

must have galled their pride. They boasted of being the noble vine planted in Canaan by God. Prophets had often compared them to one,¹ though they had spoken also of its having degenerated and grown rank and useless. But in the present case the worthlessness of the wood of the vine, so much softer and more crooked than many other kinds, is the only point brought forward. They might, indeed, be a vine, but, now that they bore no fruit, of what worth was their wood? The Word of Jehovah, he says, came to him, saying:—

2 Son of man,² what better is the wood of the vine than other kinds of wood? Or what is the vine-branch among the trees of the year?³ 3 Can you take wood from it, to make into anything? or do they take even a pin from it, to hang any vessel upon? 4 See, it is given for food to the fire! The flame has burnt off its two ends, and scorched the middle.⁴ Is it good for anything? 5 Even, when it was whole, it was good for nothing; how much less will it be good for anything when the fire has burnt and scorched it!

6 Therefore, thus says the Lord Jehovah; I will make the inhabitants of Jerusalem like the wood of the vine, which I have given like that of the other trees of the year, as food for the fire. 7 I will set my face against them. They came out of the fire, when I brought them from Egypt, and fire will now finally consume them, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I set My face against them, 8 and make the land desolate, because they have committed unfaithfulness! saith the Lord Jehovah.

Ceaseless in his endeavours to rouse his fellow-countrymen to a sense of their true position, as apostates, to a lamentable extent, from the religion of their fathers, and as morally degenerate and corrupt, Ezekiel tried every

¹ Hos. x. 1. Isa. v. 1. Jer. ii. 21.

² Ezek. xv. 1-8.

³ See vol. iv. p. 358.

⁴ Is this an allusion to the calamities already endured by the Twelve Tribes?