The psychography of Jeremiah, the prophet

Denison, Martha Lucile
Boston University

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/6096

Boston University
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

THESIS

The Psychography
A PSYCHOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE PROPHET (JEREMIAH)

Submitted by

Martha Lucile Denison

(A.B., Defiance College, 1924)

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

1927
OUTLINE

Thesis: A Psychographical Study of the Prophet Jeremiah

I. Introduction:
   2

II. A Psychographical Study:
   6
   A. Part One: Background
      6
         1. Historical Situation
            6
            a. Chaotic State of Judah
            b. Rule of Hezekiah
               7
                  1. Attempted revolt from Assyria.
                  2. Work of the prophet Isaiah.
            c. Rule of Manasseh
               8
                  1. His reign.
                  2. Foreign relations.
            d. Rule of Josiah
               9
                  1. Discovery of the Law.
                  2. The reforms
                  3. Jeremiah's dissatisfaction
            e. The rise of Egyptian power
               11
            f. Chaldean invasion during reign of Jehoiachim
               13
            g. The work of Jeremiah
               15
                  1. Urged surrender to save the city.
                  2. Imprisoned as a traitor
            h. The Babylonian captivity
               16
                  1. Loss of nationalism
                  2. Death of Jeremiah.

pages
1-iv
1-99
2. Religious Influences

a. Prophetic: the "golden age"

1. Amos:
   (a) Background  
   (b) Teachings:
      (1) Concept of God.
      (2) A social reformer.

2. Hosea:
   (a) Background.
   (b) Teachings:
      (1) A God of love.
      (2) Preachment against rebellion.

3. Isaiah:
   (a) Background.
   (b) Teachings.

4. Micah:
   (a) Background
   (b) Teachings.

5. Jeremiah:
   (a) As the culmination.
   (b) His teachings.

b. Law of Deuteronomy:

3. Facts of Jeremiah's life:

   a. Early life:
      (1) Birth.
      (2) Parentage
      (3) Environment.

   b. His call:

   c. His visions:

   d. His ministry:
B. Part Two - Psychographical Study

1. Definition of terms:

2. The discovery of God:
   a. God as a near presence:
   b. Monetheistic:
   c. God as a spiritual being:
   d. A leaning toward immanence:
   e. Communion becomes spiritual
   f. God is righteous:
   g. Jeremiah's life as God-centered

3. The discovery of the soul:
   a. Historical unit of religion - nation
   b. Jeremiah's unit of religion - the individual

   (1) Supreme value of life.
   (2) His belief a gradual development.

   c. Jeremiah's discovery of the relationship between God and the individual

   (1) An attainment of righteousness of heart.
   (2) An individual religion.

   d. A new appreciation of intimate relationships
   e. Personal responsibility and guilt
   f. Freedom of the will

4. The discovery of redemption
   a. The unit of salvation for Jeremiah
b. Necessity for salvation 81
   (1) The presence of sin.
   (2) The dictum of Augustine.

c. The spirituality and holiness of Yahweh 84

d. A message of doom 85
   (1) God's wrath upon sin.
   (2) God's anguish over sin.

e. The future glory of the nation 88

f. The new covenant 89

III. Conclusion: 95

Comprehensive Summary by Chapters 98

Bibliography: 100
INTRODUCTION
"The mountains catch the first rays of the morning sun. Then afterwards, the plains and valleys are filled with the light of the sun. So there are mountain men. The sunrise of God falls upon them first. We call such men prophets."

Into an empty shimmering desert and a stony land, filled with tragedies, many years ago such a man came, bringing a mountain top message of glorious beauty about God's relation to men. This man was Jeremiah, "the first prophet to discover the human soul and its relation to a personal God". His prophecy of the Christian idea of religion cannot be equaled in the Old Testament; and it is his covenant which Jesus accepted for himself and for all men. Because of Jeremiah's great contributions of religious ideas and of a personal life in perfect harmony with his teachings, we may place him among the prophets, second only to Jesus.

In order, therefore, that we may have the joy and inspiration of this magnificent character, that we may prevent blundering and miscalculation about him, and further our own successful conduct through his contagion, we shall attempt here to make the true Jeremiah live. We shall seek to solve the problems of his character, eliciting from the perpetual flux of circumstances and actions the relevant, the permanent, and hence, the truly characteristic.
Thus we may portray the enduring sum total of personality out of the passing moments.

To understand his mind, to look deeply into his soul, to present, through psychological analyses and philosophical syntheses, a character clearly, artistically, and truly, that we may know better a great human soul, and have a new appreciation of his significance for the development of religion, is our aim.

For the best handling of the subject we shall divide the thesis into two parts: part one, to contain three chapters, giving respectively the historical and religious setting and the facts of his life; part two, to contain the psychographical interpretation, divided into four chapters, presenting the characterization of his life through the great ideas that possessed him concerning 1) the discovery of God, 2) the discovery of the soul, 3) the discovery of redemption, 4) Jeremiah's contribution to the religion of Jesus.
PART ONE

BACKGROUND
CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORICAL SITUATION
THE HISTORICAL SITUATION

To disentangle Jeremiah from the politics, sociology, economics, from the national and international situations of his day is to strip him of his message — yes, of his selfhood. So enmeshed in the life of his times is he, that to know the man necessitates a knowledge of the historic movements in the midst of which he dwelt.

In order, therefore, to make our analyses of purpose, method, and attitude we shall introduce a resume of the immediate historic background and of the events parallel to his life. From the time of Ahaz' reign, 735 B.C. to the time of Jeremiah's death, near 580 B.C. is the time to be covered.

Judah was in a chaotic state. She had been seeking to retain a multiplicity of loyalties, vacillating, with the hope of self-protection, between appeals to Assyria and conjurations with Egypt. Though many lessons should have taught her the uncertainty of reliance on other nations and their destructive power, Judah had not learned the moral. Thus it was that the youthful Ahaz (736-720) inherited a troubled throne, and left it after fifteen years only more discordant. Taking advantage of Judah's turmoil during this period, Israel and Syria in a wave of energy decided to invade the land, force an alliance and depose king Ahaz. The king, not favoring his overthrow, but fearing it, threw himself with effusive rapidity
in gratuitous and complete submission upon Tiglath-Pileser
of Assyria. Thus Judah became the vassal of remote Assyria.

It is upon the throne of this Judah, oppressed
by exacting tribute, rebellious and incensed by conflicts
without and within, that the youthful and creditable Hezekiah
must reign. Urged by the unrest of his people it seemed politic
for him to make a revolt from Assyria. This he did with the
result that for a time he achieved a short-lived advantage over
the Philistines. But trouble continued to brew. The deep
blue sea looked better than the devil, hence Judah invited an
alliance with Egypt in alignment with several petty states
who sought freedom from foreign dominion. Unitedly they were
to attack Assyria; but Sennacherib, king of Assyria, thirsty for
conquest, in 701 B.C., made a campaign against the fortified
cities of Judah. Cities were burned, territory subtracted,
lands laid desolate, heavy fines and human treasure exacted.

During the next years, Egypt continued to lose
strength, and Assyria to make demands upon Judah. Finally,
Hezekiah, assimilating the counsel of the prophet and states-
man Isaiah, sought to inaugurate meritorious reforms for his
people. He tried also to maintain the terms of alliance with
Assyria. However, by 690 B.C. the Assyrians became so obvious-
ly unjust in their demands for the complete surrender of Jer-
usalem that the people were filled with fear for their own
safety and for that of their city. Then Isaiah, with his
perfect confidence that Jehovah was manipulating the affairs of the world for good, advised Judah to pay no attention to the threats of assault. He realized that Sennacherib's position was indefensible and therefore, with his concept of the righteousness of God, was certain that Jehovah would turn back the enemy. The record tells us that Assyria was compelled to make a hasty retreat—why, we are not sure; either because of defeat or pestilence. Thus, Jerusalem remained intact for another century of significant social and religious progress.

Manasseh (690-639), son of Hezekiah, is the next ruler. As a youth we see him on the throne, the victim of reform opposition, reactionary forces, and the wiles of evil women. The picture of him presents one who was corrupt and vigorous in the promotion of impiety; and he reflects the picture of his people. The masses in his kingdom clung to magic, sorcery, and foreign cults of worship. Assyrian styles came into fashion, low foreign ideals permeated the atmosphere, yet the country was at peace and in seeming prosperity, which, according to the belief of the people, meant that the favor of God was theirs. Therefore, these ill influences threatened to develop a reaction which would obliterate all the work that the great prophets of the Assyrian period had accomplished.

The story of foreign relations during this reign is short. Manasseh paid tribute to Assyria, hence
admitting subservience, and purchasing from foreign intervention. Judah had learned the lesson of keeping her promises to strong powers. This was Assyria's brilliant hour, in which she held sway over southwest Asia and Egypt, and Judah tactfully acquiesced to orders. This peaceful policy as well as the policy of heathen worship was followed for several years. Manasseh reigned and died, then Ammon, his son, reigned and died, while this policy continued.

A different set of forces seemed to have penetrated the life of Josiah, who, as a boy of eight years, came to the throne in 639 B.C. In contrast to his iniquitous predecessors, he became known as the reform king, this, because of the events subsequent to the discovery of the Book of the Law in 621 B.C., the eighteenth year of his reign. The cardinal event of his time and one significant for future generations was this discovery by the priest Hilkiah in the Temple. When the Book was brought before the king, and read to him by the scribe, Shaphan, so instantaneous was the response of this sensitive youth, that with quickened steps and infinite zeal, he set about to lead in the establishment of the constructive ordinances and commands therein contained, and in the destruction of all idolatrous influences, symbols, and altars. The main purpose of the Book designed to cause the annihilation of religious evils by the concentration of public worship under adequate supervision at the Jerusalem for the time was accom-
plished. The worship of Assyrian gods was banished, the Canaanitish objects of religion were largely destroyed, in keeping with the demands that for Israel there must be but one God. The Temple grew in power and prestige. Practice of the personal qualities of kindliness and obedience were urged as being of utilitarian value for the maintenance of prosperity and happiness. Though such an interpretation and motivation is not of the highest order, for the inner life of Judah this was a step forward and one helpful in producing great religious leaders and in partially preparing the nation for some of the travail to be borne in upon her.

In a half century, Jerusalem and the Temple lay ruined, the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, but for this short time there was invigorating calm between the storms, flashes of moral strength and religious devotion between epochs of degeneracy. Judah under Josiah's faithful reign, to some extent tried to set her house in order, while outside in the world there was much tumult. For the attempt and partial success of the reformation credit goes to Josiah as the guide. His action in adopting the reforms was a new departure and the Book of the Law from which the rules were extracted, became a "constitution" for the guidance of the people. For the practical mind, it laid down the rules and codes to be followed in black and white. But for Jeremiah, coming to manhood at this time, it was not satisfactory. He saw the
dangers of formalism involved; he realized that the evils of man were not really eliminated, and he soared far above in his interpretation of the way of life.

After this period there was a marked shift in world affairs. The brilliant summer of Assyrian power was turned to her winter of decline. The last great king was gone. The storm that would overcome Nineveh was about to break. The Scythians, a nomad race from the north, overran the Empire. From Media southward they ravaged the country, far and wide, until they came to Egypt, where they accepted heavy tribute to refrain from invasion. This time, Judah was not only untouched, but gained the advantage of freedom from weakened Assyria. Babylon, an ever unruly dependency, seized this opportunity of Assyria's weakness. Nabopolassar, the Chaldean, nominally viceroy, virtually king of Babylon, elevated himself to the Assyrian throne, and made an alliance with the Medes. Simultaneously, they attacked Assyria, with the result that in 606 B.C. in such entirety was Nineveh destroyed, that for centuries its location was forgotten; and Assyria disappeared from among the northern powers.

Egypt in 608 B.C. finding strength and ambition in Pharaoh Nechoh, and eager to have a share in the crumbling Assyrian Empire started an army north. Having taken Gaza, they were crossing from Sharon to Esdraelon when suddenly they were opposed by king Josiah with his Jewish forces.
Though Necoh advised that they turn from such a desperate adventure, Josiah persisted, with the consequence of his immediate death, and the army's defeat at the battle of Megiddo. Though we cannot dogmatically account for Josiah's act, the prompting force, no doubt, was the belief that God would reward them for their honest reform, and give them victory over heathens. This battle, and Josiah's death brought the kingdom into international vicissitudes and pathetic national disillusionment and reaction. It is in the midst of the following events, that Jeremiah, in the prime of his life, wields a political ministry, influential as Isaiah's of the past century.

Egypt and Babylon, for the next years, struggled together for the balance of power, like Egypt and Assyria had before them. Judah was forced to pay tribute to whichever master was in power. Beside this hardship and the disappointment of being placed again in the throes of strong external powers, they suffered internal discord, religious confusion, and the fluctuating policies of weak and wicked kings.

The first king, placed by popular choice on the throne succeeding Josiah, was Jehoahaz. His reign was short, for almost immediately upon his enthronement Pharaoh summoned him, had him carried away into Egypt, and thrown into chains. Necoh placed Jehoiakim, Jehoahaz' older brother on the throne; and laid upon Judah a tribute which was co-
lected by direct tax. Impoverished as the people were, the foolish king had a mania for building. He forced artisans to work without wages, and exploited his position for gain. He seemed interested only in bloodshed and robbery and violence.

Only about four years did Necho’s sway and Egyptian predominance last. Battle with the Chaldeans, who claimed by right of conquest, overlord of both Syria and Egypt, was imminent. Nebuchadrezzar, a prince of ability, led the Chaldeans and they met the Egyptians at Carchemish, on the Euphrates River, in 605 B.C. A crushing defeat was inflicted in this battle, marking a turning point in history. Egypt had failed. Again, as Jeremiah predicted, the north held the fate of Judah and her neighbors.

About 602 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar, now king of Babylon, held in submission the Syrian states, as far as the Egyptian borders. Jehoiakim paid tribute then to Babylon for three years. Nebuchadrezzar sent troops of Chaldeans, Arams, Moabs, and Ammons into Judah to besiege Jerusalem. In 597 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar himself came up against Jerusalem, and the monarch, Jehoiachim, seeing the uselessness of resistance, gave himself and his family into the hands of the Babylonians. Though the city was spared, the king was held until 561 B.C. The leaders were borne into captivity that they might not revolt, and treasures from the palace and Temple were taken.
About ten thousand of the ablest citizens were carried into a new community, where, after the fall of Jerusalem, they began the life of Judaism that has persisted to the present.

For the next forty years, Nebuchadrezzar ruled Babylonia, Syria, and Palestine with a firm hand, and we see the zenith of Babylon's glory and prestige, and the utter desolation of Jerusalem. Babylon became the most magnificent city in the world.

These difficult crises for Judah: Josiah's death, Egyptian success, then the Chaldean invasion in Jehoiachim's reign, did much to undermine the reform work. Through these tragic convulsions of Judah's history, "Jeremiah remains the one constant, rational, and far-seeing power in the national life". In the tottering world, shattered himself with despair and distraction, with uniformity of message, with questioning yet stubborn persistence he uttered forth the Word, threatening destruction and death while the people scoffed. From 597 to 586 B.C., the Jewish kingdom rapidly declined, and the nation's story is ended.

In 597 B.C., Nebuchadrezzar deported king Jehoiachim and placed on the throne a son of Josiah, whom he called Zedekiah (righteousness or truth of Jehovah), probably to bind the Jew by the name of his God, to his oath of allegiance. The leaders in court were gone but the government framework and the dregs of the people remained. They were 1. Smith, Jeremiah, p.177
"drunk with sight of power", and delighted with their escape hence they scrambled for offices, usurped property, and tried their hands at politics. Zedekiah was a weak king, master neither of himself nor others, distracted by the presence of Jeremiah on one hand and that of the pseudo-powerful and false prophets on the other.

"It is ironic that Nebuchadrezzar planning to render Judah powerless to rebel again by withdrawing her wisest most skillful and soldierly, should have left her her fanatics."  

Egypt was still strongly interested in provinces. A war party in Judah overconfident of their strength, was restless to revolt. Neighbors of Judah were tired of oppression and division. Hence plans were mitigated for a cooperative effort at independence. Jeremiah urged his warnings and predicted failure with dramatic gestures - but in vain. They were buoyed by Egypt's intrigues, and the false prophets' encouragement into framing vain plots. Even the exiled were in similar illusion, hoping for an early return. Thus, in 589-8 B.C., after the accession of Pharaoh-Hophia Zedekiah yielded to the party of revolt. Nebuchadrezzar then quickly sent an army to Jerusalem. In fear, the people and the king entered into solemn covenant with God to free their slaves of seven years' service. About this time, the Egyptian army appeared with the apparent intention of...  

l. Smith, Jeremiah, p.233
aiding Palestine, and the Chaldeans temporarily withdrew to meet them. The Jews thought they were delivered, and hastily violated their oath of freedom to slaves. But Pharaoh again failed them and the Chaldeans soon began the formal siege of the city which lasted for a year and a half. The Jerusalemites, weakened by famine and pestilence, must have held forth with much courage, in order to have withstood the attack for so long a period.

Jeremiah, accused of being traitorous, was thrown into an old cistern, where he remained until Zedekiah sought his advice. Jeremiah consistently urged surrender to prevent the final sack of the city. Though many Jews wanted to act on Jeremiah's advice Zedekiah was too weak and refused. Then the end came. A breach was made in the North wall; Zedekiah fled by a southern gate and was overtaken on the plains of Jericho, and brought to Nebuchadrezzar at Riblah on the Orontes. Here cruel death was meted out, and troops went to Jerusalem to burn the Temple, the palaces, and homes, leaving only a heap of ruins and a lesson in consequences of evil. The wretched surviving remnant saving the poorest classes, was carried into Babylon.

The district was made a part of the Babylonian province, and Gidaldiah, a Judaite of the Babylonian party, was appointed governor. He attempted to organize
his administration and rule with justice, but Ishmael, a captain of a guerilla band, inspired by jealousy, assassinated him. Terrorizing the people, Ishmael started to Ammon carrying unwilling followers, but any hopes he had were frustrated by a stronger band who rescued the captives. Finding themselves at liberty, the disconsolate Judaites looked for refuge in Egypt. With the final pronouncement of disaster for this group who sought peace in Egypt, Jeremiah was lost from view, probably murdered. The Jews were absorbed in the population and lost all hold on prophetic religion, as a nation.

Had the Babylonian exiles held no firmer to Yahweh, Israel's history would have ended in 586 B.C. But with the loosening of traditional bonds, protection from war invasion, and political concerns, there was time for meditation. Yahweh had deprived Himself of His dwelling-place, the people now must either give Him up as a weakling, or believe the words of the prophets. Of the two alternatives, some chose the former, but more began to find value and truth in prophetic utterances. To this latter group must go the credit for Hebrew influence in world history. Out of this latter group, eventually comes victory, accomplished through trust in Jehovah, trust which finds its culmination in the life and teachings of the prophet Jeremiah.
CHAPTER TWO

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES.
Israel's sphere of power, originality, genius, and achievement, lay not in political prominence, for her standing was ever insignificant; not in material productivity; not in large cultural and artistic contributions; not in scientific discoveries; nor in commercial magnitude; neither in secular, intellectual pursuit. Her history reveals the most striking achievement, the efflorescence of her creativity, the source of her immortal fame, centered in the sphere of the spiritual.

"Not by virtue of material strength and political power shall ye prevail, but by my spirit, saith the Lord". 1

In the history of human evolution, no other nation has so profoundly influenced and magnificently contributed to the religious thought of the world. This signal truth was the consummation of the prophetic literary movement, inaugurated by Amos, ca. 850 B.C., and finding its pinnacle in Jeremiah, who, "as the exponent of the purely spiritual of this movement, stands without a peer". 2

To appreciate and interpret the life of Jeremiah, a life completely saturated with spirituality, we must comprehend the religious influences which preceded and surrounded him. Chief of these were prophetic. Prophecy, while not peculiar to the Hebrews, found its most ethical and highest expressions with them. Though it appeared early in their

1. Zach. 4:6
2. Buttenweiser, p.6
history, we find its golden age from Amos to Jeremiah. For our purposes, we can eliminate the more primeval and rude expressions of the earlier prophets.

"The final mission of prophecy was to liberate the eternal truths of religion from their temporary national embodiment and disclose their true foundation in the immutable character of God and the essential nature of man." This process finds its fulfillment most prominently with Jeremiah. His life marks the climax in prophecy, and a new movement in Israel's development. Though he transcends and his genius soars above that of his predecessors, he reaches his power and greatness not without prophetic forerunners. Other prophets had taught many vital truths and at their shrines he must pay tribute.

The flood-time of prophecy came at the period when Israel's national life was at its lowest ebb, when the shadow of death was already over the Jewish state. The prophets of this day came, predicting doom and extinction; yet they were essentially men of faith and hope. Haunted though they were by the people's sins and the coming ruin, they caught a glimpse of God's larger purpose, a vision of the regeneration of man and the universal rule of God. Paradoxically then, they went forth to preach a doomed people yet a final deliverance from sin.

1. Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, p.15
"These prophets, pure in character, strong in intellect, sincere in purpose, quickened through personal communion with God, enlightened by the Divine Spirit, were able to see facts, and understand truths hidden from the eyes of those who did not live in the same intimate fellowship with Jehovah. These men, possessed of divine ideals of righteousness, and eager to realize those ideals in their nation, became statesmen, social reformers, and religious and ethical teachers. They with flaming enthusiasm, sought to impress the truths burned by a Divine Spirit upon their hearts and minds, upon their less enlightened contemporaries."

At the zenith of Israel's material prosperity, yet in the midst of people grovelling in social, moral, and religious evil practices, Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, came. Having thoroughly studied the nation's life, he was not blinded as were the masses to the impending dangers and the superficiality of the prosperity that was theirs. He considered the dark side of the picture, the luxury and wealth obtained by robbery and violence; the cruel oppression of the poor by creditors; the dishonesty of trading; the gross public and private immorality; so that the people seemed to have lost all humane and virtuous characteristics. He witnessed their self satisfaction and self assurance that Jehovah would protect them because they were ceremonially righteous. He came to the conclusion that their conception of God was false and that personal and social reform was the only hope of

1. Eiselen, p.14
deliverance. His teaching may conveniently be divided into two parts: that concerning the nature and character of God, and that concerning the nature and character of the people of Israel.

Amos' conception of God is that of a moral God whose chief characteristics are justice and righteousness and who demands those qualities from His people. There is a trend from henotheism toward monotheism. The unit of religion is still the nation, and, while God is still transcendent, He is of a highertype. Amos discloses a common fallacy of his day in his statements that material evidences are not proof of moral and religious life. An ethical God is not pleased with the blood of bulls and rams, with burnt offering nor festive celebrations. He uttered the intolerable blasphemy of his day that the worship of God was not a matter of the letter, but a matter of the spirit, achieved by faith and righteous conduct. Here we find the groundwork of Jeremiah's Temple sermon in which he rails against the people who put their faith in the Temple and in cults. He urges that they dispense with sacrifices, for only through righteous lives can they be saved.

Amos has been called the first great social prophet for not only did he seek to change the type of relation between nation and God, but he desired to reform social in-
stitutions, to form higher types of relation between man and man.

After the close of Amos' ministry, when Israel was already drifting to its doom, when moral and social evils were more penetrating, Hosea, from the northern kingdom, appeared on the stage. Apparently, he was a member of a high social class, intimate with royalty, a counselor of the ruling class. He was a keen observer of life, and showed remarkable familiarity with events of past and present. His tragic domestic experience, his love for his faithless wife, Gomer, furnished the symbolic keynote of his message. The simple but profound truths that lay at the heart of his teaching were: having once loved his wife he could not cease to love her; the greater his love, the greater the pain at her sin; but in the presence of her wilful sinning, discipline is the highest expression of love, so that the guilty will repent, and thus be ready for forgiveness which he is ever desirous to bestow. He applies his experience to that of the nation - Jehovah being represented by Hosea's attitude, Israel by Gomer's. With impassioned power and depth of feeling he pled for repentance and return to God. Jeremiah, no doubt, was influenced by the same motives as Hosea, in telling of his personal experience that marked the beginning of his work. He wanted his disciples to understand his aims and teachings.
It was the concept of Jehovah as a God of love that dominated Hosea. The materialistic concept of religion was most repugnant to him, even as to Jeremiah. Jeremiah reveals Hosea's influence signally, not only by repeating his teachings but by using his effectual figures. It was Hosea's teachings that helped lay the eternal foundation for Jeremiah and for all religion - Jehovah as a God of love, seeking love from His people.

Jeremiah also followed, but superseded Hosea, in his concern for the internal policies of his country by making his interest international. Like Hosea, but more forcefully, Jeremiah denounced rebellion; political revolutions he placed in the category of rebellion against God. But to live in harmony with God, to do His will would be to prevent the downfall of Israel. This Hosea sought to do, but to no avail. The people were impervious. With the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. the northern kingdom disappeared, the fate of Jehovah worship rested with Judah.

The pictures of moral, social, and religious corruption painted by the prophets Isaiah and Micah present only catastrophic possibilities unless tremendous regenerating forces begin to work. Ceremonial worship was formal, idolatry was prevalent, the avarice and rapacity of the nobles was terrific. The situation into which Isaiah came was not easy
but neither was he weak. A relative of king Uzziah it is natural that he was interested in public affairs, a man who knew court life and sought to guide the nation in answer to the call of God. This call comes as the dramatic and picturesque vision of paramount significance. Like Jeremiah, Isaiah at first feels unfit to accept but God's voice persists, and with a feeling of the great responsibility involved, each in his own time, accepts.

In a brief way, we shall summarize the main teachings of Isaiah, as the groundwork influence preceding Jeremiah. The key to his activity may be seen in his vision, where he perceives Jehovah as a God of infinite holiness and majesty. This idea of holiness represents, "God as distinct from man, separate from the creation which he called into existence". He goes on to express the thought that God is separated from all that is sinful and imperfect, therefore from man in his fallen state. His conception of God expands to include His whole moral nature, His purity and righteousness, faith, truth, mercy, even His wrath and indignation, which all combined to make up His holiness.

With this vision he could be satisfied with no less than to fight the battle against sin, to make the entire life of his nation cleansed, worship so pure, commerce so fair, politics so honest, that they would all be worthy

1. Eiselen, p.102
in Jehovah's sight. He was a teacher of religion, and of social reform, a statement of whose altruistic principles may be found in Isaiah 1:16-17,

"Cease to do evil, learn to do well, be anxious about right doing; set right the oppressor; help to right the fatherless; take the part of the widow."

Again, Jeremiah resembles Isaiah in his statesmanship. Fundamental in Isaiah's attitude was that of his mission to the nation, the necessity that he felt of taking a place in external politics. For him, God was back of the nation, the cause and caretaker, hoping to prepare it for a divinely appointed task. To him, Mount Zion was inviolable; Jehovah as a moral Being manipulated events and would care for his worshipers; He would keep the Temple as essential to the salvation of the holy remnant. His policy was that Judah should refrain from international entanglements and should trust in Jehovah. The keyword of his statesmanship was faith, the one requisite for national security. Isaiah, as Jeremiah, saw that the political and religious welfare involved for Judah loyalty to Jehovah. Isaiah's teachings made a deep impression upon his race, proclaimed as they were not only by his words, but by his acts. His life was a worthy demonstration that loyalty to Jehovah was patriotism to Judah and to God's world. His heroic spirit is surpassed by Jeremiah.
A younger contemporary of Isaiah, of contrasting background, was Micah, born of obscure parents; growing up with keen sympathy for the peasant group. Though no doubt terribly unpopular, he shares with Isaiah, in the light of history, the glory of effectual citizenship. With keen vision and analytic power, Micah saw that a great tragedy was about to take place. With clear insight, he found the cause: cruelty and exploitation of the poor; orgies and flagrant crimes committed by the rulers. With straightforwardness he upbraided the criminals, with terse, indignant phrases. Facing them alone, as though he feared no man, he pointed out to these self-sufficient and proud rulers, their iniquitous ways, and the inevitable dire consequences. Invec-tives, strong and piercing, he hurled at them stripping them of all their sham, and making them stand in their ugliness before themselves and him. His prophecy, too, like Jeremiah's is doom - Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed. Only through the complete destruction, well deserved and powerful punishment, can a new and ideal Israel be built. Like his predecessors in many respects, he believes in the absolute holiness of Jehovah, and human life, in accord with principles of righteousness. The remnant who thus live will spread to all the nations the knowledge of Jehovah.

Out of such prophetic influences does Jerem-
...miah come. The groundwork for him is laid. The prophets have brought the message that "in man's moral nature religion has its roots. That it is the material world whence the idea of the Divine flows into man's soul, that it is a sense of right and justice, innate in man that brings him ever new assurance of the existence of God and of His control of the universe for a moral purpose."

For Jeremiah the task remained of sifting out the best of these teachings and then of transcending and advancing a broadening conception of God, and the nature of religion. On the highest peak of prophetic achievement, where it is conscious simultaneously of its cardinal significance, yet its inherent limitations. He reaches the pinnacle of prophetic idealism in making God the only true God and Him the God, not of masses but of the individual. He changes the whole concept of religion from mass religion to personal individual religion, involving personal obligation and responsibility. His interpretations of God, of individualism, and of redemption are great strides forward in the history of religion.

In accord with the work of the eighth century prophets, Jeremiah also had the heathen religious cults, idol worship and the orgies of foreign religious abuses to combat. Moral and social degeneracy were becoming more and more pronounced in the lives of the Judaists. Thus his work stands...
as doubly noble in the light of its contrast to all about him.

Another religious influence of his time was the re-codified system of the Law of Deuteronomy - a wonderful system for a nation but exclusively nationalistic. As a young man, he saw that system collapse, and it seemed for a time that religion itself would perish with it.

"But though Jeremiah lived to see the Law fail, the nation dispersed, and the national altar shattered, he gathered their fire into his bosom and carried it not only unquenched but with a purer flame toward its everlasting future." 1

The evil opposition, both of religious and secular life, challenged him, the formalism of the Law incensed him, and the fine religious influences of other prophets and of his home inspired him, with the result that to-day he stands - a prophet, the essence of personal piety.

1. Smith, Jeremiah, p.5
CHAPTER THREE

FACTS OF JEREMIAH'S LIFE
FACTS OF JEREMIAH'S LIFE

For the fact-material of Jeremiah's life, we are indebted to his habit of self-revelation and to the biography written by his scribe Baruch. The source for such material is the Book of Jeremiah.

About three miles north of Jerusalem, visible from the peak of the Mount of Olives, stands the picturesque village of Anathoth. Here Jeremiah was born in 650 B.C. He was of priestly descent, the son of Hilkiah. Probably he descended from the line of Eli, for it is known that Abiathar, the last of that line to hold office as the priest of the Ark retired to Anathoth upon his dismissal by Solomon. The immediate home environment then, would be very strong. No family would more surely be a repository for the purest and most traditional forms of religion than this one which through generations had guarded the most sacred symbol of religion - the Ark of God. No family would have a greater knowledge and wider appreciation of the national struggles, victories, and defeats of the years, bound up with the inseparable religious history. Jeremiah must have been taught the glory of Israel's past, then the ill of the declining evil days, and the vigor of the prophecy of the eighth century. The loyalty and faith of his parents must have been kept unshaken through the crisis of Israel, for they named their infant son - Jeremiah, which being interpreted is "Jahweh hurls or shoots". They signified 1. I Kings 2:26f.
thus, their hope for divine intervention at the imminent crisis of Israel.

It was the time when Egypt and the small provinces of Palestine broke from Assyrian allegiance that Jeremiah came to this world. Those who were thinking clearly realized that nothing but serious catastrophe loomed before Judah. It was during the long and evil reign of Manasseh and the influence of cruel persecution touched the boyhood mind of Jeremiah and overshadowed his whole life.

The surrounding country, its geography, and its life, made a permanent and tremendous effect upon the essentially sensitive nature of the boy. Anathoth is hidden from the main road between Jerusalem and the north. It is exposed to the great open desert, the falling wilderness of Benjamin, and the far off mountain horizon of Gilead. Day by day, through his youth, the arid landscape caught and held his gaze. The imprint of desert tragedy is in his poetry. He knew the lash of sun, biting fierce winds, and stinging rain and snow. He experienced the loneliness of vast jungles and the pathos of straying wilderness herds. He knew the savagery of beasts and the cruelty of wild life.

"Light o' heel young camel
Zigzagging your tracks,
Heifer gone to school to the desert,-
In the heat of her passion
Snapping the breeze in her lust,
Who is to turn her?"
Wind off the glow of the bare desert heights
Direct on my people,
Neither to winnow nor to sift,
In full blast it meets me

********** **********

Is there no balm in Gilead,
No healer there? 1

Thus Jeremiah was strengthened by external forces to meet the internal struggles of life. Thus was he prepared to know the hard thorny soil of men that had to be plowed with travail to hold tender seeds of righteousness. Thus was he hardened to shout forth with vigor against evil, to meet the slings and stings of ill treatment that were destined for him. But the life of the desert alone was not his; the throbbing swirl of the great capital life of Jerusalem was also his. Its history he knew and loved. The daily traffic from village to city he watched. He saw the country produce carried away, pottery, rich spices, and cloths returned in exchange. He heard the gossip and the events of the day related, rumors of invasions and threatening dangers. These were carried from the roads between Egypt and Damascus beyond to the Euphrates, and blown from the north countries into Ephraim and Shiloh, thence southward.

For a few years, as Jeremiah was growing to manhood, there was peace and quiet in his land. But it was only the calm before a storm of events soon to burst forth with vehemence, twisting and tearing the life of Judah. The

1. Smith, Jeremiah, p. 68
Scythians would soon be pouring from the north, causing a series of great strifes.

The internal conditions were worse than those without. For two generations there had been no great prophet. Social and religious life was degraded to the level of immoral heathen practices in the name of worship. Through Josiah's reform, the Temple practices were cleansed a bit, but beyond Jerusalem the task had been more difficult. The old local Baalim of surrounding villages had been claimed as sanctuaries for Yahweh, but the old impure rites connected with false religions were yet practiced, and the forms of gods were as many as the shrines of worship.

Spiritual and physical degeneracy were accompanied by national political dissipation. In her chaotic state, little wonder that Judah's policy was vacillation! All these thoughts tormented the heart and mind of Jeremiah. Israel needed Judgment; she needed the word of God in no mistakable terms thundered into her ears. Who would fulfill this task and deliver this inspiring message of denunciation, judgment and destruction?

With a flash of realization, Jeremiah knew that the call was his. The voice of God spoke to him, and he was conscious of the Presence saying,

"Before in the body I built thee,
I knew thee,"
Before thou wast forth of the womb
I had hallowed thee,
And a prophet to the nations had set thee."

The conviction formed in his mind - that this thought of God was previous to his birth. God alone had sent him here for this stupendous work. He was to cooperate with the Divine Will, untouched by the influences of his day. He must lead his people out of confusion and panic to purity of heart and fearless righteousness. What overwhelming import was attached to this challenge to a twenty five year old youth of little Anathoth. He tells us that he felt himself too young and inexperienced to accept the call.

"I know not how to speak for I am but a lad".

But Jehovah persuaded and persisted.

"Say not thou art but a lad! For to whomsoever I sent thee, thou shall go, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shall speak.

Lo, I put my word into thy mouth." 1

Finally, after the heat of an inner struggle, he accepted the difficult task of being a religious reformer, of ministering to the nations. The significance of it filled his soul, as the consummation of a genuine religious experience. Though shy and full of forebodings, he could not turn away. He had caught the conviction of his individual meaning in relation to God and the universe. It was a moment of self-discovery and a power higher than his own soul controlled; his 1. Jeremiah 2:7,9b.
latent mental capacity was stirred; and the germs of high resolve revealed the best self to be realized. Yet it too was a moment of self-surrender, the sense that all he had inherited or acquired was for naught save to be the vessel of Yahweh, prepared by Him for the task of revealing Himself to man.

The call of this prophet is unique in that it broke the bonds of nationalism, and came as involving a world mission. He realized with keen analytic sense that all the nations were equally concerned in the great spiritual crises. One nation cannot live unto itself. The evils of one affect the others, and yet he comes to feel that God's power is sufficient to mold and re-mold any nation. (cf. The parable of the potter, Chap.XVIII). He is to be a cooperative force with God, to help mold and rebuild.

After the prophet's calls, two visions come to him:

"Then the Lord came to me saying,
What art thou seeing, Jeremiah? And I said, I am seeing the branch of an almond tree, and the Lord said to me, Well hast thou seen, for I am awake over my word to perform it".

This vision must have come as a brilliant flame of hope out of his anxious worry. In his meditation he had seen the people morally asleep and spiritually dead, walking blindly in the steps of wicked fathers. The world was cold with
winter bareness. Then with the utter joy that is ours when we see the first bud and hear the first robin announcing Spring, Jeremiah saw the first token of a Palestine spring. With this vision he received the sacrament of his call, and the assurance that God was awake and watching.  

The second vision came out of his wrestling over political conditions; and brought a change to him:  

"And the word of the Lord came to me the second time; What art thou seeing? And I said, A caldron boiling and its face is from the North. And the Lord said unto me: Out of the North shall evil boil forth, On all that dwell in the land; For behold, I am calling All the realms of the North. They shall come and each set his throne,  

In the opening of the gates of Jerusalem, On all of her walls round about; And everytownship of Judah. 
And my judgments by them I shall utter, On the evil of those who have left me, Who have turned to other gods And bowed to the work of their hands. 

But thou shalt gird up thy loins, Stand up and speak all I shall charge thee. Be not dismayed before them, Lest to their face I dismay thee. See, I have thee set this day A fenced city and walls of bronze To the kings and princes of Judah, Her priests and the folk of the land; They shall fight but master thee never, For with thee I am to deliver  

Ride of the Lord."  

So Jeremiah, quieted and assured, went forth to his task, with God. His task involved preaching the  

1. Smith, Jeremiah, p.85  
2. Ibid. p.85
message of doom to his wicked people. But he found strength for every hardship in that eternal secret of strength - God by his side, God controlling his life. Joy came to him in the realization of God's cooperative plan. God, then, sharing His purpose with the individual, shows His faith in, and appreciation of, the value of man. Here at the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry we find that he has discovered the signal truth of the power and singleness of the human soul.

The prophet's ministry, we may divide into four divisions, characterizing particular periods. The first period of his career (626-620 B.C.) contains: the earliest oracles, oracles on the Scythians, and oracles implying the work of law enforcement. His earliest oracles, 2:2-4:4, deal with a resume of Israel's religious life. She had been loyal to God in the early days; then foreign cults came in, attendant with wickedness and the distribution of the high places. The people outwardly had acted penitent, but a deeper and inner repentance is necessary - without which doom is inevitable. These oracles may be dated between 626-620, coming between the time of his call, and the suppression of these local worship places in accordance with the Law Book.

Also preceding the discovery of the Law Book came the oracles on the Scythians, 4:5-6:29, and additions. These unfold the panic caused, or likely to come because of
the raiding hordes. The poems show the progress of his thought—first, the panic is unshared by him, then their pangs become his, and he shares the sins and punishment of his people.

"The heart of the Kings shall perish,
And the heart of the Princess,
And the priests shall be aghast
And the prophets dismayed,"

In the poem of chapter 4:13-13, he interprets the cause for the doom threatening them—callousness, and perjury characterize every Jerusalemite; his search for a God-like, honest man was in vain.

Through this series of oracles he displays his keen knowledge of human nature; with clear analysis he perceives what the invaders will do; and with characteristic fearlessness he tells his people of their need of judgment and of God's ethical purpose in having them suffer.

The second great period of his life was during the years from 621-620, when the Law Book was discovered, until 608, when Josiah was slain. The world outside had ceased threatening. Inside there was the venture to follow the Law, and Jeremiah could only watch with clear eyes, and see that repentance was not real, and that outward observa-
tion of the Law did not mean inner righteousness. However, he continued to fulfill his duty though the attempts at Reformation which the Book inspired, and he charged the scribes with

1. Jeremiah 4:9
who should be the pure expression of the Law, with manipulation of it, so that it became false.

"How say you, We are the wise. The Law of the Lord is with us, But lo, the falsing pen of the scribes Hath wrought it to falsehood." 1

Though he probably appreciated these high motives and sincere efforts involved in the reform movement, it is completely unsatisfactory in his sight. Our knowledge of his activity during these years, is meager. His writing of this time is not well defined. However, it was during these years that he took his place upon the stage of public life, a prominent actor in the affairs of nations. He remained in the full light of publicity until near the end of his life. From henceforth we are to see him in Jerusalem, preaching in the gateways or Temple court to all types of people.

The third period, that during the reign of Jehoiakim, 608-597 B.C., is marked by rapid national transitions and convulsions, that again stirred Jeremiah to action. Though struggling within himself, he remained consistently true to his mission, representing the one great positive power in Judah, through the throng of tragic ills.

In our historical analysis, we have characterized the ruthless scoundrel—Jehoiakim—and the recrudescence of debasement among his people. Jeremiah did not hesitate to incur the king's hatred by his opposition to these impious

1. Jeremiah 8:8
policies. Neither did he hesitate to declare denunciation of the wicked religionists - priests and prophets.

He predicted, during this period, (chapters 7 and 26), the destruction of the Temple. This prediction gave opportunity for the opposition to conspire against him. Chapter 26, one of the most impressive of the Old Testament, relates his answer to the conspirators, and portrays his courage in refusing to conciliate, "remaining a strong wall and fortress", so that those who were not too biased, the lay leaders, and the princes, struck by his courage and sincerity, came to recognize him as an authentic speaker for God, and gave him protection.

A year or two later, Jeremiah, in the Temple court, declared the destruction of the city (19:1-20:6). He did not escape his enemies this time, but was persecuted and placed in the stocks by Pashur, "chief officer in the house of Jehovah". Unafraid, like a tormenting parent hoping to reform a bad child, he announced that the whole house would go into captivity. For this he was denied admission even to the Temple court, (36:5). Therefore, in 605 B.C., he decided to have Baruch write down all of his prophecies - to be read to the people. When the roll was completed, Baruch read it to the princes, then took it to the king, who cut and burnt it and ordered the arrest of Jeremiah, and Baruch. However,
aided, they escaped into hiding, and prepared a second roll, in 604 B.C.

Later, they must have returned to Jerusalem, for we still find sentences of judgment being declared and plots against his life, and attempts to trap him through his speech, being planned. In chapter 25, Jeremiah tells the reader that for twenty three years he has called the people to repent - but they have disregarded with callous stupidity, his warnings. His message still must be that of Divine Judgment to be meted out against Judah, though the prophet's heart breaks with the weight of woe. Though his God is ready to forgive, and though he ours out his own life of love from a harassed soul, seeking to win them, he knows it is vain. He sees his hopeless reprobates going out to destruction and desolation.

The next period of the prophet's ministry (597-586 B.C.) verified his predictions. The best of the nation was carried into captivity. Chapter 24 tells of the good figs taken away and the bad ones left. Jeremiah still had singular insight and power to meet and to analyze the situation at hand. Realizing that his countrymen were still nursing fond hopes of an early return home, he writes them, (chapter 29) to settle down peacefully, and prepare for a long and happy stay. Characteristic of his policy, he urged them that they submit to the Babylonian authority - both at
home and abroad. Unless they did, he knew that utter destruction of the city awaited them. (37:3-10, 38:21-23).

But his words only incurred the hostility of the rebellious forces, who refused to surrender, and looked for ways in which to get rid of him. It was at this time, when he was on his way to his village of Anathoth to care for some business matters, that the opportunity came (37:21). He was arrested by the captain of the watch, falsely charged with treason, and flung into the prison of Jonathan. Soon he was placed in the court of the guard. Whenever asked if there was word "from the Lord", he continued his counsel of submission. This only incurred the wrath of the royal powers who had him thrown into a slimy cistern where he would have perished, had not an Ethiopian, Ebed-meleh, rescued him. Replaced again in the court of the guard, he stayed there until the capture of 586 B.C. Then with unfailing devotion he remained to share his lot with the poor few left in their desolated land. With Gedaliah, he went to the new capital of Mizpah, and stayed there until the new governor was assassinated. Then he was taken with violence into Egypt, by his frightened fellow-men. Out of the wretchedness and sorrow of his countrymen's fate, he saw that there were great souls which could be purified and re-born. Thus he released from the anguish of his soul a message of hope, of faith revived. He urged them to be courageous and to build firm foundations...
for the future, which held promise of a dawn for them. But to those who persistently followed idolatrous practices and faced themselves firmly against righteousness, he renewed his denunciation, continuing his path of unpleasant duty until the end, when he probably met his death at their hands.

Thus a great soul went out at the hands of his fellowmen; in his own sight he had seemed to fail, in his attempt to cooperate with them in the fulfillment of God's will for many nations. But the influence of the lonely God-like soul of his age, breathed out on his people, after his death, and then through future generations, the fragrance of fellowship with God. It is through his religious experience as the criterion, that men through subsequent centuries were able to satisfy their deepest soul aspirations by communion with a personal God.
PART TWO

PSYCHOGRAPHICAL STUDY
A DEFINITION OF TERMS
Before we enter in upon a discussion such as the second part of this thesis entails, namely a psychographical study, it is necessary that we define terms, and state our psychological groundings for the conclusions we shall draw.

Psychologically, we shall use for our foundation the Gestalt theory, as it is stated and explained by Kurt Koffka. Such a theory holds that development takes place through meaningful wholes of experience, and that behavior can be explained only as we take into consideration both its subjective and objective aspects. The word "gestalt" may be most nearly translated by our English word "configuration". According to Koffka, a configuration is "such a coexistence of phenomena in which each member carries every other; and in which each member possesses its peculiarity only by virtue of, and in connection with, all the others."¹

Hence, for such a psychology, we find, in the beginning "even at the level of the reflexes and instincts and again in training and in intelligent performances, unitary, articulate, meaningful wholes."² Development proceeds by means of the modification of such structures, until there is complete development along both mental and moral lines of the whole personality. The Gestalt psychologist places an emphasis upon the wholeness of such a development.

The word "psychography" is a comparative new-

¹ Koffka, Growth of the Mind, p.131
² Koffka, Psychologies of 1925,
comer into our language, and we find, in Gamaliel Bradford, our most ardent exponent of it and its use. He confesses that his use of the term is borrowed from Saint-Bueve, and that he uses it, because "portrait" is so inadequate an expression for what he attempts to do. Together with Koffka, he holds that the individual develops as a whole, and it is only as we are able to catch a glimpse of that whole, that we can get an adequate view. Psychography seeks "to extract what is essential, what is permanent, and so vitally characteristic" out of a man's life; it grasps as many particular moments as possible, and gives us "the enduring sum total of them all."

"Psychography is the condensed, essential, artistic presentation of character". It is the picture of the soul of a man as we are able to glimpse it through what he says and does, and too often what he does not say and leaves undone. It shows the human heart in all its weakness and strength and passion. Because of this psychography is filled with a vital livingness that gives to it a tinge of mystery and a glow of fascination.

It is such a study that we are to make of the prophet Jeremiah, delving into his character and finding there the soul of the man; torn by his love for his people and aching over their sins, as he shows them, through his own life, the nature of Yahweh, and their relations to Him. From such a

1. Bradford, A Naturalist of Souls, p.5
2. Ibid, p.8
study we will gain a deeper insight into his personal religion, as it is the expression of the soul of the man himself,

- - - - - "strong in will,
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."
CHAPTER FOUR

THE DISCOVERY OF GOD.
THE DISCOVERY OF GOD

It is man's idea of God that most clearly mirrors his idea of religion. All relationships are shaped in the light of God's self-revelation to man. Religious progress through the centuries has been marked by man's growing and changing concept of God. Thus it is that Jeremiah makes a cardinal contribution to religion through his discovery of God.

Shaken to the depths by the terrific premonition of Israel's destruction, Jeremiah heard the word of God calling him to minister. The highest teachings of religion are expressed in the formula,

"And Yahweh said to me,"

This personal experience of God, the audition of God's message came to him in early manhood as a close and vivid experience. His task is stated in six terse verbs,

"To pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrown, to build and to plant."

It is to be a cooperative task - he and God as partners. This consciousness of the near presence of God characterized the whole of his life. It furnished the secret of his ability to bear the tortures of outrageous evils.

His inaugural experience with God furnished a striking contrast to an earlier concept, revealed in Isaiah's vision. There is none of the awfulness, the unapproachable splen-
that made Isaiah's experience unforgettable to him. Rather, "God meets with Jeremiah on life's common way, standing by his side, and Himself laying His hand on his mouth." To Jeremiah, He says only,

"What art thou seeing, Jeremiah? the branch of an almond tree -- a caldron, boiling," 2

This simplicity and conversational familiarity characterize their intercourse. He reached out and found Jehovah in joyous friendship, in constant abiding fellowship. We can readily believe that through boyhood he had known God but it is now that he comes into the "conscious realization of his oneness with the Infinite Life". 3

This inmost harmony of his spirit with God's as his call suggests, was to be expressed through cooperative activity. The Hebrews had ever thought of their God as one working, busy with events of the universe. This view was shared by Jeremiah, but given a new emphasis. In past centuries there had been credit given to other gods for accomplishments. With Jeremiah, however, every other deity is absolutely false. There is no other God for anyone. Through him the Hebrews attained a clear monotheism. Jehovah is the one Creator and Power behind the universe, the Source of all good, and the Worker for the betterment of all men. He is the "fountain of living water".

1. Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, p.27
2. Smith, Jeremiah, p.351
3. Kaplan, Psychology of Prophecy, p.140
It is Jeremiah who lifts God from "soil to soul". He changes the anthropomorphic concept of a God of wrath delighting in the work of destruction, to that of a God of love, with only ethical purposes seeking the best good for His people. In his familiar lesson of the potter and the clay, he has liberated God from man-made limitations, and attributed to Him the glorious power of molding life as He chose, creating forms of loveliness from broken souls.

"So I went down to the potter's house; and there he was engaged on a piece of work at a wheel. Now if the thing he was making was spoiled in his hands, he would just shape the material over again into another such vessel as he had decided to make."  

Jeremiah knew that God's power to make men over in righteousness and love was the only hope of his generation. It was this realization that gave him courage to go on preaching though hearts through the years were hardened and unresponsive.

It was Jeremiah's personal experience of the character of Jehovah that made him ready to participate with the Divine Will. It was his belief in the essential righteousness, love, and ethical purposes of God that made him willing to burn men's hearts with the Word, though it be doom and destruction. God's ways were beyond his comprehension, a mystery to men. But the solution of life's problems he found in the light of his own religious experience, "man being centered in God, finds true happiness only by living  
1. Jeremiah 18:3-5
in harmony with the Divine".

The cornerstone of Jeremiah's creed was
"Direct communion between the human and Divine mind, between man and God."  

The Word is the core of his faith.

"When thy words have offered themselves
I have devoured them. Thy words have been to me the joy and delight of my heart for I am dedicated to Thee, O Lord, God Sabbaoth."  

"Thou, O Lord, knowest me, Thou seest me ever, thou hast tried my heart which is at one with Thee".

This at-oneness with God was for Jeremiah the real prosperity, the only thing that mattered. The consciousness that he possessed this supreme Good was his solace in suffering, his strength amidst all opposition. Hated as Jeremiah was much of his life by the whole nation because of his words of doom, he was saved from permanent bitterness only by the happiness that came in God's revelation to him. In true human fashion along the way we see him rebelling against God, who let him suffer, and against his people because,

"everyone curseth me".

He cried out for vengeance, but overshadowed the cry by following it with the plea that God would rather let him die.

"Take me away", was his cry, like that of the Genius:

"He cried aloud to God:
I am alone here. Grant me love and peace
Or if not them, grant me at least release."

1. Buttenweiser, p.119
2. Kaplan, p.108
3. Jeremiah 5:16
4. Jeremiah 12:3
This was characteristic of his experience all the way - despair and gloomy forebodings, then renewed reliance on God - victory. It is the universal experience of man. When he relies on himself alone, life is too difficult and defeat is certain. When he practices the presence of God, he finds himself able to overcome evil with good, and to travel the way courageously, though it lead"through the valley of the shadow of death". In his discovery of God as the one perpetual necessity for the individual, and personal constant fellowship the only hope of victory, he surpassed every prophet, until the time of Jesus.

To Jeremiah, spiritual values were the only real ones, and God was the supreme Spiritual Value. He defined religion "as an immediate personal relation between Jehovah and the individual soul, and heart obedience and devotion of the individual to his God". This spiritualizing is his idea which proves of greatest permanent significance. He found that man was cursed if he trusted in material power and human strength, but he was blessed if his trust in God was firmly rooted. Then he was able to defy and endure every evil crisis. His prevalent prayer for spiritual strength and wholeness evidenced his emphasis on God as the only means whereby lives and motives could be purified. His outpouring in prayer was his expression of belief in a God who heard with love and rewarded with strength. Chapter 10:23-24, in 1. Eiselen, p.161
which he prayed that God, his sole source of strength, would hold him up in the greatest hour of need, is one of his deepest utterances. It not only shows his spiritual depth, but his intellectual acumen, in solving the great problems of life. Therein is suggested the thought of God as a merciful, loving, Father, dealing with prodigal sons.

The need for wholeness and spiritual vigor was his, so he cried to the Source of spirituality,

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed,
Saved me, that I may be saved. For Thou art my glory." 1

We can imagine almost, that with a modern poet, Lew Sarett, he would sing,

Wash over me, God, with your piney breeze,
And your moon's wet silver pool,
Wash over me God, with your wind and night,
And leave me clean and cool." 2

Herein is the supreme happiness and good of life. Jeremiah's discovery of God through his own particular struggle and personal needs posits God as the beginning and end of life. Without Him, life loses meaning, value, purpose — — — victory.

In contrast to his predecessors, Jeremiah placed little emphasis on a transcendent God. Rather his lead is toward that of an immanent God. His hope for Israel was that God might be to them what He had been to Jeremiah and what Jeremiah had been to the nations, "not a transient guest, but a dweller in their midst". 2

1. Jeremiah 17:14
2. 
"Yet Thou, O Jehovah art here in our midst,
By Thy name we are called;
O leave us not." 1

His is the first great utterance of God's omnipresence.

"I am a God who is near, not
Not a God who is far.
Can any man hide Him in secret
And I not see Him?
Do I nor fill Heaven and earth,
Rede of the Lord." 2

With Jeremiah we discover a God whose spirit man may truly reflect in his life. The spirit of man may be attune with the spirit of God and thus find richness and fullness untouched through formalism and law observance. Such was the new emphasis that Jeremiah gave through his personal experience. Such was the new emphasis that Jeremiah sought to give in his teachings - that man might come to know God. When he emphasized spirituality, he was accenting a new note in Hebrew thinking. No previous prophet had experience such depths of personal close revelation. Jeremiah found God as a spiritual Being and a spiritual experience.

This spiritual experience, as contrasted to external righteousness and formalism he craved for his people. Sometimes, I think he would like to say with William Watson,
"In Epigram",

"When unmasked false altar, priest and creed
* * * * * * * *
Perhaps from darkening incense freed,
God may emerge at last."

1. Jeremiah, 14:9
2. Jeremiah, 23:3
Jeremiah found the world of people in which he lives, wicked, unchaste, and deceitful.

"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond it is graven upon the tablet of their hearts." 1

The worship of God was debauched and degraded. Practice of idol worship was prevalent. Jeremiah knew that a radical change of character was necessary. This would be possible only as men really found God and put Him in their "Inward heart". To help them in this quest, though they neither desired to make it, nor to have Jeremiah's aid, was his great task.

"Arise, O prophet, watch and hearken,
And with My soul, they soul engird,
Through lands that din, and sea that darken
Burn Thou men's hearts with this, My word."

So Jeremiah obeyed. He tried to illumine the life of his countrymen with the light of God. On one hand he interpreted to them with gentle words, a God of love, of mercy, and of righteousness; on the other he interpreted a God of justice, and of wrath -- who must punish His people for their sin. For he would persuade them of the one essential truth of life, the necessity of God's spirit in man.

Jeremiah interpreted to them, God, as a kind, patient, and forgiving Father, who would persuade His children to return to Him, and to be happy.

1. Jeremiah 17:1
"O backsliding Israel, turn,
I will not look in anger upon thee;
For I am kind, saith Jehovah,
I keep not mine anger forever.
But only acknowledge thy guilt —
That disloyal to Jehovah thy God,
Thou hast blanished thy love upon strangers,
Beneath every spreading tree,
And unto my voice, saith Jehovah,
Thou hast not inclined thine ear.
Return, ye backsliding children."

And again the love of God is portrayed, as so great that
He aches to forgive the sins of His people —

"How glad, methought, shall I be,
To give them a place among sons,
To give them a pleasant land,
An inheritance passing fair;
Methought you would call me Father".

In chapter 30:22, he moves again close toward Jesus' conception of God's love,

"And ye shall be my people,
and I will be your God."

In chapter 31:9, Jeremiah's prophecy presages Jesus' conception of the Fatherhood of God:

"I will lead them to streams of water,
On a level way without stumbling,
For I am a Father to Israel,
And Ephraim is my first born."

The help of Jehovah is always nears, standing in close relationship to the soul of man. He is ever ready to forgive His wayward children; even in exile, he says,

"Turn thou to me, and I shall be turned." 2

But the people persisted through the years of prophecy in

1. Jeremiah 3:11-14
their stubbornness of heart and went down to ruin.

We have seen how he dwells on the Divine love. Equal is his emphasis upon the righteousness of the Deity, by all his deeds working truth, justice, and judgment on the earth. These are his delight, and the knowledge of them is man's only glory.

Jehovah does not demand sacrifices, but a better life.

"I accept not your burnt offering, your sacrifice pleaseth me not."

To know Him is to be just and righteous. The present generation have not discovered God. They have fallen awayn into treachereous practices. Therefore, God being just and truthful, must condemn them.

"What else can I do."

Jeremiah realizes from the first that doom is ethically necessary for the people, though his heart ever struggles against it. They have sinned against themselves and against their fellowmen - but most of all they have sinned against the pleading, powerful love of God.

In the place of the ideal of a righteous community, living under Yahweh's protection, there had been placed a superstitious reverence for the Temple in the place of love to God and obedience to His will. The Temple became even more than the Law Book - the sine qua non of religion.

1. Jeremiah 6:20
2. Jeremiah 19:17
The religion of the Temple became an organization of hypocrisy - men whose lives daily were a violation of every law of God presented themselves daily in the Temple in the fond belief that its inherent sanctity insured their safety in the practice of abominations. He meditated: Are these men so ignorant, of the Being whom they worship, as to imagine that the performance of sacrificial rites will answer His demands?

"But see you are putting on you trust in doctrines that are as profitless as they are false. The house which bears my name you regard, do you, as nothing but a robber's cave! Make no mistake: I - saith Jehovah - I have not been blind to all this."

Symbols and emblems can have little significance for one who has immediate fellowship with Jehovah. The thought is expressed very clearly in the statement:

"And it shall come to pass, they shall say no more, the Ark of the covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more."

In chapter 26, his famous Temple sermon, he denounces the belief in the inviolable sanctity of the Temple at Jerusalem. He declares that God will destroy the Temple and disperse the nation in order to show that he does not care for sacrifices and offerings, but solely for an obedient heart and a moral life.

"On the day that I brought your forefathers out of the land of Egypt, I

1. Jeremiah 7:8;11
gave them no commandment neither did I utter a syllable with regard to burnt offering or sacrifice. But the commandment I gave was this: Listen, I said, to My voice, and then I will be your God and you shall be My people, and take My commandments as the standard of all your life - this is the way to prosperity." 1

Here is the quintessence of religions, here is our thought about God, not in forms and ceremonies, but God in man's heart and in his daily life. This is the way men can live together as a nation - without it separate lives and nations have no foundations.

Thus we see that Jeremiah's life was God-centered. "In his best moments he realized that there was nothing in life that could be compared with fellowship with God." Whatever suffering he might entail, it was still the chief good of life. The lower part of his nature not infrequently railed out against what seemed his unjust lot. But in such hours, he turned his face upwards, and in prayer found rest for his soul; in prayer with a gracious, loving companion.

1. Jeremiah 7:22b-24a
CHAPTER FIVE

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOUL
THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOUL.

Of profound significance in Old Testament thought is the interpretation of religion as a relation between a personal Being and a national entity. The fundamental principle of the Hebrews was "Yahweh the God of Israel, and Israel the people of Yahweh." Prophetic religion was one in which the God of conscience entered into fellowship, not with the individual, but with the community: "in other words, the primary subject or unit of religion is the nation in whose history God revealed Himself." This is difficult of understanding for us save as we have the historical perspective. We must appreciate the circumstances of the settlement in Canaan, with the danger of contamination from impure religion; the transition to agricultural life with no provisions for devotional exercises; and then the weakening national life attended with weakening faith until the time of the exile.

Jeremiah had meditated on both the origin and essence of this religion, and came to the conclusion that it was sensual, degenerate, double minded (i.e. worship separated from God) and unreal. What, then, should be the basis of religious Life? Jeremiah found the answer in his own experience - personal fellowship with God. Thus in him "personal religion came to self-consciousness." His prophecy represents a tremendous step in the development of religion "from a nationalistic basis, on which history is

1. Skinner, p.6
2. Knudsen, Beacon Lights of Prophecy p.166
the chief medium of divine revelation to an individual and universal basis, on which God enters into immediate fellow-
ship with the human soul." Thus, Jeremiah first discovered
the soul of the individual and made it the true seat of relig-
ion. He does not discard the national point of view. He sim-
ply broadens and deepens the concept of religion by making
its essential nature consist in each member of the nation
finding personal fellowship with the Deity.

This discovery by Jeremiah of individual fellowship with God is his great contribution to the relig-
ious experience of the Hebrews. It makes him "the Columbus
of the spiritual life. By transferring God from history to
the human heart, he opened up a new world, in which man
might rise above matter, and by communion with God become a
free spirit." His own spiritual biography is the magnifi-
cent tribute to the worth of this discovery and the wealth
of this new world. That the supreme value of life is the
individual infellowship with God is purely revealed in the
life of him who taught it.

The secret of the power of the soul did not come to Jeremiah with a single flash. The study of his life
experience reveals glimpses of steps by which he was led
beyond the limits of tradition and strict prophetic conscious-
ness to the understanding of the soul and its intimate rela-
tion to God. Here, as he finds the self and its supreme value

he seems almost to presage the philosophy of personalism. It is certainly in keeping with his spirit, and as it marks the development from the center of life in the nation to the center of life in the individual, it is an important step in the evolution of the idea of the supreme value of personality. The study of his soul development leads us with him through the periods of long travail, stern discipline, terrific agony, and struggle with many natural inclinations to achieve spirituality.

This story is told to us, in the devotional poems, known as the "Confessions of Jeremiah". Through them we see the very pulse of the man—his struggles and suffering—that lead to the achievement of his own victorious soul. They exhibit, in its different aspects, one great spiritual conflict, that between the prophetic commission and the natural feelings of his heart. Here we find the key to Jeremiah's inner life. The first door is unlocked, as we read in the opening chapter of God's call to him, "to hurl forth the Word." Jeremiah's word is one of protest and shrinking,

"I cannot speak, I am too young".  

He felt inexperienced; he was naturally shy and sensitive. He knew that a prophet to the nations would have to suffer public ridicule, isolation, persecution, and the sacrifice of common joys. His whole nature shrank from the acceptance of the task.

1. Jeremiah 1:6
While Isaiah fervently answered the call, "Here am I, send me", Jeremiah must have said in his heart, "I do not want to do it - let me go." But God assured him of his constant Presence through all events:

"Be not afraid of them for I am with thee to deliver thee -- But do thou gird thy loins and rise and speak to them whatsoever I bid thee. Be not dismayed by them lest I suffer thee to be dismayed by them. Behold, I make thee this day as a fortified city, and as an iron pillar, and as a wall of brass against the whole land, the kings of Judah, her princes, her priests, and the people of the land; for they shall wage war against thee but not conquer thee, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."

These words predict the bitter struggle Jeremiah had to endure through his ministry. He desired not to struggle, so he argued against the call. But the knowledge that he is the thought of God, that God chose him even before he was born, he could not escape. So this alternately discouraged and impulsive man became the consecrated instrument of Divine Will.

This does not, however, end his questioning and conflicts with God. His earlier career seems from the glimpses we get, to have been an almost constant struggle with the Deity. He refused to be dominated, but if dominated - not crushed. He questioned each moment of his own suffering and his people's fate. He debated about justice and the ill-treatment he received. These things have been

1 Jeremiah 1:8, 17-19
His sympathetic nature was wounded by his fellowmen's alienation and misconstruction of motives. He felt the isolation from the joys of social life and blamed God for it. "I have not sat in the assembly of merry-makers, rejoicing; because of Thy hand I sat solitary." (15:17) He knew also that there were enemies who designed against his life: "Come, let us forge a plot against Jehovah." (18:18)

After he delivered the Temple sermon, hatred of him grew more intense, and he was forced to suffer persecution until the end of his life. In anguish he cursed the fact of his being and cried: "Woe unto me, my mother, that thou didst bear me, a man of strife and enmity for the whole land."

Even his nearest relatives and friends seemed to have joined against him:

"Yea, I hear the whispering of many attacked on all sides; inform on him, or let us play the informer; everyone of my bosom friends is watching to contrive my downfall; perhaps he will let himself be entrapped so that we may get him into our power and take revenge on him." 1

He cannot help but feel that God was responsible for his soul suffering:

1 Jeremiah 20:10
"Lord, thou beguilest me and I let myself be beguiled. Thou wast stronger than I and hast conquered." 1

But his rebellion was not blind, rather was he seeking the solution for the perplexities of life. He laid bare his whole inner life with its struggles and temptations. He unburdened himself of the distress which weighed down his spirit, confident that he was heard and understood.

Out of travail of spirit the great soul of Jeremiah was born. It is the way of discipline. Ever through strain comes the strength. God saw the weakness of his servant and gave him the necessary strength by wrestling with him. The soul found its secret of power and relief from weariness in the constant presence of God: "Since God is with me, I triumph like a hero." (15:16)

Jeremiah found early that personal soul growth can come only through prayer. Eventually he learned that prayer brought not its most satisfying expressions in seeking release from trouble, help against adversaries, or vengeance on persecutors. Prayer brought the greatest satisfaction as he found through it victory over his evil desired and achievement of the God-like spirit. Thus an illuminated moment, marking a turn in his life was his when he became clearly conscious of the answer which solved the problem of his personal relation to God:

"Thus sayeth Yahwe, if thou return and I restore thee, thou shalt stand before me; and if thou bring forth

1 Jeremiah 20:7
what is precious, unmixed with what is base, then thou shalt be as my mouth."

Exhausted by the continuous strain of his work, he seems to have realized that he had merely forfeited his office by losing the spirit. Therefore, he needed a reconsecration to his task if he were to act as a prophet. He learned too, that victory over the world is conditioned by victory over himself. "He who had sat as a gold-refiner testing the lives of men around him and finding them to be refuse silver discovered that all was not pure gold within him." He understood as he sat in the presence of God that there was something ignoble in the human feelings that gave expression to his querulous complaints against providence, his impatience for the verification of his predictions and especially his vindictive spirit toward his enemies. Thoughts like those mar his communion with the Holy Being and unfit him for service. Only as he has cleansed himself of the lower impulses and brought forth noble things, has he achieved the individuality that dare stand before Yahwe and speak to men. Only as he has acquired strength through the joyous sense of God-likeness, can he stand as an individual in victory over the world. "Here he gains a glimpse of the truth that the pure in heart alone can see God." 

This glimpse of truth he would share

1 Jeremiah 15:19f
2 Jeremiah 6:27f
3 Skinner p. 224
with all men. Men must have righteousness of heart which is attained through individual fellowship.

The fact of the religious receptivity of the individual was unsealed for him through his prophetic call and the subsequent experiences of his ministry. He felt himself absolutely cut off from religious fellowship with men. He stood alone for Yahwe against a people whom he loved, yet who were foes, persecutors and despisers of God's word:

"He seemed to himself the one religious person in his generation, the only one who stood in immediate relation to Him. Through his consciousness of spiritual isolation, he felt the whole cause of Yahwe rested on his individual life of inward fidelity to the truth, and outward vindication in the eyes of men... Such was the cradle of individual religion as it came to birth in the person of Jeremiah." 1

Though individualism is not the last word in religion, it is a necessary stage. "It is perhaps a stage which is repeated in every life that attains to saintly excellence." 2 For in every deeply religious life there are moments when the soul becomes alone with God, all else in life fades away. There is nothing to desire beside Him. This deepening of the subjective side of religion was the finest legacy of Judaism to the Christian Church. It affirmed the infinite value of the individual soul and its capacity for realizing

1 Skinner p.224
2 Ibid. p.224
freedom in communion with the Father of the Spirit.

He found the basis of his personal religion in his conception of a righteous God in relation to the individual. Yahwe was the all-seeing heart searcher who saw the evil that lurked within men's hearts and the goodness that shone forth, if any there was. The spirit of Jeremiah appreciates that truth. With the Psalmist he would say:

"Search me, O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wickedness in me and lead me in the way everlasting." (139)

To find God in the heart of the individual as a Presence strengthening every good purpose and pure aspiration is a great step in the history of religion. To make prayer the vital breath of individual religion is to give the means whereby man may be lifted from "soil to soul". To turn from the formation of an external worship and the legalism of a national covenant as false expressions of religion is to eliminate evils in the way of progress. These things, Jeremiah does for himself and would do for his nation, that the souls of men might climb upward with joy. Thus it is that he teaches to men the doctrines of personal religion - its universality, its individual responsibility and obligation, and freedom of the will.

Tribal loyalty through the years of Israel's
desert life had fastened on the Hebrew mind the idea of the nation as the center of importance. Therefore, the responsibility for God in life lay not with the individual but with the nation. Though we know that individuals compose the nation, we are also conscious that when responsibility is not personal, it usually ceases to be anyone's concern. Hence religious practices were most degrading.

Another detrimental factor was the fallacious thinking of the Hebrews that they were the chosen people of Jehovah. Therefore they had been resting on the false premise that through sonship under Abraham, they had the special favor of God. They had been taught too, that the Temple of Jehovah was inviolable. Hence they conceived that their favor with God would not be taken from them if they performed Temple ceremonies - adulterous and abominable though they be. Because of these misinterpretations of religion, Jeremiah had witnessed the downfall of all spiritual values in life. These he would make the center of life by substituting for the concept of particularism, the universalism of religion; for the concept of collective responsibility, personal responsibility; for the religion of form, the religion of the heart.

Through the ages man had had a mediator between himself and God. The religionists and prophets were the
particular group believed capable of receiving direct revelations from Mahwe.

"But Jeremiah would impress on his hearers that God reveals himself not to the prophet alone but to every individual — reveals himself immediately and unmistakably in the moral consciousness of each."  

He would say that man's moral convictions and promptings are the very voice of God. Since religion is a matter of the heart, it could recognize no limits of race, it would be as broad as humanity itself. It is not surprising then to find Jeremiah representing the nations as coming and saying:

"Our fathers have inherited naught but lies, even vanity and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make unto himself gods, which yet are not gods."  

When religion is individualistic rather than nationalistic, then there will be a new appreciation of other nations. They no longer will be related to Jehovah in terms of their relation with Israel but in terms of their own relation to Him. Because God is good, they will come to know Him. His manifestations will call them unto Him and His joy in them will be dependent upon their personal and world relationships. Dealings with the nations previously had been foreign to the idea that God's love and power could extend so easily over the world. Israel had never thought that other nations with devotion

1 Buttenweiser, Prophets.......p.150
2 Jeremiah 16:19-20
to the universal God could be stirred to deal justly and righteously with all. Herein is a cardinal contribution to the development of religion - its breaking of national-istic barriers and spreading Jehovah's power and influence to all the world.

In his individualization of religion is implied the doctrine of personal responsibility and guilt. With the sense of individuality extinct one might think himself punished for the sins of others, sins committed by contemporaries or ancestors. These poles of ideas are expressed in Jeremiah 31:29-30. There had been those who said: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." The children then would be helpless in the talons of ancestral sins; individual character would have no significance. But conscious personal fellowship with God changed the responsibility to the individual himself. Men must realize that the responsibility towards God rested on that individual alone whose motives, actions, and attributes are involved. "Everyone shall die for his own iniquity, every man that eateth sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge."

Man's religious obligations - the obligation to establish and maintain fellowship with God are vital.
They are achieved, not by external agencies, but by consciously aspiring after and shaping his life and conduct in accordance with the absolute perfection of God. Righteousness was recognized as the binding force between God and man and moral perfection as the ideal for man. Man would be judged then, not by his elaborate Temple ceremonies, not by his ancestry, but by the thoughts of his heart and the actions of his life.

Jeremiah's individualization of religion with its attendant idea of personal responsibility suggests also the freedom of the will. God pleads for man to love and serve Him, to be saved from doom by turning to righteousness. But He does not compel man to turn. Man wills his acceptance or rejection of Jehovah's good gifts. God, in His love, suffers for the sins of man and for man's own good must punish him in the effort to lead him into fellowship. The final decision, however, rests with man. The struggle and achievement of Jeremiah to retain the independence of his will from that of the people or God is part of his expression of the individual's separateness, freedom of the will.

However, though there is human freedom, God wills the perfection of His creatures though the evils of human nature retard the accomplishment of His purpose and
frustrate the disciplinary effort. Yahwe labors persistently and in the end, effectually, for the reconciliation of all things to Himself. Though doom hangs over Israel, eventually Jeremiah expected a future regenerate Israel to rise out of the ruins.

The advance of religion portrayed in this chapter by Jeremiah is marked by the concept of the human soul as of supreme worth. This came as a result of the dire happenings of the times. Through the bitter experiences of his own soul, Jeremiah came to the confidence of an immediate knowledge of God. He proved his own soul and "saw how God can hold a single man alone to His will against his nation and all its powers and vindicate him at last. Therein lay much of the vicarious service which Jeremiah achieved for his own generation. What he had done for himself was possible for each of them." 1

It was the radiance of his soul that has led many through the ages to share with him the glory of the indwelling Presence of God.

"Then go not thou in search of Him But to thyself repair. Wait thou within the silence dom. And thou shalt find Him there. Thus shalt thou discover thy soul." 2

1 Smith, Jeremiah p.373
2 Hosmer, The Indwelling God.
"Blessed the man that trusts in the Lord
And the Lord is his trust!
He like a tree shall be planted by water,
That stretches its roots to the stream;
Unafraid at the coming of heat,
His leaf shall be green;
Sans care in the season of drought
He fails not in yielding his fruit." 1

"The individual soul rooted in faith and drawing life from
the Fountain of Living Water, independent of all disaster"
is the most beautiful consummation of life.

1. Jeremiah 17:7f
2. Smith, Jeremiah, p.372
CHAPTER SIX

THE DISCOVERY OF REDEMPTION
THE DISCOVERY OF REDEMPTION.

The question of how to attain salvation has puzzled the great religious minds of all ages. Since the time of Jesus, the question has been centered in the desire of individuals to achieve eternal life. In the time of the great Old Testament prophets, before the birth of the idea of immortality, the question centered in the desire of the religious leaders to save the Hebrew nation.

The center of the problem has been shifted with the growth of religious ideas. But the purpose behind the interest in salvation has been that the highest values of life might be preserved. With the early Old Testament prophets this was to be accomplished by making the members of the nation moral. The goal of salvation for them was the preservation of the nation as a unit. With Jeremiah, the goal was the saving of the individual regardless of nationalistic life. Jeremiah thus, in placing his chief emphasis on the necessity of right individual relationship to God leads toward Jesus. Jesus, it was, who entirely broke from the bonds of nation and race and made the supreme sacrifice for the redemption of mankind.

Since Jeremiah had not caught a gleam of the idea of immortality, salvation’s meaning for him was limited.
It involved the negative emphasis - the saving of individuals and the nation from present disaster and death. It involved, also, the great positive fact of man cooperating with God to carry out His purposes and to make His ideals function though surrounded by evils of life.

The necessity of salvation was central in Jeremiah's thought. He looked into his own heart and found sin; he looked into the hearts of those about him and found grosser sin. He saw the destructive force of sin on life and knew with St. Paul that "the wages of sin is death", that is, the thing sin naturally earns is death. He was so haunted by the knowledge of his people's sinfulness and of the necessary impending judgment that every other problem or thought was subsidiary to it. Penetrating to the core with his ever incisive insight, he found the source of sin. It was not in any single principle as Hosea found it, in disloyalty and Isaiah, in unbelief. He found the heart of man as the source. Man was not, according to Jeremiah, by nature sinful. He was made for God. He found religion as the deepest impulse of man's being, comparable to the instinct of migratory birds.

"The very stork in the heavens
Doth know her appointed seasons;
The turtle, the swift, and the swallow
Observe the time of their coming." (8:7)
Compelled by the laws of nature, they return at the appointed season. Thus the instinct of the human soul for the divine responds naturally to the laws of the spiritual universe and is guided to its true home in God unless perverted by evil habits. Here Tertullians thought that the human heart is naturally Christian was already apprehended by Jeremiah. Here, the words of Augustine are anticipated, "Quia fecisti nos ad te, et in quietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te". 1

That Israel should be persistently impenitent is incomprehensible to Jeremiah with the light of his own experience. If a man falls he rises again but Israel seems to have the habit of perpetual relapse. In vain has he listened for words of repentence he tells us. But to no avail:

"I have listened with ear intent and their words are utterly false. Not a man repents of his wickedness or thinks upon what he has done; But each rushed on in his course As a war horse rushed in battle." (8:6)

They were reckless of obstacles and consequences. It seemed to Jeremiah contrary to the whole order of nature.

1 Confessions of Saint Augustine 1,1.
"Doth the white snow vanish from Sirion’s crags?  
Do the rills that flow cold from the hill ever dry?  
Yet me hath my people forgotten.  
The gods that they worship are phantoms.  
They have stumbled upon the way Ordaind for them of old,  
And turned into by-paths  
That never truly were laid."  
(18:14015)

But though the natural bent of man is toward God, he is also naturally weak and easily led astray. He analyzed man's nature farther and found that sinning developed the sin habit with an accompanying love of it.

"Touching this people Jehovah thus answered:  
Thus do they love to wander  
With unrestrained feet;  
But Jehovah cannot accept them;  
Their guilt he no called to mind,  
And their sins he will visit with chastisement."  
(14:10)

This long practice of sin became second nature so that man could no longer change himself.

"Can the African change his skin  
Or the leopard his spots?  
Just as helpless art thou to do good  
That art wont to do evil "  
(13:23)

Yet the people still prided themselves on being religious. When Jeremiah charged them with having no heart in the religion; they retorted that they had something better - religion in a book. They had religion also in Temple rituals.
Worship through outward observance was the end of their religion. If they performed the ceremonies according to the letter of the law, they felt themselves to have completely fulfilled their obligations to God, and thereby assured themselves of His blessing irrespective of their moral conduct. "If He regarded their doings at all, He would deal kindly with them for He was their God and they His people". Or even if he was antagonistic because of their breaches of the covenant their sin offerings would serve as propitiation.

Against all this lifeless ritual and abhorrent immorality, Jeremiah consistently maintained the spirituality and holiness of Yahwe. The only acceptable service they could render was the pursuit of truth, justice, and love. To appear before a perfect moral loving Being with blood stained hands offering sacrifices of bullocks and rams was blasphemy. Crying out to Jehovah in sincere repentance they must undergo with His help a radical change of character. "Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to Jehovah, and take away the foreskins of your heart." (4:3-4) Otherwise, he must cast them offfrom being His people, and include themselves, their Temple, and city in a common ruin.

In view, then, of this overwhelming prevalence of sin and the persistent stubbornness of hearts, it was inevitable that Jeremiah's message must be strongly one of doom. He knew the natural consequences of wrong doing to be disaster. He knew also that evil demanded judgment from an ethical God as a disciplinary agent to cause their return to Him, their acceptance of redemption. Therefore words of warning and appeal he preached that they might return to God and receive His forgiveness - the redemption of their sins. He exhorted them to do penance. While there was yet time, he would arouse them from apathy. But immediately he saw the pictures of certain doom toward which they were hastening and his heart of love wept for them.

"O hear and give ear, be not haughty; Jehovah hath spoken. To Jehovah your God give ye glory, Before it grows dark, And ere yet, on the mountains of twilight, With feet that are stumbled, Ye look for the light, which to gloom And thick darkness He turneth. But should ye refuse to give heed, Then in secret my soul shall weep, Because of your pride: And with tears that flow ever and ever Mine eyes shall run down For the flock of Jehovah, afar To captivity taken." (13:15-17)

But the people went on their way, plunging deeply into the slough of their iniquities.
"They bent their tongue as a bow for falsehood, they supplanted one another, and ruined each his neighbor's name by slander; their tongue was a deadly arrow even while they spoke peace with their mouths." 1

Therefore, Jehovah said "I will make of Jerusalem ruins, a place for jackals to haunt; I will make of the cities of Judah an uninhabited waste." (9:11)

They had grown so hopelessly evil that repentance seemed no longer possible and the clouds forbode doom.

During these years of growing estrangement Jeremiah had fierce combats with the official prophets of Jerusalem whom he held responsible for the people's waywardness. He accused them of not having God's spirit in their hearts and of having no true message for their people - simply glossing over facts by honeyed words of peace. They not only winked at the vicious pleasures of the people but practiced the grossest follies themselves. Jeremiah laid his sole emphasis on the spirit of prophecy. Hence as they are traditionalists, not advancing in the knowledge of God but preaching ease and comfort, they are false prophets. The true prophet drank of the living wells of religion, advanced in grace and with fiery words pierced and broke the stony hearts of men. Jeremiah's 1 Gordon, Prophets......p.182 (9:3-8)
words seemed only to strike notes of discord with them. He was despised and his words rejected. They had gone so far now in their self-indulgence, that Jeremiah found them incapable of being purged - of having a real conversion. The record that he left speaks volumes of pathos and tragedy.

It is a worthy glory to our prophet that while he delivered the message of God's wrath upon sin, he revealed also the great anguish of God suffering over his people's sin. This he must have found through his own heart wracked and torn by the thoughts of doom and through the unresponsive hearts who would have to suffer. Through his heart of wounded love he could fathom the love of God. He could also fathom the new depths of God. Sin was not a matter to be lightly considered; habits of evil were not easily destroyed. "Forgiveness was not easily granted by God, nor cheaply gained by men; for God has not only set our sins before his face but he carries them on his heart. Repentance must be ardent, vigorous and deeply sincere in spirit."

But men's hearts being false and Jeremiah's warnings failing, the doom descended. The best of the nation were carried into captivity and the rotten surface of political life was broken. Jeremiah was then searching

1 Smith, Jeremiah p.363
hearts more deeply found the soil in which might be built new truths and hopes. From then on his message more and more stressed the individual at the heart of all. He looked beyond the night of calamity and saw the dawn of a brighter day.

"The eternal purpose of divine grace must yet be realized. The nation may perish but the kingdom of God must endure." 1

Thus we found the "future glories" for Israel, an important subject with Jeremiah. In the Book of Consolation, there are particular features emphasized as the reward of a purified people.

1. The Future Nation.
   a. He believes that the nation must suffer in exile. But, out of the experiences, some will develop new faith in Jehovah and these will be the nucleus of the new kingdom. (4:27; 5:10; 18:29; 30:11; 46:28)

   b. Those faithful will be restored to their old home and Judah shall be the habitation of the righteous. (31:23)

   c. Out of the ashes of the old city of Jerusalem, a new city will arise to serve as the dwelling place for Jehovah and a religious center for the people. (33:16)

   d. A new king of the house of David will rule over the kingdom. He will be a man after God's own heart - a representative of Jehovah. (30:9, 21)
2. The New Covenant.

Most important as the interpretation of Jeremiah's theory of personal religion is his prophecy of the new covenant (31:31-34). The old covenants of Sinai and Deuteronomy had failed. With all their majesty they had never vitalized religion. Like Paul he finds the formation of law a hindrance to heart-righteousness. Men continued to do the evil they desired not to do and failed to do the good they desired to accomplish. In the new covenant the whole essence of the moral emphasis is changed. The commands are no longer inscribed on tables of stone or written in a great book but placed in the inward heart. The covenant consists in a long personal relation to God based on forgiveness and mutual confidence. Yahwe will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

Jeremiah here has advanced almost to the Christian standpoint.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." 1

"The passage of the new covenant brings together all the strands of Jeremiah's experience and

1 Gordon, Prophets....p.197)
doctrines, and hopes" freed from the debris and weaves them together to express the essentials of the redemption that God will give his people.

"Lo, days are coming--Rede of the Lord--when I will make with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah a New Covenant, not like the Covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by their hand to bring them forth from the land of Egypt, which My Covenant they brake and I rejected them--Rede of the Lord. But this is My Covenant which I will make with the sons of Israel after those days--Rede of the Lord--I will set My Law in their inward part and on their heart will I write it, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. And they shall teach no more every man his brother saying, Know thou the Lord! For they shall all know Me from the least even to the greatest for I will forgive their guilt and their sin will I remember no more." 1

With its close approach to the New Testament standard, it is not surprising that when Jesus, during his ministry, asked the people whom they believed him to be, some said "Jeremiah" (Matt. 16:14) It is this covenant which Jesus accepted for all men "and sealed with his own blood." 2

The life of the prophet proves him a true minister of the new covenant; the chief worker for the redemption of his people. His story is singularly

1 Smith...p.379
2 Ibid...p.380
pathetic in its revelation of forlornness and seeming failure of a life. There are failures, however, which are supreme successes and Jeremiah's is one. Like Jesus of whom he was so pure a prophetic type, he was made perfect by suffering. "He had given his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them who plucked out the hair; he had not hidden his face from the home of the spitting. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was taken from prison and from judgment and cut off from the land of the living; and they made his grave with the wicked; though he had done no violence neither was deceit in his mouth. It is the second greatest sacrifice that Israel has offered for mankind."

"The experiences of Jeremiah suggest, though he nowhere directly teaches the deepest principle of spiritual religion, that the sufferings of the righteous are for the salvation of the sinful."  

It was not long after his death, when the full tragedy of his life was realized, that this principle became articulate in Israel. It was the very period when out of the destruction of the nation the significance of the single soul became felt and the belief in individual responsibility was prevalent. There is no doubt but that Jeremiah's influence is largely responsible.

1 Smith, Jeremiah...p.344  
2 Gordon, Prophets....p.200
Though he may not have had the clear conscious ness of suffering for the sins of his people, he was surely conscious of suffering with them and because of them.

"To the last dregs he drank the cup of the Lord's wrath upon his false and wilful nation; he suffered with them every pang of their slow death through sin." 1

With meaningful words, he sought to emblazon on their hearts the deep saturation of sin and the magnitude of the guilt of those who sinned against the light and love of God. He struggled to lead them into redemption by way of repentance - "repentance following the deep searching of the heart by the Word and Judgments of God and the agony of learning and doing His Will." 2

But more effective than Jeremiah's teaching was his personal example. It was Jeremiah's own spiritual agony bringing him into close fellowship with God that showed to men the way of reconciliation and redemption. It was his suffering for his people that "foreshadowed as far as mere man can, the sufferings of Jesus Christ for men, - and this is his greatest glory as a prophet." 3

His life was given to his people, and not in vain. The influence of his life and death

1 Smith ...p.346
2 Ibid....p.346
3 Ibid....p.349
led many into the path of redemption. It led them, thus, to seek true fellowship with God and the heights of spiritualized religion; so that they would join in the prayer that characterizes the spirit of Jeremiah:

   Breathe on me, Breath of God,
   Fill me with life anew,
   That I may love what thou dost love,
   And do what thou wouldst do.

   Breathe on me, Breath of God,
   Until my heart is pure,
   Until with thee I will one will,
   To do or to endure.
CONCLUSION
We have sought through our psychographical study to become truly acquainted with the magnificent Old Testament prophet - Jeremiah. We have come to appreciate the heights of his intellect that discovered previously unknown realms of religious thinking. We have felt with him, whose emotional nature was intense, the anguish of suffering and the joy of victory. We have fought with him the battles of the will with God, himself, and his fellowmen. We have watched him develop his individuality to the place where he has become the master of his will, and simultaneously, the servant of God's will.

We have not isolated the elements involved in this experience, in keeping with our emphasis upon the wholeness of development. We have rather tried to glimpse the whole personality and to present the enduring qualities which give him livingness for all ages and all people. His contributions to the religion of Israel, we feel, are superior to those of any other prophet. In making religion involve a personal fellowship with God for everyone, he discovers the central fact of religious life. Linked to this are all other thoughts such as: the discovery of a higher concept of God, the necessity of redemption, the superior worth of the individual as over against the nation, and the necessity for inward righteousness.
He comes to his interpretations through a thoroughly analytical and sympathetic study of his generation, the events and people. The study is reinforced and made of cardinal value through his own personal religious experience. The life of our prophet we have found to be vigorous and grand in its moral and spiritual beauty. These qualities have not been obtained through a life of comfort and joy. He has emerged from the strife of life - purified and chastened by the fire of suffering and an unrequited love for his people. He walked the earth as a "lone soul", towering above the clang and dust of his time, a spiritual genius in the midst of a degraded nation.

Only in close fellowship with God did he find any joy and companionship. The terrible messages of doom, and destruction, and judgment which he was called upon to preach made him the most unpopular man in Judah. His was the fate of the Prophet.

"Alas! how full of fear
Is the fate of the Prophet and Seer;
Forever more, for evermore,
It shall be as it hath been heretofore;
The age in which they live will not forgive
The splendor of the everlasting light,
That makes their foreheads bright,
Nor the sublime
Fore-running of their time!

It remained for succeeding generations to discover the splendor of his life. We submit this study in the hope that it has unlocked the door, to some fair degree, to the study of the fascinating character of Jeremiah, "the prophet of personal piety."
COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY BY CHAPTERS
In chapter one, we gave a complete and yet succinct outline of the historical situation from the time of 735-580 B.C. This includes the statement of the historical setting into which Jeremiah came and the contemporary history with which he is closely related.

In chapter two, we stated the religious influences covering the same period, the contributions of the eighth century prophets, of the Book of the Law, and so forth, are reviewed in order to understand the factors that influenced his thinking. This background is essential also in order to view the advance of Jeremiah's religious ideas over those of his predecessors.

In chapter three we presented the factual material of Jeremiah's life in order to have the necessary background for the psychographical study. In the later chapters, then, we will not need to be concerned with explanations of his life events and their settings, but may place our emphasis upon the character analysis and the large ideas to be handled.

In chapter four, we presented an analysis of Jeremiah's life and thought that led him to his discovery of God. Herein is given his interpretation of God including the elements of the concept inherited and his own contribution added. Inseparable from his discovery of God is his discovery of the relationships of himself and his fellowmen to God. The essence of religion for him and for many others is personal fellowship with God.
In chapter five we showed how Jeremiah made the significant advance from the Hebrew concept of the nation as the unit of religion to the individual as the unit. The supreme value of life then became the soul in fellowship with God. Thus he discovered through his own personal experiences, the struggle against his call to a gloomy task; then the final acceptance and the growth of the soul. We presented in this chapter the elements of individual religion, a new interpretation of international relations, the sense of personal responsibility and guilt and freedom of the will, as definite phases of his concept of the soul, its meaning and value.

In chapter six, we have presented Jeremiah's idea of redemption. Here, the individual as ever against the nation was the chief object of salvation. The necessity for salvation was due to the presence of sin and the frailties of human beings. Sin was so strongly rooted that Jeremiah had to preach a message of inevitable doom unless the people truly repented. Since there was a natural longing in the heart for God, he found for himself and would have all men find, the joy of personal fellowship, and thus, reconciliation and redemption. The new covenant, which taught inward righteousness, was to be the standard by which men judged their lives and attained salvation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bade, W.F., The Old Testament in the Light of To-day, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1915

Ball, Chas.G., The Prophecies of Jeremiah, New York, A.C. Armstrong & Sons, 1890

Bradford, Gamaliel, A Naturalist of Souls, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1926

Buttenweiser, Moses, The Prophets of Israel from the Eighth to the Fifth Century, New York, MacMillan Co., 1914


Cornill, Carl H., The Prophets of Israel, Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1913


Eiselen, F.C., Prophecy and the Prophets, New York, Methodist Book Concern, 1909


Hill, J.G., The Prophets in the Light of To-day, New York, The Abingdon Press, 1919

Kaplan, Jacob W., The Psychology of Prophecy, Philadelphia, Julius H. Greenstone, 1908

Kent, C.F., The Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah, New York, Chas. Scribners' Sons, 1909

Kent, C.F., The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus, New York, Chas. Scribners' Sons, 1917

Kittel, Rudolf, The Religion of the People of Judah, New York, MacMillan Co., 1925


Koffka, Kurt, "Mental Development", Psychologies of 1925, Worcester, Clark University, 1926

MacFarland, Charles S., Jesus and the Prophets, New York, G.P.Putnam, 1905

McFayden, John E., Jeremiah in Modern Speech, London, James Clark & Co., 1919


Orelli, C Von The Old Testament Prophecy Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark,
Sanders, Fowler, Biblical History and Literature, New York Charles Scribners' Sons, 1906

Skinner, John, Prophecy and Religion of Jeremiah, Cambridge, University Press, 1922

Smith, A.P., Old Testament History, New York, Charles Scribners' Sons, 1903

Smith, George A., Jeremiah, New York, George H. Doran Co., 1922


Smith, Wm. Robertson, The Prophets of Israel and Their Place in History to the Close of the Eighth Century B.C., New York, D.Appleton, 1882

Wade, G.W., Old Testament History, New York, Dutton & Co., 1904
Magazines and Articles:


Hastings, James, A Dictionary of the Bible, New York, Chas. Scribners' Sons, 1909

Theart of Jeremiah", Play by Class in Old Testament Prophets, Boston University School of Theology, 1926-7