

## TRANSLATIONS FROM THE PROPHETS.

## IV.

## JEREMIAH IX. 23—XI. 8.

*Only the right Knowledge of Yahweh, and of His will for Men,  
will profit a Man.*

<sup>23</sup> Thus saith Yahweh, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: <sup>24</sup> but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth, and that he knoweth me, that I am Yahweh which do kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things do I delight, saith Yahweh.

*If Judah has only the Circumcision of the Flesh, it will be  
treated by Yahweh as no better than other Nations.*

<sup>25</sup> Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will punish\* every one that is circumcised in uncircumcision; †  
<sup>26</sup> Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that have the corners (of their hair) clipt, ‡ that dwell in the wilderness: for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart. ||

\* Heb. *visit upon*.

† Lit. *with a foreskin* (an oxymoron). The meaning is, those who are circumcised externally, but have the foreskin of their heart (4. 4) unremoved.

‡ Certain Arab tribes, who, contrary to the Jewish practice (Lev. 19. 27), shaved the hair off their temples (Herod. iii. 8). The same peculiar epithet (lit. the *corner-clipt*) recurs, 25. 23, 49. 32.

|| Judah, having no circumcision of the heart, is no better than Egypt, Edom, etc., which, like it, are circumcised externally, or than other nations which are not circumcised at all.

X. 1-16.—*Against Idolatry.\**

*Let Israel not be tempted to stand in Awe of the Idols of the Heathen.*

<sup>1</sup> Hear ye the word which Yahweh speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: <sup>2</sup> Thus saith Yahweh, Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; † for the nations are dismayed at them. <sup>3</sup> For the customs ‡ of the peoples are vanity: for (an idol is) a tree which one cutteth out of the forest, the work of the hands of the craftsman § with the axe. <sup>4</sup> They beautify it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it shake not. <sup>5</sup> They are like a pillar in a cucumber-garden, || and speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither is it in their power to do good.

*The Idols are a Thing of nought: it is Yahweh who made Heaven and Earth.*

<sup>6</sup> Whence is any like ¶ unto thee, O Yahweh? thou art great, and thy name is great in might. <sup>7</sup> Who should not fear thee, O King of the nations? for

\* This section (10. 1-16) interrupts the connexion (for 10. 17-25 carries on the train of thought of chap. 9); and in all probability is the work not of Jeremiah himself, but of some later prophet, probably of one living in the latter part of the Babylonian captivity, when the exiles were in danger of being overawed by the elaborate idol-worship carried on by the Babylonians around them. Cf. the similar descriptions and argument of the second Isaiah, Is. 40. 19-22, 41. 7, 29, 44. 9-20, 46. 5-7.

† I.e. extraordinary celestial appearances, such as eclipses and comets.

‡ Heb. *statutes*.

§ See Deut. 27. 15.

|| I.e. what we should call a *scarecrow*. Cf. Baruch 6. 70 (where an idol is compared to a *προβασκάνιον ἐν σικυηδάτῳ*).

¶ So with a change of punctuation. Or, omitting a letter, *There is none like*, etc. The Heb. text, as it stands, is not translatable. So in *v.* 7.

thee it beseemeth ; forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, whence is any like\* unto thee? <sup>8</sup> But they are one and all senseless and foolish : the instruction† of idols ‡ is wood.§ <sup>9</sup> (There is) silver beaten into plates which is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Ophir, || the work of the craftsman, and of the hands of the goldsmith ; blue and purple is their clothing, they are all the work of skilled men. <sup>10</sup> But Yahweh is God in truth ; he is a living God, and an everlasting king : at his wrath the earth trembleth, and the nations cannot abide his indignation : [<sup>11</sup> ¶ Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens.] <sup>12</sup> who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. <sup>13</sup> When he uttereth his voice,\*\* there is a roar of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth ; he maketh lightnings for the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures : †† <sup>14</sup> (then) every man becometh senseless and loseth knowledge ; every goldsmith is put to shame by his graven image : for his molten image

\* See note ¶, p. 230.

† Heb. *mūsār*, i.e. *moral education* (Prov. 4. 1, 13, 8. 10, 33, 13. 1).

‡ Heb. *vanities* (see 8. 19).

§ I.e. is no better than the idol itself : idolatry is destitute of moral or spiritual force.

|| So Targ. Pesh. and LXX (Luc.) ; the Heb. text has *Uphaz*, an unknown locality.

¶ This verse is written in Aramaic ; it interrupts the connexion between v. 10 and v. 12, and was probably originally a marginal note, suggested by the argument of the text, and intended as a reply which might be used by Jews living in heathen countries, when invited to take part in idol-worship.

\*\* Heb. *at the voice of his uttering*. The allusion is to the thunder (Ps. 18. 13, 29. 3-9 ; cf. Ex. 9. 28 R.V. *margin*).

†† Cf. Ps. 135. 7.

is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.\*  
 15 They are vanity, a work of mockery: in the time  
 of their visitation they will perish.† 16 The portion  
 of Jacob is not like these; ‡ for he is the former of  
 all things; and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance: ‡  
 Yahweh of hosts is his name.

*Continuation of chap. ix. The Prophet sees in Spirit the  
 Capital invested by the Foe, and bids the Inhabitants  
 prepare to depart into Exile.*

17 Gather up thy bundle from the ground, (O Jerusalem,)§  
 thou that abidest in the siege. 18 For thus saith Yahweh,  
 Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this  
 time, and will distress them, that they may feel|| (it).  
 19 'Woe¶ to me for my breach! \*\* my wound is grievous: ††  
 but I said, Truly this is my sickness, ‡‡ and I will bear it.  
 20 My tent is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my  
 children are gone forth from me, and they are not; there  
 is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my  
 curtains.' §§ 21 For the shepherds |||| are become senseless,  
 and have not inquired of Yahweh: therefore they have not  
 prospered, and all their flock ¶¶ is scattered. 22 Hark! a

\* The verse describes the effect of the thunderstorm (v. 13): man is dumb  
 before the spectacle; and so every idol-maker is put to shame by the obvious  
 inability of his graven image to produce anything like it.

† Cf. 6. 15.

‡ The LXX (omitting words) reads, perhaps rightly, *for the former of all  
 things is his inheritance.*

§ The pronouns are fem., showing that the *community* is addressed. Cf. 7.  
 29.

|| Heb. *find*. The text is open to suspicion.

¶ In vv. 19, 20, the community, personified, is introduced dramatically  
 bewailing its fate. (The pronouns are feminine: cf. the note on 7. 29.)

\*\* See 8. 11, 21.

†† Heb. *made sick*.

‡‡ So Targ. Pesh. MSS. of LXX., Aq. Symm. Vulg. In the Heb. text a  
 letter ('my') has accidentally fallen out.

§§ See the note on 4. 20.

|||| Fig. of rulers, as 2. 8, 3. 15, 23. 1 *al*.

¶¶ Heb. *their pasture*.

rumour, behold it cometh, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah a desolation, a dwelling place of jackals.

*Jeremiah, speaking in the Name of the People, prays for a Mitigation of the Judgement.*

<sup>23</sup> 'I know, O Yahweh, that not unto man belongeth his way; not for man is it to walk and direct\* his steps.†  
<sup>24</sup> Correct me, O Yahweh, but with judgement; ‡ not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.§ <sup>25</sup> Pour out thy fury upon the nations that have not known thee, and upon the families that have not called upon thy name: for they have devoured Jacob,|| and consumed him, and have laid waste his homestead.'¶

JEREMIAH XI. 1—17.

*Jeremiah is instructed to exhort the People to live in accordance with the Deuteronomic Law.*

XI. <sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying, <sup>2</sup> Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak thou\*\* unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, <sup>3</sup> and say unto them, Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man that heareth not the words of this covenant, †† <sup>4</sup> which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of

\* So with a change of points (cf. the Vulg.). The rendering of A.V., R.V., is not legitimate, a conjunction in clause *b* being not expressed.

† Cf. Prov. 16. 9; Ps. 37. 23.

‡ Or, *in measure*. See the note on 5. 4 (p. 47).

§ Heb. *diminish me* (29. 6, 30. 19 ['be few']; Ezek. 29. 15; Ps. 107. 39 ['are minished']).

|| So LXX. The Heb. text adds, *and devoured him* (a corrupt repetition of the previous, and anticipation of the following word).

¶ Cf. Ps. 79. 6, 7.

\*\* So LXX. The Hebrew text has *speak ye* (followed by, *and say thou*, v. 3).

†† Cf. Deut. 27. 26, 29. 9; also 11. 28, 28. 13.

Egypt, out of the iron-furnace,\* saying, 'Hearken unto my voice, and do† according to all that I command you; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God; † that I may establish the oath which I swore unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as at this day.' ‡ And I answered and said, 'Amen, O Yahweh.'

*Jeremiah instructed again to exhort the People to like effect, and to remind them of the Consequences of Disobedience.*

6 And Yahweh said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them. 7 For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, 'Hearken unto my voice.' 8 Yet they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the stubbornness of their evil heart: so I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did them not.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES.

X. 5. אִתָּם. For אִתָּם (i.e. *with them, in their power*), as often in Jer. : see on 4. 12, p. 45.

6, 7. It is impossible to explain, or justify logically, אִתָּם; see my note in *Hebraica*, ii. 34–37. With a change of points we can read אִתָּךְ, *whence?* (Gen. 29. 4, and frequently); with its use here (if this is the true reading) comp. 30. 7 'whence is its like?' (R.V. 'so that none is like it,' implying the punctuation אִתָּךְ). It is, however, quite possible that the אִ is in both cases dittographed from the preceding אִ (so König, *Lehrgeb.* iii. § 352*v*); we then get the ordinary אִתָּךְ אִתָּךְ, *there is none like thee* (2 Sam. 7. 22).

\* I.e. the furnace in which iron is smelted; fig. of a place of severe suffering. So Deut. 4. 20; 1 Kings 8. 51.

† So LXX. The Heb. text adds *them*. (Probably by error from *v. 6 end*. Here the pronoun is without a proper antecedent.)

‡ Cf. Deut. 8. 18.

8. *senseless*. A survey of the passages in which **בָּעַר** and **בִּעַר** occur shew that the idea expressed by them is *want of understanding*: notice how frequently the || is **בְּכִל**, and the addition of words implying the absence of knowledge in *v.* 14, Ps. 73. 22, 92. 6 [Heb. 7], 94. 8, Prov. 30. 2.

11. The Aramaic is that of a particular dialect: see my *Introduction*, p. 240 (ed. 6 or 7, p. 255).

12. As soon as this verse is translated correctly (notice the *participles* **עֹשֶׂה** and **מֹבִין**), it is apparent that it can connect only with *v.* 10, so that the proper place for *v.* 11 cannot really be between *v.* 10 and *v.* 12.

13. The primary idea of **הַמֹּון** is a *confused noise* or *hum*, as of a multitude of peoples, Is. 17. 12, or of a city, 32. 14; then it comes to denote a *humming throng* or *multitude*, as Jud. 4. 7, and frequently. The cognate verb, **הִמָּה**, includes such sounds as we denote by *growl* (Ps. 59. 7, of dogs), *groan* (Is. 59. 11, of bears), *moan* (Ez. 7. 16, of doves), *roar* (of the sea, Jer. 5. 22, Ps. 46. 3, or of a distant multitude, Jer. 6. 23, Ps. 46. 6 [R.V. 'raged']). Here, and in the || 51. 16, as also in 1 Kings 18. 41 (A.V., R.V., 'abundance'), the subst. is applied to the roaring noise of rain driven by the wind in a heavy storm.

17. *bundle* (**בְּנִיָּה**). So R.V. *margin*, following Ges. and moderns generally, the root being taken to be the Arab *kana'a*, to be contracted, folded in; properly, therefore, something *done up tightly*. A.V., R.V., *wares*. This connects the word with **כַּנְעָנִי**, 'Canaan,' 'Canaanite,' in the sense of *merchant* (the Canaanites, or Phœnicians, being the chief merchants known to the Hebrews): see in the Heb. Is. 23. 8, Job 40. 30 [A.V. 41. 6]; and R.V. *margin* of Hos. 12. 7, Zeph. 1. 11, Zech. 14. 21, Ez. 16. 29 (where the *text* of R.V. gives a false sense), Prov. 31. 24. But this is not a likely explanation of **כַּנְעָה**; besides, if it were correct, we should expect a **נ** after the **ע**. It must be admitted, however, that the isolation of **כַּנְעָה** in Heb. (for the root itself in Heb. means to be humbled), and the remoteness of the Arab. *kana'a*, make even the first derivation somewhat doubtful; but we have nothing better to put in its place.

19. We speak only of a *person* as being sick; Heb. speaks also of a *wound* as being 'sick.' So 14. 17, 30. 12, Nah. 3. 19; cf. Mic. 6. 13 (lit. 'I have made sick to smite thee'=I have smitten thee grievously).

23. Read with Giesebrecht **הִלְךָ וְהִבִּין** (inf. abs.) for **הִלְךָ וְהִבִּין**: cf. Vulg. *nec viri est ut ambulet et dirigat gressus suos*.