

plowed as a field, Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest,<sup>1</sup> had produced a great impression. The king and people took alarm, realising that the very centre of their religion could only be saved by amended lives. Therefore Hezekiah repented and instituted reforms. Yet it is easy to overdo the matter of exalting Micah's influence over Isaiah's. All that we learn elsewhere would indicate that Micah's preaching was little known in Jerusalem, while Isaiah's influence over Hezekiah was very great. The citation of the elders is easily explained by the similarity of subject. Jeremiah was in the toils for predicting the fall of the temple and city; but Micah had said the same thing and was not charged with crime.

<sup>1</sup> Micah iii. 12.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE PROPHET'S RELATION TO THE CHURCH

#### II. ISAIAH TO JOEL

ONCE more we turn to the greatest of all the prophets. Isaiah the son of Amoz was great as a teacher of religious truth ; as we have seen, he was also great as a statesman. Perhaps his statesmanship was the most marked trait. He busied himself perpetually with the affairs of the nation, and frequently was in conflict with the king and nobles. He had much to say about the sins of the nation and the holiness of the Lord ; but he had comparatively little to say about priests and prophets. Isaiah seems to have been brought up in the ordinances of the Jewish religion : he was in the temple when he saw the vision so graphically described by him, and which finally overcame his reluctance to take up the prophetic office. He spent a long life of at least forty years in that ministry.

Isaiah certainly was not unfriendly to the priests as such ; for when he set up a tablet whose full meaning should be clearly apparent at a future day, he chose among the witnesses of his act "Uriah the priest."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. viii. 2.



The prophet also was looked upon as exercising a proper mission in the world. When he declared that Jahveh would take away from Judah and Jerusalem those upon whom it rested, he enumerates the prophets along with the elder, the judge, the man of war, as being together those whose offices would be sorely missed in the State.

But both priest and prophet are severely censured when they are found indulging in drunken revels, as if strong drink were the kind of spirit by which the Lord stirred up His servants: "Priest and prophet reel through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine, they are gone astray through strong drink; they reel in vision, they stumble in judgment." <sup>1</sup>

As I have before suggested, Isaiah was brought up under the pre-exilic sacrificial system, and may have continued in that all his life. But when he saw that the people were wont to depend upon sacrifices rather than a clean moral life, then his denunciation breaks out in strong words: "What is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? saith Jahveh: I am sated with burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and in the blood of bullocks and lambs and he-goats I take no pleasure. When you come to see My face, who required now at your hand to trample My courts? [*i.e.* with animals for sacrifice.] Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; new moon and sabbath, the convoking of assemblies,—I cannot endure; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxviii. 7.



feasts are loathsome, they are a burden unto Me, which I am weary of bearing."<sup>1</sup>

The reason of God's displeasure at this formal, soulless ritual is stated in a word: "Your hands are full of blood."<sup>2</sup> Those deluded people fancied they could wash out the deep stains in the blood of bullocks, even as many evangelical Christians have thought they could wash theirs out in the blood of the Lamb. I think that Isaiah could never have sung that once-common hymn:—

"There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins:  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains."

What God demands is rightly seen and clearly stated by the prophet: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, deal justly with the fatherless, plead for the widow."<sup>3</sup> No sacrifice, no blood bath, can ever take the place of earnest moral endeavour. The prophet must take issue with his Church when he saw it sinking to an unworthy conception of God, as if His favours might be bought with blood.

One of the greatest dangers to the Church of God, whether Jewish or Christian, is unreality. We cannot escape this grave peril by adopting a ritual, nor by dispensing with ritual, but only by the most persistent and strenuous moral efforts. This danger was present in Isaiah's day; it was one of the things

<sup>1</sup> Isa. i. 11-14.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. i. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. i. 16 f.



which made wide the gulf between God and His chosen people: "This people draw near Me, and with their mouth and with their lips honour Me; but their heart is far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment of men learned by rote."<sup>1</sup>

But there was another phase of the popular feeling which was worse than unreality, worse than merely formal sacrifices, and that was the attempt to force the prophets either to keep silence, or to conform their utterances to the wishes rather than the needs of the people. God pity the prophet of any age who must ask, not, What would the Lord have me say to my people? but, What will my people receive without offence? God pity the people who would not gladly hear the Lord's truth, even though it made them shake like reeds in the wind.

There were people demanding easy teaching in Isaiah's time, and there were prophets who heeded them; but the son of Amoz was not among them. "It is a rebellious people," he cried, "lying children; children unwilling to hear the teaching of Jahveh: who say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us true things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits."<sup>2</sup>

Messianic prophecy does not occupy the place it once did in Christian thought, because we have not yet adjusted ourselves fully to the new light. But a Messianic life appeals to us more forcibly to-day than ever before. Jeremiah, the humble priest of Anathoth, lived a Messianic life, filled on the one side with consecration to his Divine mission, and on the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxix. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xxx. 9 f.



other with suffering due to the persecutions of those who did not respect the feelings of a peculiarly sensitive soul. In a bitter moment Jeremiah cried out that he had been deceived;<sup>1</sup> but he had no just reason to feel so, for he had been warned at the start of his prophetic career that he would encounter serious though not fatal opposition: "They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee."<sup>2</sup>

The evil due to a great body of prophets more concerned to please the people than to know the will of God, was either greater in Jeremiah's day than in any other time, or else he felt the degradation of the prophetic office more keenly. For he has more to say against these lying prophets than anyone else. Sometimes he includes the priests in his condemnation: "A wonderful and horrible thing has come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule at their hand;<sup>3</sup> and My people love it so."<sup>4</sup> "From prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of My people lightly, saying, Peace, peace, but there is no peace."<sup>5</sup> Prophet and priest were leagued for wrong, and the people eagerly grasped the comforting delusion.

This was one of the serious difficulties which the true prophet had to meet all the time. How could he persuade the people to accept the truth when other prophets were teaching falsehood? "Then

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xx. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. i. 19.

<sup>3</sup> That is, by their power. So the Chronicler assigns to the prophets the regulation of priestly duties (2 Chron. xxix. 25; cf. Dan. ix. 10). See additional note (4).

<sup>4</sup> Jer. v. 30 f.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. vi. 13 f.



said I, Ah, Lord Jahveh ! lo, the prophets are saying unto them, You shall not see sword, and there will be no famine for you : but I will give you assured peace in this place."<sup>1</sup> The answer was sufficient for Jeremiah—would that the people had seen its truth ! "Then Jahveh said to me, A lie the prophets are prophesying in My name: I did not send them, nor did I give them a command, nor did I even speak to them : they prophesy unto you a lying vision, and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their own heart."<sup>2</sup>

In chapter xxiii. we find a severe indictment of the deceivers of the people with the formal heading "concerning the prophets." It is too long to quote, but I will give the substance in as few words as possible. The holy words of Jahveh are painful to me ; for the people are deep in sin, and the prophet and priest are alike profane, even carrying their wickedness into the sacred temple. The prophets of Baal led Israel to her doom, and the prophets of Jerusalem are no better, for they commit adultery, walk in lies, and strengthen the hands of evil-doers. The people are warned not to listen to the misleading words of their deceivers. They love to cry, "Thus saith Jahveh," but Jahveh sent no message by them ; they love to cry, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed," but their false visions cause God's people to forget His name. These prophets have no word from God, and steal it every one from his neighbour—clerical plagiarism, it seems, is as old as it is abominable. The prophetic cry, "the burden of

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xiv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xiv. 14.



Jahveh," has been so dragged down by their lying visions, that Jahveh forbids its utterance any more.

At a critical hour in Judah's history, Jeremiah stood before king Zedekiah. The king, though owing his crown to the king of Babylon, vainly thought that he was strong enough safely to violate his oath of allegiance to Nebuchadrezzar. The host of prophets, whose chief concern was the royal favour, easily found messages to support his conviction. Jeremiah had no such delusion. He breaks in on the conference engaged in planning a confederated revolt, telling them that they must wear the yoke of the king of Babylon. No confidence is to be placed in the prophetic assurances, for they prophesy lies; they were not sent by the Lord.<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah warns the priests too not to trust in those deceiving voices which declare that the sacred vessels of the temple should soon be brought from Babylon. If they are true prophets, and have the ear of the Lord, they had better spend their time in interceding that the few vessels still left in the temple be not also carried away.

Jeremiah lived to see the discomfiture of the time-serving prophets, and of those who had put their trust in them. In the closing days of the national life, when the capital city was invested by hostile armies, and when the blindest could see that the blow must fall soon, this prophet significantly asked the king: "Where now are your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against the land?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xxxvii. 19.



We must turn now to see what Jeremiah has to say about the other great phase of the popular religion, the sacrificial system. The Lord declares that the people have rejected His law: "Why then comes there to Me frankincense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto Me."<sup>1</sup> Again the prophet says, "Add your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh"—Jahveh's part and your own you may eat, for it is nothing but flesh. "I did not speak to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice."<sup>2</sup> The sacrificial system was neither ancient nor authoritative, and whatever value it may have had was lost by reason of the wickedness of the people: "When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and oblation, I will not accept them."<sup>3</sup> These passages are quite enough to show that Jeremiah did not believe that the priestly law was of Mosaic origin, or that a holy and just God could be reconciled by sacrifice, which meant no more than so much flesh and blood.

But an institution might be good without owning Moses as its author. That Jeremiah was not an image-breaker may be inferred from his remarks about the Sabbath. He commands the people in the name of his God to bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor to do any work, but to hallow the

<sup>1</sup> Jer. vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. vii. 21 f.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xiv. 12.



day as God had commanded.<sup>1</sup> In other words, he insisted upon the observance of the Decalogue. This commandment seemed to Jeremiah fraught with moral power, and therefore he endorsed it heartily. Sacrifices were offered as a substitute for virtue, and were therefore intolerable.

There was a popular superstition which gave the people much comfort, affording another bubble for this prophet to prick. The temple had become a very sacred place, and even in the highest thought it seemed that Jahveh was bound to it in some mysterious way, so that misfortune to the temple meant misfortune to God. This was an old superstition in a new form. In the early days of Samuel, when the people were hard pressed by the Philistines, they thought that by taking the sacred ark into the battle they could compel the presence of Jahveh, and consequently His favourable intervention. Their eyes should have been opened by the capture of the ark. Jeremiah found those who cried "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these," and believed that in that fact they found assurance of safety. No, it will not be. It is vain for thieves and murderers

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xvii. 19 ff. Duhm and others, as we might readily suppose, look upon this passage as spurious, on the ground that it belongs to the interests of the trito-Isaiah, Nehemiah, and their followers. Why so? This law was published in Jeremiah's day, and opposed as he was to the priestly system, he may have adhered to the Decalogue, just as the Puritans struggled fiercely against sacerdotalism, but were strict sabbatarians. Jeremiah would probably take positions in the enthusiasm of the days of reform which he would not follow up in later days, when he was occupied with graver matters than the Sabbath. The Church needs to learn that to-day there are weightier matters than the observance of Sunday.



to come into the house which is called by God's name, and say, "We are delivered." So far from the sanctity of the temple saving the polluted people, God would destroy this temple, even as He had destroyed Shiloh long before.

More than any other prophet Jeremiah came into conflict with the powers that be; for men are ever intolerant when riding to their doom. In his time there was, it is true, a ray of hope in the reformation of Josiah, but the good effect of this effort was destroyed by the king's untimely death. After his day Judah's course to destruction was swift, both morally and politically. It was a time when even the leaders of the people were unwilling to hear rebukes, when they wanted no man to show them a more excellent way, and yet God would not let them perish without sending "Moses and the prophets." But the man who spoke brave words at such a time and to such a people was sure to have a sad experience, and to know the full measure of human suffering.

Jeremiah's remarks about the temple first kindled the flame. The priests, prophets, and people laid hold of him, saying, "Thou shalt surely die." Jeremiah had spoken blasphemy in his speech about the temple, and he was brought to trial on the same charge which cost our dear Lord His life. It was a capital offence, and the leaders of the Church were hungry for blood. But the prophet's time had not yet come, and he was acquitted by the powerful intervention of Ahikam the son of Shaphan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxvi. See further on this passage in chap. x.



There was another plot of which we know but little, and yet that little shows the source of the persecution, and that at one period at least both prophet and priest felt that their power was slipping away on account of Jeremiah's teaching. Here is the passage: "And they said, Come, let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."<sup>1</sup> Whatever the nature of this conspiracy, it was certainly successful in drawing from Jeremiah some fierce imprecations.<sup>2</sup> We do not need to endorse his savage curses, nor have we a right to forget that he lived six centuries before Christ, and we in the twentieth century after Christ.

One of the hardest of Jeremiah's trials came from the hands of Pashhur the priest, and chief officer of the temple. He was so incensed at the message of woe that he seized Jeremiah and kept him all night in the stocks. Did he break his spirit and silence him by this punishment? Let us see the situation: Pashhur has released his prisoner in the morning, and he stands before him stiff and sore in body, but fierce and strong in spirit; and these are his words: "Not Pashhur has Jahveh called thy name, but Magor-missabib (terror on every side): for thus saith Jahveh, Lo, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends. By the sword of their foes they shall fall in the sight of thine eyes. And thou, Pashhur, and all that dwell in thy house, shall go to

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xviii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xviii. 21 ff.



Babylon as captives and die there and be buried there, thou and all thy friends to whom thou hast prophesied falsely."<sup>1</sup> The prophet and the Church could not stand very close together in the face of such conditions. We need scarcely be surprised, however, that a reaction came when poor Jeremiah was alone, and that he cried out that God had deceived him: for he felt that there was no use standing alone any more, as Church and State persistently sought his life; so he resolved to give up his sacred office, and was only held to his duty by the Divine fire in his bones which was bound to burn its way out. Jeremiah had to learn by bitter experience the truth of Emerson's words, "The seer must be a sayer."

In the fourth year of Zedekiah, but a few years before the fall of Jerusalem, Hananiah openly challenged Jeremiah, when they were both standing before a company of priests and people, by crying: "Thus saith Jahveh, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years will I bring back to this place all the vessels of the house of Jahveh which Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon has taken from this place and carried to Babylon. And Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim the king of Judah and all the captives of Judah who were carried to Babylon I will bring back to this place, saith Jahveh; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon."<sup>2</sup>

Let us pause a moment to see the situation which Jeremiah had to face. It is easy to say that Hananiah

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xx. 3 ff. condensed.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xxviii. 2 ff.



was a false prophet,<sup>1</sup> to whom the people had no right to listen. It is easy to say the same thing of all the other prophets who stood against Jeremiah and his like. It is easy to see now that they were false prophets, because they did not speak God's truth to the people. But a careful investigation shows that they were not properly called false prophets, and did not stand before the people as wolves in sheep's clothing. They were the members of the established order,<sup>2</sup> and so far had, perhaps, a better claim upon the people's confidence than Jeremiah himself. Notice that the chapter relating this encounter is written in the first person, and is therefore autobiographical;<sup>3</sup> yet Jeremiah himself accords to his mistaken opponent the title of prophet.<sup>4</sup>

Jeremiah's answer is not very strong. He appears to have been face to face with a situation too puzzling for him to grapple with for the moment, perhaps by reason of his surprise. "Amen," said Jeremiah to

<sup>1</sup> The Septuagint text calls Hananiah a false prophet; rendering נביא in Jer. xxviii. 1 by *ψευδοπροφήτης*. This represents the judgment of a time long after Jeremiah. See also p. 106 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See further in chap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Duhm follows Cornill in emending the text of Jer. xxviii. 1 by striking out לִי, and rendering "and Hananiah said unto the priests and to all the people in the house of Jahveh." The point he makes is that Jeremiah is everywhere spoken of in the third person. But this much emending would require more, for לְעֵינַי means "in the presence of," and this would have to be struck out in ver. 1, and twice in ver. 5. Moreover, the very point of the whole discussion is that Hananiah was directly contradicting Jeremiah's plea to wear the yoke of Babylon (Jer. xxvii.). The change of text is unnecessary, has no support in the versions, and impairs the force of the prophecy.

<sup>4</sup> "Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet" (Jer. xxviii. 1).



his antagonist, "may Jahveh do so; may Jahveh confirm your words. You speak good news, and I speak bad news. Look back and answer from history which is likely to be the true forecast of this people's fate." Hananiah broke the yoke which Jeremiah was wearing on his neck as a symbol of submission; but a symbol and the thing symbolised are not always the same. Nothing was easier than to wrest the yoke from the prophet's neck; nothing was more impossible than the wresting of Judah from the hand of Babylon. Jeremiah declared that a yoke of iron would take the place of the yoke of wood, and that Hananiah, who made the people believe a lie, would atone for his sins by his death; "and Hananiah the prophet died in that year in the seventh month,"<sup>1</sup> two months after his bold prediction of peace.

We cannot follow Jeremiah through the even bitterer sufferings yet in store for him. The priests and prophets had tried in vain to accomplish his destruction. When they gave it up, the State took a hand, and then truly Jeremiah experienced living martyrdom. But he survived to see his persecutors prisoners in Babylonia, and the Church, which had resisted the only power to save it, in hopeless decay. The Church departed further and further from the teaching of the great prophets, and so became the deadly formal thing which Jesus found when He came to earth.

Zephaniah, a contemporary of Jeremiah, saw disaster threatening his land and people, and naturally

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxviii. 17.



looked about to see what forces were at work which might avert the calamity. Alas for the day! for both State and Church were on the side of evil. "Her princes in the midst of her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they leave nothing till the morrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have profaned the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law."<sup>1</sup> There could be no harmonious co-operation between a prophet, zealous for truth and righteousness, and a Church so corrupt that even the leaders are not to be trusted.

Ezekiel was at heart much under the influence of his priesthood; we might call him a zealous high Churchman; but he never forgot, as an American bishop has put it, to take a broad view from a high standpoint. He was zealous for the law, for the temple, and for all the Divine institutions of religion. But he was not blind to the fact that the Church as it was could hardly claim the favour of a holy God, who always regarded the inward and spiritual above the outward and visible.

This priest-prophet was enabled to learn a great truth from that most effective of teachers, experience. The attitude of many Jews in exile is expressed in the pathetic inquiry: "How shall we sing Jahveh's song in a foreign land?"<sup>2</sup> Without temple or altar—and the law forbade an altar except at Jerusalem—many exiles felt like David did,<sup>3</sup> that they were

<sup>1</sup> Zeph. iii. 3 f.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxxxvii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> When David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah, he complained that "they had driven him out that he could not join himself with the inheritance of Judah, saying, Go, serve other gods" (1 Sam. xxvi. 19).



separated from God. Probably Ezekiel felt so at first, but the visions taught him that God's voice was effective in Babylon as well as in Judah. O, that men would learn (adapting Emerson slightly) that God not merely was, but is; that He not merely spoke, but speaks. Ezekiel is led to see that God Himself would be a sanctuary for a little while to all that sought Him in the countries where they are come;<sup>1</sup> as someone has put it, "God without the temple is better than the temple without God."

God would be a living temple to those in exile, but the temple in Jerusalem was barren of the Divine presence, and so its consecration became null and void. Thus Ezekiel explains a problem which had puzzled many. The temple was so sacred to Jahveh that His failure to defend it to the utmost was inconceivable. To abandon the place called by His name would be an inconceivable confession of weakness. Hence the confidence of the people who cried, "The temple of Jahveh is here," and regarded it as a sure talisman of safety. Yes, said Ezekiel, your major premises are all right. Jahveh is omnipotent. Before Him all the armies of the world are but pigmies. As long as the temple was the place where Jahveh had caused His name to dwell, it was inviolable. But Jahveh has withdrawn from the sanctuary of Zion: "Then did the cherubim spread

Being outside of Jahveh's bounds, he could not worship his God. So Naaman the Syrian felt that in order to worship Jahveh in Damascus he must carry away a bit of the soil of Jahveh's land (2 Kings v. 17). To this day there is a fondness for baptism with water carried from the river Jordan.

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xi. 16.



their wings, and the wheels were beside them ; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of Jahveh rose from the midst of the city, and stood on the mountain which is eastward of the city."<sup>1</sup> Jahveh abandons the wicked city to its fate, for the temple has become unclean, and so is no longer a fit habitation for Him ; and without Jahveh the temple is of no avail.

Yet Ezekiel's feeling for the temple was so strong that he could not but hold the impious hand lifted against it as guilty. At the head of Ammon's sins stands their blasphemous cry, "Aha," when the sanctuary was profaned.<sup>2</sup> So a later poet-prophet prayed against Edom :—

"Remember, Jahveh, against the sons of Edom,  
The day of Jerusalem,  
Who were crying, Rase it, rase it [the temple]  
Even to the foundation thereof."<sup>3</sup>

God was driven away from His sanctuary, not by Babylonian arms, but by the gross impurity of His own chosen people. We have already seen<sup>4</sup> how the leading men were engaged in idolatrous worship in various forms in the sacred precincts. Ezekiel does not mention any priests<sup>5</sup> as participants, but as they had acquiesced, whereas they should have resisted even at the cost of their lives, they were adjudged guilty. The evil condition may become such that even the benign Son of Man must

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xi. 22 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxxxvii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> See chap. x.

<sup>5</sup> The "elders" mentioned (Ezek. viii. 11) were civil officers.



needs take a scourge to drive out those who were defiling God's courts.

The work of destruction was committed to the six mysterious beings, each with his slaughter weapon in his hand,<sup>1</sup> and from whose blows those only were exempt upon whose forehead the scribe had placed a mark. When they commenced operations this significant command was given, "Begin at My sanctuary,"<sup>2</sup> for there the most culpable would be found. They were ordered to defile the house by filling the courts with the slain.

Ezekiel knew that many of the woes of Jerusalem were due to the misguiding voices of those who gave messages in the name of Jahveh. He has a prophecy against these deluding voices.<sup>3</sup> They "speak out of their own heart," that is, follow their own inclination. They have been to Israel like foxes in the waste places. They have made men hope for that which would never come to pass. Women as well as men were involved in this guilt. For handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread (fees) they had profaned God among the people, trying to save the worthless and to destroy the good.<sup>4</sup>

The priests were equally at fault. They have done violence to the law, and have profaned the holy things, confusing the holy and the common, and annulling the Sabbath law.<sup>5</sup> Jerusalem would fall, not because of her ecclesiastical institutions, but because the wickedness of men would make them of no effect.

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. ix. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. ix. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xiii.

<sup>4</sup> Ezek. xiii. 17 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Ezek. xxii. 26.



Ezekiel looked upon the Church as playing a great rôle in the restoration which would come in the future. In the new Jerusalem no prophet appears, but the temple area occupies a large part of Jewish territory, that is, the whole land would be sacred; and the priest holds a position superior even to that of the prince.

There was a prophet whose name we do not know, but whose works place him at the very forefront of all the men of God in Hebrew history—the author of Isaiah liii. Whether he lived in the exile, or in the dark days in Jerusalem which followed the restoration, it is not easy to say. Whether he is depicting the fortunes of an individual or of the nation of Israel is a moot question. I can only venture my opinion that the experience so feelingly described is that of a martyr for righteousness' sake, and that the scene of his sufferings was on foreign soil.

The sufferer had been a prophet in the true sense; he had been a stout upholder of the religion of Jahveh; and his steadfastness in that religion had brought him into the toils. He was entirely unsupported by the men of his own race; indeed, they looked upon his tribulations as not only inflictions from God, but as just punishments for his wrong.

Some of the people came to see their error. They not only could admire the great fortitude of one who went to the slaughter like a lamb, but they came to see that the suffering endured was vicarious, the innocent suffering for the guilty. It is not surprising that after the Passion of our Lord, this passage took an exalted place in Messianic prophecy.



But the number of those who saw their error must have been small. There could have been no general opening of the eyes of the Jewish Church even to a single concrete fact like this. For if the Jews had followed their prophets, in this and other cases, their political history might have been much the same: they might still have been in bondage to Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, Babylon, and Rome; but they would not have crucified their Messiah. Only the children of those who slew the prophets could have led Jesus Christ to Calvary. The noble prophecy is in truth a forecast as well as a history; for without a great change in sentiment, the race which could gloat over this innocent victim would not scruple to take the life of one greater than their father Abraham.

But the prophets had to learn not to fear man, who could destroy only the body, but God, who could destroy both body and soul. They were bound to discover in due season that the world, or even the Church, which should embody the highest stage of religious enlightenment, does not welcome a voice out of harmony with its institutions. Another prophet of the same period describes his own fate, and shows thereby how his message was received by his fellows:—

“The Lord Jahveh has given me the tongue of disciples to know how to sustain the weary with a word. He quickens by morning, by morning He quickens in me the ear to hear as disciples. The Lord Jahveh opened my ear, and I was not obstinate, nor did I turn back [from the dangerous message]. I bent my back to those who smite, and my cheeks I



turned to those who pluck the beard; I turned not my face from abuse and spitting. The Lord Jahveh strengthens me; therefore I am not confounded, therefore I set my face like flint, and know that I shall not be confused."<sup>1</sup>

One might imagine that such a story comes from an age when there was a regularly established inquisition to suppress those who adhered to the true message from God. The worst persecutions of the Christians were not those inflicted by Jews or Romans, but those devised by their brethren of the same faith. No foreign punishment compared in severity to the Spanish Inquisition. So the worst afflictions of the Hebrew prophet came ever from the Jewish Church.

In the post-exilic period the prophets stand in close and friendly relation to the Church. The first of them, Haggai, as we have already seen,<sup>2</sup> was chiefly concerned with the rebuilding of the temple. We find in him a sad decline from the great spiritual leaders who had preceded him; for he seems to look upon the temple as the talisman by whose instrumentality peace and prosperity would come to the new Israel. He explains the dearth and hardship which characterised the early days of the restoration as due to the neglect of the temple.<sup>3</sup> The people had sought each one his own welfare, but when asked to join in the rebuilding of the house of the Lord, had replied, "The time is not come."<sup>4</sup> God punished the people for their indifference by causing

<sup>1</sup> Isa. l. 4 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Hag. i. 5-11.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. x.

<sup>4</sup> Hag. i. 2.



the heavens to withhold the dew and the earth its fruit.<sup>1</sup>

Haggai had to appeal not only to the people, but to the governor, and to the high-priest, Joshua. Even the latter seems to have shown no zeal for the restoration of the ritual until aroused by the prophet.<sup>2</sup> After the foundation was laid, Haggai again reviews the history of the times, explaining the dearth as a Divine punishment; but now that the work of reconstructing the temple is under way, he promises that from that day forward God will bless the land with plenty.<sup>3</sup>

Zechariah seems to have taken a prominent part in the investiture of the high-priest Joshua. At least Ewald's explanation of that somewhat mysterious passage in chapter iii. seems to me still the most probable. The priest had been constrained to exercise his functions in garments that were unsuitable to the high office. The opposition was so vigorous that the prophet presents the picture of Satan standing against the priest. The people were seemingly as unwilling to contribute for ecclesiastical vestments as for temple building. But the prophet triumphs and sees the priest clothed in the rich apparel which belonged to his office, and with a clean mitre upon his head.

Zechariah succeeded in persuading certain men who had returned from exile, and who were apparently possessed of considerable means, to provide gold and silver to make crowns for the high-priest. In crowning Joshua, Zechariah even goes so far as to declare that the priest finds in himself the fulfilment

<sup>1</sup> Hag. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Hag. i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Hag. ii. 10-19.



of his Messianic prophecy;<sup>1</sup> for he is the very Branch who shall build the temple, and bear the glory, and rule upon the throne. Ezekiel's prophecy is fulfilled, and we have fairly established in this era a form of government in which the civil power is subordinate to the ecclesiastical. Alas! that no Church, Jewish or Christian, has ever been able to bear that supremacy. We may content ourselves with the belief that the failure was due to its not being of God, and that the law "he that exalted himself shall be humbled" applies to Churches as well as to individuals.

Priests and people alike recognise the prophet as the oracle of God. A grave question arises as to the observance of the fasts<sup>2</sup> which had been kept during the exile, as a mark of the humiliation of that period and as a plea to Jahveh to bring back the captivity of His people. Should those fasts be still kept up, now that their appropriateness is no longer apparent? The law threw no light on such a question, and therefore the priests could give no answer. They were bound now to the written law, in which they were the recognised authorities.<sup>3</sup> The prophet, however, could deal with this new problem; for by him a new revelation could come. And Zechariah rises to one of his highest levels in his answer: the fasts kept in the exile were but selfish

<sup>1</sup> Zech. vi. 9 ff.; cf. iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> There were four of these fasts: that of the fourth month, marking the capture of Jerusalem (Jer. xxxix. 2); of the fifth, marking its destruction (2 Kings xxv. 8); of the seventh, marking the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. xli.); and of the tenth, marking the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings xxv. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Hag. ii. 11 ff.



rites rather than an honour to Jahveh ;<sup>1</sup> Jahveh still prefers mercy to sacrifice ; justice, kindness, compassion are the traits demanded by Him ;<sup>2</sup> therefore the fast days shall become the days of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts ; indicative of the love of truth and peace.<sup>3</sup>

"Malachi"<sup>4</sup> is concerned about the kind of sacrificial offerings made by the priests. Between the tribute from their flocks for the governor and for the priests, the people doubtless felt themselves to be in an evil case. There was no shading of the quality of the governor's quota ; but as Jahveh's part went to the priests, it was customary to offer inferior animals. Against this the prophet lifts his voice in vigorous protest : "O priests, that despise My name. You offer polluted bread upon My altar. You say, The table of Jahveh is contemptible. And when you offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil ! and when you offer the lame and the sick, it is no evil !" <sup>5</sup> "You say also, Behold, what a weariness it is ! and you have sniffed at it. . . . Cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and makes a vow and sacrifices unto the Lord a blemished thing." <sup>6</sup> The priesthood has become so corrupt that the prophet must need hold up to the priests the proper observance of the ritual laws.

Malachi has much to say besides against the priests.<sup>7</sup> He holds up the true ideal of the priesthood : "The priest's lips should guard knowledge, and they should seek the law from his mouth ; for

<sup>1</sup> Zech. vii. 5 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Zech. vii. 9. <sup>3</sup> Zech. viii. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Additional note (13).

<sup>5</sup> Mal. i. 6 ff. <sup>6</sup> Mal. i. 13 ff. <sup>7</sup> Mal. ii.



he is the messenger of Jahveh of hosts."<sup>1</sup> The actual condition was very different: "You are turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble in the law; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi."<sup>2</sup>

Malachi's idea of righteousness is the observance of the ordinances.<sup>3</sup> He does, indeed, say some wholesome things against divorce.<sup>4</sup> But one of his great charges against the people is that they have robbed God by failing to pay their quota of tithes and offerings.<sup>5</sup> Let the people bring the whole tithe into the sacred storehouse, that there may be food in the temple, and then God will make Judah a bountiful land.<sup>6</sup>

Still more has prophecy lost its true note in Joel, who was probably the latest of the canonical prophets. Joel was more priest than prophet, so that when famine swept over the land as a result of drought and vast swarms of locusts, the remedy proposed is to seek the favour of God by a great fast, at which the priests standing between the porch and the altar were to say this litany: "Spare Thy people, Jahveh, and give not Thy heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?"<sup>7</sup> The blessings which God showered upon the land, by driving away the great army of locusts and by pouring the rain from heaven, are traced to this supplication of the priests.

<sup>1</sup> Mal. ii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mal. ii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Mal. iii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Mal. ii. 14 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Mal. iii. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Mal. iii. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Joel ii. 17; cf. Psalm xlii. 3, 10.



But Joel rises to a great height once, when he points out the coming day on which God's Spirit will be poured upon all flesh.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge of God's will shall not be limited to priest and prophet, for the sons and daughters shall prophesy, the old men shall dream dreams, the young men shall see visions, and even upon the servants and handmaids will God's Spirit be poured.

We see that the voice of prophecy was becoming faint as the sun sets on the long day of Israel's great religious fervour. The approach of the long night of legalism was at hand. There were no great prophets to avert the doom, and the Jewish Church sank into that deadly state from which Jesus sought in vain to arouse it.

The prophets never turned their back upon the Church; the Church turned its back upon them. They never separated from the Church, nor would they be driven out. They worked for the purification of the Church, but always from the inside. In this they were followed by our Lord. He went to Jerusalem to keep the feast, and went out of the city only to go to Calvary. The Church finds much opposition from outside, but criticism is always more effective from inside. But those on the inside are so apt to become dead and blind like those lying prophets. The Church should be especially grateful for every voice for betterment which comes from within her bosom.

If the time shall ever come—it has never yet been—when there shall be but one fold and one

<sup>1</sup> Joel ii. 28 ff.



Shepherd, there will not then necessarily be a perfect Church ; but one great element in her power will be that all the forces which make for Christian progress and moral purity will come from within.

In the contest between the prophets and the established religious order of their times, our sympathies are of course on the side of the prophets. They were right and the Church was wrong. But the lessons of all history warn us nevertheless to be charitable in our judgment. In this enlightened age the Church still occasionally lays violent hands upon a prophet. The Church has no desire to crush truth ; she aims to conserve it. The trouble is always due to the inability to see what the truth actually is.

Despite opposition and persecution, the Church was influenced by the prophets. The Church always in a way heeds the voices of those she martyrs. Jastrow thus gives a general estimate of that influence : "The prophetic movement gave an ethical flavour to the conception of the national deity . . . resulted in the creation of an elaborate legal code, in which all the rites of the religion and the functions of the priesthood are brought into accord with the principles of ethical monotheism as preached by the prophets."<sup>1</sup> Though the Jewish Church fell far away from the prophetic ideal, it was at all events the better for the preaching of the prophets. In the long run the prophet is bound to find his audience and exert his influence. However hard people may try to stop their ears, the voice of truth slowly penetrates all obstructions.

<sup>1</sup> *The Study of Religion*, p. 79.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PROPHET'S VISION

IN this closing chapter I propose to gather up some points of interest which have not found a place in the preceding discussion. To do this I use the term "vision" in no technical and limited sense, but to indicate rather the prophet's broad outlook upon the world, and also his conception of God. His vision really included both things. The prophet became a spokesman because he was first a man with a vision. The gloss in 1 Samuel ix. 9<sup>1</sup> is correct in one sense: it gives the true order of development. *Nabi* probably means speaker;<sup>2</sup> *roeh* certainly means "one who sees." In the course of the development of prophecy there must have been men who saw before there were men who said. So with the individual: a man must be a seer before he can be a prophet. Isaiah must have his vision in the temple before he can face Ahaz at the conduit of the upper pool.<sup>3</sup>

The true prophet felt that his power to see was the

<sup>1</sup> "He that is now called the prophet was beforetime called the seer"; see further above, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Opinion is divided whether *nabi* means a spokesman, as, *e.g.*, Winckler maintains, or one who bubbles (under the influence of the Spirit), as, *e.g.*, Kraetzschmar maintains. See additional note (14).

<sup>3</sup> Isa. vii. 3.



gift of God. His eyes saw, because Jahveh had opened them. His ears heard, because the Lord had quickened them. Hence it was that he stood by his vision even when it brought him persecution from Church or State. Hence also his isolation; for the prophets were, as a rule, men distrusted by their contemporaries. Rarely in all history has a great prophet had a general following in his lifetime. Jeremiah, Socrates, and Jesus Christ alike had the experience which belongs to the order of prophets. Man seems to dislike and distrust a vision keener than his own.

The prophet was not only vouchsafed occasional glimpses into the mysteries of heaven, but he felt that he was accorded a full knowledge of the Divine purposes; in fact, his whole life seemed to be possessed of the Spirit of God, and directed whithersoever God would. The old writer shows the prophetic idea when he represents Jahveh as constrained to reveal to Abraham His purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>1</sup> So Amos states the broad principle: "Verily the Lord Jahveh will take no action except He disclose His purpose to His servants the prophets."<sup>2</sup>

The old seer Micaiah knew that the prophets who were predicting a successful campaign for Ahab were altogether wrong. He could not explain their error as we can,<sup>3</sup> but was constrained to give an interpreta-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xviii. 17 ff. The passage is assigned to J. (the Jahvist), the oldest of the Pentateuchal sources, and the one most endowed with the prophetic spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Amos iii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> This incident is fully treated on p. 52 ff.



tion of their fault in accordance with his idea that the prophets were entirely dominated by Jahveh. Therefore he describes his vision of the lying spirit which had come down to pervert the vision of Ahab's prophets,<sup>1</sup> and so lead the king to disaster.

Shortly before the invasion of Sennacherib, Isaiah is led to speak with astonishment of the blindness of the people, because they could not see what was pressing so near. Apparently there were no prophetic voices lifted up to warn the people, a fact which required explanation. The prophet interpreted the silence of the seers in a way that shows his idea of the Divine dominance of the prophets: "For Jahveh has poured upon you a spirit of heavy slumber; He has tightly shut your eyes the prophets; and He has covered your heads the seers."<sup>2</sup> The prophets do not see and the seers do not hear; the closing of the eyes and the covering of the head, by which this condition is brought about, are only explicable as coming from God. The prophet can only speak as he is moved of God, and can only keep silent as he is restrained of God. Here, indeed, is a new and fruitful idea, the inspiration of silence. Such inspiration surely is as necessary as any other. It is sometimes easier to act than to be quiet, easier to speak than to hold one's peace. Our Blessed Lord was no whit less conspicuously the Son of God when He "answered not a word," than when He cried, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

A good illustration of the completeness of God's

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel held essentially the same idea; see Ezek. xiv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xxix. 10.



control over the prophets is shown in Ezekiel's dumbness. The prophet was told at the very beginning of his ministry that God would make his tongue cleave to his mouth, so that he would be dumb, and unable to engage in the useless task of reproving the rebellious house of Israel.<sup>1</sup> This dumbness was appointed to last until the fall of Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> that is, for some five years. Whether the prophet was unable to speak during all that time may be doubtful; certainly we have prophecies from the period. But it surely means that Ezekiel was not to prophesy actively during that hopeless time, when it was clear that neither the purpose of the people to sin nor the purpose of God to punish could be changed. And it means that God's control over His prophet is absolute.

On the other hand, the hard facts so plainly told in the Bible have constrained men to abandon the unfortunate doctrine of mechanical inspiration. The notion of Athenagoras, "the Spirit making use of them as a flute player breathes into a flute,"<sup>3</sup> offers a theory of prophecy inconsistent with the facts, and unsatisfying to man's aspirations. Man rejoices to be a servant of the Most High, but desires to consecrate to that service all the faculties with which God has endowed him. The facts which I shall proceed to point out are not inconsistent, however, with the statement in the Nicene Creed, "Who spake by the prophets." Complete as God's control of the seer was, he was never a mere machine operated by

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. iii. 25 f.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxiv. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *A Plea for the Christians*, chap. ix.



Divine power. He was never constrained to lay aside his natural intelligence.

The prophet did not always have immediately at command a message which was surely the word of God. Often he must labour and struggle to catch the suggestion from on high. Jeremiah on one occasion waited ten days for the required answer; and they must have been days of mental and spiritual travail. When the captains came to the prophet, after the fall of Jerusalem and the murder of Gedaliah, to know whether they should go to Egypt, or take their chances against Nebuchadrezzar's wrath by abiding in the land of Judah, Jeremiah sent them away, and it was only after ten days' waiting that he was satisfied to give them advice which he was sure represented the mind of God.<sup>1</sup>

The prophet might give his oracle and then be led to change it. Nathan at first counselled David to carry out his purpose to build a temple for Jahveh; but after sleeping over the matter, he said positively that David should not build the house, but that the task should be reserved for the more peaceful times of David's son.<sup>2</sup> It cannot be supposed that God changed His mind during the night. If Nathan's final advice was right, then at first he spoke without knowledge of the Divine will.<sup>3</sup> Similarly Isaiah

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xlii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 1 ff.

<sup>3</sup> No essential change is required in the interpretation above if one holds with Budde that ver. 13 is a Deuteronomic interpolation, and that the original passage knows nothing of the Solomonic temple (*Bücher Samuel, in loc.*). Nathan did first counsel David to build the house, and then not to do so, even if he did not predict Solomon's building.



went to Hezekiah, lying apparently on his death-bed, and advised him to set his house in order for he would surely die; further, he prefaced his message with the formula, "Thus saith Jahveh."<sup>1</sup> But before the harbinger of evil had reached the middle of the palace court<sup>2</sup> he was commanded to go back and bid the king good cheer, for he would yet live fifteen years.<sup>3</sup> It is true that it might be said that it was first God's intention that the king should die, and then that the intention was changed by reason of Hezekiah's prayer. To say nothing of the doubtfulness of such an interpretation, it would remain the fact that Isaiah was not possessed of the knowledge which belonged to God. For God must have known the whole story, whatever the outcome was to be.

Elisha was puzzled to find that a calamity had befallen the Shunamite whose hospitality he had enjoyed, and "Jahveh had hid it from him, and had not informed him."<sup>4</sup> He felt that there was something strange that the child miraculously born to the woman should have died without his knowledge. It seemed wrong that the woman should come to him in distress without his knowing the cause of her

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xx. i. = Isa. xxxviii. i.

<sup>2</sup> The English versions follow written text and read "city" instead of "court"; the *qeri*, or emended text, which I have followed, seems to be right here (see Kittel, *Königsbücher*, *in loc.*). Isaiah had not got away from the palace before the new message was given to him.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings xx. 4 ff. The parallel in Isaiah xxxviii. omits the note of time. The story seemingly was already a puzzle to the Chronicler; for he mentions the sickness and recovery of the king, but is silent about the contradictory messages of the prophet.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings iv. 27.



sorrow. The vision of the prophet was not broad enough to comprehend all the events which happened even in the narrow range of his own life.

Again the prophet shows his limitations in his attempt to restore the child. God must be the source of the rekindled life, and God is not dependent upon any particular means. It would suffice, then, to accomplish the resurrection by a simple process; and so Gehazi is sent with Elisha's staff and directed to lay it upon the face of the child. The servant did as he was bid; but there was neither voice nor hearing, and the discomfited agent had to go back and report, "The child is not awaked."

The mother, with the truer womanly instinct, had little faith in the staff. She refused to leave the seer's abode unless he accompanied her, and in response to her importunity Elisha started to Shunem to learn from Gehazi on the way how needful indeed was his presence there. When he went to the chamber, not with a talisman, but with personal ministration, then "the flesh of the child waxed warm," and with renewed efforts, the eyes were opened, and the living child was restored to his mother.

The word of a prophet, though uncontradicted by him, was not necessarily final for all time. The vision might stand for the moment, and yet not reach the high plane of eternal truth. Jehu was not only anointed by a prophet, acting under advice from Elisha, but he was commanded to slay every male child of the house of Ahab.<sup>1</sup> Jahveh commended Jehu, doubtless by the mouth of a prophet, for his

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings ix. 8.



zeal in making a holocaust of the Baal worshippers, and for shedding the blood of the royal house.<sup>1</sup> But Hosea's vision came nearer to the truth of God than Elisha's, and one of his sharpest censures is directed against the bloodshed of the house of Jehu.<sup>2</sup> God inspired Elisha, and the same God inspired Hosea—at least, so I think—but they were not mere flutes, helpless except as touched by the hand that plays them. Hosea lived in a later day, and was possessed of finer instincts than the plowman, and so his vision comprehended a truth to which his less enlightened brother was blind.

The perplexity of St. Peter at the vision which he saw upon the housetop at Joppa<sup>3</sup> is illuminative of the way in which God deals with all His prophets. A suggestion is given which must be interpreted and applied. An idea is breathed into the mind of the seer, but the idea is a seed which must be converted into fruit, and the husbandman will by no means be relieved of his share in that labour. Habakkuk was sorely puzzled by the facts which he saw—the great heathen power of Babylon inflicting ruin on a nation which, with all its shortcomings, was holier than its assailants. His own efforts must help him to resolve his doubts.

We ought not to think it strange that there was a limitation set to the prophet's vision; that he was not able to forecast the future with detailed accuracy,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings x. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Hosea i. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Acts x.

<sup>4</sup> The non-fulfilment of many prophetic predictions is a certain fact in the phenomena of prophecy; but the subject is too large to be adequately treated here. See, however, p. 121 ff.



nor even to grasp always the range of events of his own time. For Jesus taught a doctrine which sweeps aside all the ideas which have so tenaciously clung about the overloaded doctrine of inspiration. Jesus declared that the humble fisher-folk of the Sea of Galilee had a broader vision of heavenly things than the greatest prophet of Hebrew history. "Many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not."<sup>1</sup> The prophets of Israel were greater men than the disciples of Jesus; but the vision of Jesus was infinitely truer than that of the seers, and the humble disciples were given some of the results of their Master's insight.

The errant vision of the seers unhappily extended at times even to the moral sphere. Moses is reputed to be the author of the Decalogue; but he who engraved upon the stone the words, "Thou shalt not steal," counselled his people to plunder the Egyptians on the eve of their departure from the land of bondage. The sacred writer says that this counsel was given by Moses at the express command of God,<sup>2</sup> and that Jahveh gave them favour in the eyes of the Egyptians so as to further their evil project.<sup>3</sup>

Samuel was too much afraid of Saul openly to anoint David as his rival claimant to the throne. He had recourse to a subterfuge. He pretended that he had come to Bethlehem merely to offer a sacrifice. Under cover of that sacrifice he secretly anointed the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xi. 1 f.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xii. 36.



youthful shepherd as the king of all Israel.<sup>1</sup> One may well say that that is no great evil, and indeed it would not be a very great sin for even such a man as Samuel to dissemble in order to save his life. But we are told that Samuel's deception was due to the command of God, and that brings the matter sharply home as serious. What we might easily understand and extenuate in Samuel, we can neither understand nor extenuate in God. It is one of the gifts of modern study that we can grasp the true situation. The errant vision of the seer explains the whole problem. That Samuel mistook his guidance, that he attributed to God a plan devised in his own mind, shows not only the solution of a moral difficulty in the Bible, but also reveals the nature of the prophet's vision. It is not always easy to be sure whether one is seeing with one's own eyes or another's. The prophets were not relieved of the perplexities and dangers of life by virtue of their relation to God.

It is a strange thing that the gravest of such errant visions is chargeable to Jeremiah. The poor persecuted prophet had long been a prisoner; Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian eunuch, had just rescued him from the miry pit. He was brought to the king for consultation, and was given a glimpse of the king's intentions, which Zedekiah did not care to have known by his court. He therefore charged the prophet not to disclose the interview, but, if questioned, to pretend that he had only petitioned the king not to send him back to the dungeon, where he had nearly died. Jeremiah was promptly interro-

<sup>1</sup> I Sam. xvi.



gated by the princes, who were evidently suspicious of the king's loyalty to the fast-sinking ship, and "he told them according to all those words that the king had commanded"; and the historian, who was probably Baruch, adds with an ill-concealed glee, "So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived."<sup>1</sup> It is true that there is this relief in this passage: we are not told that Jeremiah's action was counselled or approved of God. Probably Baruch would not have ventured so far as that.

The prophets betray the limitations of their visions again in the personal imprecations which now and again disfigure the otherwise fair pages of their writings. It seems to be the natural law that he who suffered most was most bitter in his maledictions. Amos predicted a dark future for the priest who essayed to stay the voice of Jahveh's seer; his wife would be a harlot, his children fall by the sword, his land be confiscated, and he himself die in a foreign land.<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah was far from gentle in his wishes for those who conspired against him and his mission: "Deliver up their children to the famine, and give them over to the power of the sword: and let their wives become childless, and widows; let their men be slain of death, and their young men smitten of the sword in battle."<sup>3</sup> On other occasions, too, his fierce wrath broke loose against his oppressors.

It is not difficult for us, who are men of like passions with the prophets, to understand such utterances; nor is it difficult for us to realise that

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxviii. 14-28.

<sup>2</sup> Amos vii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xviii. 21.



they are hopelessly inconsistent with the teaching, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." Amos and Jeremiah had many true visions, but their imprecations were never written in their hearts by the Spirit of God.

A frank treatment of the Hebrew prophet demands that such limitations should be candidly stated. But we should be careful not to exaggerate the shortcomings of the prophets. The real cause for wonder is not that there are such shortcomings, but that they are so few. The general character of the visions seen of the prophets is the highest attestation that they were men moved by the Holy Ghost.

The character of the men agreed with the character of their visions. The prophets stood out of the mass of men not only by their lips, but also by their lives. Isaiah saw that clean lips were a prerequisite to inspired utterance.<sup>1</sup> The seer can never be a rogue. In the long run no man can have high visions and lead a low life. There have been cases when men came near to it, but there is always a lack somewhere. Our Lord stated the eternally binding conditions in the beatitudes: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." God is not visible on any other terms whatsoever.

Micah knew that he was full of power by the Spirit of Jahveh, but that the herd of seers were shut in darkness so that they had no vision. The evil character of their lives explained their inability to know what God's high purposes were. So Jeremiah, in denouncing the bodies of prophets, always connects

<sup>1</sup> See Isa. vi. 5 ff.



their false visions with their base lives. Origen long ago saw the truth of the matter, in this and other points; and I quote this brief extract: "In regard to the prophets among the Jews, some of them were wise even before they became divinely inspired prophets, while others became wise by the illumination which their minds received when divinely inspired. They were selected by Divine Providence to receive the Divine Spirit, and to be the depositories of His holy oracles, on the ground of their leading a life of almost unapproachable excellence, intrepid, noble, unmoved by danger or death. For reason teaches that such ought to be the character of the prophets of the Most High";<sup>1</sup> and we may add, the record shows that such was their character.

Our Lord stated the same truth in another way when He gave warning against false prophets: "By their fruits ye shall know them." And the fruit which Jesus meant was not only of the lips, but of the life as well. That our Lord meant moral fruits as well as eloquence or orthodoxy is clearly shown by another saying in the same passage: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."<sup>2</sup> To call Jesus "Lord" is indeed well; but alone it does not suffice. Many may do that, and be barred from the Kingdom, a fate which will never befall a simple soul who does the will of God.

The Hebrew prophet was made what he was by Divine inspiration and by moral character. Another

<sup>1</sup> Against Celsus, chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Matt vii. 21.



factor contributed a share to his equipment. The greatest of all was the best educated, for example. But inspiration and character are the two essential requirements.

Prophets are needed in every age. The model for all modern seers is found in the Bible. Then let him who aspires to visions of God not forget the fundamental condition, purity of heart. The more perfect a man's mental fitness, the higher may be his visions ; but no matter what his other acquirements are, his visions of God will be dependent upon the cleanness of his life.



## ADDITIONAL NOTES

### (1) RAMAH (p. 5)

SAUL'S servant said, "There is a man of God in this city,"<sup>1</sup> but the name of the city is not mentioned here or elsewhere in the narrative. It is clear, however, that the writer meant the city where Samuel resided permanently, for on entering the city Saul asks the to him unknown Samuel, "Tell me I pray where the seer's house is."<sup>2</sup>

The later narrative of the Books of Samuel always names Ramah as Samuel's residence; it was, in fact, his birthplace, residence, and burial-place.<sup>3</sup> It is plain that Ramathaim-zophim<sup>4</sup> is an error, and that we should probably read, "a man of the Ramathites, a Zuphite."<sup>5</sup>

On the authority of this later narrative nearly all Biblical scholars have identified the unnamed city of ix. 6 with Ramah. Budde, however, contends that if the author had known the name of the city he would have given it, and that the situation of Ramah makes it inadmissible here.<sup>6</sup> The author may not have known the name of Samuel's city, but it does not follow that even a later writer may not have been better informed. As to the geographical situation, it must be admitted that the journey of Saul and his servant<sup>7</sup> is not very clear to us.

The stages of the journey are given as Mt. Ephraim, Shalishah, Shaalim, land of the Benjamites, land of Zuph. At the last-named place Saul resolved to turn back, lest his father

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. ix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* v. 18.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. i. 19; ii. 11; vii. 17; viii. 4; xx. 34; xvi. 13; xix. 18 ff.; xxv. 1; xxviii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Sam. i. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Budde, H. P. Smith.

<sup>6</sup> *Die Bücher Samuel, in loc.*

<sup>7</sup> 1 Sam. ix. 4 f.



should worry about the searchers more than the lost. It is natural, therefore, that Zuph should mark the furthest point on the journey. If that is the case, then the land of Benjamin could not be the fourth stage in their course, but must have been the first, for Benjamin was their home and starting-point. Moreover, Saul would scarcely have said, "Let us go back," if they were already returned to the vicinity of his home. Efforts have been made to locate Shalishah and Shaalim, but so far no convincing suggestion has appeared. The fact seems to be that the text is in disorder, Benjamin and Ephraim having been transposed. Changing the verbs to the plural, as the sense requires, and as the LXX. reads, we then get the following: "And they went through the land of Benjamin, and did not find them; and they went through the land of Shalishah, and did not find them; and they went through the land of Shaalim, and they were not there; and they went through Mt. Ephraim: they had come into the land of Zuph, and Saul said to his servant, who was with him, Come, let us go back." This makes the journey intelligible as far as we know it, and brings the searchers to a halt in the country of Samuel, for Zuph was in Mt. Ephraim, or on its borders. Cheyne's proposal to read Mizpah instead of Zuph<sup>1</sup> gives us a city with which Samuel was intimately associated, but the change is arbitrary and unnecessary.

The emendation proposed has this further support: the phrase, "they did not find them" (or an equivalent), occurs after each place-name until we come to Mt. Ephraim and Zuph, where it is lacking. The author here is concerned with the return of the searchers, and evidently did not regard Mt. Ephraim and Zuph as successive stages, but as essentially identical. Ramah, too, was in the hill country of Ephraim, and is very likely the place where Saul found Samuel.

(2) AMOS iii. 7 (p. 10)

This passage has long been regarded as the classic instance of the prophet's foreknowledge. Steiner long ago said, "These

<sup>1</sup> "Zuph," *Encyc. Bibl.*



words contain the justification of prophecy in general and of Amos in particular." It has seemed to be significant that this view of prophecy should be found in the first literary prophet.

In recent days, however, the authenticity of the passage has been seriously questioned. All the arguments are summed up by Marti: (1) It intolerably disturbs the connexion. (2) It is of a different structure from 4-6, 8. (3) Its theological character marks it as secondary. (4) סוד "secret," except in Genesis xli. 6, is first found in Jeremiah, and גלה סוד (to reveal a secret) is found elsewhere only in Proverbs. (5) "His servants the prophets" is a favourite expression of the Deuteronomist. Marti quotes Löhr and Baumann in support of his theory that it is a gloss added long after Amos.<sup>1</sup>

It must be frankly admitted that most of Marti's premises are sound, but still I cannot accept his conclusion. Every writer inserts explanatory clauses which necessarily disturb the sequence of thought. We know that the idea that God forewarned the prophets of His intentions was common in Jeremiah's day, but it may have been held long before. The whole Book of Amos is full of the idea. He was warning Samaria because God had apprised him of impending disaster: why should he not state the doctrine which underlies his words? The favourite expressions of the Deuteronomist, or of any other writer, are not necessarily words coined by him.

The introductory "for" and the close connexion between verses 6 and 8 are the real problems. Driver says of "for," "The reason, however, following not in v. 7, but in v. 8, to which v. 7 is subordinate."<sup>2</sup> Oort changes כי to כה,<sup>3</sup> and Oetli transposes verses 7 and 8. Löhr transposes and gives this order, 6b, 6a, 8.<sup>4</sup> We are somewhat distrustful of such solutions, aiming to remove a difficulty, but not succeeding altogether. The words in question, "The Lord Jahveh will take no action except He disclose His purpose to His prophets," do not

<sup>1</sup> *Handbuch zum A.T., in loc.*; cf. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 18, 77, 97; Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge Bible, in loc.*

<sup>3</sup> *Theol. Tisd.* xiv. 135.

<sup>4</sup> *Beihefte zur Z.A.T.W.*, iv.



explain why Amos prophesies, that is reserved for verse 8, but why the prophet knows what will happen. In verse 6 Amos is trying to make the people see the signs that something will happen, not by chance, but by Divine act: "Shall harm befall a city, and Jahveh not do it?" Verse 7 is a comment on those last words, intentionally suspending the thought: Jahveh will do something now, and I know what He will do, for Jahveh discloses His purpose to His prophets. What follows this becomes clear: my knowledge, and the source of my knowledge, constrain me to speak: "The Lord Jahveh has spoken, who can help prophesying?"

In conclusion, it may be said that it is altogether out of the question to change the last word to "trembling," as Wellhausen does, or, as the latest suggestion in *Encyc. Bibl.*, p. 3870, to "feel pain" (יִכְאֵב).

(3) I SAMUEL ix. 9 (p. 30)

Thenius<sup>1</sup> has been followed by virtually all modern scholars in pronouncing this verse a gloss, and pointing out that since it explains the archaic word "seer," which is first used in verse 11, it should follow verse 11 instead of verse 8. The editor, who introduced the gloss, however, was not so blind as it might seem, for in spite of the explanation of "seer," the natural place for this comment is where Saul and his servant resolved to go up to the seer, not where they were asking for his house.

The verse is undoubtedly a gloss, but it must be remembered that a gloss may be more valuable than an original text. Cornill does not exaggerate when he calls this an "invaluable explanatory remark."<sup>2</sup> In the writer's time prophet was the current word for the man of God, and seer had passed out of use; but the office was just the same. In Samuel's day prophet means a member of the order described in chapter iv.; the independent individual was a seer. Nowack says truly that "originally *ro'eh* and *nabi* had nothing to do with each other."

<sup>1</sup> *Handbuch zum A. T.*, in loc.

<sup>2</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, p. 12.



When did the term prophet displace the term seer? Kautzsch says that Amos<sup>1</sup> speaks of the *nebi'im* in the most honourable sense.<sup>2</sup> Amaziah calls Amos a seer,<sup>3</sup> but apparently in contempt. Comparing Amos iii. 7 and vii. 14, where Amos repudiates any connexion with the sons of the prophets, it would seem as if seer had become an unwelcome term, and that prophet was already applied indifferently to the higher or lower order, as was customary in all later times. The gloss may therefore belong somewhere near the time of Amos.

(4) JEREMIAH v. 31 (p. 47)

The expression rendered "the priests bear rule at their hands," is not devoid of difficulty. The LXX. translators were evidently puzzled, but they render *ἐπεκρότησαν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν*, which Workman understands to mean "clap their hands." Most scholars render essentially as I have; Graf, "hand in hand with them," or, "under their discretion": Orelli, "on their side as their agents": Hitzig, "come forward according to their direction." Giesebrecht translates, "the priests rule according to their own pleasure," and refers to Pashhur's persecution of Jeremiah. Duhm departs furthest from the general view, rendering, "the priests put (money) into their pockets," following a rare meaning of *רדה* "scrape"; so Ges-Buhl.

Graf refers to Jeremiah xxix. 24 ff., where we read that Shemaiah a prophet sends a letter from Babylon to Zephaniah saying that Jahveh had made him a priest instead of Jehoiada. It may be doubtful whether the prophet is declaring a fact, or making an appointment. If the latter, it would support the interpretation of the passage which I have given. It must not be forgotten either that the verse rendered as literally as possible is, "the priests bear rule at their hands."

<sup>1</sup> See iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Hastings' *Bib. Dict.*, ext. vol., p. 672.

<sup>3</sup> vii. 12.



## (5) JEZEBEL'S PERSECUTION (p. 56)

H. P. Smith holds that among the exaggerations of the legendary accretions in the life of Elijah we may count the assertion that Jezebel was an active persecutor of the religion of Jahveh. He says that Ahab had four hundred court prophets, whom even Jehoshaphat did not suspect; that Micaiah does not doubt their inspiration from Jahveh; and that Ahab gave his children names compounded with Jahveh.<sup>1</sup>

That Elijah in his despair exaggerated the extent of the evil<sup>2</sup> is natural under the circumstances. In fact, verse 18 shows that Elijah soon realised his exaggeration. Jehoshaphat may have admitted that Ahab's prophets said, "thus saith Jahveh," but he evidently placed no confidence in their oracles. Moreover, Jehoshaphat asks, "is there not here besides a prophet of Jahveh, that we may inquire of him?"<sup>3</sup> The question implies a distinction between Micaiah and the court prophets. Later in the Moabite campaign, Jehoshaphat asks Jehoram, "is there not here a prophet of Jahveh?"<sup>4</sup> The king's emphasis on prophet of Jahveh seems to imply that there were other prophets at the Israelite court.

Jezebel may not be quite so black as she is painted, but still the persistent tradition must be given full weight. Kittel is probably near the truth when he suggests that the Elijah story may originally have contained a section giving a detailed history of Jezebel's persecution.<sup>5</sup>

## (6) DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF THE PROPHET (p. 72)

It is generally agreed that there were two distinguishing marks of the prophet, the hair-mantle and some sign on the forehead. In a note to Stade's edition of the Book of Kings,<sup>6</sup> Haupt suggests a third mark, for he asserts that in order to disguise himself the prophet must cover a peculiar tonsure and

<sup>1</sup> *O. T. Hist.*, 188 f.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Königsbücher*, p. 141 f.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xix. 14.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings iii. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Poly. Bible*.



the mark between the eyes. We have no evidence of such a tonsure among the prophets.

We have given proof enough that the mantle was a characteristic garment. 1 Kings xx. 41 is sufficient evidence that there was some mark: "he quickly removed the bandage from over his eyes, and the king of Israel recognised him that he was one of the prophets." The removal of the bandage revealed a mark which identified the man with the prophets. A.V. by a curious misunderstanding translates, "he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face." Stade suggests that we may discover the survival of this mark in Zechariah xiii. 6: "and he said unto him, What are these wounds between thy hands?" But "between thy hands" makes no sense. Lowe proposed to interpret "on thy chest," but without warrant. Nowack gives up the passage, suggesting that the text is corrupt; evidently he had not seen Stade's ingenious suggestion to insert *ועל עיניך* and thus get "what are these wounds (or marks) between thy eyes and upon thy hands?" This fits into the context admirably: the prophet in shame would disavow his office, only to be met by the question, whence then the prophetic stigmata between the eyes and on the hands? This proposal seems to have escaped G. A. Smith also.

What was the mark, and by what means was it covered up? Haupt insists that *אָפָר* rendered "bandage," is an Assyrian loan-word meaning helmet. The prophet put on a helmet, which covered the tonsure, and the visor of which would conceal the mark between the eyes. Jastrow agrees that the Assyrian word means helmet or headgear, but says the word in our text means a sort of turban.<sup>1</sup> Helmet is quite unsuitable to the text: verse 38, "he disguised himself with an 'aphar (bandage) upon his eyes," does not sound like putting a helmet upon the head; nor could we say "he quickly removed the helmet ('aphar) from upon his eyes."<sup>2</sup> Far more probable is the interpretation that it was such a cloth as Orientals wind about the head, and which could easily be wound over the eyes so as to cover the mark. Cheyne says the sign was a survival of the tribal mark which placed the Kenites under the protection of

<sup>1</sup> *J.A.O.S.*, xx. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *v.* 41.



their god Jahveh.<sup>1</sup> Haupt asserts that the mark was tattooed upon their forehead. He finds references to tattooing in Canticles v. 14.<sup>2</sup> It is quite likely though that the mark was made by cutting, a very frequent practice among the Semites, and so was a scar. Zechariah xiii. 6, as amended by Stade, would support this interpretation. Tattooing is forbidden in Leviticus xix. 28. This mark was undoubtedly limited to the sons of the prophets, and the old custom among them would yield only slowly to a law against it.

(7) JEREMIAH xi. 1-8 (p. 99)

This passage has been regarded as authentic by nearly all scholars, including Giesebrecht and Cornill. Duhm has raised the question of its originality, and Cheyne naturally follows him in doubting its genuineness. They start from the belief that Jeremiah took no interest in the newly discovered Book of Deuteronomy. Cheyne refers to Jeremiah viii. 8, "the false pen of the scribes has done it falsely," as showing the prophet's antipathy to the law. It is to be noted that (1) the LXX. lacks verses 7 and 8 of the passage, but they are not material; and (2) that Huldah was consulted as to the law's authority; but that does not prove that Jeremiah was out of sympathy with the code. Hoffmann goes so far as to say that when Jeremiah declared that God had not commanded sacrifices at Sinai,<sup>3</sup> his words are unmistakably aimed against the new law.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Jeremiah's book is saturated with Deuteronomic phrases, a partial list of which may be found in Driver's *Deuteronomy*, p. xciii. Either Jeremiah had absorbed the contents of the new law, or his book has been recast by a Deuteronomic editor, the latter supposition being entirely unnecessary. If we have a reference to the new law in viii. 8, on equally good grounds we may find a similar reference, with a vastly different purport, in xv. 16: "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and they were pleasant to me, and rejoiced my heart."

<sup>1</sup> *Encyc. Bibl.*

<sup>2</sup> See his *Canticles*, and *Am. Jr. Sem. Lang.*, xviii. 231.

<sup>3</sup> vii. 21 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Religionsgeschichtliche Vorträge*, p. 25.



(8) ANCIENT SHORTHAND WRITING (p. 142)

It has been claimed now and then that shorthand writing was known to many ancient peoples, but so far little evidence has been offered to support the contention. Now, however, M. Leon Goudallier asserts that the existence of shorthand among the ancient Greeks and Romans is certain. I have not seen M. Goudallier's original article in *Cosmos*, but only extracts published in the *Literary Digest*.<sup>1</sup> From these brief excerpts it is difficult to verify the author's statements, or to form a conclusion as to their value.

He claims to trace the art clearly from Tiro, a Roman slave born in 103 B.C., who became Cicero's secretary, and who reported the famous speeches against Catiline, to which reference was made on page 141 f.

I had supposed that stenography was distinctly a modern invention. However, if Cicero's orations, Paul of Samosata's debates, Origen's and Chrysostom's sermons, Augustine's discourses, and the proceedings of the Council of Carthage, were all stenographically reported, as M. Goudallier claims, it would still be very unlikely that a reporter took down the words of Amos or Isaiah, and it is certain that Baruch did not write Jeremiah's prophecies at the time they were delivered.

(9) THE PROPHETS' WRITINGS (p. 160)

A distinction must be drawn between the prophetic books as they have come down to us, and the original writings as they left the hand of the author. It is firmly established that the prophets from Amos onward put their messages into writing themselves. But it is reasonably sure that we have no prophetic book in its original form. The prophets wrote, but they did not collect and edit; that task has been taken up by others, and was accomplished long after the prophets' days. The editors were not acute literary scholars, whose aim was to issue an authorised edition of the authentic works of a great prophet.

<sup>1</sup> Feb. 20, 1904.



The editors were themselves deeply imbued with the prophetic spirit ; but they lived in a day when deference was paid to the written rather than to the spoken word. Therefore, their concern was to collect messages of God which tended to moral and spiritual rather than to literary edification. Consequently they did not scruple to gather into the one Book of Isaiah prophecies from many hands, and covering at least two or three hundred years. The contents of the prophecy, not its authorship, determined its value to them. The speech, not the speaker, should likewise be the measure of merit for us.

(10) SAUL'S REJECTION BY SAMUEL (p. 169)

Both accounts of Saul's rejection<sup>1</sup> are rejected by H. P. Smith.<sup>2</sup> The former he calls "a construction of religious bias," the latter is passed by as thoroughly unhistorical, "a free reconstruction and expansion of the former." In his latest work<sup>3</sup> Budde agrees with Smith, but holds that there may be a fragment of history in xv. 4-9, the story of the Amalekite war.

The section in xiii. 8-15 has all the marks of an interpolation. As Nowack has pointed out, it interrupts the narrative, and it places Saul at Gilgal, whereas verses 2 and 15 indicate that he was at Michmash. The narrative does not admit a change of position. The story makes Samuel's rejection of the king an act of injustice, because Saul waited the appointed time, and Saul did not appear. The other story<sup>4</sup> does give a good reason for Saul's rejection, according to the ideas of the times. Samuel does seem to have changed his disposition towards the king, and probably encouraged David in his efforts to gain the throne. The prophet may have kept himself in the background more than these later writers supposed, but his hand may be apparent for all that.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xiii. 8 ff., and xv.

<sup>2</sup> *O. T. History*, pp. 120, 125 ; Samuel, *in loc.*

<sup>3</sup> *Bücher Samuel*.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xv.



(11) CHEYNE'S JERAHMEELITE THEORY (p. 197)

Cheyne has recently adopted the most revolutionary theory of the Northern Kingdom which so far has entered the mind of man. The whole life of Israel is transplanted to the Negeb, or North Arabia. Some of the strange aberrations of this once sound scholar are found in his recent *Book of Psalms*. The application to the prophets is developed in the article "Prophetic Literature," *Encyc. Bibl.*, and especially on Isaiah and Jeremiah in his *Critica Biblica*, part i., 1903.

There was no prophet of the Northern Kingdom, and there is no reference in prophecy to that land. Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Ezekiel, Joel, Obadiah, are from the Negeb; and all prophets either come from that country or have it constantly in view. The centre of interest is Jerahmeel, a place deserving a fame hitherto denied it; for it was the Mecca of all Hebrew prophets, and the subject of the principal prophecies.

It is true that the prophetic and historical books give no colour to Cheyne's theory, but the reason is not far to seek. Of Nahum i. 1 he says, "This is one of a group of passages<sup>1</sup> in which the names of the North Arabian oppressors of the Jews are cleverly obscured"; and again, with a fine lack of a sense of humour, "with a North Arabian background, many parts of Ezekiel assume a different aspect. It is no easy task, however, to undo the skilful work of an ancient editor . . . who succeeded . . . in well disguising the many striking references to Missur, Jerahmeel, Geshur, and Saphon."

Cheyne was never turned from a task because it was not easy. So he proceeds to undo the skilful work of an ancient editor who, for undiscoverable reasons, endeavoured almost successfully to eliminate Jerahmeel and the Negeb from the Old Testament. We will cite a few specimens of Cheyne's work of restoration.

Amos belonged to the Negeb, for the Bethel of vii. 17 is a Bethel in the Negeb heretofore unknown. That Bethel was in the Negeb is easily proved. In 2 Kings xxiii. 25, Jericho,

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxxv. 8, lii. 1; Joel iii. 4, 17.



Bethel, Mt. Carmel, and Samaria appear to be near each other. The text should be emended to read Rehoboth, Bethel, Mt. Jerahmeel, and Shimron; so Bethel is in the Negeb. *Q.E.D.* Tekoa<sup>1</sup> is a corruption of Jerahmeel, and "of the herdmen" should be "a native of Harim or of Rekem." בולם is a clear corruption of Jerahmeel. "From after the flock" should be "Cusham-Jerahmeel" — the resemblance of the Hebrew is about as close as the English. Hosea's wife was an Arabian, since both Gomer and Diblaim are corruptions of Jerahmeel; therefore Hosea dwelt in the Jerahmeelite Negeb.

Nahum has been regarded as a simple problem, so far as historical situation is concerned; but that seeming simplicity is due to the skilful editor. So Cheyne restores the original difficulties: "Underneath our present text it is possible to trace a prophecy which related, not to Nineveh, but to the Jerahmeelite capital. The key is i. 1, where בליעל is miswritten for Jerahmeel." Joel is not a real name, but perhaps a corruption of Jerahmeel; Pethuel (Joel's father) = Bethuel = an inhabitant of Bethel, and so Joel belongs to the Negeb. Obadiah is not a real name, but a late modification of an ethnic, probably ערבי, the Arabian.

Jeremiah and Zephaniah do not prophesy against the Scythians, for the new light shows that the invaders were North Arabians; the new light is emendation—Geshur and Jerahmeel instead of Assyria and Nineveh. So the key to Isaiah i. is Cheyne's discovery that the supposed Syro-Ephraimitish war was really an irruption of Jerahmeelites. It may be added that there is very little left of the Massoretic text of Isaiah after Cheyne has emended to his taste.<sup>2</sup>

Isaiah xl.-lv. was composed in North Arabia. Ezekiel also suffered imprisonment and prophesied in the same country. The river Chebar<sup>3</sup> should be the river of Jerahmeel, and Tel-abib should be Tel-arab, mound of Arabia, or Tel-Jerahmeel. The strongest evidence, however, he says, is in chapter 38 f., where Gog and Magog should be everywhere Jerahmeel.

It is needless to follow this theory any further. Because of Cheyne's great name, this absurd fancy is likely to get a hearing

<sup>1</sup> i. 1.<sup>2</sup> See his *Crit. Bibl.*<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 257.



which it ill deserves. There is not a particle of legitimate evidence advanced in its favour. By the same method one could prove that the home of prophecy was China or England, since all that is needed is to change the names and words in the text to suit the occasion. Less attention would be given here to this imaginative extravagance, were it not that Cheyne threatens us with fresh deluges of this sort of criticism.<sup>1</sup> Such sad mutilations of the Hebrew text and such perversions of Hebrew history do serious harm to the interests of a rational and sound criticism. Textual and historical criticism are the necessary foundations of any valid Biblical study, but an attempt to rewrite Hebrew history from pure imagination is objectionable in principle and barren in result.

(12) ST. LUKE xiii. 33 (p. 292)

Our Lord's meaning is not that some fate is drawing Him to Jerusalem, but that a prophet could only die at the hands of the Church. The peril to the outspoken man of God, in the olden days, came often from the State; for the State and Church were closely identified. When the State became independent it was no longer a menace to free religious speech. In the case of our Lord it is significant that the one hand stretched out to stay the mad passions of the frantic crowd stirred up by the chief officers of the Jewish Church was that of the Roman governor. Jerusalem, which should have been the centre, not only of religious life, but also of religious liberty, was as a matter of fact the centre of religious persecution, and the principal place of martyrdom.

(13) "MALACHI" (p. 313)

It has long been surmised that Malachi is not a proper name, and that we do not know the name of the prophet to whom this book is due. Cheyne holds that Joel and Obadiah likewise are not the names of prophets, since Joel may be an error for Jerahmeel and Obadiah for Arabian.<sup>2</sup> Cheyne further

<sup>1</sup> See *Crit. Bibl.*, introd.

<sup>2</sup> See Note (11).



suggests that Malachi is a corruption for Michael, the latter not being the name of the prophet, but the general term for any angel messenger.

"Malachi" is apparently taken into the heading from iii. 1, where it must be rendered "my messenger." On account of the similarity of language Nowack thinks that the heading to Malachi<sup>1</sup> is from the same hand as the headings in Zechariah ix. 1 and xii. 1, all three beginning with the peculiar phrase, "the oracle of the word of Jahveh unto Israel" ("unto Israel" is lacking from our present text in ix. 1). The LXX. and the Targums did not read "Malachi" as a proper name, the former rendering ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ. The editor did mean Malachi as a proper name, however, for rendering "my messenger" will not make good sense in the heading. The Greek translators saw the difficulty and obviated by reading "his messenger."

(14) MEANING OF נָבִיא (p. 217).

It may be safely asserted that while apparently every possibility has been proposed, Biblical scholars are still at sea as to the root meaning. Most writers connect with Assyrian *nabu*, to call or name. Nebo (or Assyrian Nabu), whose name is essentially the same word as *nabi*, is sometimes called a prophet among the gods.<sup>2</sup> Hoffmann proposed the meaning, "one who utters his words in a loud and violent manner with deep inhalations."<sup>3</sup> He connects idea with the drivel symptomatic of an epileptic fit. Cheyne thinks that the meaning "speaker" is not in accordance with the earliest accounts of the *nebi'im*, and suggests that the word is another form of נָבַע to effervesce or gush.<sup>4</sup> Beyer connected with an Assyrian נָבַע to tear away violently, therefore originally the prophet was one carried away by a supernatural power. In Israel, he

<sup>1</sup> i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Jastrow, *Relig. of Babyl. and Assyr.* p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> *Z. A. T. W.*, 3, 88 ff; so Kautzsch, *Hastings' Bib. Dict.*, ext. vol., p. 652.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Davidson, *Hastings' Bib. Dict.*, iv. p. 108.



says, an insane man was believed to be possessed of supernatural powers.<sup>1</sup> David's expulsion from Achish<sup>2</sup> and the demoniacal possession in the New Testament, do not support his view.

Cornill discusses the word at length in his *Prophets of Israel*.<sup>3</sup> He says the word is not originally Hebrew, and we must therefore go to the cognates. He dismisses the Assyrian equivalent as lacking the essential point, which he finds in the Arabic, where we get the sense "announcing" or "proclaiming." His example, Aaron as the prophet of Moses,<sup>4</sup> does not seem to me a good instance of the primitive use, nor is there sufficient basis in his derivation for his conclusion that Arabia is the ancient home of Hebrew prophecy.

The oldest use of the word is in 1 Samuel x. 5 ff., where "prophesying" certainly is applied to the excited singing and dancing to the accompaniment of instrumental music. Saul quickly succumbed to this influence, and, if we may in a measure trust the later account,<sup>5</sup> which is often regarded as a later version of the old story in chapter x., anyone who came under the spell was likely to catch the contagion.

<sup>1</sup> *Am. Jr. Sem. Lang.*, xviii. 120.

<sup>3</sup> p. 8 ff.

<sup>5</sup> xix. 18 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xxi. 10 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Exod. iv. 10 f. ; vii. 1.



## INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>             Abraham, 9<br/>             Ahab, 11, 52, 106, 178 ff.<br/>             Ahaz, 115, 214<br/>             Ahijah, 7, 173<br/>             Ahikam, 245<br/>             Amaziah, 57, 77, 147, 176<br/>             Amos, 57<br/>               " and the Church, 279 ff.<br/>               "       " State, 198 ff.<br/>             Azariah, 176<br/><br/>             Balaam, 14, 17, 23<br/>             Barton, 34<br/>             Baruch, 143<br/>             Briggs, 123<br/>             Budde, 35, 54 ff., 56, 169, 321<br/><br/>             Chebar, 257<br/>               " addn. note (11), 341<br/>             Cheyne, 98<br/>               " theory of prophecy, addn.<br/>                   note (11), 341<br/>             Chronicler, 138<br/><br/>             David, 170<br/>               " house of, 204<br/>             Davidson, 104<br/>             Deborah, 34<br/>               " song of, 166<br/>             Divination, 162<br/>             Dreams, 20<br/>             Duhm, 155, 241, 248, 298, 302<br/><br/>             Ecstatic state, 23<br/>             Eglon, 165<br/>             Elijah, 113, 177, 178<br/>             Elisha, 15, 24, 65, 186, 322 f.         </p> | <p>             Ezekiel, 153, 320<br/>               " call of, 99 f.<br/>               " and the Church, 304 ff.<br/>               "       " State, 257 ff.<br/><br/>             False prophets, 58, 302<br/>             Fulfilment of prophecy, 121<br/><br/>             Gemariah, 246<br/>             Gomer, 86<br/><br/>             Habakkuk, 159<br/>             Haggai, 149, 310<br/>             Hananiah, 58, 107, 133, 301<br/>             Hastings' <i>Bible Dictionary</i>, 69,<br/>                   210, 227, 230<br/>             Hezekiah, 116, 226, 322<br/>             Hezekiah's accession, 218<br/>               " reformation, 219<br/>             Hilprecht, 164, 257<br/>             Hosea, call of, 85 ff.<br/>             Huldah, 240<br/><br/>             Inspiration of silence, 319<br/>             Isaiah, 156<br/>               " call of, 91 ff.<br/>               " and the Church, 290<br/>               "       " State, 212 ff.<br/><br/>             Jastrow, 70<br/>             Jehoiachin, 243<br/>             Jehoshaphat, 11, 52<br/>             Jehu, 183, 190, 203, 323<br/>             Jerahmeel, addn. note (11), 341<br/>             Jeremiah, 61, 326<br/>               " call of, 95 ff.<br/>               " and the Church, 293 ff.<br/>               "       " State, 239 ff.         </p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



Jeroboam, 6, 276  
 Jeroboam II., 191, 197  
 Jezebel, 179  
     ,, persecution of, 55  
     ,, addn. note (5), 336  
 Joash, 176, 190  
 Joel, 13, 314  
 Jonah, son of Amittai, 191  
 Josephus, 54  
 Joshua, 311 f.  
 Josiah's reformation, 240  
 Judah, 206  
  
 Kittel, 53, 72, 174, 232, 240  
 Kraetzschmar, 49 f., 69, 71, 76  
  
 Malachi, 149, 313  
 "Malachi." Cf. Joel, addn. note  
     (13), 343  
 Manasseh, 239  
 Merodach-baladan, 223  
 Micah, book of, 210  
     ,, and the State, 210 ff.  
 Micaiah, 52, 106, 185, 282, 318  
 Moabite Stone, 186  
 Moses, 24, 28, 110  
 Musri, 223  
  
 Naaman, 65  
 Nabi', 317  
     ,, meaning of, addn. note (14),  
         344  
 Naboth, 183  
 Nathan, 170, 172, 193, 321  
 Natural and supernatural, 3  
 Nehemiah, 195  
 Nowack, 210  
  
 Obadiah, 51  
 Omri, 177  
 Origen, 329  
 Ottley, v, 164, 281  
  
 Pashhur, 300  
 Paton, 184, 198  
 Paul, St., 157  
 Pekah, 209, 213

Peter, St., 324  
 Peters, 201, 288  
 Prophecies, pseudepigraphic, 40  
 Prophecy, conditional, 131  
     ,, predictive, 129  
 Prophet; his insight, 4 ff.  
     ,, knowledge of past, 7 f.  
     ,, " future, 8 ff.  
     ,, control of the future, 13 ff.  
     ,, mark on forehead, addn.  
         note (6), 336  
     ,, as a revolutionist, 193 ff.  
 Prophet's dress, 68  
     ,, fees, 65  
     ,, living, 64  
     ,, power, 103  
 Prophets of Ahab, 52 ff.  
     ,, of Baal, 114, 180  
     ,, and priests, 33, 280 ff.  
  
 Ramah, 5; addn. note (1), 331  
 Ramoth-gilead, 11  
 Razon, 213  
 Rehoboam, 174  
 Restoration, 128  
 Rogers, 223 ff., 234  
 Roll, burning of, 247 f.  
  
 Samuel, 13, 167, 274  
     ,, book of, 168  
 Sanday, 104  
 Sargon's invasion, 221  
 Saul, 5, 167  
 Sayce, 214, 225  
 Schultz, 54, 56, 62  
 Seer, 31  
 Sennacherib, 228, 234, 237  
 Shebna, 230  
 Shemaiah, 174  
 Shishak, 175  
 Shunamite, 322  
 Signs, 111  
 Smith, G. A., 86, 199, 207  
     ,, H. P., 33, 43, 49, 171, 257  
     ,, W. Robertson, 145, 204,  
         287  
 Solomon, 37, 172  
 Spiritual enlightenment, 25



Spiritual influences, 101

Stenography, 142

„ addn. note (8), 339

Syro-Ephraimitish War, 213

Tabeel, son of, 209

Temple, 305

Theophanies, 19

Toy, 261 f.

Uriah, 245

Vision, 22, 317

Wellhausen, 84

Winckler, 218, 223 ff.

Zechariah, 278, 311

Zedekiah, 251, 296

Zephaniah, 90, 303

Zerubbabel, 267 ff.



# INDEX OF SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

	PAGE		PAGE
Genesis xviii. 17 f.	9	1 Kings xii. 21 ff.	174
Exodus vii. 8 ff.	118	"    xiii.	276
"    xi. 1 f.	325	"    xvi. 1 ff.	6
"    iv. 2-4	111	"    xvii.	178
Numbers xii. 6 ff.	24	"    xviii.	179
Deuteronomy xiii. 2-4	119	"    xviii. 24	114
"    xviii. 21 f.	123	"    xix. 15 f.	181
Judges v.	166	"    xx.	184
"    v. 7	34	"    xx. 38, 41	72
1 Samuel iii. 1	33	"    xxii.	106
"    iii. 19	112	"    xxii. 5	12
"    vii.	35	"    xxii. 6	53
"    ix. 5, 9	30	2 Kings iii.	15
"    ix. 9	317	"    iii. 13 ff.	186
"    ix. 9, addn. note (3)	334	"    iii. 15	24
"    x. 7	168	"    iv. 27	322
"    xv., addn. note (10)	340	"    iv. 38 ff.	67
"    xv. 22	275	"    vi. 6	4
"    xvi.	326	"    vi. 8 ff.	187, 189
"    xix. 18 ff.	49	"    vi. 31	188
"    xix. 20	43	"    viii. 4 f.	185
"    xxiii.	162	"    viii. 7 ff.	189
"    xxvi. 19	304	"    viii. 12	182
"    xxviii. 14	68	"    ix.	190
2 Samuel vii.	11	"    ix. 8	323
"    vii. 1 ff.	321	"    ix. 11	57
"    xxiv.	171	"    ix. 20	183
1 Kings i. 39	173	"    xviii. 10	218
"    xi. 29	173	"    xviii. 13	219
		"    xix. 6 f.	236
		"    xx.	116, 322
		"    xxiii. 15 ff.	276
		2 Chronicles xxv. 1-16	177
		"    xxxiii. 19	139



	PAGE		PAGE
Psalms l. 8 f. . . . .	13, 288	Jeremiah xxii. 24-30 . . . . .	243
„ li. 16 f. . . . .	288	„ xxvi. . . . .	299
„ lxxiv. 9 . . . . .	39	„ xxvi. 17 ff. . . . .	212
„ cxxxvii. . . . .	304	„ xxvi. 17-19 . . . . .	288
„ cxxxvii. 7 . . . . .	306	„ xxvi. 20-23 . . . . .	245
Proverbs xxvi. I . . . . .	113	„ xxvii. . . . .	296
Isaiah i. 11-14 . . . . .	292	„ xxviii. I . . . . .	107, 302
„ vi. 1-9 . . . . .	92	„ xxviii. 2 ff. . . . .	301
„ vi. 5 ff. . . . .	328	„ xxviii. 9 . . . . .	123
„ vii. 4 . . . . .	215	„ xxviii. 11 . . . . .	108
„ vii. 11 . . . . .	115	„ xxix. . . . .	251
„ vii. 16 . . . . .	216	„ xxxii. . . . .	257
„ viii. 2 . . . . .	290	„ xxx.-xxxiii. . . . .	158
„ viii. 3 . . . . .	159	„ xxxiv. 8 ff. . . . .	253
„ xiv. 28-32 . . . . .	228	„ xxxvi. . . . .	144
„ xx. . . . .	116	„ xxxvi. 5 . . . . .	144
„ xx. I . . . . .	222	„ xxxvi. 29 . . . . .	246
„ xxii. 16 . . . . .	231	„ xxxvii. 19 . . . . .	296
„ xxviii. 7 . . . . .	291	„ xxxviii. 14-28 . . . . .	327
„ xxix. 10 . . . . .	319	Ezekiel viii. 3 . . . . .	260
„ xxx. 8 . . . . .	159	„ xi. 22 f. . . . .	304, 306
„ xxx. 9 f. . . . .	293	„ xii. 3-7 . . . . .	262
„ xli. 21 f. . . . .	124	„ xvii. . . . .	263
„ xliv. 26 . . . . .	125	„ xxiv. 15 ff. . . . .	265
„ xlviii. 127 . . . . .	127	„ xxxvii. 12 ff. . . . .	265
„ l. I . . . . .	89	Hosea i.-iii. . . . .	200
„ l. 4 ff. . . . .	310	„ i. 2 . . . . .	87, 90
„ liii. . . . .	308	„ i. 3-9 . . . . .	86
Jeremiah i. 4-10 . . . . .	96	„ viii. 4 . . . . .	201
„ ii. 30 . . . . .	239	„ ix. 7 f. . . . .	284
„ iii. 6 ff. . . . .	241	„ xi. 12 . . . . .	207
„ iii. 18 . . . . .	241	Joel ii. 17 . . . . .	314
„ v. 30 f. . . . .	294	„ ii. 28 ff. . . . .	315
„ v. 31 . . . . .	47	Amos ii. 11 . . . . .	44
„ v. 31, addn. note (4) . . . . .	335	„ iii. 3-8 . . . . .	77
„ vii. 21 f. . . . .	297	„ iii. 7 . . . . .	10, 126, 318
„ xi. 1-8, addn. note (7) . . . . .	338	„ iii. 7, addn. note (2) . . . . .	332
„ xi. 18 ff. . . . .	243	„ iii. 8 . . . . .	84
„ xiii. 18 f. . . . .	248	„ v. 21 ff. . . . .	280
„ xvii. 19 ff. . . . .	298	„ vii. 12 . . . . .	67
„ xviii. 21 . . . . .	327	„ vii. 12 ff. . . . .	282
„ xx. 3 ff. . . . .	301	„ vii. 14 f. . . . .	57
„ xx. 7 ff. . . . .	257	„ vii. 15 . . . . .	77
„ xxi. 8-10 . . . . .	254		



# INDEX OF SCRIPTURE PASSAGES 351

	PAGE		PAGE
Amos vii. 17 . . .	327	Zechariah xiii. 2 . . .	63
„ viii. 5 . . .	280	Malachi ii. 14 ff. . .	314
„ ix. 11 ff. . .	200	St. Matthew vii. 21 . . .	329
Micah iii. 1-4 . . .	210	St. Luke i. 70 . . .	29
„ iii. 5-7 . . .	286	„ vii. 36 ff. . .	6
„ iii. 12 . . .	212, 289	„ xiii. 33 . . .	272
„ vi. 1-8 . . .	287	„ xiii., addn. note (12) 343	
Zephaniah iii. 3 f. . .	304	St. John iii. 2 . . .	117
Haggai i. 5-11 . . .	310	„ iv. 5 ff. . .	7
„ ii. 10-19 . . .	311	„ iv. 48 . . .	120
Zechariah ii. 1-5 . . .	268	„ vii. 17 . . .	136
„ iv. 6 ff. . .	268	„ x. 41 . . .	129
„ vi. 9 ff. . .	312	Acts iii. 24 . . .	30
„ vii. 5 ff. . .	313	„ x. . . .	324
„ viii. . . .	269	Hebrews xi. 36 ff. . .	272
„ viii. 23 . . .	105		
„ xi. 3 . . .	72		



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