

their needless harshness and cruelty. In any case, the true Israel of God would not perish. The soul of the Chaldean might be puffed up because of his victories, but the just should live by his faith (chap. 2 : 4). This last assurance is quoted several times by Paul, in a somewhat different sense, as supporting his doctrine of justification by faith, Rom. 1 : 17 ; Gal. 3 : 11. (See also Heb. 10 : 38.)

Appended to the discourses is a prayer, or more properly a psalm, magnifying the Lord as the Judge of all and confidently predicting God's ultimate intervention for the deliverance of His own people. Habakkuk was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah, but seems to have prophesied for a brief period only.

**OBADIAH**—Obadiah's prophecy consists of only one chapter, and contains practically a single message, though representing perhaps several discourses. That message is a denunciation of Edom for its bitter hostility to Judah. The occasion is not clearly indicated, and it is differently placed by various scholars ; but the most probable view seems to be that it was the active assistance given by the Edomites to the Chaldeans, in the capture and overthrow of Jerusalem. There is a close parallel between part of Obadiah's prophecy and one on the same theme by Jeremiah (ch. 39).

It is supposed that both may be quoting from some older prophecy, now lost. Similar denunciations of Edom, for the same reason, are found in Ezekiel chs. 25 and 35. (Compare also Psalm 137 : 7.)

**LAMENTATIONS**—The book of Lamentations is a collection of five poems, all of which are dirges or wails over the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolate condition of the land. Apart from the common subject, they have no necessary connection with one another and each is complete in itself, but they conform to one general type of composition, having a somewhat peculiar mode of parallelism, found only occasionally elsewhere in Scripture. Four out of the five pieces are alphabetic acrostics. The fifth, though not an acrostic, has a verse for each letter of the alphabet.

The Septuagint Greek version, made be-

fore the Christian era, attributes the authorship of all these dirges to Jeremiah, and this tradition has found a place in most modern versions. But the Hebrew original makes no such claim, and most modern scholars are inclined to doubt it. It cannot be regarded as even certain that they were all written by the same author. But, in any case, they must have been written at no long time after the destruction of the city.

### LESSON XXIII.

#### EZEKIEL AND DANIEL

**EZEKIEL**—Ezekiel was a priest who was carried into captivity by the Chaldeans, along with other leading personages, eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and spent the remainder of his life in Babylonia. Five years after being carried away, he began to prophesy, discouraging the hopes of his fellow-exiles and of those left behind in Judæa, for a speedy restoration. Owing to their sins, they had every reason to fear worse troubles than any they had so far endured. This message was naturally most unwelcome ; but he impressed it upon their minds by a variety of symbolical actions and visions of a most striking character.

After the fall of the city Ezekiel was treated with more respect by his fellow-countrymen, owing to the fulfillment of his predictions, and during the remainder of his prophetic ministry he strove mainly to cheer them by the hope of an ultimate restoration, if they would but repent of their idolatry and sin. In order to stimulate their hopes, he gives in the closing chapters of his book (chs. 40 to 48) an ideal picture of the restored Jerusalem, with its temple, sacrifices and festivals. He also describes the redistribution of the land among the tribes. He himself passed away long before any of these hopes were realized.

Inserted in the middle of Ezekiel's prophecies (chs. 25 to 32) is a group of denunciations of divine judgment on the other nations of Palestine, which had apparently rejoiced in the downfall of Jerusalem.

**DANIEL**—Daniel is one of the most picturesque and striking figures in Old Testament history, and his book, is, at the same