

LECTURE IV.

THE PROPHET IN THE REIGN OF JOSIAH.

627-26—608 B.C.

THIS period of the Prophet's career may be taken in three divisions:—

First, His Earliest Oracles, which reflect the lavish distribution of the high-places in Judah and Benjamin, and may therefore be dated before the suppression of these by King Josiah, in obedience to the Law-Book discovered in the Temple in 621-20 B.C.

Second, His Oracles on the Scythians, whose invasions also preceded that year; with additions.

Third, Oracles which imply that the enforcement of the Law-Book had already begun, and reveal Jeremiah's attitude to it and to the course of the reforms which it inspired.

We must keep in mind that the Prophet did not dictate his early Oracles till the year 604-03, and that he added to them on the Second Roll *many like words*.¹ We shall thus be prepared for the appearance among them of references to the

¹ xxxvi. 32; see pp. 22 ff.

changed conditions of this later date, when the Scythians had long come and gone, the Assyrian Empire had collapsed, its rival Egypt had been defeated at the Battle of Carchemish, and Nebuchadrezzar and his Chaldeans were masters of Western Asia.

I. HIS EARLIEST ORACLES.

(II. 2-IV. 4.)

These bear few marks of the later date at which they were dictated by Jeremiah—in fact only a probable reference to Egypt's invasion of Palestine in 608, Ch. II. 16, and part, if not all, of Ch. III. 6-18. The general theme is a historical retrospect—Israel's early loyalty to her God, and her subsequent declension to the worship of other gods, figured as adultery; along with a profession of penitence by the people, to which God responds by a stern call to a deeper repentance and thorough reform; failing this, her doom, though vaguely described as yet, is inevitable. The nation is addressed as a whole at first in the second person singular feminine, but soon also in the plural, and the plural prevails towards the end. The nation answers as a whole, sometimes as *I* but sometimes also as *We*:

Before expounding the truths conveyed by these early Oracles it is well to translate them in full, for though not originally uttered at the same time, they run now in a continuous stream of

verse—save for one of those ‘portages’ of prose which I have described.¹ There is no reason for denying the whole of this passage to Jeremiah, whether because it is in prose or because it treats of Northern Israel as well as Judah.² But on parts of it the colours are distinctly of a period later than that of the Prophet. All the rest of the Oracles may be taken to be from himself. Duhm after much hesitation has come to doubt the genuineness of Ch. II. 5-13, but his suspicions of deuteronomic influence seem groundless, and even if they were sound they would be insufficient for denying the verses to Jeremiah.³

II. 1, 2, And he said, Thus sayeth the Lord :⁴

I remember the troth of thy youth,
 Thy love as a bride,
 Thy following Me through the desert,
 The land unsown.

3 Holy to the Lord was Israel,
 First-fruit of His income ;
 All that would eat it stood guilty,
 Evil came on them.

Rede of the Lord—

¹ P. 37.

² See pp. 40 f., 72.

³ See p. 41.

⁴ So simply the Greek; the Hebrew, *And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem saying*, not only betrays an editorial redundancy, but what follows is addressed not to Jerusalem but to all Israel. Here if anywhere the Greek has the original. Jeremiah begins thus to dictate to Baruch.

- 4 Hear the Lord's Word, House of Jacob,
All clans of Israel's race !
- 5 [Thus sayeth the Lord]
What wrong found your fathers in Me,
That so far they broke from Me,
And following after the Bubble¹
Bubbles became.
- 6 Nor said they :
Where is the Lord who carried us up
From the land of Miṣraim ?²
Who led us thorough the desert,
Land of waste and chasms,
Land of drought and barren,³
A land which nobody crosses,
Nor mankind settles upon it.
- 7 And I brought you into a garden,
To feed on its fruit and its wealth.
But coming ye fouled My land,
My heritage turned to loathing.
- 8 The priests never said,
Where is the Lord ?
They who handle the Law knew Me not,
The rulers⁴ rebelled against Me ;
By Baal the prophets did prophesy,
And followed the worthless.
- 9 So still with you must I strive,⁵
And strive with your sons.⁶

¹ Hebrew *hebel* = *breath*.² Egypt³ So Greek.⁴ Lit. *shepherds*.⁵ Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord*.⁶ Some Hebrew MSS, and Vulgate.

- 10 For cross to the isles of Kittim and look
 Send to Kedár, and think for yourselves,¹
 And see, was ever like this ?
- 11 Have any nations² changed their gods,
 And these no gods at all ?
 Yet My people exchanged their³ Glory
 For that which is worthless.
- 12 Be heavy,⁴ O heavens, for this,
 Shudder and shudder again !
- 13 Twain the wrongs My people have wrought—
 Me have they left,
 The Fount of live water,
 To hew themselves cisterns,
 Cisterns broken,
 That cannot hold water !
- 14 Israel a slave !
 Or house-born serf !
 Why he for a prey ?
- 15 Against him the young lions roar,
 Give forth their voice,
 And his land they lay waste,
 Burned are his towns and tenantless.

¹ Cyprus = Kittim and Kedár, an Arab tribe, are the extremes of the world then known to the Jews.

² So Greek.

³ Hebrew marg. *my*.

⁴ Or *heave* (Ball), lit. *be aghast* but the Hebrew is alliterative, *shommit shamaim*.

- 16 The sons, too, of Noph and Tahpanhes have
forced,
Have abused thee.¹
- 17 Is not all this being done thee
For thy leaving of Me?²
And now what to thee is the road to Mişraim,³
Nile's waters to drink?
Or what is to thee the road to Asshûr,
To drink of the River?
- 19 Be thy scourge thine own sin,
Thy doublings convict thee!
Know and see how sore for thyself,
How bitter to leave Me!
But never was awe of Me thine—
Rede of the Lord thy God.⁴
- 20 From of old thou hast broken thy yoke,
Hast burst thy bonds,
Saying, 'I will not serve!'
While upon every high hill,
And under each rustling tree,
Harlot thou sprawlest!

¹ This couplet is after the Greek, Hebrew has *browsed on thy skull* for *forced*. Noph = Memphis, Egypt's capital; Tahpanhes = Daphne on the Egyptian road to Palestine. Either 14-19 or more probably 16 alone is one of Jeremiah's additions to his earlier Oracles after Egypt's invasion of Palestine in 608.

² So Greek; Hebrew adds, *when he led thee by the way*.

³ Mişraim = Egypt.

⁴ These last four lines follow the Greek.

- 21 Yet a noble vine did I plant thee,
 Wholly true seed ;
 How could'st thou change to a corrupt,¹
 A wildling grape ?
- 22 Yea, though thou scour thee with nitre,
 And heap to thee lye,
 Ingrained is thy guilt before Me,
 Rede of the Lord, thy God.²
- 23 How sayest thou, 'I'm not defiled,
 Nor gone after the Baals.'
 Look at thy ways in the Valley,
 And own thy deeds !
 A young camel, light o' heel,³
 Zig-zagging her tracks,
- 24 A heifer, schooled to the desert—
 In the heat of her lust,
 Snapping the wind in her passion,
 Who is to turn her ?
 None that would seek her need strain them,
 In her month they shall find her.
- 25 Save thou thy feet from the peeling,
 Thy throat from thirst !
 But thou sayest, 'No use !'⁴
 For with strangers I'm fallen in love,
 Them must I after !'

¹ So Duhm by a better division of words.

² So the Greek.

³ The Hebrew *kal* seems to combine here its two meanings of *swift* and *trifling*.

⁴ Hebrew *no' ash*; with Greek delete the second *no*.

- 26 Like the shame of the thief when he's caught,
 Shall Israel's sons¹ be shamed.
 [They and their kings and their princes,
 Their priests and their prophets]²
- 27 Who say to a stock 'Thou my Father!'
 To a stone 'Thou hast borne me!'
 Their³ backs they have turned to Me
 Never their³ faces.
 Yet in time of their trouble they say
 'Rise up and save us!'
- 28 Where be thy gods thou hast made thee?
 Let them rise, if so they may save thee
 In time of thy trouble;
 For as thy townships in number,⁴
 So be, O Judah, thy gods!
- 29 What quarrel have you against Me?
 All you are the sinners;⁵
 Against Me you all have rebelled—
 Rede of the Lord.
- 30 In vain have I smitten your sons
 Ye⁶ took not correction
 Your⁷ sword has devoured your prophets,
 Like a ravaging lion.

¹ So Greek.

² The insertion (by a copyist?) of this formula rather weakens the connection.

³ So some Versions.

⁴ Greek adds *and as the number of streets in Jerusalem they burn to Baal*; cp. xi. 13.

⁵ So Greek.

⁶ Greek.

⁷ Greek *the*.

- 31 O generation—you!—look at the Word of the
Lord!¹
Have I been a desert to Israel,
Or land of thick darkness?
Why say My folk 'We are off,
No more to meet Thee!'
- 32 Can a maiden forget her adorning,
Or her girdle a bride?
Yet Me have My people forgotten,
Days without number!
- 33 Why trimmest thou still thy ways
To seek after love?
Therefore thou also to evil
Thy ways hast trained:²
- 34 Yea, on thy skirts is found blood
Of innocent souls,
Not only on felons(?) I find it
But over all these.³
- 35 Yet thou said'st, 'I am assoiled,
Sure His wrath turns from me!
Behold I am going to judge thee
For saying, 'I'm sinless!'

¹ Prose, probably a later insertion when the prophet dictated his Oracles. See pp. 47 f.

² The text of this quatrain is corrupt, the rendering above makes use of the versions.

³ The text of this verse too is uncertain. For *skirts* Greek has *hands*; to *innocent* Hebrew adds *needy*. Some read the second couplet [*though*] *thou did'st not catch them breaking in, but because of all these*, i.e. thy sins against Me, thou did'st murder them.

- 36 How very light dost thou take it,
 To change thy ways!
 E'en of Mişraim shalt thou be ashamed¹
 As ashamed of Ashshúr.
- 37 Out of this too shalt thou come
 With thy hands on thy head,
 For spurned hath the Lord the things of thy
 trust,
 Not by them shalt thou prosper!

III. 1 [Saying]:—

- If a man dismiss his wife and she go from him
 and become another man's, shall she return to
 him?² Is that woman³ not too polluted?
 But thou hast played the harlot with many
 lovers and—wouldest return unto Me? Rede
 of the Lord.
- 2 Lift to the clearings thine eyes,
 Where not wast thou tumbled?
 For them by the roads thou hast sate,
 Like an Arab in desert,
 Thou hast fouled the land with thy whore-
 doms
 And with thy vices;
- 3 With thy lovers so many
 It has meant but thy snare.⁴
 The brow of a harlot was thine,
 Shame thou hadst done with.

¹ Or *balked*.

² Greek.

³ Greek; Hebrew *land*.

⁴ So Duhm after the Greek. Hebrew is impossible.

4 But now—thou callest me 'Father,
Friend of my youth !'

5 'Bears *He* a grudge for ever,
Stands on His guard for aye ?'¹
Lo, so thou hast spoken, yet done
Ills to thine utmost.

6 And the Lord said unto me in the days of
Josiah, the king,² Hast thou seen what re-
creant Israel did to Me³ going up every high
hill and under each rustling tree, and there
7 playing the harlot ; and I said, After she has
done all these things can she return to Me ?—
and she did not return. And her treacherous
8 sister Judah saw, yes she saw,⁴ that, all be-
cause recreant Israel committed adultery, I
had dismissed her and given her the bill of
her divorce ; yet her sister treacherous Judah

¹ The two Hebrew verbs in this couplet, *naṭar* and *shamar* mean *to keep* (or *maintain*) and *to watch* ; they are usually transitive and (in the sense here intended) are followed by a noun, *anger* or *wrath*, which English versions supply here. But its absence from *both* the Hebrew and Greek texts leads us to take the verbs as intransitive, as is the case with *naṭar* in New-Hebrew.

² Verses 6-18, in prose break the connection both of style and meaning between 5 and 19 and cannot in whole be Jeremiah's or from his period. This is especially true of 16-18 which assume the destruction of the Ark and the Exile of Judah as well as of Israel as already actual. But the passage probably contains genuine fragments from Jeremiah.

³ So Greek.

⁴ So one Hebrew MS. and Syriac.

was not afraid, but also went and played the
 9 harlot. And it came to pass that, through the
 wantonness of her harlotry, she polluted the
 land, committing adultery with stones and with
 10 stocks. And yet, for all this, treacherous
 Judah¹ has not returned to Me with all her
 heart, but only in feigning.²

11 And the Lord said to me, Recreant Israel
 hath justified herself more than treacherous
 12 Judah. Go and call out these words toward
 the North and say,

Turn thee to Me,³ recreant Israel,
 I frown⁴ not upon thee ;
 For gracious am I (Rede of the Lord),
 Nor for ever bear grudge.

13 Only acknowledge thy guilt,
 That defying the Lord thy God,
 Thou hast scattered to strangers thy ways
 Under each rustling tree,
 And hast⁵ not obeyed My voice—
 Rede of the Lord.

14 [Return ye backsliding children, Rede of the
 Lord, for I am your Baal,⁶ and I will take
 you, one from a city and two from a clan, and

¹ Hebrew adds *her sister*.

² Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord*.

³ So Greek.

⁴ Lit. *make not My face to fall*.

⁵ Greek ; Hebrew *ye have*.

⁶ That is *Lord and Husband*.

15 will bring you to Sion. And I will give you
Shepherds after My heart, and they shall
shepherd you with knowledge and with skill.

16 And it shall be, when ye multiply and increase
in the land in those days (Rede of the Lord),
they shall not again say, 'The Ark of the
Covenant of the Lord!' It shall not come to
mind, it shall be neither remembered nor
missed,¹ nor shall it be made again.

17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the
Throne of the Lord and all nations shall
gather to her,² nor walk any more after the
18 stubbornness of their evil hearts. In those
days the House of Judah shall walk with the
House of Israel, that together they may come
from the land of the North to the land which
I gave their³ fathers for a heritage.]

19 But I⁴ had declared the How (?) .

I should set thee⁵ among the sons,
And should give thee a land of delight,
Fairest domain of the nations.

¹ So Greek.

² Hebrew adds *to the Name of the Lord to Jerusalem*.

³ So Greek; Hebrew *your*; after *North* Greek has *and from all lands*.

⁴ In antithesis to verse 5 of which it is the immediate sequel both in sense and metre.

⁵ Feminine, i.e. Judah was a daughter, and a son's portion was designed for her.

And said, Thou would'st call Me Father,
Nor from after Me turn.

20 As a woman plays false to her fere,¹
So to Me ye played false!
[O House of Israel, Rede of the Lord.]

21 Hark!
From the clearings weeping is heard,
Wailing of Israel's sons,
That they have perverted their way,
Forgotten the Lord their God.

22 Return ye oft-turning children,
Let me heal your back-turnings!
'Here are we! to Thee we are come,
Thou Lord art our God.

23 'Surely the heights are a fraud
The hills and their hubbub!²
'Alone in the Lord our God
Is Israel's safety.

24 'The Baal hath devoured our toil
And our sires' from their youth,
'Their flocks and their herds,
Their sons and daughters—

25 'Lie we low in our shame,
Our dishonour enshroud us!
'For to our God³ have we sinned,
'[We and our sires from our youth]

¹ So finely Ball.

² The riotous festivals on the high-places.

³ Hebrew adds *the Lord*.

Up to this day!

'Nor have heeded the voice
Of the Lord our God.'

IV. 1 [Israel, if thou wilt return,
Return to Me,

And thy loathly things put from thy mouth
Nor stray from My face.¹

2 If in truth thou swear by the life of the Lord,
Honest and straight,
Then the nations shall bless them by Him
And in Him shall they glory.]²

3 Thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and
to the inhabitants of³ Jerusalem :

Fallow up your fallow-ground,⁴
And sow not on thorns!

4 To your God⁵ circumcise ye,
Off from your heart with the foreskin!

[O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem]
Lest My fury break out like fire,
And burn with none to quench!
[Because of the ill of your doings.]

¹ This couplet after the Greek.

² I agree with Cornill and Skinner that these two verses are a later addition. The answer to the people's confession comes in verses 3 and 4.

³ So some Hebrew MSS. and versions.

⁴ Hebrew *nirû lakesh nîr*; also in English the noun and verb are the same—to fallow or fallow up = to break or plough up.

⁵ So Greek and other versions.

From his call the Prophet went forth, as we saw, with a heavy sense of the responsibility and the power of the single soul, so far as he himself was concerned; and while we study his ministry we shall find him coming to feel the same for each of his fellow-men. But in these his earliest utterances he follows his predecessors, and especially Hosea, in addressing his people as a whole, and treating Israel as a moral unit from the beginning of her history to the moment of his charge to her. He continues the figures which Hosea had used. Long ago in Egypt God chose Israel for His child, for His bride, and led her through the desert to a fair and fruitful land of her own. Then her love was true. The term used for it, *hesedh*, is more than an affection; it is loyalty to a relation. To translate it but *kindness* or *mercy*, as is usually done, is wrong—*truth* is our nearest word.

I remember the truth of thy youth,
Thy love as a bride,
Thy following Me through the desert,
The land unsown.

Upon the unsown land there were no rival gods. But in fertile Canaan the nation encountered innumerable local deities, the Baalim, husbands of the land, begetters of its fruits and lords of its waters. We conceive how tempting these Baalim were both to the superstitious

prudence of tribes strange to agriculture and anxious to conciliate the traditional powers thereof; and to the people's passions through the sensuous rites and feasts of the rural shrines. Among such distractions Israel lost her innocence, forgot what her own God was or had done for her, and ceased to enquire of Him. Hence her present vices and misery in contrast with her early troth and safety. Hence the twin evils of the time—on the one hand the nation's trust in heathen powers and silly oscillation between Egypt and Assyria; on the other the gross immoralities to which the Baals had seduced its sons. There was a double prostitution, to gods and to men, so foul that the young prophet uses the rankest facts in the rural life which he is addressing in order to describe it.

The cardinal sin of the people, the source of all their woes is religious,

Is not this being done thee
For thy leaving of Me ?

This was so, not only because He was their ancestral God—though such an apostasy was unheard of among the nations—but because He was such a God and had done so much for them; because from the first He had wrought both with grace and with might, while the gods they went after had neither character nor efficiency—mere breaths, mere bubbles!

The nerve of the faith of the prophets was this memory—that their God was love and in love had wrought for His people. The frequent expression of this by the prophets and by Deuteronomy, the prophetic edition of the Law, is the answer to those abstractions to which some academic moderns have sought to reduce the Object of Israel's religion—such as, 'a tendency not ourselves that makes for righteousness.' The God of Israel was Righteous and demanded righteousness from men; but to begin with He was Love which sought their love in return. First the Exodus then Sinai; first Redemption then Law; first Love then Discipline. Through His Deeds and His Word by the prophets He had made all this clear and very plain.

What wrong found your fathers in Me,
 That so far they broke from Me?
 Have I been a desert to Israel,
 Or land of thick darkness?
 Why say My folk, 'We are off,
 To meet Thee no more.'

Jeremiah has prefaced this Divine challenge with a passionate exclamation in prose—*O Generation—you!—look at the Word of the Lord!*—which (as I have said) I like to think was added to his earlier verses when he dictated these to Baruch. Cannot you see, cannot you see? He is amazed by the stupidity, the callousness, the abandonment with

which his people from their leaders down have treated a guidance so clear, a love so constant and yearning. And again his soul sways upon the contrast between the early innocence and the present corruption of Israel.

A noble vine did I plant thee,
Wholly true seed,
How could'st thou change to a corrupt,
A wildling grape ?

The sense of their terrible guilt governs him, and of their indifference to it, saying we are clean, to which he answers :—

Yea though thou scour thee with nitre
And heap to thee lye,
Ingrained is thy guilt before Me—
Rede of the Lord.

Yet the fervency with which he pleads the Divine Love reveals a heart of hunger, if hardly of hope, for his nation's repentance. Indeed apart from his own love for them he could not have followed Hosea so closely as he does at this stage of his career, without feeling some possibility of their recovery from even this, their awful worst; and his ear strains for a sign of it. Like Hosea he hears what sounds like the surge of a national repentance¹—was it when Judah listened to the

¹ iii. 22b, 25; Hos. v. 15-vi. 3.

pleadings and warnings of the discovered Book of the Law and *all the people stood to the Covenant?* But he does not say whether he found this sincere or whether it was merely a shallow stir of the feelings. Probably he suspected the latter, for in answer to it he gives not God's gracious acceptance, but a stern call to a deeper repentance and to a thorough trenching of their hearts.

Fallow up the fallow-ground,
 Sow not on thorns!
 To your God¹ circumcise ye,
 Off from your heart with the foreskin!
 Lest My wrath break out like the fire,
 And burn with none to quench.²

Jeremiah has been called the blackest of pessimists, and among his best-known sayings some seem to justify the charge:—

Can the Ethiop change his skin,
 Or the leopard his spots?
 Then also may ye do good,
 Who are wont to do evil.³

And again,

False above all is the heart,
 And sick to despair,
 Who is to know it?

¹ So Greek.

² iv. 3, 4.

³ xiii. 23.

But to his question came the answer :—

I, the Lord, searching the heart,
And trying the reins,
To give to each man as his ways,
As the fruit of his doings.¹

In this answer there is awfulness but not final doom. The affirmation of a man's dread responsibility for his fate implies, too, the liberty to change his ways. In the dim mystery of the heart freedom is clear. Similarly, and even more plainly, is this expressed in the earlier call to *break up the fallow-ground*. This implies that beneath those surfaces of the national life, whether of callous indifference on the one hand or of shallow feeling on the other, there is soil which, if thoroughly ploughed, will be hospitable to the good seed and fit to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Human nature even at its worst has tracts other than those on which there has been careless sowing among thorns, moral possibilities below those of its abused or neglected surfaces. Let us mark this depth, which the Prophet's insight has already reached. Much will come out of it; this is the matrix of all developments by himself and others of the doctrine of man and his possibilities under God. And for all time the truth is valid that many spoiled or wasted lives are spoiled or wasted

¹ xvii. 9, 10.

only on the surface; and that it is worth while ploughing deeper for their possibilities.¹

In what form the deep ploughing required was *at first* imagined by the Prophet we see from the immediately following Oracles.

2. ORACLES ON THE SCYTHIANS.

(With some others: IV. 5-VI. 29.)

The invasion of Western Asia by the Scythians happened some time between 627 and 620 B.C.² The following series of brief poems unfold the panic actually caused, or to the Prophet's imagination likely to be caused, in Judah by the advance of these marauding hordes, and clearly reflect their appearance and manner of raiding. It is indeed doubtful that Judah was visited by the Scythians, who appear to have swept only the maritime plain of Palestine. And once more we must remember that when the Prophet dictated his early Oracles to Baruch for the second time in 604, and *added to them many more like words*,³ the impending enemy from the North was no longer the Scythians but Nebuchadrezzar and his Chaldeans; for this will explain features of the poems that are not suited to the Scythians and their peculiar warfare, which avoided the siege of fortified towns but kept to the open country

¹ See further, Lecture viii.

² See above, p. 73.

³ xxxvi. 32.

and the ruin of its villages and fields. Jeremiah does not give the feared invaders a name. The Scythians were utterly new to his world; yet their name may have occurred in the poems as originally delivered and have been removed in 604, when the Scythians were no longer a force to be reckoned with.¹

1. As it has reached us, the First Scythian Song, Ch. IV. 5-8, opens with the general formula—

Proclaim in Judah and Jerusalem,
Make heard and say!

which may be the addition of a later hand, but is as probably Jeremiah's own; for the capital, though not likely to be besieged by the Scythians, was just as concerned with their threatened invasion as the country folk, to whom, in the first

¹ On the subject of this paragraph see the appendix on 'The Medes and Scythians.' The following may be consulted: N. Schmidt in 'Enc. Bibl.' on 'Jeremiah' and 'Scythians'; Driver, 'The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah,' p. 21; J. R. Gillies, 'Jeremiah, the Man and His Message,' pp. 63 ff., who thinks that the Scythians did invade Judah, and W. R. Thomson, 'The Burden of the Lord,' pp. 46 ff., who thinks they did not. A thorough study of the question will be found in Skinner's 'Prophecy and Religion, Studies in the Life of Jeremiah,' ch. iii. The case against the Scythians being the enemy from the North that Jeremiah describes is best presented by J. F. McCurdy in 'History, Prophecy, and the Monuments,' vol. ii, pp. 395 ff.

place, the lines are addressed. The *trump* or *horn* of the first line was the signal of alarm, kept ready by the watchman of every village, as Amos and Joel indicate.¹

- IV. 5^b Strike up the trump through the land,
 Call with full voice,
 And say, Sweep together and into
 The fortified towns.
- 6 Hoist the signal towards Sion,
 Pack off and stay not!
 For evil I bring from the North
 And ruin immense.
- 7 The Lion is up from his thicket,
 Mauler of nations;
 He is off and forth from his place,
 Thy land² to lay waste;
 That thy townships be burned
 With none to inhabit!
- 8 Gird ye with sackcloth for this,
 Howl and lament,
 For the glow of the wrath of the Lord
 Turns not from us.

These lines are followed by a verse with an introduction to itself, and therefore too separate from the context, and indeed too general to have belonged to so vivid a song:—

¹ Amos iii. 6; Joel ii. 1.

² Greek *the earth*.

9 And it shall be in that day—Rede of the Lord—

The heart of the king shall perish,
 And the heart of the princes,
 And the priests shall be aghast
 And the prophets dismayed!

And this is followed by one of the sudden protests to God, which are characteristic of Jeremiah:—

10 And I said, Ah Lord God, surely Thou hast wholly deceived this people and Jerusalem saying, 'Peace shall be yours,' while the sword strikes through to the life!

2. The Second Scythian Song is like the first, prefaced by a double address, which there is no reason to deny to Jeremiah. Jerusalem is named twice in the song, and naturally, since the whole land is threatened with waste and the raiders come up to the suburbs of the capital. The Prophet speaks, but as so often the Voice of the Lord breaks through his own and calls directly to the city and people (though the last line of verse 12 may be a later addition). On the other hand, the Prophet melts into his people; their panic and pangs become his. This is one of the earliest instances of Jeremiah's bearing of the sins of his people and of their punishment.

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¹ Amos iii. 6 ; Joel ii. 1.

² Greek *the earth*.

9 And it shall be in that day—Rede of the Lord—

The heart of the king shall perish,
 And the heart of the princes,
 And the priests shall be aghast
 And the prophets dismayed!

And this is followed by one of the sudden protests to God, which are characteristic of Jeremiah:—

10 And I said, Ah Lord God, surely Thou hast wholly deceived this people and Jerusalem saying, 'Peace shall be yours,' while the sword strikes through to the life!

2. The Second Scythian Song is like the first, prefaced by a double address, which there is no reason to deny to Jeremiah. Jerusalem is named twice in the song, and naturally, since the whole land is threatened with waste and the raiders come up to the suburbs of the capital. The Prophet speaks, but as so often the Voice of the Lord breaks through his own and calls directly to the city and people (though the last line of verse 12 may be a later addition). On the other hand, the Prophet melts into his people; their panic and pangs become his. This is one of the earliest instances of Jeremiah's bearing of the sins of his people and of their punishment.

IV. 11 At that time it was said to this people and
to Jerusalem,

A wind off the blaze of the bare desert
heights,

Straight on the Daughter of my people,
Neither to winnow nor to sift,

12 In full blast it meets me.

[Now will I speak My judgments upon them]

13 Lo, like the clouds he is mounting,

Like the whirlwind his cars!

Swifter than vultures his horses,

Woe, we are undone!

14 Jerusalem, cleanse thou thy heart,¹

That thou be saved!

How long shalt thou harbour within thee

Thy guilty devices.

15 For hark! They signal from Dan,

Mount Ephraim echoes disaster.

16 Warn the folk, 'They are come!' ²

Make heard o'er Jerusalem.

Behold,³ beleaguerers (?) coming

From a land far away;

They give out their voice on the townships of
Judah;

17 Like the guards on her fields

¹ The text adds *from evil*, one wonders if *Jerusalem* was added in 604; without it the line is regular.

² After the Greek.

³ So Syr., transferred from previous couplet.

- They are round and upon her,
 For Me she defied!¹
- 18 Thy ways and thy deeds have done
 These things to thee.
 This evil of thine how bitter!
 It strikes to the heart.
- 19 O my bowels! My bowels, I writhe!
 O walls of my heart!
 My heart is in storm upon me,
 I cannot keep silence.²
 For the sound of the trump thou hast heard,
 O my soul,
 The uproar of battle.
- 20 Ruin upon ruin is summoned,
 The land is undone!
 Suddenly undone my tents,
 In a moment my curtains!
- 21 How long must I look for the signal
 And hark for the sound of the trump!
- 22 [Yea, fools are My people
 Nor Me do they fear.³
 Children besotted are they,
 Void of discretion.
 Clever they are to do evil,
 To do good they know not.]

¹ Metre and meaning of 16 and 17 uncertain. For beleagu-
 erers (?) Duhm reads *panthers* or *leopards*; cp. v. 6.

² Duhm after Greek renders, My soul is in storm, my heart
 throbs.

³ Greek; Hebrew *know*.

3. The Third of the Scythian Songs is without introduction. Whether the waste, darkness, earthquake and emptiness described are imminent or have happened is still left uncertain, as in the previous songs. The Prophet speaks, but as before the Voice of God peals out at the end.

- 23 I looked to the earth, and lo chaos,
 To the heavens, their light was gone.
- 24 I looked to the hills and¹ they quivered,
 All the heights were a-shuddering.
- 25 I looked—and behold not a man!
 All the birds of heaven were fled.
- 26 I looked to the gardens, lo desert,
 All the townships destroyed,
 Before the face of the Lord,
 The glow of His wrath.
- 27 [For thus hath the Lord said,
 All the land shall be waste
 Yet full end I make not]²
- 28 For this let the Earth lament,
 And black be Heaven above!
 I have spoken and will not relent,
 Purposed and turn not from it.³

4. The Fourth Scythian Song follows immediately, also without introduction. The first four couplets vividly describe the flight of the peasantry,

¹ Greek; Hebrew adds *lo!*

² Probably a later addition.

³ The order of verbs in this couplet is that of the Greek.

actual or imagined, before the invaders. The rest seems addressed to the City as though being threatened she sought to reduce her foes with a woman's wiles, only to find that it was not her love but her life they were after, and so expired at their hands in despair. All this is more suitable to the Chaldean than to the Scythian invasion, and may be one of the Prophet's additions in 604 to his earlier Oracles. However we take it, the figure is of Jeremiah's boldest and most vivid. The irony is keen.

IV. 29 From the noise of the horse and the bowmen,

All the land¹ is in flight,

They are into the caves, huddle in thickets,²

Are up on the crags.

Every town of its folk is forsaken

No habitant in it.

30 All is up! Thou destined to ruin (?)³

What doest thou now?

That thou dressest in scarlet,

And deck'st thee in deckings of gold,

With stibium widenest thine eyes.

In vain dost thou prink!

¹ So Greek; Hebrew *city*, a change possibly made after the fall of Jerusalem.

² So Greek.

³ Text uncertain; this reading is derived by differently dividing the consonants—*bah no' ash for bahen 'ish*.

Though satyrs they utterly loathe thee,
 Thy life are they after!
 31 For voice as of travail I hear,
 Anguish as hers that beareth,
 The voice of the daughter of Sion agasp,
 She spreadeth her hands:
 'Woe unto me, but it faints,
 My life to the butchers!'

The next poem, Ch. V. 1-13, says little of the Scythians, possibly only in verse 6, but details the moral reasons for the doom with which they threatened the people. It describes the Prophet's search through Jerusalem for an honest, God-fearing man and his failure to find one. Hence the fresh utterance of judgment. Perjury and whoredom are rife, with a callousness to chastisement already inflicted. Some have relegated Jeremiah's visit to the capital to a year after 621-20 when the deuteronomic reforms had begun and Josiah had removed the rural priests to the Temple.¹ But, as we have seen, Anathoth lay so near to Jerusalem, and intercourse between them was naturally so constant, that Jeremiah may well have gained the following experience before he left his village for residence in the city. The position of the poem among the Scythian Songs, along with the possible allusion to the Scythians

¹ P. 134.

in verse 6, suggests a date before 620. There is no introduction.

- V. 1 Range ye the streets of Jerusalem,
 Look now and know,
 And search her broad places,
 If a man ye can find—
 If there be that does justice,
 Aiming at honesty.
 [That I may forgive them¹]
- 2 Though they say, 'As God liveth,'
 Falsely² they swear
- 3 LORD, are Thine eyes upon lies (?)
 And not on the truth³ ?
 Thou hast smitten, they ail not,
 Consumed them, they take not correction.
 Their faces set harder than rock,
 They refuse to return.
- 4 But I said, 'Ah, they are the poor,
 And therefore⁴ the foolish !
 'They know not the Way of the Lord,
 The Rule of their God.
- 5 'To the great I will get me,
 With them let me speak.
 'For they know the Way of the Lord,
 And the Rule of their God.'
 Ah, together they have broken the yoke,
 They have burst the bonds !

¹ Greek ; Hebrew *her*. The clause seems an addition.

² Hebrew adds *therefore*.

³ So Duhm after the Greek ; p. 48, n. 2.

⁴ So Greek,

- 6 So a lion from the jungle shall smite them,
 A wolf of the waste destroy,
 The leopard shall prowl round their towns,
 All faring forth shall be torn.
 For many have been their rebellions,
 Profuse their backslidings.
- 7 How shall I pardon thee this—
 Thy children have left Me,
 And swear by no-gods.
 I gave them their fill and they whored,
 And trooped to the house of the harlot.
- 8 Rampant¹ stallions they be,
 Neighing each for the wife of his friend.
- 9 Shall I not visit on such,
 Rede of the Lord,
 Nor on a people like this
 Myself take vengeance?
- 10 Up to her vine-rows, destroy,
 And make² a full end,
 Away with her branches,
 They are not the Lord's.
- 11 For betraying they have betrayed Me
 Judah and Israel both [Rede of the Lord]
- 12 The Lord they have belied,
 Saying 'Not He!

¹ The text is uncertain, the Hebrew margin and versions pointing to an untranslatable original.

² The text has *make not*, but this is inconsistent with the context, and *not* seems a later addition.

- ‘ Evil shall never come on us,
 Nor famine nor sword shall we see.
- 13 ‘ The prophets ! they are nothing but wind
 The Word is not with them ! ’¹
- 14 Therefore thus hath the Lord of Hosts said,
 because of their speaking this word—²
- Behold I am setting My Word
 In thy mouth for fire,
 And this people for wood,
 And it shall devour them.

5. The Fifth Song upon the Scythians, Ch. V. 15-17, besides still leaving them nameless, emphasises their strangeness to Israel's world. There was a common language in Western Asia, Aramean, the *lingua franca* of traders from Nineveh to Memphis; and Jew, Assyrian and Egyptian conversed in it. But the tongue of these raiders from over the Caucasus was unintelligible. Yet how they would set their teeth into the land ! Mixed with the verses which thus describe them are others which suit not them but the Chaldeans and must have been added by the Prophet in 604. A people so new to the Jews might hardly have been called by Jeremiah *an ancient nation, from of old a nation*, and in fact these phrases are wanting in the Greek version.

¹ Hebrew adds, *thus be it done them*; Greek omits.

² Hebrew has *God* after *Lord* and *your* for *their*.

- V. 15 Behold, I am bringing upon you
 A nation from far,
 [O house of Israel, Rede of the Lord
 An ancient nation it is,
 From of old a nation,]¹
- 16 A nation thou knowest not its tongue,
 Nor canst hear what it says,
 Its quiver an open grave,²
 All of it stalwarts.³
- 17 It shall eat up thy harvest and bread,
 Eat thy sons and thy daughters,
 It shall eat up thy flocks and thy cattle,
 Eat thy vines and thy figs.
 It shall beat down thy fortified towns,
 Wherein thou dost trust, with the sword.

The last couplet is unsuitable to the Scythians, incapable as they were of sieges and avoiding fortified towns—though once they rushed Askalon. It is probably, therefore, another of the additions of 604 referring to the Chaldeans. The prose which follows is certainly from the Chaldean period, for it was not Scythians but Chaldeans who threatened with exile the peoples whom they overran.

- V. 18 Yet even in those days—Rede of the
 Lord—I will not make a full end of you.

¹This couplet the Greek lacks.

²Eloquent of death: Ps. v. 9.

³For these four lines the Greek has only *A nation thou hearest not its tongue, all of them mighty.*

19 And it shall be when they say, For what hath the Lord our God done to us all these things?—that thou shalt say to them, Just as ye have left Me and have served foreign gods in your own land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land not yours.

There follows a poem, verses 20-31, that has nothing to do with the Scythian series; and that with the preceding prose, with which also it has no connection, shows us what a conglomeration of Oracles the Book of Jeremiah is. It seems as though the compiler, searching for a place for it, had seen the catch-word *harvest* in the previous Scythian song and, this one having the same word, he had copied it in here. The Book shows signs elsewhere of the same mechanical method. But like all the Oracles this has for its theme the foolish dulness of Israel to their God and His Word, and the truth that it is their crimes which are the cause of all their afflictions yet now not in history but in Nature. There is no reason to doubt that the verses are Jeremiah's, and nothing against our dating them in the early years of his ministry.

V. 20 Declare ye this in the House of Jacob,

Through Judah let it be heard :¹

21 Hear ye now this, people most foolish,

And void of sense.²

¹ Hebrew adds *saying*.

² Lit, *with no heart*, the seat not only of feeling, but of the practical intelligence.

[They have eyes but they do not see,
Ears but they hear not.]

- 22 Fear ye not Me, Rede of the Lord,
Nor tremble before Me?—
Who have set the sand a bound for the sea,
An eternal decree it cannot transgress;
Though (its waters)¹ toss, they shall not prevail,
And its rollers boom, they cannot break over.
- 23 Yet this people heart-hard and rebellious,
Have swerved and gone off;
- 24 For not with their hearts do they say,
'Now fear we the Lord our God,
'Who giveth the rain in its season,
The early and latter;
'And the weeks appointed for harvest
Secureth for us.'
- 25 These have your crimes deranged,
Your sins withholden your luck.
- 26 For scoundrels are found in My folk,
Who prowl with the crouch of a fowler (?)²
And set their traps to destroy,
'Tis men they would catch!
- 27 Like a cage that is full of birds,
Their houses are filled with deceit,³
- 28 And so they wax wealthy and great—
They are fat, they are sleek!—

¹ Something like this has obviously slipped from the text.

² Text uncertain.

³ Either with the spoils or with the victims thereof.

- Overflowing with things of evil (?),
 They defend not the right,
 The right of the orphan to prosper,
 Nor justice judge for the needy.¹
- 29 Shall I not visit on these,
 Rede of the Lord,
 Nor on a people like this
 Myself be avenged ?²
- 30 Appalling and ghastly it is
 That has come to pass in the land :
- 31 The prophets prophesy lies,
 The priests bear rule at their hand,
 And My people—they love so to have it ;
 But what will ye do in the end ?

6. In the Sixth Song on the Scythians, VI. 1-5, which also is given without introduction, Jerusalem is threatened—even Jerusalem to which in the previous songs the country-folk had been bidden to fly for shelter—and the foes are described in the attempt to rush her, as they rushed Askalon according to Herodotus. That they are represented as faltering and no success is predicted for them, and also that they are called *shepherds*, are signs that it is the Scythians, though still nameless, who are meant in verses 3-5. The next three verses, separately introduced, point rather to

¹ The text of the whole verse is uncertain. Greek omits *things of evil* and *to prosper*.

² Or *take vengeance Myself*.

a Chaldean invasion by their picture of besiegers throwing up a mound against the walls, and may therefore be one of the additions to his earlier Oracles made by the Prophet, when in 604 the enemy from the North was clearly seen to be Nebuchadrezzar, with the siege-trains familiar to us from the Assyrian and Babylonian monuments; upon which are represented just such a hewing of timber and heaping of mounds against a city's walls.

- VI. 1 Pack off, O Benjamin's sons,
 Out of Jerusalem !
 Strike up the trump in Tekoa,¹
 O'er Beth-hakkérem lift up the signal !
 For evil glowers out of the North,
 And ruin immense.
- 2 O the charming (?) the pampered height²
 Of the daughter of Şion !
- 3 Unto her shepherds are coming,
 With their flocks around,³
 They pitch against her their tents,
 Each crops at his hand.
- 'Hallow⁴ the battle against her,
 Up, let us on by noon.'

¹ Hebrew bitēkô'a tikkē'û ; a play upon words.

² After the Greek ; the Hebrew text is corrupt.

³ Transferred from the next line to suit the metre.

⁴ The Hebrew idiom for starting a campaign or a siege, which was formally sanctioned by a religious rite.

- 4 'Woe unto us! The day is turning,
The shadows of evening stretch.'
- 5 'Up then and on by night,
That we ruin her palaces!'
- 6 For thus said the Lord of Hosts :
Hew down her ¹ trees and heap
Against Jerusalem a mound ;
Woe to the City of Falsehood,²
Nought but oppression within her !
- 7 As a well keeps its waters fresh
She keeps fresh her evil ;
Violence and spoil are heard throughout her,
Ever before Me sickness and wounds.
- 8 Jerusalem, be thou corrected,
Lest from thee My soul doth break,
Lest I lay thee a desolate waste,
Uninhabited land.

Here follows another and separately introduced Oracle :—

- 9 Thus hath the Lord ³ said :
Glean, let them glean as a vine
Israel's remnant ;
Like the grape-gleaner turn thy hand
Again to its ⁴ tendrils.
- 10 'To whom shall I utter myself,
And witness that they may hear ?

¹ So some MSS.

² So Greek : Hebrew, *She is a city to be visited.*

³ Hebrew adds *of Hosts.*

⁴ So Greek.

- ‘ Lo, uncircumcised is their ear,
They cannot give heed.
‘ The Word of the Lord is their scorn,
No pleasure have they therein.
11 ‘ I am full of the rage of the Lord,
Weary with holding it back ! ’
Pour¹ it out on the child in the street,
On the youths where they gather ;
Both husband and wife shall be taken,
The old with the full of days.
12 Their homes shall be turned to others,
Their fields and wives together,
When I stretch forth My Hand
On those that dwell in this² land.
[Rede of the Lord.]
13 Because from the least to the greatest
All are greedy of gain,
Right on from prophet to priest
Every one worketh lies.
14 They would heal the breach of My people,
As though it were trifling,
Saying, ‘ It is well, it is well ’—
When—where³ is it well ?
15 Were they shamed of their loathsome deeds ?
Nay, not at all ashamed !

¹ It is difficult to discriminate in these lines between the Lord and the Prophet as speakers. If the Greek *I will pour* is correct, the Prophet still speaks, otherwise the Lord who began in verse 9 and was followed by the Prophet in 10 and 11a, resumes in 11b.

² So Greek.

³ *Ibid.*

They know not even to blush!
 So they with the fallen shall fall,
 And shall reel in the time that I visit,
 Rede of the Lord.

Still another Oracle which gives no glimpse of the Scythians, but threatens a vague disaster and once more states the moral reasons for Judah's doom. Its allusion to incense and sacrifices is no reason for dating it after the discovery of Deuteronomy.¹

- 16 Thus hath the Lord said—
 Halt on the ways and look,
 And ask for the ancient paths :
 Where is² the way that is good?
 Go ye in that,
 And rest shall ye find to your soul,
 But they—' We go not !'
 17 I raised up sentinels for you—
 Heed the sound of the trump !³
 But they—' We heed not !'
 18 Therefore, O nations, hearken,
 And own My record against them (?)⁴

¹ Hans Schmidt, quoted by Dr. Skinner, does so, and takes it as the earliest evidence of Jeremiah's opposition to Deuteronomy, and Dr. Skinner in his Chapter 'In the Wake of the Reform,' says it is almost certainly post-deuteronomic. I am not convinced. See below, p. 133.

² Greek *mark ye*.

³ See above, p. 112.

⁴ Text both of Greek and Hebrew uncertain; the above is adapted from the Greek.

- 19 Hear thou, O Earth,
 Lo, evil I bring to this people,
 The fruit of their own devices,¹
 Since they have not heeded My Word,
 And My Law have despised.
- 20 To Me what is incense that cometh from Sheba,
 Sweet-cane from a far-off land?
 Your holocausts are not acceptable,
 Nor your sacrifice pleasing.
- 21 Therefore thus hath the Lord said:
 Behold I set for this people
 Blocks upon which to stumble;
 Fathers and children together,
 Neighbour and friend shall perish.

None of the foregoing brief and separate Oracles diverts from the moral theme of all these earlier utterances of the Prophet, that Judah's afflictions, whether from Nature or from invaders, are due to her own wickedness. And this record even the foreign peoples are called to witness—another proof that from the first Jeremiah had a sense of a mission to *the nations* as well as to his own countrymen.

7. There follows the Seventh, the last of the Songs which may be referred to the Scythian invasion, Ch. VI. 22-26. It repeats the distance from which, in the fateful North, those hordes have been *stirred* to their work of judgment, their

¹ Greek has *backslidings*.

ruthlessness and terrific tumult, the panic they produce, and bitter mourning. The usual formula introduces the verses.

22 Thus hath the Lord said :

- Lo, a people comes out of the North,
 A nation¹ astir from the ends of the earth,
 23 The bow and the javelin they grasp,
 Cruel and ruthless,
 The noise of them booms like the sea,
 On horses they ride—
 Arrayed as one man for the battle
 On thee, O Daughter of Şion !
 24 We have heard their fame,
 Limp are our hands ;
 Anguish hath gripped us,
 Pangs as of travail.
 25 Fare not forth to the field,
 Nor walk on the way,
 For the sword of a foe,
 Terror all round !
 26 Daughter of My people, gird on thee sackcloth
 And wallow in ashes !
 Mourn as for an only-begotten,
 Wail of the bitterest !
 For of a sudden there cometh
 The spoiler upon us.²

¹ Hebrew adds *great*, which Greek omits.

² Greek *you*.

This is the last of Jeremiah's Oracles on the Scythians. There is little or no doubt of their date—before 621-20. What knowledge of this new people and their warfare the Prophet displays! What conscience of the ethical purpose of the Lord of Hosts in threatening Judah with them! Yet some still refuse to credit the story of his Call, that from the first he heard himself appointed as a prophet *to the nations*.¹

This section of Jeremiah's earlier Oracles concludes with one addressed to himself, Ch. VI. 27-30. It describes the task assigned him during the most of his time under Josiah, whether before the discovery and promulgation of the Book of the Law in 621-20, or subsequently to this while he watched the nation's new endeavour to repent and reform. During the years from 621-20 till 608 when Josiah was defeated and slain at Megiddo, there can have been but little for him to do except to follow, as his searching eyes and detached mind alone in Israel could follow, the great venture of Judah in obedience to the Book of the Law. For this interval the outside world had ceased to threaten Israel. The Assyrian control of her was relaxed: the people of God were free, and had their first opportunity for over a century to work out their own salvation.

¹ See above, pp. 79 ff.

- 27 Assayer among My people I set thee,¹
 To know and assay their ways,
 28 All of them utterly recreant,
 Gadding about to slander.
 Brass and iron are all of them (?),
 Wasters they be!
 29 Fiercely blow the bellows,
 The lead is consumed of the fire (?)
 In vain does the smelter smelt,
 Their dross² is not drawn.
 'Refuse silver' men call them,
 For the Lord hath refused them.³

To take these lines as subsequent to the institution of Deuteronomy and expressive of the judgment of the Prophet upon the failure of the reformation under Josiah to reach the depth of a real repentance,⁴ is unnecessary. The young

¹ Hebrew adds, *a fortress*, obviously borrowed by some scribe from other appointments by God of Jeremiah, e.g. i. 18. For *ways* in next line Duhm by change of a letter reads *value*.

² Greek and Targ. read *their evil* for *the evil ones* of the Hebrew.

³ The general meaning is clear, the details obscure for the text is uncertain. Driver's note is the most instructive. In refining, the silver was mixed with lead and the mass, fused in the furnace, had a current of air turned upon it; the lead oxidising acted as a flux, carrying off the alloy or dross. But in Israel's case the dross is too closely mixed with the silver, so that though the bellows blow and the lead is oxidised, the dross is not drawn and the silver remains impure.

⁴ As Erbt ('Jeremia u. seine Zeit') and Skinner (p. 160) do.

Jeremiah had already tested his people and in his earliest Oracles reached conclusions as hopeless as that here. At least he had already been called to test the people; and in next section we shall see how he continued to fulfil his duty after the discovery of Deuteronomy, and onwards through the attempts at reformation which it inspired.

3. JEREMIAH AND DEUTERONOMY.

(Chs. VII, VIII. 8, XI.)

We are not told when or why Jeremiah left Anathoth for Jerusalem. His early poem denouncing the citizens¹ reveals a close observation of their morals but no trace of the reforms begun by Josiah soon after 621 B.C. Some therefore hold that he had settled in the City before that year.² Anathoth, however, lay so near Jerusalem that even from his boyhood Jeremiah must have been familiar with the life and trade of the capital; and as his name is not mentioned in connection with the discovery of the Law-Book on which the reforms were based, and neither he nor his biographer speaks of that discovery, it is probable that as yet he had not entered upon residence in the Temple-precincts. A natural occasion for the migration of his family and himself would be upon Josiah's disestablishment of the rural sanctuaries and provision for their priests beside the priests

¹ v. 1-8, see p. 119.

² So Duhm.

of the Temple.¹ In any case we find Jeremiah henceforth in Jerusalem, delivering his Words in the gateways or courts of the Temple to all classes of the citizens as well as to the country-folk, who under the new laws of worship thronged more than ever the City and her great Shrine.

There is general agreement that *the Book of the Law* discovered by the Temple-priests in 621-20 was our Book of Deuteronomy in whole or in part—more probably in part, for Deuteronomy has been compiled from at least two editions of the same original, and the compilation may not have been made till some time later. Many of its laws, including some peculiar to itself, have been woven out of more than one form, and there are two Introductions to the Book, each hortatory and historical and each covering to some extent the same ground as the other. We cannot tell how much of this compilation was contained in the discovered Book of the Law. But this Book included certainly *first* the laws of worship peculiar to Deuteronomy, because the reforms which it inspired carried out these laws, and probably *second* some of the denunciations which precede or follow the laws, for such would explain the consternation of the King when the Book was read to him.²

¹ Deut. xviii. 6, II Kings xxiii. 8, 9.

² On this and the following paragraphs see the writer's 'Deuteronomy' in the Cambridge Bible for Schools.

Deuteronomy is fairly described as a fresh codification of the ancient laws of Israel in the spirit of the Prophets of the Eighth Century. The Book is not only Law but Prophecy, in the proper sense of this word, and a prophetic interpretation of Israel's history. It not only restates old and adds new laws but enforces the basal truths of the prophets, and in this enforcement breathes the ethical fervour of Amos and Isaiah as well as Hosea's tenderness and his zeal for education.

Deuteronomy has three cardinal doctrines: The One God, The One Altar, and The One People.

First, The One God. Though slightly tinged with popular conceptions of the existence of other gods,¹ the monotheism of the Book is strenuously moral and warmly spiritual. The God of Israel is to be served and loved because He is Love—the One and Only God not more by His Righteousness and His Power than by His Grace, manifest as all three have been throughout His dealings with Israel. The worship of other gods is forbidden and so is every attempt to represent Himself in a material form. His ritual is purged of foolish, unclean and cruel elements. Witchcraft and necromancy are utterly condemned.

Second—and this is original to Deuteronomy—The One Altar, at that time an inevitable corollary

¹ Deut. iv. 19.

both to the need for purity in the worship of God and to the truth of His Unity. The long license of sacrifices at a multitude of shrines had resulted not only in the debasement of His worship, but in the popular confusion of Himself with a number of local deities.¹ The removal of the high-places, the concentration of sacrifice upon One Altar had, by the bitter experience of centuries, become a religious and an ethical necessity.

Third, The One People. Save for possible proselytes from the neighbouring heathen, Israel is alone legislated for—a free nation owning no foreign king as it bows to no foreign deity, but governing itself in obedience to the revealed Will of its own God. This Will is applied to every detail of its life in as comprehensive a system of national religion as the world has known. And thus next to devotion to the Deity comes pride in the nation. Because of their possession of the Divine Law Israel are *the* righteous people and wise above all others. The patriotism of the Book must have been one cause of its immediate acceptance by the people, when Josiah brought it before them and upon it they made Covenant with their God. Throughout the Book treats the nation as a moral unit. It enforces indeed justice as between man and man. It gives woman a

¹ See above, pp. 76, 104 ff.

higher position than is assumed for her by other Hebrew codes. It cares for the individual poor, stranger, debtor and dependent priest with a humanity all its own, and it exhorts to the education of children. Above all it forbids base thoughts as well as base deeds. Yet, while thus enforcing the elements of a searching personal morality, Deuteronomy deals with the individual only through his relations to the nation and the national worship. The Book has no promise for the individual beyond the grave. Nor is there pity nor charity for other peoples nor any sense of a place for them in the Divine Providence. There is no missionary spirit nor hope for mankind outside of Israel.

Further it is due to the almost exclusively national outlook and interest of the Book that it has no guidance or comfort to offer for another element of personal experience—question and doubt. While it illustrates from the nation's history the purifying discipline of suffering because of sin it says nothing of the sufferings of righteous individuals, but by the absoluteness of its doctrines of morality and Providence suggests, if indeed it does not inculcate, the dogma that right-doing will always meet with prosperity and wrong-doing with pain and disaster—a dogma which provoked the thoughtful to scepticism, as we shall see with Jeremiah himself.

Again, the fact that the Book, while superbly

insistent upon justice, holiness and humanity, lays equal emphasis on a definite ritual, with One Altar and an exclusive system of sacrifices, tempted the popular mind to a superstitious confidence in these institutions. And while it was of practical advantage to have the principles of the prophets reduced to a written system, which could be enforced as public law and taught to the young—two ends on which the authors of Deuteronomy are earnestly bent—there was danger of the people coming thereby to trust rather in the letter than in the spirit of the new revelation. Both these dangers were soon realised. As Dr. A. B. Davidson has said, 'Pharisæism and Deuteronomy came into the world on the same day.'

Such was the Book discovered in the Temple in 621-20 and accepted as Divine by King and Nation. Modern efforts to connect Jeremiah with its discovery and introduction to the Monarch, and even with its composition, may be ignored. Had there been a particle of evidence for this, it would have been seized and magnified by the legalists in Israel, not to speak of those apocryphal writers who foist so much else on Jeremiah and Baruch.¹ That they have not even attempted this is proof—if proof were needed—that Jeremiah, the youthful son of a rural family, and probably

¹ See p. 8.

still unknown to the authorities in the Capital, had nothing whatever to do either with the origins, or with the discovery, of the Book of the Law or with its presentation to the King by the priests of the Temple.

Yet so great a discovery, so full a volume of truth poured forth in a style so original and compelling, cannot have left unmoved a young prophet of the conscience and heart of Jeremiah.¹ That he was in sympathy with the temper and the general truths of Deuteronomy we need not doubt. As for its ethics, its authors were of the same school as himself and among their teachers they had the same favourite, Hosea. In his earliest Oracles Jeremiah had expressed the same view as theirs of God's constant and clear guidance of Israel and of the nation's obstinacy in relapsing from this. His heart, too, must have hailed the Book's august enforcement of that abolition of the high places and their pagan ritual, which he had ventured to urge from his obscure position in Anathoth. Nor did he ever throughout his ministry protest against the substitute which the Book prescribed for those—the concentration of the national worship upon a single sanctuary. On the contrary in a later Oracle he looks for the day when that shall be observed by all Israel and the watchmen on Mount Ephraim shall cry,

¹Cp. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

Rise, let us up to Sion,
To the Lord our God!¹

On the other hand, the emphasis which Deuteronomy equally lays upon ethics and upon ritual, and its absolute doctrines of morality and Providence were bound to provoke questions in a mind so restlessly questioning as his. Then there was the movement of reform which followed upon the appeal of the Book to the whole nation. Jeremiah himself had called for a national repentance and here, in the people's acceptance of the Covenant and consent to the reforms it demanded, were the signs of such a repentance. No opposition appears to have been offered to those reforms. The King who led them was sincere; a better monarch Judah never knew, and his reign was signalled by Jeremiah at its close as a reign of justice when *all was well*. Yet can we doubt that the Prophet, who had already preached so rigorous a repentance and had heard himself appointed by God as the tester of His people, would use that detached position jealously to watch the progress of the reforms which the nation had so hurriedly acclaimed and to test their moral value?

In modern opinion of Jeremiah's attitude to the discovered Law-Book there are two extremes. One is of those who regard him as a legalist and

¹ xxxi. 6.

throughout his career the strenuous advocate of the Book and the system it enforced. The other is of those who maintain that he had no sympathy with legal systems or official reforms, and that the passages in the Book of Jeremiah which allege his assent to, and his proclamation of, the Deuteronomic Covenant, or represent him as using the language of Deuteronomy, are not worthy of credit.¹ Of these extremes we may say at once that if with both we neglect the twofold character of Deuteronomy—its emphasis now on ethics and now on ritual—and again, if with both we assume that Jeremiah's attitude to the Law-Book and to the reforms it inspired never changed, then the evidences for that attitude offered by the Book of Jeremiah are inconsistent and we may despair of a conclusion. But a more reasonable course is open to us. If we keep in mind the two faces of Deuteronomy as well as the doubtful progress for many years of the reforms started by it, and if we also remember that a prophet like all the works of God was subject to growth; if we allow to Jeremiah the same freedom to change his purpose in face of fresh developments of his people's character as in the Parable of the Potter he imputes to his God; if we recall how in 604 the new events in the history of Western

¹ These two extremes are represented by Winckler and Duhm respectively.

Asia led him to adapt his earlier Oracles on the Scythians to the Chaldeans who had succeeded the Scythians as the expected Doom from the North—then our way through the evidence becomes tolerably clear, except for the difficulty of dating a number of his undated Oracles. What we must not forget is the double, divergent intention and influence of Deuteronomy, and the fact that Josiah's reformation, though divinely inspired, was in its progress an experiment upon the people, whose mind and conduct beneath it Jeremiah was appointed by God to watch and to test.

These considerations prepare us *first* for the story in Ch. XI. 1-8 of Jeremiah's fervent assent to the ethical principles of Deuteronomy and of the charge to him to proclaim these throughout Judah; and *then* for his later attitude to the written Law, to the Temple and to sacrifices.

- XI. 1 The Word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying :
- 2 Hear thou¹ the words of this Covenant, and speak¹ them to the men of Judah, and to the
- 3 inhabitants of Jerusalem. And thou shalt say to them, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who hears not
- 4 the words of this Covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought

¹ Sing. as partly in Greek and wholly in Syriac.

them out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron-furnace, saying, Hearken to My Voice and do¹ according to all that I command you, and ye shall be to Me a people, and I will be
 5 God to you; in order to establish the oath which I swear unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day.

And I answered and said, Amen, O Lord!

6 And the Lord said unto me, Proclaim² these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the
 8 words of this Covenant and do them, but they did them not.³

The story has its difficulties. It is undated; it is followed by verses 9-17, apparently from the reign of Jehoiakim; what the Prophet is called to hear and gives his solemn assent to is generally described as *this Covenant*; and in verses 7 and 8 there is what may be a mere editorial addition since the Greek Version omits it, which has led some to assert the editorial character of the whole. But for the reasons given above, there is no cause to doubt the substantial truthfulness of the story, unless with Duhm we were capable of believing that Jeremiah never spoke in prose, nor

¹ With Greek omit *them* of the Hebrew text.

² Hebrew adds *all*.

³ As above, Greek omits all of the Hebrew verses 7, 8 except the last clause which follows naturally on verse 6.

can be conceived as, at any time in his life the advocate of what was a legal as well as a prophetic book. Of the first of these assertions we have already disposed;¹ the second is met by the fact that what Jeremiah was called to assent to was not a legal programme but a spiritual covenant, of which ethical obedience alone was stated as the condition. In Josiah's reign what else could *this Covenant* mean than the Covenant set forth in the recently discovered Book of the Law and solemnly avouched by the whole people?² That its essence was spiritual and ethical is expressed in the Deuteronomic phrases which follow, and the quotation of these is most relevant to the occasion. Nor do the recollections, the command and the promise which they convey go beyond what Jeremiah had already enforced in his earlier Oracles.³

¹ See above, pp. 40 ff.

² This consideration seems to dispose of König's claim that Jeremiah here maintains the Sinai-Covenant (with the Decalogue) in opposition to the Moab-Covenant set forth in Deuteronomy. How could the former be defined in the time of Josiah as *this Covenant* or described in Deuteronomic phrases? See also G. Douglas, 'Book of Jeremiah,' p. 156.

³ Dr. Skinner (*op. cit.*, p. 100) thinks that 'the accumulation of distinctively Deuteronomic phrases and ideas in verses 4, 5 implies a dependence on that book which savours strongly of editorial workmanship.' But if *this Covenant* be the Deuteronomic, as he admits, what more natural than to state it in Deuteronomic terms, expressive as these are only of its spiritual

Therefore we may believe that, as recorded, Jeremiah heard in the heart of Deuteronomy the call of God, that he uttered his Amen to it; and that, from his experience of the evils of the high-places, he felt obliged, as he also records, to proclaim *this Covenant* throughout Judah.¹

In the same chapter as the charge to the Prophet concerning *this Covenant* there is mention of a conspiracy against his life by the men of Anathoth, XI. 21. Some suppose that these were enraged by his support of reforms which abolished rural sanctuaries like their own. But his earlier denunciations of such shrines, delivered inde-

essence? I would also refer to what I have said on p. 41 as to the effect on the Prophet of the new and haunting style of Deuteronomy.

¹Dr. Skinner's authoritative support to the substance of the thesis maintained above is very welcome, strengthened as it is by the point which he makes in the first of the following sentences: 'The deliberate invention of an incident, which had no point of contact in the authentic record of his life, is a procedure of which no assured parallel is found in the book. We must at least believe that a trustworthy tradition lies behind the passage in ch. xi; and the conclusion to which it naturally points is that Jeremiah was at first strongly in favour of the law of Deuteronomy, and lent his moral support to the reformation of Josiah' (pp. 102-3). Wellhausen, 'Isr. u. Jüdische Gesch.' (1894, p. 97): 'An der Einführung des Deuteronomiums hatte er mitgewirkt, zeitlebens eiferte er gegen die illegitimen Altäre in den Städten Judas . . . Aber mit den Wirkungen der Reformation war er keineswegs zufrieden.' So too J. R. Gillies, 'Jeremiah,' p. 113, and W. R. Thomson, 'The Burden of the Lord,' p. 66; and virtually so, Peake, i. 11-14.

pendently of Deuteronomy, had been enough to rouse his fellow-villagers against him as a traitor to their local interests and pieties.

Another address, VII. 1-15, said to have been delivered to all Judah, rebukes the people for their false confidence in the Temple and their abuse of it, and threatens its destruction. Editorial additions may exist in both the Hebrew and Greek texts of this address, but it contains phrases non-deuteronomic and peculiar to Jeremiah, while its echoes of Deuteronomy were natural to the occasion. Except for a formula or two, I take the address to be his own. Nor am I persuaded by the majority of modern critics that it is a mere variant of the Temple address reported in Ch. XXVI as given *in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim*. Why may Jeremiah not have spoken more than once on the same theme to the same, or a similar effect? Moreover, the phrase *We are delivered!* VII. 10, which does not recur in XXVI, suits the conditions before, rather than those after, the Battle of Megiddo. For parallel with the increased faith in the Temple, due mainly to the people's consciousness of their obedience to the Law-Book, was their experience of deliverance from the Assyrian yoke. I am inclined, therefore, to refer VII. 1-15 to the reign of Josiah, rather than with XXVI to that of Jehoiakim.¹ But,

¹ So, too, H. P. Smith, 'O.T. History,' p. 278, n. 2; while Duhm, Giesebrecht, Davidson, Driver, Gillies, Peake and Skinner

whatever be its date, VII. 1-15 is relevant to our present discussion.

VII. 2, 3 Hear ye the Word of the Lord, all Judah!¹ Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel—

Better your ways and your doings that I
 4 may leave you to dwell in this Place. Put not
 your trust on lying words,² saying to your-
 selves,³ 'The Temple of the Lord, The Temple
 5 of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord—are
 those!'⁴ But if ye throughly better your
 ways and your doings, if ye indeed do justice
 6 between a man and his fellow, and oppress not
 the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow,
 and shed not innocent blood [in this Place],
 7 nor go after other gods to your hurt, then
 I shall leave you to abide in this Place [in

all take vii. 1-15 and xxvi. to refer to the same occasion early in Jehoiakim's reign. Duhn and Skinner remark on an apparently incoherent association of Place (= Holy Place) and Land in vii. 3-7. The clause about the Land may be a later addition. Yet in verses 13-15 (the substance of which Skinner admits to be genuine) the destruction of the Holy Place and ejection of the people from the Land are *both* threatened.

¹ So simply the Greek; the longer Hebrew title, verses 1, 2 may be an expansion by an editor, who took vii. 1-15 as reporting the same speech as xxvi. 1 ff. In verse 3 Hebrew reads *Lord of Hosts*.

² Greek adds *for they will be absolutely of no avail to you*.

³ So Syriac.

⁴ Or *there they are!*—plural because of the complex of buildings.

- the land which I gave to your fathers from
 8 of old for ever]. Behold, you put your trust
 9 on lying words that cannot profit. What?
 Steal, murder, fornicate, swear falsely, and
 burn¹ to Baal, and go after other gods whom
 10 ye knew not, yet come and stand before
 Me in this House upon which My Name has
 been called and say 'We are delivered'—in
 11 order to work all these abominations! Is it
 a robbers' den that My² House [upon which
 My Name has been called] has become in
 your eyes? I also, behold I have seen it
 —Rede of the Lord.
- 12 For go now to My Place which was in Shiloh,
 where at first I caused My Name to dwell,
 and see what I did to it because of the
 13 wickedness of My people Israel. And now
 because of your doing of all these deeds [Rede
 of the Lord, though I spake unto you rising
 early and speaking, but ye hearkened not, and
 14 I called you, but ye did not answer],³ I shall
 do to the House [on which My Name has
 been called] in which you are trusting, and to
 the Place which I gave to you and to your

¹ It is doubtful whether this verb, meaning in earlier Hebrew *to make any burnt offering* was already confined to its later meaning, *to burn incense*.

² So Greek.

³ Much within these brackets is lacking in the Greek.

15 fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I shall cast you out from before My Face as I cast out¹ your brethren, all the seed of Ephraim.

In this address there is nothing that contradicts Deuteronomy. The sacredness with which the Book had invested the One Sanctuary is acknowledged. But the people have no moral sense of that sacredness. Their confidence in the Temple is material and superstitious, fostered, we may believe, by the peace they were enjoying and their relief from a foreign sovereignty, as well as by their formal observance of the institutions which the Book prescribed. What had been founded to rally and to guide a spiritual faith they turned into a fetish and even to an 'indulgence' for their wickedness. The House, in which Isaiah had bent beneath the seraphs' adoration of the Divine Holiness, and, confessing his own and his people's sin, had received from its altar the sacrament of pardon and of cleansing, was by this generation not only debased to a mere pledge of their political security but debauched into a shelter for sins as gross as ever polluted their worship upon the high places. So ready, as in all other ages, were formality and vice to conspire with each other! Jeremiah scorns the people's *trust* in the Temple as utterly as he had scorned their *trust* (it is the same word) in the Baals or in Egypt

¹ Hebrew *all*.

and Assyria. The change in the pivot of their false confidence is to be marked. So much at least had Deuteronomy effected—shifting their trust from foreign gods and states to something founded by their own God, yet leaving it material, and unable to restrain them from bringing along with it their old obdurate vices.

Whether, then, this address was delivered in Josiah's reign or early in Jehoiakim's it affords no reason for our denying it to Jeremiah. As God's tester of the people he has been watching their response to the Revelation they had accepted, and has proved that their obedience was to the letter of this and not to its spirit, that while they superstitiously revered its institutions they shamelessly ignored its ethics. For just such vices as they still practised God Himself must take vengeance. As those had deranged the very seasons and were leading to the overthrow of the state,¹ no one could hope that the Temple would escape their consequences. And there was that precedent of the destruction of Israel's first sanctuary in Shiloh, the ruins of which, as we have seen, lay not far from Jeremiah's home at Anathoth.²

Another Oracle, XI. 15, 16, also undated, seems, like the last passage, best explained as delivered by Jeremiah while he watched during the close of Josiah's reign the hardening of the people's trust in their religious institutions and felt its

¹ Verses 9, 25, 29, etc.

² See above, p. 72.

futility ; or alternatively when that futility was exposed by the defeat at Megiddo. It has, however, been woven by some hand or other into a passage reflecting the revival of the Baal-worship under Jehoiakim (verse 17 ; its connection with the prose sentence preceding is also doubtful). Copyists have wrought havoc with the Hebrew text, but as the marginal note of our Revisers indicates, the sense may be restored from the Greek. *My Beloved* is, of course, Israel.

- XI. 15 What has My Beloved to do in My house,
Working out mischief?
Vows, holy flesh ! Can such things turn
Calamity from thee ;
Or by these thou escape ?¹
16 Flourishing olive, fair with fruit,
God called thy name.
To the noise of a mighty roaring
He sets her on fire—
Blasted her branches !

The first of these verses repeats the charge of VII 2-11 : the people use the Temple for their sins. The word rendered *mischief* is literally *devices*, and the meaning may be intrigues hatched from their false ideas of the Temple's security. But the word is mostly used of *evil devices* and here the Greek has *abomination*. As with their

¹ *Vows*, so Greek, but Lucian *fat pieces* (Lev. vi. 5) ; *by these thou escape*, so Greek, Hebrew *then mightest thou rejoice*.

Temple so with their vows and sacrifices. All are useless because of their wickedness. The nation must be punished. The second verse may well have been uttered after the defeat at Megiddo, or may be a prediction on the eve of that disaster to *the branches* of the nation, which the nation as a whole survived.

This leads to another and more difficult question. Jeremiah has spoken doom on the Temple and the Nation; has he come to doubt the Law-Book itself or any part of it? As to that there are two passages one of which speaks of a falsification of the Law by its guardians, while the other denies the Divine origin not only of the deuteronomic but of all sacrifices and burnt offerings.

Even before the discovery of the Law-Book the young prophet had said of *those who handle the Law* that *they did not know the Lord*.¹ And now in an Oracle, apparently of date after the discovery, he charges the scribes with manipulating *the Law*, the *Torah*, so as to turn it to falsehood. The Oracle is addressed to the people of whom he has just said that they do not know *the Rule, the Mishpat, of the Lord*.

VIII. 8 How say you, 'We are the Wise,
The Law of the Lord is with us.'
But lo, the falsing pen of the scribes
Hath wrought it to falsehood.

¹ ii. 8, see above, p. 92.

Torah, literally *direction* or *instruction*, is either a single law or a body of law, revealed by God through priests or prophets, for the religious and moral practice of men. Here it is some traditional or official form of such law, for which the people have rejected the Word of the Lord—His living Word by the prophets of the time (verse 9).

9 Put to shame are the wise,
Dismayed and taken.

Lo, they have spurned the Word of the Lord—
What wisdom is theirs?

Was this *Torah* oral or written? And if written was it the discovered Book of the *Torah*, which in part at least was our Deuteronomy?

So far as the text goes the original *Torah* may have been either oral or written, and the scribes have *falsified* it, by amplification or distortion,¹ either when reducing it for the first time to writing or when copying and editing it from an already written form. This leaves open these further questions. If written was the *Torah* the very *Book of the Torah* discovered in the Temple in 621-20? And if so did the falsification affect the whole or only part of the Book? To these questions some answer No, on the ground of Jeremiah's assent to *this Covenant*, and the command to him

¹ Cp. the similar charge of Christ against the scribes.

to proclaim it.¹ Others answer Yes; in their view Jeremiah was opposed to the deuteronomic system as a whole, or at least to the detailed laws of ritual added to the prophetic and spiritual principles of the Book.² Another possibility is that Jeremiah had in view those first essays in writing of a purely priestly law-book, which resulted during the Exile in the so-called Priests' Code now incorporated in the Pentateuch. In our ignorance both of the original form of Deuteronomy and of the extent and character of the activity of the scribes during the reign of Josiah we might hesitate to decide among these possibilities were it not for the following address which there is no good reason for denying to Jeremiah.

VII. 21 Thus saith the Lord,³ Your burnt offerings add to your sacrifices and eat
22 flesh⁴! For I spake not with your fathers nor charged them, in the day that I brought them forth from the land of Egypt, concerning
23 burnt-offering and sacrifice. But with this Word I charged them, saying, Hearken to My Voice, and I shall be to you God, and

¹ xi. 1 ff.; so Giesebrecht on viii. 8.

² Marti, *Gesch. der Isr. Religion*, 154, 166; Duhm, and especially Cornill, *in loco*.

³ Hebrew adds of *Hosts, the God of Israel*.

⁴ The former were not, the latter were in part, eaten by the worshipper; but it does not matter if now he eats them all alike!

ye shall be to Me a people, and ye shall walk in every way that I charge you, that it may be well with you.

Whether from Jeremiah or not, this is one of the most critical texts of the Old Testament because while repeating what the Prophet has already fervently accepted,¹ that the terms of the deuteronomic Covenant were simply obedience to the ethical demands of God, it contradicts Deuteronomy and even more strongly Leviticus, in their repeated statements that in the wilderness God also commanded sacrifices. The issue is so grave that there have been attempts to evade it. None, however, can be regarded as successful. That which would weaken the Hebrew phrase, rightly rendered *concerning* by our versions, into *for the sake of* or *in the interest of* (as if all the speaker intended was that animal sacrifice was not the chief end or main interest of the Divine legislation) is doubtful philologically, nor meets the fact that all the Hebrew codes assign an indispensable value to sacrifice. Inadmissible also is the suggestion that the phrase means *concerning the details of*, for Deuteronomy and especially Leviticus emphasise the details of burnt-offering and sacrifice. Nor is the plausible argument convincing that the Prophet spoke relatively, and meant only what Samuel meant by *Obedience is better than sacri-*

¹ xi. 1 ff. : above, pp. 143 ff.

fice, or Hosea by *The Knowledge of God is more than burnt-offerings*.¹ Nor are there grounds for thinking that the Prophet had in view only the Ten Commandments; while finally to claim that he spoke in hyperbole is a forlorn hope of an argument. In answer to all these evasions it is enough to point out that the question is not merely that of the value of sacrifice, but whether during the Exodus the God of Israel gave any charge concerning sacrifice; as well as the fact that others than Jeremiah had either explicitly questioned this or implicitly denied it. When Amos, in God's Name repelled the burnt-offerings of his generation he asked, *Did ye bring unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O House of Israel?* and obviously expected a negative answer. And the following passages only render more general the truth that Israel's God has no pleasure at any time in the sacrifices offered to Him, with the institution of which—the natural inference is—He can have had nothing to do. *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil. Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath declared to thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*

¹ Sam. xv. 22, Hos. vi. 6. Those who take the passage relatively also quote Paul's words that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel, 1 Cor. i. 17.

And these two utterances in the Psalms: *Shall I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows to the Most High; and Thou desirest not sacrifice else would I give it, Thou delightest not in burnt-offering, The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.*¹

For the accuracy of these assertions or implications by a succession of prophets and psalmists there is a remarkable body of historical evidence. The sacrificial system of Israel is in its origins of far earlier date than the days of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt. It has so much, both of form and meaning, in common with the systems of kindred nations as to prove it to be part of the heritage naturally derived by all of them from their Semitic forefathers. And the new element brought into the traditional religion of Israel at Sinai was just that on which Jeremiah lays stress—the ethical, which in time purified the ritual of sacrifice and burnt-offering but had nothing to do with the origins of this.

Therefore it is certain *first* that Amos and Jeremiah meant literally what they stated or implicitly led their hearers to infer—God gave no commands at the Exodus concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices—and *second* that historically they were correct. But, of course, their interest in so saying was not historical but spiritual.

¹ Amos v. 25; Micah vi. 6-8; Ps. l. 13, 14; li. 16, 17.

Their aim was practical—to destroy their generation's materialist belief that animal sacrifice was the indispensable part of religion and worship. Still his way of putting it involves on the part of Jeremiah a repudiation of the statements of Deuteronomy on the subject. So far, then, Jeremiah opposed the new Book of the Law.¹

But with all this do not let us forget something more. While thus anticipating by more than six centuries the abolition of animal sacrifices, Jeremiah, by his example of service and suffering, was illustrating the substitute for them—the *human* sacrifice, the surrender by man himself of will and temper, and if need be of life, for the cause of righteousness and the salvation of his fellow-men. The recognition of this in Jeremiah by a later generation in Israel led to the conception of the suffering Servant of the Lord, and of the power of His innocent sufferings to atone for sinners and to redeem them.

This starts a kindred point—and the last—upon which Jeremiah offers, if not a contradiction, at least a contrast and a supplement to the teaching of Deuteronomy. We have noted the absoluteness—or idealism—of that Book's doctrines of

¹ See Robertson Smith, "The O.T. in the Jewish Church," 2nd ed., 203, 295 (1892), and Edghill, "The Evidential Value of Prophecy" (1904), 274, one of the best works on the O.T. in our time.

Morality and Providence; they leave no room for certain problems, raised by the facts of life. But Jeremiah had bitter experience of those facts, and it moved him to state the problems to God Himself. He owns the perfect justice of God; but this only makes his questioning more urgent.

XII. 1 Too righteous art Thou O Lord,
That with Thee I should argue,
Yet cases there are I must speak to Thee of:
The way of the wicked—why doth it prosper,
And the treacherous all be at ease?
2 Thou hast planted them, yea they take root,
They get on, yea they make fruit;
Near in their mouths art Thou,
But far from their hearts.

We shall have to deal with these questions and God's answer to them, when in a later lecture we analyse Jeremiah's religious experience and struggles. Here we only note the contrast which they present to Deuteronomy—a contrast between the Man and the System, between Experience and Dogma, between the Actual and the Ideal. And, as we now see, it was the System and the Dogma that were defective and the Man and his Experience of life that started, if not for himself yet for a later generation, pondering his experience, the solution of those problems, which against the deuteronomic teaching he raised in brave agony to God's own face.

Such serious differences between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy—upon the Law, the Temple, the Sacrifices, and Doctrines of Providence and Morality—suggest an important question with regard to the methods of Divine Revelation under the Old Covenant. Do they not prove that among those methods there were others than vision or intuition springing from the direct action of the Spirit of God upon the spirits of individual men? Are they not instances of the processes by which to this day in the Providence of God truth is sifted and ultimately beaten out—namely debate and controversy between different minds or different schools of thought, between earnest supporters of various and often hostile opinions in neither of which lies the whole of the truth? The evidence for Revelation by Argument which the Book of Jeremiah affords is not the least of its contributions to the history and philosophy of religion.