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THE

Bible

STUDENT

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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

fall under the judgment of Him Who has been excluded from them all. It will see the establishment of God's kingdom in the midst of men. No longer will tyranny provoke rivers of tears but the benign autocracy of the Prince of Peace, Who alone can be entrusted with absolute power, will bring peace, justice and plenty to all. It will witness the judgment of Satan and his consigning to eternal destruction. The age long conflict between good and evil will at last be resolved in the victory of God's Man, a victory gained at the Cross but awaiting His final triumph for its complete demonstration. It will bring heart satisfaction to the waiting Christ. He has toiled for His Bride and at last she will be with Him in perfect suitability to her position, rejoicing in and sharing His glory and ravished with the fulness of His love. It will secure absolute glory to God. His eternal decrees and covenants will have reached their fulfilment and He will be All-in-all.

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

By PROFESSOR A. RENDLE SHORT

The attentive reader of the Bible will have noticed that though many of its chapters are historical, the history is written not at all as a scholar would write it. For instance, it relates all that happens to the laws of God. It is singularly discontinuous; we are told much about certain periods extending over a generation or two, and little or nothing about the intervening periods. Sometimes God is active and there are miraculous happenings; sometimes events pursue a quite ordinary course. Obviously we are intended to pay special attention to the periods that are dealt with in such detail. One of these periods includes the reigns of Josiah and his sons, and the few years following the destruction of Jerusalem. Here belong chapters in Kings and Chronicles, and the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and part of Daniel. It is a period of divine providences, but not of miracles, except the miracle of prediction.

Jeremiah is often thought of as a gloomy, repellent man who took a delight in foretelling disaster. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was of a shrinking, almost timid disposition, with a deep affection for his wayward nation. 'Ah, Lord God,

I cannot speak, for I am a child'. But he had eyes and ears, and he could not shut them to certain obvious facts. 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. And though they say, The Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely. Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved. Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock. Therefore I said, Surely these are the poor; they are foolish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men and will speak unto them, for they have known the way of the Lord and the judgment of their God. But these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. From the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely' (6:5). Jeremiah was conscious of a mighty ordination to tell king, prophets and people what the Lord had spoken to him. He began his public ministry in the year 627 B.C. For the first five or six years his warnings of judgment to come appear to have been based on his knowledge of the general principles of God's dealings. It seems that the books of Moses had disappeared from circulation, though no doubt some memory of them remained. But in 621 B.C., during Temple renovations, the Book of the Law was found in the house of the Lord, and its contents became generally known. The terrific denunciations, especially those written in the book of Deuteronomy (ch. 28), must have turned Jeremiah cold with horror. Hereafter he is constantly using phrases derived from that book, and he is sure, only too sure, that judgment is inevitable, and what form it will take. He dare not marry; why beget children only to see them perish miserably? He was watched malevolently by his own kinsfolk and neighbours: 'even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee. The men of Anathoth, that seek thy life'. He was put in the stocks and officially forbidden to speak in public, derided and contradicted by the false prophets, arrested and threatened with death, compelled to live in hiding, shut up in a rigorous captivity in the house of Jonathan the scribe, cast into a disused well to die of hunger and thirst (11:21; 12:6;

20:2; 26; 36:5, 19; 37:15; 38:6). But he loved his people, saw plainly the impending evil, had some faint hope that it might yet be averted if they repented, and knew that he was a prophet of the LORD. How could he hold his peace?

We feel we know the innermost soul of Jeremiah better than that of any other Old Testament prophet. He is conscious of divine guidance, but frightened of it. He feels acutely that just at present God's judgments fall on himself rather than on the real culprits, and he would like an explanation (10:23-24; 12:1-5). There is none forthcoming. He complains that God's words have been the joy and rejoicing of his heart, but nevertheless his pain is perpetual and his wound incurable; why did his mother bring him into such a sorrowful and difficult world? (15:15-18). Sometimes, he very nearly sent in his resignation to the Almighty (20:7-15). The false prophets vexed him sore (23:9). But still he held on his course.

Sometimes he is moved to call down curses on his personal enemies (18:21-23). This conduct is consistent with Old Testament parallels, but is rather shocking to the Christian. Revengeful psalms and revengeful prophets are a major problem of Old Testament morality. It should be remembered that these curses were principally intended to vindicate the divine righteousness. In Old Testament times, it was only by sore judgments on the wicked that divine righteousness could be vindicated. Since Calvary, the holiness and righteousness of God have been vindicated once for all, in the most impressive manner possible, and in the sight of all the world. So prayers for vengeance must cease. Even in Old Testament times, it was a moral advance for God's servants to commit their cause to Him, instead of settling their matters with a cudgel.

That Jeremiah was not a confirmed pessimist, taking a delight in evil tidings and full of a perpetual 'I told you so', is shown by the complete change in tone when the blow has fallen, or is so nearly fallen that all can see it coming. Then, he foretells a return to the land, and a rebuilding, after seventy years of captivity. He buys a farm, to keep it in the family for the days to come, even while the Chaldeans are camping upon it. Above all, he promises a New Covenant of spiritual restoration and forgiveness, a promise fulfilled on a great and notable Thursday evening, when our Lord took a cup, filled it with wine, and said,

'This is the blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins' (31:31-34).

Jewish tradition says that Jeremiah was stoned to death in his old age in the land of Egypt. We would prefer to believe that God's promise of protection (1:8; 15:20) held good to the end, and that he went to his grave in the peace of a quiet sunset after a very stormy day.

THE PSALMS IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

This morning I was with a warm-hearted congregation with a strong evangelical tradition. They confine their singing to the Psalms, and probably get much more out of them than we may be inclined to believe. They find unsuspected alliances with Gospel truth that, to my heart at any rate, are quite unforced. This morning most of the Psalms sung had references to 'making an offering to the Lord' and led up without comment to the reading of the incident in Luke's Gospel which tells of the woman in Simon's house, whose 'offering' certainly pleased the Lord better than an ox that had horns and hooves, and conformed to the sacrifice spoken of in Psalm 51.

I have a very warm corner in my heart for that congregation which I have visited since I was a boy, and their influence on my own spiritual life has not been negligible. They have a very strong sense of the character and greatness of God, and link this with the N.T. notes of 'repentance' and 'faith'. And John 3:16 frequently heard in prayer sounds doubly well against this strong O.T. background. Creation and Redemption used to be the twin notes of the public ministry, and to hear farmers singing, as I did this morning, Ps. 8, about 'all cattle of the field' was very fitting. I stood beside a sea-fisherman, an elder of the congregation, as we sang, too, about 'all fish in the sea' being under the governance of man. It brought actual life and spiritual truth very close together.—(*Extract*).

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THE THEOPHANIES OF THE O.T.—A TABULATED REVIEW

Alex Soutter

SCRIPTURE PORTION	PERSONS VISITED	THE 'ANGEL' OR 'MAN'	TRUTH ILLUSTRATED	PLACE	CHRIST PRESENTED AS	FORCES OF EVIL	ATTENDANT SYMBOLS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE
Gen. 16	HAGAR (Flight)	SEEING Gen. 16. 13; Mark 2. 8; Rev. 3. 20	CORRECTION	BEER-LA-HAI-ROI (Well of the Living one who sees, or reveals Himself)	ALL-SEEING ONE John 1. 48	SELF	WELL —Salvation Gen. 16. 7; Isa. 12. 3
Gen. 18	ABRAHAM (Father of a Multitude)	EATING Gen. 18. 8; Mark 2. 14; Rev. 3. 20	COMMUNION	HEBRON (League, or Fellowship)	JUDGE OF THE NATIONS Matt. 25. 32	SODOM	OAK —Refreshment Gen. 18. 1, 4 R.V.; Song of Sol. 2. 3
Gen. 32	JACOB (Supplanter)	TOUCHING Gen. 32. 25; Matt. 17. 7 Rev. 1. 7	CONFLICT	PENIEL (Face of God)	PERFECTER OF HOLINESS Phil. 1. 6	SELF	BROOK —Waters of Affliction Gen. 32. 23; Ps. 110. 7
Exod. 3	MOSES (Drawn out)	CALLING Exod. 3. 4; Mark 3. 13; 1 Cor. 1. 26	CALL and COMMISSION	HOREB (Waste)	THE GREAT I AM John 8. 58	EGYPT	THORN-BUSH —Weakness that endures. Exod. 3. 2; 2 Cor. 12. 9
Josh. 5	JOSHUA (Jehovah is Salvation)	WIELDING SWORD Josh. 5. 13; Matt. 4. 4; Eph. 6. 17	COMMISSION and COMMAND	JERICHO (Fragrant)	CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION Heb. 2. 10	CANAAN	RIVER —Waters of Death Josh. 5. 1; Gal. 2. 20
Judg. 6	GIDEON (Feller)	ENCOURAGING Judg. 6. 12; John 15. 27; Acts 18. 19	CALL and CONFIRMATION	OPHRAH (Hamlet)	DELIVERER THROUGH SACRIFICE Heb. 10. 14	MIDIAN AND AMALEK	TEREBINTH —Reassurance Judg. 6. 11, 12; Heb. 13. 5, 6
Judg. 13	MANOAH (Rest)	FOREWARNING ('Beware') Judg. 13. 4; Mark 13. 23	CONSECRATION	DAN (Judge)	EXALTED LORD Eph. 1. 20	PHILISTINES	FLAME —Glory. Judg. 13. 20; Acts 5. 31

In providing the above most helpful Tabulated Review, Mr. Soutter concludes the series of excellent Studies of this theme appearing in previous issues.—ED.