

LECTURE V.

UNDER JEHOIAKIM.

608—597-8 B.C.

I. FROM MEGIDDO TO CARCHEMISH, 608-605.

JOSIAH's faithful reign, and with it all thorough efforts to fulfil the National Covenant,¹ came to a tragic close on the field of Megiddo—the Flodden of Judah.

The year was 608 B.C. Medes and Chaldeans together had either taken, or were still besieging, Nineveh; and Pharaoh Nēcoh,² eager to win for Egypt a share of the crumbling Assyrian Empire, had started north with a great army. Marching by the coast he first took Gaza, and crossing by one of the usual passes from Sharon to Esdraelon,³ found himself opposed near Megiddo by a Jewish force led by its king in person. The Chronicler tells us that Neco

¹ II. Chron. xxxv. 20, *when he had set the Temple again in order.*

² Or Nechoh or Neco as in our own versions: Heb. נְכוּחַ or נְכוֹ

³ 'H.G.H.L.,' p. 151.

sought to turn Josiah from his desperate venture: *What have I to do with thee? I am come not against thee but against the House with which I am at war. God hath spoken to speed me; forbear from God who is with me, lest He destroy thee.*¹ But Josiah persisted. The issue of so unequal a contest could not be doubtful. The Jewish army was routed and Josiah himself immediately slain.²

At first sight, the courage of Josiah and his small people in facing the full force of Egypt seems to deserve our admiration, as much as did the courage of King Albert and his nation in opposing the faithless invasion of Belgium by the Germans aiming at France. There was, however, a difference. Neco was not invading Judah, but crossing Philistine territory and a Galilee which had long ceased to be Israel's. Some suppose that since the Assyrian hold upon Palestine relaxed, Josiah had gradually occupied all Samaria. If this be so, was he now stirred by a gallant sense of duty to assert Israel's ancient claim to Galilee as well? We cannot tell.³ But

¹ II. Chron. xxxv. 21. This may be only the reflection of later Jewish piety on so perplexing a disaster; but it rings like fact.

² II. King xxiii. 29, *as soon as he saw him*. For other records of Neco's northward march see Appendix II.

³ The idea that Josiah fought Neco, as an Assyrian vassal (Benzinger on II. Kings xxiii. 28-30) is, of course, quite improbable, even if Niniveh did not fall till 606. But if the latest datum is correct that Niniveh fell in 612 (see Appendix I) it is utterly groundless.

what we may confidently assume is that, having fulfilled by thirteen years of honest reforms his own part of the terms of the Covenant, Josiah believed that he could surely count on the Divine fulfilment of the rest, and that some miracle would bring to a righteous king and people victory over the heathen, however more powerful the heathen might be. He was only thirty-nine years of age.

His servants carried his body from the field in a chariot to Jerusalem, bringing him back, as we may realise, to a people stricken with consternation. Their trust in the Temple was shaken—they were not *delivered!*¹ In the circumstances they did their feeble best by raising to the vacant throne Josiah's son, Shallum, as Jehoahaz, *the Lord hath taken hold*. But the new name proved no omen of good. In three months Necho had the youth in bonds at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, *that he might not reign in Jerusalem*, and afterwards took him to Egypt. Of this fresh sorrow Jeremiah sang as if it had drowned out the sorrow of Megiddo—

XXII. 10 Weep not for the dead,
 Nor bemoan him,
 But for him that goeth away weep sore,
 For he cometh no more,
 Nor seeth the land of his birth.

Jehoahaz died in Eygpt.

¹ See above, p. 149.

The next King, Jehoiakim, another of Josiah's sons, was set on the throne by Necoh, who also exacted a heavy tribute. What national disillusion! The hopes falsely kindled upon the letter of Deuteronomy lay quenched on Megiddo; and the faithful servant of the Covenant had, in spite of its promises as men would argue, been defeated and slain in the flower of his life. Judah had been released from the Assyrian yoke, only to fall into the hands of another tyrant, her new king his creature, and her people sorely burdened to pay him. The result was religious confusion. In at least a formal obedience to the deuteronomic laws of worship, the people of the land continued to resort to the Temple fasts and festivals.¹ But resenting the failure of their God to grant victory numbers relapsed into an idolatry as rank as that under Ahaz or Manasseh;² while others, more thoughtful but not less bewildered, conceived doubts of the worth of righteousness. And these tempers were embittered by the cruel selfishness of the new monarch and his reckless injustice. To the taxes required for the tribute to Egypt he added other exactions in order to meet his extravagance in enlarging and adorning his palace. The crime, with which Jeremiah charges him in

¹ xxvi. 2, xxxvi. 9.

² Whether the sacrifices of children in Hinnom had been resumed, vii. 31 ff., is uncertain; yet this passage may well belong to Jehoiakim's reign.

the following lines, is one to which small kings in the East have often been tempted by their contact with civilisations richer than their own. On Judah Jehoiakim imposed the cruel corvée, which in our day Ismail Pasha imposed upon Egypt.

- XXII. 13 Woe to who builds his house by in-
justice,
His storeys by wrong,
Who forces his fellows to serve for nothing,
And pays not their wage.
- 14 Who saith,¹
I will build me an ampler house
And airier storeys,
Widen my windows, panel with cedar,
And paint with vermilion,
- 15 Wilt thou thus play the king,
Fussing with cedar?
Thy sire, did not he eat and drink,
And do justice and right,
- 16 And judge for the poor and the needy?
Then was it well!²

¹ Greek omits and renders the following *I* and *my* by *thou* and *his*.

² Using the Greek, Duhm, Cornill and Skinner render this quatrain thus :—

Did not thy father eat and drink,
And do himself well?
Yet he practised justice and right,
Judged the cause of the needy and poor.

Was not this how to know Me?—

Rede of the Lord.

- 17 But thine eyes and thy heart are on nought
 Save thine own spoil,
 And on shedding of innocent blood,
 Doing outrage and murder.

Josiah had enjoyed what was enough for him in sober, seemly parallel to his faithful discharge of duty; his son was luxurious, unscrupulous, bloody, and withal petty—*fussing with cedar*, and cutting up the Prophet's roll piece by piece with a pen-knife! Jeremiah and Baruch's sarcastic notes on Jehoiakim find parallels in Victor Hugo's 'Châtiments' of Napoleon III.: 'l'infiniment petit, monstreux et feroce;' 'Voici de l'or, viens pille et vole . . . voici du sang, accours, viens boire, petit, petit!'

XXII. 18. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, King of Judah.

Mourn him they shall not, 'Woe brother!'

'Woe sister!'

Nor beweepe him, 'Woe Lord!'

Or 'Woe Highness!'

- 19 With the burial of an ass shall they bury him,
 Dragged and flung out—
 Out from the gates of Jerusalem.

Such a prophet to such a king must have been intolerable, and through the following years Jeremiah was pursued by the royal hatred.

There were other and more poisonous enemies. We have found him, from the first, steadily seeing through, and stoutly denouncing the great religious orders—the priests, natural believers in the Temple, with a belief, since Deuteronomy came into their hands, more dogmatic and arrogant than ever; and the professional prophets with their shallow optimism that all was well for Judah, and that her God could never bring upon her the doom which Jeremiah threatened in His Name. *Not He!* was their answer to him. These two classes were in conspiracy, deluding themselves and the people; in their trust upon the letter of the Law, they had no sense, as he told them, of *The Living God*.¹ Roused by his scorn they watched for an occasion to convict and destroy him.²

This he bravely gave by making, in obedience to God's call, public prediction of the ruin of the Temple. It is uncertain whether Jeremiah did so only once, as many think who read in Chs. VII and XXVI reports of the same address, or whether, as I am inclined to believe, the former chapter reports an address delivered under Josiah, and the latter the repetition of its substance in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.³ However this be, Ch. XXVI alone relates the consequences of his outspoken courage. It represents

¹ ii. 8, 31, v. 30, 31, vi. 13, 14, 19, etc.; see pp. 106, 154, etc.

² xx. 10.

³ See above, pp. 147 ff.

the priests and the prophets as quoting his sentence upon the Temple in absolute terms; though both reports, in the form in which they have reached us, render his own delivery of it as conditional upon the nation's refusal to repent and to better their ways.¹ This, of course, was ever their way; they were ready distorters.

XXVI. 1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, came this word from the
 2 Lord: Thus saith the Lord, Stand in the court of the Lord's House and speak unto all Judah, all who come in to worship in the Lord's House, all the words that I have charged thee to speak to them; keep back
 3 not a word. Peradventure they will hearken and turn every man from his evil way, and I shall relent of the evil which I am purposing to do to them because of the evil of their
 4 doings. And thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord: If ye will not obey Me to walk in My
 5 Law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of My servants, the prophets whom I am sending to you, rising early and
 6 sending—but ye have not hearkened—then

¹ Many take the conditional clauses in vii and xxvi to be later insertions (e.g. Skinner, 169 f.). But it was natural to the malice of his foes to distort Jeremiah's conditional, into an absolute, threat, and in xxvi. 13 he corrects them. My translation follows the Greek version, and omits the Hebrew additions which are found in our English versions.

shall I render this House like Shiloh and this City a thing to be cursed of all nations of the earth.

7 And the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these
8 words in the House of the Lord. And it was, when Jeremiah finished speaking all that the Lord had charged him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets¹ laid hold on him saying, Thou shalt surely die!

9 Because thou hast prophesied in the Name of the Lord saying, As Shiloh this House shall be, and this City shall be laid waste without a dweller. And all the people were gathered to Jeremiah in the House of the Lord.

10 When the princes of Judah heard of these things they came up from the king's house to the House of the Lord and took their seats in the opening of the New Gate of the Lord's
11 House.² Then said the priests and the prophets to the princes and to all the people—Sentence of death for this man! For he hath prophesied against this City as ye have heard with your ears.

¹ Both text and versions add here *and all the people*; but this may be the careless insertion of a copyist, for in what follows the people are with Jeremiah.

² So 34 MSS., and Syr. Vulg. and Targ.

12 And Jeremiah said to the princes and to
all the people, The Lord hath sent me to
prophecy against this House and against this
13 City all the words which ye have heard. So
now better your ways and your doings, and
hearken to the Voice of the Lord, that the
Lord may relent of the evil which He hath
14 spoken against you. But as for me, here am
I in your hand! Do to me as is good and
15 right in your eyes. Only know for sure that
if ye put me to death ye will be bringing
innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon
this City and upon her inhabitants; for in
truth the Lord did send me unto you to
speak in your ears all these words.

16 And the princes and all the people said to
the priests and the prophets, Not for this
man be sentence of death, because in the
Name of the Lord our God hath he spoken
to us.

17 Then arose some of the elders of the land
and said to all the assembly of the people,
18 There was Micaiah the Morasthite in the
days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and he said
to all the people of Judah, Thus saith the
Lord :

 Şion like a field shall be ploughed,
 And Jerusalem be heaps,
 And the mount of the House a mound
 of the jungle.

- 19 Did Hezekiah and all Judah put him to death? Did they not fear the Lord and soothe the Lord's face, and the Lord relented of the evil He had uttered against them. Yet we are about to do a great wrong upon our own lives.

Several of its features lift this story to a place among the most impressive in the Old Testament. The priests and prophets on the one side and the princes on the other both use the phrase, that Jeremiah *spoke in the Name of the Lord*. But the former quote it ironically, or in indignation at the Prophet's claim, while the princes are obviously impressed by his sincerity and apparently their impression is shared by the people. There could be no firmer measure of the pitch of personal power to which Jeremiah has at last braced himself.

The promise of his Call is fulfilled. Sceptical, fluid and shrinking as he is by nature, he stands for this hour at least, *a strong wall and a fortress*, by his clear conscience, his simple courage, and his full surrender to whatever be in store for him. How bravely he refuses to conciliate them!—*I am in your hand, do to me as is right in your eyes*.

Again, there is proof of a popular tradition and conscience in Israel more sound than those of the religious authorities of the nation. The people remembered what their priests and prophets forgot or ignored, and through their elders gave

utterance to it on the side of justice. In agreement with them were the princes, the lay leaders of the nation. To ecclesiastics of every age and race this is a lesson, to give heed to 'the common sense' and to the public instinct for justice. And on that day in Jerusalem these were called forth by the ability of the people, commoners and nobles alike, to recognise a real Prophet, an authentic Speaker-for-God at once when they heard him.

The danger that Jeremiah faced and the source from which it sprang are revealed by the fate which befell another denouncer of the land in the Name of the Lord. Of him, the narrator uses a form of the verb *to prophesy* different from that which he uses of Jeremiah, thus guarding himself from expressing an opinion as to whether the man was a genuine prophet. This is a further tribute to the moral effect of Jeremiah's person and word.

XXVI. 20 There was also a man who took upon him to prophesy in the Name of the Lord, Urijahu, son of Shemajahu, from Kiriath-jearim, and he prophesied¹ against this land, 21 according to all the words of Jeremiah. And king Jehoiakim² and all the princes heard of his words and they sought³ to put him to

¹ Hebrew adds *against this city and*.

² Hebrew adds *and all his mighty men*.

³ So Greek; Hebrew *the king sought*.

death; and Urijahu heard and fearing fled
 22 and went into Egypt, and the king sent men
 23 to Egypt.¹ And they took forth Urijah thence
 and brought him to the king, and slew him
 with the sword, and cast his corpse into the
 graves of the sons of the people.

24 But the hand of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, was with Jeremiah so as not to give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

The one shall be taken and the other left! We are not told why, after the verdict of the princes and the people, Ahikam's intervention was needed. Yet the people were always fickle, and the king who is not mentioned in connection with Jeremiah's case, but as we see from Urijah's watched cruelly from the background, was not the man to be turned by a popular verdict from taking vengeance on the Prophet who had attacked him. Ahikam, however, had influence at court, and proved friendly to Jeremiah on other occasions.²

All this was *in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim*. Before we follow Jeremiah himself through the rest of that malignant and disastrous reign, during which the steadfastness that his personality had achieved was again to be shaken, we must

¹ Hebrew adds a name (*El-nathan, son of Achbor*) and repeats.

² II. Kings xxii. 12 ff.; Jer. xxxix. 14, xl. 5, 6.

understand the progress of the great events which directed his own conduct and gradually determined the fate of his people.

In 625 B.C. the successor of Assurbanipal upon the tottering throne of Assyria had found himself compelled to acknowledge Nabopolassar the Chaldean as nominally viceroy, but virtually king, of Babylon.¹ The able chief of a vigorous race, Nabopolassar bided his time for a vaster sovereignty, and steadily this came to him. The Medes, twice baffled in their attempts on Nineveh,² made terms with him for a united assault on the Assyrian capital and for the division of its empire. To that assault Nineveh fell in 612 or 606,³ and with her fall Assyria disappeared from among the Northern Powers. Whatever part of the derelict empire the Medes may have secured, Mesopotamia remained with the Chaldeans who doubtless claimed as well all its provinces south of the Euphrates. But, as we have seen, Necho of Egypt had already overrun these and battle between him and the Chaldeans became imminent. Their armies met in 605-4 at Carchemish on The River. Necho was defeated by Nebuchadrezzar, son of Nabopolassar, and driven south to

¹ The designations of the title differ ; what is stated above was probably the fact.

² See Appendix I.

³ As vividly described, or predicted, by Nahum ; see the writer's 'Twelve Prophets,' vol. ii. ; on the date see Appendix I.

his own land. Egypt had failed ; and the northern caldrons, as Jeremiah from the first predicted, again boiled with the fate of Judah and her neighbours. *The Foe*, though no longer the Scythian of his early expectations, was still *out of the North*.

By 602, if not before, Nebuchadrezzar, having succeeded his father as King of Babylon, carried his power to the coasts of the Levant and the Egyptian border. Judah was his vassal, and for three years Jehoiakim paid him tribute, but then defaulted, probably because of promises from Egypt after the fashion of that restless power. As if not yet ready to invade Judah in force, Nebuchadrezzar let loose upon her, along with some of his own Chaldeans, troops of Moabites, Ammonites and Arameans. Soon afterwards Jehoiakim died and was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, a youth of eighteen, who appears to have maintained his father's policy ; for in 598, if not 597, Nebuchadrezzar came up against Jerusalem, which forthwith surrendered, and the king, his mother and wives, his courtiers and statesmen were carried into exile, with the craftsmen and smiths and all who were *apt for war ; none remained save the poorest of the people of the land*.¹

¹ II. Kings xxiv. 1-16. The chronology of the end of Jehoiakim's reign is uncertain. Most have held that the three years of his tribute were his last years, 600-598. But Winckler ('A.T. Untersuchungen,' 81 ff.) gives good reasons for preferring 605-3.

Throughout these convulsions of her world, this crisis in the history of Judah herself, Jeremiah remains the one constant, rational, and far-seeing power in the national life. But at what terrible cost to himself! His experience is a throng of tragic paradoxes. Faithful to his mission, every effort he makes to rouse his people to its meaning is baffled. His word is signally vindicated by the great events of the time, yet each of these but tears his heart the more as he feels it bringing nearer the ruin of his people. His word is confirmed, but he is shaken by doubts of himself, his utterance of which is in poignant contrast to his steadfast delivery of his messages of judgment. No prophet was at once more sure of his word and less sure of himself; none save Christ more sternly denounced his people or upon the edge of their doom more closely knit himself to them.

It is a staggering world, and the one man who has its secret is shaken to despair about himself. Yet the Word with which he is charged not only fulfils itself in event after event but holds its distracted prophet fast to the end of his abhorred task of proclaiming it.

The cardinal event was Nebuchadrezzar's victory over Necho at Carchemish in 605 or 604 with its assurance of Babylonian, not Egyptian, supremacy throughout Western Asia. Such confirmation of the substance of Jeremiah's prophecies

of the past twenty-three years was that Divine signal which flashed on him to reduce those prophecies to writing and have them recited to the people by Baruch. We have already followed the story in Ch. XXXVI of how this was done¹ and of the consequences—the communication of the Roll to the princes and by them to the king, the king's burning of the Roll piece by piece as he heard it read, his order for the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch, their escape into hiding, and their preparation of a Second Roll containing all the words of the First with many others like them. We may now, in addition, note the following.

First there is the Divine Peradventure at the beginning of the story.² *It may be*, God says, that the people will hear and turn from their evil ways that I may forgive their iniquity—a very significant *perhaps* when taken with the Parable of the Potter to which we are coming. Again, the king at least understands the evil predicted

¹ See above, pp. 22 ff. Our versions render the Hebrew correctly, but the following emendations may be made from the Greek: Verse 1, for *this word . . . from the Lord* read *the word of the Lord came unto me*; 2, for *Israel* read *Jerusalem*; 22, omit *in the ninth month*, unnecessary after 9; 31, omit *their iniquity*, for *upon them* read *upon him*, and for *men* read *land, of Judah*; 32, for *Jeremiah took* read *Baruch took* and omit *and gave it to Baruch the scribe the son of Neriah*, and also the words *king of Judah* and *in the fire*.

² xxxvi. 3.

by Jeremiah to be the destruction of his land and people by the King of Babylon.¹ And again, though some of the princes encourage the Prophet's escape, and urge the king not to burn the Roll, none are shocked by the burning.² Evidently in 605-4 they were not so impressed with the divinity of Jeremiah's word as they had been in 608. Then they did not speak of telling the king; now they say that they *must tell*³ him. Jehoiakim's malignant influence has grown, and Jeremiah discovers the inconstancy of the princes, even of some friendly to himself.

To the same decisive year, 605-4, *the fourth of Jehoiakim*, is referred an address by Jeremiah reported in XXV. 1-11 (with perhaps 13a). This repeats the Prophet's charge that his people have refused—now for three-and-twenty years—to listen to his call for repentance and reaffirms the certainty, at last made clear by the Battle of Carchemish, that their deserved doom lies in the hands of a Northern Power, which shall waste their land and carry them into foreign servitude for seventy years. The suggestion that this address formed the conclusion of the Second Roll dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch is suitable to the contents of the address and becomes more

¹ xxxvi. 29; cp. xxv. 9 f.

² xxxvi. 19, 24.

³ Such is the force of the Hebrew idiom in the last clause of xxxvi. 16; for the different attitude of the princes in 608 see pp. 170 ff.

probable if we take as genuine the words in 13a, *Thus will I bring upon that land all My words which I have spoken against her, all that is written in this Book.* But a curious question rises from the fact that we have two differing reports of the address.¹ Very significantly the shorter Greek Version contains neither the addition to the date, *that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon*, nor the two statements that his was the Northern Power which would waste Judah and which she should serve for seventy years (verses 1, 9, 11, as also the similar reference in verse 12), all of which are inserted in the Hebrew text but not without a sign of their being later intrusions upon it.² And indeed it is inconceivable that the Greek translator could have omitted the four references to Nebuchadrezzar (including that in

¹The Hebrew text is accurately rendered by our English Versions; the following are the principal points on which the Greek differs from it: Verse 1, both Greek and Latin lack *that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon*; in verse 2 Greek lacks *Jeremiah the prophet and all*, and in verse 3 *the word of the Lord hath come to me and but ye have not hearkened.* In verse 6 for *I will do you no hurt* Greek reads *to your hurt.* Again, Greek lacks in 7 *saith the Lord*, in 8 *of Hosts*, in 9 *saith the Lord and to Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon My servant*, and for *all the families* it reads *a family*; and in 11 lacks *this, a desolation, these and the king of Babylon*, substituting for the last two *shall serve among the nations.*

²E.g. the preposition *to* before *Nebuchadrezzar* in verse 9 which does not construe.

verse 12) had he found them in the Hebrew text from which he worked. Probably, therefore, Jeremiah did not include them in the first version of his address; and for this he had reason. His purpose in the address was to declare the fulfilment of the substance of all his previous prophesying, and this had been not that the Chaldeans, but that *a northern power*, would prove to be the executioner of God's judgment upon Judah. The references to Nebuchadrezzar were added, possibly by Jeremiah himself or by Baruch, as the Chaldean doom steadily drew nearer. The interesting thing is that the earlier version of the address survived and was used by the Greek translator.¹

Verses 12-14, indicating the destruction of Babylon in her turn after seventy years, are, in whole or in part, generally taken as a post-exilic addition.² Omitting verse 14, the Greek inserts between 13 and 15 the Oracles on Foreign Nations, which the Hebrew postpones to Chs. XLVI. ff.³ In the uncertain state of the text of 12-14 it is impossible to decide whether this was or was not the original position of those Oracles.

¹ xxv. 1-14 has been denied to Jeremiah by Schwally ('Z.A.T.W.,' viii. 177 ff.) and Duhm, but their arguments are answered by Giesebrecht and Cornill *in loco*; see, too, Gillies, 195-8, 202, and Skinner, 240 f.

² See Davidson in Hastings' 'D.B.,' ii. 574, Driver and Gillies *in loco*.

³ See above, p. 14.

The rest of the chapter, verses 15-38, is so full of expansions and repetitions, which we may partly see from a comparison of it with the Greek, as well as of inconsistencies with some earlier Oracles by Jeremiah,¹ of traces of the later prophetic style and of echoes of other prophets, that many deny any part of the miscellany to be Jeremiah's own. Yet we must remember that his commission was not to Judah alone² but to *the nations* as well, against many of which XXV. 15-38 is directed; and the figure of the Lord handing to the Prophet the cup of the wine of His wrath is not one which we have any reason to doubt to be Jeremiah's. Sifting, by help of the Greek, the Hebrew list of nations who are to drink of the cup, we get Judah and Egypt; Askalon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod; Dedan, Tema, Buz, and their *clipt* neighbours in Arabia; all of whom were shaken in Jeremiah's day by the Chaldean terror. Indeed the reference to Ashdod suits the condition of that Philistine city in the Prophet's time better than its restored prosperity in the post-exilic age. The substance of verses 15-23 may therefore be reasonably left to Jeremiah. Verses 24-38 are more doubtful.³

¹ E.g. cp. 26 with 9 and both with i. 15.

² As Duhm asserts; see above, pp. 79 ff.

³ The above paragraph on xxv. 15-38 is based on Giesebrecht's careful analysis of the passage.

2. PARABLES.

(XIII, XVIII-XX, XXXV).

To the reign of Jehoiakim are usually referred a number of symbolic actions by Jeremiah, the narratives of which carry no dates. So far as they imply that the Prophet was still able to move openly about Jerusalem and the country they might be regarded as earlier than 604, when he was under restraint and had to hide himself.¹ But this is not certain. We are left to take them in the order in which they occur in the Book.

The first is that of the waist-cloth, XIII. 1-11. Jeremiah was charged to buy a linen waist-cloth² and after wearing it, but keeping it from damp, to bury it in the cleft of a rock, and after many days to dig it up, when he found it rotting. So had the Lord taken Israel to cleave to Him as such a cloth *cleaves to the loins of a man*; but separated from Him they had likewise rotted and were good for nothing. Separated by what—God's action or their own? As it stands the interpretation is complicated. God spoils Israel because of their pride (verse 9) and Israel spoil themselves by disobedience and idolatry (verse 10). The complication may be due to a later addition to the text. But this question is not serious.

¹ xxxvi. 5, 19, 26.

² Worn next the skin; not *girdle* which came over the other garments. See 'Enc. Bibl.,' article 'Girdle.'

Neither is that of the place where Jeremiah is said to have buried the cloth. *Pěrath*, the spelling in the text, is the Hebrew name for the Euphrates and so the Greek and our own versions render it. But the name has not its usual addition of The River. If the Euphrates be intended the story is hardly one of fact, but rather a vivid parable of the saturation of the national life by heathen, corruptive influences from Mesopotamia.¹ Yet within an hour from Anathoth lies the Wady Farah, a name which corresponds to the Hebrew *Pěrath* or (by a slight change) *Parah*; and the Wady, familiar as it must have been to Jeremiah, suits the picture, having a lavish fountain, a broad pool and a stream, all of which soak into the sand and fissured rock of the surrounding desert.² That the Wady Farah was the scene of the parable is therefore possible, though not certain.³

¹ So virtually Cornill, who, indifferent as to whether the story is one of fact or of imagination, emphasises the choice of the Euphrates as its essential point, compares ii. 18, *to drink of the waters of the River*, and dates the story in the earliest years of Jeremiah's ministry. On the other hand Erbt, who also reads *Euphrates*, interprets the story as one of actual journeys thither by Jeremiah.

² I visited it in 1901 and 1904, a most surprising oasis!

³ *Pěrath* or *Parah* = *Farah* was first suggested by Ewald ('Prophets of the O. T.,' Eng. trans. iii. 152), quoting Schick ('Ausland,' 1867, 572-4), by Birch ('P.E.F.Q.,' 1880, 235), and by Marti ('Z.D.P.V.,' 1880, 11), and has been accepted by many—Cheyne, Ball, McFadyen, Peake, etc.

But the ambiguity of these details does not interfere with the moral of the whole.

This parable is immediately followed by the ironic metaphor of the Jars Full of Wine, XIII. 12-14, which I have already quoted.¹

Next comes the Parable of the Potter, Ch. XVIII, that might be from any part of the Prophet's ministry, during which he was free to move in public. This parable is instructive first by disclosing one of the ways along which Revelation reached, and spelt itself out in, the mind of the Prophet. He felt a Divine impulse to go down to the house of the Potter,² *and there I will cause thee to hear My Words*, obviously not words spoken to the outward ear. For, as Jeremiah watched the potter at work on *his two stones*,³ and saw that when the vessel he first attempted was marred he would remould the clay into another vessel as seemed good to him, a fresh conception of the Divine Method with men broke

¹ See above, p. 55.

² In the valley of Hinnom, where were potteries and above them a city-gate *Harsith* = (probably) *Potsherds*; in the upper valley broken pottery is still crushed for cement; lower down traces of ancient potteries appear, and there is the traditional site of the Potter's Field, Matt. xxvii. 7.

³ So literally the term rendered *wheel*, A.V. It was of two discs, originally of stone, but later of wood, of which in earlier times the upper alone revolved and the lower and larger was stationary, but later both revolved by the potter's foot. See 'Enc. Bibl.,' article 'Pottery.'

upon Jeremiah and became articulate. A word from the Lord flashed through his eyes upon his mind, just as in his first visions of the almond-blossom and the caldron.¹

XVIII. 5. Then the Word of the Lord came unto
6 me, saying, O House of Israel, cannot I do
with you as this potter?² Behold, as the clay
in the hand of the potter, so are ye in My
hand.³

Thus by figure and by word the Divine Sovereignty was proclaimed as absolutely as possible. But the Sovereignty is a real Sovereignty and therefore includes Freedom. It is not fettered by its own previous decrees, as some rigorous doctrines of predestination insist, but is free to recall and alter these, should the human characters and wills with which it works in history themselves change. There is a Divine as well as a human Free-will. 'God's dealing with men is moral; He treats them as their moral conduct permits Him to do.'⁴

The Predestination of men or nations, which the Prophet sees figured in the work of the potter, is to Service. This is clear from the comparison between Israel and a vessel designed for a definite use. It recalls Jeremiah's similar conception of

¹ See above, pp. 84 f.

² Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord*.

³ Hebrew adds *House of Israel*.

⁴ A. B. Davidson.

his own predestination, which was not to a certain state, of life or death, but to the office of speaker for God to the nations. Yet because the acceptance or rejection by a nation or an individual of the particular service, for which God has destined them, naturally determines their ultimate fate, therefore this wider sense, which predestination came to have in Christian doctrine, is so far also involved in the parable.¹

To the truths of the Divine Sovereignty and the Divine Freedom the parable adds that of the Divine Patience. The potter of Hinnom does not impatiently cast upon the rubbish which abounds there the lump of clay that has proved refractory to his design for it. He gives the lump another trial upon another design. If, as many think, the verses which follow the parable, 7-10, are not by Jeremiah himself (though this is far from proved, as we shall see) then he does not explicitly draw from the potter's patience with the clay the inference of the Divine patience with men. But the inference is implicit in the parable. Did Jeremiah intend it? If he did, this is proof that in spite of his people's obstinacy under the hand of God, he cherished, though he dared not yet utter, the hope that God would have some fresh purpose for their service beyond the wreck

¹ To this we return in dealing with Jeremiah's religious experience. See below, Lecture vii.

they were making of His former designs for them and the ruin they were thereby bringing on themselves—that He would grant them still another chance of rising to His will. But if Jeremiah did not intend this inference from his parable then we may claim the parable as one more example of that of which we have already had several, the power of this wonderful man's experience and doctrine to start in other minds ideas and beliefs of which he himself was not conscious, or which at least he did not articulate—that power which after all is his highest distinction as a prophet. I do not think, however, that we can deny to Jeremiah all consciousness of what his parable implies in regard to the Patience of the Divine Potter with the perverse human clay in His hands. For we have already seen from another of the Prophet's metaphors that under the abused and rank surface of a nation's or an individual's life he was sure of soil which by deeper ploughing would yet yield fruits meet for repentance.¹

In either case the parable is rich in Gospel for ourselves. If we have failed our God upon His first designs for us and for our service do not let us despair. He is patient and ready to give us another trial under His hand. And this not only is the lesson of more than one of our Lord's parables, for instance that of the fig-tree found

¹ See above, p. 109 on iv. 3.

fruitless, but nevertheless given the chance of another year,¹ and the motive of His hopes for the publicans and harlots, but is implied by all the Gospel of His life and death for sinners. In these He saw still possibilities worth His dying for.

But as Christ Himself taught, there are, and ethically must be, limits to the Divine Patience with men. Of these the men of Judah and Jerusalem are warned in the verses which follow the parable. While it is true (verse 7 ff.) that if a nation, which God has said He will destroy, turn from its evil, He will relent, the converse is equally true of a nation which He has promised to plant and build, that if it do wrong and obey not He will surely repent of the good He had planned for it. For this refractory people of Judah He is already *framing* or *moulding evil*—the verb used is that of which the Hebrew name for *potter* is the participle. Though chosen of God and shaped by His hands for high service Israel's destiny is not irrevocable; nay, their doom is already being shaped. Yet He makes still another appeal to them to repent and amend their ways. To this they answer: *No use! we will walk after our own devices and carry out every one the stubbornness*

¹ Luke xiii. 6 ff. Other parables or actual incidents illustrating either the possibilities of characters commonly deemed hopeless or the fresh chances given them by God's grace, are found in Matt. xviii. 23 f., Luke vii. 39 f. (the woman who was a sinner) and xix. (Zacchæus).

of his evil heart. At least that is how Jeremiah interprets their temper; his people had hardened since Megiddo and the accession of Jehoiakim.

Some moderns have denied these verses to Jeremiah and taken them as the addition of a later hand and without relevance to the parable. With all respect to the authority of those critics,¹ I find myself unable to agree with them. They differ as to where the authentic words of the Prophet cease, some concluding these with verse 4 others with verse 6. In either case the parable is left in the air, without such practical application of his truths as Jeremiah usually makes to Judah or other nations. Nor can the relevance of the verses be denied, as Cornill, one of their rejectors, admits. Nor does the language bear traces of a later date. They seem to me to stand as Jeremiah's own.

The Prophet's threat of evil is still so vague, that, with due acknowledgment of the uncertainty of such points, we may suppose it, along with the Parable of the Potter, to have been uttered before the Battle of Carchemish, when the Babylonian sovereignty over Western Asia became assured.²

¹ Cornill *in loco*, Skinner, pp. 162 f., both of them in fine passages on the teaching of the parable, the former exposing the superficiality of Duhm's impulsive judgment upon it. Cornill finds that the genuine words of Jeremiah close with verse 4; Skinner, Erbt and Gillies (p. 158) continue them to 6.

² But see next page.

The next in order of Jeremiah's symbols, Ch. XIX, the breaking of a potter's jar past restoration, with his repetition of doom upon Judah, led to his arrest, Ch. XX, and this at last to his definite statement that the doom would be captivity to the King of Babylon. Some therefore date the episode after Carchemish, but this is uncertain; Jeremiah is still not under restraint nor in hiding.

He is charged to buy an earthen jar and take with him some of the elders of the people and of the priests to the Potsherd Gate in the Valley of Hinnom.¹ There, after predicting the evils which the Lord shall bring on the city because of her idolatry and her sacrifice of children in that Valley down which they were looking from this gate, he broke the jar and flung it upon the heaps of shattered earthenware from which the gate derived its name;² and returning to the Temple repeated the Lord's doom upon Judah and Jerusalem. He was heard by Pashhur of the priestly guild of Immer, who appears to have

¹ xix. 1 ff. The Greek connects this incident with the preceding by reading *then* for the Hebrew *thus*, and with many Hebrew MSS. adds to *saith the Lord* the phrase *to me*, making Jeremiah himself the narrator. In xix. 4 read with Greek *whom neither they nor their fathers know, and the kings of Judah have filled*, etc. Throughout Greek lacks phrases which are probably later additions to Hebrew; but these are not important.

² See p. 18, n. 2.

been chief of the Temple police, and after being *smitten* was put in the stocks, but the next day released, probably rather because his friends among the princes had prevailed in his favour than because the mind of Pashhur had meantime changed. For Jeremiah on his release immediately faced his captor with these words:—

XX. 3 The Lord hath called thy name not Pashhur but Magor-Missabib, Terror-all-
4 round. For thus saith the Lord, Lo, I will make thee a terror to thyself and all thy friends, and they shall fall by the sword of their foes, and thine own eyes shall be seeing it; and all Judah shall I give into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them to exile and smite them with
6 the sword . . . and thou Pashhur and all that dwell in thy house shall go into captivity and in Babylon thou shalt die.¹

At last Jeremiah definitely states what Judah's doom from the North is to be. We wish that we knew the date of this utterance.

Assigned by its title to *the days of Jehoiakim* is

¹The above is mainly from the Greek. The following is a significant instance of how the knowledge of the Bible still holds among some at least of the Scottish peasantry. A woman in a rural parish calling on her minister to complain about the harshness of the factor of the landlord said that he was a very Magor-Missabih. And it is no less significant that the minister had to consult his concordance to the Bible to know what she meant!

another action of the Prophet, which is the exhibition rather of an example than of a symbol, Ch. XXXV. The story was probably dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch, for while the Hebrew text opens it in the first person (2-5), the Greek version carries the first person throughout and the later change by the Hebrew to the third person (12 and 18) may easily have been due to a copyist mistaking the first personal suffix for the initial letter of the name Jeremiah.¹

The Rechabites, a tent-dwelling tribe sojourning within the borders, and worshipping the God, of Israel, had taken refuge from the Chaldean invasion within the walls of Jerusalem. Knowing their fidelity to their ancestral habits Jeremiah invited some of them to one of the Temple chambers and offered them wine. They refused, for they said that their ancestor Jehonadab ben-Rechab² had charged them to drink no wine,

¹ In xxxv the differences between Greek and Hebrew continue to be those generally found in the Book, i.e. Greek omits the expansive formulas, including the Divine titles, redundant words (like *all*) and phrases, and corrects the wrong preposition *to* by the right *upon* (17). Further, it spells differently some of the proper names, reads *house* for *chamber* (4 *bis*), a *bowl* for *bowls* (5), *to me* for *to Jeremiah* (12), and in 18 does not address the promise to the Rechabites, but utters it of them in the third person, also omitting the name of Jeremiah, and in 19 for *for ever*, lit. *all the days*, reads *all the days of the land*.

² The ally of Jehu, II. Kings x. 15, 23. The tribe was Kenite, I. Chron. ii. 55. The Kenites, according to Jud. i. 16, I.

neither to build houses, nor sow seed nor plant vineyards. Whereupon Jeremiah went forth and held them up as an example to the men of Judah, not because of any of the particular forms of their abstinence, but because of their constancy. Here were people who remembered, and through centuries had remained loyal to, the precepts of an ancestor; while Israel had fallen from their ancient faithfulness to their God and ignored His commandments. The steadfast loyalty of these simple nomads to the institutions of a far-away human father, how it put to shame Judah's delinquency from the commands of her Divine Father! This contrast is in line with the others, which we have seen Jeremiah emphasising, between his people's fickleness towards God and the obdurate adherence of the Gentiles to their national gods, or the constancy of the processes of nature: the birds that know the seasons of their coming, the unfailing snows of Lebanon and the streams of the hills. The whole story is characteristic of Jeremiah's teaching.¹

Sam. xv. 6, settled in the South of Judah, but Jonadab is found in North Israel and apparently his descendants, as fugitives before an invasion from the North, came from the same quarter. Heber the Kenite also dwelt on Esdraelon, Jud. iv. 17, v. 24.

¹ Duhm's criticisms of it, and rejection of some of its parts are, even for him; unusually arbitrary, especially his objection to the words in verse 13, *Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, for obviously these people were not gathered in, nor could be addressed from, the Temple chamber.

3. ORACLES ON THE EDGE OF DOOM.

(VII. 16-XVIII *passim*, XXII, XLV).

From the seventh to the tenth chapters of the Book of Jeremiah there are a number of undated passages in prose and in verse, which are generally held to have been included in the collection of the Prophet's Oracles written out by Baruch in 604-3, and of which some may have been delivered during the reign of Josiah, but the most of them more probably either upon its tragic close at Megiddo in 608, or under Jehoiakim. We have already considered the addresses reported in VII. 1-15, 21-27,¹ as well as the metrical fragments VII. 28, 29, and VIII. 8, 9.² There are other prose passages describing (1) VII. 16-20, the worship of the Queen, or the Host, of Heaven, which had been imposed upon Jerusalem by the Assyrians, and either survived the decay of their power from 625 onwards, or if suppressed by Josiah in obedience to Deuteronomy,³ had been revived under Jehoiakim; (2) VII. 30-34, the high-places in Topheth, upon which children were sacrificed, also condemned by Deuteronomy and

It was the people as a whole, whose fickleness from age to age he was about to condemn; on this verse Duhm's remarks are, besides being arbitrary, inconsistent.

¹ Above, pp. 147 ff.² Above, pp. 50, 153 f.³ Deut. iv. 19, xvii. 3; II. Kings xxiii. 5, 13. See the present writer's 'Jerusalem,' ii., pp. 186 ff., 260, 263.

recorded as destroyed by Josiah;¹ (3) VIII. 1-3, the desecration of the graves of Jerusalem. It is not necessary to reproduce these prose passages, whether they be Jeremiah's or not; our versions of them, Authorised and Revised, are sufficiently clear.

But there follow, from VIII. 4 onwards, after the usual introduction, a series of metrical Oracles of which the following translation is offered in observance of the irregularity of the measures of the original. Note how throughout the Prophet is, as before, testing his false people—*heeding* and *listening* are his words—finding no proof of a genuine repentance and bewailing the doom that therefore must fall upon them. Some of his earlier verses are repeated, and there is the reference to the Law, VIII. 8 f., which we have discussed.² There is also a hint of exile—which, however, is still future.

In Ch. VIII, verses 4-12 (including the repetitions they contain) seem a unity; verse 13 stands by itself (unless it goes with the preceding); 14, 15 echo one of the Scythian songs, but the fear they reflect may be that either of an Egyptian invasion after Megiddo or of a Chaldean; 16 and 17 are certainly of a northern invasion, but whether the same as the preceding is doubt-

¹ Deut. xii. 31, II. Kings xxiii. 10. See 'Jerusalem,' ii., pp. 263 f.

² Pp. 153 f.

ful; and doubtful too is the connection of both with the incomparable elegy which follows—VIII. 18-IX. 1. For IX. 1 undoubtedly belongs to this, as the different division of the chapters in the Hebrew text properly shows. In Ch. IX. 2-9 the Prophet is in another mood than that of the preceding songs. There the miseries of his people had oppressed him; here it is their sins. There his heart had been with them and he had made their sufferings his own; here he would flee from them to a lodge in the desert.¹ IX. 10-12, is another separate dirge on the land, burned up but whether by invaders or by drought is not clear. Then 13-16 is a passage of prose. In 17-22 we have still another elegy with some of the most haunting lines Jeremiah has given us, on war or pestilence, or both. And there follow eight lines, verses 23-24, on a very different, a spiritual, theme, and then 25-26 another prose passage, on the futility of physical circumcision if the heart be not circumcised. If these be Jeremiah's, and there is no sign in them to the contrary, they form further evidence of his originality as a prophet.

The two Chs. VIII and IX are thus a collection both of prose passages and poems out of different circumstances and different moods, with

¹ The only apparent reason for the compiler putting the two songs together is that the last verse of the one and the first verse of the other open in the same way, *O that I had* (Hebrew *O who would give me*).

little order or visible connection. Are we to see in them a number of those *many like words* which Jeremiah, when he dictated his Second Roll to Baruch, added to his Oracles on the First Roll?¹

The first verses are in curious parallel to Tchekov's remarkable plaint about his own people and 'the Russian disease' as he calls their failing: 'Why do we tire so soon? And when we fall how is it that we never try to rise again?'

VIII. 4 And thou shalt say to them,² Thus saith the Lord :

' Does any one fall and not get up,
Or turn and not return ?'³

5 Why then are this people turning
Persistently turning⁴?

They take fast hold of deceit,
Refuse to return.

6 I have been heeding, been listening—
They speak but untruth !

Not a man repents of his evil,
Saying, 'What have I done?'

All of them swerve in their courses
Like a plunging horse in the battle.

7 Even the stork in the heavens
Knoweth her seasons,

¹ xxxvi. 32.

² Greek omits this clause.

³ Apparently a common proverb.

⁴ Hebrew adds *Jerusalem* with no sense and a disturbance to the metre.

- And dove and swift and swallow
 Keep time of their coming—
 Only my people, they know not
 The Rule¹ of the Lord.
- 8 How say ye, 'We are the wise,
 With us is the Law² of the Lord.'
 But, lo, into falsehood hath wrought it³
 False pen of the scribes.
- 9 Put to shame are the wise,
 Dismayed and taken,
 The Word of the Lord have they spurned—
 What wisdom is theirs?
- 10 So to others I give their wives,
 Their fields to who may take them,
 For all from the least to the greatest
 On plunder are bent;
 From the prophet on to the priest
 Everyone worketh lies.
- 11 They would heal the breach of my people
 As though it were trifling,
 Saying 'It is well, it is well!'—
 And well it is not!
- 12 Were they shamed of the foulness they
 wrought?
 Nay, shamed not at all,
 Nor knew their dishonour!
 So shall they fall with the falling,

¹ *Mishpat* = rule, order, ordinance.

² *Torah* = law, see p. 154.

³ Reading הַשִּׁבְרָה for הַשִּׁבְרָה .

Reel in the time of their reckoning,
Sayeth the Lord.¹

13 Would I harvest them?—Rede of the Lord—
No grapes on the vine,
And never a fig on the fig-tree,
Withered the leaves.²

14 For what sit we still?
Sweep together
And into the fortified cities,
To perish.
For the Lord our own God
Hath doomed us to perish,
Hath drugged us with waters of bale—
To Him³ have we sinned.

15 Hoping for peace?
'Twas no good,
For a season of healing?
Lo, panic.⁴

16 From Dan the bruit⁵ has been heard,
Hinnying of his horses,
With the noise of the neighing of his steeds
The land is aquake.

¹ With 10-12, cp. vi. 13-15; 11, 12 are wanting in Greek.

² Hebrew adds a line of corrupt text.

³ Hebrew, *the Lord*.

⁴ So Greek. The verse is another instance of the two-stresses-to-a-line metre; see p. 46.

⁵ So Greek.

He¹ comes,¹ he devours the land and her fulness
The city and her dwellers.

17 For behold, I am sending upon you
Basilisk-serpents,
Against whom availeth no charm,
But they shall bite you.²

18 Ah! That my grief is past comfort³
Faints on me my heart,
Lo, hark to the cry of my people
Wide o'er the land.⁴

19 'Is the Lord not in Sion,
Is there no king?'⁵
[Why have they vexed Me with idols,
Foreigners' fancies?]⁶

20 'Harvest is past, summer is ended,
And we are not saved!'

21 For the breaking of the daughter of my people
I break, I blacken!
Horror hath fastened upon me
Pangs as of her that beareth.⁷

22 Is there no balm in Gilead,
Is there no healer?

¹ So Greek.

² Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord*.

³ After the Greek, Hebrew is hopeless.

⁴ Lit., *from a land of distances*, usually taken as meaning exile. But exile is not yet. Dubm as above.

⁵ So Greek.

⁶ *Bubbles*, ii. 5. The couplet seems an intrusion breaking between the two parts of the people's cry.

⁷ So Greek.

Why do the wounds never close¹
Of the daughter of my people?

IX. 1 Oh that my head were waters,
Mine eyes a fountain of tears,
That day and night I might weep
For the slain of my people!

There follows an Oracle in a very different mood. In the previous one the Prophet has taken his people to his heart, in spite of their sin and its havoc; in this he repels and would be quit of them.

2 O that I had in the desert
A wayfarers'² lodge!
Then would I leave my people,
And get away from them,
For adulterers all they be,
A bundle³ of traitors!
3 Their tongue they stretch
Like a treacherous bow, (?)
And never for truth
Use their power in the land,
But from evil to evil go forth
And Me they know not.⁴

¹ Lit., *why cometh not up the fresh skin on.*

² Greek, *an uttermost.*

³ The Hebrew word seems to me to be taken here rather in its primitive sense of *bundle* than in the later, official meaning of *assembly*.

⁴ Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord* for till now the Prophet has spoken. Verse 3 is difficult. Duhm omits most, Cornill all, as breaking the metrical schemes which they think Jeremiah invari-

- 4 Be on guard with your friends,
 Trust not your¹ brothers,
 For brothers are all very Jacobs,
 And friends gad about to defame.
- 5 Every one cheateth his neighbour,
 They cannot speak truth.
 Their tongues they have trained to falsehood,
 They strain to be naughty—
- 6 Wrong upon wrong, deceit on deceit (?)
 Refusing to know Me.²
- 7 Therefore thus saith the Lord :³
 Lo, I will smelt them, will test them.
 How else should I do
 In face of the evil . . .⁴ (?)
 Of the Daughter of My people ?
- 8 A deadly⁵ shaft is their tongue
 The words of their mouth⁶ deceit ;
 If peace any speak to his friend
 In his heart he lays ambush.

ably used. But the form of the Hebrew text—short lines of two beats each, with one longer line—is one into which Jeremiah sometimes falls (see pp. 46 f.). *Like a bow* so Greek ; Hebrew, *their bow*. Cp. our *draw a long bow* (Ball).

¹ So Syriac.

² Again Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord*. The text is uncertain. Hebrew, *thy dwelling is in the midst of deceit, they refuse to know Me*.

³ Hebrew adds *of Hosts*.

⁴ So Greek, Hebrew omits ; more seems to have dropped out.

⁵ So Hebrew text ; Hebrew margin and Greek *polished*.

⁶ So Greek.

- 9 Shall I not visit for such—
 Rede of the Lord—
 Nor on a nation like this
 Myself take vengeance ?
- 10 Raise for the mountains a wail,¹
 For the meads of the pasture a dirge !
 They are waste, with never a man²
 Nor hear the lowing of cattle.
 From the birds of heaven to the beasts
 They have fled, they are gone.
- 11 I will make Jerusalem heaps,
 Of jackals the lair,
 And the townships of Judah lay waste,
 With never a dweller.
12. Who is the man that is wise
 To lay this to mind,
 As the mouth of the Lord hath told him,
 So to declare—
 The wherefore the country is perished,
 And waste as the desert,
 With none to pass over !
- 13 And the Lord said unto me,³ Because they
 forsook My Law which I set before them,
 14 and hearkened not to My Voice,⁴ but have

¹ So Greek. Hebrew, *I will raise* and adds *lamentation*.

² Hebrew adds *passing over*, probably a mistaken transference from verse 12. Greek and Latin omit.

³ So Greek.

⁴ Hebrew uselessly adds *nor walked therein*.

- walked after the stubbornness of their heart,
and after the Baals, as their fathers taught
15 them, therefore thus saith the Lord¹ the God
of Israel, Behold I will give them wormwood
16 to eat and the waters of poison to drink. And
I will scatter them among the nations, whom
neither they nor their fathers knew, and send
after them the sword till I have consumed
them.
- 17 Thus saith the Lord :
Call the keening women to come,
And send for the wise ones,
18 That they come and make haste
To lift us a dirge,
Till with tears our eyes run down,
Our eyelids with water.
- 19 For hark ! from Şion the voice of wailing,
'How we are undone !
'Sore abashed we, land who have left,
Our homes overthrown !'³
- 20 Hear, O women, the saying of the Lord,
Your ears take in the word of His mouth,
Teach the lament to your daughters
Each to her comrade the dirge :

¹ Hebrew adds *of hosts*; and *this people* for *them*.

² Hebrew adds *of Hosts* and *consider ye* which Greek omits as well as *hasten* in 18; the text of the four lines is uncertain. For *us* and *our* Greek has *you* and *your*.

³ So Vulgate.

21 'For Death has come up by our windows
 And into our palaces,
 Cutting off from the streets the children,
 The youths from the places ;¹
 22 And the corpses of men are fallen
 As dung on the field,
 As sheaves left after the reaper
 And nobody gathers !'

23 Thus saith the Lord :
 Boast not the wise in his wisdom,
 Boast not the strong in his strength,
 Boast not the rich in his riches,
 24 But he that would boast in this let him boast,
 Insight and knowledge of Me,
 That I am the Lord, who work troth,
 Judgment and justice on earth,
 For in these I delight.

25 Behold, the days are coming—Rede of the
 Lord—that I shall visit on everyone circum-
 26 cised as to the foreskin : Egypt and Judah and
 Edom, the sons of Ammon and Moab, and
 all with the corner² clipt, who dwell in the
 desert ; for all the nations are uncircumcised
 in their heart and all the house of Israel.

¹ Hebrew has the obvious intrusion, *Speak thus, Rede of the Lord*, which Greek lacks.

² I.e. of their hair ; see xxv. 23, xlix. 32. Herodotus says (iii. 8) that some Arabs shaved the hair above their temples ; forbidden to Jews, Lev. xix. 27.

Which just means that Israel, circumcised in the flesh but not in the spirit, are as bad as the heathen who share with them bodily circumcision.

Ch. X. 1-16 is a spirited, ironic poem on the follies of idolatry which bears both in style and substance marks of the later exile.

On the other hand X. 17-23 is a small collection of short Oracles in metre, which there is no reason to deny to Jeremiah. The text of the first, verses 17-18, is uncertain. If with the help of the Greek we render it as follows it implies not an actual, but an inevitable and possibly imminent, siege of Jerusalem. The couplet in 17 may alone be original and 18, the text of which is reducible neither to metre nor wholly to sense, a prose note upon it.

X. 17 Sweep in thy wares from beyond,¹
In siege that shalt sit!

18 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will sling out them that dwell in this land,² and will distress them in order that they may find . . . (?)
Such is the most to be made of the fragment of which there are many interpretations. The next piece, 19-22, is generally acknowledged to be Jeremiah's. It has the ring of his earlier Oracles.

¹ So Greek; Hebrew, *the land*. The Hebrew part. *sitting* may like that in v. 18 be future.

² So Greek; Hebrew, *in the land at this time*.

The Hebrew and Greek texts differ as to the speaker in 19*a*. Probably the Greek is correct—the Prophet or the Deity addresses the city or nation and the Prophet replies for the latter identifying himself with her sufferings. It is possible, however, that the words *But I said* are misplaced and should begin the verse, in which case the Hebrew *my* is to be preferred to the Greek *thy* adopted below. If so the stoicism of 19 is remarkable.

- 19 Woe is me for thy¹ ruin,
 Sore is thy¹ stroke!
 But I said,
 Well, this sickness is mine²
 And I must bear it!
- 20 Undone is my tent and perished,³
 Snapped all my cords!
 My sons—they went out from me
 And they are not!
 None now to stretch me my tent
 Or hang up my curtains.
- 21 For that the shepherds⁴ are brutish
 Nor seek of the Lord,
 Therefore prosper they shall not,
 All scattered their flock.⁵

¹ So Greek, Hebrew *my*.

² So some Greek and Latin versions, Syriac and Targ.

³ Greek; Hebrew omits.

⁴ I.e. Rulers.

⁵ Hebrew, *pastures*.

- X. 22 Hark the bruit,
Behold it comes,
And uproar great
From land of the North,
To lay the cities of Judah waste,
A lair of jackals.

As we have seen, Jeremiah in the excitement of alarm falls on short lines, ejaculations of two stresses each, sometimes as here with one longer line.¹

A quatrain follows of longer, equal lines as is usual with Jeremiah when expressing spiritual truths :—

- 23 Lord I know! Not to man is his way,
Not man's to walk or settle his steps.
24 Chasten me, Lord, but with judgment,
Not in wrath, lest Thou bring me to little!

The last verse of the chapter is of a temper unlike that of Jeremiah elsewhere towards other nations, and so like the temper against them felt by later generations in Israel, that most probably it is not his.

- 25 [Pour out Thy rage on the nations,
Who do not own Thee,
And out on the kingdoms
Who call not Thy Name!

¹ See above, pp. 46 f., 93.

For Jacob they devoured and consumed,
And wasted his homestead]¹

Another series of Oracles, as reasonably referred to the reign of Jehoiakim as to any other stage of Jeremiah's career, is scattered over Chs. XI-XX. I reserve to a later lecture upon his spiritual conflict and growth those which disclose his debates with his God, his people and himself—XI. 18-XII. 6, XV. 10-XVI. 9, XVII. 14-18, XVIII. 18-23, XX. 7-18, and I take now only such as deal with the character and the doom of the nation.

Of these the first in the order in which they appear in the Book is XI. 15, 16, with which we have already dealt,² and the second is XII. 7-13, generally acknowledged to be Jeremiah's own. It is undated, but of the invasions of this time the one it most clearly reflects is that of the mixed hordes let loose by Nebuchadrezzar on Judah in 602 or in 598.³ The invasion is more probably described as actual than imagined as imminent. God Himself is the speaker: His *House*, as the parallel *Heritage* shows, is not the Temple

¹ So, following some Greek MSS., Targ., and the parallel Ps. lxxix. 6, 7.

² Above, pp. 152 ff.

³ P. 176. Practically all agree to this. Admitting its possibility, Duhm prefers to assign the lines to the Scythian invasion, against which see the reasons offered by Cornill *in loco*, who further suggests a connection between xi. 15, 16 and xii. 7-13. Ball, after Naegelsbach, argues for a date before Carchemish.

but the Land, His *Domain*. The sentence pronounced upon it is a final sentence, yet delivered by the Divine Judge with pain and with astonishment that He has to deliver it against His *Beloved*; and this pathos Jeremiah's poetic rendering of the sentence finely brings out by putting verse 9a in the form of a question. The Prophet feels the Heart of God as moved as his own by the doom of the people.

- XII. 7 I have forsaken My House,
 I have left My Heritage,
 I have given the Beloved of My Soul
 To the hand of her foes.
- 8 My Heritage to Me is become
 Like a lion in the jungle,
 She hath given against Me her voice,
 Therefore I hate her.
- 9 Is My Heritage to Me a speckled wild-bird
 With wild-birds round and against her?
 Go, gather all beasts of the field,
 Bring them on to devour.
- 10 Shepherds so many My Vineyard have spoiled
 Have trampled My Lot—
 My pleasant Lot they have turned
 To a desolate desert.
- 11 They make it a waste, it mourns,
 On Me is the waste!
 All the land is made desolate,
 None lays it to heart!

- 12 Over the bare desert heights
 Come in the destroyers!
 [For the sword of the Lord is devouring
 From the end of the land,
 And on to the end of the land,
 No peace to all flesh.¹
- 13 Wheat have they sown and reaped thorns,
 Have travailed for nought,
 Ashamed of their crop shall they be
 In the heat of God's wrath.]

The last eight lines are doubtfully original: the speaker is no longer God Himself. There follows, in verses 14-17, a paragraph in prose, which is hardly relevant—a later addition, whether from the Prophet or an editor.

The next metrical Oracles are appended to the Parables of the Waist-cloth and of the Jars in Ch. XIII.² We have already quoted, in proof of Jeremiah's poetic power, the most solemn warning he gave to his people, XIII. 15, 16.³ At some time these lines were added to it:—

- XIII. 17 But if ye will not hear it:
 In secret my soul shall weep
 Because of your pride,
 And mine eyes run down with tears
 For the flock of the Lord led captive.⁴

¹The text of these four lines is hardly metrical.

²Above, pp. 183-185.

³Above, p. 59.

⁴In this quatrain Greek reads *your soul*, and Hebrew *my eye* and precedes this line by *shall weep indeed* which Greek omits.

The next Oracle in metre is an elegy, probably prospective, on the fate of Jehoiachin and his mother Nehushta.¹

- 18 Say to the King and Her Highness,
 Low be ye seated!
 For from your heads is come down
 The crown of your splendour.
- 19 The towns of the Southland are blocked
 With none to open.
 All Judah is gone into exile,
 Exile entire.²

The flock of the Lord, verse 17, comes again into the next poem, addressed to Jerusalem as appears from the singular form of the verbs and pronouns preserved throughout by the Greek (but only in 206 by the Hebrew) which to the disturbance of the metre adds the name of the city—probably a marginal note that by the hand of some copyist has been drawn into the text. In verse 21 the people, whom Judah has wooed to be her ally but who are about to become her tyrant, are, of course, the Babylonians.³

The last line is one of those longer ones with which verses or strophes often conclude (see p. 35).

¹ II. Kings xxiv. 8, 15; Jer. xxii. 26.

² So Greek.

³ See ii. 36, iv. 30; Ezek. xxiii. 22.

- XIII. 20 Lift up thine eyes and look,
 They come from the North!
 Where is the flock that was given thee,
 Thy beautiful flock?
- 21 What wilt thou say when they set
 O'er thee as heads,¹
 Those whom thyself wast training
 To be to thee friends?
 Shall pangs not fasten upon thee,
 Like a woman's in travail?
- 22 And if thou say in thine heart,
 Why fall on me these?
 For the mass of thy guilt stripped are thy
 skirts,
 Ravished thy limbs!
- 23 Can the Ethiop change his skin,
 Or the leopard his spots?
 Then also may ye do good
 Who are wont to do evil.
- 24 As the passing chaff I strew them
 To the wind of the desert.
- 25 This is thy lot, the share I mete thee—
 Rede of the Lord—
 Because Me thou hast wholly forgotten
 And trusted in fraud.
- 26 So thy skirts I draw over thy face,
 Thy shame is exposed.

¹ *As heads* obviously belongs to this second line of the quatrain, from which some copyist has removed it to the fourth.

27 Thine adulteries, thy neighings,
 Thy whorish intrigues;
 On the heights, in the field have I seen
 Thy detestable deeds.
 Jerusalem! Woe unto thee!
 Thou wilt not be clean—
 After how long yet? ¹

Ch. XIV. 1-10 is the fine poem on the Drought which was rendered in a previous lecture.² It is followed by a passage in prose, 11-16, that implies a wilder 'sea of troubles,' not drought only but war, famine and pestilence. Forbidden to pray for the people Jeremiah pleads that they have been misled by the prophets who promised that there would be neither famine nor war; and the Lord condemns the prophets for uttering lies in His Name. Through war and famine prophets and people alike shall perish.

XIV. 17 And thou shalt say this word to them:
 Let your eyes run down with tears
 Day and night without ceasing,
 For broken, broken is the Daughter of my
 people,
 With the direst of strokes!
 18 Fare I forth to the field,
 Lo the slain of the sword!

¹ So Hebrew literally.

² Pp. 56 f. The date is quite uncertain.

Or come into the city
 Lo anguish of famine!
 Yea, prophet and priest go a-begging
 In a land they know not.¹

Some see reflected in these lines the situation after Megiddo, when Egyptian troops may have worked such evils on Judah; but more probably it is the still worse situation after the surrender of Jerusalem to Nebuchadrezzar. There follows, 19-22, another prayer of the people (akin to that following the drought, 7-9) which some take to be later than Jeremiah. The metre is unusual, if indeed it be metre and not rhythmical prose.

- 19 [Hast Thou utterly cast off Judah,
 Loathes Sion Thy soul?
 Why hast Thou smitten us so
 That for us is no healing?
 Hoped we for peace—no good!
 For a season of healing—lo panic!
- 20 We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness,
 The guilt of our fathers; to Thee have we
 sinned.
- 21 For the sake of Thy Name, do not spurn us,
 Debase not the Throne of Thy Glory,
 Remember, break not Thy Covenant with us!

¹ The text of the first four lines is uncertain. I have mainly followed the Greek. *Begging*, if we borrow the sense of the verb in Syriac, otherwise *huckstering*, *peddling*.

- 22 'Mongst the bubbles of the nations are makers
of rain,
Or do the heavens give the showers?
Art Thou not He for whom we must wait?
Yea, Thou hast created all these.]

As the Book now runs this prayer receives from God a repulse, XV. 1-4, similar to that which was received by the people's prayer after the drought XIV. 10-12, and to that which Hosea heard to the prayer of his generation.¹ Intercession for such a people is useless, were it made even by Moses and Samuel; they are doomed to perish by the sword, famine and exile. This passage is in prose and of doubtful origin. But the next lines are in Jeremiah's favourite metre and certainly his own. They either describe or (less probably) anticipate the disaster of 598. God Himself again is the speaker as in XII. 7-11. His Patience which the Parable of the Potter illustrated has its limits,² and these have now been reached. It is not God who is to blame, but Jerusalem and Judah who have failed Him.

- XV. 5 Jerusalem, who shall pity,
Who shall bemoan thee,
Who will but turn him to ask
After thy welfare?
6 'Tis thou that hast left Me—Rede of the Lord—
Still going backward.

¹ Hos. vi. 1-4.

² P. 189.

So I stretched my hand¹ and destroyed thee
Tired of relenting.

7 With a winnowing fork I winnowed them
In the gates of the land.

I bereaved and destroyed my people
Because of their evil.²

8 I saw their widows outnumber
The sand of the seas.

I brought on the mother of youths (?)
Destruction at noonday,

And let fall sudden upon them
Anguish and terrors.³

9 She that bare seven hath fainted,
Breathes out her life,

Set is her sun in the daytime
Shamed and abashed!

And their remnant I give to the sword
In face of their foes!⁴

Through the rest of Ch. XV and through XVI and XVII are a number of those personal passages, which I have postponed to a subsequent lecture upon Jeremiah's spiritual struggles,⁵ and also several passages which by outlook and phrasing belong to a later age. The impression left by this miscellany is that of a collection of

¹ Hebrew and some Greek MSS. add *against thee*.

² Hebrew, *they turned not from their ways*.

³ The text of verse 8 is uncertain. I have mainly followed the Greek.

⁴ Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord*.

⁵ Lecture vij.

sayings put together by an editor out of some Oracles by our Prophet himself and deliverances by other prophets on the same or similar themes. In pursuance of the plan I proposed I take now only those passages in which Jeremiah deals with the character of his people and their deserved doom.

XVI. 5 Thus saith the Lord—

Come not to the home of mourning,
Nor go about to lament,¹
For my Peace I have swept away—
Away from this people.²

8 Nor enter the house of feasting,
To sit with them eating and drinking
9 For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel:
Lo, I make to cease from this place,
To your eyes, in your days,
The voices of joy and rejoicing,
The voices of bridegroom and bride.

There follows a passage in prose, 10-13, which in terms familiar to us, recites the nation's doom, their exile. Verses 14, 15 break the connection with 16 ff., and find their proper place in XXIII. 7-8, where they recur. Verses 16-18 predict, under the figures of fishers and hunters, the arrival of bands of invaders, who shall sweep the country of its inhabitants, because of the idolatries with which these have polluted it. There is no

¹ Hebrew adds *nor bemoan them*, an expansion.

² Hebrew adds *Rede of the Lord, even kindness and compassion*; verses 6 and 7 are expansion.

reason to deny these verses to Jeremiah. In 19, 20 we come to another metrical piece, singing of the conversion of the heathen from their idols—the only piece of its kind from Jeremiah—which we may more suitably consider later. Verse 21 seems more in place after 18.

- XVII. 1. The sin of Judah is writ
 With pen of iron,
 With the point of a diamond graven
 On the plate of their heart—
 And eke on the horns of their altars,¹
 And each spreading tree,
 2 Upon all the lofty heights
 And hills of the wild.
 3 Thy substance and all thy treasures
 For spoil I give,
 Because of sin thy high places
 Throughout thy borders.
 4 Thine heritage thou shalt surrender²
 Which I have given thee,³
 And thy foes I shall make thee to serve
 In a land thou knowest not.
 Ye have kindled a fire in my wrath
 That for ever shall burn.³

¹ Hebrew adds *when their children remember their altars and Asherim* rightly taken by Duhm and Cornill as a gloss.

² Hebrew adds *in thee* for which some read *thy hand*.

³ These four verses along with the phrase *Thus saith the Lord* which follows them are lacking in Greek. This is clearly due to the oversight of a copyist, his eye passing inadvertently from *the Lord* of xvi. 21 to *the Lord* of xvii. 5.

These verses, characteristic of Jeremiah, are more so of his earliest period than of his work in the reign of Jehoiakim, and may have been among those which he added to his Second Roll. They are succeeded by the beautiful reflections on the man who does not trust the Lord and on the man who does, verses 5-8, quoted in a previous lecture.¹ The rest of the chapter consists of passages personal to himself, to be considered later, and of an exhortation to keep the Sabbath, verses 19-27, which is probably post-exilic.²

In Ch. XVIII the Parable of the Potter is followed by a metrical Oracle which has all the marks of Jeremiah's style and repeats the finality of the doom, to which the nation's forgetfulness of God and idolatry have brought it. Once more the poet contrasts the constancy of nature with his people's inconstancy. Neither the metre nor the sense of the text is so mutilated as some have supposed.

XVIII. 13 Therefore thus saith the Lord :

Ask ye now of the nations,

Who heard of the like ?

The horror she hath grossly wrought,

Virgin of Israel.

14 Falls from the mountain rock

The snow of Lebánon ?

¹ See pp. 53, 54.

² Cp. 'Isaiah,' lvi. 2-7, lviii. 13, 14 ; Neh. xiii. 15-22.

- Or the streams from the hills dry up,
 The cold flowing streams ?¹
- 15 Yet Me have My people forgotten,
 And burned² to vanity,
 Stumbling from off their ways,
 The tracks of yore,
 To straggle along the by-paths,
 An unwrought road ;
- 16 Turning their land to a waste,
 A perpetual hissing.
 All who pass by are appalled,
 And shake their heads.
- 17 With³ an east wind strew them I shall,
 In face of the foe.
 My back not my face shall I show them
 In their day of disaster.

¹ A much manipulated verse ! *Mountain*, taking *sadai* in its archaic sense as in Assyrian and some Hebrew poems, Jud. v. 4, Deut. xxxii. 13 (see the writer's 'Deut.' in the 'Camb. Bible for Schools') where it is parallel to *highlands*, *rock* and *flinty rock*. The following emendations of the text are therefore unnecessary, and are more or less forced. *Sirion* (Duhm, Cornill, Peake, McFadyen, Skinner) ; *missurim* = *from the rocks* (Rothstein). The Greek takes *sadai* as *breasts* and nominative to the verb : *Do the breasts of the rock give out?*—not a bad figure. *Hill-streams* reading *mēmē harim* (Rothstein) for the Hebrew *maim zarim* = *strange* (? far off) *streams*. Ewald takes *zarim* from *zarar* = *to rush, press*. Duhm reads *mēsarim* = *Northstar*. Cornill turns the couplet to *Or do dry up from the western sea the flowing waters?* Gillies, *the wet winds from the sea*, etc., for which there is a suggestion in the Greek ἀνέμω.

² See p. 149, n. 1.

³ So some MSS. ; the text has *like*.

Personal passages follow in verses 18-23, and in XIX-XX. 6, the Symbol of the Earthen Jar and the episode of the Prophet's arrest with its consequences, which we have already considered,¹ and then other personal passages in XX. 7-18. Ch. XXI. 1-10 is from the reign of Šedekiah; 11, 12 are a warning to the royal house of unknown date, and 13, 14 a sentence upon a certain stronghold, which in this connection ought to be Jerusalem, but cannot be because of the epithets *Inhabitrress of the Vale* and *Rock of the Plain*, that are quite inappropriate to Jerusalem. This is another proof of how the editors of the Book have swept into it a number of separate Oracles, whether relevant to each other or not, and whether Jeremiah's own or from some one else.

From Chs. XXII-XXIII. 8, a series of Oracles on the kings of Judah, we have had before us the elegy on Jehoahaz, XXII. 10 (with a prose note on 11, 12) and the denunciation of Jehoiakim, 13-19.² There remain the warning (in prose) to do judgment and justice with the threat on the king's house, XXII. 1-5, and the following Oracles:—

XXII. 6 For thus saith the Lord concerning the house of the king of Judah³—

¹ Pp. 191 ff.

² Pp. 164-167.

³ Duhm's objection to this title as a mistake by an editor is groundless; for though the following lines are addressed to the land or people as a whole, their climax is upon the fate of the royal house, *the choice of thy cedars*.

A Gilead art thou to Me,
 Or head of Lebánon,
 Yet shall I make thee a desert
 Of tenantless cities.

7 I will hallow against thee destroyers,
 Each with his weapons,
 They shall cut down the choice of thy cedars
 And fell them for fuel.

8 [And¹ nations shall pass by this city and
 shall say each to his mate, For what hath
 9 the Lord done thus to this great city? And
 they shall answer, Because they forsook the
 Covenant of the Lord their God, and bowed
 themselves to other gods and served them.]

Whether this piece of prose be from Jeremiah himself or from another is uncertain and of no importance. It is a true statement of his own interpretation of the cause of his people's doom. The next Oracle addressed to the nation is upon King Jeconiah, or Koniyah. I follow mainly the Greek.

XXII. 20 Up to Lebánon and cry,
 Give forth thy voice in Bashán,
 And cry from Abarím² that broken
 Be all thy lovers.

21 I spake to thee in thy prosperity,
 Thou saidst, I hear not!
 This was thy way from thy youth,
 Not to hark to My Voice.

¹ Hebrew adds *many*.

² Greek *from over the sea*.

- 22 All thy shepherds the wind shall shepherd,
 Thy lovers go captive.
 Then shamed shalt thou be and confounded
 For all thine ill-doing.
- 23 Thou in Lebánon that dwellest,
 Nested on cedars,
 How shalt thou groan¹ when come on thee
 pangs,
 Anguish as hers that beareth.
- 24 As I live — 't is the Rede of the Lord—
 Though Konyahu were
 Upon My right hand the signet,
 Thence would I tear him.²
- 25 And I shall give thee into the hand of them
 that seek thy life and into the hand of them
 thou darest, even into the hand of Ne-
 buchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and into the
 26 hand of the Chaldeans; and I will hurl thee
 out, and thy mother who bare thee, upon
 another land, where ye were not born, and
 27 there shall ye die. And to the land, towards
 which they shall be lifting their soul,³ they
 shall not return.
- 28 Is Konyahu then despised,
 Like a nauseous vessel?
 Why is he flung and cast out
 On a land he knows not?

¹ Greek, Syriac, Vulgate.² Hebrew *thee*.³ Hebrew adds *to return thither*; Greek lacks.

- 29 Land, Land, Land,
 Hear the Word of the Lord!
 30 Write this man down as childless,
 A fellow . . . (?)
 For none of his seed shall flourish
 Seated on David's throne,
 Or ruling still in Judah.¹

We can reasonably deny to Jeremiah nothing of all this passage, not even the prose by which the metre is interrupted. We have seen how natural it was for the rhapsodists of his race to pass from verse to prose and again from prose to verse. Nor are the repetitions superfluous, not even that four-fold *into the hand of* in the prose section, for at each recurrence of the phrase we feel the grip of their captor closing more fast upon the doomed king and people. Nor are we required to take the pathetic words, *the land to which they shall be lifting up their soul*, as true only of those who have been long banished. For the exiles to Babylon felt this home-sickness from the very first, as Jeremiah well knew.

If we are to trust the date given by its title—and no sufficient reason exists against our doing so—there is still an Oracle of Jeremiah, which, though now standing far down in our Book, Ch. XLV, belongs to the reign of Jehoiakim, and

¹ In 28-30 the Greek, mainly followed above in accordance with the metre, is far shorter than the Hebrew text.

is properly a supplement to the story of the writing of the Rolls by Baruch in 605.¹ The text has suffered, probably more than we can now detect.

XLV. 1 The Word, which Jeremiah the prophet spake to Baruch, the son of Neriah, while he was writing these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah,² in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah.³

2 Thus saith the Lord⁴ concerning thee, O
3 Baruch, for thou didst say :—

Woe is me! Woe is me!⁵

How hath the Lord on my pain heaped sorrow!
I am worn with my groaning,
Rest I find none!

4 [Thus shalt thou say to him⁶] thus sayeth the
Lord :

Lo, what I built I have to destroy,

¹ The reasons given by Giesebrecht and Duhm *in loco*, by Skinner, p. 346, and (more fancifully) by Erbt, p. 86, for impugning the date given in xlv. 1, and relegating the Oracle to the close of Jeremiah's life in exile as his last words to Baruch, have been answered in great detail, and to my mind conclusively, by Cornill, who points out how much more suited the Oracle is to conditions in 605 than to those of Baruch and Jeremiah after 586.

² Cornill: *the words of Jeremiah in a book*.

³ Hebrew adds *saying*.

⁴ Hebrew adds *the God of Israel*.

⁵ So Greek.

⁶ Superfluous after, not to say inconsistent with, verse 2; probably editorial.

And what I planted I have to root up.¹
 5 Thou, dost thou seek thee great things ?
 Seek thou them not,
 For behold, on all flesh I bring evil—
 Rede of the Lord—
 But I give thee thy life as a prey,
 Wheresoever thou goest.

The younger man, with youth's high hopes for his people and ambitions for himself in their service—ambitions which he could honestly cherish by right both of his station in life² and the firmness of his character—felt his spirit spent beneath the long-drawn weight of all the Oracles of Doom, which it was his fate to inscribe as final. Now to Baruch in such a mood the older man, the Prophet, might have appealed from his own example, for none in that day was more stripped than Jeremiah himself, of family, friends, affections, or hopes of positive results from his ministry; nor was there any whose life had been more often snatched from the jaws of death. But instead of quoting his own case Jeremiah brought to his despairing servant and friend a still higher example. The Lord Himself had been forced to relinquish His designs and to destroy what He

¹ *I have to or am about to.* The Hebrew addition to this couplet, *and that is the whole earth*, is probably a gloss; it is not found in all Greek versions.

² His brother Seraiah was a high officer of the king, ch. li. 59; see also Josephus X. 'Antt.' ix. 1.

had built and to uproot what He had planted. In face of such Divine surrender, both of purpose and achievement, what was the resignation by a mere man, or even by a whole nation, of their hopes or ambitions? Let Baruch be content to expect nothing beyond bare life: *thy life shall I give thee for a prey*. This stern phrase is found four times in the Oracles of Jeremiah,¹ and nowhere else. It is not more due to the Prophet than to the conditions of his generation. Jeremiah only put into words what must have been felt by all the men of his time—those terrible years in which, through the Oracles quoted in this lecture, he has shown us War, Drought, Famine and Pestilence fatally passing over his land; when *Death came up by the windows*, children were cut off from their playgrounds and youths from the squares where they gathered, and the corpses of men were scattered like dung on the fields. It was indeed a time when each survivor must have felt that his life had been *given him for a prey*.

To the hearts of us who have lived through the Great War, with its heavy toll on the lives both of the young and of the old, this phrase of Jeremiah brings the Prophet and his contemporaries very near.

Yet more awful than the physical calamities which the prophet unveils throughout these

¹ Here and xxi. 9, xxxviii. 2, xxxix. 18.

terrible years are his bitter portraits of the character of his people, whom no word of their God nor any of His heavy judgments could move to repentance. He paints a hopeless picture of society in Jerusalem and Judah under Jehoiakim, rotten with dishonesty and vice. Members of the same family are unable to trust each other; all are bent on their own gain by methods unjust and cruel—from top to bottom so hopelessly false as even to be blind to the meaning of the disasters which rapidly befall them and to the final doom that steadily draws near. Yet, for all the wrath he pours upon his generation and the Divine vengeance of which he is sure, how the man still loves and clings to them, and takes their doom as his own! And, greatest of all, how he reads in the heart that was in him the Heart of God Himself—the same astonishment that the people are so callous, the same horror of their ruin, nay the same sense of failure and of suffering under the burden of such a waste—*on Me is the waste!*¹ *What I built I have to destroy!*

Except that he does not share these secrets of the Heart of God, it is of Victor Hugo among moderns that I have been most reminded when working through Jeremiah's charges against the king, the priests, the prophets and the whole people of Judah—Victor Hugo in his *Châtiments* of

¹ ix. 3, 7 (*How else can I do?*), xii. 9, 11, see p. 211.

the monarch, the church, the journalists, the courtiers and other creatures of the Third French Empire. There is the same mordant frankness and satiric rage combined with the same desire to share the miseries of the critic's people in spite of their faults. I have already quoted Hugo's lines on Napoleon III as parallel to Jeremiah's on Jehoiakim.¹

Here are two other parallels.

To Jeremiah's description of his people being persuaded that all was well, when well it was not, and refusing to own their dishonour, VIII. 11, 12, take Hugo's 'on est infâme et content' and

Et tu chantais, en proie aux éclatants mensonges

Du succès.

And to Jeremiah's acceptance of the miseries of his people as his own and refusal to the end to part from them take these lines to France:—

Je te demanderai ma part de tes misères,

Moi ton fils.

France, tu verras bien qu'humble tête éclipsee

J'avais foi,

Et que je n'eus jamais dans l'âme une pensée

Que pour toi.

France, être sur ta claie à l'heure où l'on te traîne

Aux cheveux,

O ma mère, et porter mon anneau de ta chaîne

Je le veux !

¹ See p. 167.