

BIBLE VIEW  
OF THE  
JEWISH CHURCH

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*BY HOWARD CROSBY*

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THE  
BIBLE VIEW  
OF THE  
JEWISH CHURCH,  
IN THIRTEEN LECTURES,

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## PREFACE.

THE following lectures were delivered to the people of my charge, with the design of giving them a *coup d'oeil* of the history of the Jewish church as the Bible sets it forth.

That the grand outline might be distinct, historic details and subordinate questions have been avoided.

The church of God is one. The church to-day is the same church which God brought out of the land of Egypt, the same which he will glorify in the future. The same Saviour, the same Holy Spirit, the same principles of the divine government are found at Sinai as at Calvary. The Old Testament and the New are equally in essence (though not in completeness) the gospel of God. Love to God as the result of an accepted atonement is the distinguishing subjective mark of the church, as the sacrifice of a divine substitute for the sinner is the great objective truth of revelation.

So also man's weakness and tendency to abandon God for his own devices is visible in the church of

all ages, and the need of reminding the church that its strength is in obedience to God's word and implicit reliance on the Divine Spirit is ever apparent. In these days when philosophy is attempting to take the place of revelation, and many leaders in the church are encouraging the attempt, it is especially important to call the church to the contemplation of the Word as the only light in this dark world, that it may walk aright and not fall into the pits of error that Satan through the specious influence of human learning ("the wisdom of this world") has prepared for it.

These lectures are offered as a humble contribution to this end.

H. C.

# THE BIBLE VIEW OF THE JEWISH CHURCH.

## LECTURE I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

ALL the information we have regarding the origin and early history of the Jews and the Jewish church comes from the Bible. The monuments of Egypt and Babylon have not a word for us on the subject. A few historical fragments of ancient writing are preserved, which in vague and varied ways speak of a foreign people migrating from Egypt, where they had sojourned for a long period in an early time, which allusions Josephus the Jewish historian refers to the Jews. And the Assyrian monuments make mention of a few of the later Kings of Israel and Judah, who were made tributary to Assyria. There are also Babylonian traditions of the creation and the deluge which bear some resemblance to the accounts given in the first book of the Bible. But from none of these sources is any light shed upon the origin and early history of the Jewish people, and we are shut up to the Bible only for our knowledge. The matter

is thus greatly simplified. Every Bible reader is able to judge of the truth of any writer on the subject. He is able to determine how much is inserted by mere fancy, or how much is altered to suit preconceived theories, or how much is omitted as chargeable to interpolation, and then he can judge how far these changes are conformable to reason and common sense.

The history of Israel as given us in the Old Testament was always received by the Jewish and Christian churches as exact and true until quite modern times. In these latter days a school of learned men has arisen, whose aim has been to show that the Old Testament is a mass of jumbled documents, largely fabulous and fraudulently conceived. In the goodly name of "higher criticism," which means a criticism of internal relations rather than of the outward text, they have professed to dissect the Old Testament and discover its many independent and ill-assorted parts. They have gone so far as even to break up sentences and declare that one part of the sentence belonged to one writer and period and the other to another writer and period. Without a particle of external evidence but only by the acuteness of their own intellects, they have taken the books of Moses and parcelled them out to a dozen different authors and have placed those



authors in time from 500 to 1000 years after the time of Moses, in order to do which they deny the testimony of our Lord and his apostles, they deny the testimony of the Jewish and Christian church for ages, and they invent utter impossibilities, such as the palming off on the Jewish people a detailed ritual as of Moses by fraudulent schemers of a late age, in which the main features of the ritual could not be realized, and the manufacture of a mass of law and history whose language and references are all antique and exactly suited to the olden time for a people to whom such references would be unmeaning. And all this overwhelming absurdity they venture on solely on the ground of assumed differences of style in the writing and à priori determinations against the supernatural, and in doing this, they unhesitatingly strike out all passages in the Old Testament which militate against their wild theory, and dogmatically assert that they are interpolations.

There never was a more bare-faced falsehood thrust upon the public than this Wellhausen theory, so called from its most reckless advocate, but which has numerous modifications (though containing the essential folly) in writings of the German critics and their servile acolytes in England and America. Apart from all personal characteristics

and merits, it is easy to see in this movement the spirit of that Evil One who is ever watchful to oppose God's truth and to sow doubt in the minds of God's people. Fifty years ago the arch-enemy directed his attack against the *New Testament* and in different ways by men like Baur and Strauss and Renan endeavored to overthrow its authenticity and authority, but he was fearfully discomfited, and men like Lightfoot and Westcott and Abbott were raised up to show the extreme audacity of these infidels and to make as clear as the noonday the genuineness and authenticity of the *New Testament*. Foiled in this assault, the great enemy of souls and of God turned to the *Old Testament* and brought out some vagaries of learned men of a past generation, on which to build up, through Kuenen, Graf, Reuss, Wellhausen and others, a battery against the Pentateuch and the *Old Testament* history. Satan well knew that if the *Old Testament* could be made to appear false, then Christ and his apostles, who constantly quote it as God's word, must be false too. And so the battery was constructed and its guns mounted, and their roar frightened the timid as if all God's revelation was going to pieces, but again the Lord raised up men like Stuart and Edersheim in England, and Curtis and Bissell and Green in our own country, who exposed the stu-

pendous fallacies of these learned critics and amply vindicated the integrity of the Old Testament Scriptures. In such a course of lectures as this which I begin this evening, it would be out-of-place to enter into details regarding this contest and to show the many special absurdities of which these iconoclasts are guilty, and the complete exposure of these by the equally learned men who have indignantly met their aspirations on the Holy Word. I shall content myself with quoting a passage from the learned and devout Edersheim. After a forcible series of illustrations of the reckless work wrought by the German dissectors, he says, referring to the preposterous idea of attributing the Mosaic law to a time a thousand years later than the Mosaic epoch, "The legislation, supposed to have been then introduced, made no provision for, took not the slightest notice of, the wants of the great majority, not even to the provision of synagogues, which we know to have been among the first requirements of the dispersed—nay, even of those who returned to Palestine. Surely this seems so strange as to be almost incredible. In times which called for the widest comprehension, they concocted the narrowest conceivable legislation, and that in the interest of the small number of priests who returned to Palestine; and they not

only succeeded in introducing it as the Mosaic Law, but in imposing it upon the educated majority without eliciting a single contradiction or raising a single question as to its authenticity—until the ingenuity of critics more than 2000 years later discovered the forgery!” Such are Edersheim’s just words. We can characterize the promulgation of such a theory as literary impudence. We come back, therefore, to the impregnable position of the full inspiration of the Old Testament, in which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, to which Old Testament our blessed Lord himself ever directed his hearers, declaring that not one jot or tittle of it would fail, that it were “easier for heaven and earth to part than one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke xvi. 17). Remember that when our Lord said this, he was speaking directly of the Old Testament just as we have it, which was called, “the law and the prophets,” and this is the phrase he uses in this immediate context. Now it is this inspired Old Testament that alone gives us our knowledge of the origin and early history of the Jewish church, and the humblest godly soul is quite as competent to decide on the truth of any general statement concerning it as the most learned professor in a University.

From this Old Testament we learn that the Jewish church was miraculously born and nurtured, and the Jewish people started on their career from a high vantage ground of divine revelation, from which they declined as the centuries passed, through the native depravity of the human heart. The infidel statement is just the reverse. It affirms that the Jews were originally a barbarous people, and that they gradually by a process of political and social evolution worked their way out into a high civilization, from polytheists becoming monotheists and from loose nomadic tribes becoming a solid kingdom. Of course this position, so antagonistic to the Bible record, is taken in consistency with the system that rejects all that is supernatural, whether miracle or prophecy or revelation.

The whole Jewish history is explicable only on the theory of a divine call and a divine revelation at the start. There was nothing in the world before Christ to develop into a pure and holy law of love to God and love to man. Whatever there was of that sort must have come from heaven. Look at Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome. Is there any such development in those great empires? Did those nations with all their culture ever conceive a notion of love to God and man on the fundamental principle of all law and

social order? And yet here is little Israel proclaiming this exalted truth. How did Israel get it? If Israel developed it from its own heart and mind, why did not the other nations so develop it? No; there was no development at all in it. Israel had it at the very start and had it direct from God. The law of Moses could have had its birth in no human mind. Like the gospel of Christ, it is aimed against the common tendencies of our race. It calls for a heart-service to God. It forbids every form of advantage over our neighbor. It makes prominent the exceeding sinfulness of man and his constant need of the divine forgiveness and divine guidance. It belittles human pomp and pride and it makes no compromise with sin. In all this it is diametrically opposite to the prevailing religions of the old world, and it is so, because it teaches a religion not of man but of God. Put the Psalms of David as late as you please in Old Testament history, put them down to the times of the exile and afterward, and what human source could possibly have originated such profound views of sin and guilt and such clear views of the divine forgiveness with its spiritual comfort and strength? Compare these Psalms, which have ever been the sweetest and most sustaining experiences of spiritual life to the humble believer, with the finest hymns of the Vedas

and other pagan books, and you feel at once that you are profaning the Psalms by such a parallel. In the finest pagan hymns there is but superficial imagination or intellectual effort. In the Bhagavad Gita, which is the most devotional of the Hindoo books, and which perhaps is of a date later than the time of Christ, we have Arguna, the man, examining the physical constitution of his god and seeing within him all the sages and celestial snakes, the god himself being possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes on all sides (Bhagavad Gita ch. 11, 17). It is such gross and childish material that makes up the body of pagan sacred literature. Only those who are ignorant of it dare compare it with the Bible. Look at the Homeric hymns, so called, and whatever of a religious literature there was in ancient Greece, so highly cultured and so proficient in art and oratory and poesy, and you see only a string of compounded epithets of deity, many of them only such as weak men would delight in, but not a glimpse of the true state of man's heart or the true character of a God of justice and love. It is so in Babylonia and Assyria. It is so in Egypt. Now and then a slight notice of God as the only one to forgive in response to the trust of the human heart may be found, as a remnant of the original revelation filtered down through

the ages, but the mass of the theology and worship of all those most enlightened nations was gross, selfish, superficial and sensual. Now put alongside of all this the pure teachings of the Old Testament, the deep revelations of the depravity of the human heart, the absolute need of the Divine Spirit to renew it, the summons from worldliness, the exaltation of a spiritual life and the demand of internal purity, and you must be blind indeed if you do not see that this grand Bible is of God, bearing on its face the seal of its heavenly origin.

It is this glorious book of God which tells us of His wonderful ways with the children of men, which reveals to us His exact justice that can never yield to the slightest compromise, and yet also his abounding love which can show mercy to the chief of sinners while justice has its perfect way and exacts the punishment of sin to the uttermost. It is this paradox which is revealed in the person and work of the Son of God, becoming flesh and dwelling, suffering and dying among us, becoming sin for us, becoming a curse for us, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, by whose stripes we are healed. And this marvel of the Divine wisdom and love was adumbrated to the ancient church of Israel by the typical ceremonial, which was an object lesson of a substituted Saviour bearing the blow of



justice, by whose blood the worshiper was purged of his sin and reconciled to God. The Old and the New Testament are all one. They have one aim. They treat of one revelation. They disclose one way of salvation. They fit in together as perfectly as two sundered fragments of a branch would fit together, with an undesigned exactness that no human art could imitate. The Old Testament must be read in the light of the New, and the New Testament cannot be understood except in the light of the Old. As our Lord himself said, the Old Testament testifies of him all the way through. Christ is its main underlying thought, and no one knows how to read the Old Testament, who does not look for Christ everywhere in it. The infidel commentators and critics, to whom we have referred, by leaving Christ out of the Old Testament cannot understand it, and talk about it like infants.

And so in reading the New Testament, the Old is so inwoven into its texture that the reader must constantly refer to it in order to comprehend the truths that are there set forth concerning our Lord. From this sacred volume, it is my purpose to trace carefully the origin and history of the church of God in its organized form, which is equivalent to tracing the origin and history of the Jewish church and people. I cannot but believe that such a re-

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search, assiduously and devoutly made, must bring us face to face with truths most important and precious to our spiritual interests, and will strengthen our faith, kindle our zeal, deepen our devotion and increase our reverence for Him, who, as a loving father, condescends to meet our need as sinners and to feed our souls with the heavenly manna of his word.

## LECTURE II.

### ABRAHAM.

ETHNOLOGISTS find three grand divisions in the human race, which they call the Semitic, the Aryan and the Turanian. The Semitic, so called from Shem, the son of Noah, considered to be its ancestor, occupies a comparatively small portion of the earth, clinging to the original seat of the race and showing little desire for movement or progress. The Semitic region includes Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia with a small strip of North-eastern Africa. The principal languages of the Semitic group are the Assyrian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Arabic and Ethiopic. The Aryan division of the race contrasts remarkably with the Semitic. It is full of movement and progress. It has penetrated into all parts of the north and has led the van of civilization. It has peopled the plains of India, the plateau of Persia, the mountain of Armenia, nearly the whole of Europe and America, many parts of Africa, Australia and the islands of the sea. It includes the Sanscrit and Zend as well as the Greek and Latin among ancient

languages and the English, French, German and other European languages among the modern ones. The three great families of the Slaves, the Teutons and the Celts belong to the Aryan division.

The Turanian division is not so easily described. The old Persians used to call the country north of them Turan, the same which we now denominate Turkestan, and this name has been used by ethnologists for all people who are not Semitic or Aryan excepting the Chinese. But there is not the same certainty with regard to the homogeneousness of this division that there is regarding that of the others. This Turanian division includes the Tartars and Turks, the Dravidian people of Central and Southern India, and the Samoyeds of Siberia and the Hungarians and Finns of Europe.

It is natural to consider these three grand divisions of our race as corresponding to the three sons of Noah, the Semitic being descended from Shem, the Aryan from Japhet and the Turanian from Ham, but as yet we have not sufficient evidence for this apportionment. The Turanian division is especially a puzzle to the learned philologists and ethnologists, and the Chinese are an independent problem. We may, however, in general count the Semitic as Shemites and the Aryan as Japhethites, while we leave the Turanian as undetermined.

Our earliest view of the southern portion of the Mesopotamian country, where it borders on the Persian Gulf, and where in ancient times the Tigris and Euphrates entered that gulf by independent mouths, more than a hundred miles farther north than where they now enter it by one mouth, reveals the several branches of the human race as there resident. There were Semites and Aryans and Turanians. But the Turanians seem to have had the preponderance. They were the founders of what is called the old Accad civilization, and probably Nimrod was the earliest of their mighty men and founder of the Empire known as the old Chaldean Empire. These Accad people were the inventors of the Cuneiform writing, so lately interpreted, and which has revealed so much of ancient history before unknown. They had also made progress in the arts of building and war, and had shown some knowledge of state-craft. It was out of their country and probably by reason of their oppressive tyranny that the Semitic people of that region emigrated northward. "Out of that land" says the Bible (Gen. 10. 11.) "went forth Asshur and builded Nineveh and the city Rehoboth and Calah and Resen." Now Asshur was a descendant of Shem (Gen. 10. 22.), and this passage shows us that the great Assyrian Empire at the north was the

outgrowth of a Semitic emigration from Babylonia. It was probably at the same time and for the same reason that Terah and his family left the Chaldean city of Ur in this southern region and migrated to the northern Euphrates, as those represented by Asshur migrated to the northern Tigris. But while the same natural causes existed in both cases, that of Terah had remarkable elements in it unknown to the other. The movement of Terah was guided by an appearance of the God of glory to his son Abram, and in this divine revelation the direction of the migration was determined (Acts 7. 2. and Gen. 11. 31.), the land of Canaan on the Mediterranean Sea being the ultimate goal. The journey thither was a very long one, 700 miles in a straight line across the Syrian desert, but a thousand miles by the only way in which a company could travel, along the Euphrates to the region of Carchemish and then westward and southward into Canaan. The Terah family passed north along the Euphrates and halted on the Belik, one of its affluents in the fertile region of Charran, the country that was called Padan Aram (Gen. 25. 20.), a name that suggests its habitancy by a Semitic people (Gen. 10. 22.) before Terah's arrival, although it may have got this name from Terah's own descendants (Gen. 22. 21). For some reason not explained Terah and

his family took up their abode in Charran, and it was not till Terah's death, that Abram, probably after another intimation from God (Gen. 12. 1.), proceeded to obey the divine command in its fulness and seek the land of Canaan, whose nearest point was three hundred miles south-west of Charran. Into that land, about to play so prominent a part in the world by reason of this man's coming to it, Abram entered with his wife and nephew and his numerous retinue of servants and adherents when he was seventy-five years old. The Canaanites, among whom he came were not Semites like himself, but a Cushite race that had previously found their way to the Mediterranean coast from the region of the Persian Gulf, but had adopted a Semitic language. Perhaps these Cushites are to be classed among the Turanians. Certainly the Cushites, who were descendants of Ham, had a great deal to do with the populating of southern Arabia and parts of Africa, and it may be that the Canaanites were brought into Canaan by a gradual pushing along the shores of the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. However this may be, Abram found in Canaan a people of a different division of the human family, but speaking a language which he could understand. They were idolaters, like those from whom he had come out,

when he left Ur of the Chaldees, but he had no relatives and connections about him from long residence by which he would be entangled in idolatrous ways, as he had in his native land. So there was an opportunity for practical separation from the heathen while among them, an opportunity which Abram faithfully seized, but which his nephew Lot sadly neglected, and by neglecting which the posterity of Lot became polluted with the vilest heathenism.

Five hundred years after Abram's time, the great general of Israel, Joshua, after he had subdued these very Canaanites and given Abram's descendants possession of the land, said to the representatives of the tribes, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (that is, the river Euphrates) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and *they served other gods*. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood and led him throughout all the land of Canaan." These words of Joshua show that Terah's family did not get wholly rid of idolatry when they removed to Padan Aram, and that Abram needed the divine revelation once and again to purify himself from the prevailing polytheism.

Probably some of the grosser forms of idolatry were left behind when they left Ur of the Chaldees.



Perhaps they no longer worshiped Bel and Mero-dach and Nebo and the many gods of the Babylonian pantheon, but that certain teraphim or images were still used seems certain from the narrative concerning Rachel when married to Abram's grandson, which states that such teraphim were used by her when she came from the Padan Aram country and were counted by her father as his gods (Gen. 31. 30.) and it was not till Jacob reached Bethel that he caused these "strange gods" to be put away (Gen. 35, 2).

It is hard for us to imagine how strong a hold idolatry has upon a people and how difficult it is to wean a people away from some form of image worship. The Romish church has yielded to this tendency of the human mind and has placed images before its votaries, telling them, it is true, to worship the true God through these, but in effect furnishing them with a genuine idolatry.

The call of Abram is the initiative movement of God to the planting of an organized church upon our sin-smitten earth. In the antediluvian world there was apparently no religious organization beyond the family. Perhaps at first, a place of worship was constituted near the garden whence the original pair was banished, of which the cherubim and the sword-like flame were the adumbrations of

the future ark of the Covenant. But we may surmise that as the human family spread and as wickedness multiplied, their special sign of the divine favor, which *kept* (in more senses than one) the way of the tree of life (Gen. 3, 24.) was withdrawn. After the deluge, for perhaps a thousand years, the family seems again to have been the only framework of a religious system, and again it proved a failure, vice and violence again filling the earth till the piety of Noah seemed to have scarcely a representative on the earth. It was then that God called Abram. In the divine wisdom, a family was to be specially and miraculously guarded and nursed into a nation, which should form an organized depository of divine truth, holding it amid a wicked world until the time should come, under the impulse of a visible Messiah and his atoning work for sinners, to spread that truth throughout the earth. To this end the supernatural was necessary. Man, without the supernatural, was hopelessly lost. He was ever sinking deeper and deeper into pollution. Revelation and miracle were absolutely necessary to save him. No church of God could be established without this double witness of God—a truth delivered, and the miraculous signs to evidence that truth. Thus the miracles of the Old Testament which gather around the birth of

the Church, instead of being jarring elements disturbing the history, are most fitting in the chain of events, and the divine interposition to save man would be incomprehensible without them.

Abram's call was the special revelation of God, and in the course of Abram's life God appeared nine times to him to direct his conduct and to sustain his faith. In these appearances the foundations of the coming church were laid in the rite of circumcision and in the promises of a chosen seed in the land of Canaan. The miracle of Isaac's birth was a witness and pledge of the promises of God, and so revelation and miracle were united in Abram's experience, as they ever have been and ever must be in the establishing or re-establishing of a divine dispensation upon the earth.

Abram's character under the divine guidance and teaching became admirably adapted to his position as the historical foundation of God's church. He appears before our minds as a calm and dignified patriarch, patiently bearing trial, yielding rights for the sake of peace, showing kindness and hospitality, helping those that were in distress, courteous and liberal in his dealings with the surrounding people and possessing under all an unshaken faith in God, looking beyond the seen to the unseen, to

the spiritual city prepared for him and his by the divine Builder and Maker (Heb. 11. 10, 16).

To this noble Abraham, father of the faithful, God had made known that four centuries of affliction should precede the establishment of his seed in Canaan (Gen. 15. 13.), so that he looked not for an immediate earthly fulfilment of the promise of Canaan, but his hopes were placed on "a better country, that is, a heavenly" (Heb. 11. 16.), from which, doubtless, he would also see and enjoy the furtherance of the divine purpose in the establishment of his posterity in Palestine as the church of God.

It is interesting to contemplate this grand soul as the historic foundation of God's church, as not belonging to the Jewish church, which was not constituted till four centuries later, so that we of the Christian church can claim him, as truly as they of the Jewish church, as our father Abraham. As father of the faithful, father of all that have faith in God, he occupies the fit position before the beginning of the Jewish church, thus emphasizing a spiritual rather than a carnal lineage. (Rom. 4. 16; Gal. 3. 7.)

When God thus called out one man to be the preparation for his church, he did not abandon the rest of the world. The presence of the church is

not the doom of all out of it. Melchizedek and Job and Hobab are testimonies here. The spirit of God never ceases to strive with man through his conscience and whatever of truth has come down through tradition to his mind, and how far the spirit is successful is not for us to decide. There may be a vast host at the judgment who will be found clothed in white, who will come from the north and the south and the east and the west from Babylon and Assyria and Egypt and Ethiopia, who were never within the visible church on earth, but who were nevertheless the children of Abraham, saved by the blood of the atoning Saviour and anointed by the Holy Ghost.

While the church, then, is God's own institution, made such by revelation and miracle, it is not to be considered as the only and necessary means of reaching the divine salvation. This is one of the errors of Rome that we must avoid. Yet, as the institution of God, it is the duty and privilege of every believer to be identified with it and to receive of the fulness of its life, while adding, by his own presence and activity, to that life.

In Abraham's career there were a number of incidents that bear the mark of typical design on the part of the Almighty Disposer of events, before whom his plan of mercy is ever present. We may

note his coming up out of Egypt, which adumbrated Israel's deliverance from that land and our Lord's own emigration ("Out of Egypt have I called My Son," Hos. 11, 1; Matt. 11, 15.), and all of which typified the redemption of the human soul from the Egypt of depravity. We may also note his successful assault upon the great eastern enemy who had invaded the land and his victorious return and thanksgiving, as exhibiting the final triumph of the church over the world-power that has so often afflicted it. So again the promise made and repeated to Abraham, that his seed should possess the land in which he was a stranger, is but an adumbration of that larger promise of God, that Abraham's spiritual seed shall possess this world in which they so long have sojourned as strangers and pilgrims.

The birth of Ishmael showed the impatience of the church in not awaiting the Lord's time and the evils that therefore ensue, and the independent and rebellious character of Ishmael betoken the apostasies or defections from the coming church, while the miracle in the birth of Isaac represented the miraculous preservation of the church through ages of defection and corruption.

Abraham's own prevarication twice concerning Sarah, was a prefigurement of the compromises

which God's church would make in its failure of faith and in its fear of the world, while Abraham's faith in carrying Isaac to the altar and then using the divinely-introduced substitute, marks the church's attitude of confession and its acceptance of the divine victim. Finally the sending to Padan Aram for a wife for Isaac shows the church's desire to be free from worldly alliances, and the children by Keturah going forth and settling the neighboring lands, represent the civilizing influences of the church outside its own spiritual pale.

In Abraham's life and its recorded incidents, therefore, we see an epitome of the church as it was to be in the midst of the world. That church was to be composed of weak and sinful men called out from the world, as Abraham was called out of his pagan environment, and was to be guided, as he was, by the voice from Heaven and not by the customs of the world or by the promptings of self. Composed thus of individual men, it is not strange to see in the individual man, Abraham, the first thus called out in view of God's purpose, many of the characteristics of that future church which should be the Salt of the Earth.

In the call of Abraham, the first step was taken by Providence for laying the foundation of the church. The second step must be multiplication of

his posterity under circumstances that should consolidate them and should also cause them to appreciate their position as the Called of God. If they grow up in the life that Abraham lived, they will scatter like Keturah's children and utterly fail of union and organization. There must be some constraining power that shall force them to keep together and it must be with circumstances of oppression that shall teach the people to look to God and welcome a divine deliverance. It was therefore of God that the promised seed while remaining in Canaan (as a sort of earnest of what was to come) should be few—first only Isaac, then only Jacob and his twelve sons. During the lives of these three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchal family was being instructed of God and made more and more distinct from all others in the world. The spiritual type was being impressed upon them which should appear in their posterity when the church, as such, should be born. When the family had reached a household of twelve sons, Providence arranged their removal to Egypt, where two contrasted dispensations availed them; first, a period of marvelous increase and prosperity through the position of Joseph and the regard paid to him and his memory by the Pharaohs, and then a period of bitter oppression



under the Pharaohs of a new and inimical dynasty. Both these dispensations were necessary, the first to make the numbers of a great nation, and the second to cause the people thus multiplied to desire an emigration to the land which their family traditions ever kept before their minds as destined for them by the God of Abraham.

Thus this whole period of more than four centuries was requisite to form the nation to which should be committed the oracles of God. The old Greek proverb, with its polytheistic word altered, runs "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine." Natural causes are not disturbed while the supernatural interposes. Events, ordered by an all-superintending Providence, meet the demands of the divine plan, and in spite of all opposition from earth and hell, heaven's mercy establishes itself among sinful men in the form of an organized church, richly laden with the revelation of grace. Abraham's call from Ur of the Chaldees was the prepared seed for the fruitage of an elect nation at Sinai, a nation at once and a church, whose King was Jehovah and whose law was from heaven.

In reviewing this period of patriarchal preparation we may revert to the divisions of our race referred to at the beginning of this discourse, and note

the fulfilment of the prophecy which ages before Abraham, the inspired Noah pronounced regarding the posterity of his three sons who were to repeople the earth, a prophecy whose fulfilment began in the separation of Abraham and his seed, but has in these latter days reached its culmination. The words of Noah were, "God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Here is a paradox in the prophecy. Japhet is promised the enlargement and yet he is to dwell humbly in the tents of Shem. We should have expected that if Japhet were to be enlarged, Shem would come and dwell under his superior protection, but no! Japhet, though marked by his enlargement, will yield to the protective care of Shem. And now what does history, the history of at least four thousand five hundred years since that prophecy, show us? Japhet has been wonderfully enlarged. The Japhetian or Aryan nations have spread (as we have seen) all over the globe. They hold nearly all Europe and America, and they hold important centres in Asia and Africa, while the isolated continent of Australia (as we may call that huge island) is almost wholly in their hands. Compared with this world-wide spread of Japhet, how insignificant is the domain of Shem—only the circumscribed region of Syria and Arabia, with an offshoot

along Northern Africa. But when God called Abram, he was preparing the tents of Shem to receive enlarged Japhet. He was forming a church of Semitic people and Semitic language, out from which a Semitic Messiah should arise, and in which Semitic prophets and apostles should be the repository of the Divine Spirit to communicate God's will to the world. This church of God is that which is called in the prophecy "the tents of Shem," and it is this Semitic church into which the Japhetians of Europe and America have found shelter. The wide-spread Japhet finds protection in the tents of Shem.

There is another part to the prophecy. It runs, "and Canaan shall be his servant." While the literal Canaan, as subdued and subject to Israel was a fulfilment of this, yet that seems only a primary and typical fulfilment of the more extended application to the nations and peoples who are not of Shem and Japheth. Canaan may stand for Noah's third son, Ham, and if Ham is the father of the Turanian nations, then by the prophecy is indicated the subjugation of the Turanian nations by the Japhetians or Aryans and their subordination in all things to this dominant race of the world. Look at the Turanian people—the Turks and Tartars, the Dravidians of India, the Mongol and Malay



tribes, the population of the South Seas and the American Indians—and see how every where they are politically the servants of the Aryans.

And so we behold to-day the exact fulfillment of the prophecy of Noah, the spread of the Japhet nations over the world, their refuge in the divine religion of Shem and their dominance over the inferior Hamitic peoples of the earth. How every word of these holy scriptures sparkles with divine lustre, and what a glorious study is this Word of God!

## LECTURE III.

### SINAI.

A LITTLE more than four centuries after Abraham's call out of the contamination of paganism, the patriarchal family had, under both ordinary and extraordinary providences, developed into a nation of two millions, compact and isolated, and as such appeared before Mount Sinai in the rugged, mountainous desert of the peninsula of Arabia Petraea. That the idolatry of Egypt, by which they had been surrounded, had had an unhappy influence upon them cannot be denied, but the amount of this influence is greatly exaggerated, especially by the infidel writers. Joshua declares that in Egypt the children of Israel were tainted with idolatry (Josh. 24. 14.), and Ezekiel affirms the same fact (Ezek. 20. 8., and 23. 3). From Amos (ch. 5. 26.), as quoted by Stephen (Acts 7. 43.), we see that idolatry clung to them in their desert sojourn, although the names of the gods mentioned, Moloch, Chiun and Remphan rather point to Semitic than Egyptian deities. But although this was true, yet we are to notice two other facts, first, that this idolatry

was by no means universal in the tribes, as we see from the readiness of the children of Levi to punish the idolaters (Exod. 32. 26.), when they practised their idolatry before Sinai, and secondly, that it seems in part at least to have been the worship of Jehovah through images, and not a worship antagonistic to that of Jehovah, as Aaron when making and setting up the golden calf expressly calls the religious festival, at which it was worshiped "a feast to Jehovah" (Ex. 32. 5.). It is not at all strange that the people of Israel should have accepted the idea that the true God could be worshiped through material representations, and it was also very natural that in such worship they should imitate the sad carnalities which marked the image-worship of Egypt. It was Aaron's fearful error that he humored this tendency, when he had knowledge enough, and ought to have had sanctified wisdom enough, to repress it. The calf which he made may not have been an imitation of Mnevis or Apis the Egyptian bulls which received their worship, but rather a well-known cherubic emblem which had been common to the race, and from which perhaps the Mnevis and Apis worship had originated.

We cannot therefore say that Israel came out, as an idolatrous people, from Egypt, we can only say

that they were worshipers of the true God, who had mingled idolatrous styles with that worship, which styles they had adopted partly from Egypt and partly from other countries, from what Germans would call the *Zeitgeist* of that age. It is wonderful that amid the universal, or almost universal, idolatry of the time, they had preserved a monotheism, and through generations of servitude held to the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

We are told that a mixed multitude accompanied them out of Egypt. These could scarcely have been Egyptians, but were probably Semites of a different stock from Israel, remnants perhaps, of the old Shasu or Shepherd-king population of Lower Egypt, who felt it unsafe to remain in Egypt when the anger of the Pharaoh should burn against the Semitic people as represented by Israel, and who, therefore, hastened to take advantage of Israel's organized departure for their own safe escape.

These people were, of course, idolaters, and must have been a constant evil to Israel. We find them at a later date the leaders in an insurrection (Num. 11. 4.), and it would seem from the narrative that a large part of these idolatrous attachés of Israel were destroyed at that time by the plague which God sent (Num. 11. 34.).

Such, then, was the composition of the great host that had found their way from Egypt to Sinai under the guidance of Moses. It was no confused mob. On the contrary the nation had been carefully arranged, during the time of the plagues which God sent upon Egypt by the hand of Moses, so that they could march out of Egypt in military order. The perplexing word rendered "harnessed" in Ex. 13. 18., ("and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt")—Hebrew "cham-ushim"—seems to refer to a military system, but, apart from that, the narrative gives us abundant evidence that Moses exhibited the skill of a general in marshalling the multitude of Israel and conducting them speedily and safely along their arduous course. That the supernatural protection and guidance of God was also with the exodus is most apparent. The pillar of cloud, shooting out its fires at night was a visible sign of the Divine Presence, which must have done much to satisfy Israel of their divine call, and to make them obedient to Moses, as their divinely-appointed leader. We must believe that official grades permeated the host, so that each family knew where to look for direction, and perfect order was maintained. If that vast multitude had rushed out of Egypt as a mere mob, thousands would have perished and they



would have been scattered over the country, an easy prey to the Egyptian pursuers. Nothing is clearer than the thorough discipline of the movement, and this must be referred to the skill of Moses and to the supernatural influences from heaven. God was testifying by unmistakable tokens to the divine origin and character of his church. He was showing to the world that Israel was called to be his people and with them his revelation should be deposited. Egypt saw the evidence, and afterwards Edom and Canaan beheld it, for the mighty works were not done in a corner, but the fame of the miracles that accompanied Israel's career from Egypt to Palestine was spread abroad on every side. Rahab in Jericho well represents this where she says to the spies (Josh. 2. 9. 10.), "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you, for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt."

The whole action of the Exodus from the plagues to the entrance upon Canaan was infused with supernatural elements, just as the corresponding period in the establishment of the Christian dispensation of God's church was marked by the miracles of Christ and his apostles.

It was a remarkable region to which Moses led the men, women and children of Israel. The Sinai district is one of dark, rugged mountains of porphyry with beetling cliffs, and towering crags, where scarce a vestige of verdure may be found. In the centre of this rockbound wilderness is a plain of a few miles in extent, like the adytum or shrine of a vast natural temple. Into this solitude the hosts of Israel poured, having made their way among the winding ravines which form the only approaches. They had been two months making the tedious journey of two hundred miles with all the *impedimenta* of a migration rather than a march, which, with due allowance for Sabbath rests and other detentions, would make their daily journey about four or five miles. Nothing but a sense of the Divine Will could have led Moses and this great multitude to such a barren and unfriendly region. On the way there had been murmurings, notwithstanding the tokens of God's presence—murmurings through fear of the Egyptian pursuers, murmurings from thirst and murmurings from hunger, but each season of murmuring had led to a new display of the divine power to supply all the needs of the people. The Red Sea opened, the waters of Marah became sweet, and the manna was miraculously provided for Israel's permanent

supply in the desert. These were the preliminaries of the grand revelation of God's will and glory at Sinai. In the grand solitudes of that stern wilderness, this people, consolidated, marshalled, trained and educated by supernatural means, and now brought out from Egyptian bondage, encamped to await the expression of the Divine Will. Two days of solemn preparation through the extended camp followed, and then upon the third day came the appalling scene of nature's most awe-inspiring agitation. Thunders, lightnings, tempest, darkness, smoke, earthquake—these filled every heart with terror, as amid it all the loud notes, as it were of a celestial trumpet, announced the coming king, and then were uttered by a heavenly voice out from the thick darkness of the mountain's summit the words of the central law—the ten commandments, which, as words spoken by God himself without human agency, and as written on stone tablets afterwards by God himself without human agency, and as preserved uniquely and alone in the sacred ark, were to belong not simply to Israel, but to the church of God forever. They formed the basal law of love to God and love to man, on which all righteousness is built.

A second display of the Divine Presence was accorded to Israel, when, a year later and while the

nation was still encamped before the holy mount, the tabernacle had been constructed, its ritual prepared and its priests consecrated. Aaron, the high-priest, had offered up sacrifices for himself and for the people, as the beginning of his holy ministry. The young calf for a sin-offering and the ram for a burnt-offering had been offered for himself, and the kid of the goats had been offered as a sin-offering for the people. Then the calf and the lamb for a burnt-offering for the people were prepared and placed on the altar *but not burned*. But by their side the meat-offering and the bullock and ram for peace-offerings were regularly burned. After this, Moses and Aaron entered into the tabernacle, and thence returned to bless the people.

On this great day of the priests' inauguration, the beginning of the ritual, we must believe that the entire host was alert, and that at each tent-door facing the mountain the family belonging to that tent was standing with intent gaze upon the tabernacle that had probably been erected on an elevated position under the brow of Sinai. In that clear atmosphere, the distance of a mile is no further for sight than the distance of a quarter of a mile in ordinary climes, and we may believe that the most distant spectator on that day was not

more than two miles from the tabernacle and its altar.

After Moses and Aaron had blessed the people, the Shekinah, the visible glory of God, suddenly appeared above the Tabernacle, and from that glorious appearance darted forth a ray of fire, seized the calf and lamb that lay upon the altar as the people's burnt-offering, and instantly consumed them. This typical action of God's punishment for sin seizing a substitute for guilty man caused the vast host to shout with joy and fall on their faces with gratitude.

The whole heart of Israel was warm and true at this time. Under the deep impression of the awful scenes of the Sinai wilds Israel was solemn and sincere. The golden age of Israel was at the beginning of the nation, when the Divine guidance was conspicuous, and when the scenes of Sinai were fresh upon the mind. And yet even in that golden age occurred the sad apostasy of the golden calf, whose name only would give it a place in a golden age. But that apostasy was not so much a deliberate plan as a sudden outburst of desperation, which the absence of Moses from a people who were as yet children in religious knowledge explains. Aaron's device was a weak and cowardly effort to keep the people in subjection by compro-

mise, in which he probably had no intention to lead the people into idolatry, but wished by a well-known sacred symbol to satisfy their longing for a visible representation of Deity. The forty days during which Moses was absent in the Mount were days to test the confidence of Israel in Moses. They had seen and heard enough to be assured that God was with Moses, and that their part was to wait patiently; but their faith gave way and they despaired of ever seeing Moses again. Hence their anxiety to find a substitute, not so much for Moses, as for the pillar of cloud, which probably now rested on the summit of the mountain, or, it may be, was temporarily withdrawn while they abode before Sinai, (See Exod. 24, 15-18, and comp. ch. 33, 9.) Aaron's golden calf was the proposed Elohim or likeness of God that was to go before them in their march to Canaan. As we have seen, it was natural that Israel should use idolatrous customs around the golden calf, notwithstanding the intention that it should represent the true Elohim who had brought Israel out of Egypt. The breaking of the second commandment leads to the breaking of the first. One may make and bow down to an image in order to worship the true God through it, but there is only a step between this and worshiping the image itself, and God has ex-

pressly forbidden both. He has forbidden an image of Deity to bow down to, and history shows that where this command of God has been disobeyed the one who bowed down to the image soon became a worshiper of another god than Jehovah. The churches of Christ that introduced image-worship have become idolatrous churches, and in them superstition has taken the place of enlightened religion. Israel's sin before Sinai was therefore not only one of enormous magnitude, as showing their lack of faith in God and in Moses, but was one of great peril to the nation in leading them into a fatal idolatry, and hence we see the severe interposition of God and the death of three thousand of the offenders.

But notwithstanding this sad episode before Sinai, we assert confidently that when the ritual was established, and the divine fire consumed the people's burnt-offering, Israel was enjoying its golden age. It was full of the revelations of God, full of delight at the national independence, full of respect for Moses and the newly-appointed priesthood, and when the people shouted and fell on their faces before the divine token of salvation, there was a hearty sincerity and solemnity throughout the whole host which marked the highest point of their spiritual experience.

It was a very brief golden age. The desert life exhibited many sad rebellions against Moses and against God. The people grew callous under the very constancy of the divine manifestations. The cloudy pillar the manna, the water flowing along their camp from the smitten rocks (first at Horeb, then at Kadesh) became every-day affairs, and lost their hold upon the people's reverence and gratitude. Punishments were necessary again and again to bring them to a sense of their position as God's wards, under a supernatural guidance and enjoying privileges beyond all others on the earth. They are not alone as examples of ingratitude and unbelief. They are only illustrations of our common human nature depraved by sin. Familiarity with the divine mercies soon makes man ungrateful and forgetful of the Bountiful Giver, and the mass of men go on in life as stupid and regardless of God as the brute beasts. We see in Israel a people wonderfully favored, and, at the first full apprehension of these favors, showing a zeal and faith most commendable, but from that time exhibiting a constant tendency to fall away, the falling being checked repeatedly by the special punitive interpositions of God. As we have said before, there was no development of goodness from a germ within, no natural growth of Israel into a high ideal, but there was a



perfect ideal given to Israel at the start, and from that they persistently fell away. From Sinai to Joshua's death we find their best moral period. After that, their association with the Canaanites left in the land and their base desire to be like the nations around them honeycombed the commonwealth with idolatry and all the vices that accompany idolatry. But we anticipate. Let us come back to Sinai, and see what foundations God laid for his visible church upon the earth. We have noted the moral law of the Decalogue given as no other words were ever given to man, and have seen how the double principle of Love to God and Love to man constituted the marrow of that wonderful law. Here were the grand ideas by which all the rest of God's commandments to Israel were to be interpreted. The civil law which regulated the people as a state inculcated habits, whose only explanation is love. The people were not to glean the corners of their fields, they were to bring back to its owner the stray ox or ass of an enemy, they were to help lift up the beast of another if it fell, even though that other had wronged them and they were not to vex or oppress strangers but relieve and refresh them. (Lev. 19, 10; Exod. 23, 4, 5; Exod. 22, 21: 23, 12; Lev. 25, 35.)

Who ever heard of such laws in any other

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ancient people? You look in vain for any manifestation of love in the laws of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria or any of the enlightened empires of antiquity. These laws are evidences of the heavenly origin of Israel's polity. They are just such laws as were consonant with the ecclesiastical character of the nation. They were effluences of the divine truth which made Israel the people of God.

But it is in the ceremonial law given at Sinai that we most clearly see the stooping of heaven to save and renew our race in a holy church.

That law had bloody sacrifices as its chief characteristic. A domestic animal slain on the altar atoned for sin. This was the cardinal principle of salvation. The Israelitish sacrifice differed from all the sacrifices of the pagans, inasmuch as they were offered as gifts or presents to God to bribe him into good nature and mercy, the original idea of sacrifice being utterly lost by the pagans—but the sacrifices of the Israelites were offerings of a victim to receive the blow of justice against sin. The Israelite did not think he was making a present to God of a lamb or kid, but asked God to strike with his just judgment against sin the lamb or kid as a substitute for himself. This, the original meaning of sacrifice, perverted as we have seen by the heathen, was maintained in Israel. In the

pagan sacrifice God's justice was resisted or slighted, but in the sacrifice of Israel God's justice was honored. Israel's sacrifice was an adumbration of the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world—the pagan sacrifice had lost all that significance, and, instead of being the offering of humility, became the offering of pride.

Here, then, was the soterial foundation of God's church, if we may use a theological word. Just as love was its ethical foundation, so atonement by a substitute was its soterial foundation. The variety of the sacrifices does not interfere with this general definition. The burnt-offerings, the sin-offerings, and the peace-offerings, all held the vital principle of substituted suffering within them, whatever additional ideas, such as peace with God and communion with saints, they may also have contained. But not only was salvation through a substitute, and a life of love taught by this Sinai revelation, but the mode or condition of that life as consisting in union with God was specially noted. The Tabernacle was ordered to be constructed that *God might dwell among them* (Exod. 25. 8). The Tabernacle was God's house, not in the loose sense in which we use this phrase of a church-building, but in its strict sense, where God by a visible presence, the Shechinah, actually dwelt.

He, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was prefigured in this central tent of Israel's camp, this central house in Israel's land. But not only the fact of God dwelling in Israel betokened union with God as the mode or condition of the life of love, but also the priesthood stood forth to designate the same idea. It was the priest who, passing the altar of sacrifice and the laver of washing, entered the sanctuary and had access to the incense altar, the bread of the face and the candlestick, as representing the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Here he appeared as dwelling not only with God, but *in* God's house, and this thought was identified by the High Priest once a year, when he entered the Holy of Holies and bowed before the Shechinah. We at once see how fully this illustrates the believer's abiding in Christ, who is not only our High Priest, but is the Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. The believer, abiding in Christ as the true Tabernacle, is also identified with Christ as High Priest within the Holy of Holies. Here, then, in the Sinai ritual, the third fundamental element of the church of God was abundantly represented, that union with God which is the only mode or condition of the life of love, obtained by the propitiatory death of the substituted victim. All the

other teachings of the ritual gather around these or are built upon these three. These three were constantly taught to Israel by the ritual of every day, salvation by a substituted sufferer, a life of love, and union with God as the mode of that life. In no stronger way (perhaps we may be right in saying "in no *other* way") could these vital truths be presented to man at that age, before the coming of the Son of God as the Lamb of sacrifice, than by this Sinai ritual. And yet, as in all rituals, there was danger of taking the sign for the thing signified. This was guarded against in Israel (or should have been guarded against) by the reading of the law and the teaching of the Levites. Pious souls maintained and cherished their faith through the ritual. All along the ages of Israel's existence as a nation there were Simeons and Annas, who fed upon the spiritual things betokened in the ritual. But the nation at large lost sight of the meaning and adhered to the ritual as a magical scheme, superstitiously making efficacious the mere formal use of its ordinances. When the Lamb of God appeared, the ritual had completed its work. Sacrifice, priest, Tabernacle, were now fulfilled in Him who was all three, and in whom every believer finds all that the soul needs. What a sad error, then, it is for Christians to long for a ritual,

to seek to re-establish what was necessary at Sinai, and yet so hard to preserve from a most corrupt use, and which was wholly done away in Christ! We need not types and adumbrations now. We have our Saviour evidently set forth before us, crucified for us. Let us not go back to the twilight. We have the sunlight. Let us suspect all efforts toward a ritual elaboration as a desire to be rid of a spiritual religion, and let us worship and serve God as in the Christian church of light, and not in the Jewish church of shadows.

## LECTURE IV

### THE LAW.

WE saw in our last discourse that the three grand truths conveyed to Israel at Sinai were first, the pardon of sin through a substituted sufferer exhibited in the sacrifices, second, the life of love thus made possible, as exhibited in the injunctions of the moral law, and third, union with God as the mode and condition of that life of love exhibited in the Tabernacle and in the priesthood. These three fundamental truths of salvation, on which a godly Israelite's faith rested, were constantly and in many forms impressed upon the minds of the people. It was indeed a shadow of the realities as we now see them, but it was a shadow with most distinctly marked outlines. It was a shadow that heaven's bright light cast, revealing all around the edges of what was shadowed, so that shape and relations could be discerned, even though a closer description was impossible. The historic Christ was coming and his personality must be a mystery while he is coming, but when he has come, the same light, that shone on the church from all sides of the mystery

but left the mystery, only outlined, now shines directly on the mystery which is no longer a mystery, as we look upon its enlightened face. We are thus able to study the old ritual and find details of meaning which the Israelite of old could not possibly understand. To keep up the figure of the shadow, we come to see to what features of the great reality the varied indentations and projections of the shadowed figure are to be referred. The ancient Hebrew looked upon these as simply divinely-ordained details, and if he thought they had a meaning, it was one which he could deposit not with his knowledge but with his faith. Some of these are explained by the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, such as the heaven-representation in the holy of holies. "But into the second (tabernacle) went the high-priest alone once every year, not without blood \* \* \* \* but Christ being come a high-priest of good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle \* \* \* \* by his own blood entered in once into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9, 7, 11, 12.). We cannot believe that the ancient Israelite recognized the Holiest (or Holy of Holies) as the type of heaven. It was to him the symbol of the awfulness of God's mysterious being, which it truly was; but we are



able to know beyond that, that it was a symbol of that mysterious heaven, where, in one great High-priest, we have communion with the Infinite God.

As the Church of God is the same in all time, and its holy truths are always the same, it was becoming that the symbols of those truths given to the church at its foundation at Sinai should involve such details as could only be understood at a later period of the church's history. And hence, too, it is pertinent for the church to-day to study these symbols and learn through them the connections and relations of divine truth. The notion that these symbols were only for the Jewish church is an error too largely current. The ritual in its practice, it is true, was only for the Jewish church, but the *study* of that ritual belongs to the church at all times as illustrating the great principles of the divine salvation. The Old Testament is an inexhaustible mine of spiritual wealth to be entered and explored with the light of the New Testament shining upon its treasures, and the godly soul will find unspeakable comfort and support from a devout examination of these old, but ever new, revelations of God.

The law given to Israel is called in Hebrew the *Torah*, a noun derived from the Hiphil of *Yarah*, "to instruct." It is the instruction or teaching of God

to his people, and of course has therefore the very highest interests of man in view. It may be divided into the civil, the ceremonial and the moral law. The civil had regard to the life of Israel as a nation, the church of God then having a national form. The ceremonial had regard to the duties of religion, all of which bore direct and symbolic relation to the truths of salvation and godliness. The moral law was centered in the Decalogue which was for all time, and not for Israel only, and which laid down the principles of love to God and love to man in a concrete and practical form. These three departments of instruction from heaven formed the Torah or law, as a whole. It is of this whole that David treats in the 119th Psalm, where he uses not only the word "law" but also "testimonies," "precepts," "statutes," "words," "judgments" and "commandments." It was this Law he loved and cherished above all things as God's blessed speech to man's soul. And it is something of his holy fervor we should catch as we take up the sacred volume and read the Pentateuch.

We have noted the three grand truths presented so constantly and forcibly by the law, the substituted sufferer for man's sin, the life of love and the mode and condition of that life in union with God. Now let us consider some of the resultant truths

that were also taught in this wonderful manifestation of the divine mercy.

In the sacrifice there was inserted the meat or meal-offering. It was a presentation to God of an unbloody gift. It was composed of flour anointed with oil. This was indeed a *gift*, and hence we see in the category gifts and sacrifices mentioned as two distinct things in the ritual. But this gift was always subsequent to the sacrifice. The propitiation had to be made first by a bloody sacrifice and then the "minhhah" or gift could be offered to God. What did this indicate? That God was approachable as a friend only after sin had been pardoned. When the victim had been slain and God had accepted this death in place of the sinner's death, then the gift could be offered to God as a present of gratitude to the Almighty Saviour. It showed that men had no approach to God until his faith in the atoning victim had acted. Carnal men love to talk of God as the All-Father, as if they could go to Him unreservedly, but this is all wrong. They *cannot* go to Him until they are pardoned, and they are not pardoned until they have by faith brought the victim to the altar to be slain in their stead. Nothing was more fully taught the Hebrews than the sinful condition of man and his native inability to approach God by

reason of his sin. And it is directly in opposition to this teaching that we have the cry of the infidel world to-day, in the name of "liberal Christianity," that God welcomes all to his arms. It is a Christianity with Christ (and all that Christ indicates) left out.

The "minhhah" or meat-offering, then, represented this friendly freedom of access to God after pardon had been obtained, God consenting to receive a gift from the hands of his creature, now made a child.

Another religious truth made evident in the ceremonial had its object lesson in the peace-offerings, in which, after the characteristic bloody sacrifice, the offerers and the priests sat down together to a feast on the parts of the victim that were not burned (Lev. 7, 15, 34). Here was the Communion of saints before God. As the "minhhah" or meat-offering was a Communion with God after pardon, so the feast of the peace-offering was the Communion of saints after pardon. Neither can exist without the pardon first. This feast of the peace-offering was not a rollicking, roysterous, bacchanalian feast such as characterized the feasts at heathen altars, but was a solemn, though cheerful, festival. It was a sober-minded recognition of a brotherhood constituted by the divine grace. The

various instances of peace-offerings in the history clearly shows this (See for example, Exod. 24, 5; Josh. 8, 31; 2 Sam. 6, 17; 1 Kings 3, 15). It was a fearful corruption of this holy rite, of which Israel was guilty, when before Sinai the people introduced the idolatrous reveling into its performance (Exod. 32, 6). Men are always prone to corrupt the best instruments of holiness and to adapt them to their own follies. The peace-offering banquet was to Israel a lesson of brotherhood in God through the pardon of sin, and every pious Israelite so understood it.

Another lesson taught daily by the ceremonial law was the danger of contact with sin. The pollutions of various sorts, from disease, from touching dead bodies and from the ordinary workings of nature, and the purifications necessary in consequence were occurring constantly before the eyes of the people. They well knew that these external pollutions and purifications pointed to the pollutions of the soul and the needed applications to God's grace through the blood of the sacrifice, and hence such earnest cries from the sinning one as "Purify me with hyssop and I shall be clean—wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" went far beyond the outward rite in their meaning. The hyssop was dipped in the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled on the leper,

and, if one was otherwise unclean, the hyssop was dipped in water with the ashes of the slain heifer and sprinkled on the person (Lev. 14, 7; Num. 19, 18). The spiritual needs of the 51st Psalm most certainly did not rest satisfied with the outward ordinance, but looked to that which it signified. It was "Create in me a clean *heart*" that the sinning soul asked. And so every pious Israelite understood the spiritual meaning of the services of the ceremonial law. That law was very much what the parable was from our Saviour's mouth to the Jews of His day, a picture of profound truth to be received by the humble and godly heart, but a mere outward performance to the proud and carnal nature. It was this deep spiritual meaning of the ceremonial that gave such substantial comfort to the devout soul, when he could cry "I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call upon the name of the Lord." "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

No one can study the ceremonial law without realizing that it put Israel perpetually on guard against sin, sin from without and sin from within. The soul was admonished that it lived in a world

of sin and inhaled an atmosphere of sin. There was sin even in the holy actions of men. Aaron, as high-priest, had to bear the iniquity of the holy things (Exod. 28, 38.). A constant waiting upon God as alone able to pardon and sanctify was thus impressed on the people. And this sin, so prevailing, so permeating, was shown to be unspeakably evil and abhorrent to God. It was not to be treated lightly. It deserved death. It was of hell. It was spiritual leprosy and spiritual corruption and spiritual banishment from God and truth. Man is ever disposed to make light of sin, to call it by some euphemic name as weakness or misfortune, and to treat it as a matter for jest or oblivion, but God reveals its fearful blackness and its destroying power. That which the New Testament says in didactic words regarding the heinousness of sin is taught with graphic power in the Old Testament by its rites of purification, so that sin may be said to be the occasion of the whole ritual and of the whole revelation of God which it represents. And it is undoubtedly true that no religion can satisfy the heart and conscience of man, which does not meet this fearful burden of sin with a relieving power, which does not offer a forgiving and sanctifying efficiency to the soul awakened to a sense of its real condition. It was this which eminently character-

ized the Mosaic ritual as a revelation of God, and which testified to its divine character. Religions that would appease God by gifts make God the sinner, an ill-tempered and cruel God, who is to be bought off by presents, and they furnish no comfort to the awakened sinful soul of man. Even religions that usurp the name of Christ, but which deny the sacrificial character of Christ's death as the vicarious Lamb of God, can bring no peace to the disturbed conscience, and are no better than the human philosophies which would exalt man by his own efforts and triumph over evil and sin by a supposed goodness of the human heart to be brought out by education or social improvement. Between all these religions and philosophies on one side and the gospel of the Old and New Testaments on the other is the wide and deep gulf which separates human pride from humble faith in God, which separates man's righteousness from the righteousness of God.

Another spiritual lesson to Israel was given in the law of the Nazarite. With a few remarkable exceptions of Nazarites from birth, the Nazarite was one who temporarily subjected himself to certain prominent self-denials. During the time of his separation he could drink no wine nor eat any grapes, which in a wine country like Palestine was a daily self-denial.



He could not shave and so had to appear before others in an unkempt and unlovely way, in which he found another self-denial. He could not touch a dead body, even though it might be the body of his dearest and nearest. He was prohibited from giving the parting kiss to the form he loved so well. Here was another object lesson before Israel, denoting the need of self-denial in sustaining a holy life, in fighting against the flesh in behalf of the spirit. It was not intended that all men should be Nazarites, or temporary Nazarites, but it was intended that this ritual picture should be hung up before Israel as an indicator of the inward spiritual contest against carnality which every godly heart should exercise. It was a denoter of the readiness with which the believer should give up even the innocent enjoyments of life, when necessary to achieve conquest over the evil passions within. To act the Nazarite now-a-days would be to grasp at the sign instead of the thing signified. The true Nazarite to-day is not the man who abstains from wine or lets his hair grow, but the believer who combats his besetting sins, whatever they are, by giving up even innocent habits that may promote those sins, and who is ever ready to relinquish his rights for the good of his soul. The true Nazarite is the man who separates himself from the ungodly

world in their follies and time-wastings and, in order to do that, is perfectly willing to appear ugly and peculiar to the general public. He does not try to be eccentric—that is pride—but he tries to walk with God. To imitate the Nazarite literally to-day in any respect is as absurd as to imitate Israel in sacrifices and purifications. All these matters were alike the object lessons of a typical church, and all alike are done away in Christ, while the spiritual things they signified are permanent lessons for the soul at all times.

The last point we shall indicate wherein the ritual gave spiritual lessons to Israel in an objective way is in the recurrence of the the three great annual feasts. The Passover, which made conspicuous the salvation of God's people by the blood of the Lamb of God; the Feast of Weeks, in which the offering of the first fruits represented the indebtedness of the people to God as their bountiful Father; and the Feast of Tabernacles which exhibited in type the joy of the Holy Ghost;—these three feasts, having relation to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, were to be held at the Central shrine, at the Tabernacle, where God dwelt among his people, and to them all Israel were to come up. It is this last fact I wish to mark—the assembling of the people from Dan to Bersheba. It was a

grand object lesson of unity in God, a protest against division and disintegration among the people of God. It also destroyed the notion of individuality—the corrupt excess of personal independence, which begets errors and nurses pride. It taught the family unity of the Lord's redeemed ones and upheld the principle of peace. Each believer was to recognize his co-believer as a brother, all coming alike to the family hearth-stone, where their Father dwelt. That which we call to-day Christian brotherhood was here most appositely set forth, and is a lesson of untold importance to the varied denominations of Christians now existing, who should allow no differences of view to interfere with their hearty inter-communion in the holy service of the Lord.

Let us now, in conclusion, recapitulate. We have first noted the three conspicuous truths taught to Israel in the ritual and moral laws, the fact of a substituted sufferer for sin in the sacrifices, the life of love to God and man in the Decalogue, and the mode and condition of that life in union with God in the Tabernacle and the Priesthood. We have also noted, this evening, as other important truths shadowed forth in the ritual, God's friendship with man in the Meat-offering, the Communion of Saints in the Peace-offering, the preva-

lence, danger and heinousness of sin in the elaborate purifications, the need of self-denying separation from an ungodly world in the Nazarites and the brotherly unity of believers in the three annual feasts. There are many more truths regarding the spiritual life imbedded in the Mosaic law, but we produce these as examples of the mode by which God instructed his infant church in the great principles which form the basis of all true knowledge and all true faith regarding the all-important subjects of sin and salvation.

The gospel is but the translation of these types into the concrete, the shedding of new light upon the old truths. The Law and the Gospel are all one. When the apostle says the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, he is not making the two opposite, but supplementary to one another. He says, "The law through Moses was given," that is, the moral law which only a perfect man could obey, for it demanded perfect love to God and man. Then he says, "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ," that is, the grace and spirit of truth by which alone the holy law could be loved and obeyed entered our world in and through Jesus, but remember that Jesus was before Israel in the sacrifices, as we have seen. The moral law was supplemented by the ceremonial

law. The holy precept was supplemented by the Holy Christ and the Holy Spirit as betokened in all the ritual. That which Christ and the Spirit are to us, the Ceremonial law was (in its spiritual import) to Israel. We see now why it is done away in Christ. The sign gives way to the thing signified. No longer is it a law to us, but it remains as containing a remarkable gallery of picture lessons of the divine truths which centre in Christ.

## LECTURE V.

### THE DESERT.

TWO common errors concerning Israel in the Desert are to be removed. The first is that of the *Wandering*. It is supposed that for forty years the people were moving about the wilderness with no fixed abode, on a perpetual journey. The second is a corollary of the first, that the people had no national consistency, but were only a disciplined army and that marching was their principal business.

Now, in contrast to all this, let us note that Israel traveled only 600 miles in 40 years, and that this traveling probably did not consume more than six or seven months of the 40 years. One year was spent before Sinai in the receiving and establishing the Holy Law, and thirty-eight years were spent at Kadesh at the southern extremity of the Land of Canaan. The very name of Kadesh (the "sacred") was probably given by reason of the Tabernacle resting there for a whole generation. The journey from Sinai to Kadesh was made after the solemn scenes at the holy mountain, and was

probably a journey of two months. Three conspicuous acts of insubordination occurred in that march, an organized complaint at Taberah, another at Kibroth-hattaavah, where the mixed multitude (the Shasu idolaters, as we think) were the beginners, and in which the heaven-sent manna was despised, and the third a jealousy of Aaron and Miriam against Moses, starting from a quarrel with Moses' wife. We saw that when Israel lost heart and complained before reaching Sinai and receiving God's law, the Lord met their complaints with mercies. He sweetened the water at Marah, He gave them manna by the Red Sea and He gave them the victory over the Amalekites with water from Horeb. But now after the year's training before the Holy Mount with the stupendous evidences of God's presence and care there given, the Lord deals differently with his people. More light demands a better obedience and a stronger faith. At Taberah a fire from the Lord, darting forth probably from the cloudy pillar, consumes some of the ringleaders. At Kibroth-hattaavah, after a solemn exhibition of the divine glory before the Tabernacle, the Lord sent a surfeit of quails to the host and with them a fearful plague which carried off a great number of the people. And at Hazeroth, where Miriam seems to have been the prime mover in opposition to Moses,

a leprosy fell upon the guilty woman, from which she was released by Moses' intercession.

The church of God was taught in these visitations that the holy light from heaven which shone upon it could not be slighted with impurity, that with privilege came responsibility, and that relations with God were not to be treated with the easy carelessness with which men treated earthly relations.

From Kadesh (now identified as Ain Gades) the twelve spies were sent forth who traversed the whole length of Canaan and returned in 40 days. Only two of the 12 had faith in God that He would overcome all difficulties and give the people possession of the land. Caleb and Joshua stood alone. The other ten magnified the perils, and discouraged the entire host. The lessons of Egypt and Sinai, of Taberah and Kibroth-hattaavah, were in vain. A new outburst of complaint arose to heaven. Caleb and Joshua were near being stoned to death because of their faith and truth. Again Moses lifted up his intercession for the guilty people, and hindered their immediate destruction. But the sentence was then pronounced that the people who had thus failed in their faith in God should never enter into the promised land. Caleb and Joshua only of that vast host should cross the borders and



take possession of the national home promised to Abraham four centuries before. And now the pendulum of unbelief in God's power to give them Canaan swung to the opposite extreme of self-confidence that they could gain it by their own efforts, and the people rushed madly up the heights of the Negeb against the Canaanites only to be driven back with fearful slaughter. God had decreed them a forty years delay, but they tried to make void the divine decree.

While human unbelief was the proximate cause of the long abode in the desert, yet the whole period was ordained of God for the preparation of Israel for a proper entrance upon their promised inheritance. Man's freedom and God's ordination work together in perfect harmony. While we cannot understand *how* this is, we know well that it *is* so. How clearly Peter puts the double truth at the day of Pentecost! "Jesus of Nazareth \* \* \* \* being delivered *by the determinate counsel* and foreknowledge of God ye have taken, and *by wicked hands* have crucified and slain" (Acts 2, 23.); and again in the prayer of the disciples after the release of Peter and John they say "of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus whom Thou hast anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together for to

do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel *determined before* to be done." It was in accordance with this double truth that Israel's unbelief was God's plan of educating Israel in the long desert abode. God has no after-thought, no emendation of his plan or purpose. Man changes, but God is ever the same. We are now to consider Israel as a nation—an inchoate nation—established for a long sojourn in the wilderness. National and family life are to be developed there. Children are to be born and grow up, knowing no other life than the desert life. Social relations are to be formed on conditions belonging to such unique surroundings. No towns or villages are to spring up, but a vast encampment of two millions of human beings is to take permanent form at Kadesh, God's house with the cloud upon it being the centre, and a daily supply of manna from heaven and of water from the smitten rock of Kadesh being afforded to the host. These three perpetual miracles were the constant evidences of God as their King and Protector. [I take the Kadesh smiting of the rock—Numbers 20. 1-13.—as belonging to the first arrival at K., and the time of the general complaint recorded in ch. 14.] They were also evidences that Moses was their God-given legislator and governor, and that Aaron was their God-given High Priest. But notwithstanding

this clear and constant token, some Reubenites, as representing the oldest son of Jacob, joined an ambitious Levite named Korah, and started a formidable insurrection against Moses and Aaron. Moses was to be set aside for Dathan or Abiram or On, who would represent Reuben as the civil head of the nation, and Korah, a Kohathite Levite and cousin of Aaron, would take Aaron's place as High Priest. This daring revolt called for another divine interposition. Dathan and Abiram and their associates sank into the earth which opened for them, and Korah with his company were destroyed by fire which darted forth upon them from the cloud. This insurrection was the natural result of man's pride and jealousy, which even the clearest evidences of God's presence cannot subdue. Man becomes accustomed to such evidences and hence they go for nothing. Every man to-day is surrounded by evidences of God's presence. These evidences are not in the form of miracle, that is, of the supernatural. But the natural contains miracles. Evidences of God, as clear and convincing as the pillar of cloud and the manna, are around us all, but, like Korah and his fellows, we are so accustomed to them that they have no influence upon us. If the concrete miracles were wrought daily before us, we would show the same stolid unbelief. We have

Moses and the prophets—if we hear not Moses and the prophets; neither will we be persuaded though one rose from the dead. This is our Lord's testimony to the obstinacy and callousness of the human heart before the evidences of God and His will. We know that idolatry was more or less practiced by Israel while the manna was eaten and while the cloud of glory rested on the tabernacle. The martyr Stephen quotes from the prophet Amos to show that with Israel's offerings to Jehovah in the wilderness the people carried their shrines and images of false gods (Amos 5. 25., Acts 7. 42, 43.). Ezekiel records the same fact (ch. 20. 15, 16.), "I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them \* \* \* \* because they despised my judgments and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols." Moses himself is witness of this same defection. He says in his great song of God's mercy and judgment (Deut. 32. 17.), "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God—to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not." In all our views, therefore, of Israel in the desert, we must have before our minds two things, the tabernacle and its worship, with Moses and Aaron the representatives of the divine

will, and a godly portion of the people maintaining the solemn services, and then, besides, a great deal of insubordination and recklessness with idolatrous practices among the people. It was not a nation of idolaters, but a nation acknowledging Jehovah and largely tainted with idolatry.

The encampment at Kadesh was formed in perfect symmetry, the Tabernacle in the centre with the Levites encamped around it, the Kohathites on the south, the Gershonites on the west, the Merarites on the north, while Moses and Aaron occupied the east. Beyond this Levitical encampment were the encampments of the tribes, Reuben, Simeon and Gad on the south, Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin on the west, Dan, Asher and Naphtali on the north and Judah, Issachar and Zebulon on the east. There was probably a distance of a half-mile between the Tabernacle and the first row of the tents, other than those of the Levites (cf. Josh. 3. 4.). That this symmetrical order of abode marked the thirty-eight years' abode in Kadesh there can be no good reason to doubt. But we may believe that from time to time detachments were sent out to pasture cattle in the various oases of the desert, or even to repel attacks from neighboring nations. God has not seen fit to gratify our curiosity regarding the details of this long desert-life of Israel. But

this we know, that while living a desert-life, they did not live a nomad or Bedouin life. They were organized with a central home, a vast encampment, which probably covered 25 square miles, and their divine supply of food and drink rendered a nomadic life unnecessary. A thorough system of law was enforced, divine intervention occurring when necessary to check any looseness in its observance, although, with all this, we must allow a large margin of sin and disorder in so great a multitude, which it would not have been expedient to notice by divine intervention.

It is to be particularly noted that the law given at Sinai, which the cant of modern skeptics calls the Priest-code, contains much that is applicable only to the desert life, while the law given in the plains of Moab forty years later and found in the book of Deuteronomy, apply wholly to the settlement in Canaan. This fact exposes the folly of those who would put Deuteronomy before Leviticus, and place both of them eight hundred years after Moses. In no other age of Israel's history could Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers have been written but in the Mosaic age, and at no other time of Moses' life than the Sinai period, and at no other period could Deuteronomy have been written than

on the eve of Israel's entrance upon the promised land.

The whole order of encampment and march could have had no meaning except in the desert, for only the *army* marched when in Canaan, and not the non-combatants. So the methods of keeping the camp clean, and the directions regarding the following the cloud have no application to Israel in Palestine whether before or after the exile. And so also the changes in the law which are found in Deuteronomy are exactly those which would be made on leaving a desert life for a settled life in a fertile land, and yet these changes are quoted by the adversaries as contradictions in the law. There was very little need to speak of the priests in Deuteronomy, for the priests and their functions had been amply treated of in the law as given at Sinai, but when they are mentioned, it is not strange that Moses should call them "the *Levitical* priests" instead of merely "the priests," in order to impress upon Israel on entering their land that the priests belonged to that tribe of Levi, which should have no regular tribal inheritance with the rest, but should be separated to the Lord and so revered by Israel. Priest and Levite were to be regarded together as the Lord's special tribe of service. Yet it is on this title of "Leviti-

cal priests" given to the priests in Deuteronomy that the skeptics build their principal argument that Deuteronomy came before the other Pentateuchal books, at least before what they call the Priest-code, when they say no distinction was made between priests and Levites, the distinction being an after-invention. So absurdly slim is the foundation on which the enemies of revelation build.

Nothing can be conceived more exactly adapted to consolidate the nation and to thoroughly impregnate it with the distinctive principles of the revealed religion than this long residence in the wilderness, shut up to themselves, free from the contaminations of idolatrous nations, and almost entirely free from disturbance from without. We cannot tell how far a systematic training in divine truths was instituted, but we cannot believe that Moses and Aaron with their position and advantages neglected the education of the people, nor can we believe that family training in religion was absent. It is also exceedingly probable that the Levites found occupation in teaching the people, as we know they did in later times. Surely those forty years were not passed in spiritual idleness, but in establishing the divine work of forming a nation unto God. The earnest injunctions in the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy concerning the educa-



tion of the children in the law cannot be supposed to have been an entirely new thing at that time. It must have been a repetition of faithful counsel that had been given from the beginning. Thoughtful souls in Israel must have pondered on the wonderful ways of God with the people and have pointed the young and ignorant to the events that had so signalized their career from the time that the plagues upon Egypt marked Moses as their heaven-appointed guide. There were other means of training also, of which we have a few solemn instances recorded. The judicial death of Shelomith's son for cursing God was a warning against the double sin of blasphemy and rebellion. Another judicial death, that of the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day, was a clear indication that the law of the Sabbath was to be observed in its exactness, and that every detail of the ritual was of God, so that any wilful contempt for any portion of it was rebellion against Israel's King. It is the fashion for men who think lightly of religion to sneer at these instances of severity and to attack the law of God as cruel and the ancient church as barbaric because of them. It is only because of their ignorance of the nature of sin, and of their consequent incapability of judging of the relations between God and man, that they thus talk. The

awful chasm which sin has made between God and man, the fearful character of sin as the enemy of truth and the perfect holiness of God are the three facts which explain all and show that severity is an absolute necessity in the successful action of the divine mercy, that mercy which rejoiceth against judgment just because there is a judgment without mercy (Jas. 2. 16). It is because there is a judgment that destroys, that mercy has her place of joy. They that reject the mercy must be destroyed, and all who rebel against God and refuse to obey his ordinances of salvation are the deliberate rejectors of the mercy. The capital punishments in Israel which we have referred to were the tokens of this fundamental truth. The shallow souls, that would have God's love overlook all sin and allow every man to exercise his wilfulness in any direction and to any extent, forget that Divine Love must be a consuming fire to all that is unclean and hostile to the truth. For all such it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The love these worldly ones picture to themselves is simply weakness, a weak compromising with evil, the absolute destruction of holiness.

God's training of Israel had to have these stern features in it. These stern features of the divine government of holiness are typed in the storms and

earthquakes of nature, and on the other hand they find their counterpart in the agitations and distresses of the human mind. Sin has made man's way a very hard one, and man would make God responsible for the hardness. The old couplet, though very homely, is very true—

No rogue e'er felt the halter draw  
With good opinion of the law,

and so every sinner is ready to accuse God's holy law of injustice and cruelty when the evil lies altogether in his own sin.

It would be a very interesting narrative that would give account of the details of desert life in Israel for those long forty years. We should like to see the intercourse of families, the daily duties, the amusements of the people and all that side of which the Bible naturally does not treat. But we must leave all this to the imagination, and be content with knowing that the God who provided them with the means of grace also provided them with all the materials of a rational life.

One common objection to the Mosaic constitution of Israel we must notice in conclusion. It is that no mention is made of the life beyond the grave. The answer to the objection is twofold; first, that we have in the Law of Moses a system of life on earth, not a revelation of the life in heaven. How

much Moses may have said to Israel, in his daily intercourse with them, of the future life we cannot know, but their law was a table of earthly duties, largely a ritual which they were to use. In this ritual there were clear types of the future life, but the great object of the law was to keep the nation separate from all others and closely bound to Jehovah. The second answer is that this law implied a life beyond, that all its moral meaning rested on the idea of man's continuance in being, that the salvation and purification from sin taught in the ritual would have been trifles not worth attention, if they had had respect only to this life. And then we may add that the people of Israel were steeped in the knowledge of the life beyond. Egypt, where they had dwelt for centuries, taught the doctrine most prominently, and Israel's ancestors plainly declared that they sought a better country, that is, a heavenly. (Heb. 11, 14, 16.) No one can have access to God and suppose himself an ephemeral being. The intercourse with God is itself proof to the contrary. The spirit beareth witness with the man's spirit to his permanence. It is a spiritual instinct. And so the nation of Israel could not have lived a month under the marvelous manifestations of God without an inward consciousness that life was not bounded by the grave.

## LECTURE VI.

### THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

ISRAEL was to enter into possession of Canaan as a renovated people. The old generation, that had seen the wonders wrought for them by God in Egypt and at Sinai, and had yet refused to obey the Lord and enter into the promised land, had entirely disappeared, excepting the two brave and faithful souls, Joshua and Caleb. Aaron, who had compromised with the rebellious people at Sinai and with rebellious Miriam at Hazeroth, had been removed, and even Moses, the honored and steadfast leader of Israel had had to forfeit his entrance into Canaan by reason of his error at Kadesh.

The new generation had had its hardships, its murmuring and its severe chastening, experiences necessary to correct the evil and strengthen the faith of God's host. It had repeated the complaint of the preceding generation against the austerity of the desert and had wearied of the manna, which seems to have lost its hold upon them as a constant testimony to God's presence and care, and in return for this outburst of murmuring God had sent

serpents among the people and multitudes perished. It was then that the brazen serpent was erected on a height and all Israel bidden to look to it and be healed, a significant token of God's readiness to pardon the sins of his people through their faith, although the fulness of the teaching was reserved for a later day, when the Messiah himself should explain to the church of God the exact application of the symbol then erected in the wilderness.

The contests with Sihon, King of the Amorites, and with Og, King of Bashan, were also parts of the discipline needed by the new generation, in which they learned that God would give them the victory over all foes however formidable.

The sad influences of Moab over Israel in introducing a degrading sensuality into the host and the severe punishment inflicted both upon Moab and on sinning Israel, formed the last severe lesson of the divine government to Israel before the entrance upon the promised land was achieved. Two matters of note occurring at the threshold of the land must be marked. The one is the demand of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and of the half-tribe of Manassch to dwell *outside* the land. They would send their men to fight with their brethren and secure possession of the land for them,

their wives and children and non-combatants would remain in the region conquered from Sihon and Og, and *there* would be their own permanent home. The request was granted, but it was granted, as all requests contrary to the divine order are granted, with a corresponding loss of the divine protection. The further history of those trans-Jordanic tribes abundantly showed this. The other matter is the faithful and affectionate farewell words of Moses, with the new ordinance of God by him, delivered to Israel, as found in the book of Deuteronomy. He rehearses all God's wonders to them and their fathers, he shows God's tender love and his necessary severity, he exposes their sins, he sets before them the alternatives of righteousness with blessing and wickedness with cursing, and he urges them with unequalled tenderness to choose the right and to serve God with all their hearts.

And now Israel, thus trained and taught and exhorted, in its new generation, with Joshua its Military Commander, and Aaron's son Eleazar its spiritual leader and High Priest, crosses the Jordan by miracle, receives the sign of the Abrahamic covenant and celebrates the Passover in the plain of Jericho. To eliminate miracle from this narrative is to demolish the history altogether. Any attempt to belittle the marvels which God wrought

at this part of Israel's career is to destroy the symmetry of the events, and shows an entire obtuseness regarding the function of Israel as the church of God. As we have seen before, the founding of a church as a divine repository of truth demanded miraculous signs, without which no man would have been warranted in recognizing its pretensions, and hence Egypt and all other nations were to receive witness that God had set apart Israel for this high mission. The plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the scenes at Sinai and throughout the desert sojourn were to be appropriately followed, as the conclusion of this miraculous cycle, by the divine marvels granted Israel in taking possession of the promised land.

Jericho, a strong-walled city, the first they meet in Canaan, is to be theirs by no blow struck by them, but by the unseen forces employed by their God and King. The priests with the ark march around the walls once a day for six days and on the seventh day make the circuit seven times. Then with a shout from the army and the blowing of trumpets by the priests the massive fortifications fall and Israel enters into the city and destroys it. Here the faith of Israel was marked. They did not despise Joshua's command regarding these repeated circuits and this week's delay. They did not



deem such conduct unmilitary and puerile. But they performed to the letter all the strange command, as if it were nothing strange, and their reward was in the bloodless victory at the last. Hence it is said by the inspired writer in the New Testament, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." (Heb. 11. 30.)

When a short time afterwards this aggregated faith was followed by a breach of God's law regarding the destruction of the contents of Jericho, and a family (for Achan certainly was helped by his whole family in his concealment of the Jericho treasure) was found allowing worldly purposes and methods to defile the faith of Israel, the same holy God who rewarded the faith, set his seal of condemnation on the wickedness which was in Israel. The disaster at Ai showed the solidarity of the church and its responsibility to keep itself pure before God, and the execution of Achan and his family was the awful exhibition of that holy wrath which must ever visit the wilful iniquities of God's people. Remember that these dealings of God were not with mankind in general, but with his called church, and moreover that they were dealings at the beginning of an important dispensation, when lessons had to be scored deep in the life of the

avored people. Hence they are not to be regarded as examples of God's dealings with mankind on this earth, nor even of God's dealings with his church at all times, but rather as marked object-lessons of divine truth for the church, and types of God's *ultimate* dealings with all mankind, as a God of both mercy and justice.

It is a striking fact that before any general conquest of the land, Israel made its way directly to the heart of the country, (to the mathematical centre, if we take Sidon for the north extremity and Kadesh for the south extremity), and there between Gerizim and Ebal swore fealty to Jehovah, and dedicated themselves and the land to Him. The solemn transaction at Shechem was a declaration that their whole movement in taking possession of Canaan was not a human device of ambition and lust of conquest, but a humble obedience to God, who had appointed them to be the executioners of his judgments against the Canaanites, a people sunken in the grossest sins. It has been a favorite theme of infidels to inveigh against the Bible as advocating murder and wholesale cruelty, and to describe the God of the Bible as a monster, because of Israel's destruction of the Canaanites. But any unprejudiced student of the Word will see that the treatment of the Canaanites was exceptional, and

that God's instructions to Israel in his law commanded gentleness and mercy toward enemies and all kindness toward the stranger. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. 22. 21). "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. 23. 9). "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Lev. 19. 33). "And if thy brother be waxen poor and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him, yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with thee" (Lev. 25. 35). "The Lord loveth the stranger—love ye therefore the stranger" (Deut. 10. 18, 19). Such was the marked attention to strangers and sojourners which God commanded in time of peace. There is nothing like it in the whole world's history. It is the voice of Heaven's wondrous love to man, communicating love for our fellow-man.

The commands of God in his law regarding enemies in war were a remarkable contrast to the custom of the times. It was the habit of those days to torture and slay every enemy taken in war, to

massacre old and young, male and female, or if any were spared they were spared only to be the lowest of slaves. But God commanded Israel never to slay women and children, and never to destroy the fruit trees of an enemy's land, nor could they indulge in the torturing cruelties in which the nations then delighted, and the whole law laid down principles which would prevent any aggressive war, except the one in which the Canaanites were to be destroyed. The Canaanites were the sole exception to these rules of mercy, and that because God had condemned them, not because of any cruel spirit on the part of Israel. The orders of God to Israel run thus: "Hear, O Israel: \* \* \* Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, 'For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land;' but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness or for the uprightness of thy heart dost thou go to possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." This is reiterated to Israel, so that they should count themselves as simply the appointed officers of

God (all unworthy in themselves) to visit his sentence of punishment upon the Canaanitish nations, whose iniquity was now full. Israel, indeed, held back from performing their duty in exterminating the Canaanites, and spared many of them to be thorns in their side and tempters to idolatry. God alone was responsible for the utter destruction of men, women and children of the doomed nations, so far as that sentence was carried out, that same God who has often commanded the earthquake, the famine and the pestilence to go forth and slay thousands of every condition, just as now he used Israel as his agent. And who is he who dares call God to account? Who is he who can enter into the counsels of the Most High and judge the reasons of the Almighty? Who is he who can impugn the Divine wisdom and righteousness? We are, therefore, not to accuse Israel of cruelty and savagery in the destruction of the Canaanites, any more than we accuse the sheriff of cruelty for strangling a man to death. We are to transfer the whole responsibility to God, and there be satisfied that the Judge of all the earth doeth right. To quote Israel's treatment of Canaan as an example for human action is absurd, for it was God's special revelation that made Israel an exception, and this exceptional feature stands forth prominently in all

the sacred record. The love of God is not only reconcilable with His holy vengeance and its severity, but absolutely demands it, and the same love that says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," also says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." It is a weak and wicked religion that does not show love on its reverse side, that apologizes for sin and confounds holy judgment with cruelty. It is also a proud and foolish religion which would expect to fathom all God's doings and call in question his justice and truth by reason of the puzzling problems of fact that history presents. The Mosaic law shows God to be full of love and mercy. It presents him as long-suffering and tender in his dealings with man, and yet that same law shows these severities against which the infidel world inveigh. The Gospel, as we have seen, presents these some apparent contrasts, and if we are to reject the one, we are to reject the other. The whole difficulty with scoffing man is that he has no idea of the awful character of sin, and of the sublime character of holiness, and yet dares to sit in judgment upon the Holy God. Ignorance and pride resist the light of God's revelation. They also resist the light of God's providential dealings in Nature.

They assume to know better than God how He should govern the world.

But to return. After Israel's solemn consecration of nation and land to God at Gerizim and Ebal, two grand campaigns, one at the south and one at the north, subjugated the country. The exceptions were not the inhabitants of the Gibeonite Tetrapolis, who by guile escaped and became servants to the congregation, but only those Canaanites who in special fastnesses entrenched themselves and before whom Israel's faith failed. The conquest of Canaan was completed, with this exception, in about five years. It was Israel's remissness that protracted the result. But with all this, it was a remarkable conquest, sweeping out of existence six distinct nationalities with their many petty kings in a country full of difficulties by reason of its mountainous character. The Canaanites who remained sporadically in the land were not formidable enemies, but resident aliens whose danger to Israel was a moral one. The land was so entirely Israel's that the surveyors proceeded securely to lay out the boundaries which should mark the settlement of the tribes of Israel, and Joshua spent the remnant of his days (about twenty years) in presiding over the people whom he had placed victoriously in the land. The tabernacle had been set up at

Shiloh, near the centre of the country, the regular worship of God according to the divine ritual was maintained, and the only rebuke that Joshua had to administer to the people was for their remissness in thrusting out the Canaanitish groups that yet remained and in settling themselves permanently within designated limits. The desert habits of the people overcame their faith and obedience. And yet we cannot read the last chapters of the book of Joshua, without being convinced that these faults of Israel have been greatly exaggerated by commentators.

The great mass of the nation were full of reverence to God and attachment to his worship, although here and there traces of idolatry from contamination with Egypt and other lands remained. We have the express statement of the Scriptures which settles this point ; "and Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua and which had known all the works of Jehovah that he had done for Israel." Those miraculous works had now ceased. The age of miracles to evidence the establishment of the divine kingdom upon the earth was now over, and for five centuries Israel was to live under the written law, with no miracle but those of the days of the fathers behind the divine statute. In the days



of Ahab and his successors when idolatry poured into the land from Phœnicia, God again vouchsafed miraculous signs to his prophets who withstood the gigantic evil, and Elijah and Elisha stand forth as the representatives of that later day of testimony. After that no miracle was beheld till the new dispensation of the Son of man called for this superhuman testimony to the change from the Jewish to the Christian church.

We may properly count these years of Joshua and the elders who overlived Joshua as the years of Israel's purest life. We may believe that for some thirty years peace and prosperity marked the newly-settled church of God. The lust for wealth, the desire to be like other nations, the restlessness under an exacting ritual and the love of novelty had not yet entered into the hearts of the people, and Israel presented among the nations of the earth the only example of an orderly, happy, contented and free commonwealth, with laws so just and equal and beneficent, that they have never been excelled in these particulars by the laws of the most advanced and democratic nations of modern times. This existence of such a code at a time when all other national codes were unjust and tyrannical, or rather when other nations had *no* codes but were governed by whim and brute power,

is itself an impregnable argument for the divine character of Israel's polity, for surely there was nothing in the condition and character of a mass of Egyptian slaves that could account for it.

That the possession of Canaan by Israel was an enacted type of the possession of rest by the true people of God we have Scripture warrant to assert. In the typical gallery as thus indicated by inspiration, Egypt represents the depravity in which our human nature is found, and out from which the trusting soul is led by the Spirit of God, saved by the blood of another, and carried through experiences of trial, but provisioned from heavenly sources, until perfect rest is attained in the place prepared for it by a covenant-keeping God. That Canaan-rest of the soul is to some extent obtained in this life, though its fulness is found only in the life beyond. Its illustration in this life has some of the detracting features of Israel's life in Canaan. There is remissness in taking advantage of all our privileges—there is a failure in faith and zeal—there is a permitting the old affections (the Canaanites) to dwell with the soul and disturb its rest, and there is a want of realization of the wonderful mercies that God has wrought for us. Every true Christian heart will see itself reflected in the conduct of

Israel in its settlement in Canaan, and will learn a lesson of self-humiliation before God.

It is for us, who have been led out of Egypt and through the desert and have been fed on the manna and have drunk of the Rock water that followed us—and have thus been led into the rest of the people of God,—it is for us to ponder on the marvels that God has shown to us in His Son, redeeming us from our condemnation and giving us the name and place of His children, that we answer not these mercies by ingratitude and worldliness, but be ever a separated people, rejoicing in our advantages, using faithfully our spiritual rights, and devoted to our King and Saviour.

## LECTURE VII.

### THE JUDGES.

WHEN Joshua died, Israel was a quiet and compact commonwealth, the people faithfully serving the Lord (Judg. 2. 7). The nation was a brilliant light in the midst of a dark world, a light altogether of heaven, kindled and sustained by the Spirit and the Truth of God. That little land of Palestine was the token of God's long-suffering toward the past of our race and of his merciful purpose toward its future. That separated people was the church of God concrete and visible, which in its invisible and spiritual character was in the future to be as broad as the earth. We can rest our eyes on this fair oasis of Israel for only a very brief period. For a few years, the time of one generation only, the leaf of this tree was green and its fruit abundant. Then came the mildew, the frost, the worm at the root, the scorching heat, the drought, all the varied forces of sin, to corrupt the growth and to cancel all the advantages which God had so freely bestowed. The very source of the evil was in the disregard of what infidels have

called God's cruel law to exterminate the Canaanites and their foul idolatry. It is hard for us to imagine the wild sensuality and beastliness which were indissolubly connected with the Canaanitish idolatry. The more religious they were, the more filthy were their lives. The obscene and cruel rites belonging to idolatry dragged every soul into the deepest defilement and rendered every contact with the people a moral pollution. Hence God had ordered the utter extermination of the whole people with all their unclean apparatus of religion, as he had before ordered the drowning of a whole world sunken in sin. It was not what God would do with every filthy people in this world, but it was a selected example of God's wrath against sin, and a warning of the final destruction of all who indulged in iniquity. The failure to obey God's command involved Israel in troubles. The altars of Baal and Ashtoreth, allowed to remain in the land, and the contact in business and society with the immoral idolaters soon began to have their natural effect, and about twenty years after Joshua's death the people of God were found bowing down to the idols of Canaan and awakening the just anger of Jehovah. We may imagine that this idolatry of the people must have been accompanied by a fearful demoralization of society.

Intermarriages between Israelite and Canaanite families took place, and so the homes of Israel were polluted and the poison admitted into the very arteries of the national life. The government of Israel was a mild and simple democracy. The elders of each tribe managed its affairs, and these elders fairly represented the people. No monarch controlled the nation to unify it and to concentrate its force on any given spot. No oligarchy gathered wealth and power by which to compel and oppress, for the elders were not an oligarchy, as they had no hereditary succession and seem to have held their position by the common consent of the people. Such a government, although the best in the world when a people are righteous and pure, is easily impregnated with the vices of the people and become its partner in wickedness. No stay to the idolatry of Israel ever, therefore, came from its elders. There was, indeed, a central figure in Israel, the High Priest, and he bare the Urim and Thummim by which the divine will was made known. But his functions were connected with the ritual at the central place of worship, and the Urim and Thummim were not to be degraded by a common use. The High Priest, therefore, could do but little to withstand the wave of idolatry that was flowing

over the land. It was the exigency of such a crisis that called for the *Shophet* or Judge. He was the defender of the commonwealth against idolatry not directly, but in the way we now designate.

According to God's repeated threatenings, he brought on Israel the scourge of a foreign foe, from time to time, to punish them for their idolatry and the vices appertaining to idolatry. This foreign foe seized upon the whole land or a part of it and forced a tribute, while generally oppressing the people. Then when the scourge had been sufficiently applied, and the people felt their sinfulness and cried unto God, some man was specially raised up by God with a clear indication of the divine will concerning him and this one, as *Shophet* or Judge, delivered Israel from the oppressor. The *Shophet* was thus an extraordinary officer, designated by God and having, as his function, to deliver the people from an oppressor and to hold the delivered people to the truth of God against idolatry.

Twelve of these *Shophetim* or Judges are named in the history, some of whom may have been contemporary. At least it is probable that Samson judged Israel in the tribes of Dan and Judah, while Ibzan, Elon and Abdon were also Judges

in the northern part of the land, during the middle twenty years of the sixty years' Philistine oppression. It was probably in temporary and local overthrows of the Philistines that these three obtained their judgeship. The whole period of the Judges from the first, Othniel, to the last, Samuel, (if we take the date of the battle of Ebenezer, when the Philistines were overcome), was about 358 years, and it is interesting to remark that of those 358 years, two hundred are expressly declared to have been years of peace and prosperity, and perhaps we are to add to those the forty-five years of Tola and Jair, which would give us 245 years of peace and only 113 of oppression. The whole period of the Judges seems at first sight to be called a period of 450 years by Paul in his address at Antioch in Pisidia, but that period evidently begins with the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, from which to the battle of Ebenezer would be almost exactly 450 years. We are so accustomed to regard the period of the Judges as a period of disorder and wretchedness, that it will appear startling to assert, that, next to the day of Joshua, it was the very best period of Israelitish History. More than two centuries of it were years of peace, when the nation must have been, as a whole, observant of God's laws and faithful to the



holy covenant, for God had declared that when they should turn from Him He would bring the foreign oppressor upon them and only remove him on their repentance and obedience. Hence we have a right to infer that for more than 200 years of the period of the Judges, Israel was faithful and devout before God. It is true that severe judgments came upon them, but it is also true that those judgments wrought their intended work and brought Israel back to obedience and faith for a longer or shorter period, at one time for eighty years, that is, for more than two generations. An Israelite living at that time in one of those generations must have enjoyed a condition of quietness and happiness in social and political life seldom realized elsewhere or at any other time on the face of the earth. It is a part of the unbelief of rationalists to blacken the period of the Judges and to mark the state of society then in Israel as barbaric and vicious. It is a part of the theory that Israel began its career as savage, and developed by natural evolution into civilization, when the truth is exactly the reverse. Israel began with the enlightenment of Sinai and the training of the desert. It entered on Palestine as a prepared people. And its course, instead of being a development into something better and better, was a down-

ward progress to worse and worse. Too many think of civilization as consisting only of a flourishing condition of the arts and sciences, forgetting that the moral life is the standard of a true civilization. Israel certainly was not, in the time of the Judges, marked by any prominence in the arts and sciences. Babylon and Egypt were far in advance of Israel in these matters. But if the moral life is the true standard of civilization, then Israel was far in advance of Babylon and Egypt at this early period in civilization. The land was full of a righteous and happy people in the many long intervals of whole generations between their lapses and punishments. It is not sufficiently noted that the object of the Book of Judges is not to give the history of Israel, but to point out their lamentable failures, their departures from the law and service of God. The good parts of their history are thus purposely passed over, or dismissed with a word, while each instance of sin is enlarged upon. The whole record of Israel in the Old Testament has this character. It is a record of Israel's departure from God. It is an exhibition of man's gravitation to evil, thus making clear that only in God was man's hope. Here was a nation wonderfully prepared and set apart with advantages and privileges unparalleled to cultivate truth and righteous-

ness, and, with all this, it went down by an inclined plane into infidelity and rebellion against God, until He had to cast them off. In the time of the Judges we see an early and a favorable condition of the nation, the idolatrous tendency cropping out again and again, but on the whole and after punishment the nation yielding to treatment and serving God in faith and obedience.

The last five chapters of the Book of Judges are an appendix and give two accounts, one of Micah and his house of Elohim, and the other of a grievous sin at Gibeah and its punishment. These chapters are used to support the idea of the barbarism of those times. But they prove the very reverse. They show the events recorded in them as something extraordinary. The sin at Gibeah, such a sin as is committed constantly in every city of Christian lands, was such a horror to Israel, that they rose up as one man and punished it with the extremest rigor. Surely that shows a sensitiveness to sin, which no people have ever since exhibited. Do you call that barbaric? Would God, then, that all nations were now barbaric! In Micah's case, we have a story of what occurred probably very soon after the conquest, and before things were well settled. The Danites had been remiss in destroying the Canaanites, and suffered in consequence

Some of their tribe had to emigrate and seek a new settlement. That such a band should become rough and reckless is what might be expected. As for Micah's image, it was not an idol, but a representative of Jehovah, for he worshiped only Jehovah. The man was evidently a man of wealth, and under the seductive influences of wealth he ran into the error of instituting a private chapel, in which representatives of Jehovah, like the cherubim, should be placed, and a Levite should act as priest. It was a gross breach of the Mosaic law, but exactly in the line in which first errors from order would fall.

These events are recorded to show how sin and apostasy crept into Israel, but they by no means show a general corruption and barbarism among the people. As we said, they are exceptional cases, and to use them as proofs of the blackness of the age of the Judges is like using the bills of mortality published quarterly by our city as a history of the city's career.

There is a phrase in this appendix to the Book of Judges, which is strangely misapprehended. It is this: "in those days there was no king in Israel but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The phrase occurs twice (17. 6. and 21. 25) and the first clause occurs once more (18. 1). "In those days there was no king in Israel." The com-

mon impression is that this phrase describes a chaotic and turbulent condition of the community, but a little observation will correct this judgment. The Book of Judges was probably written by Samuel, when he had had to yield to the rebellious desires of Israel and give them a king. In his old age the faithful prophet writes the account of Israel's advantages and defections, and when copying the old records of the earlier day, he inserts the memorandum that the events recorded belonged to a time when Israel was enjoying great personal liberty without a king, and that will account for so much independent action of individuals and sections, which under Saul's tyrannical sway would appear very strange indeed.

So the arguments for the barbaric character of the age of the Judges all fall to the ground, and we re-assert that the age was, next to that of Joshua, immediately preceding, the very purest and best age of Israel's history. Of course, we do not mean that Israel was a perfect nation, nor that its whole population were equally faithful at any one time. There was much iniquity in the land at all times. In every nation there are base souls and companies, a lower stratum of immoral and abandoned men and women, and Israel was not without these. No doubt, if we had traveled through Israel in the best

portion of the period of the Judges we should have seen just such breaches of law and order, and just such crimes as we see to-day in every civilized nation, but we firmly believe that these breaches and crimes would have been found far less gross than those which occur among us and far less numerous in proportion to the population.

That idolatry again and again crept in among the people we have seen, but the common notion that it prevailed over the worship of Jehovah is absurd. Statements in the Book of Judges are perverted and exaggerated to prove the corruption of Israel at this time. For example, Gideon's altar in Ophrah is quoted as a proof that Israel had abandoned the law concerning one central altar and had erected altars all over the land. But Gideon's altar is the only other constructed altar than the central one mentioned in the Book of Judges, and that altar was erected unto Jehovah where God had appeared to him, this special appearance of God sanctifying the spot and justifying the altar. It is true that Manoah offered up sacrifices on a rock at Zoreh, but here again God had appeared to Manoah and thus sanctified the rock as an altar and Manoah as a priest (after the manner of Gideon) for that particular time. Such exceptional cases, with their peculiar features, instead of showing that the law

was broken and altars erected everywhere, go to prove the opposite.

In Gideon's case, there was a very important reason for the exception, that Gideon's father, Joash, had built an idol altar in the place. Baal's altar was to be thrown down and Jehovah's altar erected in its place, as an emblem of Gideon's work for Israel.

Again Jephthah's band and its performances are quoted as examples of departure from the Mosaic law and of a coarse and barbarous state of society. But we are to remember that Jephthah belonged to the east side of the Jordan, where the people by their own choice had settled outside of Canaan, exposed to all the moral and social dangers from their neighbors the Ammonites and Moabites. A corruption of society in that region was a natural consequence. Moreover Jephthah lived toward the close of the period of the Judges, when Israel had indeed become corrupt and was needing a Samuel to arise to withstand the tendency to moral and national ruin. It was at the same time that we find Samson on the west side of Jordan, such a miserable specimen of a man in his moral character, acting as Judge, and gifted by the Lord with marvelous physical strength with which to worry and harass the Philistines, but not to subdue them, as if

the low state of the country did not justify a higher order of Judge or a more thorough deliverance.

At these closing years of the period of the Judges we find that the nation was fast becoming base and corrupt to the core. No longer appeared such noble souls as Othniel, Caleb's nephew, who graced the early portion of the period of the Judges, or as Deborah and Gideon who marked its middle years. Patriotism and piety had together languished and well-nigh perished, so that Jephthah and Samson appear in strong contrast with the heroes of two centuries before.

Bear in mind that in this period of the Judges we are considering a range of over 350 years, and we cannot give the same character to each part of this long epoch. What we unhesitatingly assert is that, if we take the period as a whole, it compares favorably with any other part of Israel's history of like length, that it exhibits, it is true, a simplicity of life that is not a mark of brilliant civilization, but that the moral basis of a true civilization was there as it was nowhere else, and that the earlier half of this period represented generally a peaceful and faithful people of God.

In order to have a correct idea of the times, we must see the two conflicting currents of thought and life both at work, that of the Law and its



earnest defenders, and that of the idolatrous Canaanites and those ready to compromise with them. At one time the former prevails and a long, happy experience is the result. At another time the latter prevails and then come invasion, confusion and ruin. Toward the close of the period the latter element seems to have gained a permanent mastery, and so the Philistines are ordained by God to be a permanent rod of punishment. For sixty years that fierce people persecute Israel, and the nation is brought to the very lowest condition of national life, humbled in the dust, and ground down in poverty and wretchedness by these stalwart foes from one end of the land to the other.

But this fearful prostration of Israel at the close of the period of the Judges is not to be made the characterization of the whole period. *There* is the mistake of the ordinary commentary. It is a superficial view, fostered, as we have said, by those who would deny the supernatural in Israel's history, and would make Israel a nation of savages gradually evolving into the civilization of Solomon's day. Israel was more brilliant in Solomon's day. It was larger, wealthier, and more powerful. But it was far lower in the moral scale in Solomon's day, than it was in the earlier portion of the period of the Judges.—Between these two periods, however,

there was a reformation, and the dreadful condition of the commonwealth was relieved by the presence and work of a Great Reformer, a grand figure, one of the grandest in all history, that now appears upon the scene. This was Samuel, whom we may consider either as the first of the Prophets or as the last of the Judges. He is the connecting link between the Judges and the Kings. His position is so prominent and his importance as an agent of God for Israel's salvation so great and his life so long and varied in its relations to the people, that we must devote a special discourse to the consideration of Samuel and his place in the history of the Jewish church.

## LECTURE VIII.

### SAMUEL.

FROM the constitution of Israel as an organized church of God at Sinai to the captivity in Babylon was a period of nearly nine centuries. Samuel stands midway between the extremes of this period. His life divides the democratic era from the monarchic. Before him Israel was in its original polity, but had so abused and corrupted the freedom which such a polity gave them, that they deserved no longer its enjoyment, and a new form of government was to be given them of God, and yet according to their own wicked wish (for God acts through the evil desires of men, as in the crucifixion of Christ), under which government they would have a new opportunity of obeying God and serving him according to His holy law. In Samuel's time this new polity was formed and after him it continued until the Babylonian captivity.

We have seen how Israel constantly tended toward idolatry, and how each Judge who was raised up was a sort of reformer who stayed for a time the sad defection. But Samuel, who was the twelfth

and last of the Judges, stands far above all his predecessors both as to personal character and as to the work he wrought for Israel. Indeed his life forms by itself a historic epoch in Israel. He was not only specially called of God to judge Israel, as were all the Judges, but he was gifted with extraordinary powers as priest and prophet, although he was not a priest by birth but only a Levite. Born of godly parents, he was dedicated to God before his birth, and was one of the three Nazarites for life, of whom we read, Samson and John the Baptist being the others. The Nazarite was separated from the rest of men, as his name indicates (*Nazar* being the Hebrew word for "separate"), and as distinctive of this ritual and symbolic separation, his hair was never cut, nor did he drink wine or eat grapes, nor could he touch a dead body. He was an object lesson of the separation between holiness and sin. The common life of man was to be eschewed by him. Of course his was no example of what all men should do. He was simply a typical picture of a great principle, that holiness required a spiritual separation from the ordinary world. Like sacrifices and purifications and the other divinely-ordained machinery of the law, Naziritism had its special function in the typical

church, but, like the other ordinances, is now a thing of the past.

The Nazaritism of Samuel, of course, made him the more conspicuous before Israel in his career, and doubtless this was part of the divine plan in leading his pious mother so to destine him from his birth.

Samuel was born shortly after the oppression of the Philistines had been checked by the marvelous deeds of Samson, but still it was a very dark day for Israel, and Samuel was probably only fifteen years old when Samson died a prisoner in Ashdod, and when the ark of God was captured by the Philistines at the first battle of Ebenezer. Eli, the old and weak high priest, died at the same time. We may believe that it was at this time also that the tabernacle at Shiloh, the tabernacle that Moses had reared in the desert, and that had been Israel's sanctuary for more than three centuries, was destroyed, and the nation was without that central symbol of the divine presence. It was the fearful time referred to in the 78th Psalm (ver. 59, 60), when "God abhorred Israel and forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh." The prophet Jeremiah, five hundred years later, refers to this overthrow. "Go ye now into my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it

for the wickedness of my people Israel" (Jer. 7. 12). How profound was the abyss into which Israel had fallen! Its central shrine destroyed, the holy ark in a foreign land, the high priest and his sons dead, the Philistines swarming over the land, Samson, the last stalwart defender of Israel, gone—surely the wrath of God was outpoured upon His people and His vengeance burned against them for their disobedience and idolatries. And what was to save the wretched land? Who now was to be the deliverer? It was this youth of fifteen years, who had been brought up by Eli as an attendant upon the temple, as the tabernacle was called long before the temple of Solomon was built, the word so used meaning the "palace," that is "the palace of the Great King of Israel."

It was this young Samuel who was now to come forward as the Lord's selected agent of Israel's reformation and restoration. We cannot tell when Samuel stood forth as the acknowledged guide of the bruised and scattered flock. There was probably for five years after the disaster at Ebenezer and the destruction of Shiloh a chaotic condition of affairs. Under the pressure of severe judgments, the Philistines had sent back the ark, and the men of Kirjath-jearim, a town about twenty miles S. W. of Jerusalem, had received it. This is the only

light that breaks in upon the dark landscape. We may suppose that at twenty years of age, the age in which Levites entered upon his active service, Samuel entered upon his extraordinary service, as not only a Levite, but as priest (and temporary high-priest during the minority of Ahitub and then of Ahiah, Eli's descendants) and as prophet of the Lord. His judgeship (for thus it is expressly called, 1 Sam. 7. 15.) was thus a very exalted and composite judgeship, of a very different sort from that of his predecessors, the divine element being much more prominent. As judge, Samuel made Bethel, Gilgal, Ramah and Mizpeh, four places only a few miles apart, north of Jerusalem, the seats of government, perhaps because that region only was free from the Philistine occupation.

It was not till fifteen years after the time in which we suppose Samuel to have assumed his high functions, and twenty years after the first battle of Ebenezer which so prostrated Israel, that the second battle of Ebenezer occurred and the great deliverance was effected. Doubtless the way had been prepared for this deliverance by the teachings of Samuel and his appeals to the people. What we first see in the sacred story is a gathering of the representatives of Israel at Mizpeh (probably Neby Samwil, five miles N. W. of Jerusalem) at the call

of Samuel for the purpose of special prayer to God (1 Sam. 7. 5). It was a most solemn meeting. The people had already listened to the earnest appeals of Samuel and had put away the Baalim and Ashereth, whose worship had brought them into distress. They had declared again for Jehovah, and now this meeting at Mizpeh was what might be called a ratification meeting with regard to their new choice. The representatives of Israel on the height of Mizpeh fasted before God, and drawing water poured it out before the altar as a sign of their deep repentance, confessing their sins. Here was a turning-point in Israel's life. It had seemed as if their final destruction had come. The national life was held by a very slender thread. But this Mizpeh assembly changed all. Here Israel formally repented and God turned away the fierceness of his anger.

The gathering at Mizpeh was soon known to the Philistine government, and they prepared an immediate blow to crush this revival of courage on the part of Israel. Their host marched directly on Mizpeh, and the representatives of Israel trembled. They must have been very few in number compared with the Philistine army and they were ready to faint at the approach of these victorious veterans. They appealed to Samuel to intercede with God for



them, and a special solemn service was held of intercession, in which Samuel (as a divine agent raised up for the crisis with extraordinary powers) offered up on the altar at Mizpeh a burnt-offering and lifted up his voice in prayer. It must be remembered that the ark was at Kirjath-jearim and the tabernacle was destroyed. In this emergency Samuel as an extraordinary high-priest set up an extraordinary altar at Mizpeh, as afterward he did at Gilgal.

The Philistine host meantime marched rapidly up the ascent of Beth-horon, and swarmed out upon the Gibeon plain, where twenty years before they had dealt Israel such a deadly blow capturing the ark and slaying the sons of Eli. It was while Samuel was in the act of offering the burnt-offering, that the Philistine army met an unexpected foe. It was not Israel. The small band of Israelites were up on the Mizpeh height with Samuel. Philistia's foe was God himself, who sent a terrific storm upon the army with awful thunderings and destructive lightnings, that decimated the host and put everything into confusion, so that the Israelites rushed down into the plain, fell upon the Philistines in their bewilderment and drove them in thorough rout down the pass to Beth-horon.\* So complete

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\* The Beth-car of Samuel is supposed to be the Beth-horon of Joshua and Chronicles.

was this destruction of the Philistine host, and so rapid was Israel's recovery of strength that the Philistines withdrew entirely from the land and never entered it again until forty years afterward when Saul's sins and the renewed sins of the people again brought them in as the Lord's rod. On the battle-field Samuel erected a stone (a menhir, as it would be called to-day) and called it Eben-ezer, *Stone of help*, as indicative of the Lord's continued help to Israel. The spot is probably now marked by the well, called Bir-Azeir, a half-mile north-west of Gibeon, a mile and a half north of the Mizpeh hill, and two miles south of the opening of the pass of Beth-horon.

The battle of Ebenezer (this second battle on the spot) was thus a mere pursuit of a flying enemy, whom God had by the intervention of the elements disordered and defeated. It was not Israel's strength, but God's mercy, that gained the day, and by this the people were practically taught that the way of repentance was the way of safety and success.

Samuel had now, as Judge, delivered Israel from its oppressor, but, not as the other judges had done, by the use of carnal weapons. It was the intercessory prayer of Samuel that had wrought the work, and the prophet Jeremiah, 500 years

afterward, refers to this intercessory power of Samuel, when he says, "Thus said the Lord unto me, 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people.'" (Jer. 15.1). Samuel is coupled with Moses, as equally a conspicuous example of a successful intercessor for Israel before God in Israel's past history. The forty years that followed are barely noticed in the sacred record. It is because the record relates only to Israel's decline, and hence the periods of prosperity and obedience are not enlarged upon. All that the record has of these 40 years is this, "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places, and his return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel, and then he built an altar unto the Lord." Mizpeh, Ramah, Bethel and Gilgal were near one another, as we have seen, and after the destruction of Shiloh served as a tetrapolis sanctuary, at each of which an altar was erected, and at each of which probably Samuel officiated as priest and even as high-priest while Ahitub and Ahiah, Eli's descendants, were minors. It will be borne in mind that Eli's posterity was destined to die young (1 Sam. 2. 33.) and hence Ahitub, who was a babe, when Samuel

began his career, may have died very shortly after his active high-priesthood began, and his son and successor in that case would be a babe, so that for the most part of the forty years after the battle of Ebenezer Samuel would be virtually the nation's high-priest, irregularly, but as ordered of God.

The peculiar character of this epoch when there was no tabernacle and the ark was in temporary quarters at Kirjath-jearim, is used by the rationalistic abusers of the higher criticism as a proof that Israel had not yet received the law attributed to Moses! But we see that the exceptional character of the crisis explains all. The nation was experiencing by reason of its sins a period of ecclesiastical derangement, and the order of four centuries is disturbed. A peculiar sanctuary and a peculiar high-priest mark the peculiar crisis, until under David and Zadok a new settlement is adjusted. The forty years between the battle of Ebenezer and the establishment of the kingdom under Saul must have been a period of great peace and privilege. Samuel, honored, by God very much as Moses had been honored, was at the head of affairs, filling both a civil and an ecclesiastical position of supremacy. These forty years included (we think) his life from 35 to 75 years of age. He was a man of large frame and strong muscle and must have

exhibited the lineaments of moral power in his face. As a Nazarite he had long hair, and perhaps wore the ordinary dress of a Levite. His presence evidently was imposing and calculated to beget confidence and obedience. Israel, under his sway, recovered largely its strength, after the long period of Philistine domination and oppression. The worship of Jehovah was again pure, and unmixed with the follies of Paganism. The people were happy in their homes. And one might have hoped, on looking at this changed condition, that now new life had been given God's people which could not possibly fail.

But weak human nature is going to disturb this picture. Toward the close of these forty years, a desire that had been gradually growing in the minds of the people finds an occasion for expression. The desire was to have a king and a monarchical government like the nations around them, and the occasion was one unfortunately given them by the weakness of Samuel himself. What sad spots are found in the best characters! A Moses and a Samuel disappoint us. Samuel had made his two sons judges in the South Country with their station at Beersheba. It was probable as he grew old and felt that he needed assistants. It was a pity that he chose members of his own family, es-

pecially when, as we learn, they were covetous men and destitute of principle. Their corruption together with a threatened assault of the Ammonites gave the occasion which the people only needed to fan their wicked desire for a king into a flame. A representative gathering of all Israel came to Samuel and demanded that he should give them a king. The old saint and patriot was grieved at the disclosure. Here was a spirit of opposition to God, for God had constituted the nation without an earthly king and had been greeted himself as their king in the triumphal ode which they sang at the Red Sea. Doubtless Samuel also felt the ingratitude and implied reproach against himself in the people's demand. But instead of following any natural impulse of his heart in reply to the demand, he betook himself to prayer, and received from God directions for his conduct under these trying circumstances. In conformity with this revelation from heaven the aged prophet first protested against the people's wish, and when they refused to obey his voice he then told them that the Lord would grant them their evil desire, but that the king they so craved would act the tyrant and oppressor of the land.

The romantic story of Saul's anointing by Samuel and the inauguration of the young and

bashful monarch at Mizpeh is one of the exquisite narratives of the sacred volume. We need not repeat the details. The young Benjamite king signaled the beginning of his reign by the gallant relief of Jabesh-gilead in the trans-Jordanic region, which was besieged by the Ammonites. This splendid victory confirmed Saul's position, and won to him the hearts of all Israel, so that a new assembly of the people was held at Mizpeh and a second solemn inauguration was celebrated. Samuel took this occasion to rehearse the history of Israel to the people, to call their attention to the fact that God had always blessed them when they obeyed him and scourged them when they sinned against him, to show them that they had done wrong in asking a king, and yet to tell them that the kingdom would be blessed or cursed according to their future obedience or disobedience to God. The venerable prophet then declared to the assembled multitude that the Lord would ratify all he had said by sending them a storm of thunder and rain that day in the wheat-harvest time, when storms do not occur in Palestine. The storm was to be a special witness to them of their sin in determining to have a king. When Samuel ended his address, the clouds gathered, the rain poured down and the thunders burst upon the multitude, and they ap-

pealed to Samuel again to plead with God that they should not die.

The memorable occasion concluded with an earnest entreaty of the prophet to obedience with a conditioned promise of the Lord's protection and guidance. Thus far all looked well with the new kingdom, and here the history again leaves a great hiatus.

We pass over twenty years in silence. And now we look out upon Israel again. What a change has been wrought! The Philistines are again everywhere in the land. Two thousand men with Saul at Michmash and a thousand with his son Jonathan at Gibeah are the two little bands which are left to represent the strength of all Israel. The Philistines had forbidden the use of sword or spear to any Israelite, and had prohibited any smith from practising his art in the land, lest Israel might procure arms. This sad condition of the country shows that Saul's reign had been what Samuel had predicted, a reign of tyranny and oppression, a reign, moreover, of selfishness and rebellion against God. The modest young Benjamite had become a hardened, cruel despot, and had led the people far away from God. He had had great victories over Ammon and Moab and Edom and Syria and Amalek and Philistia, but these had only filled him



with pride, in which he dared to disobey God and his prophet Samuel again and again.\*

Samuel, now nearly a hundred years old, had retired to his home at Ramah and there mourned for the condition of Israel and the madness of the king. It was then that the secret visit to Bethlehem took place and the anointing of the youthful David in his father's home. Then followed the victory of the young David over Goliath, and then the fierce persecution of David by the royal monster in his jealousy, until at last on Gilboa's height the tyrant fell before the Philistine foe, the country being in full possession of the enemy. It was in the midst of the period of Saul's persecution of David, that Samuel died and was buried at Ramah, where he was born. He had lived nearly, if not quite, a century. He was born amid the desolations of Israel. He grew up to build again the waste places, to restore Israel to obedience and order. And he lived to see the rebellious spirit again let loose, and, as personated in Saul, plunging the nation once more into the mire of sin and misery in which he had found it. Was his mission, then, in vain? Was this great Reformer a fruitless laborer? No mission of God is in vain. No reformer labors

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\* Chapters 13 and 14 of 1 Samuel as far as verse 47 of chapter 14 are out of place or rather chapter 14. 47-52, belongs to the end of chapter 12.

fruitlessly. It is true Israel sank again into corruption and was again wasted by the enemy, but we may trace to the mission and labors of Samuel the preparation of the nation to receive the noblest of all earthly monarchs, the sweet singer of Israel, the man after God's own heart, who was in his turn to destroy the enemies of Israel and to renew the nation's devotion to the central sanctuary and its divine worship. A new period of peace and prosperity was to come, and Samuel was its forerunner. It was his grand personality with his stern denunciation of sin, his bold rebuke of the wilful monarch, his persistent entreaties to obedience, and the divine testimony confirming all, that saved the nation from an utter collapse, by sowing the seed that sprang up after his death in the career of David, the noblest human type of the Messiah who was to come.

## LECTURE IX.

DAVID.

WE have seen that the colossal form of Samuel marks the midway of the history of the Jewish state before the captivity, and that it divides democratic Israel from regal Israel. Samuel's exceptional career was a re-modeling of the polity, caused by the rebellious disposition of the people. The religious element of reformation was also included, though amid powerful obstacles and with diminished effectiveness. The first monarch proved a failure. He was a man after the people's heart. He had the physical and mental vigor of a leader, and he proved himself a brave and successful warrior, and he, moreover, imitated the example of the pagan potentates around him in making himself a fierce and cruel tyrant, disregarding the rights of man and the laws of God. He massacred the Lord's priests and persecuted the Lord's anointed, and brought on his land the terrible vengeance of the Most High.

In the midst of his savage despotism the venerable Samuel had clandestinely visited Bethlehem

and poured the oil of consecration upon the head of the youngest son of a distinguished family of that now world-celebrated town.

From that day David was God's anointed king of Israel, and Samuel himself proclaimed Saul a usurper (1 Sam. 15. 28). The remainder of Saul's reign was occupied largely in the persecution of David, who had become prominent before the people by the slaying of Goliath, and who, after being admitted into Saul's family, had become generally recognized as the divinely-appointed successor to the tyrant. The interesting scenes of the contest with Goliath, the praises of the people, the marrying of Saul's daughter, the friendship with Jonathan, the repeated efforts of Saul to slay his young rival, and the wanderings of David as a fugitive from place to place for several years, we must pass over as familiar stories to all.

The people had had a king after their own heart. God was now determined that they should have a king after *His* own heart. He would give them a monarch who, by his character, should offer them the very best opportunity of serving God faithfully and of retrieving, as far as possible, the fearful error of turning the theocratic democracy into a kingdom. The new king had been born probably at the very time when Saul's victories over Am-

mon, Moab, Edom, Syria and Philistia, had be-  
gotten in him the pride of power, and his career  
of despotism had fairly begun. The family in  
Bethlehem, to which he belonged, was of a dis-  
tinguished line, and was doubtless well known to  
the tyrant. It seems, however, to have lived a  
retired life, and its youngest son, in the simplicity  
of those times, had as his occupation the business  
of tending the sheep in the neighboring pas-  
tures. He first appears to us at about seventeen  
years of age, a strong and hearty lad of large size  
and handsome face and figure, skilled in the use of  
the harp and fond of song, and with a record of  
manly courage in guarding his flocks from the  
beasts of prey. The wretched state of the coun-  
try at this time, through Saul's misgovernment,  
has probably an illustration in this statement of the  
incursion of lions and bears into Bethlehem's neigh-  
borhood. The glories of Saul's early victories  
had been eclipsed by the disasters of his reign, and  
the Philistines, who had felt the severity of his  
power, were now in turn avenging themselves bit-  
terly on Israel.

It was then that the lad of seventeen suddenly  
appeared before the nation as Israel's hero, and the  
people sang "Saul had slain his thousands, but  
David his ten thousands." David was exalted in

the eyes of the nation, but the Philistines were only checked for a moment. Their strength was re-gathered and they desolated the land, while Saul was seeking to destroy the young Bethlehemite. The final catastrophe came at Gilboa, and amid the ruins of the nation David was proclaimed king at Hebron by the tribe of Judah, while Abner, Saul's general, escaping from the Gilboa carnage to the eastern side of the Jordan, set up Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, as Saul's successor.

Two marked victories of David over the Philistines, at Baal-perazim and at Gibeah, restored the independence of the country, and Abner's treachery toward Ish-bosheth brought all Israel in a few years to the support of David as king.

Jerusalem, which had been left as a Jebusite stronghold for the four centuries of Israel's occupation of the land, was assaulted and captured by David, and was made the capital of the united nation. The Davidic epoch of Israel had now fairly begun. The desolations of Saul's reign were repaired. The tyrannies of the throne were at an end. The enemies of Israel were no more within the border. The ark was brought from Kirjath-jearim (where it had been for a whole century) to Jerusalem and placed within a new Tabernacle. The priesthood was carefully disciplined for a regu-

lar service, and the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings at the grand festival at Jerusalem declared the beginning of a new era of order and faithfulness in the religious life of the nation.

David's reign from this point of vantage continued for more than thirty years. They were busy years. He was in the prime of his life when he was established over united Israel reformed and revived. The nations, around, that had taken occasion of the weakness of Israel to invade it, were all driven back and the conquering arms of David in turn brought these nations into subjection, so that Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom and Syria all yielded to his sword and became part of the Hebrew Empire. At this time both Egypt and Assyria were in a low condition of national strength. In Egypt the feeble monarchs of the 21st dynasty were on the throne, and the country was in that torn and rent condition, which preceded the reviving reign of Shishak. In Assyria we find the vacant epoch, of which so little is known, between the reigns of Shamas Vul in B. C. 1070 and Asshar-dayan 2nd in B. C. 930, the blanks in the Assyrian record showing us that it was a time of national depression. Providence thus gave David an undisputed sway from the Euphrates to the River of Egypt, and made him the ruler of a peaceful empire, most powerful of all.

the nations of that day. In all external things so grand was the opportunity to Israel for a faithful service of God in all the ways of his appointment. A marvelous change had been wrought in a decade. A little kingdom between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, torn to pieces by intestine strife and by foreign oppression and apparently moribund with anarchy and poverty, had become the most powerful and the wealthiest of nations, compact and strong in its military, civil and ecclesiastical systems, extending its sway to the borders of the two great empires of the age, Egypt and Assyria, itself superior to either in its resources. What had wrought this change? He is blind who does not see in it the hand of the Almighty, according to his promise to Israel. It is true that David, God's instrument, was a man of versatile genius and immense force of character. It is true that he was the favorite of his people and united them all in his service. It is true that he was a consummate general and a wise administrator of government. And above all, it is true that he was a man of prayer and faith; who looked to God alone for guidance and upholding. But it was God who raised up David and gave him these remarkable talents and advantages, and it was God who made these talents and advantages successful (for oftentimes such fail),



and he reads history wrongly who does not behold the purposes of God in constant activity behind all these second causes.

It is not our purpose to give a history of David's reign. We only design to mark this period of Jewish history as a period of renewal, a period in which (as it were) the old confusion was wiped out, and the slate made clean for a new writing, a period in which the Church of God would, under altered political surroundings, have a fresh opportunity of fulfilling its high function in obeying the Divine Law and offering a Divine Light to the nations.

David's part in this renewal was a varied one. He was first the *warrior*, a man of war from his youth. The disorders and calamities of the nation needed the strong arm of military force. David's courage, skill and prowess enforced order at home and drove the enemies of the land beyond its borders. His conquest of foreign countries were all gained in wars of self-defence. The lust of conquest did not appertain to him or to the Israelitish nation. He extended his empire to the Euphrates solely in repelling the attacks of Syrians and others who determined to destroy his growing power. This fact is not sufficiently noted by commentators on David's history. They would condemn him for his

assaults upon other nations, and thus class him with the Alexanders and Napoleons, whose wanton ambition led them in their unjust and cruel careers. David was no such scourge of mankind. His mission was to conserve Israel, and it was strictly in doing this, that he repelled its enemies to their subjugation. In a very few years this work was achieved, and for the remainder of his reign, his kingdom was at peace.

But David was far more than a warrior. He was a *statesman*. He saw that obedience to God's law was the safety of his people, and he decreed obedience to that law in every detail. He restored the tabernacle worship in its fulness, and added to it the department of music, we must believe, by divine revelation. For his Psalms were of God, as the testimony of our Lord himself shows, and these Psalms were composed (at least, many of them) for the sacred services of the sanctuary. This musical accompaniment to the sanctuary services seems to have been one of the divine tokens of a renewal of the Church of God. David, as a statesman, moreover brought into the service of the State prominent men of the subject nations. Hittites and Gittites and Cherethites and Pelethites were brought into the army and into the civil service. These, doubtless, received the mark of proselytes and were

incorporated in the Israelitish nation. The Jewish people were to be an exclusive people, only in not receiving the sinful practices of the pagan nations, but never exclusive in the excluding of proselytes from pagan nations. Rahab and Ruth were early examples of the [receiving and honoring of those who came from the most depraved nations.

Another feature of David's statesmanship was his gentleness and fatherly care of his people. He was at the opposite pole from Saul. He had not a fibre of the tyrant in him. He loved to help the poor and oppressed; and his kindness to the house of Saul, who had persecuted him, is unparalleled by history. He won the affection of his people by his own loving regard for them and so placed his dynasty on a firm foundation. But David was still more than a skilled warrior and a wise statesman. He was a *godly man*. He sought not self, but God. It is in this especially that he answers to the inspired description of him as a man after God's own heart. There is much flippant cant about David's sins, which the enemies of God love to use. They write out these sins in capital letters, ignore all the rest of David's life and doings, and then triumphantly exclaim, "This is your man after God's own heart!" And now let us examine this cant and see its shallowness.

David was absolute monarch of a mighty people for thirty years. He could kill, confiscate, banish and appropriate whatever he wished. He had full power for all this. He had, moreover, the example of Egypt and Assyria and of every smaller kingdom for all this. Every other Oriental despot used that power continually. No family was safe from ruin, no estate was safe from plunder, no man was sure of his own wife or could protect his own daughter. Such was the tyranny of the times. Here was David, the most absolute despot of that day, in the midst of this accustomed style of kings, and what do we find against him for the whole thirty years of his absolute sway?

One act of immorality with a virtual murder concerned in it—that is all. Why, the purity of such a life is most wonderful. In any other absolute monarch like Alexander or Cæsar, the immoralities would have been a daily affair all through the thirty years, and the murders would have been quite as numerous. Even in our enlightened age (as we call it) and in enlightened Europe, the one example of absolute power which we have, that of Napoleon, is one stained with debauchery and crime. The Romans all thought Augustus had a right to take Livia from her husband, and never conceived of an immorality in the matter, so low

was the moral sense of the community. And these enemies of God's truth to-day never have a word against Augustus, but when David a thousand years before Augustus takes Bathsheba from her husband, they cannot cease their maledictions upon the awful wretch, and damn his whole life for the one act. So Uriah's death would have been justified by any of the casuists of antiquity. It would not have been deemed murder at all. The casuists would have said that Uriah was a soldier, and death in the field of battle was glorious, and as somebody had to die in the front rank, it might as well be Uriah as any one else. That is the way in which some would argue if Alexander or Cæsar was the subject of discussion. But David took no such view of his own case. David is his own accuser. It is he that has emphasized his own wickedness. He sees nothing in his own act but adultery and murder. He palliates nothing. He casts himself before God in deep self-abasement. He is overcome with the grief of remorse. He sheds the bitter tears of repentance. He writes his own condemnation for all ages to read, and for these very men of Belial in our age to use against him. Is this like Alexander? Is this like Cæsar? Is this like Napoleon? Ah! it is through this one conspicuous sin of David we see

the tender piety of his character, the purity of his godly soul. We hardly hazard anything in saying that not another man who ever lived could have carried thirty years of temptation so safely, so free from stain as did this wonderful man after God's own heart.

A man after God's own heart is not a sinless man—there is none such. But a man after God's own heart is a man who walks with God and feels his own weakness, and, if he falls, turns to God for pardon and guidance. And such was David.

There were other incidents in his life which show human weakness, but it is only the one on which we have commented that has whetted the edge of calumny and malignity.

David was wrong in numbering the people, and God punished him for it, but we see that in doing this he was following a popular impulse. Whether he was wrong in his severe treatment of the Moabites and Ammonites depends first on our understanding what the phrases regarding their punishment mean, and then upon our knowledge of the divine element in the act. Too little is said in the record to enable us to judge. We may say the same of the delivery of Rizpah's sons and their nephews to the Gibeonites to be hanged. The record gives us every reason to believe that this

was a divine order involving exact justice, with circumstances which are unknown to us.

But the greatest evil of David's life was his polygamy and its sad consequences. Polygamy was not a sin, but it was a fearful evil. Man was left by God to work out of it by a long experience and study of the great principles of life. David, though a man of God, was not ahead of his age in the matter of matrimony. He followed the custom of the day and in it transgressed no precept of God's law as given to Israel. It must be a hard thing for a monarch to bring up his children in purity and righteousness even under the most favorable circumstances, surrounded as they are by flatterers and sycophants who are ever ready to minister to the base passions of princes, and so court their favor. But when the monarch is polygamous, the evil is increased a hundred-fold. The rivalry of wives and their jealousy of each other's children introduce an element of tremendous force to produce disturbance and destruction in the royal family. It was so with David. A harem of wives produced a bear-garden of children, and the latter part of David's life was sorely burdened with the excesses of his sons, the culmination of this evil being the king's own banishment for a season from his throne by one of his rebellious sons. It was through these

afflictions, the results of his own folly, that God trained his soul to the contemplation of higher things and made him a sweet singer for the whole church of all ages, sympathizing with every phase of human suffering and expounding the blessedness of God's healing mercies. Man is but man at best, poor, weak man, and David, glorious as he was as God's King and Prophet, was full of the weakness that marks our common humanity. Compared with other men, he stands among the pre-eminent few, but before the standard of God's holiness, David must with us all bow in the dust.

If we regard the history of the divine grace among fallen men, which is mostly the history of the Church of God, David appears as holding a place of peculiar conspicuity for personal attainment and for far-reaching influence. Though living in age which some love to consider an age of ignorance and semi-barbarism, he exhibited a knowledge of men and things that the wisest might envy, and showed a tenderness and refinement of feeling that would put modern society to the blush. In his religious life, he approached very near the throne of God, and in his exquisite spiritual songs uttered a voice of faith and love that serves the need of the most exalted saint of our gospel day. The whole church of God from David's day to ours has found



its loftiest worship in the use of David's Psalms, and in this way his life has been brought nearer the life of every saint than that of any before or since. Moreover God has put upon him an honor unequaled in giving to the Eternal Son, as coming to earth for our redemption, the name of David. The David of prophecy is Jesus Christ. Speaking of the Messianic period, the prophet says, "Thus saith the Lord God \* \* \* \* I will set up one Shepherd over them and he shall feed them, even my servant David" (Ezek. 34. 23). No man's name was ever given to the Son of God but David's with the single exception that he is called "the last Adam" by way of contrast and not of likeness.

Such, then, is the grand and good man who stands at the head of Israel's second opportunity, and prepares a new period for Israel's probation, a man with his full share of human weakness, but yet gifted with a wonderful versatility of genius, exalted to a great prominence in worldly affairs, holding withal a profound spirit of devotion to God and made the recipient of an inspiration which gave a new Scripture to the church of God.

If Samuel was a type of John the Baptist preparing the way for new things, David was the higher type of the Messiah himself, who brought in the new day by his personal presence and life.

## LECTURE X.

SOLOMON.

DAVID'S reign, we have seen, was a new start for the Jewish church and nation. The nation in its new form as a kingdom, and the church with its new tabernacle and restored ark and service, had every earthly circumstance for a true prosperity, and we might expect that what had proved so great a failure under the original polity might become a success under the new order of things. In its first probation the nation of Israel had been given a simple and retired life, that the church of God might be nurtured spiritually, the people being separated from the idolatrous nations. But the desire of the people to be like the other nations broke through the bounds that God had set around them, and led them into the excesses of idolatry and well-nigh to their utter destruction both as a church and as a nation. Four centuries had served only to show the persistent downward tendency of the people, notwithstanding the providential checks which God's mercy had prepared, and now another period of four centuries was to be given Israel under a

new polity and in a new probation. In this new trial the nation was no longer to be a simple and retired folk, but to exhibit the features of other nations with king and court and subject provinces and the manifold results of wealth and power. It was indeed a perilous trial, but the people would have it so. They had failed under God's simple plan. They were now to try their own human plan. And yet God, after allowing Saul to prove to them how tyrannical a king might be, had placed a man of exalted piety and consummate wisdom on the throne in the person of David, that the new experiment might under him be begun with the most favoring circumstances. David's thorough reform of the tabernacle service and the composition of his exquisite inspired Psalms were parts of God's gracious provision for the new probation.

We have already considered the noble character of David, and we have also noted the evils that beset him in his eventful life. After forty years of royal experience the great reforming king was gathered to his fathers, and his young son Solomon sat upon the throne.

Solomon was born in the purple. He knew only the royal side of life. And it is one of the side-proofs of David's godly influence in his family (notwithstanding the waywardness of his other sons)

that this Solomon should on ascending the throne in his youth exhibit a moderation and regard for the proprieties of life most unusual in a palace-born prince. He felt the responsibility of his position as ruler over a great nation of imperial size, and he sought wisdom to govern aright. His visit to Gibeon, where what remained of the old Shiloh tabernacle was standing, was undoubtedly the prompting of a reverential spirit. The high-place at Gibeon was probably the same as Ramah, where Samuel had lived and where he had set up the old Shiloh tabernacle, when Shiloh was destroyed. This lofty hill rises up close by Gibeon, and is now known as Neby Samwil (or the "Prophet Samuel"). When David erected a new tabernacle for the ark in Jerusalem, he did not see fit to remove this memento of Samuel's day and work, but left it on the memorable hill. The brazen altar seems also to have been left on this high-place of Gibeon during David's reign. The spot is only five miles from Jerusalem, in full view, and David may have considered it sufficiently near so as not to warrant any further union of ark and altar. However that may be, Solomon's visit to the high-place of Gibeon was blessed with a vision of God in a dream, in which he received the promise of executive wisdom for his royal office, and so was directed at the very be-

ginning of his reign in the way of truth. Solomon's sacrifices both at Gibeon on the brazen altar and at Jerusalem before the ark were tokens of his regard for religion and indications of a godly reign like that of his father David.

At this period Jerusalem was a great centre of political influence and of commerce. With the exception of Phenicia, all the neighboring lands were tributary to Israel, and even Phenicia seems to have had a humble deference toward Israel that bordered on subjection. The trade between the East and West passed through Israel's capital. The roads from Syria to Egypt and from Arabia to Tyre (and so to the Tyrian colonies) alike passed through Jerusalem. This city consequently increased rapidly in wealth. Stately mansions were erected and the markets displayed the purple robes of Phenicia, the rich stuffs of Babylon, the sparkling gems of India, the golden ornaments of Ophir and the curious art-objects of Egypt. Wealth poured in upon the favored city, and Solomon, with rare wisdom, improved all the channels of trade, and furthered the unexampled prosperity of the land.

He entered into close alliance with Hiram the king of Tyre (and the terms used appear to show that Solomon was a liege lord to Hiram), and then

began to ornament Jerusalem with the spoils of Lebanon. The rocky height of Moriah was taken in hand. Its top was cut off and the summit that remained became a broad level, on which the most costly temple of antiquity was to be reared. Huge stones fully prepared at the quarry formed the gigantic foundations and walls which supported and bounded this grand area. Courts and porticoes of rarest workmanship were built upon this plane, and the central shrine itself, the successor of the humble tabernacle of old, was richly adorned with the firs and cedars from friendly Tyre. For seven years two hundred thousand men were employed in this colossal task and reared the wonderful fane, whose remnants to-day so astonish the beholder. A royal palace that was thirteen years in building, the famous "house of the forest of Lebanon" and a palace for his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, were among the other magnificent buildings which this wealthy monarch erected in the capital city of Israel. So great was his fame that a queen from southern Arabia came a thousand miles to witness the glory of Israel and of Israel's king, and was astonished when she saw a grandeur far beyond her highest anticipations. Forty millions of dollars' worth of gold alone was received by Solomon in a year, and we cannot put the purchasing value of that at less

than \$400,000,000. Such enormous wealth no king or nation has ever seen, either before or since Solomon. God had ordered it probably that the great gold fields of Arabia should, just at that point of history when Solomon was the most powerful monarch of the earth, be either discovered or vastly widened, and the result was like that of the opening of the gold mines of California in our own day. Only in Solomon's case, the produce came largely to one man, who controlled the channels of commerce, while in the case of California thousands joined in the acquisition. Moreover it is probable that the Arabian gold fields were richer than those of California. It is this limitless wealth of Solomon and his remarkable worldly wisdom, which has made his name a name for all that is weird and magical, and all that is strange and colossal is attributed to his powerful hand. The empire of Solomon enjoyed profound peace, as if his name (which means "man of peace") were prophetic of the character of his reign. In this it differed from the ages before it and the ages that followed, and in this long continued peace the opportunities for the great wealth of Israel were afforded.

The splendor of the court and the capital city and the general animation of commercial life must have pleased the pride of an Israelite of that golden

day. The rich arrivals by way of the Red Sea and the Dead Sea from Ophir, and by way of Joppa from Tarshish, the embassies from distant kingdoms to pay court to Israel's sovereign, the processions of tribute-bearers from the subject nations, the building of aqueducts and fortresses, the making of roads, the growth of towns and cities, and the world-wide fame of the monarch as a miracle of wisdom must have made the Israelitish bosom heave with delight and the Israelitish mind to believe that Israel's ultimate and permanent glory had arrived.

But how different was the reality ! Beneath this golden surface the most potent elements of corruption were at work. The king, intoxicated by his prosperity, forgot the law and the God of Israel. He brought in wives by the hundred from the idolatrous nations around him and made his chief queen the daughter of Egypt's Pharaoh. To please these ladies he set up chapels to their gods all around the holy city, and it was but another step when the monarch himself worshiped these gods in their immoral shrines. Religious principle was forgotten in political expediency and social courtesy. While the priests of Jehovah were offering up the sacrifices of the law on Jehovah's altar before the magnificent fane which Solomon had erected, the priests



of Chemosh and Molech, of Baal and Ashtoreth were performing their horrid rites in full sight of the holy temple, and Solomon was attending the polluted services in company with his foreign wives.

The evil that wealth and foreign intercourse produced in the court wrought its work through the whole body of the state. The people became greedy for display. Religion became a formality, while the heart was set on earthly advantage. Every form of vice was admitted with the foreign habits, and David's piety and puritanism were all matters of the past.

As Israel had failed, when God gave it a simplicity of life for its model, so it failed when God gave it earthly prosperity and magnificence. The human heart in both forms of opportunity proved its native depravity and turned away from God.

It is an interesting fact that the 490 years, in which Israel neglected to observe the Sabbatical years, and for which the nation had to spend 70 years (each year for a neglected Sabbatical year) in Babylon, began, as a calculation will readily show, in the reign of this favored king Solomon. Worldly prosperity is a strong ally of Satan, and under its potent wand the soul easily neglects and then despises heavenly things.

It was in the midst of this Solomonian glory of

Israel that God sent a prophet, Ahijah of Shiloh, to an Ephraimite of high rank, having an important charge as engineer in Jerusalem, who announced the divine will that he should, on Solomon's death, be the king of the ten northern tribes, and promised the divine protection and guidance to him as they had been given to David, if he should walk in the ways of God. This engineer, Jeroboam, probably let out the secret in the delight of his proud anticipations. At any rate, Solomon heard of it and straightway sought to slay the man whom God had appointed to succeed him in Israel.

Jeroboam fled to Egypt, where a new dynasty had just come into power, and, in its representative, Shishak, was renewing the strength of Egypt and again making it a formidable empire. The Pharaoh, whose daughter Solomon had married early in his reign was dead and his dynasty ended, and Shishak had probably been the destroyer of that royal family.

At the same time Hadad of Edom and Rezon of Syria began revolts in those countries against the magnificent monarch of Israel. And so Solomon's sun went down amid gathering clouds that predicted the coming night of storm. The glory, so dazzling, was to pass away like the morning

dew. The Davidic throne, that had been exalted so high above all thrones, was to be brought down to the dust of abasement, and the nations that had feared it and bowed down to it in awe were to despise and insult it. And the exaltation and the degradation were alike the action of the just and holy God who offers opportunity of righteousness but scourges those who despise it.

Forty years of unexampled peace and prosperity had been given Israel, and these years had been used only to inflate pride and secularize the nation. All the reforms of David's day were virtually cancelled, and the stately worship of the temple was a hollow mockery. The temple was itself a human error. God had never ordered it. The idea came into David's head that God ought to have as fine a house as he, David, had. It was a pious thought, but a foolish one, for some piety is very foolish. He ought to have considered that if God was to have a house proportioned to his perfection, earth could not contain such a shrine, and hence any house of God built on the principle of giving God a house worthy of Him was absurd. He should have remembered that the simplicity of the old Tabernacle far better represented the dwelling of God among men than the gorgeous temple which would liken God to an earthly potentate.

Nathan, the prophet, tried to teach David this lesson, but he would not hear it, and so God yielded, just as He yielded before to the people who demanded a king, and He promised that David's son should build the grand temple which David so longed to erect.

And, just as God used the kingship as a type of the Messiah, so He used the temple in a like way, although both were human institutions permitted by God and not according to His divine pattern.

And, as God, when He allowed Israel to have its way and be governed by a king, told the manner of the kingdom and laid down its rules and blessed the monarch, so also when He allowed Israel to have a gorgeous temple He gave directions how the temple should be built, and honored the structure with His miraculous presence. The building of the temple was the cause (or one of the causes) of Israel's final ruin. It was part of that false life which put outward splendor for inward devotion, and which destroyed true religion by magnifying its earthly shell.

It is a great mistake to suppose that God is honored according to the amount of money put into a place of worship. No such standard will endure the test. The gold and silver and precious stones of such a system will prove to be but wood and

hay and stubble. It is the gold and silver and precious stones of faith and love that God seeks to honor Him, and not man's pride built up in a cathedral.

That a place of worship should be neat and orderly, that it should not offend taste or suggest aught unpleasant, is undoubtedly true, but this is quite a different thing from making it grand and gorgeous as though the "grand and gorgeous" of man reached nearer to God. The experience of the Hebrew commonwealth under Solomon, so often referred to by hierarchists as a model for us, teaches directly the opposite lesson. It shows us the fearful danger of making a display of architecture and ritual in our worship of God, and bids us look to the awful gulf into which Israel plunged by reason of this display. If society becomes luxurious, let not the church of God follow it into luxury. Let the church of God ever bear witness for simplicity and humility against the tide of fashion and wealth.

But now, turning from the condition of Israel in the time of Solomon, what shall we say of the man himself? Was he a man of God? Is he to be considered a saint, only wandering away from God for a time? This seems to be the conception with many. They say that he could not have written

the three books of the Bible which bear his name, unless he had been a man of God, and so they affirm that he repented of his sins before he died, and must be written in the list of the ancient worthies.

On the other hand it is quite a common thing with a certain class of commentators to deny that Solomon was the author of the Book of Proverbs (that is, the part that claims to be his) or of the Book of Ecclesiastes, and to affirm that the Song of Solomon is a mere secular love-song without any spiritual meaning. If this position were true, of course the three Books would be no argument for Solomon's piety. But we do not adopt this method. We firmly believe that the parts of the Proverbs assigned to Solomon and the Book of Ecclesiastes were of his authorship and that the Song of Solomon is a spiritual song. In no other way than as such could they have entered into the Canon, and the arguments offered against their genuineness are exceedingly weak. How then do we account for their position as sacred books if Solomon was not a man of God? Precisely as we account for the Messianic prophecies of Balaam. God has seen fit at times to make worldly men the vehicles of his trust, and in this case it was especially a powerful testimony to the vanity of earthly

things that so great a monarch as Solomon could give, when he had had his earthly cup of pleasure filled to the full. For such a one to declare to the world that all earthly pleasure is vanity and vexation of spirit was a testimony of value as coming from an unregenerate heart. This will account for the Book of Ecclesiastes. As for the Proverbs and the Song of Solomon, Balaam's case will illustrate the matter. The royal position of the writer would make his words current, and that would be reason enough why God might inspire in an unregenerate soul the thoughts and utterance. For certainly we can find nothing in Solomon's *life* that looks like piety. His calling upon God in a dream at Gibeon in his youth was in the first place an occurrence in a dream, and secondly, it was a request only for worldly wisdom and not for godliness. It was a good thing as far as it went and received the approbation of God in the dream, but it proves nothing as to piety. His beautiful prayer at the dedication of the temple was undoubtedly prepared for him by the ecclesiastical authorities. It was no impromptu of the king. His whole reign was marked by the boldest contempt for the Divine law, and one of his latest recorded acts was to seek the death of the man whom God had appointed his

successor, just as Saul had sought the death of David.

To make such a man a saint is to confound evil and good, and to destroy all the incentives to a godly life. Immense harm is done by holding up such debauchees and reckless characters as Samson and Solomon among the saints of God. As well may we hold up Balaam and Judas Iscariot, because the former uttered glorious prophecies and the latter wrought miracles. Let us stand by the sacred record, and see in Solomon a man of splendid abilities and exalted dignity and unparalleled resources becoming a slave to self and sin, a solemn beacon and warning to all men regarding the dangers of earthly prosperity and the determination of the human heart away from God.

David exalted the kingdom by his godliness. Solomon destroyed it by his impiety. The history of Israel after Solomon is the downward plunge, interrupted by a few checks from godly prophets and godly kings. The royal experiment was virtually proved a failure in Solomon. The question whether Israel could obey God's law was solved in the negative.



## LECTURE XI.

### THE DIVIDED KINGDOM.

THUS far we have seen the church of God as included in the democratic Israel a failure, notwithstanding the halcyon days of Joshua and the elders that outlived Joshua, and as included in the monarchical Israel a failure, notwithstanding the halcyon days of David. Between the two eras stands Samuel, whom we may style a second Moses, chosen of God to restore order in Israel and to see a man after God's own heart anointed king of the renewed nation. The first era, dating from the Sinai revelation, comprised about four centuries, the second era, ending with the Babylonian captivity, comprised more than four centuries, if we begin with Samuel's death. Samuel's life of a century occupies the middle period of ruin and reform, in which the sacred services of the sanctuary received so rude a shock, and tabernacle and ark were separated and each was moved from place to place, indicative of Israel's wretched moral and political condition.

We have seen how Solomon's reign of outward

magnificence both in the civil and ecclesiastical spheres was the thorough demoralization of the state and church, and that with the death of that "grand monarch" the cleavage asunder of Israel became a lasting mark of God's indignation.

The act of Jeroboam in separating the ten tribes from Judah was in direct obedience to the express command of God, and we are not to charge Jeroboam with any sin in this national crisis. The sin of Jeroboam consisted in attempting to strengthen his God-given kingdom by altering the worship of Jehovah, and setting up a system distinct from that which centred at Jerusalem. It was very natural to suppose that if the people of the northern kingdom should continue to go to Jerusalem at the national feasts, they would soon lose their distinctive nationality and become again absorbed in Judah, and to avoid this Jeroboam set up the two calves, as symbols of Jehovah at the two extremities of his kingdom, one at Bethel in the south and the other at Dan in the north. He probably considered these as the two cherubim of the Jerusalem temple, which overshadowed the ark, and thus placed his whole kingdom under their protection, sanctifying the land, as it were, between the cherubim. He did not mean that the people should worship idols, but that they should worship Jeho-

vah by these instrumentalities. One change necessitated another. He had to form a priesthood of others than the tribe of Levi, and then, to make matters more sure, he ordained a new feast in the eighth month. It was this new ecclesiastical arrangement which constituted the heinous sin of Jeroboam, and gave him the unenviable title through history as "the man who caused Israel to sin." If he had humbly accepted the throne God gave him, and had faithfully observed the ecclesiastical law God had given, letting his people go and going himself regularly to Jerusalem to worship, it would have been poor politics but good religion, and God would have rewarded his faithfulness and that of his people. But man always thinks he can improve on God, and is ready to add his inventions to God's plan. How many sins have been committed for "reasons of state!" How often has political necessity been the excuse for the plainest departures from the right! God did not leave himself without witness against Jeroboam's deliberate apostasy. His prophet appeared before the Bethel altar, and at his word the altar was rent, and the outstretched arm of Jeroboam was temporarily paralyzed. But the king had gone too far to turn back. He rejected the sign and persisted in his worldly policy.

Meanwhile Rehoboam, who had succeeded his father Solomon on the throne of Judah, had forsaken the law of the Lord after the loose and lamentable manner of the times, and God brought up Shishak, the Pharaoh of Egypt's new and strong dynasty, to devastate the kingdom of Judah and to plunder Jerusalem. The weakness of Rehoboam on this account, in addition to the positive word of Shemaiah a prophet of God, restrained the king of Judah from any attempt to recover the lost provinces of David's kingdom. But Rehoboam's son, Abijah, in his brief reign, made a formidable raid upon Israel twenty years after the separation and, after a fearful destruction of Jeroboam's army in Zemaraim, reft away from him some of his southern cities, including Bethel, where he had placed one of his golden calves.

But we do not purpose to pursue the history of the two kingdoms in detail. It comes within our scope simply to trace the general outlines of Israel's decline, a decline which was checked in the northern kingdom by only one event, but which in the southern kingdom was checked repeatedly by the excellent character of a number of the monarchs who occupied David's throne.

The northern kingdom had a duration from the separation of 253 years, and nineteen kings occupied

its throne, thus giving only a little over thirteen years as the average length of a reign, and, if the remarkably long reign of Jeroboam II. be taken out, *eleven* years will be the average length of a reign.

The duration of the southern kingdom from the separation was 385 years, 132 years longer than that of its rival. The number of kings during this period of 385 years was also nineteen, giving an average length of reign of over twenty years. In this fact of the average reign in Judah being nearly double that in the kingdom of Israel we see a mark of the better order in the former kingdom and of a larger share in the divine favor. The northern kingdom, with the impetus given it by Jeroboam, went rapidly down to flagrant apostasy. Civil wars racked the land. Jeroboam's dynasty was succeeded by Baasha's, and Baasha's by Omri's in less than fifty years, and meanwhile a Zimri had occupied the throne for a few days, who perhaps claimed it as a descendant of Saul, for we find a Zimri in the sixth generation from Saul in 1 Chron. 8. 36 and 9. 42. Omri was noted as a warrior, as we may infer from his name on the "Moabite stone" as marking his house, and he married his son Ahab to Jezebel the Tyrian princess. This alliance brought the filthy idolatry of Phœnicia

bodily into Israel. Jezebel was a woman of extraordinary force and she almost extirpated the religion of Jehovah from the land. Israel was a pitiable sight in Ahab's day. The last remnants of Jehovah's worship had apparently left the nation. Altars of Baal and Ashtoreth were seen on every side. Priests of these Phenician deities swarmed throughout the country. The court was altogether pagan. Out of the entire population of the kingdom, there were but seven thousand who had not become gross idolaters, and these were hidden through fear of the merciless queen. It was at this crisis that Elijah appeared as God's reproofing prophet and maintained a bold and severe antagonism to the iniquity of the idolatrous court and people. With prophecy and miracle this stalwart seer alarmed Ahab and angered Jezebel, at one time slaying four hundred and fifty of Baal's prophets, at another fleeing into the Sinai desert before the queen's wrath. Once and again he denounced the wicked king to his face, and in the name of Jehovah predicted the fearful doom of himself and his house.

At Ramoth Gilead the guilty Ahab received his death-wound, and for fourteen years after the Tyrian Jezebel was the ruler of Israel, although her sons Ahaziah and Jehoram, the one for two years

and the other for twelve years were nominally the kings. Meantime Elisha had succeeded Elijah as the Lord's prophet in Israel, and under his orders Jehu, an officer of the army at a new siege of Ramoth-gilead, assumed the crown of Israel. Jehu became the instrument in God's hand for the complete overthrow of the idolatry which, introduced from Phenicia, had cursed Israel for over thirty years. He destroyed Jezebel, now a woman of over fifty years of age, and with her the whole family of Ahab, including the King Jehoram and his nephew Abaziah, who was King of Judah and on a visit to his pagan relatives of Israel.

This act of Jehu was the one check of which we spoke that held back the destruction of Israel.

Jehu's motive was a selfish and worldly one. His zeal for Jehovah, of which he boasted, was zeal for himself, but nevertheless as he destroyed the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth and restored the worship of Jehovah (although in its mutilated form), God honored him with the reward of a continuance of his dynasty for five generations, and one of his descendants, the fourth in order, Jeroboam II., had a long reign of fifty-two years, in which the kingdom enjoyed an unwonted prosperity. The last king of Jehu's dynasty was, however, slain in a conspiracy almost as soon as he mounted

the throne, and then followed fifty years of rapid decline under six successive monarchs, only one of whom, Pekah, achieved any distinction, until the Assyrian power, which had even from Jehu's time interfered with Israel's independence, put an end to the kingdom, destroyed its cities and removed the people to Mesopotamia and Media. From this date B. C. 721 Israel (that is, the ten tribes as such) disappears from history.

In all the list of nineteen monarchs that reigned over Israel during these 250 years from Solomon's death, we find not one godly man. They were all, like the monarchs of the pagan nations around them, selfish and generally cruel tyrants. With the exception of Jeroboam and Jehu and his family they showed not even an outward reverence for the God of Israel. Nine dynasties had reigned in these two and one-half centuries, and all but Jehu's had cursed the land with their iniquities. The great empire of Solomon had dwindled down to a very small and insignificant state, and the power, first of Syria, and then of Assyria, had become a scourge to the apostate nation. Civil wars, assassinations, and general insecurity marked the larger part of the history of the kingdom, the period of the Jehu dynasty—a period of 112 years—being the marked exception. But this Jehu



period was disturbed by frequent wars with Syria, whose powerful monarchs Hazael and Benhadad III. made great inroads upon the country, although two of Jehu's dynasty, Jehoash and Jeroboam II, successfully resisted this Syrian foe. In spite of the comparative excellence of Jehu's family the nation became wholly corrupt.

The mission of Elijah and Elisha had been in vain. The long suffering of God had waited for two and a-half centuries, when the blow of justice had to fall and Israel was utterly extinguished. Tiglath-pileser, Shalmanezer and Sargon were the three Assyrian monarchs who became the instruments of God's anger, blotting out the nation and leaving the kingdom of Judah only to represent the favored people of God.

To that kingdom of Judah we now turn. There we find a different record. The period there from Solomon's death is 385 years, instead of 253, the length of Israel's career. The nineteen monarchs who reign over Judah are all of one family, David's, while those of Israel were of nine families. Eight of these monarchs were decidedly godly men. Two of them, Hezekiah and Josiah, were conspicuous for their piety. The other eleven could compare evenly with their rivals on the throne of Israel. The general tendency of the

kingdom of Judah was like that of Israel, but its godly kings and its maintenance of the true worship at Jerusalem served as a brake upon this tendency, lengthening its time of probation and making the final catastrophe, though fearful, not hopeless, as was the case with Israel. The example of Solomon had rendered idolatry in Judah almost ineradicable. Accustomed as the people had become during that reign of splendor to temples of Baal and Chemosh and other pagan gods, the impression of an unrighteous liberality toward heathenism could not be removed, and the heathen habit of placing shrines on high places found many imitators even among the earnest worshipers of Jehovah. Only four of the whole line of Judah's kings were true enough and bold enough to destroy these shrines on the high places. These four were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. The rest, even such good kings as Joash and Amaziah and Uzziah, left these snares in the land, so calculated to lead the people away from Jehovah. The four kings, who removed these shrines, were the four who were the chief restraints to the nation's growing wickedness. Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa, and their two reigns extended over sixty-four years. These were certainly the best years of Judah after David's time. Asa's time is called in

the record a time in which the Lord gave rest to Judah. Twice during his long reign of over forty years there was a threat of evil. The first was when the Egyptian monarch invaded the land with a vast host, but was signally defeated by Asa, and the second was when Baasha, the usurper of Israel, began movements against Judah on the northern frontier. In this latter case Asa fell from his high position of trust in God and sought aid from Benhadad of Syria, for which God's prophet Hanani rebuked him and the angry prince put the faithful prophet in prison. Such a stain is found on so good a king. But a still darker stain is found on good King Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, who reigned twenty-five years. This excellent monarch, who was so powerful as a prince and so exemplary as a man of faith in God, and whose prayer to God was answered by a marvelous victory over a formidable confederacy of the neighboring nations against him, became so infatuated with a false notion of union with Israel (perhaps with an idea of restoring the old Davidic monarchy and its glory) that he formed a close alliance with the depraved Ahab, and took the daughter of Jezebel as a wife for his son and successor. This intimacy and union between the courts of Judah and Israel became the cause of the direst evils to Judah, and did more for the

moral and religious corruption of the people than any other event in the nation's history. Jezebel's vile influence was felt at once at Jerusalem, and when Jehoshaphat died, Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, was virtually ruler in Judah. For eight years her husband, Jehoram, under her inspiration made Judah to rival Israel with its bold idolatries, and when he died, her son, Ahaziah, continued the curse till he was slain with his uncle by Jehu on his visit to the northern court. Then this new Jezebel of Judah with the fierceness of a tigress murdered all the members of the royal family and seized the throne for herself, where she held her own for six years, not knowing that one babe, a child of her son's, had been preserved by its aunt, the wife of Jehoiada, the priest, at the time of her massacre of the royal family. Those fourteen years of Athaliah's power in Judah were fearful years. They sufficed to saturate the land with the worst idolatries. And good Jehoshaphat had been the cause of it all. So dangerous are the intimate alliances of the godly with the depraved.

From the time when the noble priest Jehoiada by a well-planned revolution overthrew Athaliah and placed the young Joash on the throne of his ancestors to the time of Ahaz, a period of 137 years there were only four kings and their reigns were

prosperous. Of each it is said that they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. Yet they were not forward and zealous for the cause of God. They allowed the high places to remain as places of worship, and idolatry to manifest itself in rivalry with the worship of Jehovah (2 Chron. 24. 18. 2 Kings 12. 3.—14. 4.—15. 4-35). The restraint therefore, that these kings, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah and Jotham, put upon the moral decline of Judah was very slight. Yet their four reigns were certainly marked by political prosperity, with two exceptional events, a successful raid of the Syrians on Judah in the reign of Joash as a punishment for the murder of the prophet Zechariah by the king, and the capture of Jerusalem and its payment of a heavy ransom to the king of Israel in the reign of Amaziah as a punishment for the introduction of Edomite gods into Judah after Amaziah's victory over Edom. Uzziah's long reign of 52 years was one of wonderful prosperity until in his pride he dared to assume the function of the high-priest and was smitten with leprosy, and from that time till his death had to live apart from others in a separate house as a leper and leave the active government to his son Jotham.

This son Jotham, after Uzziah's death, maintained the political prosperity of the country. But

the carelessness and compromises of these kings had allowed the deep-seated corruption of the land to increase, and when Jotham's son, Ahaz, came to the throne at 20 years of age, the iniquity became universal and flagrant. This young prince imitated Solomon in his indiscriminate worship of all the heathen gods. He erected images of Baal, the Tyrian god, and he performed the cruel and bloody rites of Moloch, the god of Ammon, in the valley of Hinnom to the south of Jerusalem. It was this heathenish abomination which probably made the name of this valley a synonym of hell, Gehenna being the Greek form of the Hebrew Ge-hinnom (valley of Hinnom). This outburst of the corruption, which had been to some extent kept under by the preceding monarchs, brought upon Judah the rod of the Almighty. He called the Syrians and the people of the northern kingdom to descend upon sinning Judah. A hundred and twenty thousand of Judah's army fell in one day, and two hundred thousand were led away for a time into captivity. The Edomites and Philistines also attacked Judah on the south and west, and the land, lately so prosperous, was brought to the verge of utter desolation. The depraved king then begged Tiglath-pileser the new king of Assyria to come to his rescue, but though that monarch assailed Syria and Israel, and

so relieved Ahaz for a time from his northern enemies, yet the Assyrian monarch made Ahaz pay so dearly for this help that the country was impoverished and the people rendered more miserable than ever.

It was at this crisis that the prophet Isaiah, who had prophesied in the last year of Uzziah and through the reign of Jotham, now stood up conspicuously before Judah and denounced the abominations of king, nobles and people, foretelling both the severe judgments of God and also the salvation which God would render to His faithful ones. Isaiah's place in Judah was very much what Elijah's place was in Israel 160 years before. It was the place of warning a people that were fast destroying themselves, and as the word of God by Elijah and Elisha led to the overthrow of Ahab's dynasty and the ameliorated condition of things under Jehu's dynasty, so the word of God by Isaiah led to the godly reign of Hezekiah, which gave Judah thirty years of a prince like David 2 (Chron. 29. 2).

Hezekiah was with one exception the most exemplary king Judah knew after the separation of the northern kingdom. From the very first month of his reign he began to undo the evils his depraved father had created. By a thorough renewal of

Jehovah's worship in its purity and an earnest invitation to the people of Israel to participate in the ancestral services (to which, however, only a few responded), and by a thorough destruction of idols and idol altars and hill-top shrines throughout the land, he restored order to his country and gained the protection of God. The vast army of Assyria's king, Sennacherib, was annihilated by a direct stroke of the Almighty, as it was about to pounce upon Jerusalem and destroy the nation. And yet it seems as if Hezekiah and Isaiah stood almost by themselves in thus saving their country. The people generally were poisoned through and through with the corruptions of idolatry and the manners of the heathen. The personal character and force of the king and prophet stayed the inevitable catastrophe, so powerful before God is a single soul that is faithful to the divine law.

Hezekiah's reign and its wonderful deliverance was followed by the flood-tide of wickedness under Manasseh, when the restraint of the good king and the devoted prophet was removed. For fifty-five years this monster of iniquity led the land in its excesses, with the remarkable episodes of a personal captivity in Babylon and a late repentance, and was followed by two years of the equally vicious reign of his son Amon, and then appeared the last of the



checks to Judah's destruction. This was Amon's son Josiah, who at eight years of age became king, and who at eighteen became an earnest reformer of the kingdom. Whence he got his determination to serve the Lord we cannot tell. With such a father and grandfather we should have expected a Nero or a Caligula in Josiah. Perhaps a godly mother, whose name is mentioned as Jedidah, was the secret spring of Josiah's piety. He found co-adjutors in his holy reforms in Shaphan the scribe and Hilkiah the high-priest. Ahikan and Achbor are also mentioned, together with Huldah, the prophetess, as taking part in this last attempt at reformation. The idols and idolatrous priests throughout the land were exterminated, the houses of vice connected with heathen temples together with the temples themselves were razed to the ground and the valley of Hinnom, which paganism had made sacred to its abominations, was defiled and made a place to deposit the filth of the city.

Even remnants of idolatry, which Hezekiah had left, were destroyed by this ardent reformer (2 Kings 23. 12). The wizards and magicians were driven away, and, not content with purging Judah of its idolatries, he passed into the northern country, as far as his political power could extend (it was a century after the deportation of Israel by

Assyria) and overthrew what remained of the old Israelitish idolatry at Bethel and in the cities of Samaria. It is of this godly monarch that the sacred record says, "like unto him was there no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him." (2 Kings 23. 25.) And yet twenty-one years after this good man's death Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the great temple burned to the ground and the people *en masse* carried captive to the distant capital of the empire and its environs. For this good king's sons were copies of the monster Manasseh. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah followed one another in those twenty-one years, three of them sons, and one a grandson, of Josiah. They were bold defiers of God and his laws. The last three supposed that Egypt would defend them from the threatening power of Babylon, and in this reliance they rebelled again and again against the suzerainty of Nebuchadnezzar. Three times that monarch came against the revolting kingdom. One of the monarchs, Jehoiakim he slew and another, Jehoiachin, he carried captive and on each of these occasions deported large numbers of princes and others to Babylon,

until at last, wearied with their revolts, this mighty Babylonian emperor laid siege to the city and after eighteen months gained possession and utterly destroyed it, slaying Zedekiah's children before him and then putting out the wretched king's eyes. During all these sad days, Jeremiah the prophet, was the faithful witness for God and his truth, and a few upright souls stood with him, but they were like lambs in the midst of wolves, for the city was a mass of turbulence and debauchery.

Such was the end of the monarchical experiment for the church of God. The republican experiment had ended with the Philistine devastation and Samuel became the healer of the dreadful breach and the inauguration of the new monarchical system, and now the new experiment, so hopeful in David, had proved equally a failure. The nation was wrecked. The larger portion had disappeared from the face of the earth, or, at least, from the page of history. And the remnant had now been transported to a distant land. But there was a ray of hope left. Jeremiah had predicted a return after seventy years of punishment. Daniel and Ezekiel were in Babylon among the captives to testify for God and be the means of securing a holy seed for that return. A third experiment would be tried. A provincial condition under the

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great monarchies of Persia, Greece and Rome would be the last period of Israel's probation. For that condition the exile would be a preparation. By that the idolatrous poison would be extracted from the people, and the remnant who should return, according to Isaiah's prophecy, would at least be free from that destroying sin. Though the nation was virtually extinct, the church of God still lived, and the secret of its life was in the few, who, amid all the overturnings and disasters of the age, remained faithful to the God of Israel.

## LECTURE XII.

### THE EXILE.

THE prophet Jeremiah, eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, uttered these words " Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the North, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them and make them an astonishment and a hissing and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual

desolations." Seven years later the same prophet spake thus: "Thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you and perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this place." (Jer. 25. 9-12 and 29. 10.)

The sacred writer of the Chronicles (2 Chron. 36. 21.) declares that these seventy years of Exile were ordered of God that the land might enjoy sabbatical years to the number of those years that had been neglected.

Now we find that from the first deporation of Jews by Nebuchadnezzar in the year B. C. 606, when Daniel was one of the captives, to the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel in B. C. 536 there were exactly seventy years, and we also find that from the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in B. C. 586 to the sixth year of Darius, when the new temple was finished (B. C. 516) there were exactly seventy years. The former period of seventy years would represent the political captivity and the latter the ecclesiastical captivity of Judah. The deportation was of that thorough sort which was customary in those days, when monarchs of the great empires transferred whole peoples to new positions, a thousand miles distant, without any regard to the expense or the

cruelty, so as to prevent further insurrection by separating the people from their institutions and breaking down their spirit. Thousands would perish, especially the women and children, in such a migration, but that was nothing to these relentless tyrants. The Jewish deportation must have been attended with all the fearful incidents of such a great calamity. Death, wounds, sickness, separations, poverty, despondency, despair were the bitter portion of Judah's cup. The royalty, priesthood and nobility that had defied God and indulged in their idolatrous practices and their reckless debauchery, proud of their wealth and power, were now brought down to the level of slavery with the lowest of the people, and in Babylon they learned the painful lesson of humiliation and contempt. Jerusalem, the holy and glorious city, was a ruin. Its massive walls were broken down, its magnificent temple and its rich palaces were ashes, its treasures were in the coffers of the Babylonian king, and the land, of which it had been the mistress, was laid waste. The kingdom was no more. The experiment begun with Saul and David was ended, and ended in a dreadful failure. The church of God survived, but the human shell in which it dwelt was broken to pieces, and a new dwelling was to be prepared for it through the furnace of affliction. Of

this period of the exile we are to note several important characteristics.

I. It was *an entire deportation*. The only exception was a few of "the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen" (2 Kings 25. 12., Jer. 52. 16). Only a few were taken in Jehoiakim's reign, when Daniel was carried captive, a larger number were deported with Jehoiachin, seven years later, but in the third visitation of the land by God's arm of vengeance (as Nebuchadnezzar was) the sweeping out of the inhabitants was complete. We have noted the only exception. Such a wholesale transfer of a people to a far distant land shakes to pieces every structure of society. It obliterates all old lines and makes a chaos, out of which a new organization must arise. The local and the inherited go for nothing. The national life is a *tabula-rasa*. Its story must begin again. There is a total separation from all that has gone before. It was this thoroughness of treatment that Judah needed, in order that it might still, as Judah, hold the church of God till the Messiah should appear.

We must estimate the number of the nation thus deported, after all the losses in siege and battle and disease, as at least two millions, and these must have been distributed all over Babylonia.

II. There was *a complete cessation of the Mosaic*



*ritual.* The temple was burned. The vessels of the temple were in the Babylonian treasury. There could be no sacrifice or offering according to the law. The functions of high-priest and priest were suspended, the annual feasts were necessarily ignored, the ritual purifications were impossible and the imposing rites of the Day of Atonement could no more be seen. Two courses lay open for the people. One was a merging into the Babylonian nation, a union as far as possible with the life and interests of the community into which they had been brought, by which they would forget their exile and improve their fortunes. Of course this could be done only by a proportionate abandonment of both patriotism and religion. A species of indifference, at least, would mark the minds of those Jews who would thus become practically Babylonians.

The other course was to hold fast to the written Law of God and to give heed to the teachings of the Levites as those specially versed in that law. (See Neh. 8. 7. for an illustration of this function of the Levites in the succeeding century, and we may not believe that it was then a new function, as Lev. 10. 11. and Deut. 33. 10. show the contrary.) This course would demand a separate religious life from the people around them, and would interfere

with their social and pecuniary successes. It would be the course of self-denial. We should have anticipated that only the few would adopt this latter course. The great majority of the Jews in Babylon became confounded with the heathen, so far as any distinctive attachment to spiritual religion was concerned. They may have preserved their national traditions and social exclusiveness, as Jews have done throughout the world since the final ruin of their local services and habitation, but even of this we are by no means certain, for what the remnant, who returned to Judæa, have in the late centuries done, may not be a guide as to what the older Jews did in the Babylonian day. It is quite probable that the Jews in Babylon, who abandoned their piety, also abandoned their distinctive national and social unity and, like those of the ten tribes who were carried to Mesopotamia and Media, became wholly heathenized and lost to history as Jews. It thus may be very true that the Afghanistan people are, as they declare themselves to be, the descendents of the Jews, and many other peoples of the earth, both pagan and Mohammedan, may now represent those who once were the people of God in Israel and Judah.

At any rate the majority of the Jews in Babylonia were enamored of the commerce and worldly

enterprise of the land of their exile, and became regardless of all the privileges and promises which attached to God's ancient people. It was the small minority who humbly sought the Lord in the place of their captivity, and nursed the piety that was to enjoy the return. Without temple and ritual, they had a faithful prophet of God for twenty-seven years, who ministered to them and endeavored to save the people from the worldly fascinations around them. Ezekiel, a priest, was chosen of God to teach and warn the exiled nation, and it was doubtless to his earnest labors that a remnant of godliness was preserved in the nominal people of God. He was among the first captives of Nebuchadnezzar deported at the same time with Daniel, and many of his prophecies were uttered in Babylon against the still existing Judah and Jerusalem. These prophecies were of the severest type. Ezekiel also dealt sternly with those of the captivity who showed no contrition of heart before the Lord's judgment, while he denounced the woes that should come upon the enemies of Israel and foretold the blessings in store for God's redeemed people.

How far Daniel may also have been a teacher to Israel in this time of the ritual's cessation, we cannot tell. That he was a devoted man of God, a



bold professor of his faith in the face of the most formidable opposition, we certainly know. Belonging to the royal family, and therefore attached by Nebuchadnezzar to his court, he probably could not get as near to his own people as could Ezekiel. His special function in the course of Providence seemed to have been to temper the minds of the ruling powers toward the Jews, and to produce that toleration which certainly did mark the general treatment of Captive Israel by the Babylonian monarchy. To this end God bestowed upon him marvelous powers in addition to a superior natural genius. These made his influence at the court supreme. He was to Nebuchadnezzar for forty years, what Joseph had been to the Egyptian Pharaoh more than a thousand years before. Through such a distinguished man God made His poor captive people to be regarded with respect and saved them from the annihilating treatment that the people of the Israelitish kingdom had received from the Assyrian power a century and a half previously. Daniel's unflinching faithfulness to God puts him conspicuously in the same category with Hezekiah and Josiah as sustaining the Davidic piety in the line of David. A prince, flattered for his accomplishments, exalted to the highest rank in the government, surrounded by a thou-



sand temptations to self-indulgence and sin, and yet keeping himself unstained in his character and pronounced in his adherence to God, was one of the wonders of the world. The sublime courage by which he maintained his spiritual separation from the idolaters, with whom, including king and court, he came into contact daily must have been a constant example and appeal to his countrymen, although he may have been by his exalted position, personally unknown to them. So we have Ezekiel, the priest and prophet, meeting the captive Jews face to face and testifying for God, and Daniel, the prince of the house of David, at a greater distance but yet clearly seen by all, adding his powerful testimony in the same direction, while Israel was reft of its ritual. Who followed Ezekiel when he died, we are not sure. Perhaps Haggai continued what Ezekiel began, for Haggai was an old prophet at the time of the building of the second temple. Perhaps the high-priests became godly instructors of the people as undoubtedly Jeshua was on the return from exile. Many of the priests and Levites seem to have retained their spiritual sentiments, if we may judge from the number who went back under Jeshua, although it may be that in their case the expectation of position and influence in the renewed nation arising

from their office may have been a more unworthy motive.

At any rate, God provided for His people throughout the term of their captivity, so that though they were without temple or ritual services, they were not without instruction in divine things.

And here we mark our third thought regarding the exile.

III. There was *a thorough conversion from idolatry*. It is most remarkable that the Jews, cast out of their land because of their idolatry and brought into a land distinguished for the multitude of its idols and the intensity of its idolatry, should there learn to rid themselves not only of the practice, but also of the tendency. They went to Babylon idolaters, they came back to Jerusalem sincere worshipers of the one God. Of course we do not mean that every Jew who went into captivity was an idolater, nor do we mean that the worship of Jehovah was extinct in the nation at the time of the captivity. What we affirm is that idolatry, and that of a very debased sort, abounded in Judah, and Jehovah was treated as one of many gods to whom the people offered their worship, when Nebuchadnezzar carried them away. That amid this corruption of worship, accompanied as it was with

a corresponding corruption of morals, there were a few who remained steadfast in their allegiance to the true God and sighed over the abominations of king and people there is no doubt. God always preserves a seed to serve him. But, notwithstanding this, we are right in saying that the Jews carried to Babylon were idolaters, but the Jews returning from Babylon were rigid observers of the worship of the one only and true God. And furthermore, this devoted adherence (if not in a heart service yet in bold profession) to the one God continued through all their subsequent history, so that they never had again to be corrected for the sin that in all their former history had been their besetting sin, against which God had, through His prophets thundered His severest threatenings. Whether the Jews, who had become absorbed in the nations, had experienced this remarkable change, we cannot tell. Probably not. But those that returned were firm haters of idolatry. The exile had proved successful. This great and deeply-planted sin of Israel had been completely washed away by the fierce billows of God's judgments. No prophet ever complains of this sin after this. It is worldliness, selfishness, formality, that form the burden of prophetic denunciation after the exile. Idolatry is a thing of the past. Surely

nothing but an extraordinary providence could have effected this change. The ordinary workings of events would have produced a far different result. The fashionable idolatry of Babylon, the centre of learning and power, would have captivated hearts already fond of idolatrous services, and Israel would have become more and more hopelessly an idolatrous people. Especially would this have been the case, when the temple and all its holy rites were no more seen and enjoyed by them and could not act as a constant reminder of Jehovah. We are shut up to see the extraordinary hand of God in this, in appropriate accompaniment with the prophetic spirit given to Ezekiel and the interpreting spirit given to Daniel. Israel's whole history is a supernatural history, and cannot be accounted for on natural grounds. It is the effort to do this which makes the German treatment of this history so puerile and absurd.

The three chief characteristics, then, of the exile, as we have attempted to show, were the entire deportation of the nation, the complete cessation of the Mosaic ritual and the thorough conversion from idolatry. The judgment of God was made a blessing to Israel in accordance with the mercy ever manifested by the Almighty in his dealings with his people.



That which seemed like annihilation was the sowing of seed beneath the ground for a healthy crop to start up in due time. The nation was purged again for a new trial. Sinai had been one starting-point, Ebenezer a second and now Babylon was to become a third. Marvels had accompanied the start at Sinai, marvels accompanied the start at Ebenezer, and now marvels accompany the third start at Babylon. Not miracles do we mean, but marvels, both prodigies from heaven and unexpected providences upon the earth. There were the thunderings and lightnings at Sinai, there was a like voice of nature used by God in the day of Ebenezer, and there were the marvels of the writing on the wall and the abode of Daniel in the den of lions that marked the close of Israel's exile. Besides this double prodigy granted to Daniel as Israel's representative, in which we see the figures of Israel's reading the mystery of God's truth and of Israel's security amid the lions of Satanic enmity, there was the providence that brought the Medes and Persians down from the highlands of Asia upon the Mesopotamian plain to destroy the old centre of empire by the Tigris and Euphrates. From Nimrod's day down this great plain had been for more than two thousand years the seat of imperial power and civilization. But now a mount-

ain people, reckoned rude by these cultured empires, was to swoop down from the Zagros heights and, after subjugating all their rich lands, to remove the seat of Empire to the Persian hills. And God so ordered it that this Medo-Persian people, who should accomplish this epoch-making change, should be a monotheistic people, who by their sympathy on this score with the Jews should be led to discharge them from their captive state and honor them with gifts and privileges for their return to Palestine.

The force of this marvelous fact some have tried lately to weaken, because an inscription has been found, in which it is recorded that Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, built the temples of Bel and Nebo, and lavished honors upon these Babylonian deities. This, say these enemies of God's truth, ever ready to find a stone that they may cast at the Bible,—this is a proof that Cyrus was a polytheist, and that Isaiah as prophet and Ezra as historian were both in error when they pictured Cyrus as a friend to the Jewish monotheism. As if a monotheistic king might not for political reasons act with toleration and even studious regard for the polytheism he found in the conquered country, while at the same time heartily favoring the monotheistic people he found dwelling as aliens

in the land. We do not believe that Cyrus was a spiritual man, but a politically wise man, and as such humored and honored his new subjects, while in convictions he was a Zoroastrian and sincerely favored the Jews and their religion, so that he could honestly say in his proclamation for their return, "Jehovah, the God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth." (Ezra 1. 2.) In this light we see that the Persian monarchy was raised up to be a nursing father to God's people and renew their national life in their own land.

## LECTURE XIII.

### THE POST-EXILIAN PERIOD.

WE learn from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah that only 50,000 Jews returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel and Jeshua in response to the proclamation of Cyrus. That proclamation ran thus, "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, Jehovah, God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people, —his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, God of Israel, (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold and with goods and with beasts, besides the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem." This proclamation was faithfully obeyed by the heathens, and the Jews were loaded with silver and gold and goods by the people, and Cyrus himself handed over to the prince of Judah, who was to lead the return,

5400 vessels of gold and silver that had belonged to the old temple and had been seized by Nebuchadnezzar. Besides these gifts many of those who returned had riches, of which they gave liberally to the general cause. With all these favorable accompaniments of the return, only 50,000 of the whole nation availed themselves of the opportunity, the rest remaining either from love for the foreign life or from fear of the results of the new transfer. It was 80 years afterward that the priest Ezra made a new effort to carry back to Judah some of the Babylonian Jews and succeeded in taking 1700 men (the women are not given) under a most favorable proclamation of the king Artaxerxes. We have put the number of the Jews who were carried captive at two millions, judging from the wealth and power of the land in Josiah's day, and remembering that in Amaziah's day that monarch had an army of three hundred thousand choice men. If our estimate be correct, and if we do not reckon any increase in the 70 years, only one out of forty Jews returned to Judah. It was a sad exhibition of the prevailing indifference to all the privileges and duties of God's covenant, a proof of the alienation of the people from God and the need of their thorough sifting. The 50,000 who returned were the good wheat after the sifting, and yet we must

make an exception even here and surmise that quite a number joined the returning expedition from selfish and adventurous motives. Still it is comfortable to believe that the majority of these returning Jews came back by that long journey to their ancestral land with devout gratitude to God and in faithful service to Him. They were going to a ruined capital and a wasted country. They were going as a feeble folk among inimical tribes, but with no power of arms to sustain and defend them, and although Judah and the surrounding countries were now provinces of Persia, yet the empire was so new, and affairs so unsettled, that these provinces, distant from the Persian capital, might act very independently in contests with one another. Hence, with all the royal *send-off* of the returning Jews, there was a self-denial in the movement, which probably tended to reduce the unworthy members of the return to a minimum.

Two men appear conspicuous in the management and conduct of the Return. These are Zerubbabel or Sheshbazzar and Jeshua or Joshua. The former was of the royal family of Judah, the latter the high-priest of Israel. They were both dignitaries, and doubtless reckoned by Cyrus as the representatives of the civil and ecclesiastical sides of the people. That they had any special qualities for

leadership besides that of birth and position it is hard to tell. From the manner in which they allowed the building of the new temple to drag, we cannot argue for their eminent zeal and persistency, and yet they obeyed the prophet Haggai, when he aroused them to new exertion after years of delay, caused by the neighboring enemies of Judah and their intrigues with the Persian court. Young Zechariah was joined with old Haggai in this rebuke and appeal, and under the influence of these prophets Zerubbabel prosecuted the work of building the temple with earnestness so that in four years it was completed. The work had been stopped for fifteen years, during which however some of the people had built themselves fine houses and, we may believe, had used in their construction some of the cedar wood which had originally been brought from Lebanon for the new temple. But though the temple had been so delayed, the daily sacrifice had been renewed and the altar erected from the very beginning.

The period from the Return to the birth of Christ was one of five hundred and thirty-two years. The Jewish people during this period were a province of the Persian, the Macedonian and the Roman empires. For two hundred and four years they belonged to Persia, for two hundred and sixty-

nine years to the Macedonian monarchs, and the the rest of the period to the Romans.

Under the Persian kings the Jews were prospered. In God's providence those first two centuries after the Return were peaceful, the yoke of Persia being light and the disposition of the court friendly. The new opportunity for the development of Judah in the ways of God was most favorable. With the temple rebuilt, with the priesthood reinstated and with the counsel of prophets still sent to the chosen people, they ought to have grown in spiritual life. It is true they now abhorred idolatry and not a taint of the sin that had before cursed them was upon them now, but they were still inclined to forget that they were a separated people to the Lord, and they continually showed a tendency to adopt all the other habits of the heathen except their formal idolatry. Covetousness, greed, fraud, display and worldliness in general marked these centuries, and marriage with the people of the nations about them helped the spiritual decline. Three events marked this Persian period, each of which was a divine intervention to stay their fall. The first was the coming of Ezra the priest seventy-seven years after the Return with two or three thousand Jews whom he had prevailed to come with him from Babylon to Jerusalem. This de-



voted priest was under the divine guidance, "the good hand of his God," as he uses the significant phrase, and by his authority and energy worked a reform with success, inducing multitudes of the Jews to dissolve their social and matrimonial connections with the surrounding heathen. It is probable that those whom Ezra brought with him from Babylon were selected by him for their patriotism and piety, the cream of the new generation, who were born after the Return, but who had an inherited longing for the ancestral condition of separation unto God. If so, these would be a great help in the work of reform and their coming to Jerusalem would be the leavening of the nation with new zeal. Fourteen years after Ezra's expedition to Jerusalem, Nehemiah, who was probably of the old royal house of Judah, and who occupied a high official position in the court of the Persian monarch Artaxerxes, obtained leave to go to Jerusalem as governor of the province and to rebuild its walls, which had not been restored since their destruction by Nebuchadnezzar 140 years before. The Jews had since the Return, a period of ninety years, dwelt in their capital as an open unwallled city, and the general peacefulness of the Persian empire permitted this neglect of precautions against the assaults of enemies. But Nehemiah's patriot-

ism was stirred when he had his attention called to the exposed condition of the Holy City. The reforms of Ezra seem also to have been but of temporary avail, and there was need of a strong character in Jerusalem again to revive the people in faithfulness. Nehemiah's visit to Jerusalem in the year B. C. 446, was the second divine intervention after the Return to stay the decline of the people in their allegiance to God. He inspired the people with energy and the walls were built in a marvelously short period in the face of formidable threatenings from the Samaritans and others, and while there were many disaffected traitors within the city. Nehemiah was soon joined by the priest Ezra again, who had probably been in Babylon after his reforming work, and the two, governor and priest, used the most diligent measures to instruct the people in the truth and to separate them from their heathen neighbors, with whom they had made the most intimate alliances, the high-priest's family being a leader in this iniquity which threatened the stability of church and nation.

Nehemiah repeated his visit to Jerusalem twelve years later and had to use strong measures against the same tendency of the people, especially those of high rank, to throw down the barrier of social intercourse between the Jews and the Gentiles. The

high-priest had not only married his grandson to Sanballat's daughter, but had prepared a dwelling for Tobiah, the Ammonite noble, within the sacred precincts of God's temple.

The third intervention of God to stop Judah's decline during the Persian period was the appearance of Malachi, the last of the prophets, who probably prophesied in Judah a generation later Nehemiah. The words of this prophet show that both priests and people had become indifferent to God's service, and with a formal religion exhibited a scene of vice, oppression and superstition almost equal to that which the nation had exhibited in the old days of idolatry. There were only a few who still earnestly feared and served the Lord and who encouraged one another amid the prevailing iniquity.

With Malachi the supernatural in Judah ended. The Spirit of God withdrew from a people so determined in their resistance to the truth. For four hundred years the nation was to live a sort of twilight life until a new day should arise, a day not now for the one nation, but for all nations, wherein the light should shine on the Gentile world, and all mankind should greet the Messiah. The connection between Israel in its best estate and the church of Christ at Pentecost was to be a

very attenuated thread of godly men and women amid a self-willed and worldly people, covering their sins with a lifeless formalism.

When, two hundred years after the return, the Macedonian power overthrew the Persian empire and the Greek language and manners spread so wonderfully through the Orient, the Jews became infected with the Hellenic culture to a surprising extent. The higher classes courted the Greek fashions in society and politics. Under the Syro-Greek kings of the line of Seleucus, Jews dressed like Greeks and talked like Greeks. The Greek language was the sign of high breeding. The old Hebrew names of Jacob and Zadok and Shimei and Mattathiah gave way to Alexander and Jason and Aristobulus and Menelaus. Greek amphitheatres were established in the cities and Greek games were celebrated in them. Against this Hellenic tide a slight breakwater was erected first by the Maccabean revolution, and afterward (when the Maccabees themselves hellenized by the sect of the Pharisees.

The Maccabean revolution occurred in the year B. C. 167, a hundred and seventy years after the Macedonian conquest. The occasion was the cruel oppression of the Syro-Greek king Antiochus IV. (Epiphanes) who endeavored to stamp out the dis-

tinctive nationality and religion of his Jewish province, and who carried out this endeavor by the basest pollution of the holy temple and by the fearful slaughter of the Jewish people. An aged priest at Modin began the revolt by slaying an officer of Antiochus, and calling upon his countrymen to resist the tyrant in the name of God. This old priest with his five sons made a rendezvous in the mountains and gathered an army of patriots. The old priest soon died and Judas his son, called Maccabæus, (or the Hammer) became the hero of the war. The struggle lasted twenty-eight years, ending in the independence of the Jewish state under Simon the brother of Judas. The war was somewhat a religious war, a priestly family leading it, and the defence of religion and religious separation being the ostensible reason for the insurrection. But, nevertheless, it was largely a civil strife, with a burning patriotic desire for political independence actuating the people. Simon and his son John Hyrcanus held authority over the nation as high-priests, so constituted by the people, the direct line of the high-priesthood apparently having lapsed. But Aristobulus the grandson of Simon adopted the title of king and five of the Maccabean family followed on the throne, but only two of these reigned in an independent kingdom,

for in the reign of the third Pompey entered Jerusalem, and Judæa became virtually a Roman province. The Maccabæan kingdom as an independent kingdom lasted but a little over 70 years.

It was during this monarchy that the Pharisees arose, a sect who were protestants against the Hellenizing tendencies of the royal family and the nation. Alexander Jannæus, the son of John Hyrcanus, had become a thorough Greek in his style and habits, and he treated these Pharisees with relentless cruelty, but his wife Alexandra who succeeded him on the throne was their fast friend and patroness. The Pharisees formed the purer part of the Jewish nation, and there were doubtless among them many truly godly persons, but as a whole their effort was rather to preserve the outward ancestral religion and the independence of the nation from foreign contamination than to establish a spiritual life. And to a large extent their efforts were successful. There can be no doubt that their zeal accomplished much to check the Hellenism of the land, and to keep the Jewish people within their old circumscriptions.

It was during the Macedonian period that the Hellenic spirit started a new impulse in literature among the Jews, wholly different in kind however from that which had marked the people in more

ancient times. This new literature was in the Greek language and not the Hebrew, and much of it had its birth-place in Egypt where so many of the Jews resided in Alexandria, in which place the great Alexander had given them peculiar privileges. This literature was separated by two or three centuries from the last of the prophets and was never confounded by the Jews with their sacred writings. The remains of this literature form what we now know as the Apocrypha. It varies much in its style and character. Some of it, like Ecclesiasticus and the first book of the Maccabees, is wholesome and dignified composition, while other portions, like Tobit, Judith and Susanna, are weak and puerile.

We are now brought to the Roman period which may be said to begin in the year B. C. 63, when Pompey the Great became master of Jerusalem. From that time Rome was the lord of Judæa. By his intriguing with Rome, Herod, the Idumean, set aside the Maccabæan princes, married into the family and set himself on the throne. For forty years he ruled with a skilled but cruel hand, becoming a terror to his own country and a wonder of savagery to the Roman Emperor. It was near the close of his long reign, in which he had embellished Jerusalem and built many magnificent cities throughout the land, that Jesus was born at Bethle-

hem, and was carried to Egypt to escape the fangs of the monster.

We have now noted the three periods of Jewish history between the Return and Christ, the 204 years, when Judæa was a peaceful Persian province, the 269 years in which it was a Macedonian (Syro-Greek) province, including, however, 72 years of independence, and the 63 years in which it was tributary to Rome. We have seen how the first period was misimproved, and the nation showed its old tendency to depart from God, not now in idolatry, but in the forms of vice and violence, and how in the second period it was involved in war and disaster, until in the third period, under the iron hand of imperial Rome, it was ready to be utterly destroyed, the promised Messiah having come.

If we had entered Jerusalem in the time of Herod, we should have found a city of a Græco-Roman character, with theatre, xystus, prætorium, the Greek language spoken in the streets, the costumes largely of Greek or Roman type, the inscriptions often in Latin, and Roman soldiers reviewed in the public squares. But with all this we should have seen a bigoted and turbulent populace, proud of their Semitic blood, sticklers for the details of their hereditary ritual, insisting on preserving the precincts of their sanctuary free from the tread of a



Gentile, and ready to die for these ends, and we should have seen, mingled with the adherents of foreign manners, the turbaned Pharisees with their broad phylacteries, whom this bigoted populace revered as the models of piety and learning. Here and there, too, we should have seen an Essene with his eyes downcast, a thorough Oriental ascetic, who counted the Pharisee as heterodox as the Pharisee counted the Hellenizing or Romanizing Jew. But among all these we should have looked in vain for an Israelite of the old Davidic type, for any who felt the elevating power of the Spirit of God and communed with God in the use of the sacred ritual, with the exception of here a Simeon and there an Anna, who had amid the prevailing corruption found refuge from the dense worldliness of the nation in a retired life of prayer.

. It was thus to a people thrice-tried and thrice proved worthless, that Messiah came, and at a time when almost every spark of piety had died out, and all the means of grace had become mere foundations of pride and contention. More than fourteen centuries of God's long suffering had been showed them, and now the final scene of judgment was at hand. Messiah would with a Jewish remnant form a Gentile church—the spiritual sceptre would depart from Judah—and the old covenant would be

ground to powder under the falling walls of the temple.

In this brief survey of the history of God's ancient people we have noted that Israel was not a nation gradually growing out of barbarism into mental and moral strength by reason of inherent life, as the fashionable philosophers of the day would make it, but a nation possessing already a degree of culture by its training from Abraham to Moses, gifted with a divine revelation and a complete gospel in ritual type, and furnished with inspired instructors, and, with all these marvelous advantages, steadily declining in its moral status for the whole fourteen or fifteen centuries, except where divine interventions stayed the decline and started the people anew on a fresh plane of opportunity.

In this history of Israel we see in epitome the story of man in general, ever sinking away from God, while God offers him again and again the opportunity of return and a new trial. The lesson to us is most emphatic, the lesson of human weakness, and the necessity of trust positive and implicit in the Divine grace for the true life.

The Church of God can have no self-reliance. Self-reliance corrupts and destroys it. The church must be guided by the written law given through

men who were moved by the Holy Ghost. The church has no patent of impunity. Its sins will be severely dealt with. Judgments will begin at the house of God. The fate of Israel shows us the folly of trusting to the bulwarks of forms and names and offices, all which the wrath of God will sweep away, if the Spirit of God is not dwelling within the forms and the church is not partaker of the divine holiness. The Christian church has no more guarantee of security than had the Jewish church. Worldliness, if cherished, will be its destruction, and in godliness only is its pledge of life.

THE END.

