

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

LAMENT I

Zion's Ruin.

STANZA 1.

1 Why sits the populous City in solitude?
The Great among Nations become like a widow?
The Princess of Countries reduced to pay tribute,—
2 And weeps in the night, with the tears on her cheeks?—
There is none to give comfort, of all that have loved her,—
Her friends all deceived her, they were to her traitors!

STANZA 2.

3 Judah is captive to grief and hard slavery;
She dwells with the heathen and cannot find rest;
All her lovers look at her enclosed by besiegers.
4 Zion's streets mourn, for none come up to worship;
All her gateways are empty, her Priesthood is sobbing;
Her maids are afflicted, herself in distress!

STANZA 3.

5 Her foes are supreme and her enemies prosper!—
For the LORD has distressed her for manifold sins.
Her children march captives before their tormentors!—
6 All beauty has gone from the daughter of Zion.
Her princes are wild deer who cannot find pasture,—
They run without strength from the face of the hunter.

STANZA 4.

7 Jerusalem thinks in her mis'ry, and wandering,
Of all pleasures that were in the preceding times,
Ere her weak people fell to the hand of a rival,—
And tormentors look on her, and laugh at her capture.

STANZA 5.

8 Jerusalem sinned,—sinned,—so goes into exile:
All who honoured, despise her, from seeing her stripped,
Therefore she is sobbing, and turns herself lingering,
9 She defiled all her garments, nor thought not of results,
And falls in her sorrows with no one to cheer her.
"Look, LORD, on my griefs, for my enemy prospers;"—

STANZA 6.

10 How her tyrant has laid hands on all her delights!
She sees that the Heathen have entered her Temple,—
Tho' you ordered them never to enter Your court!
11 All her people are moaning and begging their bread;
Give their treasures for food to sustain them in life!
"Look, O LORD, and assist, for I have become faint."

STANZA 7.

“ Is it nothing to you who pass by on the road ?— 12
 Look and see !—Is there sorrow that equals my anguish ?
 Whose wound the LORD galled in the day of His wrath ?
 From above He sent fire on my bones and reduced them ; 13
 Spread a net for my feet and threw down on my back ;
 I was given to wasting and sickness all day.

STANZA 8.

“ His hand has wreathed and locked my sin's yoke on my neck, 14
 My strength fails ;—the LORD gives to unbearable hands,—
 All my heroes the LORD has destroyed in my breast ; 15
 He summoned a meeting to break all my warriors !
 The LORD treads in a press the young daughters of Judah !—
 For these I am weeping, my eyes flow with water,— 16
 For the comfort is gone that refreshed my life,—
 For my children were lost, when the enemy won ! ”

STANZA 9.

Zion spreads out her hands, but yet none give her comfort ; 17
 And the LORD has arranged Jacob's tyrants around !
 Amongst them Jerusalem comes to be flouted,—
 “ Yet JEHOVAH is right ! I rejected His orders !— 18
 Hear, now, all the Nations, and look on my woes,—
 For my girls and my boys are all taken as slaves !

STANZA 10.

“ I called to my lovers, but they have deceived me !— 19
 My Priests and my Rulers expired in the City.
 While seeking for food to sustain them in life !
 Look, LORD, for I grieve, and my bowels are tortured, 20
 My heart turns in my breast, for it mourns my rebellion ;
 In the street the Sword slaughters ;—at home it is Death !

STANZA 11.

“ They hear that I sob, and I am without comfort ;— 21
 All my foes hear my wrong,—they are glad You have done it !
 Bring the day You proclaimed,—and let them be like me !
 Bring all their wrong-doing before You and wound them,
 In the way that You wounded myself for my sins,—
 For my sobbings are great, and my heart is depressed.”

LAMENT 2.

An Appeal to God's Mercy.

STANZA 1.

Why wraps the LORD Zion's daughter in cloud in His anger ? 2
 Why throws Israel's beauty from heaven to earth ?
 Nor His footstool regards in the day of His wrath ?
 The LORD swallowed all Jacob's fields without pity ; 2
 Broke down in His fury the forts of Bath-Judah ;
 And flung to earth wounded her kingdom and princes !
 Cut off in fierce anger the strong horn of Israel ; 3
 His hand has withdrawn from the face of the foe ;
 Burnt Jacob, like flame that devours around,
 Bent His bow like a foe, fixed His hand as opponent, 4
 And slew all the loved in the halls of Bath-Zion,
 And poured out His fury like fire !

STANZA 2.

5 The LORD came like a foeman ; He swallowed up Israel ;
 He swallowed her Mansions, destroyed all her Strongholds,
 And loaded Bath-Judah with mourning on mourning!—
 6 Shakes His tent like a garden,—His chosen home ruins!
 The LORD banished from Zion the Feast and the Sabbath,
 And degraded in anger the King and the priest!
 7 The LORD loathes His altar, retires from His temple,
 And His Palace-walls gives to the power of her foes
 Who roar in the House of the LORD like a feast day!

STANZA 3.

8 The LORD planned to destruction the walls of Bath-Zion,
 Stretched the line, nor will turn back his hand from the wreck ;
 The rampart and wall weep together, and languish,
 9 With smashed bars her ruined gates fall to the earth,—
 And her Princes and King are amongst lawless heathens,
 And her preachers no more from the LORD find a vision,
 10 And Bath-Zion's rulers are on the earth speechless;—
 They throw dust on their heads, and their garments are sacks,
 And Jerusalem's maidens to earth bow their heads!

STANZA 4

11 Mine eyes fail with tears, and my feelings are troubled,
 And my pride falls to earth, with the wound of my People,
 While child and babe faint in streets of the City,
 12 And entreat of their mothers for corn and for wine;—
 When they faint, like the slain, on the City's wide streets,
 Or their life is poured out on their sad mothers' lap!

STANZA 5.

13 How portray, or depict you, Jerusalem's daughter ?
 How liken, to comfort you, maiden of Zion ?
 For deep as the sea is your wound,—Who can cure you?—
 14 Your Preachers present you with fable and falsehood,
 And display not your vice, nor can keep you from chains,—
 But show to you visions of lying seductions!

STANZA 6.

15 At you, they will clap hands, all who pass on the road ;
 Hiss, shaking their heads, at Jerusalem's daughter ;—
 " Was this she they called the perfection of beauty ?
 The delight for all earth ? "
 16 Against you all your enemies open their mouth,
 Grind their teeth, hiss, and say,—“ We have swallowed her down—
 We have seen and have found the day that we had hoped ! ”

STANZA 7.

17 The LORD has effected His purpose completely ;
 The intent that He threatened in days long ago ;—
 Thrown down, and not pitied ; your foes gloat above you ;—
 And your tyrants can lift up their horn over you !

LAMENT 3.

An Appeal to Zion to Repent.

STANZA 1.

18 Walls of Zion ! cry heartily to the ALMIGHTY,
 Pour your tears like a river, by day and by night !
 Give no rest to yourself and no sleep to your eyeballs !

Arise! shout by night to the chief of the watchers,— 19
 Pour your heart like a stream, let it flow to the Master,—
 Lift to Him your hands for the life of your children,
 Who are fainting for want at the head of the streets!

STANZA 2.

Look, LORD, and reflect upon whom You have done this! 20
 Shall wives eat their offspring? The infants they dandled?
 Or the Priest and the Preacher, be slain in GOD'S Temple?
 On the earth of the streets lie the young and the old?— 21
 You have slain the young girls and young men by the sword,—
 In the day of Your anger You slaughtered unsparing!
 You called like a meeting my terrors around me, 22
 And there was in that day from the LORD'S wrath no flight,
 But my foe shamed my girls, and the darlings I dandled.

LAMENT 4

The Prophet bewails his own Sufferings.

STANZA 1.

I am the man who felt pain from the rod of His anger!— 3
 He drove me, and led into Darkness, not light! 2
 Yes, he turned me, and struck with His hand all the day, 3
 Wore my flesh, and my skin, and has broken my bones,— 4
 Built above, and has struck on my head and exhausted! 5
 I have dwelt in Forgottenness, like the long dead,— 6
 I am bound and I cannot escape from my chain! 7

STANZA 2.

When I cry, and I shout, He is deaf to my prayer! 8
 As with stones blocks my road,—and has puzzled my path! 9
 Is a night bear to me,—and a lion in hiding; 10
 He has damaged my road, and has broke and left lonely; 11
 Bent His bow, and set me as a mark for His dart; 12
 Has sent to my loins the sons of His quiver; 13
 Made a scorn to my people, their song all the day. 14
 He filled me with bitters, He sated with wormwood; 15
 My teeth broke with gravel, and covered with ashes; 16
 He removed me from peace;—so my life forgot ease, 17
 And I said, "My strength fails, and my trust in the LORD!— 18
 I feel my affliction, and wormwood, and gall!"— 19
 Think, think, and reflect upon me and my life!— 20
 But I place this to heart, and I therefore have hope,— 21
 That the LORD'S mercies end not; nor finish His pities;— 22
 They are new every morning,—Your manifold gifts! 23
 "The LORD is my portion," my soul says, "I trust Him." 24

STANZA 3.

The LORD blesses the hopeful, the soul that will seek Him; 25
 It is well to wait still for JEHOVAH'S salvation; 26
 It is well that a man bear the yoke in his youth; 27
 Sit alone and is silent, for He put it on him; 28
 Place his mouth to the dust, for perhaps there is hope! 29
 Give his cheek to the smiter, be filled with reproaches; 30
 For the MASTER will not cast for ever away! 31
 Though correcting, He still has great pity and mercy;— 32
 Does not His heart grieve, when correcting the children of men? 33

STANZA 4.

34 To crush under one's feet all those chained to the earth,
 35 To distort a man's right in the face of the Highest,
 36 To pervert a man's cause, the LORD never approves.—
 37 Who speaks, and it comes, when the LORD has not ordered?—
 38 Both bad and good came from the mouth of the Highest.

STANZA 5.

THE LORD'S REPLY.

39 "Why complain men of pain? Men who live in their sins?
 40 Search your ways, and repent, and turn back to the LORD,—
 41 Lift your hearts, not your hands, to the GOD in the Heavens!"

THE PROPHET'S RESPONSE.

42 "We have sinned and have sorrowed; but You have not
 pardoned;—
 43 Clothed in fury, You followed, and slew without pity;
 44 You go clothed in a cloud that our prayer cannot cross.—
 45 You make us the rubbish and refuse of Nations!

STANZA 6.

46 "All our enemies open upon us their mouths,
 47 Ours Fear and the Pit, and betrayal and breaking!
 48 My eyes flow like brooks at the wreck of my People;—
 49 Mine eyes flow without resting and will not leave off,
 50 Until the LORD looks down and sees it from Heaven,
 51 Mine eye wounds my soul for the girls of my City!

STANZA 7.

52 Without cause, I was chased like a bird by my foes,
 53 My life shut in a dungeon, with stone laid above;—
 54 Waters flowed on my head, and I cried "I am doomed!"
 55 LORD, I then called Your Name, from the nethermost dungeon,
 56 And Your ear heard my voice, and with pleasure my shriek.
 57 You approached when I called,—and said to me, "Fear not!"
 58 LORD, You pleaded my cause, and gave my body life!
 59 You said I was wronged, LORD, and granted acquittal;
 60 You saw all their malice and plottings against me;
 61 You heard their abuse, LORD, against me conspiring,
 62 My foes' lips, and contrivance against me all day;
 63 Saw that sitting and rising, I still was their song!—
 64 What their own hands have made, LORD, return as their pay,
 65 Give them blindfolded minds, as Your curse in themselves!
 66 LORD, chase them in anger, and sweep them from under the sky!

LAMENT 5.

An Elegy on Zion.

STANZA 1.

4 How the bright gold is tarnished!
 The beautiful sculptures flung down!
 The fair stones at the top of the streets!

STANZA 2.

2 Sons of Zion, the precious, the equal to gold,
 Are esteemed but as pitchers, the work of a potter!—
 3 Wild beasts draw the breast,—they give suck to their young;—
 But our mothers are hard, like the birds of the Desert!
 4 So their infant's tongue sticks to its palate for thirst!—
 The children ask bread, but they cannot obtain it;—

Those who fed upon dainties, are starved in the streets ;— 5
 Those who were wrapped in purple, now lie upon dunghills,—
 For the woe of my People is greater than Sodom's, 6
 That perished at once, with no torture upon her !

STANZA 3.

Bright as snow were her Nazarites,—whiter than milk ! 7
 Red as coral their faces, as polished as sapphires ;—
 Now their form is black darkness,—not known in the streets,— 8
 Their skin cleaves to their bones, it is dry as a stick !
 The slain by the sword, excel those slain by hunger ;— 9
 Who waste, stabbed by-want of the fruits of the field !
 The hands of kind mothers are boiling their children, 10
 They are their only food in the wreck of my Race !
 The LORD works His fury, pours out His fierce anger,— 11
 Lights a fire in Zion that burns her foundations !

STANZA 4.

The Kings of earth thought not, nor all the world's people, 12
 That her fierce foes could enter Jerusalem's Gates ;
 For the sins of her Preachers, the crimes of her Priesthood, 13
 Who shed in her centre the blood of the Righteous,
 Who with their eyes torn out, reel blood-splashed in her streets, 14
 That no one is able to touch to their clothing.
 All exclaim, "Go ! Unclean ! Go !—Go !—Do not touch us !"— 15
 When flying they wander, they say in the heathen,—
 "They shall not stay here !"

STANZA 5.

The LORD turns from their part, He will no more regard them. 6
 Accepts not their Priests, and respects not their elders.
 Our eyes failed with watching for those who could help us, 17
 And we trusted a Nation who never could save !
 They step on our footmarks when walking our pathways ! 18
 Our end comes !—the time fills !—Our harvest is with us !
 Our hunters are swifter than sky-flying Eagles ;— 19
 On the mountains they pounce, in the Desert they wait !
 Took from the LORD'S Chosen the breath and the life,— 20
 In whose shade, we had said, we can rest from the heathen !

STANZA 6.

I am glad, O Bath-Edom, you traitor of Autzland, 21
 Next to you the cup goes ;—you will drink and will stagger !
 Your woe ends, Bath-Zion,—no more to be captured ;— 22
 Your grief comes, Edom's Daughter ;—your sins are exposed !

LAMENT 6.

A Plea for Judah.

STANZA 1.

Think, LORD, about what has come on us, 5
 Attend, and regard our reproach !
 Our lands are transferred to the stranger, 2
 To the foreign our houses belong !
 We are become fatherless orphans, 3
 And widows our mothers are now !
 We drink our own water for money, 4
 Our own fuel comes to us for price.
 Upon our necks are our hunters ; 5
 We are wearied, and may not have rest !

STANZA 2.

6 We gave our hand to the Mitzraim,
 We satisfied Ashur with bread ;—
 7 Our fathers have sinned, and are not ;—
 Yet we, ourselves, carry their sins !—
 8 They were slaves who now over us rule,
 There is none to release from their hands !

STANZA 3.

9 We bring in our bread by our lives,
 In the face of the sword, from the plain,
 10 Our skin is as hot as a kiln,
 For the fever of famine consumes !
 11 They have ravished the women in Zion,
 And in Judah's Cities the maids !
 12 The Princes are hung by their hands ;—
 To the Elders they pay no respect !
 13 The young men do work at the Mill,
 And the children are loaded with wood !

STANZA 4.

14 The Elders have ceased from the gate,
 And the youthful abandon their songs !
 15 Our heart has left off from its glee,
 Into mourning our dance has been turned
 16 The wreath has fallen off from our head ;—
 Alas for us !—because we had sinned.
 17 Through that our heart has turned fain
 For that has our sight become blind.—
 18 Desolation now sits on Zion's hill ;
 And Jackals are prowling around !

THE ENVOY.

A Prayer for Pardon.

19 O LORD ! You endure for ever
 Your Throne is for age after age ;
 20 Then will You forget us for ever ?
 Or abandon for long lapse of time ?
 21 O turn us back, LORD, and we shall be turned,
 And renew our days as of old ;
 22 For if You should wholly reject,
 Your anger would rise to excess !

THE END OF THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.