

JEREMIAH

BEING THE BAIRD LECTURE FOR 1922

WORKS BY THE VERY REV.
SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, D.D., LL.D.

JEREMIAH: Being the Baird Lecture for 1922.

THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE
HOLY LAND.

JERUSALEM: THE TOPOGRAPHY, ECONOMICS AND
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THE TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
IN SCHOOLS. An Address to a Conference of
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TO
THE UNION
OF
THE SCOTTISH CHURCHES

PREFACE.

THE purpose and the scope of this volume are set forth in the beginning of Lecture I. Lecture II. explains the various metrical forms in which I understand Jeremiah to have delivered the most of his prophecies, and which I have endeavoured, however imperfectly, to reproduce in English. Here it is necessary only to emphasise the variety of these forms, the irregularities which are found in them, and the occasional passage of the Prophet from verse to prose and from prose to verse, after the manner of some other bards or rhapsodists of his race. The reader will keep in mind that what appear as metrical irregularities on the printed page would not be felt to be so when sung or chanted ; just as is the case with the folk-songs of Palestine to-day. I am well aware that metres so primitive and by our canons so irregular have been more rhythmically rendered by the stately prose of our English Versions ; yet it is our duty reverently to seek for the

original forms and melodies of what we believe to be the Oracles of God. The only other point connected with the metrical translations offered, which need be mentioned here, is that I have rendered the name of the God of Israel as it is by the Greek and our own Versions—The Lord—which is more suitable to English verse than is either Yahweh or Jehovah.

The text of the Lectures and the footnotes show how much I owe to those who have already written on Jeremiah, as also in what details I differ from one or another of them.

I have retained the form of Lectures for this volume, but I have very much expanded and added to what were only six Lectures of an hour each when delivered under the auspices of the Baird Trust in Glasgow in 1922.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

CHANONRY LODGE,

OLD ABERDEEN,

18th October, 1923.

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PRELIMINARY.

FIRST of all, I thank the Baird Trustees for their graceful appointment to this Lecture of a member of what is still, though please God not for long, another Church than their own. I am very grateful for the privilege which they grant me of returning to Glasgow with the accomplishment of a work the materials for which were largely gathered during the years of my professorship in the city. The value of the opportunity is enhanced by all that has since befallen our nation and the world. The Great War invested the experience of the Prophet, who is the subject of this Lecture, with a fresh and poignant relevance to our own problems and duties. Like ourselves, Jeremiah lived through the clash not only of empires but of opposite ethical ideals, through the struggles and panics of small peoples, through long and terrible fighting, famine, and slaughter of the youth of the nations, with all the anxieties to faith and the problems of Providence, which such things naturally raise. Passionate for peace, he was called to proclaim the inevitableness of war, in opposition to the popular prophets of a

false peace; but later he had to counsel his people to submit to their foes and to accept their captivity, thus facing the hardest conflict a man can who loves his own—between patriotism and common sense, between his people's gallant efforts for freedom and the stern facts of the world, between national traditions and pieties on the one side and on the other what he believed to be the Will of God. These are issues which the successive generations of our race are called almost ceaselessly to face; and the teaching and example of the great Prophet, who dealt with them through such strenuous debates both with his fellow-men and with his God, and who brought out of these debates spiritual results of such significance for the individual and for the nation, cannot be without value for ourselves.