

ON THE MEANING AND SCOPE OF JEREMIAH
VII. 22, 23.

AMONG those passages of the Old Testament which are important for the investigation of the history of worship in Israel the passage Jeremiah vii. 22, 23 stands in the very front rank. But while there is general agreement as to the importance of this passage, there is just as general disagreement in regard to its interpretation. Seeing that a question of grammar plays a predominant part in the ascertaining of the true sense of this passage, and also inasmuch as I think I can contribute something to the answering of the question, I ask permission to set forth the considerations upon which the interpretation and the religious-historical significance of the passage depends.

The passage in question marks a turning-point in the course of thought contained in that discourse of Jeremiah which includes cc. vii. 1 to ix. 25 and x. 17-25.¹ From the position occupied by the speaker according to chap. vii. 2, this may be call his "Temple discourse."² For at the very entrance of the house of Jahveh the prophet was to proclaim the one true means of obtaining the favour of God.

¹ That x. 1-16 is not from Jeremiah is proved by linguistic considerations (see my *Einleitung in das A.T.*, p. 337).

² "The gate of the house of Jahveh" (vii. 2a) is the main portal of the *outer* forecourt, for "all Judah," to whom the discourse is first directed, consisted of course for the most part of laymen, who were only permitted to enter the *outer* forecourt, and only in a secondary degree of temple-servants (cf. vii. 21; viii. 1 f., 10), who might also, in consequence of their place of abode, be reckoned with Judah. Compare Num. xxxv. 1-8; Josh. xv. 54; xxi. 11 (Hebron), etc., which show that the Levitical towns remained as parts of their respective tribal districts. It is true that *יהודה* *מְשֻׁבָּת* in Jud. xvii. 7 is remarkable on account of the *asyndeton*, and is wanting in LXX. (B) and Pesch.; it is, however, only a trace of a double narrative (cf. further *Einleitung*, p. 252), so that the suggestion that *יהודה* has been substituted for *מְשֻׁבָּת* (Budde, *Kurzer Handcommentar*, 1897, *ad loc.*) is unnecessary. "There was a young man out of the tribe of *מְשֻׁבָּת*=*שֵׁבֶט*, Jud. xiii. 2; xvii. 7; cf. Siegfried-Stade, *Hebr. Wörterbuch*, p. 389a) of Judah" could be said also of one belonging to Levi. Compare especially *אִפְרַת*, 1 Sam. i. 1b with 1 Chron. vi. 13, 18.

This sole means consisted (in accordance with *v. 3a*) in the good quality of the people's ways (הַיִּשְׁרָיוֹת), that is in their conduct depending on particular motives and their individual activities. This excellent quality in the behaviour of the nation is to show itself, however (*v. 5a*), specially in the avoidance of a particular social evil and of the great religious evil of the period, in the avoidance, that is, of illegal oppression (*vv. 5b, 6a*)¹ and of idolatry (*vv. 6b, 9a, b*). The deceptive ground of hope on which the majority were trusting is described as the idea that Jerusalem, being the Temple city, could never be destroyed (*vv. 3b, 4, 11 f., 14 f.*).

Even the prophet's intercession cannot turn aside the consequent threatening of judgment, and he is not even to make an attempt in that direction (*v. 16a*). For the period of Divine long-suffering was at an end for the time (*v. 16b*) because Judah's religious backsliding had become wholly open and shameless. For alongside of the personification of the sun in Baal (*v. 9a*) the pantheon of the majority at that time contained as its chiefest star the shining figure of the queen of heaven (*v. 17f.*). The expression מַלְכַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם indicated a feminine Being; for the phrase stands parallel with "other gods" (*vii. 18b, xlv. 15a, 17a*), and is therefore itself intended as a description of a divinity. That the phrase is six times represented by לֵהָ (*xliv. 17-19, 25*) points in the same direction, seeing that at least an alternation of לֵהָ and לֵהָם might have been expected if מַלְכַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם were to be understood as a collective substantive. The same interpretation finds further support in the facts that this מַלְכַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם came into consideration, in the first place, as an object of women's worship (*vii. 18; xlv. 15a—*"the men who knew that their wives," etc.), that "the

¹ Cf. Amos ii. 6; iii. 9 f.; v. 7; Hos. iii. 2; vi. 9; Isa. i. 10, 17; iii. 15; v. 8; x. 2, etc.; Micah ii. 2; iii. 2 f.; Jer. vii. 6; xxii. 3; Ezek. xx. 7, 29; Zech. vii. 10; Mal. iii. 5.

Assyrians also seem to have ascribed to Ištar the additional title Malkatu,"¹ and that among the Phœnicians also "Astarte of the high heavens" is mentioned.² The LXX. also gives τῆ βασιλίσση τοῦ οὐρανοῦ in li. 18 ff., and the Peschitta in xliv. 19 Malkat Sch^omajjâ. This Syriac form reminds us also of the fact that the punctuation M^olekhet is not to have the sense of "Queen," but must point to מְלֹאכֶת, a form which is also found in *Codices* (cf. my *Lehrgebäude*, vol. ii. p. 169), and is further confirmed by מְלֹאכֶת, which is always found in the Peschitta (except in xliv. 19), and could easily pass over into ἡ στρατιὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ or the מְלֹאכֶת שְׁמַיָּא of the Targum through the suggestion of Gen. xxxiii. 14, and Jer. viii. 2.

After the speaker has thus pointed to this as the one true source of the Divine favour, he comes to that section of his discourse, whose interpretation and bearing is to be the subject of the following discussion.

If we seek to connect this discussion with the foregoing exposition, then the connection between vii. 16–20 and vii. 21–28 is undoubtedly the following. Just as little as the divinely determined punishment consequent upon the shameless religious backsliding of the majority of that period can be turned aside by the intercession of the prophet (vv. 16–20), even as little can it be averted by the sacrificial worship offered to Jahveh. But *why* is this not to be effected even by sacrificial offerings directed towards Jahveh? What attitude does Jahveh assume towards sacrificial worship in vii. 21 ff.? To obtain an answer to this question let us advance from the particular to the general.

Concerning the summons with which the Divine pronouncement begins in v. 21b, "Add your burnt offerings

¹ Schrader, "die מְלֹאכֶת שְׁמַיָּא und ihr Aramäisch-Assyrisches Aequivalent" (*Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1886), p. 488. See further details there.

² Eschmunazar-Inscription, line 16, עשתרה שמם אדרם.

unto your slaughter-offerings," it was said already by Kimchi,¹ "This imperative does not involve a gracious command (*i.e.* an actual or positive one), but it is as if a man said to his comrade, 'Do what you please: it will avail you nothing.'" This summons is an expression of the Divine irony. For what can be signified by the following phrase, *et edite carnem* (= *ut edatis carnem*) as the effect of obeying this imperative? It can be only this, that the opportunities to enjoy the flesh of sacrifices will be multiplied. This would follow if the animals set apart for burnt offerings² had been employed for slaughter offerings,³ which, apart from the fat and the blood, were consumed by the bringers of offerings or by the priests (Lev. iii. 3 f., etc.; vii. 15-18, 31; xix. 6; Deut. xii. 27b). Now, since the eating of flesh was comparatively rare in ancient Palestine,⁴ frequent indulgence in it is a mark of a luxurious mode of living. Moreover, v. 21 does not mean "Consume for yourselves alone whole-offering and slaughter-offering, without presenting any to Me, without doing anything to preserve the sacrificial character of the offering" (Bredenkamp, *Gesetz und Propheten*, p. 110). That interpretation follows from inattention to the actual words. They declare rather that the burnt-offering is to be added to the slaughter-offering, and so the sacrificial character of the particular slaughter is to be preserved, and only modified in degree. Neither is the reference to "the presentation of accumulated burnt and slaughter-offerings" (Keil, *ad loc.*).

¹ *e.g.* in the *Biblia Rabbinica* of Buxtorf, הצוויו הזה אינו למצוה רצונית, אלא כליומר לחברו עשה מה תעשה כי לא יושילך

² Lev. i. 7-9; Deut. xii. 27a; cf. Relandi *Antiquitates Sacrae Veterum Hebraeorum*, III. ii. § 6, de holocaustis: "In altari conflagrabant omnes omnino animalium partes, excepto ventriculo et, ut quidam volunt, intestinis et folliculo fellis. Eximebatur etiam nervus luxationis" (Gen. xxxii. 33; cf. Chullin, vii. 1).

³ Rosenmüller, *Scholia, ad locum*, gives the right explanation: "utrumque genus sacrificiorum eodem modo habeant Judaei."

⁴ Benzinger, *Grundriss der hebräischen Archäologie*, p. 89.

Accordingly *v.* 21 contains the declaration that the Deity on His part takes no interest in the burnt offerings as such, as part of the system of sacrifices.

Such an interest in the performance of sacrifices might plainly be either material or formal. Against the former there is an indirect protest in Isaiah i. 11, 'לְפָנַי לֹא יִגַּד', and in Jeremiah vii. 21, and a direct protest in Psalm l. 9-13. Still the *formal* interest of the Deity in the performance of sacrifices might have consisted in the fact that through their zealous performance the Divine demand for sacrifice might have found its fulfilment. Now, according to *v.* 22, was there in the Deity a formal interest of this kind in the performance of sacrifices?

In the first place, in the opening words of *v.* 22, "For I spake not unto your fathers," the expression "unto your fathers" may include both the congregation of the people and Moses; but the former is certainly referred to, indeed it is put in the foreground. Now a distinction is drawn in the Pentateuch between such ordinances of God as come from Him promulgated before the whole people, and such as come through Moses as intermediary; cf. Exodus xx. 18 f., 22 f.; xxi. 1; xxiv. 3, etc. Especially in Deuteronomy, with which Jeremiah in other respects also shows so many points of contact, both in form and thought, observe chapter v. 4. Moreover, after the proclamation of the Decalogue (*vv.* 6-18), it is expressly stated, "These words Jahveh spake unto all your assembly, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud and the darkness, with a great voice; and *He added no more.*" That is to say, these words alone were addressed by God *to the whole assembly.*¹

Seeing that the distinction, so clearly made in the

¹ For other observations on the distinction between those to whom the commandments were addressed, a distinction not noticed elsewhere, see my *Einleitung*, p. 187 f. Concerning the relations, both in form and thought, between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy, cf. *ibid.* p. 217 ff.

Pentateuch, is evidently in harmony with the phrase chosen by Jeremiah in *v.* 22, "I spake not *with your fathers*," we shall proceed most securely by bearing this circumstance in mind. The idea which underlies this distinction between the commandments which were issued direct to the whole assembly and those which were issued through Moses, must be this, that a fundamental significance attaches to the former proclamation, for it includes the Ten Words (Exod. xxxiv. 28; Deut. iv. 13; x. 4); that is to say, the ten chief precepts or religious-ethical principles.

This Divine proclamation or issue of commandments (לֹא צִוִּיתִים) further took place "on the day when I led them out of the land of Egypt." Exactly the same expression is used by Jeremiah in xi. 4, where the words of the prophet recall Exodus xix. 5 f., and at the same time (on account of "ex fornace ferri") Deuteronomy iv. 20. The same definition of time is also made use of in xxxi. 32, where Jeremiah is expressly referring back to the formation of the Covenant, which nevertheless took place at Sinai. The same form of expression is found, moreover, in xxxiv. 13, where reference is made to the laws concerning Hebrew domestic slaves, laws which were given at Sinai (Exod. xxi. 2) and repeated at the Jordan (Deut. xv. 12). It follows that the formula in question referred to the time of the Exodus from Egypt *in general*, to which Jeremiah alludes also in the word יום in xi. 7, בְּיוֹם הָעֲלִיָּתִי. The central point and the climax of that whole Exodus period was, however, the time of the sojourn at Sinai.

The prophet did not, by that description of time, refer to the beginning of the migration to the exclusion of the sojourn at Sinai (in view, as it might be, of Exodus vi. 7, "and I will take you to Me for a people," or xv. 26, אִם שְׂמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע וְנָ). It is true that this interpretation has been actually tried; for David Kimchi remarked on בְּיוֹם

'הוֹצִיאִי וְג', "Many explain that this was the first commandment, and that that which He commanded in Marah is that of which it is said (Exod. xv. 25b), 'there He made for them a statute and an ordinance,' and also that of which our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said,¹ 'Sabbath and statutes do I impose in Marah, and (=but) He gave not commandment concerning (עַל דְּבַר) burnt offering and slaughter-offering.'" This meaning for the phrase 'בְּיוֹם וְג' is shown to be impossible by what has been already said of the sense in which Jeremiah uses it. The bringing out of Israel from Egypt did not in any case take place on one day, and even the legislation given at Marah could not have been promulgated on this "day."

In the next place, we find coordinated with the Divine address, dated from the time of the Exodus, a Divine commandment, since it is said, "I spake not, and I commanded not" (לֹא צִוִּיתִי). This point must be made clear, because Bredenkamp, *Gesetz und Propheten*, p. 110, translates, "I did not speak with your fathers and command them . . . burnt offerings and slaughter-offerings," and assumes "the construction of צִוֶּה with an accusative of the object." This presupposes that he intends to make עֲלֵה זֹבַח dependent only on צִוֶּה, and so to subordinate "I commanded" to the antecedent "I spake"; a view which Köhler also (*Lehrbuch der Geschichte*, II. 2, p. 27) traces to Bredenkamp. But since the לֹא before "I spake" is repeated also in לֹא צִוִּיתִי, the formal coordination of the two clauses is positively indicated. But there is also a negative consideration barring Bredenkamp's theory, namely, that the first verb לֹא דִבַּרְתִּי would be without an object, although it is surely not the purpose of the clause to deny that God spake unto the people on the occasion of the exodus of Israel from Egypt.

What, then, is it which is denied in regard to the Divine

¹ *Sanhedrin*, 56, l. 16, שם שם לו חוק ומשפט שבת.

speaking and commanding which took place at the time of Israel's migration out of Egypt? A purpose, a reason, or an object? That depends, in the first place, on the sense of על דברִי which appears in connection with the sentence, "I spake not with your fathers, and commanded them not when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, 'al dib'rè òla wazabach."

The preposition על is connected with דברִי in such a way that the emphasis does not lie on "words"¹ in the following passages: Deuteronomy iv. 21 (על־דבריכם); 2 Samuel iii. 8; 2 Kings xxii. 13a; Jeremiah xiv. 1; ? Psalm vii. 1; 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 21 (|| 2 Kings xxii. 13a). Moreover, the same expression is used in the singular על־דבר without דבר having its proper sense of "word"² in Genesis xii. 17; xx. 11, 18; xliii. 18; Exodus viii. 8; Numbers xvii. 14; xxv. 18, three times; xxxi. 16 (in the combination על־דבר אשר, Deuteronomy xxii. 24, twice; xxiii. 5; 2 Samuel xiii. 22); xviii. 5; Psalms xlv. 5; lxxix. 9. The phrase על־דבר אשר is not found in 1 Chronicles x. 13, as would appear from Mandelkern's Concordance (1896), Col. 284 d; but Mandelkern has dropped יהיה after דבר (compare my *Syntax*, § 389 m).³

¹ As in Genesis xxxvii. 8; 1 Kings x. 6; 2 Kings xxii. 13 b; Jeremiah vi. 19, vii. 8, xxiii. 16, xxvi. 5; Haggai i. 12; (?) Psalm vii. 1, *ὕπερ τῶν λόγων Χουσι* (לְשׂוֹנֵי—pernicies—עַל חֲבִירָה), or possibly "on account of Cush"; Proverbs xxx. 6; 1 Chronicles xxix. 29; 2 Chronicles ix. 29, xxxii. 8, xxxiii. 18 f.

² As in Isaiah lxvi. 2; Jeremiah i. 12; Proverbs xxix. 12.

³ Thus Marti, *Die Spuren der sogenannten Grundschrift des Pentateuchs* (in *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*, 1880), p. 318 f., who professes to give "a complete list of those passages in which על־דבר(י) occurs in the sense of a preposition," and who, according to Brendekamp, *Gesetz und Propheten*, p. 109, has actually done so, omits the passages 2 Samuel iii. 8; 2 Kings xxii. 13a, where the sense "enquire now concerning the words of this book that has been found" (Targum, Peschitta, LXX., Klostermann) is hardly so probable as "enquire in regard to this book that has been discovered." For the king is not so likely to have referred to the particular contents of the discovered book. Indeed, in v. 13b he mentions "the words of this book" as quite plain. More probably he wished to have enquiries made about the book in general, its scope and bearing.

Now, does (על־דבר) ever signify "in the interest of a certain person, so that it points to the satisfaction of the inclinations of the person who stands in genetical relation with (על־דבר)? This sense would be possible in Numbers xxv. 18a, "through their wives, which they practised against you פֵּעוּר," where the meaning might be "in the interest of" or "for the satisfaction of" Peor. But the parallel phrase 'נ' על־דבר כּוֹזִי in v. 18b, which can only mean "and in regard to Cozbi, etc.," suggests that in v. 18a also the more general sense "in regard to" should be adopted. Onkelos has in both cases על עֵיִסָּק;¹ the Peschitta has both times }כּכּל, which signifies originally "in the interest of," but then also "in the matter of," or "in reference to." Lastly, the LXX. has both times διὰ, διὰ Φογῶρ καὶ διὰ Χασβί. It is no more probable that על־דבר has the sense of "in the interest of" in Numbers xxxi. 16. This significance, however, is recommended by Bredenkamp, *Gesetz und Propheten*, p. 110, for על דברי in Jeremiah vii. 22. He thinks indeed that we may punctuate and translate על־דְּבָרַי, or rather, after Deuteronomy iv. 21, על דְּבָרַי, "I did not speak with your fathers, and command them in that Mosaic period (to bring) burnt offering and slaughter-offering on My behalf" (in My interest and in view of My affairs). Nevertheless, this interpretation of על־דְּבָרַי not only finds no support, as has been shown above, in linguistic usage, but is absolutely prevented by the antithesis in Jeremiah vii. 22f. For what follows is not an antithesis to Bredenkamp's proposed "on My account," "in My interest," but runs, "rather have I commanded you this word." Moreover, "on My account"

¹ על עֵיִסָּק signifies "in or through active dealing with"; cf. עֵיִסָּק = "object," "thing"; עֵיִסָּק, "to busy oneself" (Levy, *Targumwörterbuch*, sub *voc.*), or "to endeavour after something," cf. }עֵיִסָּק, eseq, "difficilis fuit"; with }עֵיִסָּק, "offensus est" (Brockelmann, *Lex. Syr.*). Then the targumic על עֵיִסָּק has become the equivalent of (על־דבר).

would not agree with "I have spoken," and Köhler has already remarked, in his *Lehrbuch der Biblischen Geschichte*, II. 2, p. 27, that to express "on My account" the form למעני would rather be used.

Does על־דבר (ו) in any passage signify "in the interest, for the purpose, for the obtaining, or for the procuring of a thing"? In his review of Guthe's dissertation *de foederis notione Jeremiana* (*Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1877, 347) von Baudissin expresses the opinion that על־דבר in Psalm xlv. 5 certainly refers to the accomplishment of some object, to something which is to be striven after and is not already to hand. Now the phrase there, על דבר אָמַת, is rendered by the Peschitta quite literally with ܥܠ ܕܒܪ ܐܡܬ , by the Targum with עַל ܕܒܪ ܕܝܡܢܝܬܐ (see above, p. 143, note 1), and by the LXX. with $\epsilon\nu\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\nu \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$. These renderings provide no assistance in the interpretation of the expression in the text. But the connection of the phrase in question with "ride on" suggests rather "for the protection of the truth" than "for the establishment" of it. The same holds good with regard to "Help us, O God, our salvation" עַל ܕܒܪ ܕܝܚܝܘܫܝܢܐ , Psalm lxxix. 9, in spite of the parallel למען שׂמך .

Thus the passages, Psalm xlv. 5 and Psalm lxxix. 9, offer no sure foundation for the assumption that the meaning "for the purpose of" can be attached to על דבר. Certainly the phrase does not bear this sense in Jeremiah xiv. 1, "The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the matter of, or concerning, the great dearth"² In fact, at the moment of reception of this announcement by the prophet the dearth was not even an event of the future.³

It would therefore be in the absence of any actual

¹ Genitive of apposition; see my *Syntax*, § 337d.

² This sense of the plural is at least possible, according to the analogues cited in the *Syntax*, § 259c.

³ As Marti holds (*Jahrb. für Prot. Theol.*, 1880, p. 320).

analogy if we were to assign to the phrase *על־דבר* in Jeremiah vii. 22 the sense "for the purpose of," as Drechsler¹ interpreted "not in the interest of the sacrificial cultus did He give them His ordinances, not even those which certainly had to do with sacrifice in the first place." This interpretation also introduces a contradiction into the legislative action of the Deity which is not actually present in the relative sections of the Old Testament. For the requirements which prescribe the sacrifices run in such terms that they must certainly have been given in the interest of the sacrificial cultus.

Beyond all doubt, on the other hand, the phrases *על־דבר* and *על־דבר* have the causal signification, "by reason of," "for the sake of," for which also "in reference to" may have been understood.

This is certainly the case in regard to *על־דבר* in Deuteronomy iv. 21, "and he was angry against me," *על־דבריכם*; and also in 2 Samuel iii. 8, after *יָדָר*, and ? Psalm vii. 1; cf. above p. 08, note 1. Again, in regard to *על־דבר* the causal signification is plain in Genesis xii. 17, after "and he plagued"; xx. 11, after "and they will slay me"; xx. 18, after "he closed up"; xliii. 18, in "because of the money that was returned, are we brought"; Exodus viii. 8, "cried because of the frogs"; Numbers xvii. 14, "died on account of (their connection with) Korah." The causal sense of *על דבר* is found also in Numbers xxv. 18 (see above, p. 09), and also in xxxi. 16; again in the three cases of the combination *על דבר אשר* (Deut. xxii. 24; xxiii. 5; 2 Sam. xiii. 22), and also in the two passages discussed in a previous paragraph (Ps. xlv. 5 and lxxix. 9). The only remaining question is, whether, in every case where these phrases occur, the causal signification is suitable, as Bredenkamp thinks (*Gesetz und Propheten*, p. 109).

¹ Drechsler, *Die Unwissenschaftlichkeit im Gebiete der Alt-Testamentlichen Kritik*, 1837, p. 111.

Does the same hold good in regard to the remaining passages? In the passage already referred to—Jeremiah xiv. 1—the translation, “That which came as the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah *in consequence* of the dearth” is no more probable than “in the matter of,” *i.e.* “in reference to the great dearth.” For that announcement of Jahveh found in the prolonged calamity not only its occasion, but rather its *sphere*, or its *object*, to which it referred, inasmuch as it revealed the fact that this calamity was a punishment sent by God, which was not to be shortened by the intercession of the prophet (*v.* 10 ff.). Compare here also the simple ׁ and *περί* alongside of על עסקי. It is likewise in the case of “enquire in regard to this discovered book” (2 Kings xxii. 13a || 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 21, cf. p. 011, note 1). The non-causal significance is least doubtful in 2 Samuel xviii. 5, ׁ על עסקי בצות ונ' על-דבר אבשלום, וצא, ἰπέρ). For even if we were to choose the translation, “when the king gave command to the princes and officers as concerning Absalom,” yet “as concerning” would introduce not merely a circumstance or a causal adverbial clause (Arabic *ḥal* of motive). For the person who gave occasion for the issue of this command formed at the same time also the object of the command. It follows that (על-דבר) possesses also a sense which we may call the *objectival*.

This establishes, in the first place, the possibility that על-דבר in Jeremiah vii. 22 also introduces the so-called *objectum indirectum*. And this על-דבר can also signify “in reference to,” or “concerning” (cf. the Latin *de*).

This objectival interpretation of על-דבר in Jeremiah vii. 22 is also sanctioned by the Targum על עסקי, as well as by *περί*, and further supported by the fact that the Peschitta writes the simple ׁ. This acceptance of the phrase is moreover suggested by the verbs with which it is combined. For after the verbs “I spake” and “I commanded” an

object is most naturally looked for. On the other hand, if the phrase were to be taken in a causal sense, then "speak" and "command" would be without an object.

Now it is true that (1) "command" is used in other passages in such a way that the object is only indirectly expressed in the context, or not indicated at all. To the first class belongs, for example, the expression in Genesis xlii. 25, "Then Joseph gave commandment, and they¹ filled their vessels"; or in Jeremiah xiv. 14, "I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them." If in the latter case צוה might, on account of the following "and spake not unto them," have the sense of "establish" (instituit, constituit), this is not supported by xxiii. 32, where we have לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּים וְלֹא צוִיתִים, so that צוה is in the *positio absoluta*.² But (2) it is an altogether different question whether צוה is intended to be without an object in such cases as those where it is followed by על־דבר or על־דברי. Such an intention is by no means to be assumed in 2 Samuel xviii. 5b. For there צוה has already been constructed with an object in 5a. This object is expressed as a direct speech introduced by לֵאמֹר;³ and the object of the command thus enjoined is simply carried on in verse 5b in the same way as the logical object supplied from the immediate context is frequently carried on in Hebrew (cf. Genesis ii. 19 a, β, etc.). Neither is צוה intended to be continued without an object in Jeremiah vii. 22. For suppose we translate, "I did not speak, and I did not give commandment for the sake of the sacrifices, or because of the sacrifices"; then the commanding is related spontaneously to the sacrifices, and, in fact, to the offering of them. We may apply this translation as often as we please; we shall always find that the causal sense of על־דברי passes

¹ Compare a large collection of passages in my *Syntax*, §§ 361g, 369k.

² Concerning the *positio absoluta* of verbs see *Syntax*, § 209 b-e.

³ "Deal gently for me in regard to the young men."

over quite spontaneously into the objectival sense, so that this על-דברי signifies "on account of," or "in regard to," "in respect of." (3) This causal-objectival sense of על-דברי in Jeremiah vii. 22 is confirmed, lastly, by the antithesis of verse 23, "but this word I commanded them." For this displays, as the only natural meaning of the writer, that on the previous occasion also he intended the same word "command" (and "speak") to be continued with an object.

This positive sense of על-דברי in Jeremiah vii. 22 then, established from the context, is not to be overthrown by the question why the author did not write על, as in Numbers viii. 22, or the accusative.¹ Such a demand has no justification. For if only the expressions used by the author introduce the remote object of the speaking and commanding with sufficient clearness, and in consistency with the habits of speech observed elsewhere, then he has done enough, and we may not quarrel with him over the choice he has made between the synonymous phrases.

Moreover, the translation adopted by Jerome, "non præcepi iis de verbo holocaustatum et victimarum," is probably a result of the religious-historical difficulty which lies in the phrasing of the passage. Dillmann's singular translation² ("not concerning things of sacrifice did God give instructions at the Exodus from Egypt, but did command that they should walk in His ways") also comes eventually to the objectival sense of על-דברי. A similar translation is given also by Keil, *ad loc.*: "Concerning things of burnt or slaughter-offering." "Words or things which referred specifically to the burnt or slaughter-offering; detailed instructions concerning offerings. The sense must be: God has not given all kinds of commandments concerning the offering of sacrifices." But, on the one hand, Keil's intro-

¹ E. Ruprecht, *Des Räthsels-Lösung*, II., i. (1896), p. 230.

² Dillmann, *Handbuch der Alttestamentlichen Theologie* (1895), p. 111.

ductory phrase, "concerning things or matters of burnt and slaughter-offering," gives no clear or natural sense; and, on the other hand, the fact that על־דבר־י has passed over in linguistic usage to the function of a preposition has been set aside by Keil (and by Dillmann). And what would have been the object of denying that God had given detailed instructions concerning sacrifice? It was a question of whether God had given any instructions concerning sacrifice at all.

Now it may be asked, further, whether the denial in Jeremiah vii. 22 is *only a relative one*.

This question presses just now forcibly for consideration. For the putting of this question and the answer in the affirmative forms the climax of a whole series of investigations of this passage.¹ On this account the question must be investigated from all sides; and, in fact, it is not merely one of recent origin, but one possessing far-reaching significance.

In following to some extent the history of this question in its earlier stages, I have observed that in the course of time the *absolute* and the *relative* negation of sentences with a double reference have been mutually identified. And since this attempt to identify them is, in respect of both classes, of importance for the interpretation of Jeremiah vii. 22, both classes call for a short discussion here.

(i.) It was frequently supposed that the relative negation must be taken to be a substitute for the absolute. For in Nolde's *Concordantiae particularum ebraeo-chaldaearum* (ed. Tympe), we find as the 22nd section under the word כִּן, "כִּן = non" (p. 464); and the phrase צָדִיקָה כִּמְנִי (Genesis xxxviii. 26) is given as the first illustration. The meaning

¹ Oehler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, § 201; especially Karl Marti, *Jahrb. für prot. Theol.*, 1880, p. 321 f.; Köhler, *Lehrbuch der Bibl. Gesch.*, II. 2, p. 27; v. Orelli in Strack and Zöckler's *Kurzgefasster Commentar*, 2nd ed. *ad. loc.*; to some extent also Giesebrecht, *Handcommentar zu Jeremia*, 1894; Hommel, *Die Altisraelitische Ueberlieferung*, 1897. See below.

of that phrase, however, is "she has an overplus of moments of normality beyond me." Onkelos (אֲנִי), Peschitta (ܐܢܝܢܐ), LXX. (ἢ ἐγώ), Jerome (justior me est), and others have retained the comparative sense of the phrase. Böhmer translates very accurately, "she is more in the right than I."¹ Concerning the rendering "over against me," adopted by Dillmann and others, compare my *Syntax*, § 308b. The sense is not "ego non sum justus." This interpretation is *not* yielded by the context as is stated in Nolde-Tympe in Note 1546 (p. 911), "patet ex ratione quæ sequitur: quando quidem non dedi ei Schelah filium meum." No, the rightness or the wrongness is regarded as a quantity made up of several factors, and to Judah is ascribed the acknowledgment that he held more moments of wrongness than Tamar, for (this is added as the reason) he had not given her to Shela to wife. And thereby he had been indirectly the occasion of Tamar's subsequent conduct. Moreover, he had himself used her as a Kedescha. On the other hand, *she* had laid upon herself—in this matter—fewer moments of abnormality than he. It is true we cannot say on her behalf, as Leopold Schmidt does: "She fulfilled her duty, to raise up seed to her husband, better than I fulfilled mine, to do the same for him, my son" (sic!).² For the children born to Judah by Tamar would not be introduced into the genealogy of her husband Onan. But she, like Jacob in his dealings with Laban (Gen. xxx. 37 ff.), had tried by trickery to deprive Judah's mistake of its results. Compare also Luther's words, "Recte dixit Juda: justior est me, quamquam ingens flagitium est incestus [Thamaris]; sed is [Juda] plura et majora peccata commisit, pugnantia cum lege et jure divino, et posset accusari sacrilegii, homicidii, et omnis generis injuriarum."³

¹ Ed. Böhmer, *Das erste Buch der Thora* (1862), p. 58.

² Leopold Schmidt, *Erklärung der heiligen Schrift, Genesis* (1834), p. 737.

³ Luther, *Enarrationes in Genesis* (Opera exeg. lat.), ix. 212.

The case is precisely similar with the other passages in which, according to Nolde, Tympe, and others, לֹא ought to stand in the index under "not." "Thou art more in the right than I" (1 Sam. xxiv. 18) is just the same. In Jonah iv. 3, $\text{טוֹב מִוֹתִי מֵחַיִּי}$, which Dathe adduces as an illustration,¹ means that Jonah will continue to endure his life if God so wills it, but that of course he would prefer death. Neither can Psalm xxx. 4 (by which Nolde-Tympe probably mean verse 4b) by any possibility be taken thus. Compare my *Syntax*, § 406o. Nor yet in the phrase "Thou hast loved evil more than good" (Ps. lii. 5) was it intended to deny absolutely to the subject every good impulse. Again, in Psalm cxviii. 8 f. we have "It is better to trust in Jahveh than in men" (v. 9, "princes"); cf. Buxtorf,² "Melius est confidere in deo quam, etc." This passage also was explained by Dathe, "in Jova sperare bonum est, non vero sperare in homine." But even the fact that in Jeremiah xvii. 5 that man is condemned who puts his trust in men; or, again, that in Psalm cxlvi. 3 we find "put not your trust in princes" cannot make an absolute negation of the relative one which is used in Psalm cxviii. 8 f. For the degree of prohibition, the degree of abstention from human help need not be in all passages the same. That לֹא stands for "instead of" or "not" in Habakkuk ii. 16; Psalm lii. 5; cxviii. 8 f.; cxlvi. 3 (Hupfeld, Nowack, Delitzsch, Baethgen on Psalm lii. 5) cannot be asserted without doubt.

That לֹא was felt in practice to be an equivalent of "not" cannot even be proved from Proverbs viii. 10 *a, b*. For "receive my instruction and not silver" (10*a*) may be related to "and knowledge rather (even) than fine gold" (Umbreit) as a climax. Further, it is only a relative negation which we find in Proverbs xxv. 7 (Nolde-Tympe

¹ Glass-Dathe, *Philologia sacra his temporibus accommodata*, i. 413 f. (1773).

² Buxtorf, *Thesaurus grammaticus* (ed. 1651), p. 563.

and Dathe) and Job xxxv. 11, for clearly Psalm civ. 21, cxlvii. 9; Job xii. 7 f. must weigh against "non bestias terræ" (Nolde-Tympe); and when they add "bestias dociles seu capaces eruditionis, saltem in minore gradu, ἄτοπον" (p. 911), they are without good reason taking תּוֹרָה, "accustom," "teach," to refer to actual instruction.

An attempt has also been made to establish the same habit of speech on the ground of a series of New Testament passages, in which some have sought to detect a "Hebraism." Nolde-Tympe, Dathe, and others, have adduced, in the first place, Luke xviii. 14, κατέβη οὗτος δεδικαιωμένος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἢ (γὰρ) ἐκεῖνος. I believe, however, that even in this sentence it is not righteousness in the absolute sum of its moments which is ascribed to the publican in his relation to the Pharisee. For had this been the intention, another form of expression would have been available. The passage is parallel with the one just adduced above from the Old Testament (Gen. xxxviii. 26). There וְעָ=הָ (Peschitta, ܘܥܘܗܐ!). The reading given by the Sinaiticus (παρ' ἐκεῖνον, in relation to, in comparison with, him) is a result of the same feeling. The same holds good of the other passages, most of which are cited by Nolde-Tympe and Dathe. For, in the first place, ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς (John iii. 19) does not mean "eos plane non dilexisset sed odisset lucem" (Dathe, p. 415). This is not proved by verse 20. For πᾶς ὁ φαῦλα πράττων κ.τ.λ. (v. 20) has not necessarily the same contents as οἱ ἄνθρωποι (v. 19), and, in fact, the light that appeared in Christ has been received by a minority of mankind. Neither is there any absolute negation in John xii. 43, ἠγάπησαν τὴν δόξαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ, in spite of v. 44. Nor yet is it the case in "we must obey God rather than man" (Acts iv. 19; v. 29). The sense there is rather, "the higher authority pertains to God." The conclusion follows that in cases where the

demands of God and of men conflict, the deciding power pertains to the will of God.

At the same time, we cannot overlook a further stage of progress in diction. For in 1 Timothy i. 4 the warning is given, *μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις κ.τ.λ.*, where the meaning can hardly be that even in the knowledge of heathen mythology there may be found in a negative way a means of promoting a just appreciation of the Christian religion. The word *μᾶλλον* might rather be turned through a kind of *meiosis* or irony into an instrument of simple negation. This linguistic usage is again open to doubt in *φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι* (2 Tim. iii. 4). But even in such cases in which a comparative expresses the common form of speech "to be preferable," or "to prefer," linguistic usage has finally advanced to the point of employing this form of expression in a kind of *meiosis*, in place of an expression of absolute rejection. For it is only in this way that *κρείττον ἀγαθοποιούντας, εἰ θέλει τὸ θέλημα θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιούντας* (1 Pet. iii. 17) can be rendered. It is not satisfactory to interpret that a man can bear suffering more easily if he has a good conscience than if the sting of a bad conscience helps to inflame the wound. But the phrase in 1 Corinthians vii. 9 is particularly clear—*κρείττον ἔστιν γαμεῖν ἢ πυροῦσθαι*. Again, in *μᾶλλον ἐλόμενος κ.τ.λ.* (Heb. xi. 25) the idea is expressed that Moses in his later life *wholly* preferred belonging to the people of Jahveh to the favour of the Egyptians. Hebrews ii. 15 has been wrongly adduced by Dathe (p. 414). Compare, further, the discussion of the Arabic *min* on p. 023.

With this series of passages three phrases in the Old Testament have also been grouped. These bear on the question of the offering of sacrifice.

First, in *וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה טוֹב וְנָ* (1 Sam. xv. 22), Nolde-Tympe (p. 464) find the sense "Auscultare, *non sacrificium est bonum, etc.*" But not only does the Targum, the

Peschitta, Raschi, and Levi ben Gerson, rightly retain the כֵּן, but also by the LXX. and by Jerome it is rendered by *ὑπέρ* and *quam*. The absolute sense of כֵּן in this passage cannot be supported by the fact that the discussion here is not "de sacrificio in genere, sed de adipe et sacrificio ex anathemate" (Nolde-Tympe, p. 911). This is by way of taking account of the special context of 1 Samuel xv. 23. But, in the first place, it is very questionable whether it is the purpose of the text to employ the phrase in so limited a sense. For neither in 22*a* nor in 22*b* is there any suggestion that obedience was to be rendered only in conjunction with such sacrifices as might be taken from the "devoted" animals, while the contrary is indicated by the subsequent exceedingly strong emphasis on obedience in verse 22*a*. And, secondly, the comparative sense of כֵּן in 1 Samuel xv. 22*b* is established beyond doubt by 22*a*. For there we find: "Has Jahveh pleasure in burnt offering and sacrifice as in hearkening to the voice of Jahveh?"¹ Precisely the same thought is expressed by וְתִטֵּב לַיהוָה כְּשׁוֹר וּג' (Ps. lxix. 32) where also כֵּן should signify "non" according to Nolde-Tympe, p. 464.

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¹ "Jahveh's" represents the pronoun "his" according to my *Syntax*, § 5.

(To be continued.)