

PRELIMINARY SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEREMIAH.

A PRIEST by birth, Jeremiah became a prophet by the special call of God. His priestly origin implies a good literary training, in times when literature was largely in the hands of the priests. The priesthood, indeed, constituted a principal section of the Israelitish nobility, as appears both from the history of those times, and from the references in our prophet's writings, where kings and princes and priests are often named together as the aristocracy of the land (i. 18, ii. 26, iv. 9); and this fact would ensure for the young prophet a share in all the best learning of his age. The name of Jeremiah, like other prophetic proper names, seems to have special significance in connexion with the most illustrious of the persons recorded to have borne it. It means *Iahvah foundeth*, and, as a proper name, The Man that Iahvah foundeth; a designation which finds vivid illustration in the words of Jeremiah's call: "Before I moulded thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth from the womb, I consecrated thee: a spokesman to the nations did I make thee" (i. 5). The not uncommon name of Jeremiah—six other persons of the name are numbered in the Old Testament—must have appeared to the prophet as invested with new force and