

LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

(III)

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The Assyrian Period

A new Epoch started in both literature and religion with the fire of the literary prophets, and ushered in the greatest movement in the spiritual history of mankind. It was a great day for religion, when at a harvest feast in Bethel about 750 B.C., Amos chanted before a vast assembly the funeral son of Israel:

The Virgin of Israel is fallen,
She shall no more rise,
Prostrate she lies on her ground,
None raises her up.

Amos was a Jew and his books and saying from the first a piece a Jewish literature. Though living at Fekon, as a simple shepherd, not as a prophet, some twelve miles south of Jerusalem, Amos proceeded to Bethel to utter in his royal town of the northern kingdom. In the silent desert, he meditated on important problems, thought till a great fear came upon him, (Amos 7:1-3), (7:4-8). We can see the great experiences but there are not great enough experiences to make him a prophet.

When he went to the market of North Israel to sell the wool from his sheep

and the fruits from his trees, he saw serious social corruption of people, unbalanced and unequal distribution of riches and debasement in morals, in connection with the practice carried on in connection with the worship of Jehovah at the various sanctuaries; the conscience of his shepherd revolted as a result. As he meditated in the desert afterwards, again the dark fear came upon him and suddenly he saw a vision that made him a prophet of Jehovah (7:7-9).

“ Behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, “Amos, what do you see?” And I said, “A plumb line.” Then the Lord said, “Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them; the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

The period within the long reign of Jeroboam at which Amos neither spoke nor wrote is not very exactly known.

It was not until the presentiment of

coming danger became blended with the sense of the sin of the people and the revelation of the moral character of Jehovah in one overmastering experience that Amos knew that he must go and prophecy to Israel.

The book opens with the elaborate poems dealing in series of more or less similar syrophes, with the sins committed by five surrounding nations and Juda, and then at much greater length with the sins and punishment of Israel. Now, let us think about the literary style of this address. Most of the lines are clearly rhythmic and are grouped usually in strophes; this is characteristic of most of the prophets. In the exaltation of the prophets' spirit words flow from his lips in rhythmic regularity; In his great address against the foreign nations, he used grave and impressive refrains at the beginning and end of each strophe.

The priests and the people believed that Jehovah's requirement was the cults and that he would be pleased with them if they fulfilled this. Amos insisted that God's sole requirement was social justice. God had never required any sacrificial cult from his people at all, only righteousness even in the days of the wonderful early love union between Jehovah and Israel no sacrifices were brought (5:21-25). His grace can be only experienced in the steady and persistent pursuit of the moral ideal.

"The next important point in Amos' messages was that Jehovah's requirement

of righteousness is universal. All the nations of the world are bound to observe the fundamental laws of humanity and social morality. Jehovah is not only Israel's God but the God of the whole world and interested in all the nations."¹⁾ The relation between Jehovah and Israeh is enriched more if the moral requirements are fulfilled and is dissolved if the moral conditions are ignored. In considering the possibility of later elements in the book, we turn first to the reference to Judah, for as I mentioned at the beginning, Amos was himself a Jew.

The most extensive of the references to Judah in the text at hand is a strophe that differs in the form from the normal strophe in the opening poems. The concluding section of the book appears to presuppose, as having already taken place, the fall of the Davidic dynasty in 586, and predicts its restoration. Amos may justly be called the prophet of righteousness, because God is righteous and visits the unrighteous everewhere in order to speed the return of goodness, thus he had come to be regarded as the One God. This is the ethical monotheism of the prophets, of which Amos was the first exponent.

During the reign of Jeroboam (785-744), a Northern Israelite composed an epic, similar to the J document. We call it the Elohistie (or E) document because of its use of Elohim (deity) for

1) Bewer: LOT, p. 92

Yahweh in the patriarchal stories. Passages which are regarded as E document according to Prof. Pfeiffer are:

Genesis **15**: 1-3, 5-6, 11, 12a, 13-14, 16; **20**: 1-17; **21**: 6a, (6b), 8-21, (25-32a, 34); **22**: 1-13, 19; **28**: 11-12, 17-18, 20-22; **29**: 1, 15-18, (19-23, 25, 27, 28a, 30); **30**: 1-3, 4b-8, 17-20a, 21, 22b-23, 26, 28, (31-35, 38-40 is JE); **31**: 2, 4-11, 13-17, 19, 24, 25a, 26, 28-31a, 32-35, 36b-37, 41-43; **32**: 13b-21, 23a, 24a, 25a, 26b, 27-28, 31-32; **33**: 5, 11a, 18aAb, 19-20; (**35**: 1-4, 6b-7); 35: 14, 16-20; 37-5a, 6-11, (12-18 is JE), 19-20, 22, 24, **41**: 46a P); **42**: 1, 4, 4a, 8025, 29-37 (traces of J); **43**: 12a, 13-14, 15aBb, 23b; **48**: 1, 2a, 809, 11-12, 15-16, 20-22; **50**: 15-26. Exodus **1**: 11-12, 15-22; **2**: (1), 2-10; **3**: 1, 4b, 6, (9-22); **4**: 1-17, 18, 20b, (21-23), 27-31, 5: 3-4, (traces in 5: 6-19); **7**: 15aBb, 17b, 20b; 8: 25-27; **9**: 22-23ab, 25a, (35); **10**: 8-9, 11, (12-15), 20-27; **11**: 1-3; **12**: 36-36; **13**: 17-19; **14**: (5-7), 15-16. 19a, 20a, 21a, 22a, (23), 25a, 31; **15**: 20-21; 16-18 are JEP; **24**: 12-13, 18b, **31** 18; **32**: 5b, 6, 15-19a, 25-29 (the rest of **32** is secondary); (**33**) Numbers **10**: 33, 35-38; (**11**: 1-3, 25-30; **12**); **13-14** are JEP; 16: 1b, 2aA, 12-15, 25-26, 27b-34, (JE); **20**: 1b, 14-21 (**20**: 19-20 J?); **21**: 4b-9, 11b-15, 21-25, (33-35); **22**: 2-21, 35b-41; **23**: 1-30; **24**: 25; **25**: 1-5 (JE); **32**: (1-5), 16-17, 20-27, 34-41. Deuteronomy **31**: 14-15, 23; **34**: 3, 5-6, 10 in part. Joshua **2-11**; **14**: 6-14; **19**: 49-50; **24** (all edited by the JE and Deuteronomistic editors.)

The beginning of E is the story of Abraham like J was, but the part about

the calling of God is lost. So the story of E, as we know now, opens after Abraham had come to Canaan, trusting in the divine promise. Then God renewed the promise of a glorious line of descendants in a vision of the night. Here Abimelech took Abraham's wife Sarah, but was restrained through divine revelation in a dream from committing adultery with her. After the birth of Isaac, Sarah asked Abraham to drive his concubine Hagar and her son, Ishmael to the wilderness. She found water in the wilderness shown by an angel. In order to test Abraham's faith, God ordered him to sacrifice Isaac but sent his angel to stop him when he was on the point of slaying the boy. The story about Isaac concerning his marriage to Rebekah and the relationship between Jacob and Esau are not clear in E. It is either lost or closely interwoven with J account. In Gen. 27, perhaps E represents a substantial part of JE.²⁾

After Jacob won the birth-right of Esau, Jacob fled after being warned by God. Jacob sent a present to Esau and fought with the angel at Peniel. After a friendly meeting with his brother, he settled in Shechem, and made a pilgrimage to Bethel. Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin.

E is more explicit than J in the Joseph stories in telling the hand and purpose of God. Joseph was predicted for the future

2) Pfeiffer: LOT, p. 168

power in the dream. Sold by his jealous brother to Egypt. There he interpreted the dream of Pharaoh correctly which made him second in power in the kingdom, saved the people from the disaster of famine. He also saved his brothers from the famine in Canaan and Jacob was brought to Egypt to live.³⁾

About the stories of Moses, E is quite different from J, the character of Moses is presented in the way that a collection of legends are leading up to the conclusion: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face". Deut. 34: 10)⁴⁾

The Israelites were forced to labor by Pharaoh, moreover the two Hebrew midwives were ordered to slay the male children at birth. But they deceived him. The infant Moses was found by a daughter of Pharaoh in an ark on the bank of the Nile. She brought him up. At the sacred mountain Horeb, he received a revelation of Yahweh. Then Moses left Jethro, his father-in-law and met his brother Aaron and returned to Egypt. Pharaoh refused the request of Israelites to go out to the wilderness and celebrate a festival. In following stories of the plagues of Egypt, E is different from J in attributing the miracles to the staff of Moses and in reporting growing concessions on the part of Pharaoh after each of the five plagues. At last the

Israelites were allowed to leave Egypt. Guided by God through Moses, they crossed the Red Sea while Egyptians were drowned. Miriam praised Yahweh for his deliverance in the song. In the following stories, we hardly can separate J and E. Both have the accounts of the provision of water and food and of the battle against the Amalekites. Though E tells us how Moses received the two tablets of stone from God, E document contained no laws originally. At the same time, the people were celebrating an orgiastic festival at the foot of the mountain. The rest of the chapter is perhaps the product of postexilic times.⁵⁾

Then the Israelites set forth for Kadesh guided by the ark. Moses failed to get permission to cross the territory of Edom, so they circled the borders of Edom to the east of Moab and defeated Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan. Stories about Halaam are different in J and in E though the poetic oracles in this section were not composed by the author of J neither of E. The Baal Peor incident is perhaps JE, also the Transjordanian story. Moses died in Moab after he appointed Joshua as his successor. E's account on the conquest of Canaan is in the first half of the Book of Joshua.⁶⁾

Most of the traditions common to J and E were North Israelitic, more specifically Ephraimitic, in origin. Perhaps we

3) See Pfeiffer: LOT, pp. 169-171

4) Pfeiffer: LOT, p. 175

5) See Pfeiffer: LOT, pp. 169-171

6) Pfeiffer: LOT, p. 175

can explain a few of the differences of terms by the environment of each author. But it is noticeable the difference in opinion about how Jehovah became god of Israel. The differences may be said because of the different current in Judah and Ephraim and the difference in the convictions of each author.

As a whole, E lacks the epic, dramatic and organic quality of J. J is sculpture, E is architecture; J is like a river, E like a canal. However, the language used in E is the best kind of classical Hebrew though subtly different from that of J. In comparison with J, E reflects a more advanced civilization, a more refined environment, a more thoughtful age even it handles similar subjects. Also, the characters in E are more prone to outbursts of joy and sorrow than those of J.⁷⁾

Only a few years after Amos, Hosea began to prophesy. Gentle and tender hearted Hosea stood in sharp contrast to the rugged, might prophet of the south. Amos and Hosea are the earliest writing prophets. The book of Hosea should stand first, not in the order of time, but because of its length and its richness of content. Hosea's books divide themselves naturally into two parts: 1-3 and 4-14. The first are relatively clear and connected, the latter unusually disjointed and obscure. Certainly Hosea's prophetic career began before the end of Jeroboam's reign, as he predicts the fall of the reign-

ing dynasty 1-4, which practically ended with Jeroboam's death. He had married Gomer and had three children to whom he gave names symbolic of the impending fate of Israel. Chapters I and 4 tell us the experience of his wedded life as a symbol of Jehovah's experience with Israel. That is his wife was unfaithful. When he discovered it there was only one way for him to act according to Israel's laws and customs; he had to deal with her as was customary with adulteresses.

She is not my wife—
and I am not her husband,
And her children I do not pity.
Because they are the children of
harlotry,
For their mother has played the
harlot,
She that conceived them has done
shamefully.
And now I will uncover her shame
Before the eyes of her lovers,
And no men shall have her out of
my hand.

The faithless Gomer abandons Hosea for a paramour, but he is moved by his love for her to buy her out of the degradation into which she has fallen and he takes earnest measures to wean her to a better mind. He must love her although she loves another and is an adulteress. Jehovah is in an entirely similar condition with his wife, Israel, who also is unfaithful. All this Hosea learns to interpret as symbolic of the divine love of Jehovah for Israel, which refuses to be

7) Pfeiffer: LOT, p. 177

defeated, but will seek to recover the people, though it be through stern discipline and exile.

Jehovah then goes on to tell Hosea that he is to speak earnestly to Gomer concerning her behaviour. For this will be Jehovah's treatment of Israel too. It is in the nature of its purpose that we are not told with what success Hosea tried to win back the love of his erring wife and to build new happiness on the ruins of his youth, for his experience has become symbolic of Jehovah's experience.

Hosea was a great lyrical poet. His imagination was vivid, his style most picturesque. Hosea thought the relation between Jehova and Israel is analogous to the marital relation. Israel is Jehovah's wife. He had in love with her in the wilderness, had given her blessings of every sort but she was faithless and turned to other lovers; the loyal nature of the dieties of the Cananites, Baalin, from whom she claimed to have recieved the blessings of agriculture. Chapters 4 and 14 are rather obscure partly because of the hopeless corruption of the text in very many passages, partly from the apparently disjointed nature of the individual sections. But the general theme of this division appears in its opening words:

“There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land.”

That knowledge of God is in part innate and universal; it is knowledge of

God, and not specifically of Jehovah—not knowledge of a code but fidelity to the demands of conscience. The worship of Jehovah, which ought to be a moral service, is indistinguishable from Baal worship and idolatry, and upon those who worship Him. Thus Hosea pours indignant and sarcastic scorn on the people. Although Hosea laid most stress on the religious corruption of the people, he did not overlook the moral iniquities, which he condemned no less than Amos with whom he agreed that God demanded only morality, but not sacrificial cult. He also went into a field that Amos had not touched, politics, both at home and foreign; he foresaw the clash between Assyria and Egypt, warned the pro-Assyrians as well as the pro-Egyptians, and showed Jehovah's plan would be carried out, no matter what these politicians might do to hinder.

While Hosea was still in the north prophesying there arouse in Judah the most majestic of prophets, Isaiah of Jerusalem. Of Isaiah's life we know very little. We know only such facts as may be gathered from the book itself and 2 King 13-18, 20:21. He calls himself Isaiah, the son of Amos. “To Amos, his father, we have another reference but it is noted that this name hears no connection with the prophet Amos. As for the time he was prophesying, we can find in 1:1. Both the Kingdom of Israel, or that of the Ten Tribes and that of Judah of Jerusalem, when he began his

prophetic ministry, were still standing. His work began toward the end of the reign of Uzziah, and extended then through the reign of Jonathan and that of Ahez and on into that of Hezekiah. He had penetrated through outward appearances to the underlying reality, had seen the one who directs all movements of history, and understood His character and purpose, and thus was enabled to interpret Him to his people and to unfold His plan in the events of the nations.

One day in the year that King Uzziah died (738), he was in the temple in deep meditation when suddenly he was caught by the inspiration and saw the vision that burnt itself indelibly into his soul. He saw the divine King on His throne.

"Filled with awe, he only dared to look at the vast flowing garment that filled the temple and at the mysterious winged seraphim, from whose lips pealed forth the mighty antiphonal song that expressed to him ever after the true nature of Jehovah."⁸

"Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory."

At the holy vision he had seen, he realized his own and his peoples's simple-ness. So he made haste to tell his people of Jehovah's will. People must listen to his words and grasp the meaning in this ministry; if they fail to do so they will lose their spiritual sensibilities and

their capacity of repentance and moral restoration, and then they will be prepared for destruction—by Isaiah's ministry:

"Go and tell the people

Hear ye continually but understand not,
And see ye continually, but perceive not!

Make the heart of this people fat and
their ears heavy and shut their eyes
Lest they see with their eyes, and hear
with their ears, and understand with
their heart, and return and be healed;"

When Isaiah asked Jehovah "how long!" He replied,

"Until cities are waste without inhabitant,

And houses without man,

And the land becomes utterly waste,

And Jehovah has removed men far away,

And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be consumed,

As a terebinth and as an oak

Whose stump has remained after they are felled." (6:9-13:a)

No prophet ever received a more terrible commission. But Isaiah has done it in the strength of God's vision.

In general, the book of Isaiah falls into 3 main sections. The first of these is the usual type of prophetic collection, and frequently the oracles and narratives. In his earliest prophecies (2:6) Isaiah described how Jehovah would sweep in

8) Bewer: LOT, p. 100

a terrible tornado, on *his* great day over the country, breaking the cedars of Lebanon, shattering the oaks of Bashan, crashing, tearing the things He meets in His path, while above it all there rings out the triumphant refrain:

“And Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.”

With this refrain there joined another prophecy of the Day of Jehovah, in which Isaiah attacked all the obstacles such as idols and in which he warns his people saying:

“Go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of His majesty
When he arises to shake mightily the earth.”

His eyes were sharpened by his prophetic works and he witnessed the downfall of Jehovah's dynasty in the North also he knew Zechariah's murder of Shallum. He foresaw also, a revelation of Judah, for here also the social conditions were terribly disordered. The revolution must be done by Jehovah. So Isaiah must speak to the people how they should act and do. One day he appeared in the market place and started singing in melodious rhythm.

“I will sing now of my beloved, a love song voocerning his vineyard.” The vineyard was a term of affection for sweetheart. This is the song: The lover did everything for the vineyard

but was much disappointed at the harvest. Then he asked his hearer: to judge between his friend and his vineyard, but nobody replied. So he told his hearers the severe treatment he planned. They all agreed with him without knowing what would come next, then he said: “I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.” Isaiah showed the application of his love song before the people recovered from the astonishment.

For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah his pleasnat plant;
And He looked for justice, but behold oppression
for righteousness, but behold a cry.
(5:1-7)

Also Isaiah pronounced series of voves over all of injustice, disorder and their punishments. The princes and judges are companions of thieves, grafters, and perverters of justice. But Jehovah will avenge Himself on them all. He will remove the wicked elements and throughly purge the city.

And I will restore thy judges as at the Ist,
And thy counsellors as at the beginning;
Afterward thou be called,
The city of righteousness, a faithful town. (I:21-26)

The punishment was only upon the wicked. After removing all the wicked, the righteousness of Zion will once more be restored by Jehovah. No more was

Isaiah's message unrelieved gloom. His words had fallen on the good earth and earnest people gathered them. In 732 B.C. the final settlement of the north was made, great numbers of the inhabitants being deported, and both Damascus and Northern Israel being organized as provinces of the Assyrian empire.

The Assyrian perceived the fateful danger, and under the leadership of Damascus, a confederacy was effected between the erstwhile enemies, Damascus and Samaria. It was at the beginning of this Syro-Ephraimite war (735), when Ahaz went out to inspect the fortification of the city in view of the impending siege, that Isaiah met with him and they had one of the most memorable interviews in history. He had a little son whom he had named Shearjashub at that time. Isaiah assured the king that in the name of God Himself he (the King) needed not to fear the contemptible confederacy of Syria and Ephraim.

To him who had seen the great vision of the Heavenly King it was easy to believe that He was the only ruler, and director of all the affairs of men. Ahaz did not believe it. Isaiah tried hard to offer him any sign in heaven or hell in confirmation of his message. The King, however, evades the issue with a pious phrase, whereupon Isaiah bursts forth full of indignation (7:1-17): "Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore the

Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold a young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (i.e. with us is God). For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land of whose two kings thou art so terribly afraid shall be forsaken. But curd and honey shall he eat, when he knows to refuse the evil and choose the good. For Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people and upon thy father's house, days such as have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah."⁹⁾

This is the sign: the young woman who becomes pregnant shall in her hour of crisis cry out in glorious joy, 'immanuel', and call her baby thus, then already the divine deliverance will be manifest. Now Ahaz will remember this hour.

In which God offered His grace to him in vain, but the name Immanuel will not beto him pure joy. For this hour will mean little to Ahaz, to mankind, it will be of incalculable value, for it puts faith into the center of religion. Isaiah brought this message into the people. About this time, his second son was born and he named "Maher shalal hash bas" (17:1-6, 9-11). He did not conceal from the people the danger for Judah in the invasion of Israel by Assyria. He predicted that the clash between Egypt

9) Bewer: LOT, p. 105

and Assyria would take place in Palestine and end of Egypt too.

During the days of the Syro-Ephraimitic war Israel felt the strong power of the war psychosis from which the people suffered :

“With us is God!

Know, ye peoples, and give ear all ye of far countries :

Gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces!

Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought,

speak the word and it shall not stand,

for with us is God! (8, 9f)¹⁰⁾

Soon Isaiah found himself so fatally in opposition to the king and the people that he withdrew from his public ministry and devoted his attention to the training of his disciples. Quietly he worked, conscious that also for the public he himself and his children with their symbolical names were still witnesses of Jehovah.

He waited silently and patiently for the better time, for, only his hope was in Jehovah his only saviour. In 734, the most northern and the East Jordan tribes had been carried into Assyrian captivity, Israel had become a vassal; in 732 Damascus had fallen. After the death of Tiglathpileser in 726, Israel revolted against her new sovereign Shalmoneser. Jehovah tried to save them by discipline but they did not repent. After the recital of each act Isaiah concluded with the refrain :

“For all this His anger is not turned away, and His hand is stretched out still! and at the end of the famous description of the Assyrian advance he says : (5 : 26-29).

“He will raise a signal for a nation afar off,

and whistle for it from the ends of the earth ;

and lo, swiftly, speedily it comes!

None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps,

not a waistcloth is loose, not a sandal-thong broken ;

their arrows are sharp,

all their bows bent,

their horses' hoofs seem like flint

and their wheels like the whirlwind.

Their roaring is like a lion,

like young lions they roar ;

they growl and seize their prey,

they carry it off, and none can rescue.

They will growl over it on that day, like the rearing of the sea.

And if one look to the land

behold, darkness and distress ;

and the light is darkened by its clouds.”

The Assyrians are the instrument of punishment in the hand of Jehovah.

In 722 B. C. Samaria was taken and formed into an Assyrian province. Israel was carried into captivity. Up to this point Judah had been consistently pro-Assyrian, but with the outbreak of a new revolt in 711 B. C., Hezekiah seems to have taken the other side, and popular opinion in Jerusalem was strongly in favour of joining the philistines, who

10) Bewer: LOT, p. 106

were aided by Egypt, against Sargon. The religious reform attributed to him, if historical, may have seemed, in one of its aspects, a gesture of independence. All through these years Isaiah tried in many addresses to convince his countrymen of the profound truth that their national salvation could only be secured through faith in Jehovah.

The country remained quiet till after the death of Sargon in 705 B.C. but then, almost the whole empire broke away from Sennacherib. In the west the only vassal who remained faithful was Padi, King of Ekron, who was deposed by his subjects to Jerusalem, where he was imprisoned by Hezekiah. Ambassadors from Philistia appeared in Jerusalem to urge the Judeans to join the anti-Assyrian alliance. The people were eager but Isaiah knew the complete hopelessness of the undertaking and addressed an oracle to Philistia :

“Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee, because the rod that smote thee is broken, For out of the serpent’s root shall come forth and his fruit shall be a fiery adder, flyingserpent.

And the first-born of the poor shall feed, And thy remnant shall be slain.

Howl art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee ;

and there is no straggler in his ranks !

And to the answer for the question people asked, Isaiah replied :

“What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation ?

That Jehovah has founded Zion,
And in her shall the afflicted of His people take refuge ! (14 : 28-32).

Only trust in Jehovah, Salvation is only to be found in him ! The people would not listen. King Gezekiah was unable to resist the pressure and joined the anti-Assyrian alliance. Here Isaiah also saw the Egypt as bringing only disappointment and woe :

“Woe to the rebellious children,” say the Load,

“Who carry out a plan, but not mine ;
and who make a league, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin ;”
(31 : 1).

There is only one real helper and he is Jehovah. Isaiah repeated warnings so often that the people were beginning to tire of them. Since people would not listen to God’s plain message by which they could gain rest and refreshment, He would give to them the same and easily explained message in Assyrian with the fearful result that they would “go and fall backward and be broken and snared and taken.”¹¹⁾

(28 : 7-22) And your covenant with death shall be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand.

When the overflowings course shall pass through,

then ye shall be trodden down by it.”

As often ask it passes through,
it shall take you ;

11) Bewer: LOT, p. 111

For morning by morning shall it pass
through,
by day and by night:
And it shall be nought but terror
to understand the message.

For the bed is too short for one to
stretch himself on,
and the covering too scanty for one to
wrap himself in.

For Jehovah will rise up as in mount
Perayim,

He will be wroth as in the valley of
Gibeon;

That He may do His work, His strange
work,

and bring to pass His act, His strang act.
Now therefore be ye not scoffers,
lest your bonds be made strong!

For a decree of destruction have U heard
from the Lord Jehovah of hosts upon the
whole land.”

Isaiah penetrated through the outward
events to the underlying spiritual realities.
He was really a prophet of faith. In a
remarkable passage he has preserved a
picture of the popular mood at that time.

It was on a day when Jerusslem cele-
brated some little ephemeral triumph;
the people were on the roofs to see the
joyful scene, their own ruin was impend-
ing and they were joyfully watching a
festival!

“What ails thee now that thou art wholly
gone up to the house-tops?

O thou that art full of shoutings, a tu-
multuous city, a joyous town;

Thy slain are not slain with the sword,

neither are they dead in battle;
All thy rulers fled away together,
they fled afar off;

All thy mighty men are captured,
Captured without their bows!

As this terrible picture stood before Isa-
iah's mind, and the grief overcame him
so that he implored the people:

“Look away from me,

Let me weep bitterly;

Labour not to comfort me

for the destruction of the daughter of my
people!

For it is a day of discomfiture, of tread-
ing down and perplexity

from the Lord, Jehovah of hosts,

In the valley of decision a breaking down
of walls,

and a crying to the mountains.

And Elam has lifted up the quiver,

and Kir has uncovered the shield.

Thy choicest valleys are full of chariots,
and the horsemen set themselves in array
at the gate,

And He has taken away the covering of
Judah.”¹²⁾

The people without moral and spiritual
preparation had nothing to do with this
crisis. They did not apologize to him
with repentance, but looked forward with
light-heartedness to the coming war.
Events moved hopelessly onward. At this
moment Isaiah rose to the height of his
great conviction. He had long observed
that the Assyrian was no conscious of

12) Bewer: LOT, p. 112

Jehovah's servant, that it was sheer lust of conquest that carried him on; but now when he dared to boast in reckless arrogance that he would overthrow the city of Jehovah, Isaiah replied with scorn:

"Shall the ax vaunt itself over him who hews with it,

or the saw magnify itself against him who wields?

As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!" (10:15)

The Assyrian cannot be Jehovah's instrument anymore but must himself be punished. He cannot take Jerusalem but he will be broken by Jehovah. Sennacherib was forced to leave. It was a great deliverance for the Jews and set up one of the most important events in Judean history. This is what Isaiah, the prophet, had been expecting. In the great joy over the deliverance from the Assyrians, Isaiah described the happiness of the people over their next liberty and foretold, inwards beautifully and melodiously:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,

on them has light shined.

Thou hast multiplied the nation,

thou hast increased its joy;

they rejoice before thee

as with joy at the harvest,

as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

For the yoke of his burden,

and the staff for his shoulder,

the rod of his oppressor,

thou hast broken as on the day of Midian.

For every boot of the tramping warrior
in battle tumult

and every garment rolled in blood will
be burned as fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born, a child is born,
to us a son is given;

and the government will be upon his
shoulder and his name will be called

'Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'

Of the increase of his government and
of peace there will be no end,

upon the throne of David, and over his
kingdom,

To establish, and to uphold it with justice
and with righteousness from

this time forth and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Lord has sent a word against Jacob,
and it will light upon Israel;

and all the people will know,

Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,

who say in pride and in arrogance of
heart..." (11:1-9).

In another poem (32:1-8, 15-20) the

ideal reign is still further described. The

golden age is for him the purification and

the glorification of the old order. That

had been his hope. As I mentioned be-

fore, he was primarily the prophet of

faith, and his most important work was

to teach faith in the holiness of God,

which meant to him faith in His physical

and moral majesty and supermacy. "Like

Hosea, and unlike Amos, and Micah, Israel was essentially a man of the city. Although he was not unfamiliar with the life and work of the farmer, it was with the walls of a town that his days were spent and his work was done.”

Isaiah's literary abilities were of a very high order; his short impulsive lyrics have an extraordinary beauty and power. All the features of great poetry are here in the work, sincerity, honesty, depth of feeling, beauty of expression. From his visions in Chapter 6, we gather that dominant in his scheme of thinking was the holiness of Jehovah. He stood apart from all Gods, and Israel must stand apart from all nations. Isaiah advocated complete abstention from his political entanglements of the day and saw that the only hope for Judah lay in her holding aloof from other nations. Yet Judah went her own way and followed the path which led, to her doom. But Isaiah could not believe in her final extinction. Jehovah needed a people for his self-expression. The messiah is not yet an eschatological figure as he has no connection with the great day of Jehovah.

Beside such a great prophet as Isaiah, Micah appears small, but in reality he was one of the great prophets. Like Amos, he was a native of the country somewhere in the neighbourhood of Moreshaeth-Gath. He left no record of the experiences that made him a prophet but he came in the last decade of North Israel (730-722) and announced the cer-

tain fall of Samaria. Micah expresses with peculiar distinctness the sense of his inspiration and the object for which it is given: he is conscious of being filled with the spirit of Jehovah to declare unto Jacob his transgression and unto Israel his sin.

“He was the spokesman of the poor, who were suffering in dumb submission from outrageous oppression and shameless perversion of justice. Princes, priests, and prophets all were guilty, greed and avarice possessed them and poisoned the whole social and religious life of the nation.”¹³⁾

(3:12): “My people, children are their oppressors,
and women rule over them.
O my people, your leaders mislead you,
and confuse the course of your paths.”

The words of Micah must have burned themselves into the memories, if not the consciousness of his generation, for more than a hundred years after as well, though doubtless by this time the prophecy was written—we find his unfulfilled prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Micah begins by describing the coming of Jehovah. He is coming in judgment upon Samaria and Jerusalem, the wicked capitals of wicked kingdoms. “It is true that there is an unexpected tenderness in the poem in which the pro-

13) Bewer: LOT, p. 118

phet interprets the awful practice of child sacrifice, to which the people had been driven in their despair in Menasseh's time, as a sad mistake in their craving for reconciliation with God." He represented the people, asking with great concern:

"Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah,
and bow myself before the high God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt
offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will Jehova be pleased with thousand of
rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first born for my trans-
gression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my
soul?"

He answers:

"He has showed thee. O man, what is
good?
and what does Jehovah require of thee,
But to do justly, and love kindness,
and to walk humbly with thy God."

In his early ministry Micah had shown how deeply he himself was moved by the prospect of Israel's certain destruction, but in spite of his pessimism, he was a man of many admirable qualities. His sympathy went out to the victims of the Assyrian invasion and to the expropriated families. His call to prophecy arose from his sensitivity to human suffering and to his indignation at cruel oppression rather than from any unique vision like Isaiah experienced. His ad-

resses in themselves contain nothing new but their style is direct and vehement. In emotional power and high moral earnestness they may be ranked with the greatest prophetic literature.

The book contains not only the authentic prophecies of Micah (1-3, 6:1-7, 7) but also a number of poems from the excilic and post-excilic periods whose authors are unknown.

The Books of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel and of Judah are used Deuteronomistic and the Chronicler as the source of informations continuously.¹⁴⁾

After Isaiah, Micah and their disciples, the prophetic party, in the matter of fact they prepared for, there came the one of the most radical reformation. These party laid the most basic ideas of the Book of Deuteronomy which was the factor for the reformation: namely unity of God, Yahweh alone is God, He alone is to be worshipped, all foreign cults are to be exterminated; unity of sanctuary, external forms must be purged, regulated and spiritualized; and the combination of the requirement of true social morality and wholehearted worship in accordance with the purified sacrificial system. At any rate, it is a book found in the temple by Hezekiah, the priest during the reign of King Josiah. The book perhaps was written and then lost in and 650.¹⁵⁾ Josiah at once began to institute a reformation of the cult in accordance with the de-

14) Cf. p. 15, 16

mands of the Deuteronomic law. Thus, the temple of Jerusalem was cleansed of everything connected with foreign worship, sanctuaries outside of Jerusalem were destroyed and defiled, idolatry and superstition all through the land were put away, and the passover was celebrated in Jerusalem as it had been directed in this law (II Kings 22f.). Following the post-exilic stories, law code is given in 12-26 with the introduction in 5-11 and conclusion in 28. The code demands religion should be formulated in life, and these men wanted to regulate the whole life of the nation by fundamental principles of the religion of Moses and its expansion. But much of the basis of these code was the Book of the Covenant and other customary laws, in written or oral form. They were arranged as follows:¹⁵⁾

1. Religious Laws (12:2-16:17)
2. Officers of Authority
3. Judicial Procedure
4. Military Laws
5. Family Laws
6. Various Laws
7. Chastity Laws
8. Exclusion Laws
9. Various Ritual and Humane Laws
10. Humane Laws
11. Various Laws
12. Ritual Formularies

Throughout these codes of laws, justice and love, equity and humanity are pervading, and these qualities are directly connected with God, for He is impartial

and just, merciful and loving, Israel is to be like Him. These are the conviction and conclusion, with great warmth and urgency to love Yahweh and to do His will. He summarized them not only in the Decalogue (5:1-21) but also in the famous Shema (6:4-9). In conclusion, he sets forth, in a series of blessings for obedience to his law and of curses for disobedience, his teaching of retribution, his pedagogical doctrine of eudaemonism which was so influential later on.¹⁷⁾

All through the book, the author took the style of preacher, quite impressive in an "urgent and sonorous" also in its rhythm of its language, particularly phraseology of its well-formed sentences, and the distinction of its vocabulary.

Concerning the date of the book Prof. Pfeiffer gave us his conclusion as "series of editorial expansions beginning in 621 and ending about 400 B.C. Furthermore, except 31-34 and 12-26, the editorial process in its main lines are:¹⁸⁾

1. The edition of 621 (D in its original form): Introduction (4:44-8:20; 10:12-11:25); Special Laws (12-26): Conclusion (2k:1-24, 43-46:29-1, H:28:69).
2. The edition of 600-550: addition of 11:26-30; 27, preparing for Joshua's covenant and legislation at Shechem.
3. The edition of ca. 550: Historical Introduction (9:1-10:11; 1:6-3:29) and Conclusion (31:1-13).

15) James: POT, p. 282

16) Bewer: LOT, pp. 124-125

17) Ibid: p. 133

18) See Creelman: LOT, p. 24f

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4. The edition of 500-450 : Introduction (4 : 1-40) and Conclusion (29 : 2-30 : 20, H. 29 : 1-30 : 20), in which the Law is identified with wisdom. The latter incorporates an earlier section (30 : 15-20), which eloquently colosed the last edition of D as a separate book (ca. 550).
5. Redactional: 1 : 1-5 ; 4 : 41-43 ; 11 : 31f ; etc.

In this period, about 650 B.C., it seems the combination of J and E documents were done. It is done, probably, by many authors. But, J was more less, dominating material for the combination, since J covers stories and code more completely. Some of them were done in the manner

of real combination, some of them were E alone like Gen. 20, 40 : 1-4k, some of them were J alone in its source like in Gen. 24, 38.

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