

26
19

5

"False" Prophets

of

Ancient Israel.~

Abraham Brill.~

~ Hebrew Union College.

April 1900

Mic. 6/78

Contents

Chapter ..	Page.
Preface	I
Introduction	I
I. "False" Prophets in the Kingdom of Israel (Ephraim) ..	7
II. "False" Prophets in the Kingdom of Judah	27
(Prior to Reforms of Josiah)	
III. "False" Prophets in the Kingdom of Judah	48
(From Reforms of Josiah to Downfall)	
IV. "False" Prophets During and After the Exile	68
V. Concerning the "False" Prophets	81
in general.	

Preface

As the study and preparation for the writing of this Thesis, carried me deeper and deeper into the subject of prophetic and prophecy in Israel, the limits within which I had expected to treat the "False" prophets of ancient Israel, expanded, and grew so immeasurably before my eyes, that I could not but be impressed ^{with} the magnitude and the great difficulties of my chosen theme. I found that I could not possibly do justice to every phase of the subject. That would require the skill and fitness of a veteran. As a beginner only, I was forced to confine myself to the developing of ^{a few of} what appeared to me to be the most essential points of difference between the so-called "true" prophet and the so-called "false" prophets. I have merely touched upon matters which if given their proper

consideration, would, more than exceed the limits of a mere thesis. The difficulties in the way of preparation were, further, increased by the peculiar meagreness with which authorities have generally treated the subject of "false" prophecy in Israel. I found that together with the first-hand sources - the writing of the Canon, I could rely for information or suggestion only upon a comparatively few authoritative works which I shall shortly name. I desire to express my thanks to Dr. Battenwieser for his kind suggestions with reference to the present subject. My thanks are due also to other members of the faculty who have also freely given me valuable counsel.

In the preparation and for the writing of this Thesis, I have consulted

the following books:

Kuenen "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel."

Budde "Religion of Israel".

Robertson Smith "Prophets of Israel"

Cornill "Prophets of Israel"

Montefiore "Hibbert Lectures"

Darmstadter "Prophets of Israel".

Keir "History of Israel"

Ewald "History of Israel"

Gesenius "History of Israel"

Oort and Kuenen "Bible for Learners"

Wellhausen "Israel".

Driver's "Isaiah and His Times".

Cheyne's "Jeremiah"

Knobel "Der Prophetismus der Hebräer"

Maass "De Pseudoprophetismo Hebraeorum"

Duhm "Theologie der Propheten".

Kittel "Profetie und Weissagung"

Marti "Geschichte der Israelitischen
Religion"

Maybaum "Die Entwicklung des
Isr. Prophetenthums."

Shultz "Alttestamentliche Theologie"

Introduction

In the works of a large majority of Bible critics and historians, the so-called "false" prophets have received the very minimum of attention and consideration and the tendency, further, has been to heap abuse upon them quite out of proportion to their deserts. In the general desire to set forth the noble qualities and exceptional grandeur of the true "men of God", many authorities on the subject of prophets and prophecy in ancient Israel, have been prone to look with unmixed contempt upon those misguided men whom later historians but never their own contemporaries, dubbed "false-prophets". The true prophets condemned in sweeping and bitter terms, these impostors and charlatans, so why should historians religiously accepting the testimony of the real אנשי יְהוָה, waste their time in trying to find excuses for the "false".

prophets. The "Lügenpropheten" as Kettel designates them, were too plainly and beyond question, scamps and rogues whom no one appreciating the transcendent superiority of the genuine apostles of God, should hesitate to condemn and despise. Such might be said to have been and in many cases still, to be the attitude taken toward the opponents of the great prophets. The older authorities are almost unanimous in maintaining the view of an absolute contrast between the true and false prophets. Knobel, for instance, - an authority of considerable standing, says of the latter, "Sie stehen in einem wesentlichen Gegensatz zu jenen (the true prophets)"

* Knobel "Der Prophetismus der Hebräer" ^{vol. 2} p. 228 ff. 22
 Cf. also Maybaum "Die Entwicklung des Jer. Prophetenthums"
 p. 124 sq.

To him as to many others, the "false" prophets were all alike, unqualifiedly false, lacking in true sincerity and destitute of every honest instinct.

Of late, however, the view has been gaining ground that there were indeed some redeeming qualities in the make up of the popular prophets (for such, in truth, were the so-called "false" prophets) that among them were many earnest and sincere men who honestly believed what they preached and who might be said to differ in all respects from those prophets whom Jeremiah and others accuse of such deplorable vices, by as much as they differed in certain respects from the great prophets. Kuenen recognizes this fact when he says, "the so-called false prophets do not differ from their opponents in that they arrogated to themselves in bad faith what the latter possess in reality. As regard

sincerity of conviction and good intention, they, rather stand, generally speaking, on a level with them." * Montefiore is more conservative in his estimate of the "false" prophets though he admits that "there were clearly wide gradations of character among them, from the hypocritical chicaner to the honest if deluded enthusiast." He deprecates the tendency of recent scholars "to rehabilitate the so-called 'false' prophets" with such little hesitation, "for," says he "the evidence of Ezekiel and Jeremiah cannot be lightly put aside." Nevertheless, almost in the next sentence, he classifies Habakkuk among the best of the false prophets, thereby clearly affirming that one certainly does not presume too much.

* Kuenen "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel" p. 582
 cf. also Duhm "Die Theologie der Propheten" p. 229
 et Schullz "Alttestamentliche Theologie" p. 124-5
 ** Montefiore "Liberator" p. 22

in refusing to regard all the "false" prophets of one alloy and wholly corrupt and dishonest. This much may be said with perfect surety concerning them, that their greatest failing was not in many cases, the lack of conviction, sincerity or piety but rather their inability to rise to the heights of spirituality attained by the great prophets. The high favor in which they stood with the populace, and from the fact that they sometimes earned easy popularity by uttering pleasant and flattering words (cf. Is. xxx:10; Eze. xii:24) could not have been maintained so steadfastly, were it not for the fact that they often gave the people more solid grounds for trusting in them. The "false" prophets, moreover, might not have come down to us, blackened with such contumely and burdened with such contempt and obloquy, had not their faults and deficiencies, been magnified and exag-

gerated by contrast with the superior excellencies and purity of the great prophets whose lives and words, dominated by the spirit of God, have been a source of religious inspiration these many centuries.

In the following chapters, I shall endeavour to justify the above estimate of the so-called "false" prophets but in so doing, I shall not attempt to surround ^{them} with a glamour of idealization nor gloss over the faults and failings of which they are rightly accused. I seek only to do them justice and to give credit where credit is due. Otherwise they shall receive their full measure of blame, for, whatever may be said in vindication of them in many cases, their position and their condition are by no means irreprehensible.

Chapter. I.

History of False Prophets in

Kingdom of Israel (Ephraim)

Chapter I

Our main sources of knowledge and inference concerning the so-called "false" prophets are the writings of the canonical prophets with an occasional reference in the Book of Kings. We are, therefore, obliged to begin our history of the "false" prophets, practically with the reign of Ahab of the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim). A few introductory statements to lead up to the points to be discussed in this chapter, will first be necessary.

With many other customs and practices adopted by Israel from heathenish neighbors came perhaps soothsaying, necromancy, and similar mysterious arts. The first recorded attempt to banish האבות, המכשפים, המנחשים, הקסמים, הידעזנים occurred in the earlier part of Saul's reign.* The fact that Saul displayed open opposition against these exponents of occult art, does not prove that soothsaying or

*

divining, per se, were regarded as pernicious and objectionable, since Samuel himself ^{is said to have} dealt in the supernatural and could read the future or reveal secret things but their legitimacy seemed to depend entirely upon their source, that is, whether they originated from heathen sources or whether they came as a gift from Yahveh. Consequently, only as a protest against Heathenism were **הַחֲבוֹת**, **הַיִּדְעָנִים** and the like, forbidden to practice in Israel. This must be our only conclusion since foretelling and soothsaying were associated with the prophetic order throughout its history. In fact, in Samuel's time and even later, the name **נָבִיא** (**nebi**) seemed to have the same significance as that of (prophet) **נָבִיא** of a later period, for in I Samuel IX: 9, we are told by the historian, evidently belonging to the golden age of prophecy that, "he that is now

called a prophet was formerly (i.e. in Samuel time) called a seer." Therefore in as much as Yahoeh-prophet and Heathen-prophet had these like functions of foretelling and divining, the first distinction in the minds of the Israelites between true prophets and false prophets must have been that the former derived their powers from Yahoeh, while the latter received theirs from alien sources.* But these heathen soothsayers or prophets of Baal, Astarte and other pagan deities were plainly and unquestionably false and therefore cannot be treated or compared with those so-called "false" prophets who belonged to the Yahoeh prophetic guilds (בני נביאים) of a later period, and were so frequently censured by the canonical prophets. Therefore little or no attention will be given to those prophets of heathenish

cults spoken of, for instance, in I K. XVIII: 19-20
Jer. XXIII: 13; II: 8; VIII: 1, 2 and Zech. X: 2

Before the division of Solomon's kingdom, there was, generally speaking, but one main Yahweh prophetic party. The members of this party known as בְּנֵי נְבִיאִים or simply הַנְּבִיאִים were led or presided over by well-known and illustrious champions of Yahweh whose claim to the title of true prophets has never been questioned. Among these were Samuel, Nathan and Gad. The origin of the prophetic guild is usually traced to Samuel's time. If he was not the founder of the party, at any rate, it was largely through his influence that prophecy became a power in Israel. Samuel's intimate association with the prophetic school is shown in I S. XIX: 20

וַיִּשְׁלַח שְׂאוּל מַלְאכִים לִקְחַת אֶת־דָּוִד וַיֵּרָא אֶת־לִהְקֵת (קְהֵלֶת פְּרוֹפֵטִים)
הַנְּבִיאִים נְבִיאִים וְשִׁמְעוֹנֵל עָמַד נֹצֵב עֲלֵיהֶם

Likewise in Nathan and Gad and in other prophets of this pre-division period.

who received special mention, such as Ahijah of Shiloh, Shemaiah and Iddo*, the בני נביאים must have had their leaders and leaders. There was a common bond of sympathy which necessarily drew all the prophets together, namely, a common religious ideal - the longing for a pure national religion with the exclusive worship of Yahveh as its main condition. The prophets struggled against the growing influence of paganism and sought to prevent idolatry from taking root in Israelitish soil. The Nazarites, a class of men (supposed to have risen at the close of the period of Judges), who abstained from the use of wine mainly because wine was a feature of Baal-worship**, and the Rechabites - a branch of the Kenites - who thought Yahveh could not be worshipped save by avoiding ^{wine} and refusing to live in cities***.

* Cf. 2 Chron. IX:29

** Robertson Smith "The Prophets of Israel" p. 84.

*** Cf. Jer. XXXV

together with the active Yahweh-prophets, ^{all} represented the reaction and protest against the Canaanite civilization and religion. The real danger in Israel from idolatry began toward the end of Solomon's reign and continued for many centuries after. The great movement inaugurated by Elijah*, whose ruling principle was a passionate zeal for Yahweh, the God of hosts**, was the first practical crusade in Israel against pagan cults. The Yahweh prophets, the Nazarites and the Rechabites, it may be reasonably inferred (since from I K. XIX:10 we learn that Ahab slew many Yahweh-prophets) gave Elijah their moral as well as their active support. Of course, Elijah had a clearer insight into the true character of Yahweh than his companion enthusiasts. His aims, while generally coinciding with theirs, were yet far superior and purer by reason

* I Kings XVIII: 1-7 & q.

** I Kings. XIX: 14

of the introduction of an ethical element^{*} which thereafter was to play so important a part in the history of prophecy.

Just as Israel politically was split into two separate kingdoms, so also the prophets of Israel gradually encountered an "ethical and religious cleavage" which created in time two distinct prophetic parties.^{**} A reform party diverges sharply from the old order in the casting off of old party traditions and the advocacy of fresh religious principles and ideals. The conservatives בני וביאים who believed in upholding the strictly national elements of their religion emphasized in their doctrine of Israel for Yahoeh and Yahoeh for Israel, were generally popular prophets, guided to a certain extent by the "voice of the people".

* Cf. 1 Kings XXI:19

** Cf. Budde "Religion of Israel" p. 129, also Montefiore "Hibbert Lectures" p. 93 and Ewald "History of Israel" vol. IV p. 129.

and arraying themselves in support of the king when the latter was not deliberately opposed to Jahveh-worship. The new party, on the other hand, attempted to establish principles of righteousness, justice and social morality and included in its ranks the canonical prophets and a number of others who have left us no records of their experiences and utterances. They were bitterly opposed by the people, the kings and the priests because they uttered nothing but reproaches or a round approaching chastisement. While the older נביאים met with favor and encouragement at the hands of the king and the people, the new prophets encountered generally only unbelief and scorn. These two sides of prophetism are clearly illustrated in I Kings. XXII, our first direct reference to the so-called "false" prophets. Ahab, as we know, had been temporarily estranged from Jahveh worship

by his Tyrian consort, Jezebel who introduced the Baal-cult throughout the kingdom. During the period of his uncompromising defection from the yahweh religion, Ahab had persistently persecuted the yahweh prophets. When, however, Elijah convinced him and the people of the folly of idol-worship in so conclusive and effective a manner*, Ahab once more became faithful - after a fashion - to yahweh. But even after the lesson which Elijah taught him, Ahab tolerated the further persecution of the prophets, especially of Elijah**, carried on under the orders of Queen Jezebel. We find, - however, that while he hated ^{and hunted} the representatives of the new school of prophets because their predictions were always pessimistic in character, and their rebukes so far-reaching and stinging yet he gathered about his Court a large

* Cf. 1 Kings. xviii

** 1 Kings. xix: 2.

number of prophets of the old school
 who always uttered prophecies favorable to
 his interests, since they judged him, not by
 a moral standard as did their opponents but
 by their old rule of faithfulness to Yahweh.
 They either did not perceive that Ahab's
 conversion was not wholly sincere, or wholly
 ignored the fact, though clearly cognizant of
 the real state of affairs. Coming now to
 the events described in I K. xxii, we learn that
 on one occasion when Ahab of Israel and
 Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, were contem-
 plating a campaign against the Syrians
 for the purpose of recovering the city of
 Ramoth in Gilead, the king of Judah, ex-
 pressed a desire to consult the oracle of
 Yahweh regarding the result of the under-
 taking. Ahab immediately summoned his
 official prophets, numbering four hundred
 and headed by a certain Zedekiah, the son
 of Chenaanah, and they unanimously
 predicted success; "וַיִּבְרָא יְהוָה בְּיָד הַמֶּלֶךְ"

Jehoshaphat distrusting these prophets, asked Ahab whether he knew of another prophet whom he might consult, and Micahiah ben Imlah whom Ahab disliked because he always prophesied evil, is reluctantly sent for and the question put to him. At first he answers equivocally but finally when pressed for the truth, he prophesies defeat for Israel and death for Ahab.

וַאֲתֵי אֶת כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל נִפְצִים אֶל-הָהָרִים כַּצֶּאֱזַר

Ahab complains bitterly אֲסֹר אֵין-לָהֶם רֵעַה" (v. 17.)

of this gloomy prophecy, though it does not surprise him to hear it uttered by Micahiah. He cannot believe or at least does not wish to believe that Micahiah is more truthful than the four hundred official prophets. Micahiah then makes the amazing announcement that Yahveh, himself, had purposely misled these prophets in order that Ahab's downfall may thereby be the more easily effected* (v. 20-23)

* For a similar sentiment, see Ezekiel XIV: 9. concerning the purpose of the "false" prophets

Michaiah understood by what method of reasoning, the prophets had arrived at their conclusions. Judging from Ahab's previous victories against Benhadad, King of Damascus, and from the fact that king had now become a worshipper of Yahuah - a thing which they believed must of necessity assure success and victory to Israelitish arms, they could not possibly foresee Ahab's defeat. Michaiah evidently did not doubt their sincerity, though he perhaps wondered how his opponents could have so easily overlooked the evil results both upon Ahab's own character and upon his influence with his people, of the crime committed against Naboth*. When confronting them, he did not rail at them, nor threaten them with dire punishment, though he was obliged to give Zedekiah, their leader, to understand that his near future would be anything but pleasant (v. 25). In the eyes, therefore, of Michaiah, a so-called

* Cf. I Kings XXI.

"true" prophet, the four hundred prophets of Ahab were the unconscious instrument of a deception and were, therefore, not to be harshly blamed.

This story is worthy of our attention, illustrating as it does the attitude of the new prophets or so-called "true" prophets represented by Micaiah ben Imelah, toward the old school of which the four hundred prophets of Ahab were members. It has usually been the custom to designate the popular prophets by the disgracing title of "false prophets" but they are not so regarded by Micaiah. To quote Budd in this connection, "we must, therefore, regard the so-called 'false' prophets, better named, the prophets of one-sided nationalism, as by no means, a band of conscious liars and hypocrites, but rather as the belated representatives of an earlier stage of prophetic development." * We may

* "Religion of Israel" p. 131

rightly judge that the new prophets were always greatly in the minority because their severe and more unpopular policy of reform did not attract their more easy-going opponents into their ranks. Had the popular prophets been more discriminating in their utterances of victory and prosperity, they might not have been so frequently reproved by the great prophets as they were. In as much as the latter linked inevitable punishment to every infringement of the moral law, it was natural for them to disapprove of the practice which their opponents had of prophesying favorably even to lawless princes.

A further widening of the breach between the two schools is noticeable in Israel under the rule of the House of Jehu (beginning about 842). The old school of which Elisha was then its great leader, had set up Jehu as king and seemed to concur with his brutal policy of reform. The sanction to Jehu's conduct

was the presence at the overthrow of the House of Omri, of Jonadab ben Rechab, the Kenite, a zealot in the cause of pure Yahveh worship. Jehu throughout his reign, endeavoured to maintain Yahveh worship in Israel, and in this, we have an additional reason for his favoring the old school prophets. The new school was opposed to the brutal policy of the House of Jehu. The rule of violence and blood shed had little attraction, for instance, for the prophet Hosea (I-5) who announced in Yahveh's name;

כִּי-עַד מָעַט וּפְקַדְתִּי אֶת-דָּמִי יִרְעָאֵל עַל-בֵּית יְהוָה וְהִטַּבְתִּי

מַמְלַכֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

However zealous, Jehu might have been to keep Yahveh-worship pure and uncontaminated, the deeds of atrocity for which he and his immediate successors were guilty were so abhorrent to the new prophets that nothing short of total

extinction of the House of Jehu could satisfy their offended sensibilities. Such violence had received the sanction of the prophets of the old school who in their zeal for pure Yahweh^{worship}, failed to see that which the Canonical prophets clearly understood, namely, that morality for its own sake is the fundamental desideratum of true religion, and that righteousness was more desired by Yahweh than the tribute of burnt-offerings. It is for this reason that the latter did not hesitate to annul the work of their predecessors or opponents in opposing that very royal house which these prophets had helped to put into power.

The slight evidence that the Canonical prophets in the Northern Kingdom furnish us concerning their opponents, seems to indicate, in general, a somewhat sympathetic attitude toward the latter. Amos says of preceding and contemporary prophets :-

וְכִי לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה דְּבַר כִּי אִם-גִּלְגָּל סִדּוֹ אֶל-עַבְדֵּי הַנְּבִיאִים

Surely this remark cannot be interpreted as referring only to the few prophets with whom Amos had immediate relations, but rather to the general class of prophets.

Further when Amos says (in ch. II: 11, 12):

וְאִם מִבְּנֵיכֶם לְנְבִיאִים וּמִבְּחֹרֵיכֶם לְנָזִירִים הָאֵף אֵיזָאת כִּנִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל

וְאִם יְהוָה וְתִקְשֹׁ אֶת-הַנָּזִירִים יֵין וְעַל-הַנְּבִיאִים צִוִּיתָם לֵאמֹר לֹא-תִשְׁבְּאוּ

his intention is not to rebuke the prophets themselves but the people for their attempt to lead the prophets astray.

Of course, we must expect that among the hundreds of men wearing the prophet's mantle, there should be many who made of prophecy a trade, uttering oracles for fee and lending themselves to all kinds of deceit. When Amaziah, the chief priest at the Bethel sanctuary confronts Amos just after that prophet has pronounced full judgment against Jeroboam II, he urges him to flee to Judah and "there eat bread and prophesy there." (Amos vii: 12) The expression

ואכל-שם לחם זשם תנבא together with the celebrated answer which Amos gives Amaziah (v. 14): לא-נביא אסכי ולא בן-נביא, indicate that professional prophecy was very common in Amos' time. We may infer also from Amaziah's remark (v. 12) that he had no great amount of respect for this kind of prophecy, while he clearly respected and feared this dauntless and plain spoken Amos.

The prophet Hosea who comes to the Northern Kingdom from Judah (about 745) tells us that the prophet (in Israel) becomes witless and the spiritual man mad in thinking over the sin of the people. (ch. ix: 7): מויל הנביא: משגע איש הרוד על רב עוןך. According to Amos the corruption of the people, had the effect of silencing those who would speak but dared not כי עתה יהיה ידם כי עתה יהיה ידם. Many of Hosea's colleagues, steeped in hypocrisy and formalism, had become fully as sinful as the people, deserving ^{the punishment of} death no less than the people.

זכטלת היום זכטל זם-נביא עיך ליה (chap. IV: 5)

Yet the better element of prophets was regarded by Hosea as God's instrument of judgment:

(ch. VI: 3)

עלכן חצבתי בוניאים הרגתים באגרי-פי

"I hew them (the Israelites) down by the prophets, I slay them by the words of my mouth."

Chapter II

History of "False" Prophets in.

Kingdom of Judah prior

to Reforms of Josiah (621)

Chapter II

From the references to the "false" prophets in the writings of Micah and Isaiah, of the latter part of the 8th century, we receive additional evidence of the wide difference in many respects between the great prophets and their inferior contemporaries both of Israel and of Judah.

Those prophets who did not possess true inspiration, sought for the prophesying spirit by means of the artificial stimulus of music or strong drink. The artificial means of inducing the "raving" ecstasy was a much favored tradition of the prophetic order and by its very nature, it lent itself to considerable abuse at this later period of history. The great prophets no longer looked for their power to the ancient methods. They needed no artificial stimulants to stir them into action or into a prophesying state. The spirit of Yahveh moved them, the sin of the people gave them provocation and impulse to

"speak in God's name." "I am full of the might and the spirit of yahveh" says Micah "to declare unto Jacob, his transgression and to Israel, his sin" * Small wonder then that the farcical performances of their opponents, filled the canonical prophets with indignation. Says Isaiah :-

שגו בשכר ובלעו מן הדין תעו כן-השכר שגו בראה (7: 11: 48)

Micah refers also to this artificial method of inducing ecstasy, in these words :-

לו-אש הלך דח ושקר כזב אטף לך לין ולשכר והיה מטיף העם

הזה (11: 2)

We have already seen what Amos thought of professional prophesy in Israel *. The guild prophets, compelled to live by their oracles, would naturally try to make as much as possible from them, but it frequently happened that the character of the prophecies depended largely upon the size of the fee. Although it had

* Micah III: 8

** Cf. Amos VIII: 12, 13

always been customary in former times for prophets to accept fees (Samuel even receiving compensation for his oracles cf. 1 S. ix 7) without protest from anyone except from the one perhaps who was too exorbitantly taxed, the ^{real} prophets of this later period expressed themselves indignantly against this practice and its excesses for they saw in it nothing but harm for the people. Says Micah:

כה אמר יהוה על־הנביאים המתעים את עמי הנשכים בשניהם וקראו
 שלום ואשר לא־יתן על־סיהם וקדשו עליו מלחמה: לכן לילה לכם
 מחזון וחשכה לכם מקסם ובאה השמש על־הנביאים וקדר עליהם
 היום וזבשו החזים וחפרו הקסמים ועטו על־שפס כלם כי אין מענה
 אלהים (ch. iii: 5 ff.)

In Micah III: 11, we have another reference to professional prophecy,

ונביאיה בכסף וקסמו ועל יהוה ישענו לאמר הלא יהוה
 בקרבנו לא תבוא עלינו דעה

The latter half of this verse, as a direct reference to the characteristic belief of the popular prophets of

Judah, leads us at once to the discussion of an important matter in connection with the history of prophetism.

The prophets of the old school both in Israel and in Judah, believed that Yahveh would permit no harm to come to his people, but would protect them in any and every emergency. The popular belief in Israel had no dread of the growing power of Assyria. And when once, the Assyrians began to turn their attention to Samaria, these prophets were confident that Yahveh was able to protect his people. Amos and Hosea also believed that Yahveh possessed this power - but much more. On this occasion, thought they, Yahveh would employ the Assyrians as his instrument of punishment against all sinful peoples including Israel whose guilt surely merited severe recompense.

* Cf. Budd - "Religion of Israel" p. 137.

Amos and Hosea laid stress upon Yahweh's moral requirements. Their opponents believed that Yahweh, the God of Israel, had nothing but blessings in store for them, that perfect faith in Him was all that was necessary to guarantee divine favour and protection. They therefore vied with one another in glorifying Yahweh, forgetting that "Yahweh desired piety more than sacrifices and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings" and that it were useless to trust in God without simultaneously doing His will. Hence unlike Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah, they could not conceive of Ephraim's downfall even in the face of the terrible corruption existing in Israel. Their disillusionment was of course complete. The popular prophets of the Kingdom of Judah were even more emphatic in their advocacy of the traditional belief

* Cf. Hosea. vi: 6

than were those of Israel. They also had more opportunities for asserting this doctrine of Yahveh's inseparable connection with and guardianship over his people and their principles had great weight and influence as we shall soon see.

In 734, Pekah, then king of the Northern Kingdom, - assisted by Rezin, ruler of Damascus, undertook to conquer the kingdom of Judah. Ahaz, Judah's king, at this critical moment, despite the remonstrances of the prophet, Isaiah, called the Assyrians to his assistance, thereby not only binding himself and country irrevocably to Assyria, but also sealing the fate of the Kingdom of Israel. The continued existence and the peace of the Kingdom of Judah, henceforth, depends upon its relation to the great world power. Assyria ^{later} to Babylon ^{ca.} As long as Judah remained a ^{faithful} vassal of Assyria, or of Babylonia

no harm came to it. Under Hezekiah's successor of Ahaz, however, the little kingdom assumed a defiant attitude toward Assyria. Then began Judah's serious troubles which passed only when the nation kept faith with the dominant power whether it was Assyria or its successor, Babylon, but finally culminated in the total downfall of the kingdom. Isaiah on religious grounds had opposed the entering into alliance with any foreign nation because in his estimation, Yahweh alone could help his people and all that was necessary to insure Judah's well-being was trust in Yahweh - trust born of the consciousness of right-doing. But when Ahaz had bound himself to Assyria, Isaiah for political reasons, persistently advocated the keeping of faith with that nation and later with Babylon.

and opposed the entering into alliance with other ^{foreign} powers. But the yoke of the Assyrians had become galling to not a few of the Judeans, particularly the popular prophets, who in consequence of their religious beliefs were confident that Yahveh would not forsake his people in any event. These prophets evidently had reason that the fall of the Northern Kingdom was due to the wretched state into which Yahveh-worship in that nation, had fallen in consequence whereof Israel had lost Yahveh's favor. Therefore in planning revolt against Assyria, the prophets were convinced that Yahveh's support would be guaranteed if all images, asheras, bamahs and other evidences of heathen worship, would be destroyed, and the entire Yahveh-cult purified and renovated. It may be con-

pictured that Hezekiah instituted his
 extensive reforms in Judah, with
 the full intention of afterward re-
 bellion against the Assyrians. The
 popular prophets must have urged
 the reform movement in accordance
 with their ideas of its bearing
 upon the situation, while the prophets
 of the new school evidently advised and
 welcomed the reforms as very essential
 to the establishment of their ideal
 state based upon absolute morality.
 Hezekiah's political actions were
 plainly influenced by his religious
 views. There can be little doubt but
 that the popular prophets helped
 greatly to shape these views. That
 Hezekiah did not revolt much
 sooner than he did, was due to
 the influence of Isaiah whose deep
 insight into political affairs told

* Cf. II Kings XVIII:36.

him that it were far safer and wiser for Judah to remain the faithful vassal of Assyria. The war party was however too strong for Hezekiah to resist or disregard even if he had cared to. Therefore shortly after Samaria's downfall (722), despite the urgent warnings of Isaiah*, the king of Judah allied himself to Egypt, Babylon, and Philistia and in 705, when the great conqueror Sargon died, revolted against the Assyrians and prepared for active warfare. The Assyrians under Sennacherib immediately turned their attention to the revolting nations. They laid waste to all Judah and then encamped before the walls of Jerusalem prepared to deal with it as they had dealt with Samaria. Isaiah died

* Cf. Isaiah xxx; 1-5, 15 sq.; xxxi: 1 sq.

not as might be expected, hedging from the usual pessimistic forebodings of the new school of prophets,* immediately threaten the people with the downfall of Jerusalem but on the contrary, he cheered them with the prospect of sure deliverance. Isaiah had foretold** that Judah would not be wholly spared because of its iniquities. But with his principle of בְּהִשָּׁקֵט וּבְבִטְחָה תֵּדָע וּבִוְרָתְכֶם (xxx: 15) he could not prophesy the destruction of Zion even if the sins of the people justified it. Had not the Lord founded Zion; had the people any cause to lose heart. In as much as Hezekiah in revolting from Assyria, had practically been guided by Isaiah's own principle of trust in Yahweh, expressed in such words as:—

* Cf. Micah III: 12

** Cf. Isaiah xxviii: 15, 19.

צהלי ורני יושבת ציון כי גדול בקרבך קדוש ישראל (xii:6)

whatever might happen to the rest of Judah, Zion itself would stand as firm as a rock, for Yahweh's protection was a certainty. The confidence of Isaiah and the people was not misplaced. A pestilence decimated the ranks of the Assyrian army encamped before the walls of Jerusalem, thus delivering the city for the time being.* The confirmation which events gave to Isaiah's theory, not only secured for him great privilege with the king and people but must have helped him to put many of his ideas of moral reform into execution. The belief of the popular prophets regarding Yahweh's relation to his people and to his sanctuary was greatly strengthened by the confirmation of Isaiah's similar views.

*

Cf. Isaiah xxxvii:36, II Kings xix:35.

Isaiah's principles were misunderstood to the extent that he was thought to be laying down the very rule which his opponents had always championed. The principle of unswerving trust in Yahweh's protection, - accentuated by Isaiah - was destined to be used as a foil against the influence of later prophets particularly Jeremiah who almost lost his life by daring to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem. The history of Hezekiah's son and successor, Manasseh is graphically ^{told} in verses 2 and 16 of II Kings 21:

דִּיעַשׁ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּתוּעַבַת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי
 בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.... וְגַם דָּם זָקִי שִׁפַּךְ מִנְּשֵׁה הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד עַד
 אֲשֶׁר מָלָא אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם כִּי לֹפֶה לְבַד מִחֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא
 אֶת־יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה

The reaction from Hezekiah's sweeping reforms is here evident. Further the

*

Cf. Jer. vii; 49, 27; 28

doctrine of the inviolability of Zion tended to encourage rather than stem the moral degeneration of the people. The deliverance of Jerusalem had given the people undue confidence, and had made them feel that Jerusalem could not be taken. It was natural, therefore, for the inhabitants of the city to argue that since Jerusalem would never be devoted to destruction, it made little difference whether they conformed ^{with} to Yahveh's strict moral requirements or not. The effect in either case, must be the same, viz. the continued well-being or prosperity of Jerusalem. At all events, the people displayed a flagrant disregard for the laws of morality, the natural result of just such reasoning as the above. In the proud consciousness of the infallibility of Yahveh's protection

the people had slight scruples in accepting the idol worship which Manasseh introduced anew into Judah. Judah had become once more the vassal of Assyria, so the outward prosperity of the land deceived men into the belief that idolatry would have no serious consequences.

Little is positively known concerning the condition of prophetism during the notorious reigns of Manasseh and his son, Amon. But the oracles of Jephaniah and Jeremiah who lived sometime later or at least prophesied in the reign of later monarchs, tell us as much as we care to know for the purpose at hand. The re-introduction of idolatry into Judah and the persecution of the more sincere and zealous Yahveh-prophets, had the effect of gaining many converts to Baal, Ashtar, Moloch and

constellation-worship in the wear prophets who either from fear or from inferior notions of the strict requirements of their chosen calling, were only too ready to change their views and espouse idolatry. Some of these prophets of Baal either forgot or liked idolatry too well, to return to their former calling as soon as the pressure applied to them during Manasseh's and Amon's reigns, was removed with the crowning of the young king, Josiah. In Zephaniah's picture of Jerusalem's wickedness, the prophets are described as "vile and deceitful" (III:1).

(פוחזים אנשי בגדות)

The opponents of Jeremiah in the early days of his activity were not all dissolute. As toward the end of the kingdom of Judah when Hananiah

* Cf. Jer. II:8, VIII:1,2

faced Jeremiah and sought to contra-
 dict his teaching*, so also now in
 the beginning of Josiah's reign, there
 were worthy representatives of the
 old school of prophets, whose only fault
 like that of Hananiah, was the fact
 that their religious beliefs did not
 tally with Jeremiah's. Jeremiah had
 nothing more to say against these
 prophets other than that they
 prophesied perpetual peace for Judah
 in spite of the moral corruption cor-
 roding the very foundations of the
 nation and rendering peace impos-
 sible without definite reform.
 He thought the prophets had no
 right thus to lull the people
 to sleep and prevent them from
 perceiving their ^{own} enormities and
 sinfulness. Speaking of the coming

day of divine judgment, Jeremiah remarks:

... וְהָיָה אִם יִתְמַהוּ וְאָמַר אֵלֶּה אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה אֲכֵן הִשָּׂא הַשָּׂאֵת לְעַם הַזֶּה

Jer. IV: 9, 10 לְיִירוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְנִגְעָה חֶרֶב עַד הַנֶּפֶשׁ

God is here accredited with deceiving the people through the prophets* presumably that their punishment may afterward be all the more sudden and unexpected. While this passage appears to give us a clue as to Jeremiah's own opinion concerning this particular class of popular prophets who deceive the people with their cries of peace! we are more positively informed concerning his real views when in chapter XIV: 14, he presents Yahweh's reply to his exclamation concerning the injurious influence of the prophets upon the people in the words:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי שֶׁקֶר הַנְּבִיאִים וּבָאִים בְּשֵׁמִי לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹמִים וְלֹא

* For a similar idea expressed in Yahweh's name, cf. II Kings 19, Ezekiel

צויתם ולא דברתי אליהם חזון שקר וקסם זאלי ותרמית לכם

המה מתנבאים לכם

Such an arraignment as the above, can mean only that in Jeremiah's eyes, all his opponents were included in a single category. He would recognize no distinctions. Irritated by what appeared to him to be only blind perversity on the part of his opponents, and impatient of their interference with his plans and precepts, he gave vent to his indignation in bitter charges and invectives, all of which, if taken seriously in every case, would utterly and forever blast the character of the prophet's contemporaries, beyond any hope of vindication. Contrast ed with Jeremiah's greatly superior qualities and with his lofty religious views, their own characteristics and beliefs could well stand all that the prophet uttered or wrote against them. Judged, however, by ordinary human stand-

ards, much may be said in extenuation of the faults of most of the popular prophets. The latter considered that their own religious usages were sanctioned by centuries of veneration and respect and that it were base sacrilege for Zephaniah, Jeremiah and their followers to attempt their abolition. If the popular prophets had been given a chance to argue their own defense, would they not have paid their opponents back in the same coin by uttering philippics against them?

But we are encroaching somewhat upon what we intend to deal with in the following chapter.

Chapter III.

The "False" Prophets, from the

Reforms of Josiah to the

Downfall of Judah.

The reforms of Josiah occasioned by the discovery of the Book of Deuteronomy^{*} necessarily exerted a purifying influence upon the great multitude of prophets who filled the Land of Judah, and had hitherto been permitted to grow and act unhindered or undisturbed by rule or regulation.^{**} The laws that we find in Deuteronomy against prophets who introduce the worship of idols and prophesy in their name (Deut. xiii: 1 sq. xviii: 20) or those who falsely speak in Yahveh's name (xviii: 20-22) or those who employ charms, arts of divination, conjuration etc. (xviii: 9-14) clearly reflect the condition of prophetism in Judah before the Reform. Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Ezekiel and other canonical prophets must indeed have seen the absolute need^{at all times} of

* Cf. II Kings xxii: 8 sq., xxiii: 1st

Cf. II Kings xxiii: 24.

stringent legislation against the vicious members of the prophetic order whom they tax with every conceivable kind of wickedness. Their accusations tally with those implied by the Deuteronomic laws. The "prophets" for instance, invent visions and revelations (Jer. XIV:14 sq.; XXXIII:16, Ezek. XIII:2, 7, 17; XXII:28) - prophesy in the name of idols (Jer. II:8, 26 sq.; XXIII:14) practice the heathen arts of soothsaying and divination (Jer. XIV:14, XXVII:9, XXIX:8 Ezek. XIII:17 sq.). They are also frivolous (Jer. VI:14 sq.; VIII:10 sq.; Zeph. III:4) immoral (Jer. XXIII:11, 14 XXIX:23) mercenary to the extreme (Jer. VI:13 sq.; VIII:10 sq.; Ezek. XIII:19) and guilty even of murder (Lam. IV:13, 16).

These are unquestionably serious charges and if they applied to all the popular prophets, it would be a strange proceeding for anyone to try to mitigate their faults. But that there were many worthy representa-

tives among the opponents of the canonical prophets in Judah, who following the dictates of honest conviction, professing in firm faith that they delivered the דבר יהוה to the people, can scarcely be doubted. It is not reasonable to suppose that they could have exerted so far-reaching and potent an influence both upon the kings of Judah and upon the people if their private lives had been open to such severe criticism as were those of their inferior associates. The sanction which Isaiah's teachings had appeared to give to their own traditional belief in the imperishableness of Yahveh's protection and favor, had strengthened their hold upon the people and enabled them to mold their political and religious views with greater ease than ever before. They desecated on the beauties of independence but failed to see the necessary consequences

of revolt from Assyria or later from Babylon. They preached of Zion's glory and Yahweh's love for Israel but they overlooked, ^{or mistook} the conditions upon which God's favor and love were dependent. Their work among the people was not that of the moral reformer but rather that of the optimistic preacher of encouragement and the patriotic jingoist. Naturally in Jeremiah's eyes, they had no other effect than to "strengthen the hands of the wicked so that they turn from their wickedness no more" for "they perpetually say to those who despise God 'peace shall be yours, and to those who walk in arrogance of heart to them they say 'no evil shall befall you.'" (Jer. xiii: 14, 17)

וחזקו ידי מרעים לבלתי-שבו איש מרעתו אמרים אמור
 למנאצי דבר יהוה שלום יהיה לכם וכל הלך בשררות לבו אמרו
 לא-תבוא עליכם רעה;

The death (in 604) of the good king Josiah, which occurred in the course of a war waged against the Egyptians whom Josiah had considered himself duty bound, because of his faithful allegiance to Assyria, and for the safety of his country and religion, to strenuously oppose with force of arms, greatly altered the views as well as the faith of the people. The gradual weakening of Assyria and the triumphs of Necho, the Egyptian king, turned the scale of popular favor toward the Nile country. Jeremiah, a witness of this change of sentiment, had the temerity to warn the people of their destined downfall (ch. xxi) nearly losing his life by the act, and the "prophets" were among those who on this occasion demanded his death (xxv). Jeremiah was con-

vinced that revolt from Assyria and later, from Babylonia, and moreover, the reliance placed upon Egypt, would ultimately and inevitably compass the fall of Judah. The popular prophets were not so discomposed by the turn of events. In fact, it was in accord with their principles to have Judah break with its liege lords the Assyrians or the Chaldeans (the conquerors of the Assyrians). No doubt they attributed the misfortunes of the army of Judah under Josiah, to the fact that Yahveh's favor had temporarily deserted Judah because the sacrificial fires in the "bamahs" outside of Jerusalem had been quenched. Budde thinks that Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's frequent denunciations of gainst the "bamahs",* point to the

* Jer. xiii: 27, xvii: 2; Ezek. vi: 13.

the fact that after Josiah's death,
 something of the old order of relig-
 ious affairs that held sway before
 the Deuteronomic laws were put in
 force, was re-established in the rural
 districts and in some cases even in
 Jerusalem. The dogma of the im-
 perishability of Yahveh's favor, ^{and sanctuary} still
 played havoc in Jerusalem and
 the popular prophets continued to
 foster the belief that Yahveh would
 never permit harm to befall the
 city in any extremity. ^(Jer. viii: 4) They preached
 uncompromising opposition against
 the Chaldeans, and as after events
 will show, they exerted considerable
 influence in inducing the people and
 especially the kings of Judah to strike
 boldly for independence. We can easily
 blame them for desiring indepen-
 dence, but in their confidence of
 Yahveh's aid, they made the great

error in supposing that puny Judah could really resist Chaldea's mighty armies. The Judeans, however, did not throw aside all caution, for they not only fortified their cities and especially Jerusalem, but also made treaties with Egypt. Jeremiah sought to prevent J^{oi}achin as well as the latter's successors from throwing off the yoke of Babylon* but all to no avail. Jerusalem underwent a three months siege shortly before J^{oi}achin's death and that king's son and successor J^{oi}achim, was forced to surrender Jerusalem (597) to Nebuchadnezzar, suffering exile with many of his people. This defeat seemed to have but slight effect upon J^{edi}kiah whom the Chaldeans set upon the throne of Judah before their

* Cf. Jer. xxvii:1-59.

departure from Jerusalem. Influenced, no doubt by the counsels of the popular prophets who still confidently looked for Yahveh's intervention and who were more distinguished for their patriotic motives than for their good sense and prophetic insight, Zedekiah rashly refused further allegiance to Chaldea. Once more Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to Jerusalem and while the popular prophets and other patriots advised resistance to the very last*, repeating their time-worn formulas

"Evil will not befall you" (Jer. xxi. 17) לאֲשׁוּבָא עֲלֵיכֶם רָעָה

"Is not Yahveh's Temple here?"

הֲיֵכַל יְהוָה הֲיֵכַל יְהוָה הֲיֵכַל יְהוָה הֲמֵה (Jer. vii. 4)

Jeremiah urged the people not to listen to them; but "serve the king of Babylon and live", for otherwise the city would

* Saying לא תעבדוּת מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל (Jer. xxvii. 9, 14)

be laid waste to*. Great was the triumph of these "prophets" when shortly after, the siege of Jerusalem was raised and Nebuchadnezzar departed to meet Judah's allies, the Egyptians. It seemed that at last their prayer for deliverance had been answered. It appeared that their views had received confirmation while those of Jeremiah were proven ^{to be} without foundation. But what effect did this sudden change in the political outlook, have upon Jeremiah? Even louder now than before, grew his utterance of warning and forecasts of destruction. He prophesied that the enemy would soon return and devote Jerusalem to annihilation**. The Chaldeans did in fact return, and Jeremiah, supposing that his work was finished, attempted to retire from the city. He was

*

** Cf. Jer. xxvii: 12, 17

Cf. Jer. xxxvii: 6

apprehended, however, in the attempt
 and denounced as a would-be deserter.*
 But if he himself had no design to
 join the enemy, at least his advice
 to King Zedekiah surely had a treason-
 ous ring. Let Zedekiah submit, said he,
 and seek refuge in the camp of the
 Chaldeans** in order that Jerusalem
 and its inhabitants might be spared.
 Zedekiah did not seem wholly averse
 to this advice but expressed his fear of
 being betrayed by those who had already
 gone over to the Chaldeans*. The respect
 with which Jeremiah was treated by Zede-
 kiah and the fact that he had already
 induced many to surrender to the Chal-
 deans, show that the prophet was a
 very important ^{public} personage, despite the op-
 position against his teachings and predictions.

* Jer. XXXVII:13

+ cf. Jer. XXXVIII:17, 18

cf. Jer. XXXVIII:19

and that his preaching was at least
 of some avail. Of course his conduct could
 not be treated by the patriots of Jeru-
 salem as anything but treasonous,
 treacherous, and cowardly. Such an
 indignation was justifiable*. The people
 and especially the popular prophets, could
 not conceive of the destruction of Yahweh's
 dwelling-place and he who dared to
 prophesy Jerusalem's downfall must
 surely be a coward and a traitor in
 their eyes even if he was an alleged
 messenger of Yahweh. And believing
 their own prophecies and doctrine
 to be alone genuine and inspired, the
 popular prophets had no hesitation
 in rejecting Jeremiah's teachings, e. g.,
 in Jer. XIV: 13 לא תראו חרב ורעב לא יהיה לכם כי שלום אמת

אתן לכם במקום הזה שלום

Are we to utterly condemn these prophe-

* Cf. Jer. XXXVII: 13, XXXVIII: 4

for their opinions? Kuenen (p. 381) justly remarks, "the canonical prophets assure us that Yahweh had not spoken to them otherwise, and that they prophesied 'out of their own heart'—but who does not recognize that the case is not therewith settled? The so-called 'false-prophets' asserted just the opposite and brought in their turn, the same charge against their accusers." It is not just to brand the adversaries of Jeremiah as altogether lacking in righteousness and piety for the simple reason that they did not agree with him. The story of Hananiah (Jer. xxviii) one of the popular prophets will fitly illustrate the conflict between the two kinds or schools of prophets.

In the fourth year of Zedekiah, on a certain occasion when Jeremiah was addressing the people, the prophet

Hananiah stepped forward and removed the wooden yoke which Jeremiah wore as a symbol of impending defeat and humiliation for Judah, crying out at the same time (v. 11)

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה כֹּכָה אֲשַׁבֵּר אֶת עַל נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּעוֹד שְׁנָתַיִם
יָמִים מִעַל צִוְּאָר כָּל-הָאֲדָמִים

Jeremiah retaliated with the stern reply (v. 12):

מִוֹטוֹת עֵץ שְׁבֵרָת זַעֲשִׁית תַּחְתֶּיהֶן מִוֹט בֹּרֶל

Hananiah was unquestionably solicitous of his country's safety*, as surely as he was confident that Yahweh would preserve the city of Jerusalem from the Chaldeans. He spoke and acted as he did, out of certain conviction and faith that Zion must stand and flourish ^{forever}. He had illustrious company in the advocacy of such a belief, such prophets

* Note - There is some room for doubt as to whether Jeremiah's opponent died the same year (v. 16) in consequence or as a result of the prediction or whether

as Isaiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, having frequently expressed abiding trust in Yahweh's protection in times of trouble and in his steadfastness as the guardian of his people.* Are Hananiah and his fellow prophets to be entirely differentiated from those canonical prophets who had almost identical beliefs! But while it is true to a certain extent that the opponents of Jeremiah, because they were honest patriots and further because their beliefs were confirmed by various canonical prophets, do not deserve the blame which has been heaped upon them, yet it would, of course, be carrying the argument in their defence altogether too far, were we

(continuation of note) the death occurring the same year, was merely an ^{accidental} coincidence.

* Cf. Isaiah XIV:32; XXV:16; XIX:7,8; XXX:17 sq.; XXXI:5-9; XXXIII:10-12; Nahum I:7-12; II:1-3, Hab. I:1. [See also "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel" p. 170]; Nahum I:7-12; II:1-3, Hab. I:1.

to assert that the stand taken by Jeremiah, was less commendable than that of his opponents. "Judged even by our modern laws" says Darmstadter, "Jeremiah was a traitor.... but what constitutes precisely the unheard grandeur of the man is, that this traitor to his country was a patriot of patriots." There is no doubt but that Jeremiah saw deeper and further than did the popular prophets as subsequent events proved. His judgment as to the outcome of affairs, justified by the soundest reasoning, and based moreover upon genuine prophetic intuitions impelled him, not alone to caution the people of Judah against revolt from Babylonia, but even to check the impatient spirit of the exiles in Babylon to whom various popular prophets (also in exile) foretold speedy return to the Fatherland. In fact, he predicted the punishment by death

of two of these prophets, Ahab, the son of
 Holoaiah and, Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah,
 and pronounced judgment against a third,
 Shemaiah, the Nehelamite.* He advised
 the exiles to settle down quietly in Ba-
 bylonia, build houses, plant their gar-
 dens and enjoy the fruit thereof.**
 He may have based his conviction con-
 cerning the inevitable fall of Jerusalem
 not only upon the fact that the
 little nation was wholly incapable
 of successfully resisting the Chaldeans
 but also, and perhaps in greater meas-
 ure, upon the thought that the sins
 of the people required this just re-
 tribution. Before Jeremiah's time,
 Micah had insisted upon the ap-
 proaching destruction of Jerusalem
 (III:12) לכן בגללכם
 ציין שזה תחרש ירושלים עיין תהיה זהר הבית לבמות יער
 for the very reason in part that prompted

* Cf. Jer. XXIX: 21, 22, 32

** Cf. Jer. XXIX: 28

Jeremiah to prophesy the city's downfall, viz., the moral corruption of its inhabitants. Jeremiah, Micah and Ezekiel parted company with the great prophet, Isaiah, with regard to the principle of the inviolability of Zion. To them, the continued existence of the Kingdom of Judah, depended neither upon its outward prosperity nor upon the alleged close relationship which Yahveh as Israel's God bore to his people, but solely upon the practice of righteousness and justice. It is evident that Jeremiah, while appearing to give unpatriotic and unsound advice, was in reality reaching the very heights of true patriotism. His thought soared beyond the needs of the present and provided for future exigencies and prepared the way for the future happiness of his people. To him the present destruction of

sinful Judah was indispensable in order that the future relations of God and Israel might depend upon a spiritual covenant rather than a ceremonial. Like Moses of old who desired the uprooting of the old sinful generation before the Israelites could pass into Canaan, so also Jeremiah was convinced that only by the complete rebirth of the people, could a ideal Judah be once more established. Then would Yahweh once more gather in his people, and pure morality would, henceforth, be the true and abiding medium between God and Israel.

Chapter IV.

The "False" Prophets during
and after the Exile.

The relations of the two prophetic schools were now singularly reversed. The destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Judeans, caused general despair among those who had expected Yahveh to reveal his power in the glorious salvation of his chosen ones. This expectation failing to materialize, the people always prone to lose faith and to doubt, whenever various happenings did not suit their taste, ^{were} urged deeper into despondency by their leaders and favorites, the popular prophets. As long as hope for the deliverance of Jerusalem, was possible, the prophets had confidently maintained, to the people both in Babylonia and in Judah, that all would be well and that peace would soon follow*, but now that this hope was blasted by the unfortunate turn of events

* Cf. Jerk. xiii: 17

their own despair was greater than that of
 the people. It remained for the canonical pro-
 phets of the Exile, Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah
 and their followers, to bring comfort and
 cheer to the exiled Jews, and ^{the influence of} thwart ^{who had} the former
 preachers of peace and prosperity, ^{who had} veered to
 the opposite extreme and now augmented their
 scepticism and discouragement rife among
 the people. Only too readily were the people
 inclined to overlook their own misdeeds and
 attribute their misfortunes to the guilt of
 past generations. Their fathers had "eaten
 sour grapes and the children's teeth are
 set on edge." They thought themselves vic-
 tims of rank injustice. The prophets a-
 bove mentioned, found their task of
 cheering the people, nearly as difficult
 as their predecessors had found theirs
 to warn and to threaten. The bones of
 the people were dry, their hope was

lost*. Their condition required a remedy and treatment different from that given by former prophets. Ezekiel was the compromise between the old and the new conditions. He rebuked the people for their own misdeeds, but he also held out to them the glowing and beautiful picture of the new Jerusalem and interested them with minute details of ^{future} religious and political affairs. The second Isaiah also buied himself in the new direction which prophecy had taken, cheering the exiles with prospect of speedy deliverance by the good-will of the Persian conqueror, Cyrus the Great, and incidentally giving them some very valuable ethical and religious instruction.

What were the popular prophets doing during these times? The *raison d'être* for their former activity (and to

a certain extent. I refer to that function which Ezekiel had assigned to them as playing a necessary part in God's plans respecting Israel, viz.

והנביא כי יפתה ודבר דבר אני יהיה פתית את הנביא הזוא
 could not be applied any longer.

Ezek. xiv: 9). But they became now no more than useless and purposeless survivals, clinging to ancient traditions of their order with grim desire for life at any price, slaves of routine, and no longer capable of assuming important roles as the popular representatives of the people. There is no need to quote Ezekiel's numerous strictures against the degenerating and declining popular prophets. Much he had to say against those of Jerusalem and such as had gone into exile in the first deportation*. He was sufficiently provoked by the baneful influence of the popular prophets upon the people to have denounced them almost as bitterly as did Jeremiah.

* Cf. Ezek. xiii, ix: 11, xxiii: 23 sq.

But the second Isaiah has characterized them and their condition in a manner which leaves us little doubt as to the fairness of Ezekiel's treatment of his opponents. They still gave signs and practiced soothsaying for profit, making all too free use of wine for the manufacture of divining inspiration. In their blindness they failed to read correctly the signs of the times. They could not cheer the people with the outlook of deliverance because they could not see any future relief in view themselves. (Isaiah LVI: 10-12)

צפיו עורים כלם לא ידעו כלם כלבים אלמים לא יוכלו לנבח חזים
שנבים אהבי לזום ----- לא ידעו הבין כלם לדרכם פנו איש לבצעו
מקצתו ואתיו אקחה יין ונסבאה שבר זהיה כזה יום מחר גדול יתר מאד:

The post-exilic writers have but little to say concerning them, and that little, not of a very complimentary character. Zechariah seems to hint at a great change in the conception and condition of prophecy after

the exile. He refers reverently to the הַבּוֹיָאִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים * who in former times called the people to task for their sins and misdeeds, and appears thereby to show the contrast between them and the prophets of his own day.

Mention is made in Nehemiah VI:7 of certain prophets who were alleged to be Nehemiah's coadjutors. Sanballat, the Samaritan and his associates, Geshem and Tobiah, piqued by Nehemiah's refusal to permit the Samaritans to assist in rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple, employed several methods to hinder the great reformer's work, and to annoy him generally. While Nehemiah was engaged in the construction of the city walls, one of the several letters which these conspirators sent to him, stated that there was a report

*

Cf. Zech. I:4; VII:7, 12

current among the heathens to the effect that he intended, to rebel against the Persian king (whose vassals the Jews were), and further that he (Nehemiah) had "appointed prophets to proclaim him" in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah denied these accusations but this fact does not invalidate the inference that a large number of popular prophets supported the Governor either from conviction or for self interest, with the greater presumption in favor of the latter, since it is not probable that Sanballat would have invented the story without some foundation in actual fact; that is, if he had not adjudged ^{the prophets} as capable of being bribed to do anything. The fact that the prophets were not above bribery, is illustrated by the following story told in Neh. VI: 10-14. Sanballat and

Tobiah, unable to frighten Nehemiah by their threatening letter (see) resorted to another stratagem to trap him, or at least, in some manner to undermine his influence upon the people, and to this end, they enlisted the services of a certain prophet, named Shemaiah the son of Delaiah. The latter attempted to lure Nehemiah into the Temple with the alleged excuse that nowhere else was there safety from those who desired on that occasion to slay him. Nehemiah saw in this affair, a snare set by Sanballat and Tobiah to put him into a compromising situation so as to be able afterward to reproach him for it. He denounced Shemaiah as well the "prophets", Noadiah and the rest of the "prophets" who would so willingly have given him reason to fear (מיראים אודי) and especially branded Shemaiah's reports as false.

prophecy. These prophets of whom Nehemiah speaks so slightly, may have had the best of intentions in opposing him, though their actions seem to indicate vindictiveness not in keeping with their sacred calling. Yet they may honestly have believed in principles the reverse of those which Nehemiah held. It is hardly to be expected that the stern measures of reform adopted by Nehemiah in order to preserve Israel's purity and exclusiveness, would be acceded to altogether without demur or protest of any sort. ^{But} However biased Nehemiah may have been against his opponents, we may still infer ^{generally speaking} that the prophetic order had fallen very low in this period of Jewish History. The fact that it lent itself so readily to the concoction and execution of small petty stratagems in order to attain its ends or that it could be employed by hostile outsiders to encompass

the ruin practically of their own ^{lands} men and countrymen, is sufficient to effect an unfavorable verdict against them.

The writer of the book of Malachi (Malachi III: 1, 23, 24) looks forward to the coming of an ideal messenger of God, who in his conception, will be no other than the prophet, Elijah. If preaching repentance could be done properly only by an Elijah, then indeed must this particular prophetic function have been either wholly forgotten or at least much neglected in the writer's day.

Zechariah XIII: 2-6 indicates the bad repute into which the prophetic order had fallen. It had outlived its usefulness. There was no honor or distinction any longer in being a prophet because the unworthy representatives of the calling had brought

disgrace and shame to the venerable institution of prophecy. Like Amos who disavowed all connection with the בני זבואים because of the stigma which he thought consequent upon such a connection and claimed to be only an herdsmen and a gatherer of sycamore; so likewise, in the Messianic age of which Zechariah xiii speaks, men would be ashamed to be identified with the order of prophets. A man who prophesied, would be disowned by his own parents; he would be ashamed of his own prophetic visions, shun the prophetic mantle and declare himself to be no prophet but a מקובל but honest husbandman: איש עבד אדמה אנכי

(v. 5) איש עבד אדמה אנכי

The portion (ix-xiv) of the book of Zechariah in which the above passage is found, is supposed to date a few centuries after the rebuilding

of the Temple and is therefore extremely important as evidence to the fact that the prophetic order was not yet by any means extinct though tottering and doomed soon to pass away.

Later, however, in the Maccabean age, the writer of the Book of Maccabees knows of prophecy only as a past and gone phenomenon ("and there was great tribulation in Israel, such as was not since the time that no prophet appeared unto them - I Macc. ix: 27). A Maccabean psalm (LXXIV: 9) laments the fact prophets have disappeared from Israel. ----- אֵין צִדִּיק בְּיָמֵינוּ

Chapter v.

Concerning the "False" Prophets,

In general.

The first conclusion to be established is that the so-called "false prophets" were not false to the extent that they claimed to be prophets when in fact they themselves and their contemporaries knew that they were not prophets. Whenever they are referred to in the Canon, even by their opponents, it is under the plain title of נביאים, members of the prophetic order and individuals devoted to the service of Yahweh (as they may have seen fit to serve Him), and whether with limited vision and misguided outlook but honestly, or on the other hand, hypocritically and with vicious intentions. Whatever may have been said against the popular prophets (or נביאים) in the Canonical writings,

at least the name "false prophets" was never deliberately applied to them. (Of course they were referred to often in such expressions as follows:

יהוה רוח שקר בפיהם (Jer. xii:23)

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלֵי שֹׁקֵר הַנְּבִיאִים בְּשֵׁמִי לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּים
וְלֹא צִוִּיתִים וְלֹא דִבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם חֲזֹן שֹׁקֵר וְקֶסֶם וְאֵלִיל וְתֵר מִיַּת לֵב
הִמָּה מִתְנַבְּאִים לָכֵם:

כִּי שֹׁקֵר הֵם נְבִיאִים (בְּשֵׁמִי) (Jer. xxviii:16, Zech. xiii:3, Jer. xxi:21)

הַנְּבִיאִים נִבְּאוּ בְּשֹׁקֵר (Jer. v:31) (cf. also Jer. vi:10, Jer. xxi:9)

הַנְּבִיאִים נְבִיאֵי הַשֹּׁקֵר וְנְבִיאֵי תִרְמִית

וְהֵם נְבִיאִים בְּשֵׁמִי לִשְׁקֵר

הַבִּטְחָה אֶת־הָעַם הַזֶּה עַל־שֹׁקֵר

וְעֹבְיָה וְעַד־כִּהֵּן כָּל־עֹשֵׂה שֹׁקֵר

וְנְבִיאֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם..... נֹאדָף זֶה־לֵךְ בְּשֹׁקֵר

חֲזֹן שׁוֹא וְקֶסֶם כִּזְב (Jer. xxi:6) דְּבֹרָכָם שׁוֹא וְחֲזִיתָם כִּזְב (cf. also Jer. xxii:28)

נְבִיאֵי חֲזֹן לֵךְ שׁוֹא..... וְיִחַזֵּן לָךְ מִשְׁאֹת שׁוֹא (Lam. II:14)

The names "false prophet" or "pseudeprophet" signifying as they do the belief in an absolute contrast between the so-called true prophet and their opponents, were applied

long after prophets and prophecy had disappeared from Israel. The word נביא is translated several times in the Greek version by the word ψευδοπροφήτης.* The Targum יונתן - also translates נביאים in many places** by the words זבאי שקרא or זבאי דשקרא. Even in Hosea 14:7 where the prophet does not in the least speak disapprovingly of his contemporaries (אוייל קוביא מטבצ איש הדרח על רב עונן) the Targumist writes זבאי שקרא for הנביאים of the Hebrew text. It is ^{more than} likely that these later writers placed all the opponents of the so-called "true" prophets, worthy or unworthy upon the same general level. Hence their failure to make any distinctions among the "false" prophets.

* cf. Jer. vi: 13; xxvi: 7, 8, 11, 16; xxvii: 9; xxviii: 11; xxix: 1, 8; Zeck xiii: 2.
 ** cf. I K xxii; Hos. iv: 5; Jer. ii: 8; iv: 9; Jer. vi: 12, 13; Ezek xiv: 9.
 Matthew "De Pseudopphetismo Hebraeorum" p. 100.

themselves. Their translations are of course
 arbitrary and, in addition, any of them
 no more a judgment of propriety, or
 value, than the Bible itself would not imply
 the general epithet "false prophets," and
 their translators do, as applying
 to all who come into a country
 rather the proper party, as the
 friends of the common people or
 the ordinary members of the people
 guild, for it would not change with
 these prophets with the same degree
 of uniformity by "patronizing" that
 the common people after a time
 they appear to be under a mistake as to
 what is their nationality, and are not
 divided into distinct nations, and are
 always, perhaps, with the foreign
 influence, German, French, Italian, Spanish,
 and many different kinds
 of influence, and the "false" prophets
 are not the same as the "true" prophets
 but also the same.

one canonical prophet and another, though
 the "false" prophets cannot be said to
 be "false" because their views about
 religion differed from those of the
 canonical prophets. The line of de-
 markation between the so-called "false pro-
 phets" and the true prophets are not by
 any means definite and fixed. Their
 difference was not one of kind, but
 rather of degree. Some prophets were
 imbued with loftier motives and purer
 religious principles than others, the
 difference depending firstly upon the
 peculiarity of nature which gives one
 man an advantage over another in
 point of fitness for comprehending
 the grander elements of religion,
 secondly upon the special exigencies
 of the times which are inclined to pro-
 duce men of superior as well as of
 inferior worth, both of whom re-
 ciprocally react upon and influence

the times which beget them. The stern
 justice and the severe measures of an
 Elisha are distinguished from the calm
 and higher morality of an Amos, an
 Hosea, the varying views of Isaiah
 and Micah regarding the fortunes of
 Jerusalem, the difference of opinion
 of Jeremiah ^{and Habakkuk} as to the future of the
 kingdom of Judah, and lastly, the
 conflict between the traditional part
 of prophets and the canonical prophets
 (as fully explained in foregoing chapters)
 prove to what extent, the development
 of prophecy depended upon conditions
 of human nature, of time and locality
 or on special circumstances. Among
 the so called "false" prophets, there were
 many who appreciated the sanctity
 of their office, sincerely and devoutly
 performing what they believed to
 be their sacred duty. And if they
 were inspired by Jahveh with a

"lying spirit" - as was said to be the case with Jidiah ben Chenaanah and his four hundred companions (1 K. xxii: 22-29) and with those of the character described by Ezekiel when he says:

הַנְּבִיאִים כִּי-יָפְתוּ וְדָבַר דְּבַר אֲנִי יְהוָה פְּתִיחַ אֶת הַנְּבִיאִים הַהֵם (Ezek. xiv: 9)

their conduct was receiving divine sanction or at least they were commended for their purity of intention and honesty of purpose. Hananiah and his compatriots, for instance, were not members of the prophetic school because they believed they could lie and cheat and rob the people all the easier. The risks they were taking and the fiery courage, they were showing in resisting the powerful Chaldeans, were not such as would be taken or displayed by mere charlatans and impostors. Nor would the prophets Ahab and Jidiah whom Nebuchadnezzar put to death in Babylon for exciting the people with

false hopes and stirring them into rebellion, (Jer. xxix:22) have acted with such recklessness if they did not sincerely believe that their course was right. Were not such prophets under the firm impression that they spoke in Yahveh's name and that Yahveh had commissioned them to speak and act as they did?*

There were other guild-prophets who no doubt well deserved the stinging rebukes of the great prophets. They were prophets by name, but acted with but slight knowledge or regard for the responsibilities of their calling. They were accused of every conceivable crime some which I have mentioned on page 50.

The two predominating disorders among the guild-prophets were greed and drunkenness. The former arose from

the traditional practice of soothsaying. The people had been educated into believing that the faculty of divining secret things or of predicting future events, was a part of the prophetic calling and indissolubly associated with it. Soothsaying had always been a characteristic of the prophetic guild since its very origin and represented in the case of many so-called "prophets" their greatest claim for wearing the prophet's mantle. The conception as to the value and importance of soothsaying, was one of the main points of difference distinguishing the old school of prophets from the new school. The conservative school held to soothsaying for its own sake, as the chief occupation of a prophet, while they made their regular prophetic mission of introducing reforms, a secondary consideration. The new school employed the art of prediction as only a means to a certain

important end and that was to bring home more strikingly some ethical truths or religious principles. Their greatest ambition was to establish ethical monotheism to re-form the government with these eternal principles of right and justice, and to elevate society in general. Their gift of prophecy was a secondary matter. The fulfillment of predictions could be no test to distinguish "true" prophets from "false" prophets, because in some cases the failure of prophecies to be substantiated by the events of subsequent history would reverse the titles of "true" and "false". Although various statements in the Bible itself suggest the standard which a number of modern critics have advocated as differentiating "true" prophets from "false". For instance, ^{when} Deut. XVIII: 21-22 says:-

* cf. Kuenen "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel" p. 385-53

וְכִי תֹאמַר בִּלְבָבְךָ אֵיכָה נִדְעֶה אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־דִבְּרוּ יְהוָה: אֲשֶׁר
 יִדְבֹר הַנְּבִיא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה הַדָּבָר וְלֹא־יָבֹא הוּא הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר
 לֹא־דִבְּרוּ יְהוָה בְּדִזְיוֹן וְבִרוּ הַנְּבִיא לֹא תִגְדַּר מִמֶּנּוּ

or when Jeremiah (ch. xxviii: 8. 9) lays down
 the rule that the test of true prophecy
 is generally the prediction of misfortune
 and national calamities, while he who
 took the responsibility to prophesy peace
 could not be said to have been sent by
 Yahveh before the result justified the
 prediction. It is still by no means a
 reliable criterion. Often predictions
 were made which had indefinite
 time limits e.g. the coming of Judge-
 ment day or of the Messianic age,
 or some could not be fulfilled until
 long after the death of the prophet
 for instance Jeremiah's prediction of
 the duration of the Babylonian Exile
 (Jer. xxix: 10). Of what value then would
 such a rule be to the prophet's con-
 temporaries who desired to know

at once the genuineness of a prophet. The
 inadequateness of this standard is most
 decisively shown by the fact that many
 prophecies of so-called true prophets were
 not realized at all, or the very contrary
 happened. Only a few examples need be
 cited. Jeremiah predicted that Jehoiakim
 would have an ignominious burial
 (Jer. xxii 19, xxxvi 30) and that he would not be
 succeeded by a son upon the throne
 while II K. xxiv 6, plainly states that
 the very opposite of what was predicted
 actually took place. Jeremiah also
 foretold that Zedekiah would die
 a peaceful death (cf Jer. xxxiv 4sq) but
 according to II K. xxv 15 sq, his closing
 days are full of misery and un-
 happiness. Amos predicts that
 Jeroboam II, would die by the sword
 (Am. viii 11) while II K. xiv 29 indicates
 that the king died a peaceful death
 and was buried in peace. All the

canonical prophets made miscalculations at times in their predictions, so that it would be extremely unsafe to make the fulfillment of prophecies, a positive test of a prophet's worth. Fortunately true prophecy did not have to depend ^{intirely} upon prediction. A true prophet's ideal was not to make an exact representation of the future nor to seek cheap popularity by a display of his divining powers in the direction most pleasing to the people and rulers, but forecasting was to him a vehicle to convey some moral teaching or ^{a means to} effect some particular reform. He would predict ^{the future} for the sake of bettering the present. In other words, he cared not how his words might offend princes, priests and people, but truth above all would he speak, whether of future events or of present conditions. If conditions warranted it, he would even revise his prediction.

Jeremiah says definitely that Yahweh might change his mind about sending calamities to a people if that people repented and turned from Evil. Consequently the prophecies in such a case would have to be revised. (Jer. XVIII: 7-10) Now since prediction and soothsaying in themselves were regarded by the canonical prophets only as means for improving the people it is natural that they should bitterly reproach those who prostituted their calling to base purposes, making soothsaying their chief occupation and trying to earn all they could by flattering the people with complimentary prophecies which would only have the effect to lull moral susceptibility to sleep and blind the eyes of the people to the magnitude of their misdeeds. Such conduct was exceedingly repugnant to the purer minded canonical prophets. The whole order of guild-

prophets made a practice of uttering oracles for payment. It was the traditional mode by which the בני נביאים earned their livelihood. Of course, flagrant abuse and excesses, made the practice an exceedingly dangerous one as I have just pointed out. Greedy and unscrupulous prophets would not hesitate to determine the quality of their predictions by the size of fee tendered*. They deceived the people with flattering words מקלות and חלקות (Is. xxx:10) מקסם הלק (Ezek. xii:24). It is natural to suppose that the canonical prophets believing it their duty to tell the people their faults and to prophesy only or principally of coming misfortunes, would condemn the opposite tendency in their opponents and upbraid those prophets without discriminating between worthy,

* J. Micah III:5

i. e. honest and conscientious antagonists,
 or unworthy and unscrupulous men.

But if inordinate greed was so common among the בני זבאים, drunkenness was a vice of no less magnitude, judging from the notice it received from the Canonical prophets. The first זבאי appeared in Israel in the time of Judges as bands of ecstatic wanderers. Their methods and practices in the service of Yahveh, corresponded with those employed by their Canaanitish neighbors in the worship of Baal. They were at first religious enthusiasts, resembling flagellants or dervishes to the extent that they expressed their religious emotions by throwing themselves into a condition of wild ecstasy (cf. IS xix: 20-24) They sought the furor of inspiration by the employment of artificial means, such as music and strong drink (cf. Is. xxviii: 7; Micah II: 11)*

True inspiration as possessed by the great prophets was a rare faculty among the large prophetic class. The great prophets were fired with the spirit of God (יהוה סלם כה את-רוח יהוה) Micah III: 8; cf. also Jer. XLV: 1, 76; Ezek. XXXIII: 1, Is. XLII.

As earnest and deeply religious men "of the Spirit" (איש הרוח Hos. IX: 2), they felt absolutely called upon to deliver Yahveh's messages to the people (cf. Amos III: 8) and in their zeal to proclaim "the word of Yahveh", their spiritual utterances required no artificial excitations for deliverance but were generally spontaneous. How different was that natural inspiration, from the artificial inspiration of the general mass of prophets. Ecstatic excitement passing into frenzy marked

* (From preceding page)

The prophet Elisha even, made use of music to induce prophetic inspiration cf. II K. III: 15

** cf. Robertson Smith "Prophets of Israel" p. 86, 391

the usual course of artificial inspiration. The ordinary prophets sought the "raving" ecstasy principally (in times of Canonical prophets) through the free use of strong drinks. Naturally the great prophets who no longer required passing into "raving" ecstasy for the utterance of their oracles and required nothing save their own moral conviction and earnestness to make them speak in Yahveh's name, were highly indignant at the excesses committed by their opponents, whom they could not fail to notice, - were running in hold and worn grooves of tradition.

In comparing the prophets of the two schools, it can reasonably be inferred that while the great prophet generally speaking, represented prophecy in its higher forms, the ordinary guild prophets were but belated representatives of an older and lower

stage of prophecy. To all the prophets, indeed, Yahveh was the Holy One of Israel but while the great prophets place most emphasis upon the first part of this designation and made Yahveh's friendly relations to Israel, depend upon the holiness and righteousness of the people their opponents held fast to the earlier conception about Yahveh, namely, as the inseparable One of Israel. In the first case, the knowledge of the moral condition of the people, called forth gloomy forebodings and anticipation of retributive calamities. In the latter case, the peculiar relation which Yahveh was thought to bear to Israel necessarily encouraged the prophets to exclaim, "Is not Yahveh in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us." While we may advance this explanation of the respective stands of the two schools of prophets, it does

not preclude the possibility of there
having been earnest and sincere men
in the ranks of the popular school.
It moreover easily accounts for the
great superiority of the Canonical
prophets over their opponents by meas-
uring the quality of religious earnest-
ness and conviction and the depth of
spiritual and moral insight, the
best criterion with which to judge
all prophets, and determine their
relative merits.