

*Jeremiah.*—The tragic death of the young king Josiah and the strife of parties produced an uncertainty of policy which could end only in national disaster. The prophet Jeremiah gave sober counsel and frequent warning as well as strong denunciation. He saw that the threatened judgment must come but his plan of recognizing stern facts and bowing before the great Babylonian power might have lessened the terrors of the situation and have avoided the final tragedy. But to do this required an act of faith—faith to see the hand of Yahweh in the real events of history, of which neither the kings nor the people were capable. Jeremiah gave his faithful testimony during many years, and after the destruction of Jerusalem was dragged away to Egypt, where his end is veiled in darkness. He was a worthy successor of the great prophets, and did much to give a deeper sense of individual life and a higher spirituality to religion. Though the book that bears his name is in a confused condition, and contains much material of various kinds that did not come from his hand, we can gain from it a vivid picture of the disorder of the times, of his outward conflicts and inward struggles. In his story we find more of personal “experience” in the sense in which we now use that word. He had the conviction that he was, as an individual, foreordained to a great task (Jer. 1/5), but that did not end the matter; he was often subject to inward misgivings and wrestlings regarding his call and work. He makes complaints to his God and bewails his hard lot. He is gentle and sensitive, but cannot attain to the height of Christian resignation and calmness. But it was a terrible life, to be always on the strain, denouncing false prophets, exposing popular delusions, declaring unceasingly that the policy of the leaders must lead to inevitable doom. The great prophetic message, that has already been discussed, he presented in his own way with bold imagery and gentle poetic beauty, which shows that he lived in communion with nature and in intimate sympathy with human life. His life, the story of it, and his poems, must have exerted a great influence, though at the time it all seemed to be such a tragic failure. When the reaction came, and men could see his utter truthfulness and loy-