

The Burden of Prophecy

The main theme of the Old Testament Prophets
presented and their clear chronological order observed

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Valiant for the Truth	01
The Spokesman....instead of a mouth	02
The "Burden" of Prophecy	11
Chronological order of Prophets sought and exhibited	15
Last Days of Acts 2 (Joel)	20
Jonah. "The Second Time"	22
Amos. The Sycamore Fruit and its ripening	27
Hosea. Restoration of Israel, symbolic and promised	32
Micah. "From of Old"	39
Jeremiah. Restoration & New Covenant	44
Daniel. "Times of the Gentiles" (with brief note on Zephaniah)	50
Ezekiel. Wheels within Wheels.	
The Unfolding Purpose	58
Haggai. "From this day will I bless you"	63
Zechariah. "No more Canaanite"	68
Malachi. "He shall prepare the Way"	74

THE BURDEN OF PROPHECY

“Valiant for the Truth”

The central testimony of *The Berean Expositor** is, and ever must be, Christ in His capacity as Head of the Church which is His body, the testimony of Paul the Lord's prisoner, the testimony for the present parenthetical dispensation, the testimony whose limits lie between the dismissal of Israel in Acts twenty-eight, and the recognition of Israel as a Nation in their land, a recognition that is on the horizon and steadily drawing near. To us, therefore, whose hope must be realized before the “coming” of the Lord either in the air, or upon the Mount of Olives, the intricacies of prophetic fulfilment or of its interpretation do not present themselves as such personal problems, as the references in our own epistles to the *epiphaneia* “manifestation”, or the *exanastasis* “out-resurrection,” must and should do. Nevertheless, the Saviour of the Church is at the same time the Saviour of Israel. The same glorious person Who is Head of the Church, is also the King destined to reign on David's throne, and it would be an unchristian and selfish spirit that refused to be interested in anything taught in the Scriptures, unless some personal benefit from it to ourselves should accrue. We believe that those of our readers who have read the short series of articles on “The Signs of the Times”† which dealt especially with the prophetic foreshadowing of 1 and 2 Timothy, would appreciate help on the matter of prophecy generally, even though in the final issue, the day of fulfilment may fall beyond their own immediate hope.

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† *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. xxxv, 1949/50.

What is prophecy?

“A prediction of some contingent circumstance or event in the future received by immediate and direct revelation” (Vitranga).

“A declaration made by a creature under the inspiration or commission of the omniscient God relating to an event or a series of events, which have not taken place at the time the prophecy is uttered, which could not have been certainly foreknown by any science or wisdom of man” (Dr. Pye Smith).

The form of prophecy which is envisaged in these definitions is the predictive, but there is another form of prophecy which must not be omitted, that is the moral and didactic or teaching phase. The words uttered by the prophet had a meaning or a lesson for his immediate hearers, as well as a forecast of “things to come.” It is with the predictive phase of prophecy, however, that we have to do in this booklet. We may ask, What is a Prophet? and find at least the elements of an answer in the words of Numbers twelve:

“Hear My words, If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold” (12:6-8).

The word here translated “prophet” is the Hebrew *nabi*. Gesenius says that *naba*, the verb, comes from a root meaning “to bubble up.” Dr. Young, in his concordance, says it means “flow forth” which amounts to much the same thing. If this etymology be true, it looks to the inspiration of the prophet. This Divine efflatus, which appears to be an essential equipment of a prophet, can be illustrated by the case of Saul.

Samuel said to Saul: “The spirit of the Lord will come upon thee and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shall be turned into another man” (1 Sam. 10:6). This came to pass so that it was said: “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (1 Sam. 10:11).

When, as a consequence of Saul’s disobedience, the Lord withdrew His favour from him we read “The evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house” (1 Sam. 18:10). In these two cases prophecy, whether true or false, was the direct outcome of the “coming upon Saul” of a spirit, a spirit that was either good or evil. From this same book of Samuel, we learn that:

“Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer” (I Sam. 9:9).

Seer, Hebrew *roeh*. This word, as the English indicates, is derived from the verb “to see” *raah*, and Isaiah played upon this fact when he said “which say to the Seers, see not” (Isa. 30:10).

Another word which is also translated “seer” is derived from the Hebrew *chazah* which means “to see” as in a vision. Again 1 Samuel will provide an illustration:

“And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision” (I Sam. 3:1).

So the prophecy of Isaiah opens with “The *vision* of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he *saw*” (Isa. 1:1).

According to Numbers 12:6 the usual mode of imparting the prophetic message to a prophet was of “vision” or “dream”. Let us note a few references that show the relation of “vision” and “dream” to prophecy.

NATHAN. “According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David” (1 Chron. 17:15).

ISAIAH. “Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz” (2 Chron. 32:32).

DANIEL. “I Daniel, had seen the vision”; “To seal up the vision and prophecy” (Dan. 8:15, 9:24).

PAUL. “A vision appeared to Paul in the night” (Acts 16:9).

“I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord” (2 Cor. 12:1).

“A prophet, or dreamer of dreams” (Deut. 13:1). “God . . . answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams” (1 Sam. 28:15). These and kindred passages show the close link that the Scriptures establish between the gift of prophecy and the dream. It will be observed, however, that the first reference, like several not quoted here, refers to the false prophet, even as false prophets and their misleading visions are referred to by Jeremiah (14:14, 23:16). Ecclesiastes said “A dream cometh through the multitude of business . . . in the multitude of dreams . . . are also divers vanities” (Eccles. 5:3,7). So that dreams by themselves are suspect and must not be confused with Divine illumination. On the other hand, the Lord spoke to Abimelech, to Joseph, to Solomon and to Daniel by dreams,

and when the prophet Joel refers to the prophetic gift associated with the day of Pentecost, he said "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

Neither visions nor dreams of themselves were a sufficient warrant for unquestioning acceptance. Neither the prophet nor his hearers were treated as automatons. Just as in New Testament times, the believer is enjoined to "try the spirits", for some were not of God, so, in Old Testament times, even though a prophet or dreamer of dreams gave a sign or a wonder, and even though that sign or wonder *came to pass*, even then all such prophecy should be tested by the known will and Word of God (Deut. 13:1-5).

Perhaps no gift so overwhelmed the individual mind of the human instrument as the gift of prophecy, for it is written "holy men of God spake as they were *moved* by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 2:21), and that word "moved" means "driven" as by a tempest (Acts 27:15,17), and so much so that Balaam, even against his inclinations, admitted that, when the moment came, he would not be able to speak anything but what the Lord put into his mouth (Num. 22:38, 23:5-10). Nevertheless, in spite of all this pressure on the one hand, the believer was expected to exercise his responsibility before the Lord, and to distinguish "the chaff from the wheat" (Jer. 23:28).

A series of statements is made in Jeremiah twenty-three concerning the false prophets which illuminate this use of what we might call "the moral yardstick":

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (22,23).

The moral issue, not a prodigy, was the test. These false prophets caused Israel "to forget" the name of the Lord, and turned their hearts after "Baal". They are accused of "stealing" God's words, and using their tongues to say "He saith". "I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their lightness . . . they shall not profit at all". "Lies and lightness". Here are two test words that may be applied to the

whole of prophetic scripture. If the result of any prophetic utterance, be to “make you vain” then we can be sure that such prophets “speak a vision of their own hearts, and not out of the mouth of the Lord” (Jer. 23:16).

The Hebrew word that is translated “lie” is *sheqer*. The primary idea of the word, according to Gesenius, is “colouring” with the implied idea of falsehood. So, “wanton eyes” are translated by Bishop Lowth “falsely setting off their eyes with paint” (Isa. 3:16). Keeping to the prophecy of Jeremiah we find this word *sheqer* translated “feignedly”, “in vain”, “falsely”, “lying”, “lies” and “falsehood”. Jeremiah 8:8 reads in the Authorized Version margin “the false pen of the scribes worketh for falsehood”, or again, “They bend their tongues like their bow for lies, but they are not valiant for the truth” (Jer. 9:3). Over and over again Jeremiah warns the people against the teacher of lies, and finally was himself put into prison because the words he uttered were unacceptable in the ears of the rulers of the people.

“Lies and lightness”. The Hebrew word translated lightness is *pachazuth* which means instability. “Unstable as water” (Gen. 49:4) uses the word in the masculine form. Zephaniah said, “her prophets are light (*pachaz*) and treacherous persons” (3:4).

“Truth”, *emeth* (the parent of our word *Amen*) is the very opposite both of “lies” and “lightness”, for the basic meaning of *emeth* is “stedfastness”, “establishment” (2 Chron. 32:1). “Lies and lightness” here are the tests for all prophetic utterances—if they “make you vain” they are not of God.

Why should “false prophets” ever be permitted? Apart from the fact that such form part of the problem of evil that is ever present but never discussed in the Scriptures, we are definitely told that the prophet or a dreamer of dreams that says “Let us go after other gods” is permitted by the Lord, “For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 13:1-3).

In our own generation we have a number of “prophets” who, by one form of computation or another, have “proved” that the second coming of the Lord would take place on some specified date. One after another they have been proved false, but

still they arise and still there will be found men and women foolish and blind enough to follow them.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (or “surely there is no morning for them”, R.V.) (Isa. 8:20).

“Thy Spokesman . . . instead of a mouth”

The first person to be named “a prophet” is Abraham (Gen. 20:7), which shows that the title is not to be limited to “prediction” but rather to the wider meaning of a spokesman for God.

“He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee and thou shalt live.”
“So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech” (Gen. 20:7,17).

While Abraham utters no prophecy of future events, he “prayed” and the thing he prayed for came to pass, so, even though the predictive element is inconspicuous, it is there, nevertheless.

The next man to be named a “prophet” is Aaron. When the time came for Moses to go into the presence of Pharaoh, the Lord said to him:

“See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land” (Exod. 7:1,2).

This related appointment looks back to Exodus three and four where Moses was originally called by God and commanded to go back to Egypt and to Pharaoh. Moses had seen the sign of the burning bush (Exod. 3:1-3), had heard the Lord speak in the name of the God of his fathers; had been assured of the Lord’s presence; had received the unfolding of the great name I AM (Exod. 3:4-15) and had received confirmation by the working of two especially typical miracles (4:1-8), yet even after all this Moses is seen to be diffident.

“And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Exod. 4:10).

Humility is a lovely grace, but a false humility takes on itself an ugly look whether assumed out of fear, pride or any other reaction to the Divine challenge. Paul served the Lord with ALL humility, and could nevertheless say "I can do all things", but only "through Christ which strengtheneth me."

The Lord remonstrated gently with Moses, saying;

"Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exod. 4:11,12).

This is surely enough—but no! Moses replied:

"O my Lord, send I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou would send."

These words do not mean loving and loyal acquiescence but rather suggest "Send by someone else, rather than send me." The Students Commentary remarks here:

"The hesitating and timid Moses of Mount Horeb was the same courageous and self-reliant Moses who smote the Egyptian dead! His strength then unfitted him as a Divine instrument and now his weakness unfitted him. God can use neither one nor the other, if the strength is trusted, or if the weakness is sheltered behind as an excuse."

So it was that Aaron came to be appointed:

"And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also behold he cometh forth to meet thee, and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth and his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God" (Exod. 4:14-16).

It would take us too far afield to pursue the personal history of both Moses and Aaron and mark their inter-related service whether for good or ill. One thing only must be said before we pass on, and that is, quite apart from any personal failure on the part of Moses, he was ever a type. As representing the law, he could not take Israel across Jordan, only Joshua, "The Salvation of the Lord", could do that. So here. Moses, a "king" (Deut. 33:5) and a "lawgiver", was early associated with a "Sceptre" (Gen. 49:10). Moses had access within the veil beyond the right granted to any high priest (Num. 7:89;

Lev. 16:2), and so was in some ways “a priest”; we have already learned that he was something more than a “prophet”, but these three offices can be truly borne by One and One only. He Who is in truth Prophet, Priest and King is the Saviour Himself, and Moses’ failure but sets forth the total failure of all mankind.

Aaron was to be “spokesman” for Moses.

Aaron was to be “instead of a mouth” to Moses.

Aaron was to be a “prophet” to Moses.

Moses “took the place” of God to Aaron.

Throughout the narrative, it is Moses who is commissioned, but it is Aaron who actually speaks, whether Aaron be mentioned by name or not. “And the Lord spake unto Moses” (Exod. 8:1). “And the Lord spake unto Moses, say unto Aaron” (8:5). “And the Lord said unto Moses *Go* in unto Pharaoh . . . and Moses and Aaron *came* in unto Pharaoh” (10:1,3). What is true of Moses and Aaron is true of the Lord and of His prophets. When the prophet speaks, it is understood that he speaks “instead of a mouth”, he is the “spokesman” for the Lord.

Let us, having gone so far, pursue this aspect of the subject further. “The Lord put a word in Balaam’s mouth” (Num. 23:5). The context of this statement is illuminating. Balak, the king of the Moabites, seeing what Israel had done to the Amorites, was moved with fear, and sent messengers to Balaam, calling him to come and “curse me this people”, promising him great reward. After several vacillations Balaam consented, and when Balak heard that Balaam had come, went out to meet him saying, “Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?” but Balaam replied:

“Lo I come to thee: have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God putteth into my mouth, that shall I speak” (22:38).

And so it was, in spite of the “seven altars” with the “seven oxen” and the “seven rams”, all was unavailing to alter the word of the Lord; Balaam spake only that which the Lord put into his mouth. Now if a reluctant and greedy self-seeker like Balaam could not help but speak words of truth, when God chose, how much more may we expect and believe that the

true prophet whose heart was in harmony with his Lord and the message he was called upon to give, would speak by inspiration.

On several occasions Isaiah concluded a prophetic utterance with the words “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”, but Jeremiah and his ordination sets forth very vividly this aspect of the prophetic gift. After Jeremiah learned that he had been ordained “a prophet unto the nations” he said:

“Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak . . . then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said ‘Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth’ ” (1:5-9).

Then follows, in verse ten a summary of the prophecies that Jeremiah was to utter, and this in turn was followed by a test. How far could Jeremiah enter into the message he was bound to deliver?

The Lord said to Jeremiah “What seest thou?” and Jeremiah replied “I see the rod of an almond tree.” To this the Lord replied “Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten My word to perform it” (1:11,12).

To the English reader, the Lord’s commendation does not seem to follow. There seems no obvious connection between an “almond tree” and “hastening” the Word. An almond tree is in the Hebrew *shaqed* “a watcher”; the almond was a harbinger of Spring, being among the first to flower in January. The word “hasten” is the translation of the Hebrew *shaqad*, but why the Authorized Version translators should have so translated it is not evident. The word means “to watch” as can be seen in Jeremiah 5:6 and 44:27. The matter is placed beyond dispute by a reference in Jeremiah 31:28. Jeremiah’s prophecies were related to “rooting out”, “pulling down” and subsequently “building” and “planting” the nations (1:10) as in chapter thirty-one this is referred to:

“And it shall come to pass, that like as I have WATCHED over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I WATCH over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord” (Jer. 31:28).

What therefore the Lord said to Jeremiah at the beginning

was, "I will WATCH (over) My Word to perform it" and according to Jeremiah 31:31 this promise of restoration will be accomplished under the terms of the New Covenant, a covenant that has no place in the dispensation of the mystery.

The prophet Hosea uses a very bold figure of speech when he says:

"Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth" (Hos. 6:5).

It may possibly come into the mind of anyone not too well grounded in the truth that, after all, this reference to the words of God being put into "the mouth" of a prophet is very primitive and belongs only to a primitive age. We therefore turn to the New Testament, where both before and after Pentecost the figure is employed.

Referring to the forty-first Psalm, Peter says:

"This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost *by the mouth* of David spake before concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16).

After Pentecost with its spiritual endowment and illumination, Peter still employs the same figure:

"But those things, which God before had showed *by the mouth* of all His prophets . . . He hath so fulfilled" (3:18).

"The times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken *by the mouth* of all His holy prophets since the world began" (3:21).

And yet once again just before a second miniature Pentecost, Peter said:

"Lord Thou art God, which hath made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who *by the mouth* of thy servant David had said, Why did the heathen rage?" (4:24,25).

We have seen that a prophet was one who received his message either by a vision or a dream, and had the matter ended there we might have reasonably supposed that, having seen the vision or dreamed the dream, he was left to explain and expound the revelation in his own way. This we see is not so and once again we thank God for the wondrous care and provision He has made to preserve intact and uncorrupted the Word which He sent to the children of men.

The "Burden" of Prophecy

We have already seen that false prophecy leads to error by its "lies and lightness" (Jer. 23:32); what we may not have observed was that in the very next verse, we have a taunting word concerning "the burden" of the Lord. Eight times in Jeremiah twenty-three do we read of this "burden" in Jeremiah's rebuke to these prophets of "lies and lightness."

"And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest shall ask thee, What is the burden of the Lord? thou shalt say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you saith the Lord" (Jer. 23:33).

The evident parallel to this is found in verse thirty-five:

"Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbours, and every one to his brother, What hath the Lord answered? and, What hath the Lord spoken?"

Such offenders were prohibited from using the term "the burden of the Lord" any more, "for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of Hosts our God." There can be no doubt but that "the burden" either of the Lord, or of the prophet, be he false or true, or the people, whatever their attitude, refers to their "words".

The service appointed to the sons of Levi in respect to the furniture of the tabernacle and the court is called their respective "burden" (Num. 4:15-49). The responsibility for leading and controlling the children of Israel after their departure from Egypt is called by Moses "a burden", saying:

"Wherefore hast Thou afflicted thy servant, and wherefore have I not found favour in Thy sight, that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me. Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which Thou swearest unto their fathers?" (Num. 11:11,12).

It will be seen that this burden was not looked upon as mere weight or pressure, the heart as well as mind and body was involved. The prophet Isaiah uses the figure of a burden a number of times, to refer to some specific prophetic utterance, "The burden of Babylon" (13:1), "The burden of Moab" (15:1). Isaiah 13-27 is a sevenfold series of "Burdens and

Blessings”,* the overthrow of Babylon and other enemies of the truth being followed by the restoration of Israel. By the time we reach the prophet Zechariah, “the burden of the Lord” had found its “rest” (Zech. 9:1).

It is evident that to the true prophet, the gift of prophecy was no light matter. To be able to see down the stream of time and to have some perception of the course of events, particularly when the general trend of such events is downward to destruction and misery, brings with it a responsibility that constitutes a real burden.

On two occasions the word which is translated “burden” is actually translated “prophecy.”

“The words of Agur . . . even the prophecy” (Prov. 30:1).

“The word of King Lemuel, the prophecy which his mother taught him” (Prov. 31:1).

We can build nothing upon these translations, however, owing to the extreme difference of opinion on the part of translators and commentators (see the text and margin of the Revised Version).

Something of this consciousness of great responsibility can be found in the epistles of Paul. Not only was he overwhelmed by the grace that could choose and use so earthy an earthen vessel, he was also exceedingly sensitive to the responsibilities that his call and commission brought with them.

Paul uses the same figures of speech as did Moses in Numbers 11:11,12. He spoke of himself as “a nursing father”† (1 Thess. 2:11), as of one who had “begotten” the believers in the churches which he had founded. “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15).

Again, after actually using the expression “I will not be *burdensome* to you,” he said “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved” (2 Cor. 12:15). He knew the “cares” of all the churches. He was conscious that he was a “debtor” to preach the gospel. “Who is offended,” cried the Apostle, “and I

*For structure of Isaiah see *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. xxx.

† The “nurse” of verse 7 is “a nursing mother”; see Moffatt or the *Diaglott*. The “father” of verse 11 borrows the thought of nursing from verse 7.

burn not?" and summed up his life of service by using the figure of the drink offering poured out upon the sacrifice and service of faith. Paul knew "the burden" of the ministry of the word. John, the writer of the book of the Revelation, knew this burden of prophecy. He was given the book, which the Angel had brought, and was told:

"Take it, and eat it up, and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey . . . Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings" (Rev. 10:9-11).

The word entrusted was indeed "sweet" for was it not the word of the living God! but the events prophesied were grievous because of the rebellion of man. The prophet Ezekiel had a similar experience:

"Son of man, eat that thou findest: eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel . . . and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness . . ." (Ezek. 3:1-3).

Yet this book contained "written therein lamentations and mourning and woe" (2:10) and he, like John, would have tasted its bitterness. So deeply did Jeremiah realize "the burden of prophecy" that his very name has become a byword. We speak of a "Jeremiad" when referring to some utterance that is particularly doleful, and often with a touch of ridicule.

Not only is he the writer of the book of "Lamentations" but in his prophecy itself we read:

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people" (Jer. 9:1).

Isaiah, too, after he received the commission to go and tell Israel the words of judgment of Isaiah 6:9,10 reveals his sense of "burden" by his reply "Lord, How long?" Time would fail to speak in detail of the baffling experiences of Habakkuk (Hab. 1:1-17), of the way in which the domestic and private life of Hosea was invaded by the necessities of the prophetic office (Hos. 1-3), of David and others whose experiences walked with the message they were called upon to give, and who knew the meaning of "the burden of the Lord".

The Saviour Himself bore many burdens, and as the true Prophet of God, He knew the burden of prophecy.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets . . . how often would I have gathered thy children . . . Your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:37,38).

He knew what it was to be rejected (Matt. 11:20-24) and His words which fill the remainder of chapter eleven with their wonder are especially addressed to those who in their turn bear this “burden of the Lord”. Doubtless many thousands have derived comfort from Matthew 11:28-30 who were never in any sense “heavy laden” with this burden, and doubtless many more will adopt these precious words and print them on Motto cards, and teach them to Sunday school scholars. Nevertheless, these words were originally uttered in a special circumstance and have as their primary interpretation a word of cheer to the burdened servant of the Lord. This can be seen by the employment of the figure “take My yoke upon you,” for “servants” are under the “yoke” (1 Tim. 6:1) and to take another’s yoke upon one’s own shoulders, is to become a “yoke fellow” (Phil. 4:3) in service and ministry. “Come unto Me all ye that labour” said the Saviour, and this word “labour” is oftentimes taken to mean affliction, weariness and grief.

Kopiao, the Greek word so translated, is used for “toil” and “labour” in the ordinary sense of the term, namely work, whether physical or mental, that involves hard work, toil and energy, and which is usually attended with fatigue. There is only one reference out of twenty-three found in the New Testament where any departure from this meaning is allowed, and that is John 4:6, “Jesus therefore *being wearied* with His journey,” and even that is weariness arising out of a toilsome journey.

The word translated “heavy laden” also, *phortizo*, is employed once again in Luke 11:46 for the lading men with burdens grievous to be borne, and gives us the word “burden” *phortion* of Matthew 11:30, as also in Matthew 23:4.

What does this invitation of the Lord given in Matthew 11:28, 29 really mean? He had reached the first great crisis in His earthly ministry—apparent failure. His mighty miracles had not brought about repentance, and without repentance Israel’s blessing could not take place. What then? Should He bewail? Should He murmur? NO! “AT THAT TIME” He said “Even so Father”. Here was “meekness and lowliness of heart” and He

called upon all who should tread this path of unrequited service to share with Him, to learn of Him, to bear with Him, to endure patiently with Him, to recognize that the burden of the Lord must be reckoned with, that few true servants of the Lord can hope to carry out His appointments without entering into the experiences that are recorded of the Prophets or of their Lord.

None but a prophet can bear the burden of a prophet, but those of us who enter into the teaching of the Scriptures and believe their message, we, too, have our allotted burden.

Can we read 2 Timothy three and learn that the closing days of this dispensation shall be "perilous" without a qualm? Can we read the dreadful characteristics of verses 2-4, and realize the parallel they exhibit to the Paganism denounced in Romans 1:29-31, without concern? We whose life-work it has been to "Preach the Word", can we read without anxiety the prophetic words of 2 Timothy 4:3,4, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"? To all who are thus placed, the words from Matthew eleven come with refreshing and enstrengthening grace.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

The Chronological Order of the Prophets sought and exhibited

There are many side issues attached to such a theme as "Prophets and Prophecy" which, though interesting and in their degree important, cannot be considered here. We are more concerned with *the message* which the Prophet was inspired to deliver, than *the way* in which he was inspired and endowed thus to speak. What is the burden of prophecy? What are its main subjects? Can they be reduced to categories that will enable us to arrive at a fairly accurate understanding of their import, or must we take each prophecy as it stands and consider it independently of all the rest?

The first thing to settle must be, which of the books of the Old Testament come under the heading of "Prophecy". The Hebrew canon is divided into three great groups—a division recognized by the Lord Himself—The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. The Prophets include some historical books, for Old Testament history often is a foreshadowing of that which is yet to come.

Let us first of all set out before the eye the books of the Prophets according to the Hebrew canon.

A JOSHUA. Joshua, The Captain.

The Lord of all the earth (Josh. 3:11).

Failure to possess the land (Josh. 18:3).

The Canaanite still in possession (Josh. 15:63).

B JUDGES. Failure. Thirteen Judges.

Israel, forsaking and returning. No king (Jud. 21:25).

C SAMUEL. Saul, type of Antichrist, David, type of Christ.

Israel want to be like *the nations*.

D. KINGS. Decline and fall. Removal from land.

LAST PAGE of Hebrew O.T. "No remedy" (2 Chron. 36:16).

FIRST PAGE of Greek N.T. "Jesus . . . He shall save" (Matt. 1:21).

D ISAIAH. Israel's only hope of restoration. The Messiah.

C JEREMIAH. Nebuchadnezzar, type of Antichrist. David's "Branch".

Israel in captivity among *the nations*.

B EZEKIEL. Glory and the cherubim.

The glory forsaking and returning. "The Lord is there".

A MINOR PROPHETS. Joshua, the high priest (Zech. 3).

The Lord of all the earth (Zech. 6:5).

Return to the land from captivity.

No more the Canaanite (Zech. 14:21).

It will be seen that if we follow the Hebrew canon, we shall

include Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, but exclude Daniel. The Hebrew conception of a Prophet was wider than simple predictions, but it is the predictive aspect of prophecy that interests us at the moment. We shall therefore omit the historical books mentioned above, but include Daniel. This will give us the following prophecies which come under the heading "Predictive": Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Minor Prophets and Daniel. (To this collection must be added a number of the Psalms which are predictive in character.) This necessarily makes a formidable list of works that call for examination, and the words "The *burden* of prophecy" recur to the mind as one contemplates the task.

Another question that must be settled is "In what order should these prophecies be considered? If the chronological order in which these prophets appeared could be established, it would be wise to adopt that order. This, however, can only be done if that order can be ascertained. The four prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are dated. Let us see this before we go further.

ISAIAH. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (Isa. 1:1).

JEREMIAH. "The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah . . . to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon King of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign" (Jer. 1:1,2).

EZEKIEL. "In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi" (Ezek. 1:2,3).

DANIEL. "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim King of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar . . . in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams . . . this is the dream" (Dan. 1:1; 2:1,36).

It will be seen that Ezekiel should come after Daniel if the order of appearance is to be strictly observed.

Of the twelve Minor Prophets, six are dated and six are undated. The six that are dated are Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai and Zechariah. The six undated are Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Malachi.

Let us record the six dated Minor Prophets first, and then see how far it is possible to relate the undated ones with those whose chronological sequence is plain.

HOSEA. "The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beerī, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel" (Hos. 1:1).

AMOS. "The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake" (Amos 1:1).

MICAH. "The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem" (Mic. 1:1).

ZEPHANIAH. "The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi . . . in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah" (Zeph. 1:1).

HAGGAI. "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet" (Hag. 1:1).

ZECHARIAH. "In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah . . ." (Zech. 1:1).

These six prophets are explicitly dated, their chronological order is not a matter of debate or deduction. This is not the case with the remainder.

Of the six undated Minor prophets, nothing can be said with certainty, but Jonah being called the son of Amittai, turns us back to 2 Kings 14:25 and so relates the prophetic ministry of Jonah with the reign of Jeroboam King of Israel (2 Kings 14:23).

Malachi, while undated by specific chronological reference, is linked by internal evidence to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

He speaks as did Nehemiah of the intermarriage of Israel with "the daughter of a strange god" and of the declension of tithes. The temple, with its altar, its sacrifices and its feasts had evidently been restored, and was now suffering a relapse into formalism. The fact that "the governor" (Mal. 1:8) is given a name (*Pechah*) which is used mainly of the Persian ruler is a further chronological link. The testimony of the Rabbins is that Malachi was "The seal of the prophets". We have, therefore, twelve Prophets which we can place in chronological order, thus:

Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. These prophets ministered while the kings of Judah and of Israel reigned concurrently. To this group, the undated prophet Nahum, probably belongs.

Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Daniel and Ezekiel prophesied between the carrying away captive of Israel, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the kings of Judah.

To this group, the undated prophets Habakkuk, Joel and Obadiah probably belong. Daniel and Ezekiel continued after the destruction of Jerusalem and are the prophets of the "Servitude".

Finally Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, bring prophecy to a close and ministered during and after the restoration brought about under Ezra and Nehemiah.

We propose giving an examination of these prophets—but the very nature of the subject makes any attempt at detail impossible. We shall seek the main trend of each prophet and build up, as we do so, sixteen links in the chain of prophecy, which bind together the historic founding of the kingdom of Israel under David, the vicissitudes of apostacy, failure and partial restoration that follow, and the birth and ministry of John the Baptist who in turn foreshadowed the coming of Elijah with which Old Testament prophecy ends (Mal. 3:1, 4:5,6).

The Last Days of Acts Two

A Brief Note on the Prophet Joel, with particular reference to Peter's quotation as recorded in Acts Two.

The prophecy of Joel is undated, and we have purposely limited ourselves to the dated prophecies, but it contains references to the future that impinge upon New Testament times, and must be given a consideration here. Its outstanding thoughts are REPENTANCE and RESTORATION, both of which form the groundwork of Peter's ministry in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

“Rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God . . . Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him?” (Joel 2:13,14).

“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm, My great army which I sent among you” (Joel 2:25).

The passage that demands our attention is that which follows this promise of restoration:

“And it shall come to pass afterward” (Joel 2:28).

The word “afterward” cannot stand alone, we must supply mentally the answer to “after what?” and here the answer is “After the promised restoration, after the day comes when Israel as the people of God shall never be ashamed.” It is obvious to any student of Prophecy that this happy day of Israel's restoration has not yet come, and that consequently some Scriptural and logical reason must have justified Peter's quotation of Joel 2:28-32, in Acts 2:17-21. A few variations are observable in Peter's quotation, that depart both from the Septuagint and from the Hebrew original, but these do not constitute a problem. What does constitute a problem of interpretation is the reason for quoting Joel 2:28-32 on the day of Pentecost. Peter most certainly called the people to repentance, and linked repentance with the times of restitution which had been the burden of prophecy since the world began, but if Pentecost *was* the restoration long hoped for, Peter could

not have said what he did in Acts 3:19-26. When we examine his quotation more closely we discover that he made a most important alteration. He DID NOT because he COULD NOT say "It shall come to pass AFTERWARD" for the promised restoration was yet future, he could only say.

"It shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS" (Acts 2:17).

It is an exegetical mistake of the first magnitude to assume that Peter is providing us with a basic text upon which we may erect a structure of "the last days", he is simply accommodating the passage to answer a most simple and somewhat trivial objection. Upon twelve men had come the "power from on high" with the result that the Jews who had come from the twelve specified nations (Acts 2:9-11) heard them speak the words of God in the tongue in which they had been born. Some were amazed and said "What meaneth this?" Others mocking said "These men are full of new wine," but Peter said "These are not drunken . . . this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel", and proceeds to quote the whole passage. His answer amounted to this: "If you are going to attribute this initial outpouring of the spirit which has endued these twelve men with power for their ministry, to the effects of wine and drunkenness, what will you say when the great outpouring of the spirit takes place AFTER the restoration actually comes?" For this reason, if for no other, Acts 2:16-21 is the last passage to refer to in the construction of any scheme of the prophetic period known as the "last days"; any other reference is preferable to this, for the simple reason that Peter was accommodating this passage to rebuke those that mocked.

It is not within the scope of this series to attempt an examination of the prophetic period known as the "last days", the subject demands a treatise, but a word to the wise we trust will be sufficient. "In those days", i.e. the days of which Joel was speaking, God said:

"For behold, in those days, and at that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations" (Joel 3:1).

If any are at all doubtful as to the fact that "blood and fire and pillars of smoke", the darkening of the sun, and the turning

of the moon into blood are judgments and not blessings,* let him read Joel 3:15,16. It will not be possible in this booklet, to examine the other undated prophecies, except to remind the reader that Habakkuk must ever be held in some measure of affection and regard, for supplying the Apostle to the Gentiles his great text "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4).

Jonah. "The Second Time"

The first of the "Prophets", taking the "predictive" prophets chronologically, is Amos, but the book of the prophet Jonah forms a link and a background that must be included. Jonah's prophecy is threefold. The prophecy he spoke, namely "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" was not fulfilled, even though he himself was not a false prophet. His greatest prophecy is not found in the words he uttered but in the things he did and experienced. In his deeds he foreshadowed the culminating sin of Israel, and in his experience he foreshadowed the resurrection of Christ.

Jonah is mentioned in the Old Testament eighteen times, one reference being found in the book of Kings, where a record is made of the fulfilment of a prophetic word given by Jonah. Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel "restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher" (2 Kings 14:25).

Practically nothing is known of this initial prophecy of Jonah except what is here recorded, but what little is said is like a straw that indicates the direction of a current.

Hamath is situated at the northern extremity of the Lebanon range and would be a natural gateway from Nineveh in any attempt to invade Palestine. The Sea of the Plain of course is

* It has actually been expressed that however strange it may appear, these dreadful occurrences must somehow be "blessings", such is the condition of mind into which a false interpretation of Peter's quotation can lead the most earnest seeker after truth.

that known as "The Dead Sea". Dr. John Lightfoot translates the phrase in 2 Kings 14:28, which in the Authorized Version reads "And how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath *which belongeth* to Judah, for Israel" as recovering these lost ramparts which originally belonged to Judah (2 Sam. 8:6, 2 Chron. 8:3,4) taking them over "in Judah's title, as fitter to be subject to the seed of Israel, than to Syria".

It was therefore something of a staggering blow for Jonah, the intensely patriotic prophet of Israel, to be sent with a message to Nineveh, and such a message as he suspected might turn to Nineveh's preservation and advantage. Jonah's remonstrance and disobedience is to us well-nigh inexplicable, but there have been modern instances where the fear and the hatred of an invader has overridden the finest feelings and principles of Christians, acting in similar circumstances.

"Assyria had been laying her hand for some generations upon the nations on the Mediterranean coast, and it was a hand of fierce and ferocious mastery. No considerations of pity were permitted to stand in the way of Assyrian policy . . . the kings seem to gloat in their descriptions over the spectacle presented by the field of battle . . . this carnage was followed up by fiendish inflictions upon individual cities. The leading men, as at Lachish when Sennacherib had conquered the city, were led forth, seized upon by their executioners, and subjected to various punishments, all of them filled to the brim with horror . . . No man in Israel was ignorant of these things. Jonah may have witnessed them . . . Nineveh's cup then was full. The Judge had ascended the tribunal . . . sentence was about to be pronounced . . . If Nineveh perished, Israel was saved, there was only one thing to be feared. God's mercy might arrest the smiting of God's justice. . . What if Nineveh were left without warning . . . it was a choice between vengeance on him, a rebellious prophet, and vengeance on his people. He would sacrifice himself, but let Nineveh perish, and so save Israel . . . when he is cast overboard, there is no prayer, no cry to the Lord, from the prophet's lips. He has himself counted the cost. He has put himself outside God's mercy. He has made himself a curse for his people's sake" (Urquhart).

In the New Testament the name Jonah is used nine times of the Old Testament prophet, four times of Peter under the name Simon "son of Jonas" and once of Peter retaining the Aramaic "Bar-Jonas". Once, Jonah may have been in mind, when we read in John 7:52 "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet". Yet Gath-Hepher, the birthplace of Jonah, is in Galilee, and it may have been prejudice because Jonah went to the Gentiles, and not ignorance of geography that made the Pharisees say this.

Every one of the references to the prophet Jonah in the New Testament deals with either "the sign" of the three days and three nights, or "the preaching" which he made to the men of Nineveh. Jonah was not only a type of the resurrection of Christ, but he was a "sign unto the Ninevites" (Luke 11:30).

The prophetic import of the book of Jonah seems to be gathered up in the words of the first verse of chapter three, "the second time", as in Isaiah 11:11 which speak of Israel's restoration, or as in Acts 7:13 where "the second time, Joseph was made known unto his brethren", foreshadowing the day that is fast approaching when Israel shall look on Him Whom they have pierced, or as in Hebrews 9:28 when it is promised that the Saviour shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Something of the dispensational teaching of the book of Jonah can be gathered by a reference to that other follower of the Lord, Simon son of Jonas, who at the self-same place "Joppa" (Acts 10:5, Jonah 1:3) hesitated and argued when warned by God at the sending of Cornelius *the Gentile* with a request that he might tell him words, whereby both he and all his house should be saved (Acts 11:14). Jonah, when questioned by the mariners, said "I am a Hebrew" (1:9). Peter when he met Cornelius said "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation" (Acts 10:28), a sentiment shared by the church at Jerusalem (11:1-3). Peter confessed that he had at length become convinced that "In every nation he that feareth Him (God) and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (10:35), and Jonah reveals that his disobedience was prompted by the conviction he had that God being a gracious God, and of great kindness, would recall His threat of judgment, and repent, if there were any signs of repentance on the part of the enemy, the Gentile at Nineveh.

Jonah's rebellion sets forth moreover the attitude of Israel, which filled up the measure of their iniquity. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, said "Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us: and they are contrary to all men; *forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles* that they might be saved, to fill up their

sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. 2:14-16).

It will be remembered how the angry mob of Jews listened to Paul as he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, making no protest until he reached the hated word "Gentile". "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts 22:1-22). Jonah, it will be remembered, said "It is better for me to die than to live . . . I do well to be angry, even unto death" (Jonah 4:3,9).

Because Israel took such a definite line of antagonism against the extension of salvation to the Gentile, they have been for the last nineteen hundred years blinded, scattered, and to all intents dead, for when the time comes (and the hour seems to have struck) for Israel to be restored, the figure used by the prophet Ezekiel is that of a valley full of dry bones that are caused to live.

When we come to examine the prophecy of Hosea we shall see that this interval in Israel's history is covered by the name given to Hosea's son *Lo-ammi* "Not My people", and the interval of "two days" after which, on "the third" they shall once again "live" in His sight. So, the period of Jonah's typical death while in the great fish and his return on the third day, not only foreshadowed the death and resurrection of Christ, but the spiritual death and resurrection of the people whose attitude to Gentile evangelism he so strongly anticipated. We do not feel that our readers need a lengthy defence of the record of "Jonah and the whale".* In the Old Testament narrative the word "whale" does not occur, but the monster that swallowed Jonah is called "a great fish" and not only so, but a great fish which the Lord had "prepared". The word "whale" is found only in the New Testament record, which word is the Authorized Version translation of the Greek *ketos*, a word that indicates an order of marine animals called *cetateous*.

The repentance of Nineveh was not lasting, but the revelation which this strange story gives of the character of the God of Israel is a standing witness for all time against the blasphemy

*Should "evidence" be required, the reader should consult "The Cruise of the Cachalot" by Frank Bullen.

of the Higher Critic who seems to delight to pour scorn upon the "savage, primitive and local character of *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*".

Here is the testimony of this earliest of the Prophets of Israel. "The LORD" is, according to Jonah, "the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land" (1:9). Here is no mere tribal god. Here is uncompromising witness to the fact that God was Creator.

"Now the LORD had prepared a great fish", "The LORD God prepared a gourd", "God prepared a worm", "God prepared a vehement east wind" (Jon. 1:17; 4:6,7,8). The God of the book of Jonah was Personal, He could and did interpose in the affairs of men, He wrought miracles when it pleased Him so to do.

The structure* of Jonah is an extended alternation:

A 1:1,2. The word of the Lord, Arise, Cry.

B 1:3. Jonah's disobedience.

C 1:4-17. Effect upon the heathen mariners, "Let us not perish".

D 2:1-7. Jonah's prayer, "life from corruption".

E 2:8. Reference to idols.

F 2:9,10. Salvation is of the LORD.

A 3:1,2. The word of the Lord, Arise, Preach.

B 3:3,4. Jonah's obedience. The second time.

C 3:5-10. Effect upon heathen citizens, "That we perish not".

D 4:1-9. Jonah's displeasure. "Take my life from me".

E 4:10,11. Reference to idolaters.

Jonah's God also was a God of grace, there is nothing primitive or savage here:

"Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly." "Salvation is of the LORD." "The word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time." "And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way." "I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." "Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry? Should not I spare Nineveh?"

*We are indebted to Mr. E. A. Cater for suggestions in arriving at this structure.

Men bring up over and over again the passages of Scripture where Israel are commissioned to destroy another nation root and branch—they scarcely ever stop to consider the reasons offered in the Word for this “surgical operation”, but how many emphasize the extreme kindness of the Lord, as expressed in the closing words of Jonah’s prophecy:

“Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither made it to grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”

Amos. The Sycomore Fruit and its Ripening

We have already pondered over the “burden” of the prophets, and in Amos we have “the burden bearer” in person, for the Hebrew *Amos* means “a burden bearer”, burden being the Hebrew *massa*. Amos was never trained in “the school of the prophets”, he told the false priest of Beth-el who counselled him to flee:

“I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: and the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me ‘Go, prophesy unto My people Israel’ (7:14,15).

The Revised Version reads “a dresser of sycomore trees”. The LXX uses the word *knizo* “to scrape, to make to itch, to nettle”. It may not seem, at first sight, a subject worthy of such importance as to hold up our exposition, but there is more here than appears on the surface. Theophrastus, the successor of Aristotle, in his “History of Plants”, tells us that the sycomore fruit “does not ripen till it is rubbed (*knizo*) with iron combs, after which rubbing it ripens in four days.” Hasselquist, a Swedish naturalist, says “It buds the latter end of March, and the fruit ripens in the beginning of June; it is *wounded* and *cut* by the inhabitants at the time it buds, for without this precaution, they say, it will never bear fruit.”

The Fig, the Vine and the Olive are employed to set forth the

peculiar privileges of Israel (Judges 9:8-13), the Fig probably standing for Israel's national privileges. The sycomore has a leaf like the mulberry (Gk. *moron*) and fruit like the fig (Gk. *sykon*), hence the name in the Greek New Testament is *sykomoros*. The point that Amos seems to make here and which has a typical teaching, is that Israel, like the sycomore, will not bear ripe fruit apart from great tribulation. Already, we learn from Amos 1:3 that Damascus had "threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron", and when we remember that "tribulation" is derived from the Latin *tribulum* "a threshing sledge for separating grain from the husk, a wooden platform studded with sharp bits of flint or with iron teeth" ("Lloyd's Encyclopædic Dictionary"), the figure begins to take a deeper significance. Further, the Lord says "For, lo I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (Amos 9:9). Because the word translated "grain" is once translated "one small stone" in 2 Samuel 17:13, some have thought that Amos 9:9 should be translated "not the smallest stone", but this is unnecessary and untrue. It is the very object of sifting to get rid of "small stones" and leave the grain behind, and Amos' simile loses all point if the language be changed. In 2 Samuel 17:13, any word meaning "a small particle" would have done quite as well as "one small stone". Further the word translated "grain" is the Hebrew *tseror*, from *tsarar* "to vex", "to be in a strait", "narrow", and is found in Amos 5:12 where it is translated "afflict". The "one small grain" is one that is oppressed and has passed through affliction, yet, being one of the elect cannot fall upon the earth and be lost. We must return to this great conclusion of the prophet again.

Meanwhile we must obtain a broad idea of the way in which Amos was inspired to address the people of Israel. First, he speaks of the judgment that is threatened against the surrounding nations (1:3-2:3), he then turns to Judah (2:4) and to Israel (2:6) and uses the same formula that he employed against the nations:

"For three transgressions . . . and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof."

When the judgment is pronounced against Judah and Israel,

special emphasis is placed upon their attitude to the law and to the commandments (Amos 2:4) and to their attitude to those who were raised up as prophets, saying to them "prophecy not" (2:12). We have already seen that this was a characteristic of Israel, for Amaziah, the priest of Beth-el, said to Amos:

"Prophecy not again any more at Beth-el: for it is the king's chapel, and it is in the king's court" (Amos 7:13),

for Amos had prophesied the death of the king and the captivity of Israel. The fact that to Israel the Lord could say:

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth,"

instead of conferring upon them such favour as would exempt them from punishment, the reverse is the truth:

"Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2).

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). As this verse stands it speaks eloquently of the relation of "walk" and "fellowship", but the intention of the prophet seems to be deeper than this. The word translated "agreed" is the Hebrew *yaad*, and means "to meet" by appointment. It is the word used in Exodus 25:22 of the Mercy Seat, "There will I *meet* with thee", and although there is reference made to "the altar", the fact that Amos could say "every altar" and speak of the "altars of Beth-el" (3:14) shows that they were idolaters. This can only be remedied by judgment falling upon this altar, for the translation of Amos 9:1, which reads in the Authorized Version, "cut them in the head", should be amended and read:

"Smite the capital, shake the foundations, cut them off (i.e., the pillars) by the head, all of them."

Somewhat in the same strain as the opening chapters, where the refrain "For three transgressions and for four" punctuates the prophet's denunciation, we have in chapter four, the recurring refrain:

"Yet ye have not returned unto Me, saith the LORD."

Israel are here addressed as "the kine of Bashan" and with dreadful irony the prophet calls upon them:

“Come to Beth-el, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression, and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years; and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God” (Amos 4:4,5).

For these transgressions “want of bread”, “lack of water”, “blasting and mildew”, “pestilence” and treatment similar to that which overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah were sent upon this people, “Yet have ye not returned unto Me” is the sad refrain. The prophet now changes his formula “Seek ye Me, and ye shall live”, “Seek Him”, “Seek good” (Amos 5:4,6,8 and 14), and again returns to the root cause of all the evil—ceremonial instead of moral rectitude (5:21-27). In chapters 7-9 we meet a series of symbols:

- (1) Grasshoppers, fire, plumbline (7:1-9).
- (2) Basket of summer fruit (8:1-3).
- (3) Striking the lintel (9:1-4).

The first group of symbols fall into a simple pattern:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------|---|------------------|-----------|
| (a) | Symbol | Grasshoppers. | | |
| | | O Lord forgive. | By whom shall | for he is |
| | | | Jacob arise? | small. |
| | | The Lord repented. | It shall not be. | |
| (b) | Symbol | Fire. | | |
| | | O Lord God cease. | By whom shall | for he is |
| | | | Jacob arise? | small. |
| | | The Lord repented. | This also shall | |
| | | | not be. | |
| (c) | Symbol. | Plumbline. | | |
| | | No further call upon the Lord. | | |
| | | I will not again pass by them any more. | | |

The plumbline is the symbol of inflexible righteousness, and Israel’s judgment is here set forth. Isaiah after speaking of the tried foundation stone which God would lay in Zion, says “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies” (28:16,17).

“Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land” (Amos 7:17).

The second symbol, the basket of summer fruit (8: 1-3).*

This symbol is aligned with that of the plumbline, for in these two symbols occurs the question, "Amos, what seest thou?" The word "summer" is the translation of the Hebrew word *qayits*, which appears to be derived from the same root as *qatsir* "harvest" (Amos 4:7) both words meaning literally "to cut off" (2 Kings 16:17) and so "reap" (Amos 9:13). "Summer" is put by the figure of metonymy (or change of name) for the fruits that are ripe and ready to be plucked. This symbol like the symbol of the plumbline speaks of judgment that will not be turned aside, the same words being found in Amos 8:2 as in 7:8, "I will not again pass by them any more". The summer had come, the harvest must be reaped, as Jeremiah puts it "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20).

The final symbol is that of the smiting of the lintel with the strange expression "The Lord standing upon the altar" (Amos 9:1). The word translated "upon" is the same word that is translated "by" in 1 Kings 13:1 where we see "Jeroboam standing by the altar". This was the same altar at Beth-el, and a "man of God out of Judah" was sent, even as Amos who also was a man of God out of Judah was sent, to denounce the idolatry of Beth-el. Judgment that seems unmitigated and unescapeable is now poured forth. There is no escaping it in hell, heaven or the bottom of the sea (Amos 9:2,3). Even in captivity the sword should not rest (9:4).

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth" (Amos 9:8).

This however is not the last word, for the verse continues:

"Saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD."

The prophecy now passes to the glorious and blessed future:

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen . . . the plowman shall overtake the reaper . . . and I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel . . . and they shall be no more pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord my God" (Amos 9:11-15).

* The reader should note that the third member of the structure given in "The Companion Bible" needs modification. The judgment was not this time averted.

Instead of attempting the literary structure, which to be of any service would have to be set out in some fulness, we append the following set of distinguishing features, which, if followed through, will reveal the prophet's main theme and method of approach.

- (1) "For three transgressions, or for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof" (Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13; 2:1,4 and 6).
- (2) "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the LORD" (4:6,8,9,10,11).
- (3) "Seek ye Me, and ye shall live" (5:4).
"Seek the LORD and ye shall live" (6).
"Seek Him that maketh the seven stars" (8).
"Seek good and not evil, that ye may live" (14).
- (4) "Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD" (18).
"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion" (6:1).
- (5) "The Lord repented for this. It shall not be" (7:1-6).
- (6) "Amos, what seest thou? Not again pass them any more" (7:8, 8:2).
- (7) "In that day." Sackcloth. Wandering (8:9-12).
"In that day." "Raise up; bring again captivity" (9:11-15).
"The words of Amos . . . which he saw concerning Israel."

Hosea. The Restoration of Israel, symbolical and promised

The prophecy of Hosea follows those of Jonah and Amos so far as chronological order is concerned, but stands at the head of the twelve minor prophets in the Hebrew canon. The name Hosea is the Hebrew word for "salvation" and appears in chapter one, in the promise:

"But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will SAVE them by the Lord their God, and will not SAVE them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen" (1:7).

This promise might well be taken as the key promise of the prophecy. The word reappears in the closing section of the prophecy:

“Thou shalt have no God but Me; for there is no SAVIOUR beside Me” (13:4).

“I will be thy King: where is any other that may SAVE thee in all thy cities?” (13:10).

“Asshur shall not SAVE us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy” (14:3).

The reader will not fail to observe how this last reference perfectly balances the first, even to the inclusion of the word “mercy”. This insistence upon the word “salvation” and “save” suggested by the name of the Prophet, is a feature that is noticeable in another grouping of the Prophets in the Hebrew canon.

The term “Prophet” covers some books which are historical rather than predictive, and opens with the book of Joshua and closes with the book of the minor prophets considered as one book. The “Prophets” therefore of the Hebrew canon open with “Joshua” the salvation of the Lord, the Captain, and close with “Joshua” the salvation of the Lord, the High Priest, the whole prophetic section of the Old Testament being bounded by the name borne by THE Saviour, for “Jesus” is but the Greek spelling of Joshua, as a reference to Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 will show. A disquisition on such a theme as “The nature of God” is naturally outside the scope of studies such as this, but no one should be able to read the words “I will . . . save them by the LORD their God” (1:7) without being struck by its peculiar phraseology. It is “The LORD” Who is the speaker (verse 4), “And the LORD said . . . I will avenge . . . I will break . . . And (*God* the word supplied by the Authorized Version) said “. . . I will no more . . . I will utterly . . . I will have mercy . . . and will save.” If the passage had read “I will save them by Myself” it would have been readily understood. It must be remembered that of “God, Absolute and Unconditional” we know, and can know, nothing. He, Himself is greater than all His names, and His very nature unnameable. In this verse in Hosea we see, as it were, God Himself referring to Himself in the realm of the manifest and the conditioned. He is “Jehovah THEIR God” Who in fulness of time became Man and was known as “The Man Christ Jesus”. The first three chapters are chiefly characterized by the fact that the Prophet enacts in his own family life, the message that he has to tell, and this is followed in the remaining chapters where the

Prophet, still using symbol, speaks the message by word of mouth.

“Go take unto thee a wife” (1:2). “Go yet love a woman” (3:1). This is “the beginning of the word of the Lord BY Hosea.” “Hear the word of the LORD ye children of Israel” (4:1). This is the continuance of the prophecy of Hosea. The word translated “beginning” is not the same as that found in Genesis 1:1. It is the Hebrew *chalal*, and is found again in the margin of Hosea 8:10, where the text reads “sorrow”. It may appear strange to the casual reader that a word can mean either “beginning” or “sorrow” but the fact is, that the idea of a “beginning” is a derived meaning, the primary idea of *chalal* being “to perforate” thence by steps “to lay open”, “to give access and so profane or defile” and eventually “to begin” in the sense of “opening”. While a verbal connexion between the word “beginning” and the subsequent strange episode in the life of the prophet would not be evident to the English reader, Hosea, who was commissioned by God to “take a wife of whoredoms” (1:2) would scarcely fail to note that the word “beginning” was derived from the word meaning “to lay open, profane, defile” and employed by Moses and other writers for the very pollution and profanation he was called upon to exhibit (Lev. 21:7,9,14; 19:29). It does not necessarily follow that Gomer, the daughter of Diblain, was an immoral woman. It means that she was of “Israel” as distinct from “Judah” for Israel, that is the ten tribes, had been idolaters, having their own sanctuary at Beth-el. We have already learned about the “altars of Beth-el” from the prophet Amos, and Hosea refers to Beth-el in 10:15 and 12:4 in a markedly contrasted manner. The two marriage contracts into which Hosea entered, are highly significant, and must now be examined. (See structure on next page.)

It is evident by this disposition of the subject matter, that these two marriage contracts entered into by the prophet, were intended to set forth in symbol the relationship of the Lord to Israel, their defection, the long period of their estrangement and their final restoration. The names of the three children which were born were most certainly given because of their typical meaning. The name of the wife, Gomer, does not appear to have been chosen because of its meaning, but because of its

association. Gomer was the name of a northern people, of Japhetic origin (Gen. 10:2). Some believe that from these descended the *Cimeru*, the ancestors of the Cymry or the Welsh. Israel by their sins and idolatry had put themselves in the position of the far-off Gentiles. The three children of this marriage were named by God's instruction Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi (Hos. 1:4,6 and 9).

A 1:2. "Go take a wife of whoredoms."

B 1:2. Meaning, the departure of the land from the LORD.

C 1:3. Hosea takes Gomer.

D 1:4-2:23
Prophetic
Significance.

e 1:4-9 The three children.

a Jezreel "I will avenge."

b Lo-ruhamah
"Not
mercy."

c Lo-ammi "Not
My people."

f 1:10,11-3:1 Prophetic import of the three names.

f 3:2-22 Prophetic fulfilment of the three names.

e 2:23 The three children.

a Jezreel "I will sow."

b Ruhamah
"Mercy."

c Ammi "My
People."

A 3:1 "Go yet love . . . an adulteress."

B 3:1 Meaning. Israel, who look to other gods.

C 3:2 Hosea buys her, with the price of a slave.

D 3:4,5
Prophetic
Significance

e 3:4 Many days.

f 3:4 Abide . . . without a king &c.

e 3:5 Afterwards.

f 3:5 Return . . . Lord and David
their King.

e 3:5 Latter days.

Jezreel. First it should be observed that there is in this name a paronomasia between Israel (*Yisrael*) and Jezreel (*Yizrael*).

Then, it must be remembered that two words similar in sound, provide a further prophetic foreshadowing. The Hebrew word "to sow" is *zara*, the Hebrew word "to scatter" is *zarah*, so that the expressions "May God sow" and "May God scatter" appear very similar to the eye and ear in the original. Israel were to be "scattered" among the nations (Lev. 26:33, Jer. 31:10) but eventually they were to be "sown" again in their own land (Jer. 31:27). The Prophet Zechariah uses the word "sow" with the meaning equivalent to "scatter" (Zec. 10:9). The scattered tribes of Israel were known as "the dispersion" (Ezek. 12:15, John 7:35) or "The twelve tribes scattered abroad" (Jas. 1:1) where the Greek word for "seed" *spora* enters into the composition of the word *diaspora* "the dispersed or scattered". In this name of Hosea's first-born son, therefore, the whole of Israel's history is compressed. They shall be scattered, but they shall at last be gathered. The names of the two children that follow are prophetic of the condition of Israel during this scattering, *Lo-ruhamah* meaning "not having obtained mercy," *Lo-ammi* meaning "not My people". The "*Lo-ammi*" period of Israel's scattering is of the utmost importance to the right understanding of the dispensational place of the mystery and the Church of the One Body. Israel became "lo-ammi" at Acts 28:28, when for the first time in history it could be said "The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles", independently of Israel. The verb is literally "was sent" and refers to some particular point in time. This point we believe to be indicated in Acts 26:17, consequent upon the second appearing of Christ to Paul. In God's good time, a complete reversal will be made of all the conditions that are now associated with Israel's blindness, which reversal is the subject of Hosea 2:23—(1) "I will sow" *Jezreel*, the second meaning attaching to the Hebrew name; (2) "I will have mercy", removing the negative "*lo*" from the name *Lo-ruhamah* and (3) "My People", removing the negative "*lo*" from the name *Lo-ammi*. Great shall be the day of *Jezreel* when this blessed reversal takes place (1:11). The second marriage relationship of Hosea is given in chapter three. The word translated "friend" in Hosea 3:1 is the Hebrew *rea*, which differs from the word translated "evil" only in the vowel points, and is usually written *ra*. This verse is translated in the LXX "Go yet, and love a

woman that loves evil things, and an adulteress", and it is in line with the truth for which this symbol stands that these words should refer to the same woman Gomer, who had acted unfaithfully even as Israel had done. We sincerely hope that by so concluding we have not said evil of an innocent person, and must of course leave the matter to the judgment of "that day". The woman in view had evidently become seriously involved, for the price paid by Hosea was the price demanded for the liberation of a slave. The symbolism of this new marital transaction is then explained:

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.

"Afterward shall the children of Israel return to seek the LORD their God, and David their King: and shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days" (3:4,5).

The interval of the "many days" is to be characterized by a mutual "abiding" or "waiting". The woman was to "abide" without further unfaithfulness, the man would abide and wait also. This waiting negative attitude is explained by the sixfold negation of verse four. Israel has had no "king" since the days of their captivity. On the other hand, their very scattering among the nations has made it impossible for any foreign prince to rule over them. Since the destruction of Jerusalem Israel have been deprived of the right to offer sacrifice, but, since the days of their captivity, they have never again fallen under the old spell of idolatry, they have had no priest in the true sense of the word, but neither have they teraphim. The Bible student needs no explanation of these terms, except perhaps the last.

Teraphim. This word is variously explained, but always with a consciousness that much to do with its origin and intention is unknown. Dr. J. E. Shelley contributed a suggestive article to the *Bible League Quarterly* in 1939 in which he speaks of the "Generations" which compose the bulk of the book of Genesis, and suggests that these "ancestral tablets" were called Teraphim by association with Terah the father of Abraham, and says that "certain Jewish legends represent Terah as actually a maker of idols". The word "teraphim" occurs but six times in the English of the Authorized Version, all the references apart from

Hosea 3 being found in Judges 17 and 18. The word occurs, however, fifteen times altogether in the Old Testament being translated "image", "idolatry" and "idol". It was the teraphim that Rachel stole and hid (Gen. 31:19-35). It was the teraphim that Michal placed in the bed vacated by David (1 Sam. 19:13, 16). In 1 Samuel 15:23, Ezekiel 21:21 and Zechariah 10:2, it will be seen that the teraphim were consulted and associated with witchcraft and divination.

"When the temple in Jerusalem was burned in A.D. 70 all the genealogical records of Israel's tribes were utterly destroyed. There is no man among the Jews today who can prove definitely of what tribe he is, by giving his genealogical records" (Dr. J. E. Shelley).

Israel had long been without a king when they entered their *lo-ammi* condition at Acts 28. The last thing to go at the destruction of the temple would have been the genealogical records. Since that date Israel has "waited" and must wait until a priest stands up with Urim and Thumim—in other words, until the Lord Himself returns. The words of Hosea 6:1,2 suggest that the period covered by this "abiding" will be "two days" which in the symbolical use of the term may cover the two thousand years that may intervene before their complete restoration. As we have no certain knowledge as to when this period actually started, it is useless to attempt to compute the date of Israel's restoration. The return of Israel, with the confession that they will make, constitutes the closing chapters of this prophecy. All is graciously reversed. Instead of being *lo-ammi* and *lo-ruhamah*, the fatherless find mercy (14:3). Their backsliding is healed, and this restored people grow as the lily, have the beauty of the olive, the odour of Lebanon, with their fruit derived alone from the Lord.

The reader will be as conscious as the writer of these notes that the bulk of the prophecy has been left unexplored. To attempt a fuller exposition would demand a lengthy presentation, but sufficient, we trust, has been lifted out to provide a guide to the reader who supplements the comments given here, by his own Berean-like studies.

Micah. "From of Old"

The next prophet in chronological order is Isaiah, but for two reasons we are passing this prophecy by. The first is that it is beyond our powers to present in one section a conspectus of its sixty-six chapters that would in any sense be worthy, and secondly, because the prophecy of Isaiah has been given a fairly exhaustive study in *The Berean Expositor* (Vols. xxx-xxxv.) The next prophecy, therefore, that calls for consideration is the book of the prophet Micah. There are a number of passages in Micah which are almost a word for word replica of passages in Isaiah, and one prophecy of Micah is found in Jeremiah (Mic. 3:12, Jer. 26:18).

A comparison of Micah 1:1 with Isaiah 1:1 will show that Micah commenced his prophecy some seventeen or eighteen years after Isaiah had begun in the days of Uzziah; both Isaiah and Micah continued to prophesy until the days of Hezekiah; Isaiah's visions are "concerning Judah and Jerusalem", Micah's visions are "concerning Samaria and Jerusalem".

This prophecy falls into two main subdivisions, which can be headed "Prophecies of Judgment" and "Prophecies of Restoration", these themes alternating and given in the following pattern:

- A 1:2-3:12. JUDGMENT. "Hear." Concluding words "Jerusalem shall become heaps."
 B 4:1-5:15. "In the last days." "Remnant" (4:7, 5:3,7,8).
The Messiah. "FROM OF OLD" (5:2).
 A 6:1-7:10. JUDGMENT. "Hear." Concluding words "trod-
 den down as mire."
 B 7:11-20. "In that day." "The Remnant" (7:18).
The Promise "FROM THE DAYS OF OLD" (7:20).

Micah adopts a peculiar form of speech when pronouncing judgment upon the towns that were to suffer because of the transgression of Israel; he uses the figure of *Paronomasia*, or as it is called when in vulgar use "the pun". Micah depicts the onward march of the conquering Assyrians, indicating, by the

play upon the meaning of their names, the futility of one town calling on another for help against this overflowing scourge.

Gath means "Weep-town"; *Aphrah*, "Dust-house"; *Saphir*, "Beauty-town"; *Zaanan*, "Aside-town"; *Beth-ezel*, "Neighbour-town"; *Maroth*, "Bitter-town"; *Lachish*, "Horse-town"; *Ashzib*, "Falsehood-town", and *Maresah*, "Possession-town". The prophet sees in all these names a foreshadowing of their dreadful emergency. He cries "Weep-town weep not; Dust-house, roll thyself in the dust; Beauty-town, go into captivity with beauty shamed; Aside-town, respond not to the mournful appeal of Neighbour-town; for he, i.e. Sennacherib, will feed his army on you. Bitter-town shall bitterly grieve for her goods, but evil, i.e. calamity, shall only reach the gate of Jerusalem. Horse-town built the chariot to the swift steed (for flight). She, i.e. Lachish, introduced Samaria's idolatry to Zion, therefore should she give up possessions at Moresheth to the foe. Falsehood-town, should prove false as an helper, and the Assyrian should become the possessor of Possession-town. The 'glory' of Israel, i.e. the nobility, should flee for safety to the cave of Adullam" ("The Student's Commentary").

It is well-nigh impossible for us today, lacking the personal knowledge of these towns and the details of the Assyrian invasion, to be at all sure that we have interpreted this strange pronouncement aright, the explanation quoted from "The Student's Commentary", taken together with the notes supplied by "The Companion Bible", will give a general idea of Micah's method.

In Hosea 12:10 the Lord said "I have multiplied visions, and have used similitudes by the mouth of the prophets." Again in Hosea 6:5 we read "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the word of My mouth", and over and over again He speaks of "rising up early" in sending the prophets, as though the Lord would call our attention to the pains He had taken to attract attention to His words of warning. Amos, as we discovered, had his own distinctive approach, here Micah has another.

The first section of Micah ends with the words that are found also in the prophecy of Jeremiah:

"Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah King of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of

hosts: Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house, as the high places of the forest" (Jer. 26:18).

The next section, Micah chapters 4 and 5, opens with words that are exactly similar to those given in Isaiah 2:2-4 and Zechariah 3:10 (Mic. 4:1-4). There is no reason why Micah should not open his prophetic foreview of the glories of the day of restoration with a few verses taken from his fellow prophet Isaiah, or that Zechariah some years later should not quote a verse from Micah. When we read chapter five we come to a prophecy which borrows from none, and is blessedly unique:

"But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

The quotation offered by the chief priest and scribes is recorded by Matthew:

"And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel" (2:6).

A fairly long list of omissions and alterations could be compiled when we compare the original of Micah and the quotation given by Matthew. We do not feel however that there is any call for a minute analysis. The chief priests answered Herod's question by quoting enough from the prophecy of Micah to settle the main point—"Beth-lehem". The ancient name *Ephratah* is omitted, as it would be common knowledge that the city of David was intended, and not a town named Beth-lehem in Zebulun. The "thousands" of Judah are translated into "princes" for the Hebrew *eleph* is not only translated "thousand" but "family" (Judges 6:15), and just as the Romans spoke of a "Centurion" because he commanded a "hundred" men, so a "thousand" was a unit, over which a leader took command. The omission of the words by the priests and scribes "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," may have been by design or because the portion they had quoted was sufficient for the purpose. Beth-lehem was so "little" that it was not included in Joshua's survey, even though it must have existed, being the home town of Naomi and ultimately of Ruth. From this little village the Saviour "shall come

forth” said the Lord, but He had “goings forth” “from of old, from everlasting”. The two expressions “shall come forth” and “going forth” are translations of the Hebrew *yatsa*, in the second instance the participial noun *motsaoth* is used. Here, Micah speaks of a going forth from Beth-lehem which was fulfilled in the reign of Herod the king, and of a series of goings forth that can be given no date within the cognizance of men, they have been from of old, from the *olam* or the age. It is a poor view of the Majestic Person of the Redeemer, that stops at Beth-lehem with the high priests and scribes, and will not go all the way with Micah the inspired prophet.

This word *yatsa* means “to come or to go forth” in almost any manner. It is applied to the growth of vegetables, to the offspring of man, to beams of sunlight, to fountains of water. Hosea makes reference to His goings forth, saying “His going forth is prepared as the morning” (6:3) or as the Revised Version reads “as sure as the morning” and refers to the hope of resurrection expressed in the second verse. Between them, Hosea and Micah span the whole of time, Micah looking back to the distant past, Hosea looking forward to the distant future, and both past and future of these “goings forth” are pivoted upon the “coming forth” from little Beth-lehem. Eternity poised upon time! Beth-lehem the hub of the universe!

From chapter 6:1 to 7:10 the call to hear is once more heard. Israel are reminded of the deliverance from Egypt, and the frustration of Balaam. They are rebuked for their senseless trust in ceremonial, and are brought back to right and truth by the words:

“Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (Mic. 6:7,8).

The bitter fruits of this influence of “the statutes of Omri” and of “the works of the house of Ahab” are revealed, so that at last “A man’s enemies are the men of his own house” (Mic. 6:16, 7:6). Micah has no false hopes for this backsliding people, he says:

“Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me” (7:7).

In the words "Until He plead my cause" (7:9) there is more than a hint of the intercession of the One Mediator. The closing section of the prophecy reverts back again to the theme of chapter four, Israel's ultimate restoration.

This blessed conclusion is distributed under three references to certain "days".

A 7:14. "As in the days of old." *The decree.*

B 15-17. "The days of the coming out of Egypt." *Type.*

A 18-20. "From the days of old." *The promise.*

"In that day shall the decree be far removed" (Mic. 7:11). To what does Micah refer in these words? The preceding verse speaks of lifting of the desolations that had overtaken Jerusalem, and that simultaneously with the building of her walls, in that day the decree shall be far removed. Other prophets have used this expression. Joel says "I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen; but *I will remove far off* from you the northern army" (Joel 2:19,20). When the day comes for Jerusalem's walls to be rebuilt, Isaiah says "Thou shalt *be far from* oppression" (54:14).

Some commentators render the passage "Thy boundary shall be widely extended", others "The decree is issued or extended", applying it to the proclamation of the Persian monarch permitting the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. In the ordinary way, a rule of interpretation that should be observed is that every sentence has one and only one primary meaning. Micah, however, has already given us a sample of his play upon words in chapter 1:10-16, and it is therefore possible that some cryptic reference is here, to the removing afar off the decree that brought the Assyrian army against Jerusalem and the reverse of this, the extending of the decree that brought the exiles back to Jerusalem, "He shall come . . . from Assyria" (Mic. 7:12). A special variant reading is "they shall come", and refers to the exiles, the returning "remnant" (Mic. 7:18). The sentence that follows "the fortified cities, and from the fortress even unto the river" should read "from Egypt to the Euphrates", which covers the extent of the land originally promised to Abraham (see structure), and the restoration of Jerusalem is likened to the day when the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, the reference to "marvellous things" being a

fulfilment of the covenant made in Exodus 34:10 "I will do marvels".

The propensity of Micah to the figure of *paronomasia* comes once more to the fore. His name *Micah* means "Who is like God?" Consequently he cannot close his prophecy of restoration without saying "WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?" and uses the figure "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," to assure the restored remnant of the completeness of their forgiveness.

The last words of Micah are a solemn attestation that God will perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which He had sworn unto the fathers "from the days of old".

When the survey of these Minor prophets is completed, we should assemble together the words with which they bring their prophecies to a close. Most of them end on this satisfactory and triumphant note.

Jeremiah. Restoration and the New Covenant

We have expressed our inability to deal with the prophecy of Isaiah and feel that while passing by his great prophecy, we could at least point to a wholehearted attempt to exhibit its teaching in the exposition given in Volumes xxx-xxxv of *The Berean Expositor*. A like difficulty confronts us here, for the next of the prophets to be considered, if we continue to follow their chronological order, is Jeremiah, and of the two this prophet is even more intricate to analyse than Isaiah. Moreover, we cannot, as with Isaiah, point to any exposition of this prophecy in other of our publications, consequently we are faced with the necessity of attempting, however poorly, an exhibition of the main lines of Jeremiah's message.

We "open the book" and note that it commences with "The words of Jeremiah", and that Jeremiah's prophetic office lasted until the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, when Jerusalem fell (1:1-3) and we note that the last verse of chapter fifty-one says "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah" (64); we

must believe that the record of the fulfilment of his prophecy which occupies chapter fifty-two and takes us also to the besieging of the city unto "the eleventh year of King Zedekiah" (52:5) was added under the inspiration of God, by another hand. The record that fills Jeremiah fifty-two is practically a verbatim repeat of the record already written in 2 Kings 24 (18-20) and 25 (1-30), a few supplemental items only being added. The book therefore falls into two parts.

A 1-51. "The words of Jeremiah," Their beginning, and their end—"thus far."

A 52. Historic proof of the truth of his prophecy so far as it concerned Jerusalem.

At the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry, we meet two symbols, "The almond tree" and "The seething pot" (1:11-16), and at the close we have the symbol of the little book specially written and sent to Babylon which was to be cast into the Euphrates (51:59-64). The symbol of the almond tree gives assurance that the word of the Lord shall be fulfilled. The Hebrew word for "almond tree" is *shaged* "the watcher", because it is the first to blossom in the spring. The point of the symbol is blunted by the Authorized Version translation of the corresponding Hebrew verb *shaqad* by "hasten". This is rectified in the Revised Version which reads "I will watch over My word to perform it." The second symbol of a seething pot which was "from the north" (R.V.) is explained:

"Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land" (1:14).

This dreadful symbol finds its fulfilment in the siege of Jerusalem and the added chapter (52) is placed where it is, so that the word spoken by Jeremiah should be seen to be true.

Jeremiah's commission is given in chapter 1:4-19, and includes the two symbols already referred to.

"See I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out . . . and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant." (1:10).

Reference is made to this in chapter thirty-one:

“And it shall come to pass, that like as I have *watched* (same word as is translated ‘hasten’ in 1:12) over them, to pluck up and to break down and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord” (31:28).

The first set of prophecies are addressed to the Jews at Jerusalem (2:1-20:18). The second set of prophecies are addressed to the Gentiles (46-51). There are also historical portions that deal with the times of Jehoiakim (21-35), and to Zedekiah (37-45), whilst central to the structure of the book is the mission of Baruch to Jehoiakim. Baruch acted as scribe to Jeremiah while he was a prisoner, and Baruch performed one or two important tasks, each of which had symbolic importance.

- (1) He was charged by Jeremiah to preserve the evidences that the prophet had purchased a field in Anathoth which belonged to his uncle (32:14).
- (2) He wrote the words of the Lord out of the mouth of Jeremiah, and took the roll and read it in the house of the Lord (36).
- (3) He was warned in a special revelation against self-seeking and his life was granted to him “for a prey” (45).

The import of the two charges entrusted to Baruch is the utter faithfulness of the Word of the Lord even in spite of all appearance to the contrary, and the importance of the word in the eyes of the Lord Himself.

The field in Anathoth. Isaiah 10:5-32 speaks of the Assyrian invasion, and verses 28-32 give geographical details of the invasion. Among the towns listed is Anathoth, concerning which Isaiah utters the lament “O poor Anathoth” (10:30). This town, three miles north of Jerusalem, was the birthplace of Jeremiah (1:1). The men of Anathoth were threatened with sword and famine in the year of their visitation, because they threatened Jeremiah the prophet (11:21-23). Jeremiah had sent a letter to the residue of the elders which were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar saying:

“Build ye houses, and dwell in them and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them,”

for “after seventy years” the Lord promised to visit them and

perform His good word causing them to return. A false priest wrote to the people that were in Jerusalem saying:

“Why hast thou not reprov'd Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you,”

and in justification of this, Shemaiah quoted the exhortation written by Jeremiah to the elders in Babylon.

Jeremiah thirty-two records a great test for the Prophet himself. He had advised those in the captivity to accept their punishment, and to arrange their lives in accord with the length of time this captivity was to last. Zedekiah the king had imprisoned Jeremiah, who had warned him that the king of Babylon would take the city of Jerusalem. At this time Jeremiah was told by the Lord that Hanameel, his uncle, would come and say “Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it” (32:7). This Jeremiah did, paying the price and taking evidence of the purchase before witnesses. These evidences, Jeremiah gave into the safe keeping of Baruch, who was charged to keep them “many days”, indeed for fifty-two more years, until the completion of the seventy years' servitude, the warrant for such unexpected doings being the promise of the Lord:

“For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land” (32:15).

When, however, the transaction was over, Jeremiah reveals something of the strain under which he had laboured and prayed, saying “there is nothing too hard for Thee . . . Behold the mounts, they are come into the city to take it . . . and Thou hast said to me, O Lord GOD, Buy the field for money and take witnesses” yet the city was given into the hands of the Chaldeans.

In the answer of the Lord to His tried servant, He takes up the words of Jeremiah saying “Is there anything too hard for Me?” and assures Jeremiah that He would not only break down and destroy, but that He would build again and plant “for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD” (32:44).

The roll which was read to Jehoiakim. The second piece of ministry which Baruch did at the behest of Jeremiah was to write in a scroll all that Jeremiah had spoken against Israel and Judah and the nations, and to read these words in the

house of the Lord "in the ear of all the people" (36:10). This was reported to the princes and to the scribes, who bade Baruch to bring the roll and to read it to them. When they had heard all that Baruch had written they were afraid saying "We will surely tell the king of all these words." The king heard three or four pages of the roll, and then taking a pen-knife cut it into pieces and threw the pieces on to a fire "until all the roll was consumed." The princes and scribes were not afraid, nor rent their garments, nevertheless three men made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll. Because of this treatment of His Word, the Lord sent the following dreadful message to Jehoiakim:

"He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost" (36:30).

In both of these transactions the attitude of heart and mind to the word of God is the crucial point.

In contrast with the doom pronounced against Jehoiakim, must be placed the promise of Jeremiah 33:17, "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel."

The heart of Jeremiah's prophecy, however, is the New Covenant, in which all the blessings of restoration are assured. This new covenant will be made with "the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," and is in direct association with the original covenant made with the same people at Sinai, "Which My covenant they brake" said the Lord. This passage (Jer. 31:31-34) is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12 and 10:16,17 and so reveals the intention of the Apostle when he addressed this one epistle "To the Hebrews." How a Gentile, who is by nature an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, can claim the teaching of "Hebrews" as truth for himself is beyond the ability of the writer to understand.

The new covenant began to operate during the early ministry of the Apostle Paul, but came to an end with the dismissal of the covenant people at Acts 28, when the *lo-ammi* condition began.

Chapters fifty and fifty-one are of peculiar interest to the student of prophecy because of the statements made by the prophet concerning Babylon, and the light these statements

throw upon the setting of the book of the Revelation, which makes reference to these chapters.

We will conclude this very imperfect presentation of the prophecy of Jeremiah with a selection from the many parallels that are found between the references to Babylon in Jeremiah 51 and Revelation 17, 18.

Jeremiah 51.

“O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness” (51:13).

“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine: therefore the nations are mad” (51:7).

“My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD” (51:45).

“Her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies” (51:9).

“Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed” (51:8).

“When thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her, and they shall be weary” (51:64).

These references should cause the reader to pause before committing himself to the idea that “Rome” is the “Babylon” of the book of Revelation. We say no more here, but hope to take up the question of Babylon and its place in Prophecy as a separate study to be published later. Then more time and space can be devoted to this most important key to the unlocking of Prophetic Truth.

Revelation 17,18.

“I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters” (17:1).

“The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (17:2).

“And the woman was arrayed . . . having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations” (17:4).

“Come out of her My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues” (18:4).

“For her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities” (18:5).

“Babylon the great, is fallen, is fallen” (18:2).

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (18:21).

Daniel. "The Times of the Gentiles"

(with a brief note on Zephaniah)

The prophet that follows Jeremiah chronologically, is Zephaniah, whose prophecy immediately precedes the Captivity. Something of the state of mind that characterized the people at the time of their end can be gathered, not only from the violence and deceit and the prevalence of idolatry, but from such a passage as Zephaniah 1:12 where the Lord threatens to punish those who say "The LORD will not do good, neither will He do evil."

At the end, a promise is given that glances at the root cause of the confusion that has spread over the earth, namely, Babel's curse, for we read:

"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9).

Verse eight, which immediately precedes this promise of a change of language, has a peculiar feature that has been recorded in the Massorah. It contains every letter in the Hebrew alphabet including the five finals, and it may indicate what the universal language of the future is to be.

Zephaniah, like most of the prophets, ends on the note of restoration, "He will save", "He will rest in His love", "I will gather", "When I turn back your captivity before your eyes" (3:17-20). God promises Israel that He will get them praise and fame "in every land where they have been put to shame", and because at long last "the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee" the promise stands "thou shalt not see evil any more" (3:15). With these comforting thoughts we turn our attention to the next prophecy on our list, the prophecy of Daniel.

If a series on "Babylon and its place in Prophecy" is undertaken, a detailed examination of Daniel's prophecy will be given. Here we must be content with a survey. Zephaniah uttered his prophecy immediately before the fall of Nineveh, Daniel dates his opening words "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah", the year in which Nebuchadnezzar set out to besiege Jerusalem and take it. Other nations

and kings figure in this prophecy, some being named, some being left unnamed, but all are seen as successors and continuers of Gentile domination over Jerusalem, which city will be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24). Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2) covers the whole period of time from the deposition of the kings of Judah, until the setting up of the kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and king of Israel.

The Book of Daniel falls into two great corresponding sections:

(1) 1-6. The Historic Foreshadowing. Now past.

(2) 7-12. The Time of the End. Yet to come.

The following structure will reveal the parallelism sufficiently to justify the thought that what took place in the experience of Daniel himself, was at the same time an anticipation and a guarantee of what is to come at the time of the end.

DANIEL

(1) *Historic Foreshadowing*

A 1, 2. Dream. Gentile dominion. "The Lord gave."

B 3. Fiery furnace. Like Son of God. People, nations and languages.

C 4. Seven Times. Madness.

D 5. Writing (*kethab*) explained.

The hand. Belshazzar's doom. Darius the Mede.

E 6. Den of Lions. Sealed (*chahtam*).

HE DELIVERETH.

(2) *Prophetic Fulfilment.*

A 7. Dream. The Lord's dominion. There was "given Him".

B 7, 8. Fiery stream. Like the Son of Man. People, nations, languages.

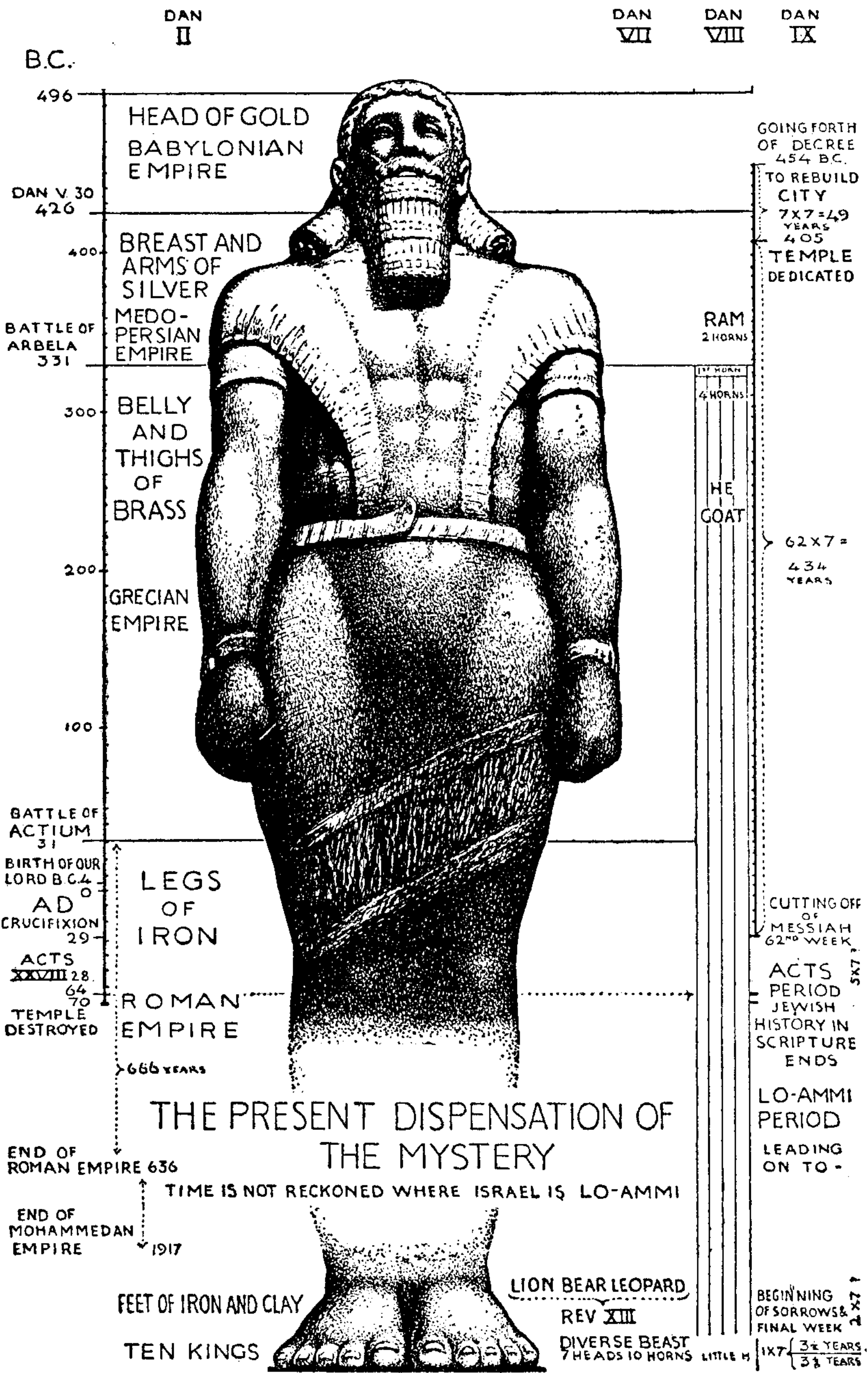
C 9. Seventy times seven. Restoration.

D 10-11:1. Writing (*kethab*) explained.

The hand. Belteshazzar's strength. Darius the Mede.

E 11:2-12:13. Like a den of lions. Book sealed (*chahtam*).

HIS PEOPLE DELIVERED.



DAN II

DAN VII

DAN VIII

DAN IX

B.C.

496

HEAD OF GOLD
BABYLONIAN
EMPIRE

GOING FORTH
OF DECREE
454 B.C.

DAN V 30
426

BREAST AND
ARMS OF
SILVER

TO REBUILD
CITY
7x7=49
YEARS
405
TEMPLE
DEDICATED

400

BATTLE OF
ARBELA
331

MEDO-
PERSIAN
EMPIRE

RAM
2 HORNS

300

BELLY
AND
THIGHS
OF
BRASS

4 HORNS

THE
GOAT

200

GRECIAN
EMPIRE

62x7 =
434
YEARS

100

BATTLE OF
ACTIUM
31

LEGS
OF
IRON

CUTTING OFF
OF
MESSIAH
62ND WEEK

BIRTH OF OUR
LORD B.C. 4

AD
CRUCIFIXION
29

ACTS
XXVIII 28

64
70
TEMPLE
DESTROYED

ROMAN
EMPIRE

ACTS
PERIOD
JEWISH
HISTORY IN
SCRIPTURE
ENDS

666 YEARS

THE PRESENT DISPENSATION OF
THE MYSTERY

LO-AMMI
PERIOD
LEADING
ON TO -

END OF
ROMAN EMPIRE 636

TIME IS NOT RECKONED WHERE ISRAEL IS LO-AMMI

END OF
MOHAMMEDAN
EMPIRE
1917

FEET OF IRON AND CLAY

LION BEAR LEOPARD

REV XIII

BEGINNING
OF SORROWS &
FINAL WEEK

TEN KINGS

DIVERSE BEAST
7 HEADS 10 HORNS

LITTLE H 1x7 { 3 1/2 YEARS / 3 1/2 YEARS }

The two key passages of the book are chapter two, Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, and chapter nine, the Seventy Weeks.

Nebuchadnezzar, after being raised to such eminence, quite naturally found his thoughts turning to the future, as Daniel reminded him,

"As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, *what should come to pass hereafter*" (2:29).

The God of heaven revealed to Daniel the secret, and through him made known to Nebuchadnezzar *what shall be in the latter days*" (2:28). While the successive monarchies of Medo-Persia and of Greece were necessarily a part of the things that should "come to pass hereafter", Daniel makes it clear, that by this expression he refers principally to the time of the end:

"Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces, the IRON, the BRASS, the CLAY, the SILVER, and the GOLD: the great God hath made known to the king *what shall come to pass hereafter*" (2:45).

Here the whole image, not its most remote successor nor its last phase, is seen together, and no interpretation that ignores this FACT is worth the paper employed in its publication. "The latter days" and "hereafter" refer particularly to "the days of these kings" (2:44). The same rapid passing over of intermediate events, and the same concentration of the mind upon the "end" is indicated in the opening chapter of the second section, chapter seven, "I would know," said Daniel, "the truth of the FOURTH Beast" (7:19). The accompanying chart sets out the relationship of the Times of the Gentiles with the parenthetical dispensation of the mystery, but the limits of this booklet will not permit a fuller exposition here.*

It must be remembered that Daniel stood at the end of a long line of prophets and the expression "latter days" and "last days" had a definite prophetic meaning.

It has been too readily assumed that because Daniel 7:19 speaks of the "fourth beast", that there are four kingdoms, and four only, represented in the image of chapter two. This, however, cannot be. When Daniel interpreted the image of

* For relation of Daniel with the book of the Revelation, see our book, "This Prophecy", 7s. 6d., from Mr. Canning.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he stood at *the very beginning* of Gentile dominion, all except Nebuchadnezzar himself was yet future. When he received the vision of the seventh chapter Babylon was practically finished, and the Medo-Persian successor was at the gates. Neither Babylon nor Medo-Persia could be included in a prophecy of the future which said "four kings which SHALL ARISE" (7:17), for they most certainly had already "arisen". The first successor of Nebuchadnezzar's dominion that was still *future* to Daniel was "Greece", and consequently what was the "fourth beast" of Daniel seven, would have been the "sixth" in the descending order of the image, if these four beasts are to be considered as successive. This can be seen if set out as follows:

*Daniel 2**Daniel 7*

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) Head of Gold. | (1) Lion with wings. |
| (2) Breast of Silver. | (2) Bear with ribs in mouth. |
| (3) Belly and Thighs of Brass. | (3) Leopard with wings. |
| (4) Legs of Iron. | (4) Monster with ten horns. |
| (5) Feet of Iron and Clay. | |
| (6) Toes of Iron and Clay. | |

The "ten horns" of the one correspond with the "ten toes" of the other symbol, and both refer to the terrible character of the world ruler and his dominion which will most surely arise as a result of world conditions to-day. The last phase of Gentile dominion will be "diverse from all the beasts that were before it." The last phase of Nebuchadnezzar's image also was "diverse" by reason of the intermingling of clay with iron. Light is thrown upon the character of the last Gentile dominion on the earth by the language used in Revelation thirteen. There we can understand why the "fourth beast" was left without description—it will be a monstrous amalgamation of all that was bad in the powers that it succeeds.

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a LEOPARD, and his feet were as the feet of a BEAR, and his mouth as the mouth of a LION" (Rev. 13:2).

The beast of Revelation 13 moreover had SEVEN heads and TEN horns, and Daniel speaks of three beasts that had *one head* each (Dan. 7:45), and one that had *four* (Dan. 7:6), so making the *seven* seen by John. The mouth speaking

blasphemy is also a feature of both visions (Dan. 7:8,25; Rev. 13:5) and this continues according to Daniel 7:25 "a time, times and dividing of time", a period of time exactly equivalent to "forty and two months" or "three years and a half", as a comparison of Revelation 12:14,16; 13:5 will show.

The prophecy of the seventy weeks, which is the theme of Daniel nine, is too vast a subject to be compressed in the limited compass of such a survey as this, but something must be done, if only to call attention to certain principles of interpretation which must be observed.

We subdivide our examination of Daniel nine into three sections:

The prophecy of Jeremiah (1,2).

The prayer of Daniel (3-19).

The principle of computing prophetic times (20-23) and the prophecy of the seventy weeks (24-26).

The prophecy of Jeremiah (1,2).

From Zechariah 1:12 we have proof that the period of Judah's captivity was seventy years and we learn from Daniel 9:2 that Daniel discovered by reading the prophecy of Jeremiah that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. One passage which Daniel would have pondered is found in Jeremiah 29:1-10:

"After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."

Daniel could not but be greatly moved, moreover, to read such a forecast as that of Jeremiah 27:7:

"And all nations shall serve him (Nebuchadnezzar) and his son, and his son's son (Belshazzar), until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him."

Daniel's Prayer (3-19).

Daniel's prayer concerning the restoration of Jerusalem is dated in the first year of the king under whose edict that restoration was commenced:

"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans" (Dan. 9:1).

It would take us too far afield to attempt to prove that "Darius" of Daniel 9:1 and "Cyrus" of Daniel 10:1 are the same person, or that Ahasuerus, like Pharaoh, is not used exclusively of any one monarch, but is an appellative, meaning "Venerable king". The reader should consult Appendix 50 and 57 of "The Companion Bible" for proof of these assertions.

Daniel's prayer acknowledges that the terrible desolations that befell Jerusalem were the consequence of Israel's rebellion against the Word of God, sent by Him through His prophets. The faithfulness of God to the word of His judgment is made an argument by Daniel, that He will as surely be faithful to His word of promise. While Daniel was thus praying, the angel Gabriel came and revealed to him the great prophetic period of the "seventy sevens". This prophecy of the seventy weeks is divided into three parts:

The Principle of Computing Prophetic Times (20-23).

- (1) 9:24. THE SEVENTY SEVENS.
- (2) 9:25,26. THE SEVEN SEVENS AND THE SIXTY AND TWO SEVENS.
- (3) 26,27. THE ONE SEVEN AND THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN.

A "week" to the English reader is a period of seven *days*, and the Hebrew word so translated is *shabua*. Where a week of days is intended, this word is used as a masculine plural (Exod. 34:22 and nine other passages) but where it means a period of years, it is used in the feminine plural (Dan. 9:24,25, 26), except those passages which add the explanatory words "days" (see margin of Dan. 10:2,3). The "one seven" of Daniel 9:26,27 is divided into two parts, and this corresponds with the three years and a half, the forty and two months, the 1260 days, the time, times and a half, of the references to this same prophetic period found in the book of the Revelation.

Daniel had been praying concerning the 70 years. The angel came to direct his mind to a further period, that of 70×7 years.

That the Hebrew *can* use the word "week" or "sabbath", where we to-day would use "seven", a passage in Leviticus will show, for in the eighth verse of chapter twenty-five, "seven *sabbaths* of years" is defined as a period of "seven times seven years."

The Seven sevens, and the Sixty and Two sevens.

The angel interpreter divides this great period of 490 years into three parts.

7 × 7 or 49 years, which starts from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

62 × 7 or 434 years, which starts with the completion of the wall and runs on until the crucifixion of Christ.

The one 7, the final "week" (Dan. 9:27), which is the great period covered by the book of the Revelation.

If these numbers be added together we have 490 years. But, during the first 49 or 7 × 7 of these years, Israel were still outside of Divine favour. Nehemiah said of the times:

"The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof burned with fire" (1:3).

This "lo-ammi" condition did not change until the wall of the city had been rebuilt. This brings us to the second set of weeks, the 62 × 7 or 434 years, which leads us from the finishing of the wall to the crucifixion of Christ A.D.29.

455 B.C. = Nehemiah 1:1-2:8. "The going forth of the commandment."

454 B.C. = The twentieth year of Artaxerxes.

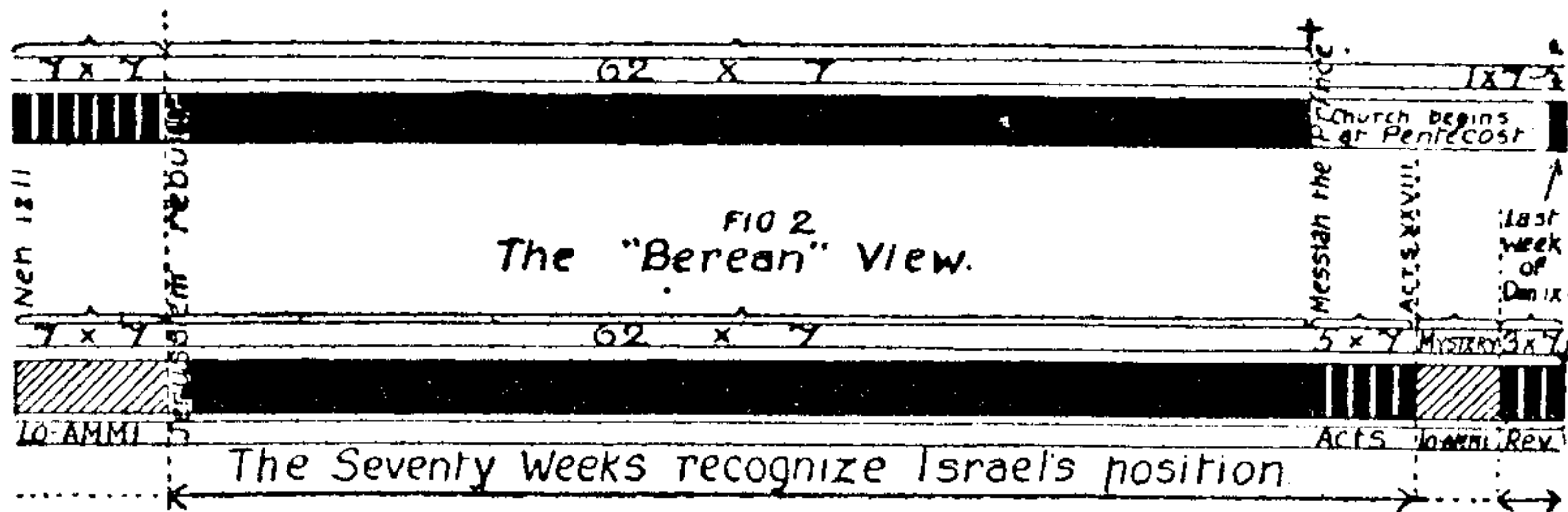
407 B.C. = Nehemiah obtains leave of absence (Neh. 13:6).

405 B.C. = The dedication of the temple.

405 B.C. *ends the 49 years of Daniel nine, and commences the 62 × 7 of the same prediction.*

This means that we have the period of the Acts of the Apostles covered by the angel's prophecy, and so we do no violence to

FIG. 1
The Orthodox View



truth by not cutting Israel off until Acts twenty-eight is reached. There remain, therefore, three sevens of years to be fulfilled, the last of which is the subject of so much intense teaching in the book of the Revelation. It is suggestive that there are *three* outstanding *sevens* in the Apocalypse, the 7 seals, the 7 trumpets and the 7 vials, which bring the prophecy to its close. The difference between the “orthodox” view and the “Berean” view may be demonstrated by the chart on page 57.

Ezekiel. Wheels within Wheels. The unfolding purpose

If it seemed temerity to attempt a survey of such prophecies as those of Isaiah and Jeremiah within the scope of our present purpose, what word can be used of the attempt to do the same with such a book as Ezekiel? The imagery is so involved, that the words of chapter 1:16 “A wheel in the middle of a wheel” almost describes the impression that one receives upon first reading this great prophecy. Regarding Ezekiel 10:13 which reads in the Authorized Version “It was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel,” it is thought by some that these words “O wheel” would be better translated “Roll on”—as though the imagery of these wheels within wheels, these wheels of which it could be said “When those went, these went”, linking the wheels with the living creatures or cherubim—as though they were designed to exhibit the supreme direction of the Lord in the accomplishment of His purposes, which, even though wrapped in mystery, roll on with certainty and unerring precision to their glorious goal.

Ezekiel was a priest, and was carried away captive with Jehoiakim to Babylon, and his prophecies deal with the impending judgments that are about to fall, both upon the Jews and surrounding nations, and with the final deliverance and restoration of His people.

The Structure provided in “The Companion Bible” covers the ground, and exhibits the general movement of the book. We use this as our basis, but in order to make this outline of the greatest service, we add a series of supplemental notes.

EZEKIEL

- A 1:1-12:28. DESOLATION. The Cherubim. The glory departing.
 The Signs (a) The Tile.
 (b) Bread.
 (c) The Razor.
 (d) The Chain.
- B 13:1-23. PROPHETS. (a) Men. Symbol "daub with un-
 tempered mortar."
 (b) Women. Symbol "sewing pil-
 lows."
- C D 14:1-11. ELDERS polluted. "A sign and a proverb."
 E 14:12-15:8. LAND and CITY. Symbol "The Vine."
 F 16:1-63. JERUSALEM. Symbol "Child, Mother,
 Daughter."
 G 17:1-24. BABYLON. Parable "A great eagle."
 H 18:1-32. PROVERB. "Sour Grapes."
 I 19:1-14. LAMENTATION. Waste.
- C D 20:44. ELDERS polluted. "A sign."
 E 20:45-22:31. LAND and CITY. Parable "The Fire."
 F 23:1-49. JERUSALEM. Symbols. Two sisters.
 G 24:1-32:32. BABYLON. Parable "The anointed
 cherub."
 H 33:1-22. SIGN. "Watchman."
 I 33:23-33. LOVELY SONG. Wastes.
- B 34:1-31. SHEPHERDS. (a) Feed themselves (Shepherds).
 (b) Foul the pastures (sheep).
- A 35:1-48:35. RESTORATION. The Cherubim. The glory re-
 turning.
 The Visions:
 (a) The Dry Bones.
 (b) The Two Sticks.
 (c) Healing Waters.
 (d) Healing Leaves.

Such is the outline of the prophecy as a whole. Two portions only can be dealt with here (and that very inadequately) owing to the peculiar character of their wording. The one subject is "The Cherubim," the other "The Vision of the valley of dry bones."

The Cherubim. The prophecy of Ezekiel opens and closes with a vision of the Cherubim. In the opening section, the Cherubim are seen reluctantly leaving the city, with the glory of God associated with their withdrawal; in the closing section, they appear in the rebuilt temple, where the glory of the Lord returns. Between these two references, stands the enigmatic passage which speaks of "The Anointed Cherub that covereth."

A 1-11. The Cherubim. The Glory departing.

a from threshold.

b from east gate.

c from midst of city.

B 28. The Anointed Cherub. "Cast out as profane."

A 41-48. The Cherubim. The Glory returns.

c from the way of the east.

b by the way of the gate.

a to the inner court.

The title "Cherubim" is not found in the first chapter, but from chapter 10:20 we learn that "the living creatures" of the opening vision are the Cherubim. In the first chapter we meet with their description, the four faces, which is repeated in 10:21. The book of the Revelation speaks of these same "living creatures," but the Authorized Version unfortunately veils the reference by translating the word *zoon* "beasts" in Chapter 5:6,7,8 and elsewhere. "The Student's Commentary" says, of the opening and closing references to the Cherubim in Ezekiel: "It (i.e., The glory) leaves slowly (10:3,4,18,19) and returns suddenly (43:1-5), such is the way of love; it lingers when retiring, it hastens when returning." The prophetic and symbolic meaning of the Cherubim is a subject too far-reaching to be dealt with here. All we can say here is that the four faces, Man, Lion, Ox and Eagle appear to represent Man and the dominion given to him, at present under the curse, but yet to be fully restored in Christ the second Man and the last Adam. Fuller notes will be found in *The Berean Expositor*, Volume xv, pp. 181-191.

In Ezekiel twenty-eight there is a reference to "The Anointed Cherub that covereth", which, while being another passage of great depth and difficulty must be given consideration, however brief. In Ezekiel 26:19-21 the prophet pronounces the doom

of Tyre, which includes the words "A terror will I make thee and thou shalt not be", which words are practically repeated of the Anointed Cherub in chapter twenty-eight. This doom of Tyre is followed by a lament or dirge which occupies chapter twenty-seven. Here we find further expressions of the Anointed Cherub that are repeated in chapter twenty-eight.

TYRE'S BOAST "Perfection of beauty" (27:3,4,11).

ANOINTED CHERUB "Perfect in beauty" (28:12).

TYRE'S TRAFFIC "Merchants" "Merchandise" (27:12-25, 34).

ANOINTED CHERUB "Merchandise" "Traffick" (28:16,18).

TYRE'S DOOM "A terror . . . never be any more" (27:36).

ANOINTED CHERUB "A terror . . . never be any more" (28:19).

It is evident from these parallels that the fall of Tyre is used as a type of another and greater fall. This is brought before us again in chapter twenty-eight itself by dividing the words of the prophet up under two heads.

The Judgment upon the Prince of Tyrus (1-10).

The Lamentation upon the King of Tyrus (11-20).

The Prince of Tyrus was so obsessed with his own wisdom, traffic and riches, that he said "I am God". He was, however, "a man" and was "slain". The King of Tyrus, he, too, found his heart lifted up because of his beauty, and corrupted his wisdom because of his brightness. He however was not "slain", a "fire" is to be brought forth from his midst, he shall be brought to ashes, be a terror and never be any more. He is not said to be "a man", instead he is called "the anointed cherub that covereth".

Among other things said of this "King" is that he had been in "Eden the garden of God". Only two human beings are recorded as ever having been there, namely Adam and Eve, the others being the *Nachash* the "Shining one", the "Serpent" and the "Cherubim" (Gen. 3). With every precious stone as his "veil" and "covering" he could well be called "The Shining one", while the stones that are named resemble very closely both the breastplate worn by the high priest and the twelve foundations of the holy city. The additional words "anointed" and "covereth", "holy mountain" and "profane" all point to a

being who had originally an office very closely related to the worship of God.

The Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones. Ezekiel thirty-seven refers to the day which is now upon us, a day when Israel will have returned to their land, but are still spiritually dead. To Ezekiel is put a question "Can these bones live?" to which the prophet wisely answers "O LORD GOD, Thou knowest". He is then told to prophesy "upon" or "over" (Heb. *al*) these dry bones, and is assured that a day will come when the breath of God shall cause them to live. As a consequence he sees each bone come together "bone to his bone", yet without "breath" or "spirit". He is commanded a second time Prophecy "unto" (Heb. *el*) the wind (breath or spirit). The bones now clothed with flesh and animated by breath "stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army".

There does not appear to be any justification for making this word "army" mean simply a collective term for a great number. It appears to mean "an army" in the military sense of the word, and where other words than this are used the translation is in keeping, being rendered by words like valour, valiant, strong, war, host, might, strength and a number of other variants of the primitive idea of "force". Added to this, these bones did not represent simply the dead of Israel but "the slain" (Ezek. 37:9), a word that indicates a death by violence (see Ezek. 23:10, 26:6). The word translated "valley" means "a plain" as in Isaiah 40:4 and is the word employed by Zechariah when he speaks of the "Valley of Megiddon" (Zech. 12:11), the scene of Israel's national repentance, as also the scene of the great battle yet to be fought at "Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16). This "valley" is shown on the map of Palestine as the Plain of Esdraelon at Megiddo, and lies between Haifa on the Mediterranean coast and the Jordan. It is in this valley and near "The hill of Megiddo" (Armageddon) that the gathering to battle predicted in Revelation sixteen will take place. There, in Revelation, it is "the spirits of devils" that call this great army together. In Ezekiel it is "the spirit of God" that is evoked to breathe on the slain.

The explanation of the symbolism of the dry bones is given. The whole house of Israel are thereby represented, and they are reported to have said:

"Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts" (Ezek. 37:11).

There is the solemn thought in the fact that the self-same word is used of the Messiah Who was "cut off" out of the land of the living (Isa. 53:8). Not only the slain, but the dead are to be raised, and according to Ezekiel 11:17 the scattered of Israel are to be gathered from among the nations and placed in their own land. This prophecy of restoration is followed by the symbolism of the two sticks. One stick represented the name of Judah and his companions, the other, Ephraim, the head of the ten tribes. These two sticks were to "become one" in the prophet's hand. For the Lord declared:

"I will make them one nation upon the mountains of Israel: and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" (Ezek. 37:22).

The prophecy concludes with a great name of the Lord:

"The name of the city from that day shall be (Jehovah-Shammah) The Lord is there" (Ezek. 48:35).

Thus, the departed glory returns, the scattered nation returns, the times of restitution of all things spoken by the prophets will at last have come.

Haggai. "From this day will I bless you"

Haggai was the first prophet by whom God spoke after the return from captivity. His prophecy is dated "In the second year of Darius the King", which, according to the chronology worked out by "The Companion Bible", was "sixteen years after the decree of Cyrus" and occupied a period of about four months. The prophecy is fourfold.

- (1) The Prophecy given on the 1st day of the 6th month (1:1-11).
- (2) The Prophecy given on the 21st day of the 7th month (2:1-9).
- (3) The Prophecy given on the 24th day of the 9th month (2:10-19).
- (4) The Prophecy given on the 24th day of the 9th month (2:20-23).

The name Haggai means "My Feast" and the feasts of the Lord are linked with the house of the Lord, worship being the prime reason for the Temple.

Zerubbabel, the name of the governor of Judah at this time, means "Scattered, or Sown in Babylon". He was of the seed royal, and is usually called "The Son of Shealtiel, or Salathiel" (Ezra 3:2,8, Hag.1:1). In 1 Chronicles 3:19 he is called the son of Pedaiah, who was the brother of Salathiel (1 Chron. 3:17). The name Salathiel comes in the genealogies of Christ as given in Matthew and in Luke, even though at the repudiation of Jeconiah the succession passed from the line of Solomon to the line of Nathan his brother. It appears that Matthew gives the strict line of relationship, whereas Luke gives the legal line which would include sons by adoption, even as it includes Joseph the husband of Mary, whose genealogy is given by Luke. While living at Babylon, Zerubbabel who bore the name of Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5:16), was made governor and who laid the foundation of the house of God in Jerusalem. Sixteen years previous to the opening prophecy of Haggai, Cyrus the King of Persia had made the proclamation recorded in Ezra 1:2-4, which charged the people of God to go up to Jerusalem and to build the temple which had been destroyed. The third chapter of Ezra records the beginning of the work under Joshua and Zerubbabel. At the laying of the foundation of the house of the LORD most of the people "shouted with a great shout", but many of the older men, who had seen the glories of the first house, mingled tears with their rejoicing (Ezra 3:10-13).

Sixteen years after this, the temple was still unfinished, and chapter four of Ezra supplies part of the reason for the long delay. The adversaries of Judah came to Zerubbabel with offers of help, saying "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do: and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon King of Assur, which brought us up hither" (Ezra 4:2). These were the Samaritans, and the refusal of their offer by Zerubbabel, finds an echo in the Samaritan's question, recorded in John 4:20. Upon being refused, the people of the land began a campaign which ended in a command by the Persian King for the work to cease. "So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the

Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel" (Ezra 4:24, 5:1), and once more under Zerubbabel and Joshua the work of rebuilding began. When Haggai arose to speak to the people, he makes no reference to the opposition of the Samaritans, and to the edict of the King, but rather charges the returned exiles with self-seeking and indolence. It is, alas, too easy to shield oneself behind opposition, prophetic forecasts and the like, but these do not in any sense alter our responsibility. The people had allowed the opposition of their enemies to provide a substitute for the command of the Lord. They said "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built"—yet Haggai as the mouthpiece of the Lord asked:

"Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" (Hag. 1:4).

Dispensational truth must run on all fours. If we live in a dispensation characterized by "All SPIRITUAL blessings" dispensational truth demands that we shall not, at the same time, expect or aim at "blessings in basket or in store". If dispensational truth tells us to set our affection on things above, and teaches us that our CITIZENSHIP is there, it will expect us to react, as did Abraham, and confess that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth". We cannot have things both ways.

Haggai calls upon the people to "consider" their ways, or as the Hebrew has it "set your heart" on your ways, a call which the prophet makes five times over.

"Set your heart on your ways" (1:5,7). "Ye have sown much, and bring in little."

"Set your heart from this day (2:15). "Before a stone was laid."

"Set your heart from this day" (2:18). "From the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, set your heart to it . . . from this day will I bless you."

What had their self-seeking and fearfulness brought?

"He that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (1:6),

a text that could be used with profit at many a conference claiming higher wages to-day. The value of a wage is to be computed in what it will buy, any other computation is un-economic. In the newspaper on this day of writing is a headline

“The Little Man’s Budget” and shows how a steel worker, with a wife and one small child, spends his weekly wage £7 0s. 5d., a sum of money if it had been earned in the days of our own boyhood would have spelled wealth and affluence!

“Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? said the LORD of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house” (Hag. 1:9).

It is a noteworthy feature in the outworking of the purpose of God, that Israel’s fortunes are linked with the “house of the Lord”.

In Volume xxix of *The Berean Expositor*, pp. 206-212, the reader will find an article which is devoted to the evident relation which Scripture reveals, of this association of the house of the Lord, and the nation of Israel. On page 208 a complete survey of history from David (1 Chron. 28) to the edict of Cyrus (2 Chron. 36) is set out in structure form, which cannot be repeated here. All we can do is to indicate the teaching which the structure emphasizes.

A 1 Ch. 28. DAVID. Command to build (10). Writing (19).
The LORD be with thee (20).

* * * *

M 2 Ch. 26. UZZIAH. Sacrilege. A Leper.

* * * *

A 2 Ch. 36. CYRUS. Charge to build. Writing. The LORD
be with him (22,23).

The words “Then spake Haggai the LORD’s messenger in the LORD’s message” (1:13) strike a note that will find a response in the hearts of those who appreciate the distinctions of dispensational truth. These words could be applied to “Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles” where “the messenger” and “the message” are so closely inter-related, as is evident from 1 Timothy 2:6,7:

“A testimony in its own peculiar season, whereunto I am ordained a preacher.”

A month later, the word of the Lord came by the prophet who called attention to the contrast that was evident, between

the glory of the first house and the insignificance of this the rebuilt house of the remnant:

"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison as nothing?" (2:3).

This prophecy, uttered in the seventh month, is made to revolve around the comparative glory of the two houses, and reveals that, even though Solomon's temple was "exceedingly magnificent", and the house built by the returned exiles was "in comparison of it as nothing", yet "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former" for "The DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS shall come" and in that place the Lord said "I will give peace" (2:1-9). The Authorized Version translation "the glory of this latter house" is misleading, for the Saviour Himself came to Herod's temple, and will come again to the yet future Millennial temple (Ezek. 48). The Revised Version reads "The latter glory of this house" and "The Companion Bible" reads "Greater shall be the last glory of this house than the first." "This house" moreover is used irrespective of the fact that one building had been destroyed and another built (Hag. 2:3). The "first glory" of this house will be as nothing to the "last glory".

The prophet now swings over once again to the moral condition of the people. "So is this people, and so is this nation before Me." Again they are called to "consider" and again the prophet reminds them that the scarcity under which they suffered, the "blasting and mildew" that neutralized all the labour of their hands, was associated with their delay in rebuilding the Lord's house.

"Consider now," continued the prophet, "from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it" (2:18).

With one more glance at the empty barn, and the fruitless trees, the prophet adds the words "From this day will I bless you".

The fourth and final prophecy of Haggai reverts to the central theme of the second prophecy, namely:

"Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land" (2:6).

Here the wording is changed, but the theme is the same:

“Speak unto Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth” (2:21).

This shaking overthrows the throne of the kingdoms of the nations, for when the day of Israel’s glory dawns, the time of the Gentiles will have been fulfilled.

The prophecy concludes with the symbol of a “signet”, and looks back to the judgment that fell upon Coniah (Jer. 22:24). Here however is assurance, for the Lord says “I will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts” (2:23).

Zechariah. “No more the Canaanite”

Haggai opens his prophecy in the sixth month of the second year of Darius, and two months later Zechariah uttered his opening prophecy as recorded in Zechariah 1:1. Both prophets were prophets of the return from captivity, Zechariah referring to the “seventy years” (Zech. 7:5). The burden of Zechariah has much in common with Haggai, both speak of the moral condition of the people, and both speak of the laying of the foundation stone of the Lord’s house. The first six chapters are devoted to an exhortation to the people, and a series of visions which set forth the prophetic future of Israel. These visions lead up to two utterances concerning Christ, under the title “The BRANCH”. Let us first of all see these visions as a whole, and then consider them separately.

THE VISIONS OF ZECHARIAH 1-6.

A a 1:7-17. HORSES. Red, speckled and white.

b 1:18-21. HORNS and CARPENTERS.

c 2:1-13. MEASURING line in the hand.

B 3:1-10. JOSHUA. High Priest. *The Mitre.*

My Servant the BRANCH.

A c 4:1-14. PLUMMET in the hand.

b 5:1-11. ROLL and EPHAH.

a 6:1-8. HORSES. Red, black, white and grisled.

B 6:9-15. JOSHUA. High Priest. *The Crown.*

The Man Whose name is the BRANCH.

It will be noticed that this set of visions is a structural whole, and no detailed examination will be of any value, that fails to keep this well in mind. We have horses, that appear to symbolize spiritual agencies which walk "to and fro", we have "horns" that symbolize the Gentile powers that at different times have scattered "Israel, Judah and Jerusalem", and the "carpenters" which represent those counter agencies which the Lord employs to defeat and frustrate the overbearing power of the Gentile nations. The measuring line (2:1-13) and the plummet (4:1-14) focus our attention on the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, while the twofold reference to Joshua the high priest points us on to the only One Who can sit "as a *Priest* upon His *throne*" a King-Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

The opening vision presents to the eye of the prophet, a horse and rider standing "among the myrtle trees in the bottom". The Hebrew word *hadas* is uniformly translated "myrtle" six times, while *Hadassah*, the original name of Esther, makes the number up to seven (Est. 2:7). Simonis considered the name Esther to be a compound, *as tur* meaning "a fresh myrtle". The book of Esther by the fact that the Divine name is only to be found buried in a series of acrostics (see appendix 60 "The Companion Bible") is suggestive of the way in which God works for His people even though for the time being His presence is not evident. The "bottom" in which this rider was seen means a place of shade, and in combination with the Hebrew *muth* is translated some forty-five times "the shadow of death". In some cases this word indicates a protective covering or shadow (Psa. 17:8, 63:7, Isa. 51:16, &c.).

Of the "horses" it is written "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest" (Zech. 1:11). Similar language is used in Zechariah 6:5,7 "These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." "Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth." It will be remembered that the sons of God and Satan himself are said to have gone "to and fro in the earth" and to have walked "up and down in it" (Job. 1:7, 2:2).

The tenth chapter of Daniel lifts the veil and reveals the unseen agencies that influenced the deliberations of the kingdoms

of Greece and of Persia, an influence which will be revived as the last days draw near, even as these visions of Zechariah indicate invisible spiritual patrols in the earth. The fact that all the earth was "at rest" (Zech. 1:11) and that the heathen were "at ease" (Zech. 1:15), was not well pleasing to the Lord, for it spoke of Israel's afflictions. In reply to this report from heaven's agents in the earth, the prophet is bidden to "cry":

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (Zech. 1:17).

The vision of chapter two is devoted to this promise of restoration, a man being seen with a measuring line in his hand to measure Jerusalem, and the message being given "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein" (Zech. 2:4).

The future restoration of Israel is often considered to be impossible by reason of their apostasy and their rejection of the Messiah. Chapter after chapter in their own sacred oracles accuse them of idolatry and spiritual adultery, of disobedience and of hardness of heart, until at length this people of God's choice actually murdered the Messiah Who had been sent to them. Yet in spite of this the well-known words of Romans 11:28,29, make their restoration certain.

"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Consequently in Zechariah we have a vision of Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, with Satan resisting, and the Lord saying to Satan "The Lord rebuke thee O Satan; even the Lord That hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (3:2).

Joshua is seen clothed with "filthy garments" (Zech. 3:3) and the command is given "take away the filthy garments from him" and Joshua is clothed with "a change of raiment". While there must certainly have been a "change" of raiment, no word answering to the word "change" is found in the original, the Revised Version reads "I will clothe thee with rich apparel." The only other occurrence of the word employed here is Isaiah 3:22, where the Authorized Version reads "the changeable

suits of apparel" and the Revised Version reads "the festival robes".

Joshua was being invested with priestly garments, suitable to his high office. Many of us have been led in the past to adopt the convenient alliteration "Cleansed, Clothed, Crowned" as covering the teaching of this passage, but by employing "Alliteration's Artful Aid" we have veiled an essential distinction. The Prophet said, when he saw the high priest so far reinstated, "Let them set a fair mitre upon his head." On only two occasions is the Hebrew word *tahor* translated "fair". In the Authorized Version elsewhere it is rendered by the words "clean" (fifty times) and "pure" (forty-one times). The "mitre" is used only of the high priest and where it is translated in Ezekiel 21:26 "diadem", it is distinguished from a "crown". Only in the future is kingship and priesthood combined, as in Isaiah 62:3, where we read of a "royal diadem". Israel however can only be a "kingdom of priests" under the glorious reign of "The King-Priest". In Zechariah 6 we have the High Priest crowned and enthroned:

"Then take silver and gold and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedec, the high priest . . . He shall . . . be a PRIEST upon His THRONE" (6:11-13).

This "crown" is the crown of a king (Psa. 21:1,3).

The conclusion arrived at from the visions given to Zechariah is that in spite of Gentile oppression and Jewish failure, the restoration of Israel is assured, at the advent of the King-Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Passing over chapters 7 to 11, we come to the closing prophecy of this book which constitutes "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel" (Zech. 12:1). The subject is two-fold:

- (1) A contrast between Jerusalem at the close of the age, and Jerusalem when the kingdom is set up.
- (2) A contrast between the first coming with its piercing, its sorrow, and the second coming when the Lord shall be King.

The space at our disposal will not permit a detailed structure but the following will set the course for any interested enough to take the matter further:

ZECHARIAH 12-14.

- A JERUSALEM a cup—trembling.
12:1-4. b people . . . gathered against it.
c horse smitten . . . people smitten.
- B The FIRST d House of David. Spirit poured out.
COMING e Me Whom they have PIERCED. The
12:10-13:9. Son.
- B The SECOND d House of David. Fountain opened.
COMING e Awake O SWORD. The Shepherd.
14:1-11. d Day of the Lord. Jerusalem ravished.
e Coming of the Lord.
- A JERUSALEM c Men . . . horse smitten.
14:12-21. b Every one left . . . that came against it.
a Pot—holiness.

The city Jerusalem is mentioned by Zechariah forty times, and in the section before us (Zechariah 12-14) it occurs no less than twenty-one times. The nations are warned that Jerusalem will be both “a cup of trembling” and a “burdensome stone” to all the nations round about. While we see in the national aspirations of Israel marked signs of the times, the key to prophetic times is not *Palestine* but *Jerusalem*. “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

Any *Gentile* power that “treads down Jerusalem” is a direct successor to Nebuchadnezzar till the time of the end.

The salvation and restoration of Israel hinges upon their repentance. At His first coming they rejected their Messiah and were in turn rejected. At long last “they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced” saith the Lord, and a national mourning will follow with “every family apart”. A fountain is to be opened for sin and uncleanness in Jerusalem, and then in its proper moral sequence, “living waters” shall go out from Jerusalem: half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea.

The “former sea” is the Eastern or the Dead Sea. It is to this

that the prophet Ezekiel refers when he speaks of the waters that have healing properties, reaching unto Engedi, a village on the banks of the Dead Sea (Ezek. 47:1-11). The prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk use this healing river, which flows from Jerusalem and blots out the Dead Sea, as a symbol.

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the WATERS COVER the SEA" (Hab. 2:14).

Before this great blessing to the earth flows from Jerusalem, that city will be subjected to a terrible siege and its inhabitants most cruelly treated. "The Companion Bible", in appendix 53, gives a list of twenty-seven sieges which Jerusalem has already endured, and indicates that the siege of Zechariah fourteen will be the twenty-eighth and the last, and this will be raised by the coming of Christ, when in fulfilment of the promise made to the disciples, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" (Zech. 14:4, Acts 1:9-12).

The prophetic statement of Zechariah 14:5, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the *saints* with Thee" is referred to in 1 Thessalonians 3:13, "the coming of the Lord with all His saints". The word "saints" to the English reader suggests the redeemed among men, but *hagios* is not so restricted. It is used of angels (Rev. 14:10, Matt. 25:31, Luke 9:26, Acts 10:22). Deuteronomy 33:2 says "The Lord came to Sinai . . . He came with ten thousand of His saints". No one that we know teaches that "the church" came with the Lord to Mount Sinai, but the Scriptures do teach that angels were mediators at Sinai.

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place" (Psa. 68:17).

Stephen in his last speech described his hearers as those

"Who have received the law by the disposition of angels" (Acts 7:53).

The interpretation therefore that is still advocated, namely "The coming WITH and the coming FOR His saints" is based both upon a false dispensational understanding and a false interpretation.

To the devoted city, however, at length comes peace and blessing. Israel are to be a kingdom of Priests, and consequently the very bells on the horses shall bear the words "Holiness unto

the Lord” while the pots used in Jerusalem shall be as sacred as the bowls before the altar. The “cup” of trembling is exchanged for the “pot” of holiness, symbols indeed of a mighty change. At long last “The Canaanite” shall be for ever expelled from the house of the Lord, and the reign of righteousness shall begin.

Much indeed remains to be expounded. The geological rift that has been reported as observable is all ready for the touch of the finger of God (Zech. 14:4,5), the awful parallel of the judgment of Zechariah 14:12, with the observed results of the dropping of an atomic bomb; the evident maceration of the nations “every one that is LEFT” (Zech. 14:16), cannot now be examined. Our present purpose is rather a survey of the prophets as a whole than a detailed exposition of one of them. We can but leave the student who delights in the Word, with the pointers already provided, and pray that as each one pursues these studies, that the Lord Who inspired the prophet to speak, will continue His gracious illumination to those that seek.

Malachi. “He shall prepare the way”

Malachi is the last of the prophets, the closing words (Mal. 4:5,6) making a direct link with the advent of John the Baptist. The name *Malachi* means “My messenger” (Mal. 3:1). Malachi is designated by the Rabbins “The seal of the prophets”, and from the close of the Hebrew canon until “the voice crying in the wilderness” the prophetic gift appears to have been suspended.

It is noteworthy that Malachi’s prophecy is addressed “to Israel”, even though the ten tribes had been taken captive long before, for the returned remnant under Ezra and Nehemiah are also called “Israel”, where those who believe “British-Israel” teaching would correct us and speak only of “Jews”. Jerusalem is once more inhabited (Mal. 2:11), but the “Governor” (Mal. 1:8) still bears the name *peshah* (pasha), a name taken from the Persians. The temple is rebuilt (3:1), the altar standing (1:7) and the ritual performed (1:13,14).

The Prophecy of Malachi falls into four parts:

- (1) 1:1-14. ELECTION. Proved, but questioned.
- (2) 2:1-17. EXPOSTULATION. "Ye have wearied the Lord."
- (3) 3:1-4:3. PREDICTION. "Behold the day cometh."
- (4) 4:4-6. PROMISE. "I will send."

The prophecy opens with an appeal to Israel to consider the love that had been shown to them. This is demonstrated by the conditions then obtaining, for while Jerusalem had been delivered and restored, Esau's or (Edom's) territory was still "waste".

The words "I hated Esau" do not refer to *Esau the individual* but to his descendants. "TWO NATIONS" are the subject of the prophetic utterance of Genesis 25:23, and there is no statement in Genesis that would lead one to think that Esau himself ever suffered as Malachi 1:3 indicates, but, on the contrary, that he became a prosperous and wealthy person.

The impudent rejoinder "Wherein hast thou loved us?" (Mal. 1:2) is evidently characteristic for it occurs six times.

"Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?" (1:2).

"And ye say, Wherein have we despised Thy name?" (1:6).

"And ye say, Wherein have we polluted Thee?" (1:7).

"Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Thee?" (2:17).

"But ye said, Wherein shall we return?" (3:7).

"But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee?" (3:8).

To this list can be added such phrases as "Yet ye say Wherefore?" (2:14); and "Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee?" (3:13). Here is evidence of hardness of heart and non-repentance. With this in mind, the word "Repent" uttered by John the Baptist and by the Lord at the commencement of their public ministry, takes a deeper significance.

The first great complaint against Israel is their utter contempt for the sacred service of the temple. "Ye have snuffed at it", "And ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick: thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this at your hand, saith the Lord?" (Mal. 1:13). The utter failure of Israel causes the prophet to look further afield and he exclaims with prophetic insight:

“From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts” (1:11).

In the prophetic section (chapters three and four) there is a reversal of this, consequent upon change of heart, for “All nations shall (then) call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful-land, saith the Lord of hosts” (3:10-12). This reversal is more clearly seen when we know that the Hebrew word *chephets* “delightful” has already occurred with a negative in the first chapter. “I have no *pleasure* in you” (1:10). Again, the reference to “the rising of the sun” in the eleventh verse of the first chapter is associated with Gentile acceptance, but the rising of the sun of righteousness with healing in His wings, speaks of the day of Israel’s restoration to Divine favour (4:2).

There is, moreover, a very great emphasis placed in this prophecy on “the name” of the Lord. Following the figure of the son honouring his father, and of the servant honouring his master, the Lord addresses the priests “that despise My name” (1:6), to which they reply “Wherein have we despised Thy name?” This is followed by four references to “the name” among the Gentiles (1:11,14). Again turning to the priests, when the prophet says “And now, O ye priests this commandment is for you” (2:1) we have two more references to “the name”:

“If ye will not . . . give glory unto My name” (2:2).

“The fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before My name” (2:5).

After this the remnant of the nation comes before us, “Then they that feared the Lord . . . that thought upon His name” (3:16), the last occurrence of “the name” being in Malachi 4:2, where the rising sun with healing in His wings is for those “that fear My name,” saith the Lord.

The word “contemptible” which is found in Malachi 1:7,12, is found again in the ninth verse of the second chapter. Israel’s priests had made “the table of the Lord” contemptible. “I also make you contemptible” is the inevitable consequence.

There is a “curse” in Malachi 1:14, 2:2, 3:9, and in 4:6. Blessing also is pronounced in 3:10 and 12.

Something of the sequence of thought may be realized if we set out the references to “the Name” as follows:

- A 1:6. PRIESTS despise name, "contemptible" (1:7,12).
 B 1:11,14. NATIONS great, dreadful name. Rising Sun.
 A 2:2,5. PRIESTS glory, fear name, "contemptible" (2:9).
 B 3:16, 4:2. REMNANT fear name. Rising Sun.

The strictly prophetic passages of Malachi are found in chapters three and four. Chapter three opens with the words "Behold I will send My messenger," and chapter four closes with the words "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet".

The messenger of chapter three is John the Baptist, the passage is a partial quotation of Isaiah 40:3. John the Baptist went before the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17, 68-79). Had Israel accepted their Messiah, then John the Baptist "would have been" Elijah which was for to come. But they did not, and God in His Divine foreknowledge knew that they would not, hence the provision and the double interpretation.

The outstanding feature of the day of the Lord's coming, is the purifying of the people:

"He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (3:2-4).

Zechariah 13:9 speaks of a third part of Israel being brought through the fire which "will refine them as silver is refined"; Daniel 11:35 and 12:10 speaks of the refining effect of the last days; and to the like effect Isaiah 48:10. The "fuller" makes us think of that foreshadowing of the kingdom which took place on the mount of transfiguration, when the Saviour's raiment became so white "so as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark 9:3). This purifying is for "the sons of Levi" and for "Judah". The covenant of Levi had been corrupted by the priests (Mal. 2:8), and Judah had dealt "treacherously" and had "profaned" the holiness of the Lord (Mal. 2:11). Levi stands for priesthood, Judah for kingship, and the bringing of the two together at the last, is a reference to the destiny of this people, namely, to be "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:5,6).

The fire purifies and refines the chosen people of God, but

“Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Mal. 4:1).

In contrast with which, to those that fear the name of the Lord shall “the sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings” (2).

In conclusion, we turn back to that passage which has heartened many believers in times of darkness and departure:

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal. 3:16,17).

“Jewels.” This is the last of eight occurrences of the Hebrew *segullah* which is elsewhere translated “peculiar treasure”, “peculiar”, “special”, and “mine own proper good”. This great honour of becoming “a peculiar treasure” as the outcome of faithfulness in a day of declension, is comparable with a similar honour held out to those who in the present perilous times “depart from iniquity” and become vessels “meet for the Master’s use” (2 Tim. 2:21), and just as in chapter three of Malachi, this peculiar honour leads to the most practical results, namely, “discerning between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not” (3:18) so, those servants of the Lord who realize that in a great house there will be vessels to honour, and vessels without honour, such, by “purging themselves from these” will not only be “meet for the Master’s use” but “prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

Such is our present survey of the burden of prophecy. To deal with it more intimately calls for as full an exposition as we have already given to the prophecy of Isaiah—but that is beyond our powers. If we have erected a few finger posts along the line of prophetic research, we have accomplished our intention, and must humbly and gratefully leave the matter there, concluding with the prayer that sums up all the yearning of the redeemed, the burden of all prophecy,

“Even so, Come Lord Jesus.”

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