But the reference to Israel is to the Northern Kingdom, and of course to a much earlier period.

11–13. Regarded as a later addition by Giesebrecht. 13[a] is repeated from ii. 28[b], and 11, 12 are very generalizing in tone.

14. The first part repeated from vii. 16.

15–17. Taken by Schmidt to be a later insertion, exhorting

she hath wrought lewdness *with* many, and the holy flesh
is passed from thee? [a] when thou doest evil, then thou
rejoicest. The LORD called thy name, A green olive 16
tree, fair with goodly fruit: with the noise of a great
tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of

The Sept. renders thus: *Why hath the beloved wrought abomination in my house? Shall vows and holy flesh take away from thee thy wickednesses, or shalt thou escape by these?* [a] Or, *when thine evil* cometh

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Zion to remove by prayers and sacrifices the long-continued adversity after the fall of the kingdom.

15. As Driver says, 'The Hebrew text cannot be intelligibly translated,' and 'R.V. (=A.V.) is no real translation of the existing text.' The LXX (see R.V. marg.) enables us, as recent scholars recognize, to restore the text, though there is some uncertainty as to details. We may render the emended text, 'What hath my beloved to do in my house? She hath practised evil devices. Shall vows and holy flesh cause thine evil to pass from thee? Then mightest thou rejoice.' Giesebrecht, followed by Duhm and Erbt, instead of 'vows' reads 'fat pieces,' which is closer to the Hebrew, and corresponds to 'holy flesh.' The fat pieces were given to God on the altar, the flesh in the most common type of sacrifice was eaten by the worshippers. The general sense is clear. God asks why His people ('my beloved') come to His house, seeing their conduct is so wicked. Do they think that material offering will avert their doom (or take away their wickedness)? If it could, they might well, in view of their costly sacrifices, congratulate themselves on their immunity from disaster. It is a constant warning addressed to the people by the prophets from Amos onwards. See further on xii. 7.

16. The text of this verse also is commonly regarded as corrupt, especially in its latter half. The general sense of the Hebrew seems to be that Yahweh had called Judah a flourishing olive tree, but He has sent a thunder-storm and blasted its beauty with lightning. But the Hebrew is very suspicious. The text cannot be discussed here, and this is the less regrettable that while the details of the metaphor are probably blurred in the Hebrew, it represents the general thought of the prophet.

green: better **luxuriant** or **spreading.** The word 'gives a picture in itself. We seem to see a flourishing, sappy tree, with abundance of pliant, gracefully moving, perennially green branches.' (Cheyne, *Pulpit Commentary*, ad loc.)

17 it are broken. [S] For the LORD of hosts, that planted
thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, because of the
evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah,
which they have wrought for themselves in provoking me
to anger by offering incense unto Baal.
18 [J] And the LORD gave me knowledge of it, and I knew
19 it: then thou shewedst me their doings. But I was like
a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter; and I knew
not that they had devised devices against me, *saying*,
Let us destroy the tree with the [a] fruit thereof, and let us

[a] Heb. *bread.*

17. Regarded as an addition by most recent commentators, on account of its prosaic and conventional style.

18. The mention of the plots against the prophet formed by the men of Anathoth is introduced with surprising abruptness. Nor are we informed of the reasons which inspired their hostility. Nevertheless it probably stands in immediate connexion with the story of Jeremiah's advocacy of the Reformation in the cities of Judah. It was precisely in Anathoth, where the priesthood of Abiathar resided, that the monopoly of the Zadokite priesthood would be most bitterly resented. That the Reformation which gave such a monopoly to the family that had supplanted the house of Abiathar should be championed by a priest of Anathoth would naturally arouse the fiercest resentment. The story bears its own evidence on the face of it, though Stade and Schmidt reject it, the latter admitting that 21–23 may have been taken from the biography.

19. The prophet had often, no doubt, watched the lamb led to the slaughter, and been touched by the pathos of its fate. For its pathos consists just in this, that its trust betrays it to its ruin. It follows its owner, all unsuspicious of harm, 'and licks the hand just raised to shed its blood.' And all the more pathetic that the lamb might be the pet of the family. Cornill points out that the word is almost always used in the O.T. of the sacrificial lamb, and this may well have been in the prophet's mind as he compared himself to the lamb dedicated to be an offering to God. In the fourth Servant of Yahweh poem (Isa. lii. 13—liii. 12) the figure is imitated, but with a different emphasis and application (Isa. liii. 7). Jeremiah's unconsciousness of evil, and the secrecy of the plots against him, suggest that this incident belongs to the reign of Josiah, when it would not have been safe to attack openly an advocate of the king's Reformation.

the tree with the fruit thereof. The word rendered 'fruit'

cut him off from the land of the living, that his name
may be no more remembered. But, O LORD of hosts, 20
that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart,
let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I
revealed my cause. Therefore thus saith the LORD con- 21
cerning the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying,
Thou shalt not prophesy in the name of the LORD, that
thou die not by our hand: therefore thus saith the LORD 22
of hosts, Behold, I will [a] punish them: the young men

[a] Heb. *visit upon.*

is the common Hebrew word for 'bread,' and the rendering 'fruit' is hardly permissible. Hitzig's brilliant emendation 'the tree with its sap' (*leḥo* for *laḥmo*) is generally accepted. The meaning is the tree in its full, fresh vigour. They plot to cut off Jeremiah in the full strength of his manhood.

20. Conscious of his own integrity, he refers his case to Yahweh, who is a righteous Judge and may be trusted to give a true verdict. For He has not only the will but also the power to pronounce a judgement in accordance with the merits of the case. The human judge can base his decisions only on the outward facts. God, who tries the reins, can read the inmost motive and search out the most secret thought. He knows the singleness of aim which animates His servant, He knows also the hidden malice of his foes. It is characteristic of Jeremiah, who, as none before him, lays bare the inner life of men, that he should be the first, so far as we know, to formulate this description of Yahweh as Him that tries the reins and the heart.

the reins: i. e. the kidneys, regarded by the Hebrews as, like the heart, a seat of man's inward life. The kidneys were the organ of feeling, the heart the organ of intellect.

The prayer for vengeance makes a somewhat painful impression on the lips of Jeremiah, who approaches so near to the Christian standpoint. It is not necessary to translate as a wish; most recent scholars render 'I shall see,' &c. The prophet feels that his cause is that of God, it is not a personal vengeance that he desires.

21. Duhm regards 21–23 as a later addition, but the preceding verses, which are introduced very abruptly, would become doubly abrupt by the omission. We need the verses to make clear to us the circumstances to which 18–20 refer. It is true that a somewhat different situation seems to be presupposed. But we may believe that when Jeremiah escaped the secret snares laid for him, his fellow-townsmen proceeded to threats.

shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters
23 shall die by famine; and there shall be no remnant unto
them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth,
[n] even the year of their visitation.
12 Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee:

[n] Or, *in the year*

22. die by famine. The repetition of the verb is avoided if, with the LXX, we transpose two letters and read 'be consumed.'

xii. 1-6. This passage is very important in religious history, since it is probably the first expression we have in Hebrew literature of the problem, Why do the wicked prosper? It is often thought that Habakkuk was the first to propound it, but it is more probable that he prophesied in the Exile, later than Ezekiel (see the writer's *Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*); and even if we place his date before the exile, this utterance of Jeremiah's seems to be earlier. The problem was forced upon Jeremiah by his own experience. His oppressors were opponents of God's cause, and they were in power; he, God's spokesman, was the victim of their malice.

Duhm regards xii. 1-6 as late, since it contradicts Jeremiah's expectation of the future, and since the godless were no better off in his day than the adherents of the Law. The problem which it states is that which was the main problem of the post-exilic period. Schmidt also finds nothing in it suggestive of Jeremiah, and takes the speaker to be the nation (*Enc. Bib.* 2388). But these reasons are quite inadequate to justify the conclusion drawn from them. The problem is here stated in a very rudimentary form, and, as we may infer from 5, 6, it was directly suggested by the prophet's individual experience. That his persecutors were more prosperous than himself is more than probable, and this would sufficiently explain the formulation of his question. The first objection is urged on the ground that Jeremiah naturally expected the ruin of the godless when in the near future the land was laid waste, hence he could hardly discuss a problem which had no real existence for him. But it would have been a marvel if, in the tragic experiences through which the prophet passed, the question had not perplexed him, and it was his wont, as many of his utterances show, to place before God the difficulties which vexed his soul. And the whole stamp of the passage speaks loudly for the genuineness at least of 1, 2, 5, 6. On 3, 4 see the notes.

Cornill has put forward the attractive view that this passage should be placed before xi. 18-23 (22^a). If this is accepted the abruptness with which xi. 18 is introduced disappears, and the

yet would I [a] reason the cause with thee: wherefore doth

[a] Heb. *speak judgements.*

pronouns which have now no antecedent, are seen to refer to the prophet's brethren and the house of his father. In that case Jeremiah complains to Yahweh of the prosperity of the wicked, and Yahweh warns him to expect a still bitterer conflict than any in which he had yet been engaged. For his foes are they of his own household, treachery lurks behind their fair speeches (xii. 1–6). The prophet now continues (xi. 18) to say that thus Yahweh had put him on his guard against them. Hitherto he had been unaware of their plots to kill him (xi. 19). This inversion of the original order Cornill supposes to have been occasioned by the thought that xii. 6 referred to a trial similar to but less severe than that promised him in xii. 5. Cornill's view may very well be correct, especially if xii. 3 is really an insertion. But it is also possible, though perhaps less probable, that something originally stood before xi. 18, containing the antecedent to the pronouns which is now so sensibly missing. In that case xii. 6 is not a new revelation, but a reference to what Jeremiah has already experienced, designed to prepare him for hostility and rejection on a still wider scale.

The question remains, To what date is this to be assigned? Cornill argues that the plot to kill him shows that he was no longer a young man taking his first timid steps in public, but an authoritative personality on whom men's eyes rest; moreover he must have made himself objectionable to those in high places, since his enemies thought they could kill him with impunity. Accordingly he places the date between the great temple speech early in the reign of Jehoiakim and the catastrophe of Carchemish. In favour of this date it may also be urged that the death of Josiah and the elevation of the worthless Jehoiakim to the throne raised the problem of xii. 1, 2 in an acute form, and that the connexion with vii–x may be due to chronological considerations. On the other hand it must be said that secret plots masked by fair speeches suggest rather a date when his enemies could not count on Jeremiah's unpopularity with the authorities: they wish to kill him, but to escape detection. This suits better the reign of Josiah. And no occasion is so likely to have roused his fellow-citizens to fury as when he defended the monopoly of the sanctuary in which the upstart house of Zadok held the priesthood. We should accordingly place this section shortly after the discovery of the Law in 621 B. C.

xii. 1. If the prophet contends with Yahweh, his Divine antagonist will establish His righteousness, yet he may be permitted humbly to lay his perplexity before Him.

plead; rather **expostulate** or **complain unto.** (Driver.)

the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at
2 ease that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted
them, yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they
bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far
3 from their reins. But thou, O LORD, knowest me; thou
seest me, and triest mine heart toward thee: pull them
out like sheep for the slaughter, and [a] prepare them for
4 the day of slaughter. How long shall the land mourn,
and the herbs of the whole country wither? for the
wickedness of them that dwell therein, the beasts are
consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall
5 not see our latter end. If thou hast run with the footmen,
and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend

[a] Heb. *sanctify.*

2. The wicked of whom he complains are outwardly religious people, but though Yahweh's name is on their lips, they are inwardly estranged from Him; cf. Isa. xxix. 13.

3. Cornill strikes out this verse. The latter part, he agrees with Duhm, is out of harmony with Jeremiah's doctrine of the future; the former part is in itself unobjectionable, but out of connexion with the context. This rests on the assumption that 'the wicked' (1) are not Jeremiah's personal antagonists, for, if they were, a reference to God's knowledge of his heart would be quite in place. The thought of 3[a] is thoroughly Jeremianic, and there is no conclusive reason for deleting it.

4. Hitzig pointed out that this verse is in no connexion with the passage, and this view has been accepted by several recent scholars. The theme is the prosperity of the wicked; this verse speaks of the calamity of the land on account of the drought, but such a calamity affects the wicked as well as the righteous. The verse might quite well be Jeremiah's, though we do not know anything of its original connexion, but see further on 13.

He shall not see our latter end. If the text is correct, the meaning is apparently that Jeremiah will not survive to see their end which he has prophesied. The LXX, however, renders 'God will not see our ways,' which is probably correct. Cornill omits the whole clause on metrical grounds.

5. Now comes the Divine answer to the prophet's question. As happens in other instances, especially Job, there is no solution of the speculative problem.

with horses? and though in a land of peace thou art
secure, yet how wilt thou do in the [a] pride of Jordan?
For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even 6
they have dealt treacherously with thee; even they have
cried aloud after thee: believe them not, though they
speak [b] fair words unto thee.

I have forsaken mine house, I have cast off mine her- 7

[a] Or, *swelling* [b] Heb. *good things.*

thou art secure. We should almost certainly accept Hitzig's emendation (*boreah* for *boteah*), 'and if in a land of peace thou fleest, then how,' &c.

the pride of Jordan: this is the name given to the jungle on the bank of the Jordan, cf. xlix. 19, l. 44, Zech. xi. 3: it was a haunt of lions, as these passages show. The A.V. (R.V. marg.) rendering, 'the swelling of Jordan,' is a possible translation, but Zech. xi. 3, 'the pride of Jordan is spoiled,' does not favour this interpretation, for while the overflow of Jordan might force the lions from the banks into the open country, it could hardly be said to be spoiled.

6. This hostility on the part of his family may be the more dangerous situation he has still to face, or it may be the danger he already knows and before which he falters, but which is to be followed by a peril still more severe. Our decision depends on our general view of the passage, see the note on xii. 1–6. Cornill omits the clause 'even they have cried aloud after thee,' and this is not in harmony with the rest of the verse, which indicates that his kinsfolk concealed their hostility under a treacherous show of friendliness. Giesebrecht and Rothstein suppose that the verse is an addition, but is historical in character.

xii. 7–17. RAIDS ON JUDAH BY ITS NEIGHBOURS PUNISHED BY EXILE, BUT RESTORATION WILL FOLLOW ON ALLEGIANCE TO YAHWEH.

This prophecy stands in no connexion with its context. It describes the ravaging of Judah by its neighbours (7–13), and predicts their exile and restoration, and that Yahweh will build them up among His people if they accept its religion, but otherwise He will root them out (14–17). The Jeremianic origin of 7–13 is generally recognized (it is rejected by Schmidt as 'clearly non-Jeremianic'); the only questions are whether we have here a description of what has actually happened, or an anticipation, and to what date it ought to be assigned. The view of Hitzig

itage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into

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that we must explain the passage by 2 Kings xxiv. 1, 2 has been accepted by several scholars. From this we learn that after Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon, his territory was attacked by Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites. This corresponds to the reference to the 'birds of prey' and the 'many shepherds.' For this implies a combined attack by several peoples, rather than by one people, such as the Scythians (so Duhm), the Egyptians, or the Babylonians; moreover, the former does not suit a world-power, but petty kingdoms on a level with Judah, which is also compared to a bird of prey. If 14–17 is to be attributed to Jeremiah, the phrase, 'mine evil neighbours,' strongly corroborates Hitzig's view, and the opening words (7) cannot be urged in proof that the reference is to the exile, whether as anticipated or experienced. We should accordingly date 7–13 in the fourth year of his servitude to Babylon, though we cannot be sure what year this was.

Stade, Schmidt, and Duhm have rejected the Jeremianic origin of 14–17, the latter in fact places it in the second century B.C., as Zech. xiv, Isa. xix. 16ff., Ps. lxxxiii. But, as Cornill says, we have no parallel for the anticipations here recorded. We read of the destruction of these peoples, or of their conversion, but not of their exile followed by their restoration. Moreover, the anticipation of exile for these people was very natural for Jeremiah, who expected the foe out of the North to attack the 'nations round about' (xxv). Giesebrecht urges, further, that a later writer would not have put so strong an anthropomorphism as 'my neighbours' into Yahweh's mouth, or have represented these peoples as taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, since this did not really happen. He also points to the sympathetic tone and promise of mercy which is combined with the expression of wrath. It is, of course, not unlikely that it was added to 7–13 somewhat later by Jeremiah himself.

xii. 7–13. I have forsaken my house, abandoned my beloved to the foe, for her enmity has provoked my hate. She is like a speckled bird, attacked by her fellows. The land is a desolation from end to end. Their labours will be frustrated by Yahweh's anger.

14–17. My evil neighbours who touch my inheritance shall be rooted out along with Judah. Then I will pity and restore them, and if they learn my people's ways, they shall be built up; if not, I will utterly destroy them.

xii. 7. mine house: may be either the Temple or the land (Hos. viii. 1, ix. 15). The latter is the more probable in view of

the hand of her enemies. Mine heritage is become unto 8
me as a lion in the forest: she hath uttered her voice
against me; therefore I have hated her. Is mine heri- 9
tage unto me as a speckled bird of prey? are the birds
of prey against her round about? go ye, assemble all the
beasts of the field, bring them to devour. Many shepherds 10
have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion
under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a deso-
late wilderness. They have made it a desolation; it 11
mourneth unto me, being desolate; the whole land is
made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart. Spoilers 12

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the context. Cornill thinks that our passage stood originally in connexion with xi. 15, 16; in that case Yahweh's house is probably the Temple.

8. Israel has turned upon Yahweh like a savage lion in the jungle. The metaphor, as Duhm points out, does not suit Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem, nor even after its strength had been broken by the deportation of Jehoiachin and the best of the people.

9. Graf, by a slight correction (*ki* for *li*), greatly improves the sentence: 'Is mine heritage a speckled bird of prey, that the birds of prey are against her round about?' Just as other birds set upon a bird of unusually coloured plumage, so Judah is attacked by the surrounding nations. It is Yahweh who has incited them, but He asks the question, rather than makes the statement, that He may make clear the pained astonishment which such a necessity inspires within Him; cf. ii. 14.

The last part of the verse occurs also in Isa. lvi. 9, and is regarded by Giesebrecht as a marginal note borrowed from that passage.

10. shepherds. Cf. vi. 3. The metaphor is suggested by the way in which pastoral nomads destroy the labour of the agriculturist. The destruction of vineyards and olive-yards was a much more serious blow to agriculture than the destruction of cornfields, since it takes several years of assiduous cultivation before the former make any return. Here the vineyard is the land of Judah.

desolate: observe how he rings the changes on this and the cognate noun.

11. unto me: literally **upon me**: i.e. to my sorrow (Driver, who compares Gen. xlviii. 7).

because . . . heart. The meaning seems to be that Judah's

are come upon all the bare heights in the wilderness: for
the sword of the LORD devoureth from the one end of
the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh hath
13 peace. They have sown wheat, and have reaped thorns;
they have put themselves to pain, and profit nothing:
and [a] ye shall be ashamed of your fruits, because of the
fierce anger of the LORD.
14 Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours,
that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people
Israel to inherit: Behold, I will pluck them up from off

[a] Or, *be ye ashamed* Or, *they shall be ashamed*

---

ruin was due to the careless indifference of the people to the results of their reckless conduct. But Duhm's emendation 'and' for 'because' should perhaps be accepted; the land is made desolate, no one is troubled by its fate.

13. If the subject of the verb is the 'spoilers,' the meaning is that the enemy reap no permanent advantage from their devastation of Judah, and this verse would thus prepare for 14. But as the conclusion of 7–13 this is an unnatural interpretation, and we should more probably suppose the meaning to be that the Jews' labour has profited them nothing. And just as the reference to the sowers does not suit the spoilers, so the reference to the devastation of Judah does not suit the expressions employed. That Yahweh is spoken of in the third person is also strange. Duhm's view that it is the reflection of a reader or a marginal note on 14 is not probable; it is too good for that, and may well be the work of Jeremiah, though hardly designed for its present position. Cornill has made the very tempting suggestion that it originally formed the sequel to xii. 4, which is also in no connexion with its present context.

and ye . . . your fruits: read **and they . . . their fruits.** They anticipate abundance of fruit, but Yahweh will disappoint (cf. ii. 6) their expectations.

14. Giesebrecht regards the last clause with its reference to Judah as a thoughtless gloss, which interrupts the connexion, inserted by a reader who was surprised that the prophet omitted what he elsewhere so often predicted. Cornill agrees, partly on formal, partly on material grounds. He thinks that Jeremiah could have so expressed himself in 597, but it is not necessary to suppose that 14–17 belongs to the same date as 7–12. The reasons for the deletion are not convincing.

their land, and will pluck up the house of Judah from among them. And it shall come to pass, after that I 15
have plucked them up, I will return and have compassion on them; and I will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. And it shall come to 16
pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, As the LORD liveth; even as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built up in the midst of my people. But if they will not 17
hear, then will I pluck up that nation, plucking up and destroying it, saith the LORD.

Thus said the LORD unto me, Go, and buy thee a linen 13

16. swear: cf. v. 6.

17. Regarded by Cornill as a later addition, on the ground that we do not expect such a threat after 15. But that verse promises simply restoration to their own land, and therewith an opportunity to learn the true religion. They may or they may not avail themselves of this opportunity.

xiii. 1–11. THE PARABLE OF THE LOIN-CLOTH.

The thirteenth chapter contains five independent sections. The first is the very perplexing story of the loin-cloth. Duhm regards it as an indignity to the prophet even to raise the question whether so ridiculous a story can be true; it is the invention of some later unimaginative scribe. Jeremiah cannot have been so childish as to take a double journey to the Euphrates to demonstrate that linen was spoiled by damp, and to draw from the incident the trivial moral. This emphatic and sweeping verdict has, however, been rejected by all subsequent writers, though they still dispute whether it is a real incident, and, if so, when it was enacted, and what interpretation should be placed upon it. Erbt believes that Jeremiah actually made the double journey to the Euphrates, and ingeniously reconstructs the situation. His preaching tour after the publication of the Law-book had proved a failure, so he adopted this extraordinary expedient to drive his lesson home. This view is quite speculative, and the double journey to the Euphrates is quite improbable. It would be preferable to accept Schick's suggestion that Parah, the modern Wady Fara (Joshua xviii. 23), three miles north-east of Anathoth, is intended. But, if so, we must believe that this place was

girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

chosen rather than another on account of the similarity of its name to the Euphrates. If, however, we suppose that the Euphrates is intended, we must regard the double journey as—like several of the symbolic acts attributed to Ezekiel—a transaction in the mind of the prophet rather than as literally taken.

The text explains that as the loin-cloth was marred, so God would mar the pride of Judah and Jerusalem. As it was unprofitable, so let the people be. Yahweh had caused them to cleave close to Him, but they had not hearkened. It is often supposed that the point of the metaphor is that just as the loin-cloth was spoiled by Euphrates water, so Judah would be destroyed by the exile. Graf pointed out that the corruption of the people was not a consequence but a cause of the exile. Accordingly he took the girdle to represent the people corrupted by Babylonian influence (cf. ii. 18), and therefore cast away by God. Cornill has elaborately developed and defended this view. He places the passage in the earliest period of Jeremiah's work, when the Babylonian influence was dominant, corrupting the religious and moral life of Judah. He, however, draws the inference that the explanation in 9ff. must be later, since it does not agree with the natural sense of the incident. He leaves simply 'as the girdle . . . house of Israel' in 11. In spite of Giesebrecht's denial, it is probable that moral and religious corruption is intended by the spoiling of the girdle. The house of Israel in its early purity enjoyed the closest and most intimate relations with its God, but it became unfit for this when it deteriorated under the influence of heathenism. Hence God would cast it off.

xiii. 1–7. In obedience to Yahweh's command, I bought and wore a linen loin-cloth, which had not been placed in water. Later, at His command, I hid it by the Euphrates. Then, after many days, Yahweh sent me to fetch it. I found it spoiled and good for nothing.

8–11. So Yahweh will humble the pride of Judah and Jerusalem. The people, idolatrous and disobedient, shall similarly become good for nothing. For Yahweh caused Israel and Judah to cleave closely to Him as a loin-cloth to a man's loins, that they might be His, but they would not hear.

xiii. 1. a linen girdle: better, **a linen loin-cloth** or **waist-cloth** (see W. R. Smith's article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for 1892). Linen was worn by priests, and, as finer than leather, was better suited to represent the honour Yahweh designed for Israel (11). But the choice was probably dictated by the symbolic significance; leather would not have been ruined by damp so easily as linen.

So I bought a girdle according to the word of the LORD, 2
and put it upon my loins. And the word of the LORD 3
came unto me the second time, saying, Take the girdle 4
that thou hast bought, which is upon thy loins, and arise,
go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.
So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD com- 5
manded me. And it came to pass after many days, that the 6
LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the
girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.
Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle 7
from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle
was marred, it was profitable for nothing. Then the word of 8
the LORD came unto me, saying, [JS] Thus saith the LORD, 9

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put it not in water. It is usual in the present day to steep linen in water or scald it before it is made up, in order to take the stiffness out of it and make it more comfortable to wear. Presumably this was also the practice in Jeremiah's time, otherwise there would have been no occasion for the prohibition. The symbolic significance is apparently that the linen is to be guarded against contact with the element that will ultimately ruin it. The girdle in this state represents Israel in its unspoiled purity, in the closest union with its God.

4. Euphrates. The Heb. word P^{e}rath is the name of the Euphrates, though usually the formula is 'the river P^{e}rath.' The suggestion that here it is an abbreviation for Ephrath is unlikely. Parah is mentioned Joshua xviii. 23, but with the article. The reference to the crags does not suit the Euphrates near Babylon, but rather 'the upper part of its course, above Carchemish, or even above Samosata, where it still flows between rocky sides' (Driver). But if the Euphrates is intended it is probably a visionary experience.

5. The linen is buried below the surface (cf. 7), so that the damp percolates to it and spoils it.

9. According to this application the marring of the linen represents the humbling of Judah by national ruin. But since this is not the natural interpretation of the incident taken in itself, nor of 11, we must infer that the text has here been glossed. It is not perhaps necessary to strike out so much as Cornill does (see above). The mention of a penalty is not out of place, but it is inappropriate to take the spoiling of the linen to indicate the exile. It is rather

After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the
10 great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, which refuse to
hear my words, which walk in the stubbornness of their
heart, and are gone after other gods to serve them, and to
worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is
11 profitable for nothing. For as the girdle cleaveth to the
loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the
whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith
the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and
for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they
12 would not hear. [J] Therefore thou shalt speak unto them

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corruption through Assyrian and Babylonian influence. It would be possible to think of this as exercised in Babylonia itself during the exile. But this is very improbable, admirably though it would suit the taking of the loin-cloth to the Euphrates. For Jeremiah regarded the people as already morally corrupt through the influence that had percolated to it from the Euphrates lands, and, like other prophets, he looked to exile as a means of regeneration and restoration. Accordingly we must suppose that the marring of the loin-cloth represents a process already complete, in consequence of which Yahweh has been compelled to divest Himself of His people and send them into banishment. A less drastic manipulation of the text than Cornill's would bring consistency into it.

10. shall even be: rather **let it be,** though this cannot have been the original wording of the verse if what has been said above is correct.

xiii. 12-14. THE PARABLE OF THE JARS.

As the text now stands this passage is the continuation of the preceding. But the figures of the loin-cloth and the jars are so incongruous that the prophecies should probably be regarded as originally independent. The meaning of the latter is that just as jars are destined to be filled with wine, so inevitably will the men of Judah be filled with drunkenness by Yahweh and dashed against each other till they are destroyed. There is some inexactness in the description. If the jars are filled with drunkenness, we should expect them to stagger against each other. If, however, Yahweh dashes them against each other, the reference to the filling of them with drunkenness seems superfluous. Probably the prophet means that they will be destroyed by colliding with each other, but since it is Yahweh who has made them drunken,

this word: Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Every [a] bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not know that every [a] bottle shall be filled with wine? Then shalt thou say unto them, 13 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit [b] upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. And I will 14 dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have compassion, that I should not destroy them.

[a] Or, *jar* [b] Heb. *for David upon his throne.*

He may be said to be the indirect cause of this. There is no need to deny the Jeremianic authorship. The figure strikes us as somewhat grotesque, but it would be unsafe to determine the authorship by our modern standards. The date is uncertain. Cornill considers it to be in any case later than chap. xxv, on account of the use of the metaphor of drunkenness.

xiii. 12-14. Speak to them Yahweh's word 'Every jar is filled with wine,' they will answer that they know that. Then tell them that Yahweh is filling all the inhabitants of the land with drunkenness, and they shall be dashed to destruction against each other.

xiii. 12. We may imagine that the prophet addresses those who were assembled at some festival, and that the sight of the empty jars suggested the words he spoke, which were perhaps a toper's witticism. Just as the drunken revellers scoffed at the simplicity of Isaiah's instruction, fit only for babes and sucklings, so their successors tell his successor that they know quite well what he has to tell them.

bottle: an earthen jar is intended; cf. xlviii. 12, Lam. iv. 2, Isa. xxx. 14.

13. The inhabitants are forced to drink out of the goblet of Yahweh's wrath, and then reel helplessly against each other. The drunkenness seems to be a figure for helplessness and stupefaction, so they have neither the wits nor the energy to cope with the difficulties of their situation; cf. xxv. 15-28, Ezek. xxiii. 31-34, Isa. li. 17, Ps. lx. 3.

14. Since the drunkenness is caused by Yahweh, He is said to dash them one against another, though strictly we may suppose that they stumble against each other.

15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD
16 hath spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, before
[a] he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon
the [b] dark mountains; and, while ye look for light, he
turn it into [c] the shadow of death, and make it gross
17 darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep
in secret for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore,
and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is
18 taken captive. Say thou unto the king and to the queen-
mother, [d] Humble yourselves, sit down: for your headtires
19 are come down, even [e] the crown of your glory. The

[a] Or, *it grow dark* [b] †Heb. *mountains of twilight.* [c] Or, *deep darkness* [d] †Or, *Sit ye down low* [e] Or, *your beautiful crown*

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xiii. 15–17. GIVE HEED TO THE WARNING ERE DARKNESS OVERTAKE YOU.

It is probable that this prophecy belongs to the reign of Jehoiakim; perhaps it was part of the roll destroyed by that king, though Duhm is inclined to think that 17 refers to the prophet's seclusion after that act. There is no need to adopt Schmidt's view that it is 'reminiscent in part of late psalms.'

xiii. 15–17. Listen with humility to Yahweh's voice. Give glory to Him, before darkness overtake you on the mountains of twilight, and, as you wait for light, He make the darkness denser and denser. I weep for your pride, and the captivity of Yahweh's flock.

xiii. 15. be not proud. The scornful contempt for Yahweh's message through His prophets was a main cause of the downfall which overtook those wise in their own conceit (Prov. xvi. 18).

16. See Introduction, p. 52.

dark mountains. It would have been better to place in the text the much more poetical 'mountains of twilight.' For 'shadow of death,' see note on ii. 6.

xiii. 18, 19. DIRGE ON THE APPROACHING DOWNFALL OF THE KING AND QUEEN-MOTHER.

Since the queen-mother is here coupled with the king, several scholars agree that the king addressed is Jehoiachin. His mother receives an unusual prominence, cf. xxii. 26, xxix. 2 (no importance can be attached to the mention of her in 2 Kings xxiv. 12,

cities of the South are shut up, and there is none to open them: Judah is carried away captive all of it; it is wholly carried away captive.

Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from 20

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15), as was natural in view of Jehoiachin's youth and the distinguished position always held by the queen-mother. This view, though disputed by Duhm and Rothstein, who date the prophecy in Jehoiakim's reign, is probably correct. Scholz rejected its authenticity, but Schmidt thinks it may be genuine.

xiii. 18, 19. Announce to the king and queen-mother their approaching humiliation. The cities of the Negeb are closed, all Judah carried into exile.

xiii. 18. Next to the king, the queen-mother was the most highly-placed person in the realm, and exercised great influence.

Say thou: read, with the LXX, **Say ye.**

your headtires. The Hebrew word does not bear this meaning. The LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate omit a consonant and read, 'For come down from your head is your crown of beauty.'

19. the South: i.e. the Negeb, the name of the parched land in the south of Judah. The cities in the Negeb are mentioned because they were the furthest removed from the point at which the invader entered the country.

it is wholly carried away captive: read, with the LXX, 'an entire captivity,' as Amos i. 6, 9, the Hebrew being without parallel.

xiii. 20–27. THE SIN OF JERUSALEM AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

This description of the approaching judgement on Jerusalem belongs to an earlier time than the reign of Jehoiachin. The prophet speaks of a foe that comes out of the North. This might be either the Scythians or the Babylonians, but the former are excluded by the statement that the conqueror had been formerly a friend. This was true of the Babylonians, who since the days of Hezekiah had a bond of sympathy in a common hatred of Assyria. We may therefore date this section in the reign of Jehoiakim, probably after 605, in which year Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho. Scholz, followed by Schmidt, regards the section as late on account of its 'depraved style.'

xiii. 20–27. See, Jerusalem, those that come from the North: where is the flock entrusted to thee? Will not anguish seize thee, when thy former lover becomes thy tyrant? Thy trouble is due to thy sin. As well expect the Ethiopian to change his skin as you to do good, trained as you are to evil. They shall be scattered like

the north: where is the flock that was given thee, thy
21 beautiful flock? [a] What wilt thou say, when he shall set
thy friends over thee as head, seeing thou thyself hast
instructed them against thee? shall not sorrows take hold
22 of thee, as of a woman in travail? And if thou say in
thine heart, Wherefore are these things come upon me?
for the [b] greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts dis-
23 covered, and thy heels suffer violence. Can the Ethio-
pian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may
ye also do good, that are [c] accustomed to do evil.

[a] Or, *What wilt thou say, when he shall visit thee, seeing thou thyself hast instructed them against thee, even* thy *friends to be head* over thee? [b] Or, *multitude* [c] Heb. *taught.*

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stubble, for their forgetfulness of Yahweh. Thy shame shall be disclosed. I have seen thy abominations; how long ere thou wilt be clean?

xiii. 20. We should read, with the LXX, 'Lift up thine eyes,' and also insert 'O Jerusalem.' The flock entrusted to Jerusalem may be the cities of Judah, but more probably the inhabitants.

21. The general sense of the verse is that Jerusalem will be deeply hurt to find set as head over her a former lover, i.e. the Babylonians. This sense, however, is given neither by the R.V. text nor R.V. marg. The arrangement of the Hebrew creates the difficulty. We may translate 'What wilt thou say when he sets over thee as head those whom thou hast trained to be thy lovers?' Cf. Ezek. xxiii. 22.

23. It might seem as if Jeremiah meant that evil-doing was as much man's nature, from which he could not escape, as the colour of an Ethiopian's skin. But he is not expressing so pessimistic a view of human nature as such, but simply saying with reference to the Jews that they have grown so habituated to evil, that it has become a second nature which it is hopeless for them to try to shake off.

the Ethiopian: literally **the Cushite,** but the Ethiopian is intended. Ebed-melech, who saved Jeremiah's life (xxxviii. 7–13), belonged to this race.

spots: Gesenius thought the word might mean stripes, and the tiger be the animal intended, but it is very questionable if the tiger was known in Palestine.

ye: the change of number here, and still more the change to

Therefore will I scatter them, as the stubble that passeth 24
away, [a] by the wind of the wilderness. This is thy lot, 25
the portion measured unto thee from me, saith the LORD;
because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.
Therefore will I also discover thy skirts [b] upon thy face, 26
and thy shame shall appear. I have seen thine abomin- 27
ations, even thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewd-
ness of thy whoredom, on the hills in the field. Woe
unto thee, O Jerusalem! thou wilt not be made clean;
how long shall it yet be?

The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concern- 14
ing the drought.

[a] Or, *unto* [b] Or, *before*

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the third person in 24, are surprising in this context; we should perhaps restore the second person singular throughout.

26. Cf. Nah. iii. 5.

27. neighings. Cf. v. 8.

thou wilt . . . yet be. Rather, **How long shall it be before thou art made clean?** Jeremiah anticipates an ultimate cleansing of Jerusalem, but with sin so deeply ingrained as the colour of an Ethiopian's skin, with a nature so trained to evil, a will so inclined to wrong, it will be no swift process.

xiv. 1-xv. 9. A TERRIBLE DROUGHT, TO BE FOLLOWED BY WAR, FAMINE, AND PLAGUE, WHICH NO INTERCESSION CAN AVERT.

Since xv. 1-9 seems to form the immediate continuation of chap. xiv, it is best to include it here. Though xiv. 1—xv. 9 constitutes in its present form a fairly connected composition, it is not unlikely that pieces of different origin have been combined. Hitzig considered that two originally independent pieces have here been woven together; the former was occasioned by the drought, and consisted of xiv. 2-10, xiv. 19—xv. 1, while the latter, which spoke of a catastrophe through sword, hunger, and pestilence, consisted of xiv. 12-18, xv. 2-9. This view is accepted by Cornill, and may very well be substantially correct. The date is quite uncertain. Schmidt finds 'nothing to remind us of Jeremiah's language, style, or thought in the exquisite elegiac strain of xiv. 2-6,' while he considers that the absence of any religious suggestion precludes a prophetic source. He also rejects xiv. 7-9 as a

2 Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish, they
sit in black upon the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem
3 is gone up. And their nobles send their [a] little ones [b] to
the waters: they come to the pits, and find no water;

[a] †Or, *inferiors* [b] †Or, *for water*

Psalm breathing the spirit of II Isaiah, and out of harmony with Jeremiah's language and thought, xiv. 19–22, xv. 5–9. He accepts as genuine xiv. 10–16, xv. 1–4[a].

xiv. 1–6. Judah and Jerusalem mourn, and fail because of the drought; the nobles vainly send for water; the field labourers are dismayed. The hind forsakes her newborn offspring, the wild ass gasps for air and languishes for food.

7–10. 'O Yahweh, we have sinned greatly, yet work for Thy name's sake. Why dost Thou make Thyself as a mere traveller through our land? Why dost Thou seem to be powerless; we belong to Thee, do not forsake us.' Yahweh refuses to hear their prayer, He will punish their sin.

11–18. Yahweh bade me not pray for this people; He will not accept fasting or offering, but will consume by sword, famine, and pestilence. I replied, It is the prophets, Yahweh, who promise the people immunity from sword and famine. Then Yahweh said, The prophets were not sent by Me, they utter their lying imaginations, and shall be consumed by sword and famine, so too shall be those to whom they prophesy. Thou shalt say, Let me weep unceasingly for the breach of my people. In the country the sword, in the town famine!

19—xv. 1. Hast Thou rejected Judah? why do we wait in vain for our stripes to be healed? We and our fathers have sinned; despise us not, nor break Thy covenant with us. Can the heathen gods give rain? Nay, Thou alone, Yahweh, for whom we wait. Nay, though Moses and Samuel interceded, replied Yahweh, I would not be gracious: let them go into exile.

2–9. Yahweh destines them to pestilence, sword, famine, and exile. The sword, the dogs, the birds, the beasts shall destroy them. The sin of Manasseh will bring upon them a great punishment; who will pity or care? Yahweh is weary of relenting, He has destroyed His people. The widows are innumerable, the spoiler has struck dismay into the mother of the young warriors.

xiv. 2. **the gates** were the meeting-place of the people, where also judgement was given. Here they represent the people of the city assembled in them.

3. The nobles send their inferiors out to search for water, but the search is vain. Duhm thinks that the reference to the pits is

they return with their vessels empty: they are ashamed
and confounded, and cover their heads. Because of the 4
ground which is [a] chapt, for that no rain hath been in the
land, the plowmen are ashamed, they cover their heads.
Yea, the hind also in the field calveth, and forsaketh *her* 5
young, because there is no grass. And the wild asses 6
stand on the bare heights, they pant for air like [b] jackals;
their eyes fail, because there is no herbage.

Though our iniquities testify against us, work thou for 7

[a] †Or, *dismayed* [b] †Or, *the crocodile*

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a mistaken insertion; they would know that the cisterns were empty and send farther afield (so also Cornill).

cover their heads: in sign of grief; cf. 2 Sam. xv. 30, xix. 4. That the words recur at the close of the next verse, is no proof that they ought to be struck out.

4. chapt: the meaning of the verb is 'dismayed,' as in the margin. The LXX rendering when retranslated suggests the true text, 'The tillers of the ground are dismayed' (Duhm). The verb is elsewhere used only of persons.

5. Even the hind, famed for affectionate care of her young, abandons it when newly-born and most needing the mother's attention.

6. As in Job xxxix. 1–8, the wild ass is mentioned after the hind. Even on the mountain ranges where it loves to be, there is no breeze, and it gasps for air. If, however, the panting for air is due to exhaustion, there is some force in Duhm's objection that they would not go to the bare heights to allay their thirst.

jackals: this yields a less satisfactory sense than the margin 'the crocodile,' lifting its head out of the water to snuff up the air. Cornill and Duhm omit, with the LXX.

their eyes fail: through lack of nourishment. When Jonathan tasted the honey his eyes were enlightened (1 Sam. xiv. 27), i.e. the faintness, from which he was suffering through want of food, was relieved. Possibly the reference may be to the strain on their eyes of the long search for food (cf. Lam. iv. 17).

Giesebrecht inserts verse 22 after this verse.

7. With this verse a prayer begins, in which the people confess their sins and appeal for deliverance to Yahweh. The question is raised whether the prophet speaks in the name of the people, or whether he puts this prayer into the people's mouth. Duhm, who takes the latter view, considers that Jeremiah is attacking with bitter irony the popular belief in Yahweh's good-nature, and

thy name's sake, O LORD: for our backslidings are many;
8 we have sinned against thee. O thou hope of Israel, the
saviour thereof in the time of trouble, why shouldest thou
be as a sojourner in the land, and as a wayfaring man

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compares the similar light-hearted optimism of the people in Hos. vi. 1 ff. Erbt goes even further, and supposes that when the people were assembled at the Temple for a day of humiliation and prayer on account of the drought, Jeremiah appeared and uttered this parody of their prayer, to drive home his threat that Yahweh would not save. In favour of this view, it may be said that the anthropomorphism of the appeal to God is such as we might expect in a prayer of the people. It is, however, very difficult to believe that Jeremiah, whose heart bled for the anguish of his people, would have mocked their agonized prayers, as Elijah mocked the priests of Melkart. And would not his sense of reverence have restrained him? Cornill well reminds us that men of original religious genius such as Luther have at all times spoken with God in very human language. He agrees, however, on account of 10, that the prayer is put into the lips of the people, not uttered by Jeremiah as an intercession for them. 11 favours the other view, but if Hitzig's theory of the composition of the passage is correct, 11 would not originally belong to this context; still xv. 1 does, and unless we strike that verse out, we do not eliminate the idea of intercession from the passage.

for thy name's sake may mean for the sake of Thy reputation among the heathen, which will perish with the destruction of Thy people. This motive is constantly attributed to Yahweh. Thus Joshua asks, if the Canaanites cut off the Hebrews, 'what wilt thou do for thy great name?' (Joshua vii. 9). Ezekiel constantly represents Yahweh's action as controlled, not by regard for Israel, but by pity for His own holy name, or to magnify His name among the nations. Cf. also Num. xiv. 13–16, Isa. xlviii. 9–11, Ps. lxxix. 9, 10. The LXX here reads 'for thine own sake,' which expresses much the same thought. At the same time the references in 9, 11 suggest that the name is not here used simply in the sense of reputation. The name is the covenant name; cf. especially Exod. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5–7. Regard for His name involves regard for the covenant with Israel.

8. The wayfaring man who simply turns aside from the way to rest for a night on his journey, enters into no intimate relations with the people, and is indifferent to their sorrows and joys. But Yahweh is the Lord of the land, and the people over whom His name has been called (9) are His people. Yet He seems as aloof from them as a mere passing stranger.

that [a] turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest 9
thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot
save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we
are called by thy name; leave us not.

Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Even so have 10
they loved to wander; they have not refrained their feet:
therefore the LORD doth not accept them; now will he
remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. And the 11
LORD said unto me, Pray not for this people for *their*
good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and 12
when they offer burnt offering and [b] oblation, I will not
accept them: but I will consume them by the sword,
and by the famine, and by the pestilence. Then said I, 13
Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye

[a] Or, *spreadeth* his tent [b] Or, *meal offering*

9. astonied: the verb occurs here only, and probably we should follow the LXX and read 'fast asleep' (*nirdām* for *nidhām*). The idea that Yahweh is in a deep sleep, from which He needs to be aroused to save His people, meets us elsewhere: Ps. xliv. 23, 24, lxxviii. 65; cf. xxxv. 23, Mark iv. 38.

we are called by thy name: literally, **thy name hath been called over us.** See vii. 10.

10. Yahweh's answer. The latter part of the verse is quoted from Hos. viii. 13.

so: refers back to 8, i.e. their wandering from Me has matched My withdrawal from intimate relations with them. But the LXX omits.

11. Hitzig, followed by Cornill, takes 11, 12[a] as the work of the redactor, designed to link 2–10 with the passage which follows.

12. oblation: i.e. the vegetable offering.

13. The conflict between the false prophets and the true constantly meets us from the time of Micaiah onwards. It was quite natural that Jeremiah's pessimistic judgement on the people and verdict on its fate, especially after the Reformation, should draw forth bitter protests from the prophets, of whom Hananiah (chap. xxviii) is an example. Cf. iv. 10, v. 31, vi. 13, 14, xxiii. 11 ff. Here Jeremiah pleads in defence of the people that the prophets have misled them. There is not the slightest need to suppose that the passage, in its main drift at any rate, is due to a later editor.

shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine;
14 but I will give you [a] assured peace in this place. Then
the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in
my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded
them, neither spake I unto them: they prophesy unto
you a lying vision, and divination, and a thing of nought,
15 and the deceit of their own heart. Therefore thus saith
the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my
name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and
famine shall not be in this land: By sword and famine
16 shall those prophets be consumed. And the people to
whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of
Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and
they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor
their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wicked-
17 ness upon them. And thou shalt say this word unto
them, Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day,
and let them not cease; for the virgin daughter of my
people is broken with a great breach, with a very
18 grievous wound. If I go forth into the field, then
behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into

[a] Heb. *peace of truth.*

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14. In spite of the severe judgement passed upon the prophets, it would be an injustice to regard them all as conscious deceivers. No doubt there were such; there were others whose temptation was to utter smooth things, and flatter the prejudices of their hearers. But others were animated by higher motives, such as patriotism, which in Israel had a strongly religious element in it, or loyalty to the utterances of the great prophets in earlier days. These may well have considered themselves to be genuinely inspired.

15, 16. Regarded by Giesebrecht as a later insertion.

17, 18. A characteristic dirge over the pitiful downfall of his people; the enemy have slain those whom they found in the open country, while the famine tortured those who were in the blockaded cities. Schmidt regards it as a gloss.

the city, then behold [a] them that are sick with famine! for both the prophet and the priest [b] go about [c] in the land and have no knowledge.

Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul 19
loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of healing, and behold dismay! We [d] ac- 20
knowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee. Do not 21
[e] abhor *us*, for thy name's sake; do not disgrace the

[a] Heb. *the sicknesses of famine.* [b] Or, *traffick* [c] Or, *into a land that they know not* [d] Or, *know* [e] Or, *contemn*

them that are sick with famine: rather, **the pangs of famine.**

go about . . . knowledge. This clause is very difficult. The verb rendered 'go about' means to travel about as a trafficker. It is possible that according to a rare use in Syriac we should render 'go as beggars.' The present text must also be translated 'into a land;' we may, however, with a slight change, read 'go about the land' (*'eth* for *'el*). That priests and prophets go about as traffickers, either in their own or in another land, is an anti-climax after their dupes have been slain with sword and famine; and a similar, though a slighter, objection lies against the alternative rendering. Moreover, in 15, the prophets are themselves condemned to sword and famine. Accordingly, the verb should be emended. Giesebrecht suggests 'they are in mourning on the ground,' or 'they crouch on the ground;' the latter is accepted by Cornill: either would suit the context fairly well.

and have no knowledge: this is probably the correct rendering, assuming that the text is correct, and Giesebrecht's emendation of the preceding words be accepted. But possibly the words are the beginning of a fresh sentence, the rest of which has been lost, 'And they do not know.'

19. With this verse the people renew their prayer. Cornill agrees with Duhm in regarding xiv. 19-xv. 4 as non-Jeremianic. He points to the phrase 'the throne of thy glory,' i.e. Jerusalem, as enough to show that 19-22 could not be written by Jeremiah. But even if this phrase were impossible in Jeremiah's mouth, it would be extravagant to pass a similar judgement on the whole passage. As already mentioned, Schmidt considers xv. 1-4[a] as genuine, 4[b] he regards as a gloss.

The latter half of 19 is quoted from viii. 15.

throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant
22 with us. Are there any among the vanities of the heathen that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee; for thou hast [a]made all these things.

15 Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let
2 them go forth. And it shall come to pass, when they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD: Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine;
3 and such as are for captivity, to captivity. And I will appoint over them four [b]kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to [c]tear, and the fowls of the

[a] Or, *done* [b] Heb. *families.* [c] Heb. *drag.*

21. throne of thy glory: cf. xvii. 12, Ezek. xliii. 7. Jerusalem is so called because the Temple was there, and Yahweh was thought to dwell enthroned on the cherubim over the ark. The expression is quite fitting in a prayer addressed to Yahweh by the people.

22. This verse clearly belongs to the oracle on the drought. 'The vanities of the heathen' are, of course, heathen deities.

xv. 1. Yahweh's reply to the prayer. Moses and Samuel were famous for the mighty intercession they made for their people: cf. Exod. xxxii. 11–14, 30–32; Num. xiv. 13–24; Deut. ix. 18–20, 25–29; 1 Sam. vii. 8, 9, xii. 19–23; Ps. xcix. 6–8.

them: i. e. the people; the meaning is not 'send Moses and Samuel out of my presence, for I will not listen to their intercession.'

2. death: i. e. pestilence, as we speak of the Black Death: cf. xviii. 21; Job xxvii. 15; Rev. ii. 23, vi. 8. For the four kinds of fate here mentioned cf. xliii. 11; Ezek. xiv. 21, xxxiii. 27.

3. The sword to slay, dogs, birds, and wild beasts to devour the corpses. We should perhaps place 'to devour' after 'the fowls of heaven.'

heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and to
destroy. And I will cause them to be tossed to and fro 4
among all the kingdoms of the earth, [S] because of
Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that
which he did in Jerusalem. [J] For who shall have pity 5
upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or
who shall turn aside to ask of thy welfare? Thou hast 6
rejected me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward:
therefore have I stretched out my hand against thee, and
destroyed thee; I am weary with repenting. And I have 7
fanned them with a fan in the gates of the land; I have
bereaved *them* of children, I have destroyed my people;

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4. The downfall of Judah is attributed to the sin of Manasseh in 2 Kings xxi. 11–15, xxiii. 26, 27, xxiv. 3, 4. It is very questionable if Jeremiah would have expressed himself in this way; it is accordingly not unlikely that the latter half of the verse is a gloss, added by a reader who remembered the passages in 2 Kings.

cause them to be tossed to and fro among: rather, **make them a consternation to**; see Driver, pp. 359, 360, and Graf's note.

5. In this lament on the pitiful case of Jerusalem the prophet is not describing what has happened, but what is to happen. The tenses in 6b–9 descriptive of the calamity should be changed from perfects to futures, 'I will stretch out,' &c. It is not any of the earlier disasters which Jeremiah has experienced, but the ultimate penalty to which he looks forward, with no hope that it can be averted. The possibility may be granted that 6b–9 was written 'in the year after the fall of Jerusalem' (Cheyne, *Enc. Bib.* 1179; he adds, 'by whom we cannot venture to say'), but it is more probably earlier.

7. The metaphor is taken from agriculture. After the grain was threshed, it was thrown up against the wind which blew away the straw and chaff, while the heavier grain fell to the ground, unless the wind was rough enough to carry it also away. In this process a winnowing shovel and a winnowing fork were employed, both are mentioned Isa. xxx. 24. The latter is intended by the misleading translation 'fan;' cf. Matt. iii. 12. Here the people are taken to the gates, i. e. the borders of the land, and blown away, like chaff, into exile.

8 they have not returned from their ways. Their widows
are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have
brought upon them [a] against the mother of the young men
a spoiler at noonday: I have caused anguish and terrors
9 to fall upon her suddenly. She that hath borne seven
languisheth; she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone
down while it was yet day; she hath been ashamed and
confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to
the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD.

[a] Or, *against the mother* and *the young men*

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they have not returned from their ways: the LXX reads 'on account of their evils,' and this is accepted by Duhm and Erbt. It is not quite easy to see how the Hebrew text in that case arose. Cornill suggests 'on account of the evil of their ways,' from which he thinks both texts may be derived.

8, 9. Cornill has improved the structure of the passage by placing 8^a, 'Their widows . . . seas,' between 9^b and 9^c (after 'confounded'). In that way 8^a and 9^c, which now stand isolated, form a pair of long lines in Qina rhythm, while 8^{bc} and 9^{ab} form two other pairs, as they should according to subject-matter.

8. to me: not to be omitted, with LXX; it expresses Yahweh's participation in the disaster.

against the mother of the young men. Several explanations of the Hebrew have been proposed, the R.V. is the best. It seems to mean that suddenly, when all is fair, the destroyer comes upon the mother of the young warriors who have fallen on the battle-field and left her defenceless. We should, however, perhaps accept Duhm's emendation 'mother and suckling' (*wā'āl* for *bāḥūr*). For 'at noonday' cf. vi. 4.

anguish: the word so translated occurs besides only in Hos. xi. 9, and is there probably corrupt. The meaning is very uncertain, see Driver, pp. 360, 361. He takes it to mean here the excitement or agitation of alarm, translating 'agitation.'

9. The mother of seven was a supreme example of felicity; now her pride is humbled, she swoons with grief. 'She hath given up the ghost' does not mean she is dead, but that she faints.

her sun is gone down: this is probably not suggested by the eclipse of Thales in 585 B.C. (Cheyne), since the prophecy is in all likelihood earlier. All brightness has vanished from her life, darkness has prematurely settled down upon her.

Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man 10
of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I
have not lent on usury, neither have men lent to me on

XV. 10–21. THE PROPHET BEWAILS HIS LOT, AND GOD STERNLY REBUKES HIS DOUBT.

This very striking and precious section bears its genuineness on the face of it, though apart from the question of the text, 13, 14 form, as even Orelli admits, no original part of it, while serious difficulties attach to 11, 12. The date cannot be fixed with certainty, but it may well belong to the closing part of Jehoiakim's reign, to which Cornill assigns it. It may be added that Schmidt treats 10 and 11–14 as glosses, and 15–18 as a poetic effusion with Zion for speaker, while similarly in 19–21 the people is addressed. If this only too characteristic criticism (cf. his treatment of xx. 7–18) were correct, we should be much impoverished in our knowledge of Jeremiah.

XV. 10–14. Alas, that I was ever born to such universal hatred, drawn on me by no conduct of mine. Yahweh said, I will strengthen thee, the enemy will make supplication to thee. Can one break iron and bronze? Thy treasures will be plundered by the enemy, thou shalt serve in another land, because of Mine anger.

15–18. Thou knowest my sufferings for Thy sake; preserve me. Thy word is my joy; I am Thine. I have not companied with the mirthful, but lived in loneliness, filled with Thine indignation. Why is my sorrow incurable: wilt Thou be a deceitful stream to me?

19–21. Yahweh replies, If thou return to Me, thou shalt again be My servant; if thou cleanse thyself, thou shalt be My spokesman. They may return to thee, not thou to them. I make thee impregnable against thy assailants, and rescue thee from the power of the wicked.

XV. 10. The verse springs out of long and bitter experience of the universal hostility he aroused. His stinging attacks on the vices of his countrymen, his scornful handling of their cherished convictions and prejudices, his steady warnings that they must prepare for the worst, amply explained the bitterness with which he was assailed. Yet, conscious that all his utterances were prompted by the purest, the most clear-sighted love for his people, he marvels at the hate with which he is pursued. Had he been a usurer, or a defaulting debtor, it would have been reasonable, for financial relations of this kind were a constant occasion of embittered feelings.

11 usury; *yet* every one of them doth curse me. The LORD
said, Verily [a] I will [b] strengthen thee for good; verily [c] I
will cause the enemy to make supplication unto thee in
the time of evil and in the time of affliction.
12 [d] Can one break iron, even iron from the north, and

[a] The Vulgate has, *thy remnant shall be for good.* [b] Another reading is, *release.* [c] Or, *I will intercede for thee with the enemy*
[d] Or, *Can iron break iron from &c.*

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11. This verse is so difficult to explain and to fit into the passage that even Graf thought it was a marginal gloss. The Hebrew text, though even it is uncertain, seems to mean that Yahweh will strengthen the prophet and cause his foes to appeal to him in their time of trouble. But the formula 'Yahweh said' elsewhere closes and does not introduce a Divine utterance, the verb rendered 'strengthen' is an Aramaism, and the stylistic indications are not favourable to Jeremiah's authorship of the verse in its Hebrew form. The LXX also diverges considerably from the Hebrew. Moreover, if already in 11 we have so clear and unconditional an assurance of strength and triumph, it is strange, though psychologically not inconceivable, that Jeremiah should express himself with such despondency in 15–18, and that the *final* promise should be conditional in character. If then we conclude that the verse cannot in its present form be attributed to Jeremiah, we can either regard it as a later insertion, or restore the text to a form against which the objections mentioned do not lie. The latter alternative is adopted by Duhm, Erbt, Cornill, Gillies, and Rothstein. All of these retain the verse in its present connexion. They differ in detail, but largely agree in the general sense. It is not possible here to discuss the restoration of the text at any length. The sense most appropriate after 10 is that the prophet, so far from doing evil to the people (10), has done them good. The LXX gives the clue to the reconstruction. The Hebrew probably ran somewhat as follows: 'An "Amen, Yahweh," to their curses, if I did not make supplication to thee for the enemy's welfare in the time of evil and in the time of affliction' (so Cornill). This connects excellently with 10. Jeremiah endorses the curses hurled against him, if he had not interceded for his enemies in the time of distress.

12. This verse is still more obscure and difficult than the preceding, and many explanations of it have been given. If the words are those of Yahweh addressed to Jeremiah, the most probable view is that they contain an assurance of the triumph of the foe from the North, i.e. the Chaldeans, here referred to as iron

brass? [S] Thy substance and thy treasures will I give 13
for a spoil without price, and that for all thy sins, even in
all thy borders. And [a] I will make *them* to pass with 14
thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: for

[a] Or, *I will make thine enemies to pass into &c.* † According to some ancient authorities, *I will make thee to serve thine enemies in a land &c.* See ch. xvii. 4.

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and brass, and therewith the vindication of the prophet and his release from his enemies. This gives the significance to 'iron from the north' which we naturally expect in Jeremiah. But since we have seen reason to believe that 11 contains a continuation of Jeremiah's remonstrance with Yahweh, we must take the same view of 12. The best rendering of the text is then that given in R.V. marg., and the meaning is, Can iron, i. e. my strength (i. 18) break iron from the North and bronze, i. e. the power of my enemies? The point of the reference to iron from the North is that the best and hardest iron came from the Black Sea. But the thought would be very unnaturally expressed, and the North bears so specific a sense generally in Jeremiah that its use here in the general sense is improbable. Hence, as in 11, the question is whether the sentence should be deleted or whether it can be satisfactorily emended. The most ingenious suggestion is Duhm's, 'Is an arm of iron on my shoulder, is my brow brass?' In that case the prophet is pleading with God his human frailty as a reason why he should not be exposed to such severe trial, and we have an excellent parallel in Job vi. 12, 'Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh of brass?' But the rendering 'shoulder' is doubtful, and a brow of brass suggests impudence rather than strength. Cornill accordingly feels unable to accept this emendation, but confesses that he has nothing better to propose, and leaves a blank in his translation. Rothstein regards the verse as a gloss; Erbt proposes a clever but very improbable emendation. Giesebrecht is inclined to think that 11–14 have been introduced here from another context. Gillies reads, 'Wilt thou have more regard to my earnest prayers than to the brazen altar-shields?' but this also is not a natural expression of the thought.

13, 14. Fortunately it is generally recognized that these verses are out of place here. This sudden transition from the dialogue between Yahweh and the prophet, to an address of Yahweh to the sinful people, followed by a continuation of the dialogue is very unnatural, especially as there is no external indication of the transition. The verses recur in xvii. 3, 4, and will be annotated there.

a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn upon
you.
15 [J] O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit
me, and avenge me of my persecutors; take me not
away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have
16 suffered reproach. Thy words were found, and I did
eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the
rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O
17 LORD God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of them
that make merry, nor rejoiced: I sat alone because of
18 thy hand; for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why

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15. in thy longsuffering: i. e. towards my enemies. The LXX omits 'take me not away.' We might then accept a slight emendation of Duhm's and read 'delay not with thine anger.'

16. The opening words remind us of Ezek. ii. 8—iii. 3, and the similar episode of the little book in Rev. x. That Yahweh's word brought pain with it for the prophet is of course true, but it is a mistake to infer that Jeremiah could not have found joy in it. The communion with God, the revelation of His nature and His will brought gladness to him, though the message itself filled him with sorrow (cf. Rev. x. 8–10). At the same time the expression 'to eat words' is strange. In Ezekiel's case the idea is worked out at length, and it is certainly easier to understand the expression here if it is dependent on Ezekiel. When to this we add that the LXX has another text it becomes very questionable if the Hebrew can be defended. The LXX connects the opening words of 16 with 15, reading, 'I have suffered reproach from them that despise thy word. Consume them, and let thy word be unto me a joy,' &c.

called by thy name: cf. vii. 10.

17. thy hand. The hand of God is said to be upon a man when he is seized by the Divine power and cast into the prophetic ecstasy: cf. Isa. viii. 11, 'Yahweh spake thus to me with a strong hand;' 2 Kings iii. 15; Ezekiel is fond of the expression, cf. especially Ezek. iii. 14, 'And I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, and the hand of Yahweh was strong upon me.'

18. His lot is one of unceasing sorrow, long-continued and to end only with life. He is like the traveller who counts on finding the stream in the desert, but who is doomed to find only a dry watercourse. As Job counted vainly on his friends but found them like a vanished brook, so Jeremiah had counted on Yahweh: was his confidence to be put to confusion?

is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful *brook*, as waters that [a] fail?

Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then 19
will I bring thee again, that thou mayest stand before me; and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: they shall return unto thee, but thou shalt not return unto them. And I will make 20
thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD. And I will deliver thee out of the hand 21
of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

[a] Heb. *are not sure.*

19. To this passionate outburst, in which the prophet utters the feelings that through these weary months have been gathering energy and volume within him, Yahweh now replies. And apparently with as little sympathy for His servant's pain as He shows to Job in the speech out of the storm. Instead of praise for the past or tender comfort for the present, we have an implied rebuke. He may return to God and resume His service (stand before Him), that is to say, he has by his murmuring renounced it. Unshrinking obedience, rendered without hesitation or complaint, that is the condition imposed by God on those who aspire to the high dignity of His service. And the reward of service faithfully rendered is, as in the Parable of the Pounds, more service.

take forth the precious from the vile: the meaning of this seems to be, if thou separate the precious from the common within thee, and dedicate the former alone to My service. It is also possible to translate 'precious without common,' that is, if thou producest what is precious unmixed with what is common. It is unfortunate that the misleading translation 'vile' should have been retained here. It is an archaism for 'common.'

as my mouth: i. e. as My spokesman (cf. Exod. iv. 16).

20. It is fitting that with the summons to return to Yahweh's service, there should be renewed the promise of support made to him at the beginning of his mission (cf. i. 18, 19).

21. Duhm identifies 'the terrible' with Jehoiakim and his magnates, and they may probably be those primarily intended.

16 The word of the LORD came also unto me, saying,
2 Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have

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xvi. 1—xvii. 18. THE RUIN THAT AWAITS JUDAH FOR ITS SIN.

This section constitutes an editorial unity, and may therefore be taken together. It contains, however, pieces of rather miscellaneous origin. It is clear that xvi. 14, 15, which is repeated in xxiii. 7, 8, is out of place. xvii. 9–18 is very disconnected in character. Recent scholars have rejected the authenticity of a good deal in the section, especially in xvi, while Schmidt regards the whole of xvii. 1–18 as late. Such discussion as may be desirable is best reserved for the detailed exposition.

xvi. 1–9. Yahweh forbade me to marry or beget children, for the children born in this place, with their parents, shall die without lamentation or burial, and be eaten by birds and beasts. He also forbade me to enter the house of mourning, for great and small shall die and no mourning rites shall be observed; or to enter the house of feasting, for all festivity is to cease.

10–13. And when they ask the reason for their calamity, say that it is due to the idolatry and disobedience of their fathers and themselves; they shall be cast into exile, and serve other gods.

14, 15. The days will come when they will cease to speak of Yahweh as bringing them from Egypt, and speak of Him as bringing them back from the Dispersion.

16–18. They shall be harried from their hiding places, for I know their wickedness and will visit it with double punishment.

19–21. All nations shall confess the uselessness of idolatry. Yahweh will demonstrate His might.

xvii. 1–4. Judah's sin is indelibly written; its treasures will be spoiled, and the people will serve their enemies in a foreign land; for in Yahweh's anger an inextinguishable fire is kindled.

5–8. Yahweh's curse rests on him who trusts in man and turns away from God; he shall be like a juniper tree, his home in the wilderness. Blessed he who trusts in Yahweh! He shall be like a tree nourished by abundance of water.

9–13. Man's heart is deceitful; Yahweh alone can know it and reward men according to their works. He who gets riches unlawfully shall lose them in mid-life, and prove a fool at the end. Our sanctuary is a glorious throne. Those that forsake Yahweh shall be put to shame.

14–18. Heal me, O Yahweh. They taunt me about the fulfilment of Thy word; I have not desired the day of calamity; dismay me not, let my persecutors be dismayed and destroyed.

xvi. 2. See Introduction, pp. 14 f. Similarly Newman was im-

sons or daughters in this place. For thus saith the 3
LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters
that are born in this place, [S] and concerning their
mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers
that begat them in this land: [J] They shall die [a] of 4
grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented, neither
shall they be buried; they shall be as dung upon the
face of the ground: and they shall be consumed by the
sword, and by famine; and their carcases shall be
meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the
earth. For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house 5
of mourning, neither go to lament, neither bemoan them:
for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith
the LORD, even lovingkindness and tender mercies.
Both great and small shall die in this land: they shall 6
not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor
cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them:

[a] Heb. *deaths of sicknesses.*

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pressed in early manhood with the conviction that God's will for him was that he should not marry.

3. Cornill treats this verse as editorial. It is, of course, diffuse, and the reference to the fathers and mothers is irrelevant, but the general reference to sons and daughters is indispensable, otherwise 4 is unintelligible. Possibly 3^b is editorial.

5. house of mourning: this rendering is favoured by the context and by the fact that in 8 we have the house of feasting. The word rendered 'mourning' means shrill crying, and is most naturally explained here of the shrill wail raised by the professional mourners after a death. It occurs elsewhere only in Amos vi. 7, and there it is used of the cry of revelry. Duhm and Cornill interpret it so here, all the more easily that they strike out 8.

6. cut themselves: this mourning custom is forbidden in Lev. xix. 28, Deut. xiv. 1; the latter passage also forbids baldness between the eyes for the dead. These customs seemed, to the legislators, of a heathen character. They are mentioned, however, as quite normal in xli. 5, Amos viii. 10, Isa. xxii. 12, Mic. i. 16, Ezek. vii. 18. We need not infer that Jeremiah regarded them as unobjectionable.

7 neither shall men [a] break *bread* for them in mourning, to
comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them
the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for
8 their mother. And thou shalt not go into the house of
9 feasting to sit with them, to eat and to drink. For thus

[a] See Is. lviii. 7.

7. It was the custom for the mourner to refuse food (cf. 2 Sam. i. 12, iii. 35), apparently till the evening of the day of burial. His friends then pressed food on him to comfort him. In consequence of the taboos which attached to death, 'the bread of mourners' (Hos. ix. 4) was unclean. Accordingly the Israelite, when bringing the tithe in the third year (which was devoted to charity), utters a formula, in the course of which he says, 'I have not eaten thereof in my mourning' (Deut. xxvi. 14). This passage shows that the custom of offering food to the dead was not unknown, for the offerer continues, 'neither have I put away thereof, being unclean, nor given thereof for the dead.' But Schwally's view that Jeremiah's language refers to offerings to the dead is very improbable.

break bread **for them in mourning.** The word for 'bread' (*leḥem*) is very like that rendered 'for them' (*laḥem*), and probably stood instead of it in the original text, which would run 'break bread for the mourner.' 'Comfort them' should be 'comfort him.'

8. Struck out, as already mentioned, by Duhm and Cornill (see note on 5).

9–21. From this point Duhm recognizes nothing as Jeremiah's. Cornill thinks the deletion of 8 carries that of 9–13 with it, but if so, less flimsy grounds should be given for deleting that verse. He believes, however, that 9–13 in themselves favour the view that they are later. He considers the authenticity of 14, 15, even in their original context, xxiii. 7, 8, very dubious, and of the rest of the chapter retains only 17, 18[a], 19, 20, and part of 21. Giesebrecht agrees with Cornill as to 14, 15, and of 9–21 admits the Jeremianic authorship simply of 19. Schmidt rejects 14–18 as dependent on II Isaiah, and 19, 20 as a Psalm fragment, with 21 as a later gloss. Without minimizing the importance of this agreement between these scholars, the present writer feels that the type of criticism here illustrated is unduly arbitrary and subjective.

9–13. It is not to be denied that this passage is somewhat diffuse in style and conventional in expression, but we are warned by very familiar examples against the demand that a great poet should never write flat and prosaic commonplace.

9. Cf. vii. 34; here, however, the hearers are warned that the calamity is to fall on themselves, not on their successors.

saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place, before your eyes and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this 10
people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God? then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have 11
forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; and 12
ye have done evil more than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart, so that ye hearken not unto me: therefore will I 13
cast you forth out of this land into the land that ye have not known, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; [a] for I will shew you no favour.

[a] Or, *where*

10. Cf. xiii. 22.

13. To ancient Israel change of country implied change of god. Thus David treats banishment from the inheritance of Yahweh as involving the service of other gods (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). Each national or tribal deity had its own people and domain; outside of the latter his writ did not run. It would be quite unjustifiable to infer from the fact that a monotheist like Jeremiah speaks as he does in this passage, that we ought not to take the statement in 1 Sam. xxvi. 19 seriously. Jeremiah's contemporaries, for the most part, shared the view of David and his persecutors. Banishment to a foreign land meant for them, not theoretically only, but practically to a very considerable extent, the abandonment of their national religion. It is true, as Duhm says, that the Jews were not prevented by the Babylonians from practising their religion, but large numbers of the exiles probably felt that the destruction of the State had snapped the tie which bound them to Yahweh, and these would zealously fulfil Jeremiah's prediction.

14 [S] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD,
that it shall no more be said, As the LORD liveth, that
brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;
15 but, As the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of
Israel from the land of the north, and from all the
countries whither he had driven them: and I will bring
them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.
16 [J] Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD,
and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for
many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every
mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of
17 the rocks. For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they
are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity con-

14, 15 are found with trivial changes in xxiii. 7, 8, where they are in harmony with the context. They are obviously, as recent scholars almost universally agree (Orelli is an exception), out of place here, but whether inserted by accident, or whether to modify the painful impression of the prophecy of judgement in which they are inserted, we cannot say. See further note on xxiii. 7, 8.

16 continues the threats of 9-13, not the promise of 14, 15, for the fishing and hunting refer to the captivity, not to the return. Cornill, following Duhm, infers from the fact that the hunting takes place at a later time than the fishing that the two captivities are referred to, first that of Jehoiachin, and then that of Zedekiah. Accordingly he argues that we have here a prophecy after the event. But the two figures represent two stages of a single captivity. The fish are captured in great masses; this corresponds to the capture of the capital and towns of Judah. The hunters, on the contrary, capture each victim singly, and this metaphor is added to the preceding to indicate the thoroughness with which Yahweh will carry through His work. He will not rest content with the exile of the great bulk of the people; it is His settled purpose that no single individual shall escape, hence the hunters ferret them out of every chink and cranny in which they may have concealed themselves. We may compare for this Amos ix. 1-4, and for the fishers Amos iv. 2; Hab. i. 14-17; Ezek. xii. 13, xxix. 4, 5.

17. For 'sin' Schmidt reads 'dwelling' (*mᵉ'ōnām*); he thinks the copyist misunderstood the tenor of the verse.

cealed from mine eyes. And first I will recompense 18
their iniquity and their sin double; [a] because they have
polluted my land with the carcases of their detestable
things, and have filled mine inheritance with their abo-
minations. O LORD, my strength, and my strong hold, 19
and my refuge in the day of affliction, unto thee shall the
nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say,
Our fathers have inherited nought but lies, *even* vanity
and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make 20
unto himself gods, which yet are no gods? [JS] Therefore, 21
behold, I will cause them to know, this once will I cause
them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall
know that my name is Jehovah.

[a] Or, *because they have polluted my land: they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable things and their abominations*

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18. first: i.e. before the restoration promised in 14, 15. It cannot accordingly be original here, and since it is omitted in the LXX, it may very well be a gloss introduced after the insertion of 14, 15. Cornill emends the text, reading 'And on their head I will recompense.'

double. Cf. Isa. xl. 2, 'she hath received at Yahweh's hand double for all her sins,' i.e. double punishment. The two passages are probably connected; Duhm has withdrawn his former view that Isa. xl. 2 was dependent on this passage, but Cornill has defended it. Giesebrecht and Rothstein prefer to reverse the relation.

the carcases of their detestable things. The detestable things are the false gods; they are regarded as lifeless, hence their corpses are said to pollute the land, a dead body being ceremonially unclean. The expression is vigorous but rather strange; cf. 'the carcases of your idols,' Lev. xxvi. 30.

19. This great utterance is assigned to Jeremiah by Giesebrecht and Cornill, the latter pointing out that such an expectation lay right in the direction of Jeremiah's theology, and was a consequence of his conception of religion. It is not, however, it would seem, in its original position. Some critics, including Findlay, treat it as a gloss.

21. The close reminds us very forcibly of Ezekiel, and probably this verse assumed its present form under Ezekiel's influence.

17 [J] The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, *and*
with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table
2 of their heart, and upon the horns of [a] your altars; whilst
their children remember their altars and their [b] Asherim

[a] †Another reading is, *their.* [b] See Ex. xxxiv. 13.

xvii. 1–4. These verses, with 'Thus saith the LORD' in 5, are omitted in the LXX, probably by a pure accident. The translator's eye seems to have passed from 'Yahweh' at the end of xvi. 21 to 'Yahweh' in 5. The verses are genuine, though Schmidt regards them as a late paraphrase of xv. 4, but the text is badly preserved and the interpretation difficult. Since 3, 4 occur in xv. 13, 14, we have the LXX translation of them; it is very regrettable that for 1, 2 we are less fortunate.

1. An iron stylus was used to cut inscriptions on rock, stone, or other hard material, when it was desired to secure their permanence (see note on Job xix. 24). The thought is accordingly of the indelible character of the writing. The diamond point is also mentioned because of its extreme hardness, it alone being capable of cutting the diamond. The iron pen and point of the diamond are named because the heart of Judah is so hard. The prophet's meaning is not that Judah's tendency to sin is indelibly ingrained, but that the brand of its guilt cannot be removed.

2. This is a difficult verse. Why should there be a reference to the children? and the indelible writing would be on Judah's heart, whether the children remembered the altars or not. The particle rendered 'when' may also be translated 'as,' and the traditional Jewish explanation was 'as they think of their children, so they think of their altars and their Asherim, &c.,' but according to Hebrew usage, 'their children' should be the subject not the object of the verb, and the words do not naturally bear the sense imposed upon them. It is generally agreed that the text is corrupt. Duhm, followed by Cornill, strikes out 'whilst their children remember their altars and Asherim,' so that the sin is represented as written on their heart, the horns of their altars, the trees, the hills, and the mountain in the field, i. e. the sin of their idolatry. Giesebrecht says the simplest remedy would be to read 'so that their children will remember' (*lizkōr* for *kizkōr*), but he goes a little further and reads 'for a remembrance before me' instead of 'whilst their children remember', and then strikes out 'their altars . . . hills,' as a later inventory of the cultus at the high places. Either of these expedients would give us a straightforward text, but no great confidence can be felt in choosing between them.

Asherim. The Asherah was a sacred post, erected beside an

by the green trees upon the high hills. O my mountain 3
in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures
for a spoil, *and* thy high places, because of sin, throughout
all thy borders. And thou, even of thyself, shalt dis- 4
continue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will
cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou
knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger
which shall burn for ever.

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altar (Deut. xvi. 21). It is often regarded as the symbol of a goddess Asherah or Ashrat (see R.V. marg. on Exod. xxxiv. 13). The worship of such a goddess seems now to be established, nevertheless the connexion of the Asherim with her cult is very dubious.

3. O my mountain in the field. The usual explanation has connected these words, as R.V. does, with what follows, and treats it as a term for Jerusalem, defending this by a reference to xxi. 13, which is itself a very insecure basis. Giesebrecht considers this to be the best explanation of the text, but suspects corruption. It is safer, with some of the older scholars, to connect with the preceding verse, and then with Duhm and Cornill to change the pointing and read 'the mountain in the field.'

thy substance. From this point to the close of 4, we have a parallel text in xv. 13, 14. The text is better preserved in this verse than in xv. 13.

4. The former part of the sentence, 'And thou . . . gave thee,' is not contained in xv. 14, and is therefore treated as an insertion by Duhm and Cornill. The R.V. rendering 'discontinue' is not justifiable, still less 'even of thyself.' We should read, 'And thou shalt let thy hand fall from thine heritage,' accepting, with most scholars, the emendation of J. D. Michaelis, *yādᵉka* for *ūbᵉka* (cf. Deut. xv. 3).

I will cause thee to serve thine enemies. The text is preferable to that in xv. 14, where, however, the LXX reads as here.

5–8. This beautiful passage stands in no close connexion with its context. There is no need to dispute its Jeremianic origin, since its insertion here by the editor is easier to account for, if Jeremiah uttered it. Its position may be due to the feeling that the doom just predicted found its explanation in the principle here enunciated. The passage is parallel to Ps. i. 3, 4. A comparison between them leaves the question of relative priority uncertain, but on other grounds it is probable that the Psalmist imitates the prophet.

5 Thus saith the LORD: Cursed is the man that trusteth
in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart de-
6 parteth from the LORD. For he shall be like [a] the heath
in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but
shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt
7 land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth
8 in the LORD, and whose [b] hope the LORD is. For he

[a] Or, *a tamarisk* [b] Heb. *trust.*

5. It is a favourite thought with the prophets that Israel should depend not on human helpers but on its God. Thus Isaiah denounced the alliance with Egypt against Assyria, reminding his hearers that the Egyptians were men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit (Isa. xxxi. 3), a striking parallel to the present verse, which may have been similarly occasioned by Judah's reliance on help from Egypt against Babylon. In the Old Testament 'flesh' is a synonym for creaturely weakness; occasionally there is an additional suggestion of moral weakness. The Pauline antithesis of 'flesh' and 'spirit' involves a much sharper ethical dualism.

6. the heath (cf. xlviii. 9); the Hebrew word is of very uncertain meaning. It occurs also in Ps. cii. 17, where it is rendered 'destitute,' and a similar sense is given to it here by several scholars. But the contrast in 8 shows clearly that a tree or shrub is intended. The identification is quite conjectural; probably the dwarf juniper tree is intended (see Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 358). With this tree the prophet fitly compares the man who relies on human aid. Its roots reach down to no water, its leaves are refreshed by no rain; starved and stunted, it just hangs on to a miserable life.

8. But while the shrub in the parched salt desert drags out this shrivelled existence, how different is it with the tree planted by the watercourses! Its roots are fed from the perennial stream, which does not fail even in the year of drought; it puts forth its luxuriant foliage and then its fruit. For though the rain be withheld, its confidence is unshaken, since it draws its life from waters which never run dry. Such is the blessedness of the man whose confidence is in God, the fountain of living waters. Duhm fully appreciates the beauty of the passage, but considers that Jeremiah could not have uttered 7, 8 in view of the ruin he anticipated for the nation. Cornill replies that we might just as well deny that Jesus uttered the metaphor of the Two Builders in Matt. vii. 24–27 in view of the prospect of persecution and death which He held out to His followers. The present writer, however, considers that

shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out his roots by the river, and shall not [a] fear when heat cometh, but his leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. The heart is 9
deceitful above all things, and it is desperately sick: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the 10
reins, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. As the partridge 11

[a] According to another reading, *see.*

Duhm's objection might be met by the hypothesis that 5–8 belonged to the early part of the prophet's ministry.

fear (so LXX and Vulg.) is better than marg. **see,** in spite of the correspondence with 6.

9, 10: Here again we have an utterance which stands in no apparent connexion with what precedes. Nor is there any natural link with what follows. Duhm has made the attractive suggestion that it should be taken with 14 ff. If so, we have a colloquy between God and the prophet. The latter is not uttering in 9 a general observation on the deceitfulness of man's heart, but a personal confession prompted by a fresh insight into the dark possibilities he had come to discern within himself. On the surface all was fair; to himself, as well as to others, he seemed whole-hearted in his consecration. But the new light has lit up the subterranean depths of his heart, disclosing a prospect from which he recoils in amazement and dread. If he himself is unaware of the evil forces within his nature, which may at any time be released to his ruin, who is there who can know them all? To this despairing question we have the Divine response in 10. Yahweh knows all the intricate windings of the heart, and tracks the evil to its remotest lurking place. Then in 14 the prophet prays that the physician who has skill to diagnose his secret malady will heal him, for only so can the healing be complete.

10. even to give . . . doings: this recurs in xxxii. 19: it suits that passage better than this, and has perhaps been inserted here from it.

11. Here we have an isolated proverb on ill-gotten gains. The identification of the bird mentioned with the partridge accords with the ancient tradition; if it is correct the prophet employs a popular belief which is commonly thought to have no foundation in fact. Mr. Woods, however, gives evidence that the statement of the verse is correct, whether we adopt the text or the margin,

[a] that gathereth *young* which she hath not brought forth,
so is he that getteth riches, and not by right; in the
midst of his days [b] they shall leave him, and at his end
he shall be a fool.

12 [S] A glorious throne, *set* on high from the beginning, is
13 the place of our sanctuary. O LORD, the hope of Israel,
all that forsake thee shall be ashamed; they that depart
from me shall be written in the earth, because they have
14 forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. [J] Heal
me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall
15 be saved: for thou art my praise. Behold, they say

[a] +Or, *sitteth on* eggs *which she hath not laid*
[b] Or, *he shall leave them*

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except that the implication that the young birds desert their foster-mother is probably a mere popular belief (see Woods and Powell, *The Hebrew Prophets*, vol. ii. pp. 104 f.). The meaning of the metaphor is probably that as a bird, which takes possession of another bird's nest and hatches the eggs she finds in it, is afterwards deserted by the alien brood, so the rich man will lose the wealth he has unlawfully acquired. There is nothing in the passage inconsistent with Jeremiah's authorship.

a fool in the moral sense, as is usual in the Old Testament, rather than the intellectual.

12, 13. These verses also are not connected with their context. The former sets a value on Jerusalem as Yahweh's throne, which is surprising in Jeremiah; the latter is not open to any such objection, but it quotes from ii. 13 and xiv. 8, and probably in view of this and its connexion with 12, it also should be regarded as an editorial insertion.

written in the earth: this must mean written in the dust or on the soil, so that, unlike those whose names are engraved on marble or brass, they would soon be blotted out. But 'the earth' does not mean the soil, and the whole expression is peculiar. Ewald reads 'they that depart from thee in the land shall be put to confusion,' which restores the parallelism with the preceding clause.

14–18. These verses link on to 9, 10 (see note).

15. It was the taunting speeches of his enemies, who scoffed at his predictions of ruin, which drove him to thoughts that he would never have believed himself capable of harbouring, and

unto me, Where is the word of the LORD? let it come
now. As for me, I have not hastened from being a 16
shepherd after thee; neither have I desired [a] the woeful
day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was
before thy face. Be not a terror unto me: thou art my 17
refuge in the day of evil. Let them be ashamed that 18
persecute me, but let not me be ashamed; let them be
dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them
the day of evil, and [b] destroy them with double destruc-
tion.

[K] Thus said the LORD unto me: Go, and stand in the 19

[a] Some ancient versions read, *the judgement day of man.*
[b] Heb. *break them with a double breach.*

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thus revealed to him the deceitfulness of his heart and the weakness of his self-restraint. The sentence is parallel in thought to Isa. v. 19.

16. The first clause is strangely expressed, and the use of 'shepherd' for prophet without parallel. If the text is correct the meaning is, I have not renounced the task of acting as Thy prophet. But we should probably change the pointing and read, I have not hastened after Thee because of evil, which yields the same sense as the next clause, that he has not implored Yahweh to vindicate him against the scoffs of his foes by fulfilling his predictions of disaster. Yahweh is his witness that he has never uttered such prayers.

18. The imprecation with which the verse ends, even if we could credit Jeremiah with uttering it, contradicts 16 too sharply to have been uttered by him at this time, all the more when he is dismayed by the evil he has discovered in his own heart, and is praying for deliverance from it. The two previous clauses are not open to the same objection, and may perhaps be genuine.

xvii. 19-27. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

The Jeremianic authorship of this section was denied by Kuenen in the second edition of his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1889), and his arguments have been very generally accepted, though among recent scholars the authenticity has been defended by Orelli, Findlay, and (in the main) by Rothstein (see also Driver's *Introduction*, 8th edition, 1909, p. 258). The style has much in common with that of Jeremiah, and the sabbath was an old insti-

gate of [a] the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all
20 the gates of Jerusalem; and say unto them, Hear ye the

[a] Or, *the common people* See ch. xxvi. 23.

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tution, which had not simply a ritual but a humanitarian purpose. We ought therefore to be cautious in pressing the anti-ceremonialism of Jeremiah as a proof that this prophecy cannot have been spoken by him. Yet the stylistic indications of his authorship may be due to imitation, and while he may conceivably have pleaded for sabbath observance, in spite of his otherwise total silence about it, he could hardly have made the fate of Judah depend upon it. It was something far deeper than any outward observance that he demanded, a new heart and a new spirit. The passage is closely akin to Neh. xiii. 15–22, and Kuenen's view that it belongs to the same period is very probable. The detachment of the Jews from sacred places by the exile gave a wholly new importance and prominence to sacred times, especially the sabbath.

xvii. 19–23. Yahweh bade me stand in the gate and bid the people bring in no burden through the gates on the sabbath, or carry any burden from their houses or do any work, but hallow the sabbath as He commanded their fathers, who refused to obey.

24–27. If they obey this command, then king and princes shall enter through the gates and the city shall abide for ever, and sacrifices shall be brought into it from all the districts round about. But if they refuse, a fire will be kindled in the gates and consume the palaces of Jerusalem.

19, 20. Cf. vii. 2. What is meant by 'the gate of the children of the people' is quite uncertain. The LXX reads 'the gates of the children of thy people;' we might accordingly think, with Orelli, of 'the gate of Benjamin,' xxxvii. 13, xxxviii. 7, through which the inhabitants went into the land of Benjamin, xxxvii. 12, where Jeremiah's home was situated, and where it was customary for the king to sit. The order of the verbs 'come in and go out' ought perhaps not to be unduly pressed, but it does not favour the view that the gate led from Jerusalem into the country, for then we should have expected 'go out and come in.' It might mean a gate by which the king entered the Temple, but why should this be called the people's gate? Are kings and people classed together as the laity in distinction from the priests? The description would suit better a gate by which the kings came from their palace into the city and by which the people entered into the palace, and an internal gate, leading from one part of the city to another, might

word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates; thus saith the LORD: Take heed [a] to yourselves, 21 and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden 22 out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work: but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers; but they hearkened not, neither inclined 23 their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, and might not receive instruction. And it shall 24 come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this

[a] Or, *for your life's sake*

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well stand in contrast to 'all the gates of Jerusalem.' Yet in view of the repeated mention of the gates in the sense of the gates through which goods were brought into Jerusalem from the country, it is hard to believe that an internal gate is intended. The text is open to suspicion. The name, 'the gate of the children of the people,' is itself a very strange title for a gate. If a temple gate were suitable we might read, as in vii. 2, 'in the gate of the house of Yahweh,' though this is not an easy emendation. The present writer suggests that we should read 'in the gate of Benjamin,' as in xxxvii. 13, xxxviii. 7 (*binyamin* for *b^{e}ne 'am*), and possibly strike out the last clause 'and in all the gates of Jerusalem' as a gloss occasioned by the collective reference to the gates in the rest of the passage. The statement that the kings entered and departed by this gate seems at first sight irrelevant, but is occasioned by 25. The plural 'kings' may be reconciled with a date in Jeremiah's time, but so general a designation is better accounted for in a period when the monarchy had ceased to be (see 25).

20. kings: the plural is here much more surprising than in 19. It seems to be quite illegitimate to explain the term to mean king and princes: in the similar passage xxii. 2, the singular is used; the plural here is a sign of post-exilic origin.

that enter in by these gates: derived from vii. 2.

21. The sabbath was apparently chosen by the people to bring in their produce from the country, since they would be at work in the fields during the week. That the kings are here associated with others is surprising.

city on the sabbath day, but to hallow the sabbath day,
25 to do no work therein; then shall there enter in by the
gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne
of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and
their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of
26 Jerusalem: and this city shall [a] remain for ever. And
they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the
places round about Jerusalem, and from the land of Ben-
jamin, and from the lowland, and from the mountains,
and from the South, bringing burnt offerings, and
sacrifices, and [b] oblations, and frankincense, and bringing
sacrifices of thanksgiving, unto the house of the LORD.
27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the
sabbath day, and not to bear a burden and enter in
at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I
kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the
palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

18 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD,

[a] †Or, *be inhabited* [b] Or, *meal offerings*

25. and princes: should be omitted, as by Graf and other scholars: it has been inserted under the influence of ii. 26 and other passages; the princes do not share the king's throne.

26. Cf. xxxii. 44, xxxiii. 13, and for the close of the verse xxxiii. 11. Similar enumerations are to be found in Deut. i. 7, Joshua x. 40. The cities in these districts are enumerated in Joshua xv. 21–32 (the Negeb), 33–44 (the Shephelah), 48–60 (the hill-country). 'The lowland' is the Shephelah which included the low range that sloped down towards Philistia, 'the mountains' were the hill country of Judah south of Jerusalem, the South was the Negeb or parched land in the south of Judah.

27. The closing words are based on the refrain in Amos' prophecy of judgement on the nations, Amos i. 3—ii. 5; cf. Jer. xxi. 14, xlix. 27, l. 32.

xviii. THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.

With this chapter a section of the book begins which extends to the close of chap. xx. In xix, xx we have, as in xviii, a lesson

saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and 2

based on the potter's vessel, followed by bitter complaints of the persecution endured by the prophet. The three chapters form, however, only an editorial unity. The first of them falls into two main portions: (*a*) xviii. 1–17, (*b*) xviii. 18–23. The story of the potter (1–12) is regarded by Duhm as a late fiction; Jeremiah had seen the potter at work a hundred times in his childhood, and the moral is as trivial as it can be. But it is part of Jeremiah's greatness that he discerns a deep, Divine meaning in the familiar, commonplace incident; and the lesson deduced is anything but trivial. Cornill, who regards the story as historical and the moral as weighty, thinks that we must regard 5–12 as a later insertion, which misses the point of the incident. The story teaches that when through some mischance the vessel was spoiled on the wheel, the potter was not baffled, but, instead of flinging the marred vessel on the rubbish heap, moulded the clay into another vessel as it seemed good to him. The moral of this is that though Israel's history has proved a failure, God is not defeated but can make the nation over again according to His will. The explanation given in 5–11, Cornill says, does not correspond to this; it speaks of a God who models the clay, but not of a God who works at the marred vessel till it becomes good. There is force in this criticism, though there seems to be no good reason why 5, 6 should not be taken with 1–4. But 7–12 give a pessimistic application to the symbol, which taken by itself conveys an optimistic lesson. The verses may, however, be the work of Jeremiah, but not originally attached to the story of the potter. Erbt confines the original utterance to 1–6, but treats it as threatening. Giesebrecht contents himself with deleting 11, 12 as an insertion intended to connect this section with the following. If the symbol is optimistic in its lesson we may date it as far back as the reign of Josiah. But in its present form it is probably later. 13–17 are unquestionably Jeremianic, and may belong to the reign of Jehoiakim.

xviii. 18–23 reminds us of xv. 10–21, xvii. 14–18. It probably belongs, so far as it is Jeremiah's, to the reign of Jehoiakim. Duhm and Cornill strike out 21–23; it would certainly be a relief to think that Jeremiah did not utter them.

xviii. 1–12. At Yahweh's bidding I went to the potter's house, and saw how when a vessel was marred in the making, he made it into another vessel. So Israel is clay in Yahweh's hand. Doom may be averted by repentance, but promised blessing may be withheld on account of sin. Yahweh purposes to punish the people, let them reform; but they refuse.

13–17. Unheard of among the nations, unparalleled in Nature,

3 there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went
down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought his
4 work on the wheels. And when the vessel that he made
of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he
made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the
potter to make it.

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is the sin of Israel; she has forsaken Yahweh for idols, and will suffer a bitter punishment.

18–23. They plot against the prophet, they revile and refuse to hear him. Hear Thou their voice, they repay good with evil, remember my pleading for them. Let famine and sword devour their children and themselves, for the snares they have laid for me; forgive not their sin, but visit them with Thine anger.

xviii. 2. go down: the potter's house apparently was in one of the lower parts of the city.

3. the wheels: literally **the two stones.** The apparatus consisted of an upper and lower circular stone, connected by the same rod which passed through the centre. The lower stone was turned by the feet, and the upper stone, on which the clay rested, revolved with it. There is a description of the potter's work in Ecclus. xxxviii. 29, 30.

4. made of the clay . . . potter. The Hebrew is harsh; read, with the LXX, 'made in his hand.' This failure seems to have occurred several times during the prophet's visit. The mishap might be occasioned by some flaw in the material, the imperfection of the mechanism, or the unskilfulness of the potter. But naturally it was not any fault in Yahweh's handling of His people, but a certain intractableness in the material He was shaping, which defeated His beneficent design. There is no slip of 'the Potter's Thumb.' Yet He cannot be permanently thwarted. He will

> 'Amend what flaws may lurk,
> What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim.'

The clay will be kneaded afresh, and then placed back again on the spinning stone for Him to shape it to His mind. Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra* should be compared (from stanza xxv to the end). Paul's handling of the theme in the discussion of national election in Rom. ix–xi proceeds on different lines. He uses it to insist on God's unconditional right to dispose of His creatures as He will, to make a vessel to honour or to dishonour (Rom. ix. 21). Cf. Isa. xxix. 16, xlv. 9, lxiv. 8; Ecclus. xxxiii. 13; and especially Wisd. of Sol. xv. 7, which may have been in Paul's mind, though the reference to the potter is here literal, not metaphorical.

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O 5, 6
house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?
saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay in the potter's
hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.
[JS] At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and 7
concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down
and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I 8
have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the
evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what 9
instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning
a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my 10
sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of
the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. Now 11
therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the

5, 6. Suddenly the meaning flashes on him, the lesson God has sent him to the potter's to learn. Israel is the clay in God's hands, which has so disappointed Him. Yet He will fashion Israel into a vessel according to His mind.

7. If 7–10 is the proper continuation of 6, the point is that just as the original intention of the potter may be changed by some unexpected turn, so Yahweh's intention may be altered by change in the conditions. His threat and His promise are not unconditional. Repentance may annul the one, disobedience the other. But this is not a natural application of the figure. For the potter does not contemplate the rejection of the clay when he begins to mould it, a purpose changed when the clay proves unexpectedly amenable to his handling. And when the clay proves a failure on the wheel he does not throw it aside, but fashions it anew. So Yahweh's purpose with Israel will not be thwarted by its present intractableness, the original design will be fulfilled. Accordingly we may regard these verses as attached to 1–6 by an editor. They may, however, be Jeremiah's work, though Cheyne thinks that his certainty of the destruction of Jerusalem forbids this (*Enc. Bib.* 3878). The thought they express is illustrated by the story of Jonah's prediction of Nineveh's overthrow. In the exposition which Ezekiel gives of his doctrine of individual retribution we have the same principle transferred from the nation to the individual (Ezek. xviii. 21–28, xxxiii. 12–20).

11. frame: the verb of which the word rendered 'potter' is the participle.

inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD: Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way,
12 and amend your ways and your doings. But they say, There is no hope: for we will walk after our own devices, and we will do every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart.
13 [J] Therefore thus saith the LORD: Ask ye now among the nations, who hath heard such things; the
14 virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. Shall

12. There is no hope. Cf. ii. 25.

13. Cf. ii. 10, 11, v. 30.

14. The unnaturalness of Israel's conduct is here affirmed, as in viii. 7. But the text of the verse is by general consent corrupt. The expression 'rock of the field' is peculiar, and none of the interpretations proposed for it is satisfactory. The word rendered 'field' might also be pointed as the Divine name Shaddai; it would then be best to render, with Giesebrecht, 'Does the snow of Lebanon fail from the rock of Shaddai?' the term he takes to mean a lofty mountain. It would be better to accept Cornill's emendation 'Sirion' for 'field.' Sirion was the name given to Hermon by the Phoenicians (Deut. iii. 9, cf. Ps. xxix. 6). But this leads to a further change, since the snow of Lebanon would hardly be said to flow down from the rock of Hermon. We may accept either Duhm's restoration, 'Does the hoar frost leave Sirion, the snow Lebanon?' or Cornill's, 'Does the white snow flow away from the rock of Sirion?' The latter is preferable, since it avoids the objection which has been urged that the snow does not last through the summer on Lebanon. It seems as a matter of fact to remain in patches, but the summit of Hermon is crowned with snow through the year. In the second half of the verse the text is also corrupt. The rendering 'dried up' involves the transposition of two letters in the Hebrew; the text means 'plucked up,' but this is inappropriate. With this alteration the line runs '*Or* shall the strange, cold, flowing waters be dried up?' The triple epithet is surprising, and 'strange' is unsuitable. It may have arisen by dittography of the next word. Duhm, by a fresh division of consonants, gets instead of 'strange waters,' 'the waters of the scatterers' (cf. Job xxxvii. 9, where the word rendered 'north' is said to mean 'scattering *winds*'), and translates 'the waters of the northern stars.' The point is, he thinks, that the northern stars when they rise above the horizon each year bring fresh rain to

the snow of Lebanon fail from the rock of the field? *or*
shall the cold waters [a] that flow down from afar be [b] dried
up? For my people hath forgotten me, they have burned 15
incense to vanity; and they have caused them to
stumble in their ways, in the ancient paths, to walk in
bypaths, in a way not cast up; to make their land an 16
astonishment, and a perpetual hissing; every one that
passeth thereby shall be astonished, and shake his head.
I will scatter them as with an east wind before the 17
enemy; I will [c] look upon their back, and not their face,
in the day of their calamity.

Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices 18

[a] Or, *of strange lands that flow down be &c.* [b] Or, *plucked up*
[c] Or, *shew them the back, and not the face*

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the earth. But this is very uncertain, and the same must be said of the reconstructions of Cornill and Erbt. We should probably either strike out 'strange' or, with a slight alteration, read '*Or* are the cold flowing waters of the hills dried up?'

15. vanity: or 'nothingness;' a term for the 'non-existent deities;' cf. ii. 5, where, however, a different Hebrew word is used.

The second half of the verse is difficult and rather overloaded. They who caused the people to stumble are apparently the false gods, but more probably we should read 'they' (i. e. the people) 'have stumbled.' For 'the ancient paths' see vi. 16. They have stumbled in the way divinely ordained from of old, and chosen their own by-paths—roads that have never been properly made.

16. astonishment: this rather than 'desolation' is the true rendering here, but there is a suggestion of the other meaning.

17. The east wind, as everywhere in the O.T., is the sirocco, hot, stifling, violent, blowing over the land from the desert, blasting and parching vegetation, overwhelming caravans, suffocating its victims (see note on iv. 11). As men flee before it for shelter, so Yahweh will make Israel flee before the foe (cf. xiii. 24).

18. We are here confronted with a similar situation to that we have met in xi. 18–23, xii. 1–6, xv. 10, 11, 15–21. The prophet's enemies plot against his life. The precise sense of the verse is uncertain. The most obvious meaning is that the priest, sage, and prophet are permanent elements in the community. If so, the point may be either Jeremiah's assertion that the State with

against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the
priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the
prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue,
and let us not give heed to any of his words.
19 Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice
20 of them that contend with me. Shall evil be recom-
pensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul.
Remember how I stood before thee to speak good for
21 them, to turn away thy fury from them. [S] Therefore

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its institutions will come to an end is false, or, Let us not hesitate to kill Jeremiah, for there are plenty to reveal God's will to us when he is gone. But neither is satisfactory: the former because the motive is hardly adequate and the idea artificially expressed; the latter because, with their view that Jeremiah's message was fundamentally false, they would hardly treat his removal as conceivably involving, even as a matter for discussion, the cessation of revelation. It is therefore better to take the words as meaning that the enemies of Jeremiah are at no loss to give advice how they may best get him out of the way. As in the case of Jesus, they take counsel together how they may put him to death. It was the function of the priests to give torah or direction, i. e. in ritual or ethical matters; here the technical word is employed with a ghastly sinister suggestion. 'The wise' were the sages, of whose reflections on life the Book of Proverbs gives us a typical, though perhaps favourable, example. From Ezek. vii. 26 it would seem that 'the law ... the prophet' was a proverb. Duhm and Cornill omit the last clause.

smite him with the tongue: i. e. circulate ruinous slanders about him.

not give heed: the LXX omits the negative, 'let us give heed to all his words,' i. e. watch his utterances in order to use them for his destruction, as the enemies of Jesus did. This gives a much better sense. Jeremiah's utterances lent themselves readily to a charge of treason; cf. xx. 10.

21-23. This passionate outburst of vindictive fury, in which the writer heaps curses not only on his enemies, but on their wives and children, accords ill with Jeremiah's deep and tender compassion for his people, and with his claim that he had interceded for them and not desired the woeful day. We should probably regard these verses as editorial; 22^b, 23^a (to 'slay me') are unobjectionable, but it is scarcely worth while to regard them as by Jeremiah.

deliver up their children to the famine, and give them over to the power of the sword; and let their wives become childless, and widows; and let their men be slain of death, *and* their young men smitten of the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard from their houses, when 22
thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet. Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me 23
to slay me; forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight: but let them be [a] overthrown before thee; deal thou with them in the time of thine anger.

[B] Thus said the LORD, Go, and buy a potter's 19

[a] Heb. *made to stumble.*

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xix. 1—xx. 6. THE PARABLE OF THE BROKEN BOTTLE, AND THE PREDICTION OF PASHHUR'S FATE FOR PUNISHING THE PROPHET.

The link between this section and the preceding is the mention of a potter's vessel in both. The connexion is thus quite external. Duhm regards the whole section as late, but later commentators have refused to follow him in this drastic criticism. In the first edition of his commentary Giesebrecht argued that xix. 3–9 was an insertion, and this has been widely accepted. It is strange that Jeremiah should receive instructions to declare in the valley of Ben-Hinnom the word that Yahweh should tell him, and that immediately on this injunction the word should be communicated to him before he went to the valley at all. The contents are also suspicious, for they are very generalizing in character and full of reminiscences, and are drawn especially from the close of chap. vii. The style of the LXX differs from the usual style, and this also suggests that these verses were not in the Hebrew text used by the original translator, but were a subsequent insertion. Giesebrecht passes a similar judgement on 11[b]–13 (so Schmidt), and now with Cornill rejects xx. 4–6. The date of the incident is uncertain; the most likely view is that it happened early in the reign of Jehoiakim. Since Jeremiah is spoken of from 14 onwards in the third person, the section in its original form was probably derived from the memoirs of Baruch.

xix. 1, 2. Yahweh bids the prophet buy an earthen bottle, and

earthen bottle, and *take* of the elders of the people, and
2 of the elders of the priests; and go forth unto the valley
of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of
[a] the gate Harsith, and proclaim there the words that I

[a] †Or, *the gate of potsherds*

go with it to the valley of Ben-Hinnom, accompanied by elders of the people and priests, and there utter the words He should tell him.

3-9. He is to announce evil on Jerusalem for its idolatry, the shedding of innocent blood, and child-sacrifice. The valley shall lose its former name and be called The Valley of Slaughter. The inhabitants shall be slain, their carcases devoured by birds and beasts of prey. All that pass by shall view the ruins with amazement and scorn. The privations of the besieged shall be so terrible that they will eat their own children.

10-13. Then he shall break the bottle, and say that thus Yahweh will break the people and the city. He will make it and the houses, on the roofs of which idolatrous sacrifices have been offered, like Tophet.

14—xx. 6. Then Jeremiah returned from Tophet to the Temple, and there proclaimed to the people that the city would suffer its penalty for the obstinate disobedience of the people. Pashhur, the chief officer of the Temple, smote him and put him in the stocks. When he released him on the following day, Jeremiah told him that his name would be Magor-missabib. For he would be a terror to himself and his friends; he should behold their death by the sword. Judah and all its treasure would be carried to Babylon, and there Pashhur and his friends should die.

xix. 1. He is to take a fragile earthen vessel, because the symbolism requires that it is to be broken.

the elders of the priests: mentioned also in 2 Kings xix. 2, but perhaps we should read, with the LXX, simply 'the priests.'

2. the valley of the son of Hinnom. See vii. 31. Duhm, who is followed by Cornill, thinks the references to this valley, whether by this name or that of Tophet, are secondary, i.e. 5-7 which are borrowed from vii. 31-33, and 12[b], 13 together with the reference in the present verse.

the gate Harsith: we should render as in the margin 'the gate of potsherds.' The name occurs nowhere else; it was perhaps so-called because broken earthenware was thrown there after the valley of Hinnom had been defiled by Josiah, or perhaps because the potters had their works in the neighbourhood. Or potsherds may have been ground to powder there, to make cement

shall tell thee: [S] and say, Hear ye the word of the 3
LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem;
thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold,
I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever
heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have for- 4
saken me, and have estranged this place, and have
burned incense in it unto other gods, whom they knew
not, they and their fathers and the kings of Judah; and
have filled this place with the blood of innocents; and 5
have built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons in
the fire for burnt offerings unto Baal; which I com-
manded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my [a] mind:

[a] Heb. *heart.*

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for plastering cisterns (see Driver's note). It is generally identified with the Dung-Gate (Neh. ii. 13, iii. 13, 14, xii. 31), which led to the valley of Ben-Hinnom.

3. The address to the kings of Judah is surprising. The plural would hardly have been used while the Jewish monarchy was an actuality (cf. xvii. 20).

this place is Jerusalem, so also (and not merely Tophet) in 4.

his ears shall tingle. Cf. 1 Sam. iii. 11. The latter part of the verse is apparently derived from 2 Kings xxi. 12.

4. estranged this place. This seems to mean they have treated it as foreign, by making foreign deities at home in it. 'We might say now, *denationalized*' (Driver).

We should probably read, with the LXX, 'they and their fathers; and the kings of Judah have filled,' &c. The special reference in the last clause is apparently to the reign of Manasseh, from the account of whose reign it is borrowed (2 Kings xxi. 16, xxiv. 4), but the author generalizes. In spite of the context, it is probably not the sacrifices of children, but the murder by judicial process, by violence, or in religious persecution, of innocent persons that is intended.

5. Borrowed from vii. 31, with some variation (see note); cf. also xxxii. 35. The LXX omits 'for burnt offerings unto Baal.' The offerings were made to Molech, i.e. probably, in the popular intention, to Yahweh regarded as King, a view repudiated by Jeremiah with abhorrence.

6 therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that
this place shall no more be called Topheth, nor The
valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of Slaughter.
7 And I will [a] make void the counsel of Judah and
Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by
the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of them
that seek their life: and their carcases will I give to be
meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts
8 of the earth. And I will make this city an astonishment,
and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall
be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.
9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and
the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one
the flesh of his friend, in the siege and in the straitness,
wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their life, shall
10 straiten them. [B] Then shalt thou break the bottle in
11 the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say
unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Even so will
I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a

[a] Heb. *empty out.*

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6. Borrowed from vii. 32, the close of which, however, is given at the end of 11.

7. make void: the word, which means 'empty out,' is chosen with reference to the cognate word used in 1 for 'bottle.' The writer may have thought of Jeremiah as emptying the bottle as he pronounced the words.

and their carcases . . . earth. Borrowed from vii. 33.

8. Derived with some variation from xviii. 16.

9. Here the writer draws on Deut. xxviii. 53; cf. Lev. xxvi. 29.

10, 11. Now Jeremiah learns what he is to do with the earthenware flask. It is noteworthy that the narrator forgets to relate the prophet's fulfilment of the command. He assumes it in 14. It is the custom to break a jar behind a person on whom one would invoke a similar destruction. The close of 11, which is borrowed from vii. 32 and should therefore have been inserted in 6, is omitted in the LXX.

potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury in Topheth, [a] till there be no place to bury. Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, 12 and to the inhabitants thereof, even making this city as Topheth: and the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses 13 of the kings of Judah, which are defiled, shall be as the place of Topheth, even all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.

Then came Jeremiah from Topheth, whither the LORD 14 had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD'S house, and said to all the people: Thus saith 15 the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it; because they have made their neck stiff, that they might not hear my words.

Now Pashhur the son of Immer the priest, who was 20 chief officer in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah

[a] † Or, *because there shall be no place else*

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12. as Topheth: i.e. unclean, as 13 explains. Josiah had defiled it (2 Kings xxiii. 10).

13. Cf. xxxiii. 4, and for the sacrifices on the roofs xxxii. 29, 2 Kings xxiii. 12, Zeph. i. 5.

14. It is here presupposed that Jeremiah went to 'the gate of potsherds,' broke the bottle, and uttered the message he was charged to deliver. He now returns to the Temple and repeats the sentence of doom.

xx. 1. Pashhur. We read in xxi. 1 of a Pashhur, the son of Malchiah, and in xxxviii. 1 of a Pashhur the father of Gedaliah. The name seems accordingly to have been fairly common at this time. At a later period it was the name of a priestly family. Since Immer was also the name of a priestly family it is possible that 'son of Immer' is not to be understood strictly, but that it simply means that Pashhur belonged to that family. (On Duhm's theory see Erbt, pp. 15-17; Cornill, pp. 229 f.)

chief officer: Heb. 'overseer, ruler;' the latter word is pro-

2 prophesying these things. Then Pashhur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper gate of Benjamin, which was in the house
3 of the LORD. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashhur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then

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bably a gloss. The functions of the office are not defined, but apparently its holder was entrusted with the preservation of order in the Temple, and the suppression of whatever might seem subversive of it; cf. xxix. 26, where Zephaniah ('the second priest' according to 2 Kings xxv. 18) is said to have the power to put in the stocks 'every man that is mad and maketh himself a prophet.' Pashhur was accordingly not exceeding his powers in the treatment he accorded to Jeremiah.

2. the stocks. The precise form of this instrument of discipline is unknown; it was not only humiliating but painful, on account of the cramped and unnatural position into which the body was forced.

the upper gate of Benjamin: a temple gate on the North side, to be distinguished from the city gate, called the gate of Benjamin. Probably a way led from one to the other.

3. After a night of acute physical discomfort and of mental torture still harder to bear, Jeremiah was released, not without protest against the injustice and humiliation to which he had been subjected (cf. Acts xvi. 37). That the protest was so lengthy as is here represented is doubted by several critics, who confine it simply to the words recorded in this verse. These words are difficult. We are probably on the wrong track if we seek for an etymological explanation, as if Pashhur stood by its meaning in antithesis to Magor. There is apparently no play on words, but a new significant name is given to the overseer. This name is Terror. The Hebrew text reads 'Terror round about.' But the LXX omits 'round about,' and is more likely to be right in spite of its tendency to abbreviate; since 'terror round about' is a common expression in the book, its occurrence here is probably due to assimilation. The LXX also omits 'Yahweh,' perhaps correctly. In Pashhur's demeanour men will mark the overwhelming dread which haunts him, the shadow of approaching doom, and name him from this dominant emotion. Thus, too, he will be a sign to others of the fulfilment of Jeremiah's gruesome predictions. Probably he went into exile with Jehoiachin in 597, for somewhat later his office was held by Zephaniah (xxix. 25). For the scene cf. the encounter between Amos and Amaziah (Amos vii. 10-17), and that between Isaiah and Shebna (Isa. xxii. 15 ff.).

said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashhur, but [a] Magor-missabib. For thus saith 4
the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. Moreover I will give all the 5
riches of this city, and all the gains thereof, and all the precious things thereof, yea, all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. And thou, Pashhur, and all that dwell in thine 6
house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and there shalt thou be buried, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied falsely.

[J] O LORD, thou hast [b] deceived me, and I was de- 7

[a] That is, *Terror on every side.* [b] Or, *enticed*

4. There is an inconsistency between the representation of the fate which is to overtake Pashhur's friends here and in 6, but it is too trifling to be pressed. What is meant is that some are to go as exiles to Babylon, and some are to perish by the sword.

6. There is no other indication in the narrative that Pashhur was himself a prophet.

XX. 7–18. JEREMIAH COMPLAINS OF THE COMPULSION OF YAHWEH'S WORD, AND CURSES THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH.

We now reach one of the most powerful and impressive passages in the whole of the prophetic literature, a passage which takes us, as no other, not only into the depths of the prophet's soul, but into the secrets of the prophetic consciousness. For the psychology of prophecy there is nothing which is so instructive, nothing which displays so vividly the contact between the Divine and human element. The occasion of this utterance is not to be determined by its present connexion. It falls into two portions, 7–13, 14–18. The former of these in its present form closes with

ceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mock-

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a note of triumph like Ps. xxii, but 13 is thought by many scholars to be a later insertion on account of its Psalm-like tone, and especially its reference to 'the needy.' Even if this be admitted, 14–18 do not follow appropriately on 11, 12. It is arbitrary to delete these verses, though 12 is identical with xi. 20 and may have been originally a marginal quotation. It is also arbitrary to invert the order and place 14–18 before 7–13 (so Ewald). Accordingly, we must regard the two as mutually independent. There is nothing to fix the date with any certainty. From 7 it may be inferred that at the time there was no sign of approaching calamity, all seemed fair, and the prophet of disaster was a laughing-stock to the people. Nevertheless it is not likely that 7 ff. belong to the reign of Josiah. They represent a more advanced development than seems to have been reached at that time. Probably they belong to the early part of Jehoiakim's reign. The wild outburst of 14–18 may date from the same period, but it was perhaps wrung from him by the more bitter isolation of the dark days in which Judah's tragedy was moving swiftly to its climax. Schmidt regards the two fragments as evidently from different hands, 7–13 reminding us of the Psalter and uttered by the nation, 14–18 as probably dependent on Job iii.

xx. 7–10. Yahweh, Thou hast beguiled and overcome me, and I have yielded. All mock me, and Yahweh's word is my perpetual reproach. If I resolve to renounce my mission, the word burns in my bones that I cannot hold it in. False rumours are circulated about me, my friends try to entrap me in my talk.

11–13. Yahweh is my strong deliverer; my enemies shall be put to shame. Let me see Thy vengeance on them. Praise Him, for He has rescued me from evildoers.

14–18. Cursed be the day of my birth, cursed the man who announced the birth of a son to my father. Let him be as Sodom and Gomorrah, and hear the shout of war, since he slew me not before my birth. Why was I born to see sorrow and shame?

xx. 7. It is of the utmost importance to observe how overwhelming is the prophet's consciousness that the word is not his own. It is a word he would gladly leave unsaid, that he might have the peace he so dearly prized. But there is a compulsion in it from which he cannot escape, to refrain from uttering it brings him an even severer torment. Here there rings out clearly the prophet's unfaltering certainty of the real inspiration which is the source of all his message. On the light cast by this passage on Jeremiah's relations to God, see the Introduction, pp. 17 f.

eth me. For as often as I speak, I cry out; I cry, 8
Violence and spoil: because the word of the LORD is
made a reproach unto me, and a derision, all the day.
And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak 9
any more in his name, then there is in mine heart as it
were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary
with forbearing, and I cannot *contain*. For I have heard 10
the defaming of many, terror on every side. Denounce,
and we will denounce him, *say* all my familiar friends,
they that watch for my halting; peradventure he will be
enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall
take our revenge on him. But the LORD is with me as 11
a mighty one *and* a terrible: therefore my persecutors
shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be
greatly ashamed, because they have not [a] dealt wisely,
even with an everlasting dishonour which shall never be
forgotten. But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the right- 12

[a] Or, *prospered*

8. It is not clear whether Jeremiah means that 'Violence and spoil' is the substance of his message, or whether he means that every time he speaks Yahweh's word he has to endure violence. The latter, however, is favoured by the first clause. We should perhaps strike out 'and spoil;' it is not suitable, and the word is often added to 'violence,' and may easily have been introduced here by a copyist.

9. make mention of him: this rendering may be correct, but more probably we should translate 'think thereon,' i.e. on the word.

10. defaming: or whispering. It is of his familiar friends that he complains, and they naturally plot stealthily against him. It is their purpose to entangle him in his talk and then denounce him to the authorities; perhaps he will fall into the trap, and then they can get their revenge. The arrangement of the verse is not clear and the text is uncertain, but we may content ourselves with the general meaning, which, fortunately, is plain.

11. If at the beginning Jeremiah bitterly alludes to the promises with which God had enticed him at his call, he now triumphs over his despair in the confidence that God's promise

eous, that seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy
vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my
13 cause. [S] Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for
he hath delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of
evil-doers.
14 [J] Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the
15 day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be

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that He would be with him, and that his foes should not prevail (i. 19), is attested by his own experience. The verse is treated as an insertion by Duhm in his translation (not in the commentary, which was somewhat earlier), and by Cornill. But the reasons are quite inadequate. On 12, 13, see the Introduction to this section. The reader may consult with advantage Findlay's note on the psychological truth of 'these violent surges and alternations of feeling' in 'high-strung impressionable natures' (p. 201), though perhaps the scholars whom he criticizes for their blindness to this, would be more willing to recognize the correctness of the position he defends than he is quite willing to allow.

14–18. This passage is parallel to Job iii. 3–12. Here, as elsewhere, the question of relative priority has been debated. But without attempting to answer it by the generally inconclusive method of comparison, we can form a tolerably certain opinion. Our passage is incontestably genuine (by this it is not meant that its genuineness has not been denied), and therefore at the latest could not be much later than the destruction of Jerusalem. Job, on the other hand, can hardly be earlier than the exile, and is more probably post-exilic (see the present writer's commentary). Accordingly, the author of Job imitates Jeremiah, as indeed we might have anticipated. For Jeremiah's is a natural outburst, springing from a soul stirred to its depths; Job's curse is much more artificial and literary.

14. To antiquity the curse and the blessing were conceived to have not merely the subjective influence which is all most moderns assign to them, but a real objective effect. Once uttered, it enters on an independent existence and begins to carry itself into effect. (See further, the notes on Job iii.)

15. For us a day which is past has ceased to be, to curse the day of one's birth is therefore a piece of empty rhetoric, except in so far as it relieves the feelings. But the days of the year are not for the Hebrew mind mere marks of time, they are objective entities, each of which in its turn visits the world (cf. the twelve months in the fairy tale). Nevertheless, when the feelings are most deeply stirred a curse is most congenially aimed at a person.

the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the LORD over- 16
threw, and repented not: and let him hear a cry in the
morning, and [a] shouting at noontide; because he slew 17
me not from the womb; and so my mother should have been my grave, and her womb always great. Wherefore 18

[a] Or, *an alarm*

So while Job curses simply the day and the night, Jeremiah invokes a curse on his fellow-man. Not on the authors of his being, who might have been held responsible for his birth, since even in his bitterest moments a man's father and mother are sacred to him, so long as he has not lost all sense of natural piety. So Jeremiah's curse lights on the messenger who carried to the father the glad tidings that the birth of a living child had been successfully accomplished, and that it was a son not a daughter.

16. Duhm considers it improbable that an individual should be compared with cities, that so much space should be devoted to the messenger, and that he should be cursed for not killing the babe. Accordingly, he thinks that here the thought of 14 is continued, and that the imprecation is directed against the day of his birth. He strikes out 'that man;' Cornill, who accepts his view, reads 'that day' (similarly Findlay, p. 203). The passage is thus more closely assimilated to Job iii. Erbt goes a step further and eliminates the messenger altogether, thinking that none would be needed, but, if there were, a woman rather than a man would be sent. He reads in 15, 'Cursed be the light of the sun which brought,' &c. It is questionable, however, if we can naturally compare a day to a city overthrown. The point would be that the day, whenever it revisited the earth, should be compelled to hear the noise of battle. But the expression is very forced. And while the idea of the death at the hand of the messenger is extravagant, what but extravagance could be expected in such an outburst as this? Accordingly, we must take the text as we have it. It is usual in the East to reward the messenger who brings tidings of a son's birth. In the light of this custom Jeremiah's curse is the more significant.

the cities: i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Isa. xiii. 19).

a cry: i.e. the cry of distress from those who are attacked (xviii. 22); **shouting** is the battle-shout raised by the foe (iv. 19).

17. from: i.e. immediately after my birth (cf. Job iii. 11), but the rest of the verse shows that the unborn child is intended, so with the LXX and Syriac we should read 'in.'

came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

21 [B] The word which came unto Jeremiah from the

XXI. The Prophet Warns Zedekiah and the People that the Babylonians will Capture Jerusalem

This chapter takes us into the closing years of Zedekiah's reign, and thus to a point much later in the prophet's career than we have touched in the earlier part of the book. The critical problems which it presents are complicated and have occasioned much discussion. Since we find in xxxvii. 3–10 the record of a similar incident, Ewald considered that both accounts referred to the same event. In both cases Zedekiah sends to Jeremiah with reference to the Babylonian attack on Jerusalem, in each case Zephaniah forms one of the deputation of two, in each case the prophet gives an unfavourable reply. But these are extremely slender grounds for such a conclusion, or for Stade's similar view that originally xxi. 1, 2, xxxvii. 4–10, xxi. 3–10, xxxvii. 11 ff. stood where xxxvii. stands now, that then xxi. 1–10 was removed to its present position and xxxvii. 1–3 inserted to fill up the gap (on this view see Giesebrecht, p. 117). The two narratives refer to different stages in the conflict: xxi. 1–10 to the early part of the siege, when only a Divine intervention (2), like that in the time of Sennacherib, could raise the siege; xxxvii. 3–10 to the interruption of the siege by the coming of the relief army from Egypt. That Zedekiah should have consulted Jeremiah on both occasions is the most natural thing in the world, as is the inclusion of Zephaniah on each. And while the answer is in both cases unfavourable (with Jeremiah's prophetic certainty of the issue what else could it be?), there is a marked difference in the actual reply he gives, corresponding to the difference in the situation. There is not the slightest ground for doubting the historicity of the incident as Duhm does, who treats xxxvii. 1–10 as fiction and xxi. 1–7 as an imitation of it.

The chapter falls into four sections: (a) 1–7, (b) 8–10, (c) 11, 12, (d) 13, 14. It is questionable whether (b), which contains an address to the people, was originally connected with (a), though it belongs to the same period. (c) comes from an earlier date, when reform in the administration was still possible, and judgement had not begun. It is made up of xxii. 3, iv. 4, and forms a link with the prophecies on the kings in the following chapter. (d) is a detached fragment; why it has been inserted here is not clear. The present position of xxi. 1–10, out of its chronological order, is perhaps due partly to the mention of Pashhur at the beginning,

LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashhur the son of Malchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying, Inquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; 2
for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against

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for though it is another person than the Pashhur of xx. 1, a purely verbal coincidence seems sometimes to have guided compilers in their arrangement. Partly it may be due to the consideration that the prophecy of Zedekiah's fate may have seemed to complete the series of oracles on the last kings of Judah.

xxi. 1, 2. Zedekiah requested Jeremiah to inquire of Yahweh concerning Nebuchadrezzar's attack, in the hope that He would deliver them.

3-7. Yahweh replies through the prophet that the weapons of the Jews will be useless, and He will fight against them in anger and smite them with pestilence. Then the king and those that survive from the pestilence, the sword, and the famine, will be delivered to Nebuchadrezzar, and he shall slay them without pity.

8-10. And this is Yahweh's message to the people: They may choose life or death, death if they abide in the city, life if they go out of it and surrender to the Chaldeans; for Jerusalem will be captured by the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

11, 12. Let the house of David execute just judgement, and rescue the oppressed, lest Yahweh's fury burn like unquenchable fire.

13, 14. Yahweh is against the inhabitress of the vale and of the rock of the plain, against those who refuse to believe that disaster can come upon them. He will punish them according to their sin, kindling a devastating conflagration.

xxi. 1. The date of the incident is apparently 588 B.C. Pashhur is to be distinguished from the Pashhur of xx. 1; the latter had probably gone into captivity with Jehoiachin, and been succeeded by the Zephaniah here mentioned (xxix. 25). The latter was a priest, his colleague in the deputation seems not to have been so. Presumably they would both occupy a high position in the State.

2. The statement that Nebuchadrezzar was attacking Judah is probably an expansion of Zedekiah's message designed to acquaint the reader with the situation. It would be to underrate the incurable optimism of human nature were we to suppose that Jeremiah's stedfast prediction of the destruction of the State would have prevented Zedekiah from seeking a confirmation of his hope that deliverance might still be possible (cf. Isa. xxxvii. 1 ff.).

Nebuchadrezzar: this, which is the more correct form of the name more familiar to us as Nebuchadnezzar, is that usually found in this Book. The Babylonian name is Nabûkudurri-uṣur.

us: peradventure the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

3 Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to
4 Zedekiah: Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans which besiege you, without the walls, and I will gather them into the midst of
5 this city. And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger,
6 and in fury, and in great wrath. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall
7 die of a great pestilence. And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, even such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that

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4. The siege has begun, but the investment is not so complete that the Jews are unable to make sallies and engage the enemy outside the walls. The threat uttered by Jeremiah is rather strangely expressed, and regarded by Cornill as an insertion on that ground. The meaning seems to be that the Jews will be driven into the city, and no longer able to fight outside. The words 'and I will gather them' were apparently not in the original LXX, and may be an addition.

6–10 is regarded by Giesebrecht as a later insertion; Cornill, however, considers it with more justice to contain a genuine Jeremianic element.

6. Pestilence was specially likely to break out on account of the great mass of people and animals crowded into the city during the siege.

7. Omit, with the LXX, 'Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of,' and continue 'those that seek their life: and they shall smite them . . . I will not spare.'

seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy. And unto this people thou shalt say, 8 Thus saith the LORD: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. He that abideth in this 9 city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth away to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. For I have set my face 10 upon this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

[J] And touching the house of the king of Judah, hear 11 ye the word of the LORD: O house of David, thus saith 12

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with the edge of the sword: better, **without quarter.** See Driver's note.

8–10. This counsel to the people belongs to the same period as 1–7, but was probably not spoken on the same occasion. The same advice is given in xxxviii. 2. On Duhm's view that the prophet gave no such advice see the Introduction, p. 24.

8. In Deut. xxx. 15, 'life and death, good and evil' are set before the people, but they receive an ethical and religious interpretation. The passage is modelled on xi. 26, which probably belongs to the original form of Deuteronomy. The utterance of Jeremiah seems also to have been influenced by Deut. xi. 26, either directly, or indirectly through Deut. xxx. 15. The latter is less likely, the actual phrase is probably Jeremiah's coinage. Had the thought of the Two Ways been used in its religious sense, in which it has become so widely current, Jeremiah would hardly have given it this non-spiritual application.

9. for a prey: cf. xxxviii. 2, xxxix. 18, xlv. 5. The soldier expects, when the conflict is over, to emerge from it with the spoil he has taken. But those who surrender to the Chaldeans must make up their minds to lose everything they possess, congratulating themselves on the good fortune which has enabled them to escape with bare life, for which, as the Satan says, a man will give all that he has (Job ii. 4).

10. Cf. xxxviii. 3.

11, 12. See Introduction to the chapter. The text of 11 cannot

the LORD, Execute judgement in the morning, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go forth like fire, and burn that none can quench
13 it, because of the evil of [a] your doings. Behold, I am against thee, O [b] inhabitant of the valley, [c] *and* of the rock of the plain, saith the LORD; ye which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our
14 habitations? and I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in her forest, and it shall devour all that is round about her.

[a] †Another reading is, *their*. [b] Heb. *inhabitress*.
[c] Or, and *rock*

be correct. The opening words mean 'And to the house of the king of Judah,' and to complete the sense we need 'shalt thou say.' Some prefer to strike out 'And,' taking the opening words as a title, 'Concerning the house of the king of Judah;' cf. the similar title in xxiii. 9. If so, the rest of 11 connects with 12, and we render 'Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of David.' The house of David includes the king and the court, especially the princes, on whom the responsibility rested for the administration of justice. Their failure in this duty drew constant complaint from the prophets.

13, 14. A very obscure and difficult fragment. In its present connexion Jerusalem must be intended, but the description is unsuitable. It cannot with any propriety be called 'inhabitant of the valley' nor 'rock of the plain.' Further, the reference to the foe as 'coming down' upon it is inappropriate. This objection holds even if, with some of the older interpreters, we explain the former expressions of the lower and upper city respectively. It is accordingly probable that the verses are a quotation from another context, in which another city was referred to. The authorship is uncertain, but it is somewhat easier to account for the insertion here if the poem from which it is taken was by Jeremiah (see the note on xxii. 1–9).

plain: or **table-land.** The term 'is commonly used of the "table-land" upon which the principal cities of Moab lay, Jer. xlviii. 8, 21' (Driver).

habitations: the word is used of the haunts of wild beasts, and is rendered 'dens' in Nah. ii. 12, Ps. civ. 22.

14. Cf. xvii. 27.

[JS] Thus said the LORD: Go down to the house of the **22**

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xxii. 1—xxiii. 8. ORACLES ON THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

This section contains a series of oracles on the kings of Judah, brought together probably by an editor. Recent commentators are of opinion that the section includes not a little editorial matter. It will be convenient to treat the critical questions as they arise.

xxii. 1-5. The prophet is sent to the palace to bid the king, the court, and the people execute judgement and refrain from oppressing the defenceless. For if they do so the monarchy will be preserved, otherwise the palace shall become a waste.

6-9. Though the house of David is like Gilead and the crest of Lebanon, it shall become a wilderness. The cedars shall be cut down and burnt. To the question of the nations, Why has Yahweh done thus to this great city? the answer will be, It was because of its idolatry.

10-12. Weep not for the dead, but for the exile who shall never again see his native land. For Yahweh has said that Shallum shall die in the land of captivity.

13-19. Woe to him who builds a splendid palace by forced labour exacted without remuneration! Is this to be a true king? Did not thy father redress the wrongs of the poor? Was not this to know Yahweh? Thou carest only for dishonest gain to shed innocent blood, to practise oppression. They shall not wail for Jehoiakim, but he shall be buried like an ass, flung out of the city gates.

20-30. Cry aloud for the death of thy lovers! Thou wouldest not hearken in thy prosperity, now thy shepherds shall be scattered, thy lovers go into exile, thou shalt groan when thy pangs come upon thee. Though Coniah were my signet ring I would pluck him from my hand, and I will give him into the hand of the Chaldeans. I will hurl thee and thy mother into another land, and there, though they long for their own country, they shall die. Is it because he is a despised broken vessel that he is cast away? None of his children shall sit on the throne of David.

xxiii. 1-4. The shepherds destroy the sheep: I will punish their misrule. And I will bring back the remnant from all the lands of its dispersion, and they shall multiply in their own land. And I will give them true shepherds, and they shall live without fear.

5-8. See, the days are coming when I will raise up to David a righteous shoot, who shall reign as a wise and righteous king over Judah and Israel, and his name shall be 'Yahweh is our righteousness.' See, the days are coming when they shall cease to speak of Yahweh's rescue of Israel from Egypt, and speak instead of His deliverance of it from the North country and the Dispersion.

a king of Judah, and speak there this word, and say, Hear
the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon
the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy
3 people that enter in by these gates. Thus saith the
LORD: Execute ye judgement and righteousness, and
deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and
do no wrong, do no violence, to the stranger, the father-
less, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this
4 place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there
enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting [a] upon
the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he,
5 and his servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear
these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this

[a] Heb. *for David upon his throne.*

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xxii. 1–9 forms the introduction to the oracles on individual kings. It does not reflect throughout the same situation. 1–5 is parallel to xxi. 11, 12, and has points of contact with xvii. 19–27; it belongs to a time when reform in the administration might avert Judah's doom. In 6–9 the doom is already determined. The former is partially or entirely rejected by some scholars on account of the generalizing and commonplace character of its contents. The latter can hardly be original as it stands. The reference to 'the house of the king of Judah' does not correspond to the subject-matter, which suggests rather that a city or land is spoken of. The passage in 6, 7, 'Thou art Gilead . . . the fire' is written in Qina rhythm, and there is no reason for denying its Jeremianic authorship. Its precise date cannot be determined. 8, 9, on the contrary, is generally regarded as a later insertion. It is quoted almost verbatim from Deut. xxix. 24, 25. Cf. 1 Kings ix. 8, 9. Duhm takes it to be the conclusion of xxi. 13, 14, whereas Gillies attaches these verses to 6, 7.

1. Go down. The prophet, if the text is correct, is thought of as in the Temple, which was on more elevated ground than the palace.

2. Cf. xvii. 20; and similarly on 4, cf. xvii. 25.

5. I swear by myself. Yahweh pledges Himself by the most solemn and most binding guarantee conceivable, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings out in his comment on the formula, Heb. vi. 13–18. This oath is found also in xlix. 13, li. 14; Gen. xxii. 16; Amos vi. 8; Isa. xlv. 23.

house shall become a desolation. [J] For thus saith the 6
LORD [a] concerning the house of the king of Judah: Thou
art Gilead unto me, *and* the head of Lebanon: *yet* surely
I will make thee a wilderness, *and* cities which are not
inhabited. And I will [b]prepare destroyers against thee, 7
every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down
thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire. [S] And 8
many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say
every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD
done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, 9
Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their
God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.
[J] Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: 10

[a] Or, *unto* [b] †Heb. *sanctify.*

6. On the reference of the poem to 'the house of the king of Judah' see above. It would be better to render 'Thou art a Gilead unto me.' Gilead must include Bashan; the point of the comparison lies in the fact that Gilead and the top of Lebanon are so richly wooded. As ruinous a destruction would come upon the object of God's wrath, prosperous though it seemed, as if men cut down and burnt all the choice trees of Gilead and Lebanon.

7. prepare. See vi. 4.

8. 9. See above.

10–12. A lament on Shallum and prediction of his death in exile. Shallum is better known as Jehoahaz, and he may have received the latter name on his accession, in which case Shallum would be his original name. This is more probable than the view that he was designated Shallum by Jeremiah because he resembled Shallum the king of Israel (2 Kings xv. 13) in the brevity of his reign. When Josiah was killed at Megiddo, 'the people of the land' took Jehoahaz instead of the elder son Eliakim, and made him king. The fact is significant of the estimate they had formed of the two half-brothers. His reign lasted only three months, for Pharaoh Necho deposed him and set Eliakim on the throne, changing his name to Jehoiakim. The deposed king was taken to Egypt, where he died. The present poem was written after he had gone into exile, and while lamentations were still being made for his father Josiah. Jeremiah regards the fate of the son, torn from his throne after three months' reign to pine in exile and die, as more pitiful than that of Josiah, who was indeed cut off in his prime and

but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall
11 return no more, nor see his native country. For thus
saith the LORD touching [a] Shallum the son of Josiah,
king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father,
which went forth out of this place: He shall not return
12 thither any more; but in the place whither they have led
him captive, there shall he die, and he shall see this land
no more.
13 Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteous-
ness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his
neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not

[a] In 2 Kings xxiii. 30, *Jehoahaz*. Compare 1 Chr. iii. 15.

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slain in war, but after a righteous and prosperous reign of more than thirty years.

11, 12. These verses, which, as Graf says, are merely an explanation of 10, are regarded by Duhm and Cornill as a later addition, not on account of any discrepancy with the oracle in 10, but as giving information which is of course correct but would be unnecessary to contemporaries, and as adding very little, and that in prose not metre and in a very diffuse style, to what had already been concisely said.

13–19. An invective against Jehoiakim, and prediction of his unlamented death and ignominious burial. The judgement here passed on the king deserves the fullest confidence, and ought not to be regarded as dictated by prejudice or by misconception of his policy. The charge of exacting forced labour, without remuneration, is itself only too credible when brought against an Eastern despot. Had it been used for defensive fortifications, as Hitzig thought, or other public purposes, there would have been some palliation of his conduct, since he was probably in financial straits on account of the tribute to Egypt. But the buildings were erected simply to gratify the king's luxury and ostentation. The greater part of the section probably belongs to the early years of Jehoiakim. On the other hand, 18, 19 may have been added at a later time, perhaps on the reissue of the roll; it is certainly authentic, though it presents a historical difficulty which we cannot solve with certainty.

13. chambers: better 'roof-chambers,' i. e. rooms built on the roof, cooler than the lower rooms since the air came in through the lattice.

his hire; that saith, I will build me a wide house and 14
spacious chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it
is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt 15
thou reign, because thou [a] strivest to excel in cedar? did
not thy father eat and drink, and do judgement and jus-
tice? then it was well with him. He judged the cause 16
of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this
to know me? saith the LORD. But thine eyes and thine 17
heart are not but for thy [b] covetousness, and for to shed
innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to
do it. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoia- 18

[a] Or, *viest with the cedar* [b] †Or, *dishonest gain*

14. The text is uncertain, and the LXX diverges from the Hebrew. If we hold to the latter in the main, for 'and it is cieled' we should read 'cieling it' or rather 'panelling it' (the sense borne by the former word when the A.V. was made), and 'painting' instead of 'painted.'

15. Is kingship constituted by building fine cedar palaces? His father Josiah had quite another conception of the duties of his position. True, he 'came eating and drinking,' was no morose ascetic, but he did not surrender himself to luxury and self-indulgence, he took seriously the responsibilities of government, administered justice to the defenceless, and thus proved himself endowed with the true knowledge of God. The 'father' must be Josiah, not Solomon as Giesebrecht believes, nor Ahaz as the LXX reads. The R.V. rendering is in the main correct, and we should not substitute 'Shalt thou reign because thou viest with thy father?' (or, 'with Ahaz.' Codex A of the LXX reads 'with Ahab'). It is of special interest to have this testimony to Josiah from a contemporary so clear-sighted, so free from all the distorting prejudices in favour of royalty.

18, 19. We read in xxxvi. 30 a similar prediction made after Jehoiakim had burnt the roll, 'his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.' It is accordingly probable that our passage was among the 'many like words' added to the second edition of the roll (xxxvi. 32). This is inferred by some scholars from the fact, as they consider it, that the prophecy was not fulfilled, and must therefore have been written and the book in which it was incorporated closed before Jehoiakim's death. This raises the question whether the prophecy was fulfilled or not. In 2 Kings xxiv. 6 we read 'So Jehoiakim

kim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: They shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah lord! or, Ah

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slept with his fathers, which is taken to imply burial in the royal tombs. It is noteworthy, however, that in the case of other kings it is usual to add explicitly the fact of burial and the situation of the grave, and this is missing in the case of Jehoiakim. It is true that it is also missing in the case of Hezekiah (2 Kings xx. 21), who no doubt received a royal burial, but the statement in 2 Chron. xxxii. 33, 'they buried him in the ascent of the sepulchres of the sons of David,' probably rests on good authority and may possibly have been omitted by accident from the original text of Kings. We are therefore justified in refusing to press the formula 'slept with his fathers' to imply a royal burial. After the time of Ahaz no kings seem to have been buried in the royal tombs. It is possible that the body was buried and then disinterred and dishonoured by the people or by the Chaldeans. But the prediction contemplates that he would not receive a burial accompanied by the usual lamentations, to say nothing of a royal funeral. And the prediction was probably fulfilled. Had it not been, it would have been suppressed both here and in xxxvi. 30, and against this consideration the conventional formula in 2 Kings xxiv. 6 weighs scarcely at all, especially since the fact of burial and the situation of the grave are so significantly omitted. The full horror of this fate is only dimly realized by the modern reader, for whom nothing that happens to a dead body can really matter. But in antiquity it was supposed to matter very much to the deceased if his body received no burial. (See the writer's *Faded Myths*, pp. 43-46.)

18. The LXX diverges here considerably in detail from the Hebrew, and may partially preserve the more original text. After 'Judah:' it inserts 'Woe upon this man,' and omits 'or, Ah sister!' and 'or, Ah his glory.' The insertion may be correct. On the other hand, the omission of 'or, Ah sister!' is readily accounted for, on the ground of its inappropriateness to a man, while its insertion is much less easy to explain. It is accordingly original, and, if so, the companion omission by the LXX must also be incorrect, since the pair of exclamations in one line must be balanced by a pair in the other. Nor is there any need to correct the text. Jeremiah is quoting the customary formulae of lamentation: in the first line those commonly used (1 Kings xiii. 30), which would in this case be uttered by the king's relatives; in the second line those reserved for the king, cf. xxxiv. 5. For 'his glory' we might better render 'his Majesty.'

his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, 19
drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in 20
Bashan: and cry from Abarim; for all thy lovers are
destroyed. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou 21
saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from
thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice. The wind 22

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19. the burial of an ass: probably this means no burial at all; a dead animal would be left on the ground for the birds and beasts of prey.

20–23. This seems to be a detached fragment, since no individual king is named, and it is addressed to the community, as the feminine pronouns show. It includes, however, a prediction of the fate of the rulers, and was probably inserted here on that account.

20. The high mountains are chosen for wailing, as for the proclamation of glad tidings (Isa. xl. 9), in order that the cry may be heard far and wide (Judges ix. 7).

Abarim: 'the mountain of Abarim' is mentioned in Num. xxvii. 12, Deut. xxxii. 49 as that from which Moses saw the Promised Land. It lay east of the Dead Sea: Mt. Nebo formed part of the range.

thy lovers: the term is used for the false gods on which Israel doted, but that is not appropriate, since Jeremiah would probably not speak of them as here and in 22 (but cf. xlviii. 7, xlix. 3). It is also used for the nations with which Judah allied herself, and this view is taken by several scholars here. Generally these are represented as the instrument of God's vengeance on His people. But there is no reason why they should not be spoken of as here, and if the text is retained this is the best interpretation. The context, however, leads us to expect a reference to the native kings, and this has led some to the unnatural expedient of forcing this meaning upon the words. This is out of the question, for the rulers are never represented as the 'lovers' of their nation, but a slight emendation of the text would give the required sense.

21. from thy youth: this might seem to contradict ii 2, but it ought not to be pressed.

22. Render 'The wind shall shepherd all thy shepherds,' in order to preserve the word-play in the Hebrew. The shepherds drive the flock before them, but Judah's shepherds, i.e. her rulers (ii. 8), shall be driven by the wind, they shall be hurried into exile. Perhaps we should omit 'thy lovers,' as an intrusion from 20, reading simply 'and they shall go.'

shall [a] feed all thy shepherds, and thy lovers shall go
into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and
23 confounded for all thy wickedness. O [b] inhabitant of
Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, [c] how
greatly to be pitied shalt thou be when pangs come upon
24 thee, the pain as of a woman in travail! As I live, saith
the LORD, though [d] Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of
Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I
25 pluck thee thence; [S] and I will give thee into the hand
of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them of
whom thou art afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchad-
rezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chal-
26 deans. [J] And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that
bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born;

[a] Or, *feed upon* [b] Heb. *inhabitress.* [c] Some ancient versions have, *how wilt thou groan.* [d] In ch. xxiv. 1, and 1 Chr. iii. 16, *Jeconiah.* In 2 Kings xxiv. 6, 8, *Jehoiachin.*

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23. Judah has been as confident of safety as a bird that had fixed its nest far away from men in the cedars on the heights of Lebanon. But how she would groan when her agony came upon her.

how greatly to be pitied shalt thou be. The Hebrew is difficult and uncertain; the margin gives the reading of the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate, which is to be preferred.

24-30. This section on Coniah or Jehoiachin contains two oracles, 24-27 and 28-30. In the former his captivity still lies in the future, in the latter it has taken place.

24. Though Coniah were as precious to Yahweh, as intimately bound to Him, as a signet ring to its owner, He would cast him off and fling him away.

Coniah: or **Jeconiah**: perhaps the name borne by Jehoiachin before his accession.

25 is very diffuse, and regarded as a later expansion by Duhm, Cornill, and Giesebrecht, even in the more concise form given by the LXX. The same judgement is pronounced by the two former scholars on 26, but the reference to the queen-mother favours its authenticity: cf. xiii. 18, xxix. 2; 2 Kings xxiv. 12, 15. Her name, as we learn from 2 Kings xxiv. 8, was Nehushta.

and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto [a] their 27
soul longeth to return, thither shall they not return. Is 28
this man Coniah a despised broken [b] vessel? is he a vessel
wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he
and his seed, and are cast into the land which they know
not? O [c] earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. 29
Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man 30
that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed
shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling
any more in Judah.

Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the 23

[a] Heb. *they lift up their soul.* [b] Or, *pot* [c] †Or, *land*

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28. Here the catastrophe is accomplished; Coniah is thrown out of the land, as one would throw away a broken image or a useless vessel. We should probably omit 'he and his seed,' with the LXX, and substitute singular verbs for the plural. For 'broken vessel' it would be better to substitute 'broken image.'

29. This verse, with the following, is regarded by Duhm as an insertion; Cornill accepts the greater part of 30. The solemn triple adjuration may seem to the modern reader unnecessary, but we are scarcely in a position to judge how Jeremiah would have regarded the fact here announced.

30. childless. Jehoiachin was not literally childless, and could not be entered as such in the roll of citizens, but he had no royal successor, no son of his would be heir to the throne.

xxiii. 1-8. This section links on very well to the preceding, it also is concerned with the rulers of Judah. We should naturally expect the series of oracles which have dealt successively with Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin, to be closed by an oracle on Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. And this we probably have before us. It is true that Zedekiah is not named. But there is a tacit allusion to him in 6, and it is quite in accordance with Jeremiah's practice to refrain from personal polemic against him. For the prophet knew quite well that the king was not personally responsible for the misgovernment during his reign. He was a weak tool in the hand of the princes, hence Jeremiah attacks the shepherds. The whole passage is regarded as late by Duhm and Schmidt. 7, 8 are omitted in the LXX, but inserted quite inappropriately after 40. They occur in xvi. 14, 15, where also they are in an unsuitable position. They harmonize with

2 sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, against the shepherds that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock, and

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their present context very well, though they would stand even more suitably after 3, 4. They are rejected by Giesebrecht and Rothstein, by Cornill with less decision, since he admits that their contents are not inconsistent with Jeremianic authorship. He sets aside 3, 4 without hesitation, as presupposing a situation much later than Jeremiah's time. But the wide dispersion here contemplated is found also in 7, 8, the authenticity of which Cornill does not dispute on that ground. Giesebrecht regards 3, 4 as authentic. These questions are, however, comparatively trivial compared with that raised by 5, 6 (cf. xxxiii. 14–16). This Messianic prophecy is denied to Jeremiah by Duhm, Volz, Marti, and others. It is claimed for him by Giesebrecht and Rothstein, and above all by Cornill, who has elaborately vindicated its authenticity. It is admitted that the Messianic idea was current at the time, and the designation of the Messiah as 'the Shoot' in Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12 is a strong confirmation of the Jeremianic authorship of our passage. For unless we arbitrarily delete it from the text of Zechariah, it is clear that by his time 'the Shoot' had become a technical term for the Messiah, which implies that it was much older and had been introduced into religious terminology by an authoritative personality. Moreover the name Yahweh Ṣidqenu (Yahweh is our righteousness) seems to have been chosen here just because of its close relation to Ṣidqiyahu, which we know in the more familiar form Zedekiah. What Zedekiah's name, received at his accession, set forth as an ideal, would be a realized fact in the time of the Messianic king. And the conception of the Messiah expressed in this passage is such as we should expect from Jeremiah. He is to be a righteous ruler, dealing wisely and administering even-handed justice. Under his rule Israel and Judah will be reunited, and dwell in security, unmolested by invasion. Such a Messiah would be more congenial to Jeremiah than the victorious hero, who crushes his foes into submission or wipes them out of existence, who rules the nations with a rod of iron or shivers them like a potter's vessel.

1. shepherds: i.e. rulers, as in xxii. 22. These shepherds are more like wolves, rending the sheep of Yahweh's pasture (Ps. lxxiv. 1, xcv. 7, c. 3; Ezek. xxxiv. 31). The LXX omits 'saith the Lord' and reads 'the sheep of their pasture,' i.e. the sheep entrusted to them (cf. x. 21), but 2 seems to favour the Hebrew text.

2. feed: literally **shepherd.**

driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the 3
countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and multiply. And I will set up shepherds over them which 4
shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be lacking, saith the LORD.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will 5
raise unto David a righteous [a] Branch, and he shall reign as king and [b] deal wisely, and shall execute judgement and justice in the land. In his days Judah shall be 6
saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, [c] The LORD is our righteous-

[a] †Or, *Shoot* Or, *Bud* [b] Or, *prosper*
[c] Or, *The LORD our righteousness*

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3. remnant: here the 'remnant' is identified with the exiles.

be fruitful and multiply: a phrase characteristic of the Priestly Document of the Pentateuch (P). It occurs in the inverse order in iii. 16, Ezek. xxxvi. 11. It would be precarious to infer the dependence of our passage on P.

5. Behold, the days come: a favourite expression in this book, where it occurs sixteen times. We can trace it first in Amos iv. 2.

Branch: this rendering is incorrect (see Driver, p. 364). We should render 'Shoot;' the term designates what sprouts from the ground. Graf argues strongly that, since the Hebrew word is used elsewhere in a collective sense, so here we must interpret of the line of Messianic kings, who are really identical with the 'shepherds' of 4. But the language of these verses suits an individual much better than a collective interpretation, and the former is confirmed by the fact that Zechariah so understood it.

deal wisely: the same word is used of the Servant of Yahweh in Isa. lii. 13, if the text is correct. The measures he takes will achieve his end.

6. It is to be observed that here a favourite thought of Jeremiah's finds expression, that Israel as well as Judah is to be restored from captivity.

The LORD is our righteousness. The name embodies the people's confession, but it is borne by the Messiah himself. The

7 ness. [a] Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the
LORD, that they shall no more say, As the LORD liveth,
which brought up the children of Israel out of the land
8 of Egypt; but, As the LORD liveth, which brought up
and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the
north country, and from all the countries whither I had
driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.
9 Concerning the prophets. Mine heart within me is

[a] See ch. xvi. 14, 15.

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plural pronoun does not warrant the view that the righteous Shoot is to be explained as a collective designation. The righteousness of the people both in status and character is Yahweh's gift, of which the Messiah is the pledge. The marginal rendering is grammatically possible, but should be rejected. Jeremiah does not regard the Messiah as identical with Yahweh. In the parallel passage the name is given to Jerusalem. On its relation to Zedekiah see the note on 1–8, pp. 259 f.

7, 8. See xvi. 14, 15. In the Messianic time the great deliverance of Israel from Egypt, to which for so many centuries the people had looked back as the most wonderful manifestation of Yahweh's goodness and power, will not be mentioned in such adjurations, since it would be eclipsed by His deliverance of Israel from its wide Dispersion.

xxiii. 9-40. CONDEMNATION OF THE PROPHETS.

This section on the Prophets, for which Mic. iii. 5–12, Isa. xxviii. 7–13, Ezek. xiii. 1–16 may be compared, appropriately follows the preceding oracles on the Kings, since they were so largely responsible for the sins and miseries of the people. The text and contents raise many difficulties. In the latter portion the style is unusually diffuse, and we should probably recognize that the original utterances of Jeremiah have received considerable expansion. Duhm considers that 16–40 is a very late insertion, dating from the second century B. C., though apart from the closing verses, it might be reckoned with the best of the post-Jeremianic portions of the book, containing some things worthy of Jeremiah himself. Cornill thinks little is genuine after 24, Giesebrecht takes 30-40 as late, Rothstein singles out 9-12, 19-22, 23, 24, 28, 29 as the genuine portion of 9-32, and the closing portion on the Burden of Yahweh (33-40) he also regards as genuine, but taken from the prose-book.

broken, all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man,
and like a man whom wine hath overcome; because of
the LORD, and because of his holy words. For the land 10

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xxiii. 9–15. I am unstrung by Yahweh's holy words, for the land mourns because of transgressors. Prophet and priest profane God's house. They shall be driven on a slippery path, and fall in the darkness. The prophets of Samaria have led Israel into idolatry, the prophets of Jerusalem are guilty of flagrant immorality and encourage evil-doers in their sins. They shall be fed with wormwood and gall, for they have profaned all the land.

16–18. Hearken not to the prophets whose utterances spring from their own heart, not from Yahweh, who promise peace and safety to those who stubbornly despise Him. For who has stood in His council and marked His word?

19, 20. Yahweh's tempest shall smite on the head of the wicked, and not cease till His wrath has achieved its end.

21–24. The prophets prophesy without commission from Me. If they had stood in My council, they would have turned the people from their sin. Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can a man hide himself from Me, who fill heaven and earth?

25–29. I have heard the false prophets boasting of their dreams. Will they turn, who prophesy deceits, and with their dreams cause My people to forget Me? Let the dreaming prophet tell his dream, but let him who really has My word declare it. What has the straw to do with the wheat? My word is a fire, and a hammer that shatters the rocks.

30–32. I am against the prophets who steal their oracles, who say 'Thus saith Yahweh,' who prophesy lying dreams and lead My people astray, though I sent them not.

33–40. If the question is put, 'What is the burden of Yahweh?' then say 'You are, and I will cast you off.' Those who speak of 'the burden of Yahweh' shall be punished. Ye shall say 'What has Yahweh answered?' or 'What has Yahweh spoken?' The 'burden' shall be mentioned no more, for ye have perverted My word. If you still continue to use the term I will cast you off, away from My presence.

xxiii. 9. According to the present text the prophet's heart is broken, his bones become soft, on account of Yahweh's holy words, i. e. the Divine displeasure he has to utter. Duhm thinks his pain was really due to the sin itself, so he treats 'because . . . words' as a gloss.

10. Giesebrecht's view that 'for because . . . dried up' is an insertion due to dittography has commanded general acceptance.

is full of adulterers; for because of [a] swearing the land
mourneth; the pastures of the wilderness are dried up;
11 and their course is evil, and their force is not right. For
both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house
12 have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD. Where-
fore their way shall be unto them as slippery places in
the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein:
for I will bring evil upon them, [b] even the year of their
13 visitation, saith the LORD. And I have seen folly in the
prophets of Samaria; they prophesied by Baal, and
14 caused my people Israel to err. In the prophets of Je-
rusalem also I have seen an horrible thing; they commit
adultery, and walk in lies, and they strengthen the hands
of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness:

[a] †Or, *the curse* [b] Or, *in the year*

adulterers may be literally meant; it may, however, mean those who are faithless to God, especially the prophets. Giesebrecht, in fact, by a slight emendation reads 'prophets.'

swearing: better, **the curse.** The sin of the people has brought a curse on the land, which has taken the form of a drought.

course: literally **running.**

11. Cf. vi. 13. Priest and prophet profane even the Temple with their sins.

12. In a fine metaphor (cf. xiii. 16, Ps. xxxv. 6) Jeremiah declares their fate. Hitherto their way has been so smooth that they have run swiftly along it (10). But now the night descends upon them, and they miss the path; they find the ground slippery under their feet. They are not, however, suffered to stand still, or retrace their steps. They are driven forward till they fall. Cf. Mic. iii. 6.

13. folly: that which is without taste (cf. Job vi. 6); but here the word must have a stronger sense, 'ill-savoured' (see note on Job i. 22).

14. It was bad enough for the prophets of Samaria to prophesy by the Baal, but far worse was the immorality and lying of which the prophets in Jerusalem were personally guilty, and their encouragement of evil-doers. Their sin was monstrous in God's sight, like that of the cities of the Plain, and such would be their doom (Isa. i. 10). The estimate of the relative heinousness of the two types of sin is significant.

they are all of them become unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of [a] gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. 16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they teach you vanity: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. 17 They say continually unto them [b] that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and unto every one that walketh in the stubbornness of his own heart they say, No evil shall come upon you. 18 For who hath stood in the

[a] See ch. viii. 14. [b] †According to the Sept., *that despise the word of the Lord, Ye &c.*

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15. Cf. ix. 15, where the same threat is uttered against the people; perhaps it is here simply a marginal quotation which has been taken into the text. For 'water of gall,' cf. viii. 14. That the prophets were themselves profane, and by their sin had defiled the Temple, we learn from 11; now we learn that they have contaminated all the land.

16. The messages of such profane prophets can naturally have no Divine origin; they are their own imagination and deserve no attention. It is true that this verse does not form so good a continuation of 15 as does 17, but it is arbitrary to strike it out.

teach you vanity: lit. 'make you vain;' but 'fill you with vain hopes' (Driver) brings out the real sense.

17. The evil influence of the prophets on the land is due to the assurance they give to the wicked who despise Yahweh's word that no ill shall befall them. The reading of the LXX (so also Syriac) should be preferred. It involves a change of vowel points merely.

18. The R.V. probably gives the true rendering, but the passage is difficult. For the answer which such questions naturally suggest is that no one has stood in the council of God. Since Jeremiah could obviously not have held such an opinion, conscious as he was that he had stood in God's council, and convinced that earlier prophets had enjoyed the same experience, Duhm considers

council of the LORD, that he should perceive and hear
his word? who hath marked [a] my word, and heard it?
19 [S] Behold, the tempest of the LORD, *even his* fury, is
gone forth, yea, a whirling tempest: it shall burst upon
20 the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD shall

[a] Another reading is, *his*.

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that we have here a denial of the reality of the claims made for themselves by the apocalyptists. The author, who lived in the second century B.C., was one of the sober people who had no sympathy with ecstasy and fanaticism, and repudiated the representations made in the apocalyptic literature that the seers had visited the heavenly regions and been there initiated into the secrets of the Divine purpose. Quite apart, however, from the improbability that our passage should be so late, it is unlikely that any Jewish writer should make a sweeping statement of this kind, which would contradict the claims made for themselves by some of the Biblical writers, and especially insert it in this context where the true prophecy is vindicated against the false. Graf and others explain the passage quite differently, taking the pronoun not as an interrogative but as a relative: 'He who hath stood . . . let him perceive . . . he who hath marked my word, let him proclaim it' (with a slightly different pointing). This has some support from 28, but it would be quite inconclusive against the false prophets, who did not hesitate to give out their revelations as of Divine origin. Accordingly it seems best to take the pronoun as an interrogative, but to regard the implied denial as touching simply the claims made by the false prophets. This limitation is not contained in the verse, but in view of the general subject-matter of the passage it is not arbitrary. The sense of the verse is thus similar to that of 16.

my word. This is the reading of the Hebrew text. The Hebrew margin reads **his word**, and is supported by the Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate. Some MSS. of the LXX support the text, others the margin. The margin is probably to be rejected, as due to assimilation to what precedes.

19, 20. These verses are also to be found, with trivial variations, in xxx. 23, 24. It is questionable whether even there they are Jeremianic; here they can form no part of the original passage. They break the connexion between 18 and 21, and speak of a subject remote from the theme of the section. There is no indication that we have here a specimen of true prophecy as contrasted with false prophecy, and why should such a prediction be introduced in a book which abounded in genuine prophecies?

not return, until he have [a] executed, and till he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall [b] understand it perfectly. [J] I sent not these 21
prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, then 22
had they caused my people to hear my words, and had turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and 23

[a] Or, *done* it [b] Or, *consider*

It was probably a marginal quotation from xxx. 23, 24, but why appended to the passage it is difficult to say.

in the latter days: an eschatological expression; when the present era comes to an end, the catastrophe which marks its close will make plain to them what Yahweh's purpose has been. Cf. Mal. iii. 17—iv. 3.

21. The continuation of 18.

22. Jeremiah brings the claims of the false prophets to have stood in the council of God to a practical test. They cannot be organs of a real Divine inspiration, or they would have urged the nation to forsake its evil doings. Cornill aptly compares the test of a truly inspired Scripture in 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

23, 24. The most obvious sense of the passage is that God's omniscience and omnipresence make Him cognizant of their conduct, so let them not flatter themselves that they can escape His notice. He is not a mere localized deity, He fills heaven and earth. But these prophets would hardly have denied that God was acquainted with all their doings. They were rather convinced that they were recipients of His revelation, and nothing would be further from their thought than to escape His notice. The LXX takes 23 as a statement, 'I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off,' and this has been defended by Giesebrecht, who considers that the Hebrew text is a late dogmatic alteration to bring the text into conformity with the Jewish doctrine of God's remoteness. But this seems to give a sense out of harmony with the rest of the passage. Cornill has put forward a very attractive view. Is God a Being with whom one can be on such easy familiar terms as these prophets fancy? It is not so simple a matter to be a prophet as they think. It is a high dignity to stand in the council of God, it is not accessible to the first-comer, but only to the worthiest. God is not the next-door neighbour whose door always stands open, but the remote God, 'the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity.' But just as man cannot force himself on God or

24 not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret
places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do
25 not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. I have
heard what the prophets have said, that prophesy lies in
my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.
26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that
prophesy lies; even the prophets of the deceit of their
27 own heart? which think to cause my people to forget my

elect himself to the prophetic office, so little can he escape His summons if he is God's chosen instrument. No matter how inaccessible his retreat, he cannot elude His all-seeing eye. Cornill's view is based partly on his metrical theory, which is a precarious foundation, and while it is a deep thought which he discovers in 24^a, and one taught Jeremiah by his own experience, it is hardly that which the passage naturally suggests. 24 seems on the face of it to support 23 rather than to form a contrast to it. It is then perhaps best to acquiesce in the usual view, which lies on the surface.

25. We now have a very interesting reference to the medium through which the false prophets claimed to receive their revelations. Dreams are often mentioned in Scripture as the vehicle of Divine communications (the document E in the Pentateuch; Num. xii. 6; Joel ii. 28; Dan. ii, iv, vii, &c.; Matt. i–ii). The writer does not necessarily deny that they may serve this function, but he apparently does not rate dreams high, since they gave such scope for delusion.

26. The thought is so strangely expressed even in the R.V., while the Hebrew cannot be translated, that the text is undoubtedly corrupt. We should probably accept Duhm's emendation of the first two words in the Hebrew, reading, 'I have dreamed,' so that this formula, like that in vii. 4, xxii. 29, is repeated three times. Then we should make, as Giesebrecht suggested in his first edition, a different division of the two following words (reading *h^{a}yashub leb*) 'Will the heart of the prophets turn, that prophesy lies?' &c.

27. The prophets tell their dreams to their fellow men (not to each other), thinking thereby to make Yahweh's people forget His name. Since the author has just said that these prophets speak in Yahweh's name (25), he cannot mean that it is their intention to make the name itself forgotten. The name has here its pregnant sense, it includes the essential nature of Yahweh, so that the result of this erroneous teaching is that, while the mere name continues to be used, it is filled with a false content. The

name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers forgat my name for Baal.
28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the straw to the wheat? saith the LORD.
29 Is not my word like as fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.
31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that

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author speaks as if this result was due to an intentional misrepresentation of Yahweh's true character. Similarly the prophets of an earlier period had caused Yahweh's name to be forgotten 'through Baal,' i. e. the prophets had led their hearers to think of Yahweh as if He were like one of the Canaanite Baalim; for though the deity in whose name they prophesied was spoken of as Yahweh, he was no better than a Baal (see note on ii. 23).

28. Let the dreamer tell his dream if he will, but not utter it as divinely given revelation. Let him who has received the word of Yahweh declare it faithfully. But let the dream and the word of God be sharply distinguished, for the straw has nothing to do with the wheat, the worthless stubble with the Bread of Life; they must not be blended together.

29. And if it be asked, How are we to know what is the genuine word of God? the answer is that we may know it by its effects. It burns with consuming energy, it smashes like a forge-hammer the stubborn rocks. The former metaphor reminds us of v. 14, where the prophetic word is a fire devouring the people. But it is also worth noting that Jeremiah uses the same figure for the word in his own breast, which is as fire in his bones, torturing him till he utters it. But it is also like a hammer wielded with such crushing effect that the most obstinate resistance would be broken down. Thus we meet once again with the conception of the prophetic word as endowed with God's living energy and securing its own fulfilment.

30. The meaning is apparently that the prophets here denounced, having no genuine revelations to communicate, stole such revelations ('my words') from the real prophets and passed them off as their own. It would be very interesting to have fuller knowledge of the practices here mentioned.

31. The prophets who 'use their tongues' have no inward con-

32 [a]use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am
against them that prophesy lying dreams, saith the LORD,
and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their
lies, and by their vain boasting: yet I sent them not, nor
commanded them; neither shall they profit this peo-
33 ple at all, saith the LORD. [S] And when this people, or
the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is
the burden of the LORD? then shalt thou [b]say unto them,
34 [c]What burden! I will cast you off, saith the LORD. And
as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that
shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish
35 that man and his house. Thus shall ye say every one to

[a] Heb. *take.* [b] Or, *tell them what the burden is*
[c] † The Sept. and Vulgate have, *Ye are the burden.*

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viction behind their words; their utterance is just a glib mechanical exercise, for which they claim Divine origin by profanely prefixing to it the formula 'He saith.'

32. The author reverts to the prophets whose stock-in-trade is dreams, in which he can recognize no element of truth, but only a delusion which would lure the people into false and ruinous courses.

33. The Hebrew word for 'burden' (*massa*) was ambiguous, since it bore the derivative sense of a prophetic oracle. When the people wished to know the latest oracle, and asked 'What is the burden?' the prophet is directed to reply 'Ye are the burden, and I will cast you off' (see margin, which is almost universally accepted; it involves a slightly different division of the consonants; the Hebrew can be translated only with violence). We read elsewhere how tenderly Yahweh has borne Israel (Exod. xix. 4; Deut. i. 31, xxxii. 11; Isa. xlvi. 3, 4, lxiii. 9; Hos. xi. 3). Here He is represented as weary of His burden and purposing to fling it off.

34. The rigorous prohibition of the word 'burden' is not quite easy to understand, but apparently the people had, by a trivial witticism, imported into the derivative sense of the word something of its primary meaning: one may well call the prophetic utterance a 'burden,' for it is both heavy and wearisome. Hence the use of the word is forbidden, that such profane misuse may be rendered impossible, and an unambiguous formula is to be substituted (35).

his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken? And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: 36
for every man's own word [a] shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God. Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, 37
What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken? But if ye say, The burden of the LORD; 38
therefore thus saith the LORD: Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD; therefore, 39
behold, I will [b] utterly forget you, and I will cast you off, and the city that I gave unto you and to your fathers, away from my presence: and I will bring an everlasting 40
reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

[J] The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of 24

[a] †Or, *is his burden, and ye pervert &c.*
[b] †Or, according to some ancient authorities, *lift you up*

36. every man's own word shall be his burden. We should either render 'is his burden,' i.e. the oracle he utters has no source higher than himself, or 'the burden to every man shall be his word,' i.e. his profane use of the term 'burden' shall be a burden upon him. The former is perhaps preferable. The last clause of the verse may be an insertion, and similarly the next verse, which is a repetition of 35. They are absent in the LXX.

39. forget: we should read, as in the margin, 'lift you up,' with the LXX, Syr., and Vulg., thus keeping the play on the word *massa*. The penalty for the use of the term here threatened is certainly astonishing.

XXIV. THE BASKETS OF FIGS.

It was natural that the Jews who were left behind in Palestine, when Jehoiachin and the flower of the nation went into exile in 597, should attribute their escape from captivity to their superior excellence. This complacent estimate is contradicted in this chap-

figs set before the temple of the LORD; after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the craftsmen and smiths, from
2 Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very bad figs, which could not

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ter. There is no sound reason for doubting the Jeremianic origin, whether we owe the actual composition to Jeremiah or Baruch. Ezekiel formed a similar estimate, and it is much simpler to assume that we have an incident in Jeremiah's career, than that a later writer is carrying back into the pre-exilic period the division between the half-heathen Jews who remained in Palestine during the exile and the strict Jews who returned from Babylon or remained there. Erbt has made the interesting suggestion that in its original form the passage was uttered after the Jews, who were left in Palestine by Nebuchadrezzar, had, in defiance of Jeremiah, gone into Egypt, and that these Jews were symbolized by the bad figs, and the captives in Babylon by the good figs. But this involves quite unnecessary violence to the text. The date of the incident may be placed soon after 597.

xxiv. 1-3. After Nebuchadrezzar had taken Jeconiah to Babylon, Yahweh showed me two baskets, one containing very good figs, the other bad, uneatable figs, and at His bidding I described them.

4-10. He said that He would look on the exiles to Babylon with favour, as on the good figs, and bring them back to dwell permanently in their own land, and they would be whole-hearted in their devotion to Him. But Zedekiah and those left with him in the land, and those in Egypt, will be consumed.

xxiv. 1. The vision, like those in chap. 1, probably had a physical basis. We may suppose that it was occasioned by the sight of two baskets of figs of opposite quality. But it is also influenced by Amos viii. 1, the vision of the basket of summer fruit. Cornill strikes out 'set before the temple of the Lord,' on the ground that the word for 'temple' is not that employed by Jeremiah himself, and that no one would bring utterly worthless figs as an offering.

smiths: the precise meaning of the Hebrew word is unknown.

2. The firstripe fig was a much-esteemed delicacy; it ripened about the end of June (cf. Isa. xxviii. 4; Hos. ix. 10; Mic. vii. 1; Nah. iii. 12).

be eaten, they were so bad. Then said the LORD unto 3
me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the
good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, that cannot
be eaten, they are so bad. And the word of the LORD 4
came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God 5
of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I regard the
captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place in-
to the land of the Chaldeans, for good. For I will set 6
mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them
again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull
them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them
up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I 7
am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will
be their God: for they shall return unto me with their
whole heart. And as the bad figs, which cannot be 8
eaten, they are so bad; surely thus saith the LORD, So
will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his
princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this
land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: I will 9
even give them up to be [a]tossed to and fro among all the
kingdoms of the earth for evil; to be a reproach and a
proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall
drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and 10
the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from
off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

[a] Or, *a terror unto*

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5. regard . . . for good: i.e. look upon them with favour.

8. that dwell in the land of Egypt: whether exiles taken into Egypt along with Jehoahaz, or those who favoured Egypt, and escaped thither when the Babylonian supremacy over Judah was established. Possibly we should connect this reference with the facts disclosed in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine, which show us that in 525 B.C. a Jewish colony had been long established there.

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