

ANTICIPATIONS OF THE NEW COVENANT

IN

JEREMIAH

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ANTICIPATIONS OF THE NEW COVENANT
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By
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A Thesis
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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER II.

THE RELATION BETWEEN JEREMIAH'S TIMES
AND NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

CHAPTER II

THE RELATION BETWEEN JEREMIAH'S TIMES AND NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

A. In View of the Political Situations.

1. In Jeremiah's Times.

Megiddo, Corchemish, the fall of Jerusalem - three epoch-making events around which is gathered the political history of Judah in the time of Jeremiah. Upon the outcome of these three conflicts depended the destiny of great nations as well as the political fortune of the tiny kingdom of Judah. So rapidly were the tides of international relationships rising and falling, that these three remarkable events occurred within the space of one generation. It was in this crucial period of world history that the prophet Jeremiah, in response to a Divine command,¹ appeared upon the scene of conflict. The glory which once had been Judah's was waning rapidly, decadence had set in²,

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1. Jeremiah 1:5
2. II Kings 21:9

and disaster threatened,¹ when to this great prophet was given the task of diverting the impending doom by turning the nation from the error of its way.²

To understand properly the plight of Judah and to grasp the significance of the prophets message, it is necessary to get a birds-eye view of the locus operandi at the time when Jeremiah undertook his great mission, which was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah,³ King of Judah, or about 626 B. C. To the north lies what was once the great empire of Assyria, now rapidly disintegrating due to the influx of barbarous Scythians; to the east is Babylonia and Chaldea, still a part of Assyria but already in the process of forming a new dynasty which is to become a great power; to the south lies Egypt, casting covetous glances toward Syria over which she soon hopes to wield her sceptre. In the centre of our picture is the kingdom of Judah, seeking to further her political aspirations by a policy of intrigue and connivance with the two great nations between which she lay⁴. Under the reign of Josiah, Judah regained some of her former prosperity and independence.⁵

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1. Ibid 21:13
2. Jeremiah 1:17
3. Ibid 1:2
4. Jeremiah 2:18
5. Ibid 9:23

The King purged the religion of Judah of all idolatrous and foreign influence¹ and re-established the worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem, according to the law of Moses.² The result of these extensive reforms by Josiah was a growth of national independence and security. The judgment which God had pronounced upon the nation for the provocations of Manasseh³ was forgotten and the people believed that the great destiny of Judah was about to be realized.

a. The Battle at Megiddo.

In 608 B.C. Pharaoh Necho advanced toward Carchemish to make an assault upon the tottering Assyrian empire, but with apparently no desire to inflict any harm on Judah at this time.⁴ Josiah, however, evidently mistrusted the purpose of the king of Egypt and went forth to intercept him, despite a warning from the Egyptian king that God was opposed to his interference.⁵ Nevertheless, Josiah proceeded to battle and the two forces met at Megiddo. The Egyptians won a decisive victory and Josiah was carried back to Jerusalem mortally wounded, where he died.

Concerning the result at Megiddo Ball says, "The

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1. II Kings 23:4-20
2. Josephus, Antiquities, x.4:5
3. II Kings 21:10-15, 23:26,27
4. II Chronicles 35:21
5. II Chronicles 35:22

height to which the national aspirations had soared, only made the fall more disastrous, complete, ruinous." ¹ In the first place it meant the loss of Judah's national independence. The people elected as king Jehoahaz, ² the son of Josiah, but he had only reigned three months when Pharaoh Necho deposed him from his throne, and established in his place Jehoiakim, ³ and Judah became a tributary to Egypt. In the second place, it demonstrated conclusively that the nationalistic expectations of Judah had been founded upon a superficial conception of what constituted national greatness. Finally, it brought into the foreground the great prophet Jeremiah, whose message had had little significance to a people whose senses were dulled by a sense of false security. If the battle of Megiddo marked a turning point in the life of the nation, so did it also in the life of the prophet. From this time Jeremiah, as the mouthpiece of God, is the outstanding figure in the great drama which is being enacted upon the stage of history.

b. The Battle of Carchemish.

In quick succession to the first of these three epochal events came the second -- Carchemish. After his

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1. Ball, C. J., The Prophecies of Jeremiah, p. 20
2. II Kings 23:30
3. II Kings 23:34

subjugation of Judah which was a mere diversion, Pharaoh Necho turned to the original purpose of his invasion of Syria, which was to pit his strength against that of the Chaldeans who now occupied a threatening position in the North due to their victory over Assyria. The fall of Nineveh soon after the fiasco at Megiddo¹ marked the complete collapse of the Assyrian empire. The King of Egypt was desirous of getting his share of the broken empire and thus extending the borders of his kingdom. He proceeded as far as the Euphrates unopposed but at Carchemish he met up with the Chaldean army under Nebuchadrezzar, who won an overwhelming victory. Thus the rising power of Egypt was checked and the Chaldeans became a dominant factor in the political realm of Syria. The immediate result upon Judah of this defeat was that Jehoiakim was forced to transfer his allegiance to Nebuchadrezzar. Three years later, however, his Egyptian sympathies overcame his better judgment and he rebelled against the Chaldean king² who responded by laying siege to the city. Jehoiakim died during the siege and was succeeded by his son Jechoiachin,³

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1. Rogers sets the date at 607 or 606 B. C. - Rogers, W. R., History of Babylonia and Assyria, Vol. II, p 293
2. II Kings 24:1
3. II Kings 24:6

who, after reigning three months, surrendered to the Chaldeans.¹ Jehoiachin with eight thousand of his subjects and much treasure was taken captive to Babylon, and Zedekiah, his uncle, was placed on the throne of Judah.²

c. The fall of Jerusalem.

Now we come to the last of our three great events—the fall of Jerusalem. Zedekiah followed in the footsteps of his predecessor and in the seventh year of his reign he became involved in an intrigue with Egypt, the same old stumbling block over which previous kings had tripped. Relying on the assistance of the Egyptian king, Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadrezzar. Punishment was sure and swift. In 588 B. C., in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign,³ Nebuchadrezzar marched against Jerusalem and laid siege to the city. Despite the previous warnings of Jeremiah, the king decided to resist the siege. In 586 B. C. Nebuchadrezzar succeeded in breaking down the wall and entered the city, completely destroying it and burning down the temple.⁴ The impossible had happened and with heads bowed in grief the inhabitants of the city began their long treks into captivity in Babylon.

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1. II Kings 24:12
2. II Kings 24:17
3. Jeremiah 27:12
4. Jeremiah 52:7-14

While the foregoing pages are an attempt to portray the political situation which underlies the prophecy of Jeremiah, we fully realize that the true significance of the historic facts herein presented can only be grasped as we interpret them in the light of the prophet's message. Before attempting to do this, however, it will be more in keeping with the purpose of this section of our study, if we undertake an examination of the political situation which existed in the first century of the Christian era. Our point of concentration will naturally be the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. This repetition of the great tragedy, which brought to a close an epoch in the history of the kingdom of Judah in 586 B. C., was not a mere co-incidence, a similar but unrelated event; indeed it is a silent witness, as long as history is read, to the consistent and inexorable operation of a great law of Nature -- cause and effect. Thus it is that in this twice occurring destruction of the capital city of Judah we may seek, and hope to find, a relationship between the times of Jeremiah and New Testament times. That there is a relationship is indicated by these words of Cowles¹: "These two periods of Jewish history are not only analogous; there has been no third one."¹

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1. Cowles, Henry, Jeremiah, Introduction, p. vii.

2. In New Testament Times.

Under the Maccabeans the political aspirations of Judah had reached a high pitch, and for a brief period of a little less than a hundred years the tiny kingdom enjoyed a prosperous independence reminiscent of the glorious days of Solomon. However, the rise of the Pharisaic party had brought division and dissension, which in turn led to civil war. It was in this period of Jewish history that Pompey arrived in Syria with his Roman legions, in the winter of 64-63 B. C.,¹ and rapidly completed the conquest of Judah and the capture of Jerusalem. Once more under Judah was / control of a foreign power. Any hope that the fulfillment of Judah's national aspirations would take place through political channels was dashed to the ground, and the Pharisaic party, which was now in control, pinned their faith on the coming of a Messiah who would effect the restoration of the Jewish nation.

In accordance with the Roman system of governing its conquered provinces, Judah was given a large share of autonomy. The political affairs of the kingdom were under the jurisdiction of a king, who was responsible for the preservation of law and order. There was little interfer-

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1. Mathews, Shailer N. T. Times in Palestine, p. 117

ence with the religious and social customs of the people. To the Sanhedrin was given the right to try civil, religious, and criminal cases and to inflict any punishment except death.¹ The Sanhedrin also collected the tribute to be paid to Rome. However, the Jews had a fanatical hatred of the Romans and as a result there were constant outbreaks taking place in Judea. The result was that repressive measures were often adopted by the procurator as a means of punishment.

With the growth of the messianic hope there was a corresponding increase in the revolutionary spirit of the Jews. This spirit was fostered by a group called Zealots, who were constantly agitating the people and were the cause of most of the disturbances. The Roman government insisted on law and order but found it increasingly difficult to maintain it in a "people remembering its former independence and trusting to its God for deliverance."² In the sixth decade of the first century A. D. the murderous activities of the Zealots reached their climax and revolution broke out. The Sanhedrin, who at first opposed the Zealots, finally decided that as long as the Messianic hope remained unfulfilled, Judah should at least regain its national in-

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1. Ibid, p. 170
2. Mathews, N.T. Times in Palestine, p. 269

dependence, and thus sanctioned the revolution. The rebellion took place in 66 A.D. and Rome immediately took steps to quell it. The first move in the campaign was the conquest of the outer province of Galilee and Samaria. While this was going on, civil war broke out in Jerusalem between the Zealots and the more moderate party headed by the Sanhedrin. For two years there was a virtual reign of terror within the walls of Jerusalem. In the month of April, 70 A. D., Titus appeared before the city and began his siege. After months of desperate fighting the outer walls were broken through, and finally those of the temple. The scene within the city was one of indescribable horror.¹ The inhabitants were slaughtered by the thousand, and those spared were sold into slavery. The temple was burned, the walls razed and the city completely destroyed. History had indeed repeated itself in the fulfillment of the prophecy² of One far greater than Jeremiah.

Summary.

Before attempting to show its significance in the light of Jeremiah's prophecy, we shall present a brief summary of the historical data contained in the preceding

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1. Josephus, Wars, V. 2:5, 13:7, VI.3:3, 9:2,3,4
2. Matthew 24:2, Luke 19:44

pages. The three outstanding political events in Jeremiah's times were: (a) The battle of Megiddo where Josiah met Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, and was defeated. This battle resulted in the death of Josiah and the loss of Judah's independence. (b) The battle of Carchemish in which Pharaoh Necho was defeated by Nebuchadrezzar. Carchemish was the deciding factor in the struggle between Egypt and Babylon for control over what had been the Assyrian empire. By virtue of Nebuchadrezzar's victory Babylon became the dominant political power of her day. The effect upon Judah was to make her a tributary to Babylon instead of Egypt. (c) The fall of Jerusalem, which was caused by Judah's rebellion against the king of Babylon. In retaliation Nebuchadrezzar reconquered the kingdom, destroyed Jerusalem, burned the temple, and carried most of its inhabitants into captivity in Babylon. The political decline of Judah was marked by a simultaneous moral and spiritual disintegration.

In the first century of the Christian era practically the same process is repeated. Then Judah was in subjugation to the great Roman empire. Urged on by her national aspirations she rebels against Rome. While a Roman army is reconquering the kingdom, civil war breaks out in Jerusalem. In 70 A.D. the Romans besieged the city, succeeded in capturing it, and for the second time in Jew-

ish history Jerusalem was razed to the ground and the temple destroyed.

3. The Significance of the Political Situations.

With the circumstances leading up to and resulting in the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C., and its counterpart in 70 A. D., as a background, we turn to the prophecy of Jeremiah as an illuminating agent, in the light of which we shall seek to discover the significance of the facts presented above.

a. God's Judgment upon the Nation.

It is evidence in the very first chapter of the prophecy that God's judgment upon a sinful nation is to be in the form of an invasion which shall threaten the security of the nation and the city of Jerusalem.¹ An unnamed foe is to appear from the north,² whose cruelty and mercilessness may well cause Judah to tremble in fear.³ Thus it is that in scanning the political horizons Jeremiah sees the gathering storm clouds, barely perceptible, and yet forecasting the approaching storm. Overhead the sun is shining. On the surface the country presents a picture of a nation

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1. Jeremiah 1:15
2. For a thorough discussion of the meaning of "the North" see: Welch, A.C., Jeremiah, His Time and His Works, ch. 6
3. Jeremiah 6:22-26

prosperous and self-satisfied, at peace with the world and with God.¹ But from his lofty eminence the prophet reveals the true condition of the land. Apostasy,² idolatry,³ immorality,⁴ the moral bankruptcy of spiritual and political leaders,⁵ intrigues with other nations⁶ all summed up in one great sin - Judah had forsaken her God, her fountain of living waters.⁷ In the nation's sin the prophet Jeremiah saw the significance of the political movements of his day. As time went on the inevitability of judgment becomes increasingly manifest. The battle of Megiddo with its tragic result confirmed the validity of the prophets message, not only to himself but to the nation. And then came Carchemish and "like a flash of lightning in the darkness it lighted up to him the whole line of God's purpose to the end."⁸ Not only was judgment certain but God had now revealed the instrumentality by which it would come.⁹ From that time on two courses were open - submission or resistance. Jeremiah advocated the first course. The word of Jehovah had come to him saying, "the nation that shall bring their necks under

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1. Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11
2. Ibid 2:5
3. Ibid 2:11
4. Ibid 3:6
5. Ibid 2:8
6. Ibid 2:36
7. Ibid 2:13
8. Ball, op. cit., p 28
9. Jeremiah 25:9

the yoke of the kings of Babylon, and serve him, that nation will I let remain in their own land; and they shall till it, and dwell therein."¹ "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people and ye shall live,"² thundered Jeremiah to king Zedekiah. It was a matter of yielding to and accepting the righteous judgment of God and thus save the nation, or resist and perish. Not without meaning was the name given to him by Nebuchadrezzar when he ascended the throne.³ However, Zedekiah heeded not the advice of the prophet and judgment was swift in descending. The storm finally broke and like a whirlwind Nebuchadrezzar and his cohorts swept down upon the little kingdom. Too late Zedekiah realized that in this avenging force the righteousness of Jehovah was asserting itself. To preserve His own integrity and to fulfill the ancient promise concerning the nation's destiny God could do only one thing, and that was to destroy both temple and nation.

We can readily see the relationship of the first fall of Jerusalem to the second in the light of its true significance. Jesus was called upon to pronounce the doom

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1. Ibid. 27:11
2. Ibid. 27:12
3. II Kings 24:17

of the temple and nation for exactly the same reason - Judah had placed its faith in a building of stone and lime.¹ As Ball says: "By Jeremiah God sent his last words of warning and made his last efforts to reclaim and save the nation prior to the great captivity. So the Lord Jesus inaugurated the last endeavor to regenerate the nation and call the people and their pastors back to God, prior to the final fall of their city before the Romans."² In each instance the prophetic message was disregarded by the leaders of the nation. Their failure to understand its true meaning was due to their own false conceptions of the Divine nature. Their failure to understand and to believe was due to their stubbornness of heart.³ For that God punished them.

b. God's Purpose Revealed.

In these two great tragedies and the corresponding currents of political action which were involved we see above all else the Divine purpose slowly threading its way through the centuries. It manifested itself in the rise and fall of empires, its advance sometimes hastened, sometimes retarded, but ever moving onward toward the great consummation - that glorious day in which all the

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1. Jeremiah 7:4
2. Cowles, Henry; Jeremiah, Introd., p. vii
3. Jeremiah 16:12

kingdoms of the earth shall in fact be the kingdom of our Lord and Christ. In the light of this purpose the movements of men and nations across the stage of history, seemingly chaotic and meaningless, acquire order and significance. Always it characterizes the prophets' message. Jeremiah beheld the foundations of Judah crumble beneath her, but in the midst of the ruin his faith in the future destiny of the kingdom remained unshaken. In the nations darkest hour his inspired vision enable him to see the glimmering dawn of a new day. "Fear not thou, O Jacob, my servant, saith Jehovah; for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished."¹

B. In View of the Social Situation.

1. In Jeremiah's Times.

a. Social Classes:

The population of Judah was classified by Jeremiah under three major divisions, namely:- political, religious, civil.² The first group consisted of the king and his advisers, the princes, and made up the nobility. Next and closely related to the first, was the ecclesias-

1. Jeremiah 46:28

2. Jeremiah 1:18, II Kings 23:1,2

tical party, in which must be included the prophets, both true and false. In a theocratic kingdom such as Judah this second group had a two-fold function; first, the administration of the religious system of the country, the centre of which was the temple worship in Jerusalem;¹ and second, a voice in the national council which determined the political policies of the nation.² The third or civil group consisted of the people, "both small and great."³ This class was divided into its several strata. First there was a prosperous minority made up of large land owners, for Judah was largely an agricultural country, and also consisting of the commercial group which would exist in the larger cities.⁴ Beneath these would be the small, independent farmers and crofters⁵ in the country sections, and artisans and tradesmen in the cities.⁶ Lowest in the social scale would be the slaves and servants,⁷ whom Jeremiah calls the poor and ignorant,⁸ the victims of the injustice and oppression of those above them.⁹

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1. Welch, A.C., Jeremiah, p. 19
2. Jeri, 26:11, 27:14
3. II Kings 23:2
4. Jeremiah 22:13
5. Ibid 14:4
6. II Chronicles 34:17
7. Jeremiah 34:8
8. Ibid 5:4
9. Ibid 5:26

b. Social Conditions:

It is no pleasant picture which Jeremiah paints of the social conditions of his day. His message is studded with indictment after indictment of the social evils which existed. He bitterly protested against man's inhumanity to man, which manifested itself in the greed, trickery, and injustice rampant throughout the land:

"For among my people are found wicked men: they watch, as fowlers lie in wait; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore, they are become great and waxed rich. They are waxed fat, they shine: yea, they overpass in deeds of wickedness; they plead not the cause of the fatherless, that they may prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge."¹

He vigorously denounced the conduct of a king who would build for himself a luxurious palace at the expense of his unfortunate subjects, refusing to pay his workmen their just wages.² To Jeremiah such an action was not only a violation of economic law, but of the moral law as well. The unrighteousness of the king was reflected in the life of people and priests. "For," said Jeremiah, "from the least of them even unto the greatest of them everyone is given to

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1. Jeremiah 5:26-28
2. Jeremiah 22:13,14

covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest everyone dealeth falsely "¹ No better indication of the extent and severity of this oppression of man by man can be found than in these words of the prophet: "Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the innocent poor." ²

In addition to the oppression and injustice depicted above, there existed the most flagrant immorality. The sanctity of the home was no longer inviolable. Neighbors sought one another's wives to commit adultery with them.³ The marital relationship was readily dissolved.⁴ The whole nation had surrendered to the lust of unbridled passion, and in its social and religious life had given itself up to immoral practices.⁵ Worst of all, and what caused Jeremiah great spiritual anguish, was that the priests and prophets were no better than the people. Within the temple itself there was moral corruption,⁶ and in the holy city the prophets committed adultery and walked in lies.⁷ What a picture the prophet has depicted of a

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1. Ibid 8:10, 6:13
2. Ibid 2:34
3. Jeremiah, 5:8, 29:23 (One must also allow this possibly to be a rhetorical device to emphasize the deplorable self-will indicated in the context.)
4. Ibid, 3:1
5. Ibid 23:10
6. Ibid 23:11
7. Ibid 23:14

nation so morally bankrupt, the fabric of its life so thoroughly rotten that the slightest strain upon it will cause its disintegration into tattered garments! In the light of such a portrayal the scorching denunciation of Jeremiah becomes readily understandable.

2. In New Testament Times.

A comparison of the social situation at the beginning of the Christian era with that of Jeremiah's times reveals some changes in form but little difference in character.

a. Social Classes:

One of the principal changes which took place during the years intervening between the two periods was the elimination politically of the nobility or ruling class as an agency of government. After the first fall of Jerusalem and the captivity, Judah never recovered her national independence in any permanent sense. Thus, class distinctions were mainly restricted to those between slave and freemen, rich and poor, and to a limited extent were reflected in the religious castes of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The two latter parties, between which there was bitter antagonism because of religious and political differences in the past, were at the top of the social heap. The Sadducees were a wealthy aristocracy who con-

trolled the lucrative business of supplying the animals sold to be offered as sacrifices in the temple. Their position in Jewish society rested upon birth and the surety of their wealth upon the devotion of the Jewish people to the law.¹ On the other hand, the Pharisees, by virtue of their control over the Sanhedrin, were the governing class, insofar as the Jews were allowed to govern themselves, as well as the religious leaders of the people.

Palestine had increased in commercial importance after the exile which made possible a class of wealthy merchants. In addition to these were the large landowners,² often absentee landlords, who administered their great estates through stewards.³ And then, there was the poorer class ranging from the farmers and artisans to the beggars who sat at the gates of rich men asking only for what morsels of food which might be left over from the rich man's table.⁴ It was the poor which by far comprised the majority of the population.

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1. Cf. Mathews, Shailer, N.T. Times in Palestine, p. 82
Mathews' material is based largely on Josephus,
Antiquities xiii -10:6 ff.
An excellent discussion of the origin and nature of
the Sadducees is contained in: Schürer, Emil, A History
of the Jewish People, Division II, Vol. II pp. 4-43.
Schürer's list of source material is of especial value.
2. Luke 12:16
3. Luke 16:1
4. Ibid 16:20, 21

b. Social Conditions.

The portrayal of social conditions by the writers of the gospels may not be as vivid and sordid as that by Jeremiah, but the difference is only in degree. There is plenty of evidence to indicate that Judah was still far from being the utopia envisioned by the prophets more than six centuries before. The mere fact that a comparatively small wealthy class existed at the same time multitudes of people were living in poverty is a clear sign of economic oppression and injustice. The poor suffered under the burden of taxation and the unjust exactions of the publicans.¹ The widows and fatherless still found it difficult to obtain redress from judges for wrongs committed against them.² Men did not hesitate to bear false witness to further their own designs.³ Travel was dangerous because of robber-infested highways.⁴

Adultery,⁵ lying,⁶ and stealing⁷ were still prominent social evils. The integrity of the home was violated by the prevalence of divorce. Men did not hesitate to put aside their wives for no just cause.⁸ It

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1. Luke 19:8
2. Ibid 13:2-5
3. Mark 14:56
4. Luke 10:30
5. John 8:3
6. Matthew 26:60
7. Ibid 6:19
8. Ibid 5:31,32

is very evident that a strong relationship existed between the times of Jeremiah and New Testament times in the similarity of the social conditions of each. There is one word which characterizes both periods of our study and to which the social conditions described above are a corollary. That word is 'deceit'. The foundations of Judah were honey-combed by deceit.¹ The life of the entire nation was saturated by it. The leaders deceived the people, the people deceived one another, all deceived God, and in so doing became victims of self-deception.

C. In View of the Religious Situation.

I. In Jeremiah's Times.

The religious situation in Jeremiah's time can be envisioned properly only if we view it in its several aspects, namely: the religious reform under King Josiah; the apostasy of the people; and the national character of religion.

a. The reform of Josiah.

In reading the history of Judah as related in II Kings, one is impressed by the comment of the historian

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1. Jeremiah 5:27; 8:5; 9:5,6; 29:8
 Luke 21:8; 12:56
 Matthew 12:34; 23:28; 15:7-9

when he comes to his characterization of Josiah, that "he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah."¹ This is in striking contrast to the "he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." of Josiah's predecessors on the throne of Judah.² One of the constructive tasks undertaken by Josiah was the repair of the temple.³ While engaged in this work the workmen uncovered the book of the law, which had long been forgotten.⁴ When the book was read before the king he was greatly disturbed⁵ because of the nation's violation of the commandments contained therein, and he at once undertook a nation-wide reform. He began with the temple, purging it of all its idols and the vessels used in their worship, he evicted the priests who conducted this worship, and then he proceeded through the whole land, destroying the high places and temples where idolatry was practiced and removing the priests.⁶ The reform reached its climax in a huge⁷ passover observed in Jerusalem and attended by the people throughout the land. Thus, once again the worship of Jehovah was established in

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1. II Kings 22:2
2. Ibid. 21:2, 20
3. Ibid. 22:5
4. Ibid. 22:8
5. Ibid. 22:11
6. II Kings 23:4 ff.
7. II Kings, 23:22

the temple according to the ancient law.

b. The apostasy of the people.

The reform of Josiah affected the religion of the people in an external sense only. We turn to Jeremiah and find therein the picture of a degraded and apostate people, who have incorporated into their religious life all of the abominable and corrupt practices of the heathen nations which surrounded them. In fact, as the prophet points out, they are even more unfaithful than their neighbors for they have abandoned their God for lesser gods, which, at least, the other nations have not done.¹ The social immorality described above was but a reflection of the religious practices of the people. The high places were re-established, upon every high mountain and under every green tree the nation worshiped at the shrine of some idol.² Kings, princes, priests, and prophets have succumbed to the unwholesome lure of graven images.³ In the home father, mother, and even the children are engaged in preparing offerings to false gods.⁴ And then on top of all this, these degraded people come into the temple of their God and say, "We are delivered,"⁵ thus adding insult to

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1. Jeremiah 2:11

2. Ibid. 3:6

3. Ibid. 2:26

4. Ibid. 7:18

5. Ibid. 7:10

injury. To say more would be but to repeat. The sin of Judah is summed up by the prophet in these words: "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."¹

c. The national character of Judah's religion:

The attempted religious reform of Josiah was also indentified with the struggle for national independence under the same king, a struggle which ended in the disaster at Megiddo.² To further this latter end, Josiah, on his reforming crusade throughout the kingdom, destroyed the shrine at Bethel and desecrated the altar there,³ which had been the centre of worship for the northern kingdom, and established a centralized worship in the temple at Jerusalem. While in this action Josiah succeeded in accomplishing his immediate purpose of reuniting the two kingdoms, in its far reaching results it was disastrous for it turned the Hebrew religion in the direction of nationalism and legalism.⁴

2. In New Testament Times.

The seed planted by Josiah remained dormant

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1. Jeremiah 2:13
2. Ante. p. 7
3. II Kings 23:15, 16
4. Cf. Welch, A.C., Jeremiah, p. 19

during the exile, but after the restoration it began to grow and in the first century of the Christian era, Judaism came into full flower as a legalistic religion. Also the purging of the nation in 586 B. C. had resulted in the recognition of Jehovah as its one and only God. The embodiment of the monotheistic ideal in a legalistic religion required complete obedience to the moral law of their God, and a ceremonial system through which offerings and sacrifices could be made. Thus it was that the temple became the centre of the nation's worship. All day long the priests were busy offering sacrifices. "They included morning and evening burnt offerings for the nation, for the Emperor, and the meat and drink offerings; the private offerings of individuals, such as trespass offering, sin offering, thank offering... and a variety of offerings for the removal of ceremonial impurity."¹ Every detail of life was covered by law. The observance of the law became the end of religion instead of the means to the end of establishing a right relationship between the worshipper and his God. All the emphasis was placed on fasting, praying, tithing,² and like ceremonies, with the result that religion became cold and

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1. Mathews, Shailer, op. cit. p. 206
2. Luke 18:10 ff.

formal. The high ethical standards of Judaism were of little value because the dynamic which would make possible their realization was lacking. Men went through the forms of religion, but at heart they followed their own devices. In this respect the religion of New Testament times differed little from that of Jeremiah's times.

Summary and Conclusions.

In this chapter we have attempted to show the relationship between Jeremiah's times and New Testament times. In so doing we have considered this relationship from three different angles -- political, social, and religious. In each instance we found some basis upon which a relationship could be established. In the political situation of each period the basis of relationship was the fall of Jerusalem; in the social situation it was the similarity in social conditions; and, finally, in the religious situations we found that the germinating idea of the first period became the accomplished fact of the second. As the first was founded upon false principles, it follows naturally that the second would be also intrinsically false, and thus it proved to be.

This study of the relationship in these two periods in the history of Judah causes us to arrive at the following conclusions:

1. The ebbing tide of the nation's political fortunes reaching its lowest point in the tragedy of Jerusalem's fall and the destruction of the temple was of two-fold significance. First, it represented God's judgment upon the nation for its political infidelity by reposing its confidence in alliances with heathen nations, thus disregarding its Divinely ordained destiny. Second, it revealed the working out of God's purpose in the history of this people whom He had chosen as His peculiar instruments.

2. Our second conclusion is that the social situation of a nation is but the reflection of its inward nature. The deceitfulness, which characterized the attitude of the people toward each other, as well as toward God, in both these critical periods of Judah's history, manifested itself in every form of social evil.

3. The religion of a nation is dependent upon its conception of God. The religion of Judah was false in its nature because she failed to recognize the true character of God -- His righteousness and universality. Thus worship became a matter of the ritualistic performance of the ceremonial provisions of the law but an utter disregard of its spiritual content.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JEREMIAH
AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

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SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JEREMIAH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. The Social Implications of Jeremiah

1. The Social passion of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah, as the descendant of a priestly family, would naturally grow up in a home, the atmosphere of which was permeated by the religious traditions of his nation. There would be inscribed upon the fleshly tablets of his heart, at an early age, the ancient law of his people, which formed the basis of every aspect of their national life. That Jeremiah developed a keenly sensitive religious consciousness is evidenced by the fact that he was a very young man¹ when the Divine call came to him and he was commissioned to prophesy unto the nations.² The beginning of his prophetic ministry in a period of moral and spiritual decadence could not fail to stir the young prophet to the

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1. Jeremiah 1:6
2. Jeremiah 1:10

very depths of his being. All of his religious and patriotic fervor was aroused to its highest pitch, as the realization was borne in upon him that he had been chosen to wear the mantle of those great prophets who had preceded him. He returned from that mountain top experience with soul ablaze with a passion for the message he was to proclaim.¹ Hardship² and persecution³ could not quench the fire that burned within him. His message must find expression even against his will.⁴ His bitter denunciation of the existing social evils which characterized the message of Jeremiah and against which his whole nature revolted, was no greater than the passionate appeal of the prophet for the nation to foresake its evil habits and turn once more to the ways of its God. By fervent prayer,⁵ tender pleading,⁶ and fiery exhortation,⁷ Jeremiah sought to win back the fidelity of his people to Jehovah, God of Israel.

2. The Social Aspects of Jeremiah's Message.

That which distinguished the religion of the

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1. Ibid. 15:16
2. Ibid. 17:14
3. Ibid. 15:15
4. Ibid. 20:9
5. Jeremiah 11:14
6. Ibid. 3:14 ff.
7. Ibid. 4:14

Hebrew people from every other religion in Jeremiah's time was the great system of ethics which it contained.

Religious ceremonies consisting of an elaborate ritual and a sacrificial system were not peculiar to Judaism, but its moral law was. This law governed every phase of life, both individual and social. The moral law was the real spiritual content of the nation's religion. Thus, the extent to which this law was observed and practiced by the people would be a thermometer marking the rise and fall of the nation's spiritual life. No one realized that more fully than Jeremiah, in fact, he stands almost alone in his demands for social reform while his contemporaries were entirely engrossed in ecclesiastical reform. The historian who describes the Josianic reform in II Kings emphasizes only its external nature -- the abolition of idolatry and the establishment of a central worship in the temple at Jerusalem.¹ Jeremiah, on the other hand, indicates in his eulogy of Josiah, that the most important aspect of the reform was its social nature. "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well."² The adherence of Josiah to the moral law of his religion and his sincere

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1. II Kings 23:4-25
2. Jeremiah 22:15,16

attempt to establish and enforce this law had resulted in a restored lustre to the rapidly dimming glory of the nation's history. However, with the removal of Josiah's restraining influence, and the beginning of Jehoiakim's wicked reign,¹ there was a recurrence of all the old evils, more violent than ever, while at the same time the newly established worship in the temple continued with undiminished activity. Therefore, to the very doors of the temple² itself and to the entrance of the king's palace³ went Jeremiah to hurl forth his thunderbolts of condemnation, and to demand the return of priests, kings, and people to the social ideals of their religion.

"Execute ye justice and righteousness, and deliver him that is robbed out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the sojourner, the fatherless, nor the widow; neither shed innocent blood in this place." 4

This was the essence of Jeremiah's social message, and he addressed it primarily to those in high places, for upon the shoulders of the nation's leader must be placed the greater share of the blame for the social evils exist-

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1. II Kings 23:37
2. Jeremiah 7:2
3. Ibid. 22:1
4. Jeremiah 22:3

ent. Upon the priests because they had falsified the law of their religion and were leading the people astray.¹ Upon the king and his princes because they violated every principle upon which the right to rule is based.² In these few well-chosen words, aimed directly at the heart of the social evils of his day, Jeremiah expressed the essence of the ethical ideal contained in the moral law of his religion. They defined the relationship which should exist between ruler and people, rich and poor, strong and weak, native and sojourner. Herein is defined the quality of life which is alone consistent with the true worship of Jehovah. Herein is contained the seed which germinated and came to full fruitage in the teachings of the greatest of all prophets concerning the kingdom of God and the character of its citizens.

3. The Significance of Jeremiah's Message.

Jeremiah was a realist. Skinner says:

"It is not doctrinaire abstractions from the realities of public life, but a vivid interest in human character and motive that is distinctive of Jeremiah's ethical teaching."³

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1. Ibid. 8:8
2. Ibid. 32:32
3. Skinner, John, Prophecy and Religion, p. 141

Because he was a realist he demanded a religion that was real, that touched the very heart of human life, that entered into the warp and woof of a being's fabric. Thus it was that the prophet cut the rope which bound the nation's worship to the nation's life in the hope that the latter might be saved. The prophet's keen analysis of the moral and social failure of his day enabled him to put his finger on the fatal weakness of the nation's religion, and to that weakness he applied this social message as a corrective. The true greatness of Judah and her future security was not based upon the temple or the formal observance of the prescribed ritual of which it was the centre.¹ Rather it depended upon the life and character of the country's citizenry. Judah's failure was a breakdown in human nature. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"² So deeply rooted were the sins of these people that any external reform was labour in vain. The place to begin was the human heart. New motives must be established. Righteousness, justice, tolerance, and peace must become the ruling principles governing the relationship of man to man. This was the real meaning of the covenantal law. This was

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1. Jeremiah 7:4
2. Ibid. 13:23

the real significance of Jeremiah's social message.

B. Social Implications of the New Testament

1. Jesus, the Social Crusader.

The text of Jesus' first public address, made in the synagogue at Nazareth, as recorded by Luke, was as follows:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach
good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim re-
lease to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are
bruised
To proclaim the acceptable year
of the Lord." ¹

In these words Jesus defined the scope and purpose of his ministry. Probably no better characterization of the man and his work can be found than that of Peter, who describes him as the one "who went about doing good."² From beginning to end, the story of his earthly life contained in the gospels is a record of a life spent in behalf of others. When John the Baptist inquired as to whether Jesus was the anticipated Messiah, our Lord's reply

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1. Luke 4:18, 19
2. Acts 10:38

was:

"Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them." 1

Here was concrete evidence of the new social order which was to mark the coming of the Messiah. It is of marked significance that Jesus did not identify himself with the religious leaders of his day, he did not seek the backing and influence of the wealthy to promote his cause, neither did he recommend or seek to institute any ecclesiastical reforms, but, rather, he associated himself with the poor, the burdened, the oppressed,² with all who were victims of a society based upon greed, selfishness, and injustice. Up and down the countryside he went teaching and preaching about the kingdom of God,³ making right the wrong,⁴ changing sorrow into joy,⁵ feeding the hungry,⁶ bringing order in twisted minds,⁷ leaving the impress of his healing touch upon broken bodies,⁸ or, to sum it all

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1. Luke 7:22
2. Matthew 11:29
3. Mark, 1:14
4. Ibid. 11:15
5. Luke 7:15
6. Ibid. 9:17
7. Ibid. 8:35
8. Mark 3:10

up in a few words, making possible life in abundance to all mankind.¹

2. The Social Teachings of Jesus.

To put into a few brief sentences what others have taken volumes to express is no easy task. Therefore, we shall not attempt to give a detailed exposition of the social message of Jesus, but shall endeavor only to point out certain principles contained within it. Jesus' teachings have an ethical quality about them but it would be inaccurate to describe them as ethics. He certainly approved the lofty ideals contained in the moral law of his religion, for he said, "I came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill."² What Jesus did was to take the laws of his religion and incorporate within them a dynamic which gave them a spiritual vitality they had hitherto lacked. The law dealt with conduct. Jesus was concerned with the attitudes and motives which affected conduct. Jesus condemned anger as being the seed from which murder sprang,³ lust as the root of adultery.⁴ He proclaimed a new way of meeting force, opposition, and

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1. John 10:10
2. Matthew 5:17
3. Ibid. 5:22
4. Matthew, 5:28

evil. "Resist not him that is evil; whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also..... Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you."¹ This was the pathway to perfection.² This pathway was not easy to follow. It cut sharply across the traditional thought and practice of every social class. It was like putting new wine into old wineskins,³ if we may use a figure of our Lord's in a different setting. Either the wineskins must be transformed, or they would burst. That is exactly what happened. A Judaism turned its back upon Jesus and by crucifying him thought it had gotten rid of him. But he had inoculated it with a germ more virulent than any known to medical science. The wineskin burst, and the civilization that spurned the new ideal perished beneath the surging billows of that flood.

C. Summary.

Jeremiah advocated a new social order based upon the covenantal law which had been established between God and Israel at the time of the Exodus from Egypt. This law defined the relationships which should exist between the inhabitants of the nation. Upon obedience to this law was predicated the fulfillment of God's promise to the

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1. Ibid. 5:39,44
 2. Ibid. 5:48
 3. Matthew 9:17

nation concerning its destiny. Due to the efforts of Josiah to purge the nation of idolatry the ceremonial law was restored and worship centralized in the temple at Jerusalem. At the same time the moral law was completely ignored and the result was social decadence. Jeremiah demanded a purification of the social life of the nation through obedience to the moral law. Execute justice, oppress not, do no violence to the widow, the fatherless, and the sojourner, and shed not innocent blood was the burden of Jeremiah's social message.

The social teachings of Jesus as contained in the gospels possessed all the quality of the moral law, but in addition gave to it a new emphasis hitherto lacking. Jesus directed his message to the inner motives which determined outward action. Love, purity of life, forbearance, were the keynotes of the social gospel.

D. The Relationship of Jeremiah's Social Message to the Gospel.

1. Jeremiah and Jesus as Social Crusaders.

Jeremiah and Jesus were both socially minded and each envisioned a social order which would embody the moral ideals of the religion in which each was trained. Such a social order must be a corollary of a religion the God of which was righteous and just. Each realized that

the social evils characteristic of the times in which he lived were but a sign of religious decay. Here the similarity ends. Each faced a problem which was the same in its essential aspects but each used a different method toward its solution. Jeremiah was a reformer, while Jesus was a transformer. Jeremiah worked from the outside in, Jesus from the inside out.

2. Jeremiah's Approach to the Gospel.

That he differed from Jesus in his method of dealing with social evils is no reflection upon the prophet of Anathoth. Truly, none of his predecessors in the prophetic line saw as clearly into the real cause of Judah's social relapse as did Jeremiah. To them the nation's condition was a natural result of its departure from the way of its God. To Jeremiah not only had the nation forsaken God, but the people had practiced their evildoing for so long that their very nature had become corrupt. As George Adam Smith says: "He had a profound sense of the engrained quality of evil, the deep saturation of sin, the enormity of the guilt of those who sinner against the light and love of God."¹ So defiled had they become that cleansing²

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1. Smith, G. A., Jeremiah, p. 346
2. Jeremiah undoubtedly has in mind the ceremonial laws of purification from sin.

was of no avail. "For though thou wash thee with lye, and take thee much soap yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord Jehovah."¹ The only hope now for the nation is repentance. Not national repentance, for the prophet has become reconciled to the nation's destruction. It is with individuals the prophet pleads.² Again we quote from Smith, who has put it most strikingly -- "When Jeremiah first urges them to return it is of a public and general repentance that he speaks.....But when the rotten surface of the national life thus broke under the Prophet he fell upon the deeper levels of the individual heart, and not only found the native sinfulness of this to be the explanation of the public and social corruption, but discovered also soil for the seed-bed of new truths and new hopes."³ Here it is that Jeremiah breaks with the old and points to the new. Here are the first foreshadowings of the doctrine of regeneration, which finds its full expression in the New Testament in the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again."⁴

3. Conclusions:

It is impossible to separate the social message

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1. Jeremiah 2:22
2. This is determined by the form of pronoun used.
See Smith, G. A., op. cit. p. 369
3. Ibid. p. 367 f.
4. John 3:8

of Jeremiah from his plea for repentance on the part of his fellow-countrymen. The two are inextricably woven together. The former would have been the evidence of the latter. For that reason I think we are justified in drawing two conclusions:

a. That Jeremiah could not return to the old covenantal law as an adequate basis for a social order consistent with the ethics contained therein. The ideal was there but there was no way to enforce it. Its dynamic was national rather than spiritual, therefore, it failed to penetrate the depths of the individual heart.

b. That the social message of Jeremiah and the situation which produced it led to a development in the insight and understanding of the prophet which places him ahead of predecessors. One almost feels that he sustains a closer relationship to the new dispensation than to the old. The anticipation of a new social order through repentance became the realization of that order through regeneration in the New Testament.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN JEREMIAH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

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RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JEREMIAH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Jeremiah and Jesus

Common

1. Their Background.

Jeremiah and Jesus were both of ancient and honorable lineage, the former being of priestly descent,¹ while the latter sprang from the royal line of David.² Each lived in a small country village³ surrounded by the simple natural life of the countryside. Mother Nature was their textbook, from which they learned many of their greatest lessons. Their teachings abound with references to birds, animals, trees, flowers, wind, storm, sun, moon, and stars. In Jeremiah and the gospels we have a commentary upon the life and customs of their respective times. All classes and conditions of people are herein revealed. Jeremiah and Jesus were students of life, and for that reason, the message of each was designed to meet the needs

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1. Jeremiah 1:1
2. Matthew 1:1
3. Jeremiah 1:1, Matthew 2:23

of all humanity. Their education consisted only of the simple fundamentals of learning. They were well grounded in the sacred literature of their day, consisting mainly of the law and the prophets,¹ and which, doubtless, was carried in their memory as a result of the frequent occasions upon which they had heard it read. Little else was needed in the way of formal education. The religious atmosphere in which they grew was the warm and simple piety of homely, God-fearing people. It represented the religion of Israel at its best. Each came in contact with, and was conscious of, the insincerity and lack of true devotion in the nation's formal and established religion.²

2. Their Character.

Jeremiah and Jesus both possessed traits of character of such striking similarity, that their lives are parallel in many respects; but at the same time, there were differences which were inevitable, in view of the ultimate purpose for which each was destined. To each there came early in life the realization of a special mission,³ Divinely inspired. Both denied themselves the

1. The evidence of this is the repeated references to the law and the prophets contained in their messages.
2. Jeremiah 7:4, Matthew 23:3
3. Jeremiah 1:7, Luke 2:49

blessed privileges of home,¹ and family life that they might give themselves to their work with single-hearted devotion. Each endured persecution for his attack upon organized religion. Each possessed courage,² a capacity for suffering,³ a great love for their country and its inhabitants,⁴ and a social passion which expressed itself in a hatred of injustice and oppression.⁵

The differences between these two great figures is most apparent in their attitudes under adverse circumstances. At the time of his call, Jeremiah displayed a hesitancy which was never apparent in the life of Jesus.⁶ The spirit of Jeremiah quailed under the bludgeonings of his enemies,⁷ he strank from the ordeals which lay before him, his spirit complained at the injustices which were inflicted upon him.⁸ We find nothing of this in the character of Jesus. Calmly, confidently, steadfastly, he moves toward an appointed goal,⁹ never flinching, ever sub-

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1. Jeremiah 16:2, Matthew 8:20
2. Jeremiah 38:6, Matthew 10:28
3. Jeremiah 15:15, Matthew 16:21
4. Jeremiah 11:14, Luke 13:34
5. Jeremiah 7:5,6, Luke 11:37-44
6. Jeremiah 1:6
7. Jeremiah 12:5
8. Ibid. 12:1
9. Luke 9:51

missive,¹ perfectly obedient,² content that in all things it was his Father's will and that He would direct the outcome.³ The inner life of Jeremiah was marked by conflict but never that of Jesus, with one exception, when in that lonely vigil in Gethsemane's garden, the agony of his soul wrung sweat drops of blood from the Master's brow.⁴ And yet, we cannot properly say that this was a conflict, in any sense of the term, for through that whole experience runs one dominant note -- obedience to the Will of God. "not my will, but thine be done."⁵ Another marked difference between Jeremiah and Jesus was their respective attitudes toward the opposition. There were limitations upon the love of Jeremiah which distinguished it from the unbounded love of Jesus. There was never the faintest shadow of the resentment and vindictiveness in the attitude of Jesus toward his enemies which we find in Jeremiah. What a tremendous difference between the "avenge me of my persecutors"⁶ of Jeremiah and those gracious words of Jesus, spoken from the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."⁷

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1. John 5:30
2. Philippians 2:8
3. Matthew 26:39
4. Ibid. 26:36
5. Ibid. 26:42
6. Jeremiah 15:15
7. Luke 23:34

3. Their Ministry.

Bennett says:

"Jeremiah and our Lord appeared at similar crises in the history of Israel and of revealed religion. The prophet foretold the end of the Jewish monarchy, the destruction of the First Temple and of ancient Jerusalem; Christ in like manner, announced the end of the restored Israel, the destruction of the Second Temple and of the newer Jerusalem."¹ Even as Jerusalem and the Temple were the geographical centre of the ministry of both Jeremiah and Jesus, so were they the focal point upon which that message was directed. Jeremiah and Jesus were prophets of true religion. That was the end in view of their whole ministry. The essential difference in the ministry of each was, that what Jeremiah taught, Jesus both taught and lived. T. Crowther Gordon has expressed most beautifully the difference between Jeremiah and Jesus, and with this we conclude this section of our study:

"There are beauties in the soul of Jesus that far outshine the sombre glories of the old prophet, and Calvary has a cosmic value that Anathoth can never rival. Jeremiah walks amid the half lights: Jesus steps in the broad, bright daylight. The one stands upon an eminence, and lifts his arm of warning against the clouds that spread across the horizon. The clouds break and night falls: failure and defeat reign supreme. But after the

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1. Bennett, W. H. The Book of Jeremiah p. 370

long night of exile, Another stands upon that eminence, and the golden shafts of dawn light up the shining Christ, as He stands with His arm uplifted in triumph." ¹

B. The Personal Religion of Jeremiah

1. His High Moral Sense.

To understand this aspect of Jeremiah's personal religion properly, we must think of him as a "child of his own nation, bred on its soil, saturated with its genius, and especially with its religion, proud of its traditions, disciplined by its history, conscious that all its past has moulded his nature and outlook."² The result was a flaming fire of moral passion in the soul of the prophet. Moral righteousness became the guiding principle of life. It was characteristic of God and therefore conditioned the relationship of man to God. As Welch puts it: "Religion to Jeremiah means submission to Yaweh on His own terms, and His terms are simply the expression of His nature."³

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1. Gordon, T. Crowther, The Rebel Prophet, p. 256
2. Welch, A. C. Jeremiah, p. 65
3. Ibid. p. 60

2. Jeremiah's Conflict of Soul.

The moral ideal which was at the very heart of Jeremiah's religion inevitably led to a conflict in his religious life and from thence to an enlargement of his own concept of religion. This conflict was due to Jeremiah's inability to reconcile his personal misfortunes to his idea of justice. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart."¹ Having thus stated his allegiance to his religious ideals, his obedience to the revealed will of God, the prophet continues, "Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed?"² What kind of a God was this who would thus punish a righteous servant in such a manner? This was inconsistency of the worst sort. To Jeremiah this was a reversal of the laws of cause and effect. He could readily understand this treatment being meted out to evildoers, but there was no reason why he should be called upon to suffer such bitter persecution. It was an age-old problem which confronted Jeremiah and one to which there can only be one answer -- the answer which God gave to Jeremiah -- "If you will give up murmuring, I will restore you to my service; if you will

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1. Jeremiah 15:16
2. Ibid. 15:18

purify yourself from passion's dross, then you shall be my spokesman....I will deliver you from evil men, and free you from the clutches of the cruel."¹ The result of these purging experiences was that Jeremiah was thrown back upon a complete trust that God would within his own good counsel bring to pass the vindication of His own righteousness and the faith of those who obeyed and served Him. It gave to the religion of Jeremiah an anticipatory element which foreshadowed the establishment of a new relationship between God and his people, and which found its expression in his prophecy of the New Covenant.²

3. The Prayer Life of Jeremiah.

The prayer life of Jeremiah constitutes one of the sublimest aspects of his personal religion. It reveals to us the intimacy of the relationship which existed between him and God. When he talks to God, it is as if he were face to face with the Divine Presence. "Remember how I stood before thee to speak good for them."³ Here we see the prophet standing in the presence of God interceding for his people. In another passage he says, "But

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- 1 . Jeremiah 15:19 (Moffatt)
2. Jeremiah 31:31 ff.
3. Ibid. 18:20

thou, O Jehovah, knowest me; thou seest me, and triest my heart toward thee." Here Jeremiah contrasts himself with those to whom God is 'near in their mouth and far from their heart.'¹ Constantly the prophet was exploring the heart of his God, seeking some new revelation of His Divine Will. The phrase 'O Jehovah' is repeated over and over throughout the entire prophecy.² In this striking use of the direct form of speech, there is strikingly emphasized the prophet's continuous relationship to God through prayer. The burden of his prayers was varied. Sometimes it was the agony of his soul for which he sought relief, again, at others, it was in behalf of the people,³ whom he loved, and at still others, to seek guidance in the administration of his personal affairs.⁴ There are several fine examples of dialogue between Jehovah and Jeremiah recorded in the prophecy⁵ which illustrate the two way process of prayer. Other characteristic expressions which indicate communion between God and the prophet are: "And Jehovah said unto me"⁶ "The word of Jehovah came to me"⁷

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1. Ibid. 12:3
2. Jeremiah 5:3; 10:24; 12:1; 15:15; 16:19; 17:14; 18:19 etc.
3. Ibid. 7:16 ; 11:14
4. Ibid. 32:16 ff.
5. Jeremiah 12:1-6; 16:19-21
6. Ibid. 11:6, 9; 15:1
7. Ibid 18:5

"And thou hast said unto me";¹ "I prayed unto Jehovah."² Jeremiah's life may well be termed a fellowship of prayer. Could any man speak so constantly to God who did not have a very real sense of the Abiding Presence within his heart? It reveals to us the depth of the prophet's religious nature. It portrays a sense of the Divine immanence which is so perfectly manifested in the life of Jesus. One cannot read the story of His earthly ministry without sensing the oneness of spirit He had with God. Nothing was ever allowed to come between them. He was in the Father and the Father in him.³ He too was a man of prayer and in every great crisis of his life, or before venturing forth upon some new undertaking, he sought the help and guidance of his Heavenly Father. Before selecting those who would be his apostles and to whom would be entrusted the carrying out of his program, he spent the night in prayer.⁴ When the time of transfiguration arrived, up into the mountain went Jesus to pray.⁵ When the burden of his work pressed upon him and the multitudes overwhelmed him, Jesus sought the solitude of the desert to pray.⁶ When the time

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1. Ibid. 32:25
2. Ibid. 32:16
3. John 10:38
4. Luke 6:12
5. Ibid. 9:28
6. Ibid. 5:16

of parting came, Jesus gathered his little group about him and in the silent sadness of the upper room, the Master sought to comfort and encourage them by prayer.¹ Finally, during those agonizing hours on the Cross, thrice was his voice raised in prayer. These are only a few of many recorded incidents of the prayer life of Jesus. Jesus ever was lifting up his eyes to the Father, or retiring to the mountain steadfastness, to pray. The lives of Jeremiah and Jesus demonstrate for us the value and power of prayer in the life of man. But it was in the life of Jesus that prayer found its perfect expression. His disciples beholding this power of prayer could only say, "Lord, teach us to pray."²

C. The God of Jeremiah.

We are indebted to the prayer life of Jeremiah for a view of God which we do not usually associate with the Old Testament. To Jeremiah, God was a Familiar Being, to Whom the prophet talks as man to man. Whether he approached the Divine to plead,³ argue,⁴ or reproach,⁵ it was with the unhesitating confidence which a child displays

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1. John 17:1 ff.
2. Luke 11:1
3. Jeremiah 7:16
4. Ibid. 12:1
5. Ibid. 4:10

when it rushes into the private study of its father. No waiting at the door in fear or trembling, no deterring sense of awe and wonder, but only the headlong rush of one who throws himself into the arms of a receptive and loving friend. Not that Jeremiah did not invest God with all the attributes which the other prophets assigned to Him, for he did. Righteousness, justice, mercy, power, wrath, wisdom are only some of the attributes of God we find in this prophecy.

The God of Jeremiah is a God of action. Usually this action is portrayed as being a work of benefit for the nation. He has chosen as His own. He has delivered them from perils in the past, and now he is ever present standing over his word to perform it.¹ To do this He is God not only over Israel but over all the nations of the earth.² He uses them to carry out His own inscrutable purposes. They too are subject to His judgments and shall be partakers of his wrath.³ He does not stand aloof, indifferent to the course of human events, but is ever nigh to direct and guide those nations and individuals who are His chosen instrumentalities for the fulfillment of His eternal pur-

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1. Jeremiah 1:12
2. Ibid. 10:7
3. Ibid. 51:20

pose.

To Jeremiah God is the one and only God.. There can be no other, either in or out of Israel. The prophet has nothing but contempt for those gods which the other nations worship and which his own people have placed beside the true God. Vanities,¹ no gods,² false gods,³ works of their own hands,⁴ profitless,⁵ stock, stone,⁶ are some of the terms by which he characterizes them. George Adam Smith says: "On this line Jeremiah's monotheism marks a notable advance; for alongside of faith in the Divine Unity and Sovereignty there had lingered even in Deuteronomy a belief in the existence of other Gods."⁷

The God of Jeremiah is also a God of love.⁸ As such, he is ever yearning and pleading for the return of His people. He is patient and ready to forgive. He will repent of the judgment He has pronounced upon them if they will but repent of the evil they have done. Up to the very end, even while the besieging army of the Chaldeans

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1. Ibid. 14:22
2. Ibid. 2:11
3. Jeremiah 18:15
4. Ibid. 2:28
5. Ibid 2:8
6. Ibid. 2:27
7. Smith, G. A. op. cit. p. 356
8. Jeremiah 31:3

are without the walls of Jerusalem, God still offers to divert the disaster if His People would but cease their policy of resistance and submit to the inevitable Will.¹

Finally, Jeremiah rises to his greatest heights in his conception of God as One who suffers. The prophet came to a realization of this because of his own anguish over the sins of a people whom he loved. "My anguish, my anguish! I am pained at my very heart"² cries the prophet. Even in the midst of bitterest condemnation or direst predictions, there would well up in his heart sorrow for the sins of his people and the impending doom which hung over them, and his eyes would overflow with bitter tears.³ How much more the heart of the Eternal must have been racked by pain and anguish by the desertion of his people. Could a father be forsaken by his children, or a bridegroom by his bride, and not suffer? Even so, must God suffer, for he was as a Father⁴ to these people and as a bridegroom.⁵ The more he punished them the greater his suffering must be, and yet he could not withhold that punishment. They had refused to accept correction. They

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1. Jeremiah 38:17
2. Ibid. 4:19
3. Ibid. 9:1 ff.
4. Jeremiah 3:19
5. Ibid. 3:14

had been warned by the prophet but had spurned the warning. They had sinned grievously and now sin was to take its toll. "Your own wickedness shall punish you, your apostasy will chastise you."¹ Such was the nature of sin and the inevitableness of its consequences. To have spared them would have been to have condoned sin and that would have been contrary to the very nature of God, but at the same time, it revealed the capacity for suffering contained within that nature.

Any comment upon the relationship between this section of our study and the New Testament seems almost superfluous. Jeremiah has brought us to the foot of a Cross, a very real Cross, in fact, the self-same Cross which stood on Golgotha's brow almost five centuries later, upon which God, in Christ, laid bare before the eyes of all mankind, the agony of His suffering caused by the sins of men.

D. The New Covenant.

1. The Product of Jeremiah's Life.

It was inevitable in view of Jeremiah's own

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1. Ibid. 2:19

religious experience as well as that of the nation that he should become the author of the New Covenant. The social and religious failure of the nation was manifested in its disobedience to the moral law of the old covenant. We have seen, however, that Jeremiah attributed the real cause to the inward corruption of the nature of the individuals who comprised the nation.¹ Furthermore, Jeremiah realized that the whole history of the nation, with a few brief exceptions, was a record of its failure to live up to the terms of the covenant as contained in the law. In other words, disobedience or sin had been the practice of the nation, obedience or righteousness had been the exception. It became increasingly evident to Jeremiah that from the very beginning of its history the law had failed to produce the desired result in the nation's life. For that reason, any hope for national restoration must be predicated upon a different basis than that of the past.

Jeremiah's experience with God, which constituted the most intimate element of his religious life, had revealed to him a yearning, loving, and suffering Deity. Jeremiah was firmly convinced that this being the nature of God, he must eventually restore the nation as the object

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1. Ante. p. 45

of his affection, by entering into a new relationship with them. The nature of this relationship, as conceived by the prophet in the light of his own religious experience, would be one of direct fellowship with God.

It was upon this canvas that Jeremiah painted the beautiful picture of the New Covenant. The inevitable destruction of the nation, the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, the insincerity of kings, priests, and people in their worship, the moral and social failure of the nation were the resultant wreckage of the nation's failure to observe the terms of its covenant with God. And yet, the religious experience of Jeremiah, his unusual apprehension of the mind and heart of God, enabled him to stand in the midst of all this wreckage and glimpse the first faint streaks of light which heralded the dawn of a new day for the nation. The Old had failed and must pass away, but in the inevitability of its failure, Jeremiah saw the inevitability of a restoration. Thus, at a time of deepest darkness, he was able to compose this beautiful description of the New Covenant. Or as George Adam Smith says:

"The passage on the New Covenant brings together all the strands of Jeremiah's experience and doctrine and hopes, shaken free from the political debris of the times, into one fair web under a pattern familiar and dear to the people."¹

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1. Smith, G. A. op. cit. p. 378

2. The Nature of the New Covenant.

a. Distinguished from the Old Covenant.

The first thing the prophet points out is that this New Covenant is not to be according to the covenant made at the time of the Exodus from Egypt.¹ The prophet points out that the old covenant was one which could be broken, thus implying quite plainly that the New Covenant would be of such a nature that it could not be broken. This is quite consistent with the idea of the passage, for it would be unreasonable to restore the nation only to have the painful process of its sin and punishment repeated.

b. The type of covenant.

Jeremiah now continues the thought of the preceding verse, with a positive statement as to how the New Covenant differs from the old. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it."² The old covenant had been written on tablets of stone, the new would be on the fleshly tablets of the heart. Here Jeremiah strikes directly at the root of moral failure. The old law had affected the external behaviour of man; the new would apply to his attitudes and motives, which,

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1. Jeremiah 31:32

2. Jeremiah 31:33

in the final analysis, governed his outward behaviour. Jeremiah indicates here the two laws which Paul later designated as the law of the sin and the law of the spirit.¹ According to Bennett, this section of the covenant means the government of life "not by fixed external regulations, but by continual control of heart and conscience by Divine Spirit", and obedience to the Will of God because man's innermost nature is possessed by loyalty to God.² The result is a blessed relationship in which God is "the One who becomes to man what they need in every moment, accommodating himself to the necessity of his creatures,"³ and in which man accepts and responds to the Will of God, thus maintaining the attitude and activities of a people to God.⁴

c. Mediation unnecessary.

The nature of this New Covenant is such that it needs no intermediary to interpret it. There is no place for an official priesthood, which was an essential part of the old covenant, in the New. There will be no opportunity for scribes to falsify the law of God, causing men to go astray, which is what happened under the old covenant.⁵

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1. Romans 7:23
2. Bennett, W. H. op. cit. p. 352
3. Morgan, Campbell, Studies in the Prophecy of Jeremiah, p.177
4. Cf. Morgan, Campbell, op. cit. p. 177
5. Jeremiah 8:8

God has revealed His Will to each and every believer, making unnecessary all rules and regulations of an external nature. The revelation is given immediately, not mediately. Under the New Covenant there will be no distinctions in knowledge among God's people, no group telling another what they should know or do, but all men, the least to the greatest, shall know God.¹

3. A Covenant of Grace.

The final clause in the New Covenant indicates the action on the part of God which makes it possible. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." It is not always easy to forgive when one has been wronged, but it is much harder to forget. Jeremiah reveals to us the gracious God who does both. And yet, it was only because God was such that He could become the author of this New Covenant. What a difference between this and the old covenant. Under its terms God promised "if ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be my own possession."² But under the new covenant God says, "Ye shall be my people.....for I will forgive."³ The old depended on the people, while the new rested upon

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1. Jeremiah 31:34
2. Exodus 19:5
3. Jeremiah 31:34

God's forgiving grace. 'If' and 'for' -- what an abyss of meaning separates these two little words. Again Jeremiah definitely foreshadows the New Testament teaching of Paul, who might well be named the apostle of God's grace.¹

E. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We are almost overwhelmed by the intensity of the religious life of Jeremiah. We behold with deepest admiration this prophet, who, in many ways was the prototype of that Greatest of all Prophets, who centuries later made his appearance in this realm of time and space. So much did their life and character parallel each other, that some people thought Jesus to be Jeremiah, the prophet.² Nevertheless, there were differences in both which must ever distinguish the son of man from the Son of God.

Probably the most startling aspect of Jeremiah's religion was his relationship with God. His familiarity of approach, the majesty and beauty revealed in his concepts of the divine nature, and the bitter conflict of soul, which resulted from his difficulty in adjusting pre-

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1. Romans 6:14
2. Matthew 16:14

conceived ideas to the realities of his own experience, are all recorded for us in this great book. Through them we see the prophet seeking to penetrate deeper and deeper into the heart of the Eternal, that he might find light for the illumination of his own soul.¹ In the increasing brightness of that light Jeremiah was forced to break with the old order, forsake the traditions of his people, and venture forth upon uncharted seas in search of a new land of promise. He was able to discern its shining sands and lofty mountains on the distant horizon, but it remained for Another to disclose its full richness and beauty.

I offer the following conclusions as a result of this study of the religion of Jeremiah.

1. The religious experience of Jeremiah is evidence of the approachability of God.
2. Jeremiah clearly anticipates the Cross of the New Testament as a redemptive necessity.
3. Jeremiah points the way to the doctrine of grace which is a fundamental doctrine of the New Testament.
4. Jeremiah was not only the exponent of person-

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1. Jeremiah 12:3

al religion, but also the possessor of it.

5. Jeremiah realized that the starting point of any attempt to realize one's religious ideals was in oneself.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITERARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
JEREMIAH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

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A. The Unity of the Bible.

1. In Its Broader Aspects.

"The Bible begins with God, continues with God, and ends with God."¹ This statement of Tillett's is an excellent starting point for any discussion on the unity of the Bible, for it states in the highest terms possible what is the unity of this Sacred Book. The Christian Bible is distinctive in that it contains also the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, the religious literature of Judaism, a fact which has resulted in confused thinking on the part of some well meaning people. I refer to those who would separate the Old and New Testament on the grounds that the former is not Christian in character and outlook, and, therefore, should not be included in the

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1. Tillett, W. F., The Divine Element in the Bible. An article in the Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 28

sacred literature of Christianity. The impossibility of such an abortive act can be seen readily if we consider the place of the Old Testament in the life and thought of Jesus and the Apostles as recorded in the New. To them the accuracy of its history and the authority of its teaching was unquestioned. Thus it was that they were constantly referring to it as a source of inspiration to their own religious life or to substantiate an argument or prove a point in their teaching. When Jesus was on the Mount of Temptation facing the first great crisis of his life, it was in his Bible, this same Old Testament, that he found his answer to the seductive whisperings of the devil. To each suggestion of the tempter, Jesus replied thrice: "It is written"¹ and then followed it with a heavenly truth contained in the sacred law which God had revealed to his people in the past. It was the Power of the Word which sustained the Master of men in this hour of stress. Or, again, on the way to Emmaus, after his resurrection, Jesus talked to the two disciples,² "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." It is quite evident from this passage that our Christian religion

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1. Matthew 4:1-10
2. Luke 24:27

did not have its beginnings in the birth of a babe in Bethlehem Town on that first Christmas night, but that they reach far back into the centuries which preceded, during which they found expression in the religious literature of the Hebrew Nation, in which was recorded God's dealings with this peculiar people, whom He had chosen from all the nations of the earth, as the first recipients of His grace.¹

The same is true of the apostles who are constantly drawing upon the Old Testament for illustrative² material or to authenticate³ their teachings. This is aptly illustrated by the epistle to the Hebrews which is generously sprinkled with quotations from the Old Testament. Jesus himself bore witness of his own relationship to the Hebrew Bible when he said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill."⁴ Without the promise of the Old, the fulfillment of the New could never have been.

Thus we see that these two main sections of the Christian Bible are inextricably interwoven in their literary structure in theological significance, and in

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1. Romans 1:16
2. Galatians 4:22 ff.
3. Romans 11:26f.
4. Matthew 5:17

spiritual content. There is not only a unity of idea but a unity of purpose. But above all, both Old and New Testament are united in the radiant figure of Him whom we call the Christ.

2. In Relation to this Study.

We are indebted to Campbell Morgan for presenting some interesting figures showing the extent to which Jeremiah is used by the writers of the New Testament. The prophet himself is mentioned twice,¹ in each instance by Matthew.² From the prophecy of Jeremiah there are forty-one quotations, or allusions to, in the New Testament. More than half of these, twenty-six to be exact, are found in the Book of the Revelation. Striking though this may be, it is of no unusual significance except to show John was very familiar with the prophecy of Jeremiah. However, it might be noted that both Jeremiah and John were prophets of judgment. Only one of all the references to Jeremiah contained in the Revelation is a direct quotation. Of the fifteen remaining references scattered throughout the New

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1. Matthew 2:17; 16:14
2. A third reference (27:9) is generally accepted by critics as an error.

Testament, six¹ are direct quotations.² These figures are presented to show the unity which exists between Jeremiah and the New Testament in a literary sense, and which is demonstrative of the unity between both major divisions of our Christian Bible. We shall now turn to a study of the relative value of these quotations in their setting in both Jeremiah and the New Testament.

B. The Use of Jeremiah in the New Testament.

1. Jeremiah 31:15, in Matthew 2:17

This passage in Jeremiah is a part of the prophecy which tells of the future restoration of the nation. The verse under discussion is a reference to the sorrow of Rachel over the exile of the tribe of Benjamin.³ "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth to be comforted for her children, for they are not." Matthew quotes them as symbolic of the sorrow which filled the land over the slaughter of the Innocents, when Herod tried to destroy the babe Jesus. The verse in Jeremiah is immediately followed by the comforting words of the promised restor-

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1. This does not include Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46, which are the same as Matthew 21:13, nor II Corinthians 10:17 cf. which is the same as I Corinthians 1:31
2. Morgan, Campbell, op. cit. p. 280 f.
3. Ramah is in Benjamin, where Rachel died (I Samuel 10:2)

ation. In Matthew the subsequent context tells of the deliverance of Jesus from Herod's plot against his life. Thus, in both instances where this verse is used, it is accompanied by a message of deliverance. The passage has a spiritual significance in that the restoration promised by Jeremiah was fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

2. Jeremiah 7:11 - in Matthew 21:13

"Is this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes?" These words were uttered by Jeremiah as he stood in the gate of the temple and demanded that the people turn from their evil practices. Their worship was inconsistent with their manner of life and the temple had become the centre of a great ceremonial system, but in which there was no sincerity. The priests accepted offerings and sacrifices for which no spiritual benefit could be given. It was the same as accepting money under false pretenses. Jesus made use of these words in a similar circumstance. He too realized the insincerity and sham contained in the elaborate ritual which comprised the worship of his day. It is only fitting that he should apply these words of Jeremiah to the situation. This perversion of the temple from its true use so violated the reverence of Jeremiah and Jesus that they had only the severest condemnation for those responsible. It is the only time in

Jesus' life when his indignation ran so high that it found expression in the use of physical force.¹

3. Jeremiah 9:24 - In I Corinthians 1:31

"Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding and knoweth me (Jehovah)" In the context immediately preceding, Jeremiah states the futility of those who place their trust or glory in earthly wisdom, power, and riches. These will be of noavail in saving them from the impending doom which threatens. The only basis for glorying is knowledge of God, because such knowledge will reveal to them those things which God exercises in the earth and in which he delights - namely, loving kindness, justice, and righteousness. This knowledge of God is exactly the same principle which Paul set before the Corinthian Church. The apostle also shows the futility of earthly wisdom as God often confounds it with foolish things. This is one of those cases where Jeremiah is called upon to substantiate a New Testament argument. Only he who knows God can understand his purpose and live in harmony with it.

Paul uses the same text in II Corinthians 10:17

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1. Matthew 21:12

to substantiate another argument somewhat different from the first. Here Paul vindicates his right to exercise his authority over the Corinthian church. He appeals to those who have contempt for that authority to consider that it is based upon the Gospel which he received from the Lord. Therefore, his glorying is in the Lord by whom he stands approved.

4. Jeremiah 18:4 - Romans 9:21 ff

In this passage in Romans, Paul has drawn upon Jeremiah's classical illustration - the image of the potter and the clay -- to illustrate the Divine sovereignty of God in His dealings with men. Jeremiah, on his visit to the potter's house, watched intently the works of the potter. "And when the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." Jeremiah saw in the works of the potter an analogy to God's dealing with Israel. God could do with the nation as the potter did with the clay. The nation having become marred, God would refashion it into a new pattern in keeping with His purpose and will. Paul expresses a second idea, in addition to the sovereignty of God, contained in this passage, which Jeremiah anticipates but does not fully express, namely, the patience of God. "What if

God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy." It is significant that the potter did not throw away the crushed pieces of the spoiled vessel, but begins to fashion it anew. In God's willingness to try again, there was hope for the nation. That hope was realized in the new creation by God of a new people, composed of both Jew and Gentile, in whom was revealed the riches of God's glory.

5. Jeremiah 31:31-34 - in Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:16,17

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews in this first passage quotes that beautiful passage from Jeremiah which foretells the New Covenant. It is used to show that through the priesthood of Christ a new covenant had been mediated, which was the covenant Jeremiah had foreseen must eventually come to pass. More striking still is the fact that the argument contained in the epistle follows the same line of reasoning which Jeremiah pursued, ie. the inadequacy of the old covenant.¹

In the second passage, the writer of the epistle

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1. Hebrews 8:7

shows how the New Covenant was made possible. Again he quotes Jeremiah who laid the foundation of the New Covenant in God's forgiveness of the nation's sin. It was only through Christ that this was made possible, as he became the one and perfect sacrifice, for all time, for the remission of sin. The same thought is contained in our Lord's own words, when he said "This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood."¹ In these messages we have one more evidence of the redemptive purpose of God, which runs like a golden thread through the fabric of the Old Testament, and reaches its fulfillment in the New, through that great act of Atonement God wiped away the sin of all mankind and made possible their reconciliation to Himself. If any vindication of the prophetic vision is needed, we find it here, for truly Jeremiah anticipated in his prophecy of the New Covenant the most glorious event which has ever taken place in all history.

C. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has been devoted to a study of the literary relationships which exist between Jeremiah and the New Testament. One result of such a relationship is that it forms one of the unifying elements between the Old and

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1. Luke 22:20

New Testaments. This was discussed in its general aspects and then specifically in respect to Jeremiah. Figures were quoted to show the extent to which Jeremiah was used by the authors of the New Testament.

The second part of the chapter was devoted to a study of selected quotations from Jeremiah in the New Testament. Our method of treatment was to observe the passages in their respective contexts and to note any special significance which they might have. The outstanding quotation was the New Covenant passage of Jeremiah, which was twice quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews. This passage demonstrated most remarkably how Jeremiah anticipated the New Testament.

We offer the following conclusions as a result of the discussion in this chapter.

1. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inseparably interwoven into a unified whole which is the Christian Bible.
2. There is a definite literary relationship between Jeremiah and the New Testament.
3. Jeremiah was considered as an authority by the writers of the New Testament.

CHAPTER VI.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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The problem around which this thesis has revolved is: In what ways does the prophecy of Jeremiah anticipate the writings of the New Testament? We have approached this problem from several different angles, namely, the historical, social, religious, and literary. In as much as each of the chapters of this thesis contains a summary of the material presented therein, it is unnecessary to present another summary, which would be a reduplication of the others. However, there have been four cardinal ideas running throughout this study, which have entered into every chapter. In their logical order they are, sin, judgment, punishment, restoration. We shall now undertake a summary of the material as it is related to these four major thoughts, and how they in turn are related to our problem.

1. Sin.

According to Jeremiah, the sin of Israel was both national and individual. The former was expressed in the nation's dependence upon foreign alliances to preserve its independence, in the attempt to promote a reform which was false in principle, and in the insincerity of the worship which was established in the temple. The latter was expressed in the widespread immorality of the people,

in social and economic injustice and oppression, and in the deceit which characterized most of their relationships. Stated briefly, sin was moral and religious failure. Not only did Jeremiah denounce the sins of both people and nation but he was also very much concerned about the causes. In his early oracles the prophet expressed the hope that the people would turn from their evil ways, but this later gave way to the certainty that the nation had given itself up irrevocably to the practice of sin. The discerning mind of Jeremiah penetrated to the heart of Israel's moral failure and discovered that the real cause was the inherent corruptness of human nature. In the light of that discovery, the inevitability of subsequent events was apparent to the prophet.

2. Judgment.

A striking characteristic of the prophecy of Jeremiah, which is readily seen by even a superficial examination, is that every denunciation of the nation for its sin is immediately followed by a pronouncement of judgment. Judgment was the inevitable corollary of sin. That was because of the legal nature of the Old Covenant which was the cornerstone of Israel's religion, which made it a religion of law. Under the terms of that covenant, obedience to law determined the continuance of a relation-

ship between God and His people. "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant."¹ became the necessary requirement for the continuance of Divine favor. The burden of responsibility was placed upon the people, and it was more than their weak moral structure could stand. They violated the terms of the covenant by disobedience to its laws. By so doing, the covenant was abrogated and their relationship to God broken. The nation sought to restore that relationship by offering sacrifices and burnt offerings to their God. They hoped to remove the judgment which was upon them for their sin by a ceremonial system of worship. The one thing demanded of them they refused to do, which was to conform to the terms of the covenant by obedience to its laws. The repeated warnings and pleadings of Jehovah were of no avail. "They have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return."² Their judgment had to be executed.

3. Punishment.

The punishment of Israel was determined by the character and extent of its sin. The complete bankruptcy of national, social, and religious life meant complete purging. As only from the broken pieces of his lump of clay

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1. Exodus 19:5
2. Jeremiah 5:3

could the potter mould a new vessel, so only from the broken pieces of the nation could God mould a new people. Both temple and nation had to be destroyed and the people driven into exile. The Fall of Jerusalem was to Jeremiah the vindication of God's righteousness and justice, as well as his own cause. It was the point toward which for forty years the prophet had seen all the currents in the stream of the nation's life converging. In the ashes of the city was buried the nation's aspirations to wealth and power. All that the prophet foretold concerning its inevitable doom had come to pass. This disaster to the nation was not affected without cost, not only to the prophet, but to God. The prophet's agony of soul as he foretold the dire calamity which must overtake his beloved people was but the earnest of the Divine suffering which accompanied the destruction of God's own chosen race. Out of the bitterness of his experience, however, there came to the prophet the realization that such suffering was the evidence of a Love which would some day reclaim its beloved.

4. Restoration.

While Jeremiah saw the future restoration would take place, he also realized that it could not be under the terms of the old covenant. Neither could the restoration take place while the hearts of its people were stain-

ed by sin. God's forgiveness and removal of their sin must precede the establishment of a new covenant. To insure the permanence of this covenant, God would write His laws upon the hearts of His people. There would be no need of a temple, or priesthood, or ceremony, for God would reveal Himself directly to each, and everyone should know Him.

Conclusion.

Sin, judgment, punishment, and restoration -- this is the sequence of thought which is the key to the answer to our problem. In these four ideas, as contained in the prophecy, we find that Jeremiah anticipated the following teachings and doctrines contained in the New Testament:

1. The social gospel. The social message of Jeremiah anticipated the social teachings of Jesus.

2. The Kingdom of God. Jeremiah's portrayal of the New Covenant anticipates in covenantal terms the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God.

3. The doctrine of regeneration. In the moral failure of the people, Jeremiah saw the corruption of human nature and the necessity of its change.

4. The doctrine of repentance. Jeremiah de-

manded real repentance as the only evidence of a sincere desire to serve God.

5. The doctrine of the atonement: The suffering of God, for the people's sin anticipates Christ's suffering upon the cross.

6. The doctrine of grace. Jeremiah's realization that restoration could only come by God's forgiveness of the people anticipated the work of grace revealed in the New Testament.

7. The doctrine of faith. Jeremiah's realization of the inadequacy of the law anticipates Paul's teaching on the same subject.

8. Jesus. We list this as an anticipation because of the many similarities in the life of each. Jeremiah's courage, devotion, and suffering, his close fellowship with God, his passion for righteousness, anticipates their perfect expression in the life our Lord. The more we study this prophet, the more we realize how near he comes to being a prototype of John the Baptist. He was, indeed, as much as John, the herald of the coming of the Lord. He has a message vital to the needs of our

day. Our generation will do well to accept his warnings, but, most of all, let us look forward with renewed hope to the complete establishment of the New Covenant, which has been made possible through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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