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A HISTORY

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ISRAELITISH NATION

FROM THEIR ORIGIN



TO THEIR DISPERSION AT THE DESTRUCTION OF
JERUSALEM BY THE ROMANS.

BY

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE nature and design of the following work may be sufficiently gathered from the Preface which follows. It might be unnecessary to say another word, but for the fact that while the labours of the lamented author were taking their present form, it pleased God to remove him to a better world. It will be observed that the materials of the publication had to a certain extent appeared in separate volumes, which were well received by Christian readers. But an important end is attained, by throwing them into a continuous series. The chasm which existed in one great period of the annals has been filled by the hand of a clergyman whose learning and discretion commended him to Dr. Alexander as remarkably fitted for the task. He has performed his part with complete success; and there can be no doubt that the History, as now presented, will be found eminently useful as an instrument of Biblical instruction.

JAMES W. ALEXANDER.

NEW YORK, January 1853.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE.

THE revision of the following work was completed by its venerable and much esteemed author only a short time previous to the illness which terminated in his death. Circumstances have delayed its publication until the present time. Although the usual care has been taken to avoid typographical errors, yet it is possible, that in passing so large a work through the press, much of which was printed from manuscript, errors may have occurred, which would have been prevented had the proof-sheets been corrected by the author himself. It is confidently hoped, however, that no material imperfection will be discovered, and that the work will be appreciated as one of the latest literary efforts of a man whose praise is in the churches.

It may be added that the Fifth and Sixth Parts of this work contain all that is important to the Biblical Student in Priedeaux's "Connection of Sacred and Profane History."

PREFACE.

THE importance of the study of History as a branch of knowledge is universally admitted; and of all History, that contained in the Bible is the most ancient, the most authentic, and the most interesting. It gives us information of those events which we can learn no where else, and with which it is most necessary that we should be acquainted. Here we learn the origin of our race—the state in which they were created—their unhappy fall—the revelation of God's merciful designs towards them, and the remarkable dispensations of Divine Providence towards a chosen generation, the descendants of Abraham, with whom God entered into covenant, and to whom and his posterity he made great and precious promises; all of which were punctually and literally fulfilled. In the Sacred Scriptures we have an account of the first religious institutions established by divine authority; and a complete code of the laws given to the Israelites by the hand of Moses, which, being typical, were not intended to be perpetual, but continued to be obligatory until the advent of the promised Messiah, in whom they met with their accomplishment, and, of course, ceased to be any longer in force. The moral law, however, clearly revealed at the same time, is of perpetual obligation; and remains immutable under all dispensations, although its extent and spirituality are much better understood since the light of the gospel has been manifested.

The history of the Bible exhibits human nature in its true colours; and furnishes us with a wonderful variety of characters of men, occupying different stations, and acting under different circumstances. The character of the saint, as well as that of the sinner, is here portrayed; not as perfect, or free from every blemish; but as in the main, sincere and upright; as penitent for sins committed, and truly devoted to the service of God. The inspired penmen do not conceal the faults of the servants of God; but, with an impartial and faithful hand, their failings as well as their virtues are exhibited.

Many of the events of the sacred history are, it is true, of a marvellous kind; and as miracles do not take place in our times, and before our eyes, sceptical men are disposed to call in question the truth of events of this kind recorded in the Bible. But the evidence by which miracles are authenticated is too strong to be resisted by an impartial mind; and the events which followed, and the present condition of the world, cannot be accounted for on any other hypothesis, but the historic verity of the miracles recorded in the sacred volume.

It may to some seem an unnecessary labour to draw out the history contained in the Bible, as it can be better studied as written in the Sacred Scriptures, than in any abridgment. There is apparent force in this objection; but it should be remembered, that there exists a lamentable negligence of the Holy Scriptures, and every thing which has any tendency to make the people acquainted with the facts recorded, should be made use of; and, as the sacred narrative of the Bible is often interrupted by genealogies, and ritual laws and ceremonies, it has been found, that by separating the history from other matters, and exhibiting it in the concisest and simplest manner, it may be made interesting to many, who otherwise would not take the pains to seek for it. Such an abridgment may be

serviceable, especially to the young, for whose benefit chiefly the work has been prepared.

It should be remarked, also, that this volume contains the history of an important period not contained in the Bible. I mean the period between the close of the Old Testament history, and the commencement of that of the New Testament. For the events and transactions of this period of nearly five hundred years, we have no inspired guide; and are under the necessity of resorting to mere human testimony. But it has been so ordered in Providence, that for the events of this period we have credible historians, on whom we can rely for the principal transactions.

Without some knowledge of the events of the intervening period, the reader of the Scriptures, when he has finished the Old Testament and begins the New, feels himself much at a loss, as here he finds a state of things for which he is not prepared by any thing which he has read in the Old Testament. There are also many collateral events which are requisite to a full understanding of the history of the New Testament; a knowledge of which has a tendency to confirm his faith in the authenticity of the sacred history.

There is also a very important event, predicted indeed by our Lord, but which occurred after the termination of the history of Christ and his Apostles. I refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; an account of which, taken chiefly from Josephus a Jew, who was an eye witness, closes the history contained in the present volume.

The attentive reader will no doubt remark, that the several parts of this history are not entirely homogeneous. On this subject it will be sufficient to remark, that originally it existed in several volumes, written at different times, and for different purposes; but these having fallen into the hands of the pre-

sent publisher, he has determined to make of them a continuous history. One important chasm, however, remained to be filled, namely, from the beginning of the regal government to the end of the Babylonish captivity. To fill this important period, the services of a young clergyman were obtained; but his modesty does not permit us, at present, to mention his name.

ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER.

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HISTORY OF THE ISRAELITISH NATION.

PART I.

THE PATRIARCHS.

SECTION I.

CREATION—GARDEN OF EDEN—ENDOWMENTS OF MAN.

WHEN God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, it pleased him to bring the work to perfection not in a moment, but gradually, through a period of six days. At first, "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." To reduce this confused mass to order, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light." The expanse or atmosphere was next produced, in which the clouds and vapours were suspended. The great body of the waters were gathered unto one place, and thus the dry land arose to view. The name EARTH was given to the dry land, and SEAS to the collection of waters.

The vegetable world, in all its freshness, beauty, variety, and fruitfulness, now sprung into existence, at the command of the Creator. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so."

From the beginning, there was an alternation of darkness and light, causing evening and morning; but it was not until the fourth day of creation that the luminaries—the sun, moon, and stars—were placed in the heavens; or became visible in the heavens. "The waters now brought forth abundantly the moving creature, that hath life;" and winged fowls of every kind were formed "to fly above the earth, in the open firmament of heaven." And a command was given that these

inhabitants of the water and of the air should be fruitful and multiply.

The sea and air being thus stocked with inhabitants, possessing natures suited to their respective elements, God proceeded to create the animals adapted to the earth. "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind; and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind." When the world was thus furnished and prepared, "God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

In the creation of other things, nothing was necessary, but a simple expression of the divine will; but when the lord of this lower world was to be brought into existence, a council is called, and it is said, "Come, let us make man." With whom did the great Creator take counsel on this memorable occasion, but with his Son and Spirit? both of whom we know were efficient agents in the work of creation.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth. And God said, Behold I have given every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat."

In this grant of food to man there is no mention of the flesh of animals: it has therefore been generally believed that animal food was not in use before the flood.

We have a still more particular account of the formation of man. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, (lives,) and man became a living soul."

"And the Lord God planted a garden, eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The tree of life (lives) also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

This garden was watered by a river which went out of Eden, and was divided into four heads. Two of these, it is thought, were the Euphrates, and the Tigris, called by Moses, Hiddekel,

but nothing satisfactory has been ascertained respecting the other two. Indeed, although the situation of Paradise seems to have been well known when Moses wrote, great obscurity now rests upon the whole subject; and the conjectures of commentators have served rather to darken than to elucidate it. The most judicious, however, for a long time supposed that the terrestrial Paradise must have been situated not very far from the mouth of the two rivers before mentioned; and they conjectured, that the other two rivers were streams passing from one of these to the other, as it is known that a communication of this kind did exist between them in after-ages. But the more modern cultivators of sacred geography seem more generally inclined to look for the site of this famous garden at the source of these rivers; and allege, that two other rivers running to the north-east and to the north-west, have their source in the same region.

Man, when created, was taken and put into the garden of Eden, "to dress it and keep it." Even in Paradise idleness was not tolerated. Activity and occupation are among the essential ingredients of human happiness.

The permission to eat freely of all the trees of the garden was explicitly granted, with one only exception. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But why this prohibition? Was the fruit of a poisonous nature? So some have supposed. But no; it was "good for food," and beautiful in its aspect. Why, then, was man interdicted its use? Simply as a test of his obedience to his Creator. That all creatures should make it their first and highest object to glorify Him, from whom they received their being, and on whom they depend, is one of the plainest dictates of reason and conscience. It was therefore reasonable and proper that the Law-giver should require some test or proof of obedience, before man should be confirmed in a state of blessedness. And God selected this thing, in itself of an indifferent nature, as furnishing a fair probation of man's obedience.

It has already been mentioned, that God made man male and female; but the woman was not created as early as the man. For awhile he was alone. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him." "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, (sides,) and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib (side) which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave

his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

That man, from the moment of his creation, must have been endowed with all necessary knowledge, cannot reasonably be doubted. Without an original stock of ideas he would have been inferior to all the other animals, for to them instinct is a sufficient guide; but man has no such guide; and if he had been turned loose upon the wide world, without any knowledge until he could acquire it by the slow process of experience, his life could not have been preserved for a single day. Even the danger arising from the common elements of fire and water, which are known to children as soon as they can learn any thing, would have been unknown to him.

Moreover, if man was placed under a law, and required to love and serve his Creator, his new created mind must have been furnished with ideas of the character of God, and of the obligations of a creature to his Creator.

It is also reasonable to think, and indeed may be inferred from the sacred record, that man when created was gifted with the faculty and use of articulate speech. To suppose that Adam and Eve were at first mutes, and incapable of conversing together, except by dumb signs, is neither probable in itself, nor honourable to the wisdom and goodness of their Maker. Indeed, without such a gift, it may well be doubted whether man ever could have invented a language. But we need not argue this point; for we find, that from the beginning of man's existence, God addressed him in words. And as a striking evidence, both of Adam's knowledge and use of speech, the Creator brought to him every beast of the field and fowl of the air, to see what he would call them; "and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field."

This work must have required much time; and if it is true that Adam was able to designate some leading quality of each species by the name given, as seems probable, his knowledge of natural history must have been more accurate and extensive than that of any of his posterity.

But the crowning excellence of the character of this first man, as he came from the hands of his Creator, was HOLINESS, or moral integrity. All his affections were in just proportion to their objects, and his passions so happily balanced and harmonized, that in all the exercises of the various constituent principles of human nature, there was no jar, nor the least irregularity. Objects were loved and pursued according to their value. The higher and nobler powers of the mind governed, and the inferior and animal principles were in complete subor-

dination. This happy state of moral purity seems to have been the chief thing intended by the IMAGE OF GOD, in which man is said to have been created.

The perfect purity of their hearts, and the bland serenity of the atmosphere, may be judged of from a single circumstance mentioned in the narrative. "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."



SECTION II.

FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS, AND THEIR PUNISHMENT.

SATAN, by some means, found his way into Paradise, and with much subtlety laid his plan for the seduction and ruin of the innocent pair, whose happiness this fiend envied. Assuming the body of one of the most sagacious and noble of the animal tribes, he accosted the woman, as being the weaker vessel, when she was a little separated from her husband. He had become acquainted with the prohibition of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and watching his opportunity, when Eve was near to this tree, he said, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" This insidious question was intended to suggest a doubt of the reasonableness of the commandment of God. The woman promptly and properly answered, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." It may, indeed, seem strange that she was not filled with astonishment at hearing the serpent speak; but let it be recollected, that, in the beginning of the world, when there had not been time to observe the regular course of the laws of nature, all events were equally new and strange. She might not know but that some of the animal tribes had received the gift of reason and speech. The tempter, finding that the woman was willing to enter into conversation with him, assumed more boldness, and ventured to utter a direct contradiction of the declaration of God. "And the serpent said, Ye shall not surely die." This was the first lie which ever polluted the air of the world; and therefore, he who set this example, which has been followed by so many, is called a LIAR, and the FATHER OF LIES. But not contented with simply uttering a falsehood in direct opposition to the word of God, he went on to confirm his assertion, by saying, "For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,

and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat."

The temptation entered first by the ear. She listened to an insidious speech, which conveyed a poison to her heart, by suggesting a doubt of the Divine veracity. It next entered by the eye, for the fruit, which was beautiful in its aspect, hung clustering within her reach. Her appetite was whetted, probably, by seeing the serpent eating it with great apparent gratification. She believed it to be good for food. But probably the desire of an increase of knowledge, and a curiosity to be as God, knowing good and evil, was the prevailing motive. The desire of knowledge is innocent when restrained within proper bounds; but when our curiosity leads us to pry into the secret things of God, or to use any unlawful means to increase our knowledge, it becomes sinful.

"And she gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." Whether Adam was deceived by the same artful suggestions of Satan as the woman, or was influenced by his fondness for the society of Eve to connect his destiny with her's even in death, is not easily determined, since the sacred historian is silent respecting the motive. Paul says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." But he probably means no more than that Eve led the way in sinning.

The first sin was marked with peculiar guilt. Our first parents were supplied with every blessing which the heart of man ought to desire. They were pressed by no painful necessity to eat this fruit; the whole garden, with all its variety of delicious fruits, was before them; and they enjoyed unrestrained liberty in regard to every tree, but this one. Ignorance and inadvertence cannot be pleaded in palliation of their crime. The law of God prohibiting this fruit was brought clearly before the woman by the very words of the tempter. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree." Upon which she distinctly repeats the prohibition, with a circumstance nowhere else mentioned, namely, that they were not only forbidden to eat the fruit, but "*to touch it.*" It was then not only a voluntary but a deliberate transgression. And in the case of Adam, the opportunity for deliberation was even greater. He saw his wife in the very act of disobedience. He saw the forbidden fruit in her hand, and in her mouth; and yet when she offered it to him he did not refuse it; but took it, and did eat, conscious, no doubt, at the moment, that he was disobeying the positive command of his Maker.

The constitution of the human mind is such, that some principles or passions are not developed until certain circumstances occur which call them forth. For example, fear would never

be experienced, if we never apprehended any danger: anger would remain latent if we were never exposed to any injury: and shame was a feeling to which our first parents were strangers, until conscious guilt took possession of their minds. When any new thoughts or feelings arise in the mind, it is agreeable to the Hebrew method of speaking, to say that *the eyes are opened*; so now, Adam and Eve experienced an entirely new state of mind. The clear light of truth was obscured; serenity was exchanged for perturbation, peace for remorse, and confidence for fear. O what desolations hath sin produced!

The intercourse which man enjoyed with his Maker was not only profitable, but in a high degree delightful. But now how sad the reverse! When the well-known voice of the Lord was heard in the garden at the cool of the day, guilty man, instead of running to hail the presence of his Creator, flees to the thickest part of the trees of the garden. Guilty shame of nakedness, not experienced before, impels them to make themselves aprons (girdles) of fig leaves; guilty fear now drives them into a hiding place, as though any covert could conceal from the eye of Omniscience. But no sinner can flee so far, or hide himself so securely, as to escape the justice of God. How terrible now was the sound of that voice which said, "Adam, where art thou?" When God calls unto judgment, man must obey. The trembling culprits are now forced to come forth from their concealment, and to confess their crime. But the man endeavours to palliate his guilt by laying the principal blame on the woman; and the woman excuses herself, by pleading that she had been beguiled by the serpent.

In pronouncing sentence upon the partakers of the crime, the righteous Judge began with the serpent, and said, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

From what is here said, it would seem that the serpent originally possessed a noble form and erect attitude, but was now degraded. It is not necessary to understand the sacred historian as saying that the serpent race are nourished by dust, but only, that in their grovelling condition on the ground, dust would necessarily enter their mouths with their food.

That Satan was really the prime agent in this transaction, is evident from this, that in the book of Revelation he is called "the old serpent," and from the words of our Saviour, who calls him a "liar" and a "murderer," in manifest allusion to this event.

Here we have the first intimation of the Messiah.

As the woman was first in the transgression, there was denounced upon her a peculiar curse, which has descended upon her sex in all generations. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." But this did not exempt her from her full share of the punishment denounced upon our whole race.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; FOR DUST THOU ART, AND UNTO DUST SHALT THOU RETURN."

That Adam acted in this transaction as a public person, and not as a private individual, is evident from the undeniable fact, that the whole of this denunciation, as it relates to the curse upon the ground, the necessity of labour, and the death of the body, fall as fully upon his posterity as they did upon himself. Well then might Paul say, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

The loss sustained by the human race, in consequence of the fall of our first parents, is immense. The image of God was defaced, immortality was forfeited, and happiness was blighted.

Concerning the use to be made of the "tree of life," which stood also in the midst of the garden, the Scriptures are silent; and, as is common in such cases, the conjectures of men are abundant. Some ascribe to it the power of conferring immortality; others are more moderate in their opinions of its virtues, and suppose that the fruit was highly invigorating and medicinal, and would have preserved in health our first parents, as long as it was intended they should continue upon earth; but a third and more probable opinion is, that the tree of life possessed a sacramental character, and was merely a sign and seal of that immortal life which God had promised on condition of obedience. The words of God in the following passage are very extraordinary, and very difficult of explanation: "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden,

cherubims, and a flaming sword (or a flame turning on itself), which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." It would detain us too long, even to notice the various interpretations of this difficult passage. Leaving this, therefore, to expositors, I would only remark that we here learn that agriculture was the first occupation of man, after his expulsion from Paradise. He was sent to "till the ground." The only provision made for his comfort, of which a record was made, was "That unto Adam, and unto his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

It has been remarked by many, that probably the rite of sacrificing was at this time instituted, and that these skins were taken from the bodies of those animals which were offered on the altar.

SECTION III.

CAIN AND ABEL.

OF the particulars of their history afterwards very little is known. The sacred historian passes at once from the birth of Cain and Abel, to an interesting narrative respecting their characters, occupations, and destiny. Cain was a cultivator of the ground, but Abel was a keeper of sheep. Both of them were professedly religious, for we find them engaged in the worship of God; each presenting as an offering a portion of the fruits of his labour. No doubt, the rite of sacrificing is of divine institution, else Abel could not have offered of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, in faith; and it is altogether probable, that the productions of the earth had also been appointed to be offered, as an acknowledgment of the goodness of God, in granting rain and fruitful seasons from heaven; as we know, that after this time such offerings were made by divine appointment. There does not, therefore, appear to be any certain ground for the opinion advocated by some learned men, that Cain failed in his sacrifice, not only by a want of faith, but by an external disobedience to the command of God; refusing to bring a bloody sacrifice, and following the suggestions of his own reason, in the business of religion, rather than the revealed will of God. This may have been the fact, but no intimation of any such thing is given by Moses; at least as his meaning is given in our version. There is, indeed, a translation of the original, which contains a distinct reproof of Cain, because he had not offered a *sin-offering*, or bloody sacrifice, when the animals requisite for such an offering were in his possession, and even then couching at his door. Leaving it to the critics to settle

the true meaning of the passage, I go on to remark, that by some visible manifestation, God expressed his approbation of the worship of Abel, while he gave no sign of approbation to the offering of Cain. How the mind of God was signified, on this occasion, we are not informed; but the conjecture has much probability, that Abel's sacrifice, when laid upon the altar, was consumed by fire from heaven. This evident preference of Abel and his offering, filled the mind of Cain with thoughts the most gloomy and desperate. His cheerfulness forsook him, and his inward anguish appeared in the dejection of his countenance. It would seem, from the history here given, that God was accustomed to speak familiarly to the first men. Whether this intercourse was held merely by articulate sounds, or whether he appeared, as often afterwards, in the form of an angel or a man, it would be rash for us to decide. On this occasion, God inquired of Cain, why his countenance was fallen? and intimated to him the method proper to be pursued by him in order to find acceptance; but this expostulation from his Creator had no salutary effect on the malignant feelings of this first-born of men. He not only remained dissatisfied, but actually began to feel a hatred to his pious and unoffending brother, which would be satisfied with nothing short of his death. Abel seems to have remained unsuspecting of the bloody designs of his brother, and, therefore, took no pains to shun his presence. Cain, having determined to murder him, invites him to accompany him to the field or forest; far, we may presume, from the eye of all human witnesses. Here the first murder was committed. Of the two first-born among men, children of the same parents, the one is slain by the other. Cain had avoided the presence of human witnesses, but the eye of God was fixed on the murderer, and he was soon astonished by the question—"Where is Abel, thy brother?" Irritated, as well as confounded, he answers, "I know not;" and subjoins, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Almighty soon let him understand that his guilt was fully known, and that his brother's blood, which he had wickedly shed, had cried unto him from the ground. That is, the crime of which he had been guilty, in murdering his brother, was so great, that it was as if the blood sent forth a cry for vengeance against Cain. It is well for us that all blood does not cry for vengeance. There is blood, the cry of which, before the throne of God, is for mercy and peace; which, therefore, is said to "speak better things than the blood of Abel."

A curse is immediately denounced against the murderer. As yet there was no civil government instituted, and no human laws or human officers to apprehend and punish this criminal. God took the matter into his own hands; and though he did

not inflict immediate death upon the murderer, yet he may be said to have subjected him to many deaths, until it seemed good to him to cut him off from the face of the earth. The curse upon Cain was in the following words: "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be on the earth." Cain expostulated with his Maker in regard to the intolerable burden of his guilt and misery; and seemed now to fear the face of man, dreading lest every one who found him should slay him. To satisfy him that this should not be the fact, God gave a sign to Cain; or, as it is commonly understood, impressed a mark upon him; concerning the nature of which it would be trifling even to conjecture. The miserable wretch is now driven away from the altar and house of God; and is separated from his parents, and from all his brothers and sisters, except his own wife, who followed her worthless husband into the land of Nod: thus verifying the declaration made at the institution of marriage: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they shall be one flesh." The same is true in regard to the woman. How many children had, during more than a century, been born unto our first parents, we have no means of knowing. It is pretty clear, however, that Abel died childless; and we may infer from what is said about appointing Seth as a seed in the place of Abel, that his parents were not easily comforted, on account of the premature and unnatural death of such a son. And if there were, besides those mentioned in the record, many other children of the original pair, it would seem that none of them were like Abel; otherwise, it would not have been necessary to raise up a child to take his place. Cain seems to have been the father of a numerous posterity; and among them were found ingenious men, who became distinguished throughout all ages as the inventors or improvers of the useful, and even of some of the fine arts. We learn from this, that God may grant worldly prosperity to man while under his curse. Probably a large portion of the inhabitants of the earth before the flood were the descendants of Cain. Their skill in the arts, so necessary to the refined comforts of human society, would give them a great influence among men. With these, the practice of having more than one wife seems first to have made its appearance. Lamech is the person to whom belongs this bad distinction; and the names of his wives were, Adah and Zillah.

SECTION IV.

SETH AND HIS POSTERITY.

No transactions of any of the children of Adam are mentioned in the brief history of Moses, except the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, and the cruel murder of the latter by his envious brother. To Seth, who was the successor of Abel, there was born a son, in the hundred and fifth year of his age. The name of this son, from whom all the inhabitants of the earth since the deluge have descended, was Enos. Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born. It is therefore probable that Cain and Abel were more than a hundred years of age when the latter was murdered, but no mention is made of the age of Adam at the birth of his first-born. The plan of the writer is to give the age of the father at the birth of those sons only through whom the genealogy is reckoned. Commonly, it is presumable, that these were the first-born of their respective fathers; but of this there is no certainty. Indeed, in the case of Cain, we know that the contrary was the fact. At the birth of his grandson Enos then, Adam and Eve were two hundred and thirty-five years of age. Enos was ninety years old at the birth of his son Cainan, at which time Adam had reached the age of three hundred and twenty-five years. To Cainan a son was born in the seventieth year of his age, which was in the three hundred and ninety-fifth year of Adam's life. The son of Cainan was named Mahalaleel, to whom, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, there was born a son by the name of Jared. This occurred in the four hundred and sixtieth year of the life of Adam.

Jared was one hundred and sixty-two years of age when Enoch was born, one of the most excellent and remarkable men who ever lived. He was a prophet, and a man so distinguished for piety, that at the age of three hundred and sixty-five years, he was taken to heaven without dying. This remarkable event occurred in the eight hundred and fifteenth year of Adam's life. But this holy man was married, and at the age of sixty-five had born to him Methuselah, who is the oldest man mentioned in Scripture. It was three hundred years after the birth of this son, that God took Enoch to himself. At the age of one hundred and eighty-seven years, a son was born to Methuselah called Lamech. And in the hundred and eighty-second year of Lamech's life, another very remarkable person was born, namely, Noah. From an inspection of this genealogical table, it will appear that Adam was living at the same time with Methuselah for two hundred and forty-three years, and died

only sixty-five years before the birth of Noah. It is also evident, that Adam lived a number of years after the translation of Enoch, and was living during the whole time of his continuance upon earth. On account of the ages to which these early patriarchs lived, many generations inhabited the world at the same time. Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, and Lamech, (eight successive generations,) were alive together. Among these Adam would, of course, hold the chief authority. He was not only the father of the whole race, but the source of information to them all. Adam had been created in a state of perfection of all his faculties of mind and body; had conversed with his Maker, before sin had perverted his powers; and had received upon his entrance on the world such a stock of knowledge, as was absolutely necessary in his condition. It has sometimes been inquired, whether the antediluvians had any form of civil government; to which it may be answered, with certainty, that in the beginning, the patriarchal form existed, and no other; that is, the oldest person governed when there was any necessity for authority. Adam, by his care and government of his children, would acquire such an authority over them as to constitute him their natural ruler; and his superiority to all others, in knowledge, would serve to render his influence still greater. For nearly a thousand years, this first man ruled his numerous and increasing posterity; except that Cain and his descendants appear to have formed, for a long time, a separate society, and had no connexion with the children of Seth.



SECTION V.

GREAT CORRUPTION OF MANNERS, THE CONSEQUENCE OF INTERMARRIAGES BETWEEN THE DESCENDANTS OF SETH AND THOSE OF CAIN.

BUT when the population of the earth was much increased, an intercourse by marriage took place between these two portions of mankind. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all that they chose." It is not said that these daughters of men were the descendants of Cain; but the supposition is by no means improbable. Cain was driven out from the face of God, that is, from the place where God made himself known. He and his family were, therefore, in a manner, expelled from the primitive church. But they had probably increased in wealth, luxury, and the arts, above the other posterity of Adam. For a long time, we may presume, it would have been deemed

impious to hold any intercourse with the murderer: but at length this distance was diminished; visits were paid from one party to the other. And the young men who belonged to the line of Seth, seeing the daughters of Cain that they were very beautiful, soon formed marriages with them. This connexion seems to have been the source of a grievous corruption of manners. God, however, continued to warn and reprove the people by his Holy Spirit, either immediately by striving with their consciences, or by raising up prophets, who were inspired of God to instruct and preach. He was, however, now almost prepared to abandon them, and to say, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," yet he determined, in his mercy, that he would wait with them for a further period of one hundred and twenty years.

That the marriages above mentioned had an intimate connexion with the corruption of manners which ensued, is expressly asserted. Of their children it is said, "The same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown." Their renown, doubtless, was not for good actions, but for high-handed violence, injustice, and oppression. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."



SECTION VI.

THE DELUGE—THE ARK.

THE Almighty now resolved that he would destroy man whom he had created, from the face of the earth; "for," speaking after the manner of men, "it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth." In surveying the millions who now peopled the globe, there was only one man who found favour in the eyes of the Lord. This was Noah, the son of Lamech. As has been mentioned, he was born about sixty-five years after the death of Adam, was a preacher of righteousness, and was directed to prepare an ark for the salvation of himself and family, which consisted of no more than eight souls. Accordingly, Noah set to work to cut down and prepare gopher wood, or wood of a light and resinous quality, of different kinds. This is the first specimen of a vessel for the water, of which we have any account. The dimensions of the building and its interior arrangements were divinely directed. It had a door on the side, and a window or sky-light, which was

probably on the top. How much derision and mocking the pious patriarch underwent, while engaged in erecting this edifice, may be left to conjecture. The probable size was about five hundred feet in length, eighty feet in breadth, and about fifty feet in height, which was abundantly large enough for all the purposes for which it was intended.

The ark being completed, and the season of grace and forbearance, already mentioned, having come to an end; and Noah and his three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth, and their wives, having received a command to enter into the ark, took "of clean beasts by sevens, the male and the female," that is, probably, seven of each sex, "and of beasts that were not clean, two, the male and the female." If we have rightly interpreted the former passage, four of each species of unclean animals were taken in. Within seven days after Noah had entered the ark, the flood commenced. This was in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the seventeenth day of the second month of the year. If the original year commenced about the autumnal equinox, as is commonly supposed, then the deluge began, according to the dates here given, about the first week in our November. It is not the business of the historian to account for events, but to state them accurately. This event was probably produced by a miraculous interposition; but if otherwise, no reason of man can ever do more than form conjectures, which, however plausible, can give no satisfaction to the mind in pursuit of truth. "The fountains of the great deep" are said to have "been broken up; and the windows, or cataracts of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." After this continual rain of forty days, the water was so increased that the ark began to float; and soon the increase of the water was so exceedingly great, "that all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered;" consequently, all the animals that breathed upon the earth and air, except such as could live in the water, died. And there was a general and total destruction, not only of life, but of all the buildings which man had erected. Their cities, however populous, were swept away. The wealth of the world was buried beneath the deep. The cattle of a thousand hills were seen no more. "Noah alone remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark." "And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days." If we reckon these days from the commencement of the rain, their end would be about the 20th of February: but if, which is the most probable, they begin with the time when the waters completely covered the earth, and began to raise up the ark, they will bring us to the close of April. The latter reckoning is most probable, because they mark the period in which the waters

“prevailed upon the earth,” by which I understand, the entire covering or overwhelming of the earth.

“The fountains of the deep, and the windows of heaven were now stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained, and the waters returned from off the earth, continually; and after the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.” From this account it appears, that for ten weeks after the ark rested on Mount Ararat, nothing but water was visible; but at the end of this time, the lonely inhabitants of the ark began to spy land. If the first sight of land excites an indescribable emotion of pleasure in the common sailor, after a long and perilous voyage, what shall we say of the feelings of Noah and his family, when, after being tossed upon the bosom of the mighty deep for many months, they at length saw the summits of some lofty mountain left bare by the retiring waters? Some have conjectured that the ark remained near the place where it was built all the time, and was merely raised up by the rising flood; and when this retired, rested on the mountain where it was built; but this is very improbable. During such a convulsion of nature, the air as well as the water must have been agitated by one perpetual storm, and the ark, consequently, must have been exceedingly tossed upon the water; and there is no intimation in the sacred history, that Mount Ararat was situated any where near the place of the erection of this vessel. The mountains of Ararat are in Armenia, and tradition still points out one of the highest peaks as the spot where the ark rested.

Forty days after the tops of the mountains first began to be visible, Noah ventured to open the window of the ark, and sent forth a raven to ascertain whether the waters had withdrawn from the earth. This bird found means to subsist by resting on the summits of the mountains, or on articles floating on the water, so that it did not return again to Noah, but “went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.”

Noah also sent out a dove for the same purpose; but the dove, finding no rest for her foot, returned unto him, into the ark; and he put forth his hand, and received her into the ark. After seven days he again sent forth the dove, which returned in the evening, bearing in her mouth an olive leaf, which she had plucked from this evergreen. By this, Noah ascertained that the waters were abated from off the earth. And after the interval of another week, he sent out the dove

for the third time, which, finding the earth free from water, returned no more to the ark.

Noah now received express directions to disembark, and bring out with him all the animals which had been preserved in the immense fabric.

This remarkable event occurred in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, and on the first day of the first month. And as he entered the ark in the six hundredth year of his life, it follows that he remained shut up in the ark exactly one year.

SECTION VII.

NOAH AND HIS FAMILY LEAVE THE ARK.

THE first act of Noah, after leaving the ark, was worthy of the patriarch. "He builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar." Hence we may learn, that altars and burnt-offerings were before in common use, by Divine appointment; for we have no account of their institution on this occasion; but the history speaks of them as things well known and understood.

We have also in the narrative of this transaction information that worship of the right kind is exceedingly pleasing to God, and powerfully efficacious to obtain rich blessings for man. The Divine acceptance of Noah's offering is figuratively but beautifully expressed in the following words: "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I any more smite every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and gave them two precepts, which are incorporated in the history, though the tradition of the Jews is, that he now repeated the six which he had originally given to Adam, to which he added a seventh. The two on record are—1. To be fruitful and multiply. 2. To eat no flesh "with the life thereof;" that is, the blood. Some suppose that this is simply a prohibition of eating blood, but others think that it respects the eating of the flesh of living animals;—a cruel custom greatly practised in Abyssinia.

A solemn admonition is also given respecting taking away the life of man; and a terrible threatening of the murderer: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

God also made a covenant with Noah and all living things; that is, he entered into a solemn engagement, which was confirmed by establishing the beautiful bow in the clouds, after rain. The thing promised was suspended on no condition whatever. It was that the human race should not again be cut off, with all living creatures, by the waters of a flood. It seems probable, that it had never rained upon the antediluvian world before the windows of heaven were miraculously opened at the commencement of the deluge; or, that partial showers, which left one part of the heavens clear, did not occur then; for I cannot persuade myself that when it is said, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant," &c., it had before existed, and was already set in the clouds. If it be inquired how the earth was watered when there was no rain, the answer is, "There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." I am aware, however, that many judicious commentators are of opinion, that the bow in the clouds was no new thing, but was now applied to a new purpose; that is, God selected the rain-bow as an appropriate sign of that covenant in which he promised that the world should never again be deluged with water.

After Noah came from the ark, he followed agriculture, the original and most necessary occupation of man. For this work he had brought with him a vast stock of knowledge and experience; and we may be sure, that in his solicitude to preserve animal life, he would not neglect to bring with him into the ark a large supply of vegetables; especially of the species most useful to man. Among other things, he had preserved the roots or shoots of the vine, the fruit of which is among the richest of the productions of the earth, and from which wine is expressed.

When we consider that Noah was a prophet, a righteous man, and perfect in his generation; and that he had been, for more than a century, a preacher to the old world, and a reprover of the vices of the people, we are perplexed and astonished to find him drinking wine to such excess as to become an object of derision to the irreligious part of his family, and a source of grief and shame to the pious. The crime is so unexpected and unaccountable, that it may even lead us to suspect either that wine was not in use before the flood, or that the juice of the grape did not then possess an intoxicating quality. But there is no need of these suppositions. The fall of Noah is sufficiently accounted for, when it is recollected that he was but a man. If Adam, who was made in the image of God, could fall, there is no difficulty in believing that Noah, in whom that image was but imperfectly renewed, might also be overcome by temptation, when left to himself.

Another thing which may be inferred from the history is, that slavery, or the subjection of one to the will of another, probably existed and was common before the flood; because it is threatened here as an evil well understood; but if the practice had never existed, the meaning of the prediction would scarcely have been understood.

Why the curse fell so heavily on Canaan has led to many critical conjectures. It has been observed that parents are never more severely punished than in the disasters of their favourite children. To others, it has seemed probable that Canaan participated in his father's crime; or, that he was the principal actor in the irreverent scene.

Noah reached the great age of nine hundred and fifty years, which did not fall short of the average age of the patriarchs who lived before the flood. Indeed, six hundred years of his life were spent before the flood. The cause of the great age of men before the flood has never been satisfactorily ascertained. If my conjecture is right, that some of the laws and conditions of the atmosphere, and of the surface of the earth, underwent an alteration, it will serve for a general reason: but the special reason why man's life was then so much longer than at present can never be discovered.

The moral reasons for shortening human life are obvious enough. Such length of years furnished both temptation and opportunity to enormous iniquity. It was needful to cut off the perpetrators of violence, that wickedness might cease. There may be some reason to doubt whether they were solar or lunar years; but the probability is, that they were years of twelve months each, and each month of thirty days.



SECTION VIII.

THE EARTH PEOPLED AGAIN FROM THE THREE SONS OF NOAH.

FROM the three sons of Noah the whole earth was peopled. The children of Japheth, the elder, spread themselves through Asia Minor, along the eastern borders of the Mediterranean sea, and the islands thereof, and towards the Black, and the Caspian sea; and thus became the founders of all the nations of Greece, and of the nations in Europe and Asia north of the 40th degree of latitude. The most powerful and polished nations now on earth are the descendants of Japheth. The Russians, Prussians, Poles, Finns, Danes, Swedes, Germans, Swiss, Belgians, Dutch, Greeks, Italians, French, Scotch, English, Irish, arc, for the most part, the posterity of Noah's oldest son.

The descendants of Shem were very numerous, and migrated eastward; and to this day have retained their original habitations. Among them we must reckon the Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Persians, Hindoos, Burmese, Chinese, and Japanese, and most of the islanders in the Southern and Western Ocean.

The descendants of Ham seemed to have settled at first in various places, as in Philistia, or Canaan; in Mesopotamia, and southern Arabia. But Egypt seems to have attracted most of the children of Ham. It is therefore called "the land of Ham." And one of his sons had the honour of giving name to the country; for it was called in the Hebrew, MIZRAIM, which it appears was the name of one of the sons of Ham. The other Africans were probably descended from his other sons.

During this period of history, no mention is made of any very distinguished person except Nimrod. "He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter." The commencement of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Arad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. In the English version, it is said, "Out of that land went forth Ashur, and builded Nineveh, Rehoboth, and Calah." But most interpreters, by Ashur, understand a country, and they render the passage—"He (that is, Nimrod,) went into Ashur, or Assyria, and built Nineveh." And according to the tradition and testimony of all antiquity, Nimrod had Nineveh as the seat of his empire. There is no one fact in which ancient historians are more agreed; we conclude, therefore, that this is the true rendering of the passage. By his being a mighty hunter, it is commonly understood that he was a great warrior and tyrant. By a careful attention to the names in the tenth of Genesis, some learned men have proceeded far in tracing the nations of the earth to their respective stocks. This is a curious subject; and certainly there is not upon earth a document comparable to that contained in the tenth chapter of Genesis, both as it respects its antiquity and authority. The learned Bochart has found matter enough here to fill a large folio volume, and yet the mine is far from being exhausted.

SECTION IX.

BABEL—THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES.

THE only remarkable event in the history of the human race for many hundreds of years after the flood, was the confounding the language of the people, and thus putting an end to an impious attempt to build a tower whose top should reach to

heaven. The professed end of this tower was "to make to themselves a name, lest they should be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth." Some have supposed that the people were stupid enough to think that they could build a tower so high, that running up to its top, they would be able to escape a second deluge, if it should come. Others have, with more probability, supposed that the people being of one language, and all united in one body, they wished to erect a building so high that it might be the wonder of all posterity. A third opinion, entitled to fully as much regard as either of the former, was, that it was intended to be a temple for the worship of the heavens; and this accords with the undoubted historic fact, that, in aftertimes, there was at Babylon the temple of Belus, an immense structure, said to have been a mile in perpendicular height. From the description of this temple by Herodotus and others, it could be no other than the tower of Babel. A fourth opinion is, that this high tower was erected as a sort of landmark, which was raised so high as to be visible through the extensive plain of Shinar, that the people might not be scattered abroad, nor separated too far from each other.

Whatever might have been the real design of this structure, it was viewed as a rebellious act by the King of Heaven; therefore a stop was put to the work by a miracle. The account of Moses is the following. "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language, [lip;] and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, [lip,] that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, [Confusion,] because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth."

This event must have occurred long after the flood, because the population of the earth was now great. No date, or era, is connected with this history; but it has been supposed that its time could be fixed by the birth of Peleg, the sixth in descent from Noah, concerning whom it is said, "For in his days was the earth divided." Now, if it was certain that the division here referred to was the scattering of the people from Babel, the date of the event can be exactly ascertained; but this word [peleg] is never used in the history of the confusion of tongues, and in the whole Bible it always means a *physical rupture* or division. It has to some appeared probable, therefore, that the event here referred to was the rupture of the solid part of the globe, by which a vast chasm was made between lands

before united. The effects of the flood upon the shell of the earth were not all terminated in a few years, but large continents, which had by that convulsion been undermined and shaken, might about this time have fallen in, by which the different branches of the human family would be separated. For example, suppose that America was at first united to Africa, but was now divided by the water covering the land which once spread across the Atlantic Ocean. That such an event has once happened is rendered probable by many appearances. And this would remove all difficulty as to the manner in which human beings and animals found their way to the western continent, concerning which there has been so much conjecture.

But however plausible this interpretation may appear, it ought not to be received without the most urgent necessity, for it utterly confounds the chronology of the Bible, by taking away one of the essential links from the chain, and renders it impossible to ascertain the age of the world. And of such a convulsion of nature, by which continents once joined were severed, history is totally silent. It seems best, therefore, to adhere to the common understanding of this passage.

There has also been much diversity of opinion respecting the precise nature of the effect wrought in the confusion of tongues, at Babel. Many eminent critics are of opinion, that the confusion had no relation to words, but only to counsels. That, for a while, the people proceeded harmoniously in their work, but at length, providentially a dissension arose either as to the object of the work, or the proper mode of carrying it on. And so the simple interpretation is, they quarrelled and separated from one another. And in confirmation of this opinion they remark, that the word translated *language*, in this chapter, is not the one usually employed, but literally signifies *lip*, the meaning of which, in the Hebrew language, is more properly, *counsel*, or *confession*; often, *worship*. This opinion may be said to be the most prevalent among critics in the Hebrew tongue. And they plausibly allege, that for many hundreds of years after this event, we never read of any diversity of language; but, wherever the patriarchs travelled, they seemed to have experienced no difficulty on this score. We do, indeed, read of an interpreter between Joseph and his brethren; but they allege that he was merely a mediator, who conveyed the words of princes and other exalted personages to their inferiors; an office which is known to have had an existence in ancient times. The affinity of many ancient languages to the Hebrew is also considered as hostile to the common interpretation.

Others are of opinion, that while the words remained, by a miraculous influence upon the minds of the builders, they fell

into a great diversity in their mode of pronunciation; and this, they observe, would answer the end designed, just as effectually as a real diversity of tongues.

A third and more plausible opinion is, that the original language of man was at this time divided into a number of dialects; that one company used one of these, and a second, another; so that they were unable to hold intercourse in carrying on the work any longer, were obliged to abandon it, and were scattered abroad.

But the common opinion, and that which is favoured by our translators, and also by the Greek translators of the Bible is, that God produced miraculously, on this occasion, a number of languages radically different; from which have proceeded the various tongues spoken by the different nations of the earth. And this opinion is favoured by the fact, that several of the languages of men seem not to have the smallest resemblance to each other; but to be so different, that it is not conceivable that they all proceeded from one root. And it must be confessed, if the object was to scatter men over the face of the earth, by interrupting their intercourse with one another, this would be the most effectual of all. It is also in accordance with the tradition of the Jews, who have an opinion among them, that the number of languages produced on this occasion was just seventy-two; and that this precise number still remains unaltered. It would seem, therefore, that the common opinion is not only safest, but best supported by probable arguments.

It would seem, at first view, that all the inhabitants of the earth were engaged in the enterprise at Babel. Noah was probably still alive, and certainly Shem; but it does not seem probable that these patriarchs had any hand in the work. It is more likely, that the daring scheme was confined to the inhabitants of the neighbouring region. Noah and Shem, probably, never removed from the country where the ark rested. It is, however, useless to inquire what branch of the family of Noah was concerned in this transaction, as there is no history to cast any light on the subject.



SECTION X.

POSTERITY OF SHEM.

MOSES gives us no more than a table of the posterity of Shem, in that particular line from which the Hebrew nation sprang, and from which the Messiah was to descend. According to this table, Arphaxad, the son of Shem, was born two years after the

flood. The period of Shem's life after the birth of this son, was no less than five hundred years; so that, if he was a hundred years old when the flood began, continued one whole year in the ark, and lived five hundred and two years after the flood, he must have been at the time of his death just six hundred and three years old; and hence, it may be ascertained, that he lived after his father one hundred and fifty-two years; and was living during the greater part of the life of Abraham. It seems, that the length of human life was not shortened at once, but by degrees; for Arphaxad, though his son Salah was born in the thirty-fifth year of his age, arrived at the age of four hundred and thirty-eight years. Salah, though Eber was born in the thirtieth year of his age, lived to the age of four hundred and thirty-three years. Eber did not attain a less age, for his son Peleg being born in the thirty-fourth year of his age, he lived afterwards four hundred and thirty years, which makes his age four hundred and sixty-four. Peleg, the next in succession, did not reach the age of his progenitors; for after the birth of Reu, which occurred in the thirtieth year of his age, he lived no more than two hundred and nine years, so that the length of his life was only two hundred and thirty-nine years. And his son, just mentioned, reached precisely to the same age as his father. For, at the age of two-and-thirty his son Serug was born, and lived afterwards two hundred and seven years, which makes his whole age two hundred and thirty-nine years. Serug did not fall much short of the age of his immediate ancestors; for at the age of thirty his son Nahor was born, after which he lived two hundred years, so that his age, when he died, was two hundred and thirty. Nahor, in his nine-and-thirtieth year was the father of Terah, and lived afterwards a hundred and nineteen years, making his whole age no more than one hundred and forty-eight years.

Terah, at the age of seventy years, is said to have been the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; not in the same year; but the oldest of them was born this year. As Abram is first named, it might seem that he was the oldest of the three, but from facts afterwards related, it appears highly probable that he was the youngest; and that he was first named, not on account of age, but of dignity; and because the whole subsequent history is connected with his family.

This branch of the family of Shem had settled on the eastern side of the Euphrates; and from the testimony of Joshua we learn, that the immediate progenitors of Abraham were all idolaters. In giving his last solemn charge to the tribes of Israel, he called upon them, "Choose ye this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood." And it is remarkable that

this is the earliest instance of idolatry which we find recorded in the history by Moses.

The oldest son of Terah seems to have been Haran, who died early, in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldees; but left a son by the name of Lot, who was taken by his grandfather, and brought up with his own family. Sarai, the wife of Abram, was probably the sister of Lot; though she is here called the daughter-in-law of Terah.

Terah, with Abram, Sarai, and Lot, removed from Ur of the Chaldees, and dwelt at Haran. This movement seems to have been in consequence of some direction from God to Abram; for we find that when they left home they meant to go to Canaan; but for some reason or other, they stopped on the borders of their native country, and dwelt here as long as Terah lived. His whole age was, two hundred and five years.

SECTION XI.

HISTORY OF ABRAHAM.

Now commences the history of Abram, who, at the call of God, left Haran, after he had remained with his father for some time; and accompanied by Lot his nephew, and Sarai his wife, went to the land of Canaan, which God had told him was to be his future residence and possession. At the time of this removal Abram was seventy-five years of age. When he arrived at Canaan, he removed from place to place, according to the unsettled kind of life which he and his sons pursued. The Canaanites were, however, still in the land; and though God again promised this land to Abram and his posterity, the full possession was reserved for a future day. Several times during his stay in Canaan, he was forced to leave the country on account of famine.

Lot, the nephew of Abram, increased rapidly in wealth, as well as his uncle, and as they lived together, their herdsmen, with their respective flocks, were mingled together, which gave rise to frequent quarrels between them. Whereupon, Abram saw that to preserve peace, it was necessary for them to separate from each other. Therefore, with a noble generosity, although he was the oldest man, and Lot owed all his wealth to his kindness, yet he offered his nephew his choice of the country. Lot accordingly selected the plains of Jordan, near its entrance into the sea; that is, the country in which stood the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. This was not only a fertile country, but well watered. Lot con-

tinued to pitch his tent from place to place, until he was induced, notwithstanding the wickedness of the place, to take up his residence in Sodom, and his family became associated in marriage with the inhabitants of that corrupt city. Abram continued his residence in the more elevated country of Canaan, where he had before pitched his tent. His usual residence, however, was in the plain of Mamre, near the ancient city of Hebron.

In these early ages, almost all people were governed by kings, but their jurisdiction seldom reached farther than a single city, with its suburbs and neighbouring villages: yet sometimes ambitious men, as Nimrod, extended their dominions by war to a considerable distance. Battles, of course, were frequent, and every man was required to be a soldier, when his king demanded his services.

While Lot resided in Sodom, a war occurred, in which the five kings who ruled over the cities of the plain, were joined, against four kings whose dominions lay near the mouth of the Euphrates. The principal of these was Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, to whom these cities of the plain had been subject for twelve years; but in the thirteenth, they rebelled; whereupon, the king of Elam, calling to his assistance several other kings, marched against these rebellious kings. The two armies met and fought in the vale of Siddim, in which battle the king of Elam was victorious. Marching to Sodom, they took the spoil, and, among the rest, took Lot and his family prisoners, and carried away all his goods. Upon hearing this, Abram, calling to his aid his servants, and some of his neighbours, pursued the enemy, and overtook and defeated them near Damascus, and rescued Lot, and recovered all the property which had been taken away, which he restored to the owners, refusing to take any part for himself.

While God repeated to Abram the promise that he would give to him and his posterity the whole extent of the land of Palestine, from the river of Egypt—a small stream at the entrance into the wilderness—to the great river, the river Euphrates, and confirmed the same by a solemn covenant or oath; he distinctly foretold to him, that his descendants should be strangers in a strange land, where they should be reduced to slavery, and be afflicted four hundred years. As to the beginning of this period, there is still much difference of opinion; but that it should be calculated from the time of Abraham seems to be the most probable, and certainly was the opinion of the ancients, as in the Greek version of the book of Genesis, and in the Samaritan copy, there is an addition to the text, in which this idea is distinctly expressed. At the same time, Jehovah predicted, that the nation by whom they should be

oppressed should be punished, and that the people should come out with "great substance." And to Abram it was promised, that he should be buried in a good old age: and that in the fourth generation, his posterity should gain possession of the promised land. The reason for the fulfilment of the promise being deferred is very remarkable: "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." This short sentence contains much weighty meaning, deserving the solemn attention of every nation. It teaches them, that though God's justice is slow in visiting, with deserved punishment, guilty nations, yet his judgments are sure; and that there is a certain fulness of iniquity, which, when it is reached by any people, will certainly be followed by punishment. Then the iniquities of many generations are visited upon the last and most guilty generation. Thus does God visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children after the lapse of many centuries. And this he does, without interfering with justice in regard to individuals.

The wicked nations who now dwelt in this land, and who are sometimes called Amorites, or Canaanites, were the following, namely, the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaims, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gergashites, and the Jebusites. Ten nations; three of which were destroyed or mixed with the others, before the Israelites under Joshua took possession of the land; for at that time, no more than seven nations are mentioned.

Notwithstanding the repeated promises to Abram of a numerous posterity, he had as yet no child. And the mother of his first child was not Sarai, but her maid Hagar, who, according to an ancient usage, was given to him by Sarai, as a secondary wife. The examples recorded in Scripture, of men who had more than one wife, are not intended as examples for our imitation, but may be used for our warning. They all serve to teach us, that every departure from the original institution of marriage is attended with vexation, and evils innumerable. And as to the practice of the pious patriarchs, *that* apology may be made for them, which the pious in every age need, namely, that through the imperfection of human knowledge and virtue, particular errors and vices obtained the sanction of public opinion, and their evil was not perceived. Thus it was with the Reformers, respecting persecution; and thus it now is, probably, in regard to offensive war, and the military spirit, which is directly hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the practice of the primitive Christians.

The expedient of Sarai, with which Abram complied, was successful. When Hagar the Egyptian maid, knew that she was to have a son instead of Sarai, she could not conceal her

contempt for her mistress, who made a heavy complaint against her to her husband. Abram would not interfere, but left it to Sarai to proceed against her according to her will; upon which she began to treat Hagar with severity, until she was induced to flee from the face of her mistress. But the angel of the Lord directed her to return and submit herself to her mistress, promising that she should have a son, and that his name should be called Ishmael, because the Lord had heard her affliction. The angel, moreover, predicted what sort of man he should be, and what should be the character of the people who should descend from him. "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." Accordingly, Hagar returned, and when her son was born, she called his name Ishmael. It is truly remarkable, how exactly the character of the Bedouin Arabs, to this very day, answers to the description of Ishmael, given by the angel; and their character and mode of life, and place of residence, have never been changed, from the time of Ishmael unto this day.

At the birth of Ishmael, Abram was eighty-six years old. And he seems to have thought that God's promise of a numerous offspring would be fulfilled in this son, for whom he felt a strong affection.

SECTION XII.

COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION — GOD VISITS ABRAM, AND PROMISES HIM A SON BY SARAH—DESTRUCTION OF SODOM—ESCAPE OF LOT.

BUT when Abram had reached his ninety-ninth year, God appeared to him in a more remarkable manner than before, under the name of GOD ALMIGHTY, or GOD THE MUNIFICENT, commanding him "to walk before him and be perfect." On this occasion, God entered anew into covenant with Abram, and as a sign of the certainty of his promise, changed his name to Abraham, the meaning of which is, "the father of many nations."

At this time, also, he instituted the rite of circumcision, as a sign and seal of the covenant, and to be a distinctive mark of all who were received into covenant with God. There is no good reason for supposing that this rite was borrowed from the Egyptians or Ethiopians, as some learned men have thought, but every reason for believing that it was original with Abraham; and that other nations derived it from the Hebrews and Ishmaelites. Lest this ceremony should be neglected, the command enjoining it was very strict, and the punishment for omis-

sion nothing less than expulsion from the congregation of the Lord. The blessings promised at this time were the same as before, with some enlargement. "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

The name of Sarai was also changed to Sarah, and a peculiar blessing was pronounced upon her also:—"And I will bless her, and give thee a son of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her."

This promise of a son by Sarah almost overwhelmed Abraham; he fell on his face and laughed for joy, and said, "Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" But the good old patriarch seems to have been apprehensive, that Ishmael, on whom his affections were strongly fixed, should be cast off; therefore he exclaimed, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Upon which, God, in the kindest and most condescending manner, assured him, that his covenant would be established with the son whom Sarah should have, and whose name should be called Isaac, (Laughter.) "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time, in the next year."

The descendants of Ishmael, now upon earth, who are generally Mohammedans, have retained the rite of circumcision unto this day, and administer it about the same age as that of Ishmael, when he was circumcised, which was thirteen years.

The next appearance of God to Abraham was very remarkable, as he exhibited himself in visible form, in the shape and appearance of a man; accompanied by two angels, who, in like manner, had the appearance of men.

Abraham was sitting in his tent-door at Mamre, in the middle of the day, when they presented themselves; upon which he bowed himself toward the ground, and addressed one of them by the name, *JEHOVAH*; whence it may be inferred, that this person, though appearing in the form of a man, was in some manner known by Abraham to be truly God. It is also remarkable, that they partook of the hospitality of the patriarch. Whether their eating of the prepared calf was real or only in appearance, it is of no importance to inquire.

The object of this visit was, to confirm the promises already made to Abraham; and, especially, *that* one which related to the speedy birth of a son to Sarah. But the purpose of God

to destroy Sodom and the other cities of the plain, for their enormous wickedness, was now communicated to Abraham. The kindness and confidence with which he was treated by Jehovah, on this occasion, are extraordinary. His words were, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation; and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Abraham interceded earnestly for Sodom, and did not cease until he obtained a promise, that if only ten righteous persons should be found in that city, it should not be destroyed: but this number, it appears by the event, were not found, and so a fiery ruin overwhelmed the cities of the plain. But God was not unmindful of his servant Lot; for the two angels who had accompanied him to Abraham's tent, were now sent to warn and secure him and his family; and, on this occasion, we have an example of the extreme wickedness of the whole population of that abandoned city. Lot and two of his daughters escaped, while his sons and sons-in-law perished in the dreadful overthrow of the place; and his wife was suddenly transformed into a pillar of salt, for looking back to the town, in direct violation of the injunction of the angels.

The evil consequences of living among a corrupt and licentious people are manifest, in regard to Lot and his family. He himself seems to have continued faithful, for an apostle tells us, that "from day to day he vexed his righteous soul" on account of the wickedness of the people; but the whole of his family appear to have been infected with the prevailing corruption of manners. Of this his daughters, who escaped, gave a humiliating example, when they caused their father to be intoxicated, and became the mothers of two children to him. From this sinful connexion sprang the nations of the Moabites and Ammonites, who had their residence on the east of the Dead Sea; and were perpetual sources of trouble and injury to the Israelites.

The account of Abraham's sojourning in Gerar, on account of famine, is so much the same as what is related of Isaac, that some have supposed that some confusion has occurred in this part of the sacred book; so that what properly belongs to Isaac, is here referred, by the mistake of copies, to Abraham; especially, as Sarah being now above ninety years of age, cannot be supposed to have been as handsome as is here supposed. But as the kind of life pursued by these patriarchs was similar, there is no improbability in supposing that the disaster of

famine might happen during the residence of each of them, and that they might retreat to the same region for relief, which was fertile and near at hand. And as to the names of the kings of Gerar being the same in both cases, it may be observed, that Abimelech seems to have been the common name of their kings, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian kings. The difficulty about Sarah's age is easily removed; for she seems, by miracle, to have recovered her youth. That in both cases the women should have been seized, and taken to the harem of the king, shows us the licentious and arbitrary customs of that country and age.

SECTION XIII.

BIRTH OF ISAAC—COMMAND TO ABRAHAM TO SACRIFICE HIS SON.

THE time had now arrived when Sarah, according to the divine prediction, was to become the mother of a son. His name, as had been directed, was called Isaac; and on the eighth day he was circumcised, according to the commandment. Of course there was great joy and exultation with his parents. On the day on which Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast. This event among the ancient Jews is said to have occurred, not before the third year, and frequently was deferred until the fifth.

It seems to have been on this joyous occasion, that Sarah saw Ishmael engaged in mocking; probably Isaac was the object of his mockery, although this is not said. Wherefore Sarah begged her husband to cast out both Hagar and her son, as it was not intended that the son of the bondwoman, that is, their slave, should be heir with, or thought equal to, her son Isaac. As Abraham entertained a tender affection for Ishmael, he was very unwilling to comply with Sarah's demand; but the Lord told him that he ought to do as his wife wished; and to comfort him respecting Ishmael, the promise that he should be the father of a nation of people, was repeated. Abraham therefore sent Hagar and Ishmael from his dwelling, furnished with bread and water for their journey. They travelled on into the wilderness, and continued their journey until their provisions were spent; on which, Hagar, expecting the lad to die with thirst, laid him down under a bush, and went off to some distance, that she might not see her child die; and here, feeling her desolate and almost hopeless condition, "she lifted up her voice and wept." But God, who heareth the cry of his distressed creatures, had compassion on her, and spoke to her

from heaven, and promised not only that the child should live, but that he should become a great nation. At this juncture, the eyes of Hagar were directed to a well of water, and she filled her bottle, and gave drink to the lad.

Ishmael, from this time, seems to have dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, where he became eminent for the use of the bow. His mother appears to have remained with him; for we read, "that she took him a wife of the land of Egypt."

The permanent property of most value to those who led the wandering life pursued by Abraham and his sons, was the possession of wells of water for the refreshment of their numerous flocks. We find, therefore, that wells were the subject of solemn treaties or covenants between the heads of tribes in that country; their most serious disputes were on account of these; and the most bitter enmity was manifested by their filling up the wells of their enemies.

When Isaac was grown up to the size of a man, Ishmael being gone, the affections of the patriarch were fixed on his only and well beloved son. When all causes of trouble seemed to be removed, Abraham received the most extraordinary and heart-rending command from God which was ever given to any parent. "Take now," said God, "thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Never was a more painful duty required, and yet Abraham did not complain or hesitate. He went straight forward in the way of obedience, until his hand was raised to strike the fatal stroke, aimed at the life of his child, who lay meekly bound before him. At this critical and awful moment, his hand was arrested by the call of an angel from heaven. This, perhaps, was the most extraordinary act of faith and obedience ever exhibited by a mere man; but it was no more than a shadow of God's giving up his only begotten and well beloved Son, actually to die a painful and disgraceful death for our sins.

SECTION XIV.

DEATH OF SARAH—PURCHASE OF A BURYING PLACE.

AT the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died. On this mournful occasion, the patriarch felt that he needed for his family some better title to the land he possessed than he had yet obtained. In his mode of life he did not need to buy the land on which he

pitched his tent from time to time, and over which his flocks wandered. But when he saw the wife of his youth, and the constant companion of his pilgrimage, lying dead in the tent, the want of a place of burial, such as could not be disturbed, pressed itself upon him so strongly, that he entered into a negotiation with the sons of Heth for a piece of ground for that purpose. They, indeed, generously offered him the privilege of burying his dead in the best of their sepulchres: but he would not agree to this proposal, and asked them to sell the cave of Machpelah, with the field in which it was situated. Ephron, who seems to have been a chief among the sons of Heth, generously offered to give Abraham the field which he desired; but the patriarch did not wish to bring himself under any special obligation to the people of the land, and therefore insisted on paying a fair price for the property. Accordingly, the sale took place by mutual agreement, and he weighed to Ephron four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And thus "the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre; the field and the cave which was therein; the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession, in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of the city."

This being the most ancient example of the transfer of real estate, which is on record, it is curious to remark the particularity with which the property is described, and the several things contained in the purchase; not only the field, but the cave, and also the trees in the field, and on the border. We may observe, also, the publicity of the transaction. It was a bargain made, and an actual conveyance of land, in the presence of all the inhabitants of the city. Thus every thing was made sure. The price was carefully weighed, and consisted of such money as was current with the merchant; that is, it probably had some stamp or mark impressed on the pieces, indicating that it was not spurious but genuine silver. From the whole transaction, it seems evident, that written deeds, or documents signed and sealed by the parties, were not then in use. If writing had been known in Abraham's time, we should most certainly have had some mention of it here, or when he sent Eliezer to his kindred in Mesopotamia; but in the Bible there is not a vestige of any thing like writing before Moses, unless you choose to place Job at an earlier period. But what sort of writing was used in the time of Job, we know not. It might have been nothing else than writing by pictures, or what are called hieroglyphics.

Abraham, having secured the cave of Machpelah, buried

Sarah his wife there; and this became the place of burial for the descendants of Abraham for many generations.

SECTION XV.

ABRAHAM SENDS TO HIS KINDRED FOR A WIFE FOR ISAAC—REBEKAH IS SENT—
DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM, being now advanced in years, was desirous of seeing Isaac, his son and heir, well married and settled, before he died. And as he was on principle opposed to a connexion with the inhabitants of the country, he thought it best to send Eliezer, a trusty servant, and steward of his household, to select a wife for Isaac from among his own kindred. Eliezer, accordingly, set out on his journey, with a caravan of ten camels, not only to give a proof to the people to whom he was sent, of Abraham's wealth—for God had greatly blessed him—but to carry presents for the friends of the person that might agree to accompany him home. This aged and faithful servant had not resided so long in Abraham's family without religious benefit. He appears to have possessed the very spirit of his master, as regarded faith and devotion. For, having arrived in the country of his destination, instead of depending on his own wisdom, he commits the whole matter, by prayer, to the providence of God. The substance of the prayer which he offered up at the well of water to which he had come, was, that it might be so ordered that the woman who should first come down to the well to draw water, according to the custom of the East, and who, upon being requested, should give drink to himself and his camels, might be the one that God had appointed for the wife of Isaac. And before he had finished his prayer, behold, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, who was the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. Rebekah was beautiful, and doubtless, Eliezer, as soon as he saw her, believed that his prayer was answered; but his confidence must have been greatly increased when, in compliance with his request, she cheerfully let down her pitcher, and said, "Drink, my lord;" and when, before she was requested, of her own accord, she offered to draw water for the camels. Indeed, the occurrences were so sudden and remarkable, that the man stood astonished, waiting to observe "whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." This satisfaction, however, must have been full, when, upon inquiry, he found that the beautiful and obliging girl was the daughter of Bethuel, and consequently the grand-niece of Abraham, his master.

Eliezer having given some costly jewels to Rebekah, she, after inviting him to her father's house, ran home to tell what had passed, to her friends. Laban, the brother of Rebekah, instantly went out to the well, where Eliezer remained standing, and again most pressingly invited him to the house, saying, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels." The man having complied with this invitation, and having ungirded his camels, and received some refreshment, began to mention fully his business; and telling whose servant he was, and giving an account of the abundant riches with which God had blessed Abraham, he proceeded to explain at once the errand on which he had come; and particularly told the remarkable occurrences at the well, since his arrival. "And now," said he, "if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or the left." Then both Laban and Bethuel said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord, we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Rebekah is before thee, take her, go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." Upon hearing this favourable decision, Eliezer felt constrained, without delay, and in the presence of them all, to prostrate himself on the earth, in a solemn act of worship and praise, to Almighty God, who had so wonderfully prospered his journey. No doubt Rebekah consented to the contract thus made by her father and brother; but in those days the explicit consent of young females was not considered essential; as is the case in the East, at this day.

Things being thus quickly and happily arranged, Eliezer was anxious to return home immediately; but the friends of Rebekah begged for a little delay; but when they found that he was determined to go, and saw that Rebekah was willing to accompany him, they ceased to object. Accordingly, Eliezer had the pleasure of conveying home to his master, a lovely and virtuous bride for his beloved son. She appears to have lived with him in uninterrupted peace; for Isaac in this differed from all the other patriarchs of those times, that he never married more than one wife.

Abraham, after the death of Sarah, took another wife, Keturah. His sons, by this woman, six in number, were not permitted to divide the inheritance with Isaac; to whom Abraham gave all that he had; but these young men, as they grew up, received presents from their father, and were sent away into the east country.

Abraham lived to the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, and then was gathered to his fathers; and was buried by his sons Ishmael and Isaac in the cave of Machpelah, which

is before Mamre, which he purchased from Ephron the Hittite, and where he buried Sarah. This is the only meeting of the two brothers, Isaac and Ishmael, of which we have any account, after the former was sent away with his mother. We learn, however, that Ishmael's family greatly increased, for he was the father of twelve sons, who were all princes, each being the head of a distinct tribe or nation. Their habitation was in Arabia, where their descendants are found leading the same kind of life unto this day. Ishmael himself lived to be a hundred and thirty-seven years of age, and then "died in the presence of all his brethren."



SECTION XVI.

ESAU AND JACOB BORN—ESAU DEPRIVED OF THE BLESSING OF THE FIRST-BORN BY THE FRAUD OF REBEKAH AND JACOB.

AT the time when Isaac was married to Rebekah he was forty years of age. For a considerable time he had no children, but in answer to his prayers, twin sons, Esau and Jacob, were born. The former at his birth was in a remarkable manner covered all over with hair, but Jacob, his twin brother, was smooth. Esau being the oldest had a right to the privileges of the first-born, called the birth-right; but on a certain occasion, when the boys were grown, Esau having returned from hunting, to which he was greatly devoted, was so hungry and fatigued, that he believed himself to be dying; and meeting with his brother, who had ready-made a certain kind of red porridge or soup, Esau begged Jacob to give it to him. Jacob seeing his necessity, told him he would give it to him for his birth-right. Esau, believing himself to be at the point of death, said, "What profit shall this birth-right do to me?" Whereupon he sold it for a dish of pottage, and confirmed the bargain by an oath. This act of Esau is described in Scripture as very profane; as it was understood that spiritual as well as temporal blessings were connected with the birth-right, and especially a superiority over all his brethren: and some suppose it had some relation to the line from which the Messiah should descend. But however wicked the act of Esau in despising his birth-right, and selling it for a mess of pottage, the conduct of Jacob, who took advantage of his brother's necessity, cannot be justified. It was certainly an act in which there was a total absence of that brotherly love which we owe to every fellow-creature; and more especially to our own brothers, who are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

The only disaster which is recorded in the whole life of Isaac

was a famine, which compelled him to go to Gerar, of which Abimelech was king; whither Abraham his father had taken refuge from a calamity of a similar kind, in the time of a former king—probably the father of the present—of the same name. And a similar occurrence to that recorded in the life of Abraham now took place. Rebekah, as soon as her beauty was beheld, was carried off to be reserved for the use of the king; for Isaac had, to preserve his own life, which he supposed would be sacrificed for the sake of his wife, pretended that she was his sister; for which falsehood he had not the apology which Abraham employed; as Abraham's wife was in a certain sense his sister. But Abimelech, being a well-disposed man, no sooner discovered that Rebekah was the wife of Isaac, than he restored her to her husband, with a reproof for his conduct. As this land was very fertile, Isaac remained and cultivated the earth with great success, receiving an increase of a hundred-fold of what he sowed; that is, a hundred grains for one; and while he was resident here, his riches increased exceedingly, until he became an object of envy to the Philistines, among whom he dwelt. They contended with him about wells which his servants had dug, until, at length, Abimelech requested him to depart out of the country. He went next to the Valley of Gerar, and pitched there; but still the contention with the Philistines for the wells which he digged continued; until, at Rehoboth, they ceased to be troublesome. But he continued removing his tent from place to place, until he came to Beersheba, or the well of the oath. Here God appeared unto Isaac, and said, "I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake." And Isaac, possessing the same devout spirit as his father, "buildd an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord." While he resided at this place, Abimelech and some of his chief men came to him, and proposed entering into a solemn covenant with him. For on account of his increasing greatness they were afraid of him; and thought, as he had been badly treated whilst residing among them, and had been sent out of their land, that he might feel a disposition to be revenged. Abimelech, however, used it as an argument to enter into this covenant, that they had done nothing but good unto him, and had sent him away in peace. Isaac, who seems to have been a lover of peace, received his old friends kindly, made a feast for their entertainment, and willingly entered into covenant with them, agreeably to their proposal.

Men who are prosperous in the world often suffer affliction and mortification from their children. Esau was a favourite child with his father, who therefore would be the more grieved at the imprudent conduct of his first-born, who married one of

the daughters of Canaan, Judith the daughter of Beeri. And, not content with one, he took another wife from the same tribe, Bashemath the daughter of Elon. "Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah." Esau was forty years of age when he contracted these marriages.

It was customary for the patriarchs, when about to die, to call their children, and give them their blessing, which, in the case of the inspired patriarchs, was prophetic of their future destiny; and, of course, the richest blessing was pronounced upon the oldest son, or on him who had received the privilege of the birth-right, which was sometimes transferred from the first-born to a younger brother.

Isaac, being now advanced in years, and being so blind that he could not distinguish one person from another, thought that his days were probably drawing to a close. He, therefore, called Esau, and sent him out to hunt some venison, and to dress it in that peculiar manner, which he knew to be agreeable to him; that being gratified and excited to paternal affection, he might be prepared to give him the benediction of the first-born, before he died. Rebekah, overhearing these directions of her husband, immediately devised a plan for securing the chief blessing to her favourite son Jacob. To accomplish her end, she made him bring her a kid, which she dressed in a manner which she knew would be agreeable to Isaac's taste; and having persuaded Jacob to put on a suit of his brother's clothes, and to cover his hands and neck with the hairy skin of the kid, she sent him into his father, pretending to be Esau, who had not yet returned from the field. The stratagem succeeded. Jacob answered to his father's question, that he was Esau, and accounted for his quick return from the hunt by referring it all to the favour of Providence. Isaac suspected that the voice was that of Jacob, and therefore called him near to satisfy himself by feeling his hands; but finding that he was hairy, his suspicions, in a great measure, vanished. However, he called upon him again to say whether he was his "very son Esau," and upon receiving an answer that he was, he proceeded to bless him with his best and richest blessing; even that of the first-born: "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee; and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

This scene was scarcely finished, before Esau returned from hunting, and quickly presented himself before his father with savoury meat which he had taken. Isaac was greatly surprised, and said, "Who art thou?" "And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau." Upon hearing this, Isaac knew at once the

deception which had been practised upon him, and "he trembled very exceedingly"—but would not recall what he had done. Having blessed Jacob with his richest and best blessing, he now confirmed it, and said, "And he shall be blessed." Esau, upon this, was seized with grief. "He cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry; and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father." Isaac said, "Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing." And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, (the supplanter,) for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birth-right, and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" "Isaac answered, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given him for servants; and with corn and wine I have sustained him. And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father; and Esau lifted up his voice, and wept." Isaac then pronounced a benediction, giving him the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above. Telling him that by his sword he should live; but still repeating the prediction, that his brother should be superior to him; and that he should serve him; only, it was declared, that at those times when he should obtain power, he would break his brother's yoke from off his neck.

The conduct of Rebekah and Jacob on this occasion can never be reconciled with moral rectitude, as long as truth and sincerity shall be reckoned among the virtues; but it is not for us to fix the degree of guilt which attaches to their conduct. In this case it is probable, that Rebekah made the purpose of God the rule of her conduct, instead of his commandments; for it had been revealed to her, before the children were born, "that the elder should serve the younger;" and Jacob might have thought that as he had purchased his brother's birth-right, he had a claim to the chief blessing. In this transaction, as in many others recorded in Scripture, we have a clear illustration of the fact, that God accomplishes his own purposes by the free, and even by the sinful actions of his creatures, without being the cause of their sinfulness. But bad conduct and deceitful dealing towards brethren or others is pretty sure, in the providence of God, to be followed by some degree of retribution, even in this world. Rebekah and her favourite son were completely successful in their plan of deception, by which Esau was deprived of the blessing of the first-born; but the malice of the injured brother against his supplanter was so hot, that it became necessary for Jacob to flee to a distant country for safety; and thus a long separation took place between the mother and her favourite son, who, it would seem, had remained constantly at home until this time. Esau's anger was not a transient passion,

but he formed a settled purpose, that after the burial of his father, whose decease he concluded could not be far off, he would take the life of his brother; and this purpose he must have declared, for information of it reached the ears of Rebekah. On which, she advised Jacob to depart immediately from the country, and to go into Mesopotamia, to her brother Laban's, until the heat of Esau's anger should abate, when she promised that she would send and fetch him back. "For," said she, "why should I be deprived of you both in one day?" But as the consent of Isaac must also be obtained, and as he would not be ready to believe a report which attributed so much malice to his favourite son, she had recourse to other arguments to induce the old patriarch to consent to his departure. She complained bitterly of her afflictions, on account of the daughters of Heth, whom Esau had married; and declared that her life would become a burden to her, if Jacob should follow the example of his brother, and take a wife from among the daughters of the land. This consideration had its weight with Isaac, to persuade him to send Jacob away; wherefore, he called him, and solemnly charged him not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but to go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, and to take a wife of the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. And then he pronounced a blessing on him in the following emphatical words: "And God Almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people: And give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land, wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. And so Isaac sent away Jacob to go to Padan-aram."

Esau, observing that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away that he might form an alliance with the kindred of his family; and finding that he had vexed and displeased his parents by taking the daughters of Heth, went and married, in addition to the wives which he already had, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael.



SECTION XVII.

JACOB GOES TO PADAN-ARAM, AND IS ENTERTAINED BY LABAN—HE IS DECEIVED BY LABAN, AND RECEIVES LEAH, INSTEAD OF RACHEL, TO WIFE—RACHEL ALSO GIVEN TO HIM FOR SEVEN YEARS' SERVICE.

JACOB, having left his father's house, proceeded on his journey towards Haran, until the sun having gone down, he resolved to spend the night at the place where he had arrived; and, finding no house to receive him, he took some of the stones of the place for a pillow, and lay down to sleep. "And he dreamed, and

behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed: and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel, (house of God,) but the name before was Laish. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I can come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

In this transaction, we have the first mention of three different things, which seem, however, to have been established usages. The first is a religious vow; the second the ceremony of anointing a pillar with oil; and the third a promise of tithes, or a tenth of all his property to the Lord. There is, indeed, a mention of tithes in the history of Abraham, when he was met by Melchizedek, he gave unto him the tenth of all the spoils. It seems, then, to have been an early custom for the pious to devote one-tenth of their gains to the service of the Lord. The Mosaic law was nothing more than the recognition of a custom which had been long in use; probably from the beginning of the world. And there is no good reason why all Christians should not follow this example, and consecrate at least one-tenth of all their income to the Lord. Besides the annual tithe, the members of the Hebrew commonwealth gave many offerings in the course of the year, in the form of first-fruits and gifts, and free-will offerings.

When Jacob had arrived in the country of his mother's relations, he met with Rachel, the daughter of Laban, who acted as shepherdess of her father's sheep, and informed her that he

was the son of Rebekah, her father's sister. As soon as Laban understood that his nephew was come, "he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house." After Jacob had remained one month, Laban proposed to allow him wages for his services; but Jacob, who had fixed his affections strongly on Rachel his cousin, offered to serve his uncle seven years, if he would give her to him to wife. To this Laban readily assented; for he said, "It is better that I should give her unto thee, than to another." When the time was fulfilled, Jacob demanded his wife; for he had served seven years for Rachel, "and they appeared unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Laban, therefore, made a feast, and invited the men of the place; but instead of Rachel, Leah, the elder sister, was given unto Jacob. Laban excused himself by a reference to the customs of his country, according to which he pretended that a younger sister must not be given in marriage before the elder; but of this he should have informed his nephew before, and not have deceived him. Laban, however, offered to give him Rachel also, if he would serve seven years more; to which Jacob agreed. It must not be understood that he served seven years more before Rachel was given, but that he engaged with his uncle for the service of seven other years. To Leah, Laban gave Zilpah for a maid; and to Rachel he gave Bilhah. Although Rachel was most tenderly beloved by Jacob, yet Leah was honoured to be the mother of children, while Rachel had none. This she bore with much impatience; and in imitation of Sarah, she gave Bilhah, her maid, to Jacob as a kind of secondary wife. Leah had already borne four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; and now Bilhah bore two sons to Jacob, whom she named Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah also had two sons, Gad and Asher. And after Reuben was grown to be of a good size, Leah had a fifth son, and called his name Issachar; and afterwards a sixth, whom she called Zebulun, and a daughter named Dinah. At length God heard the prayers of Rachel, and she bore a son whom she called Joseph.



SECTION XVIII.

JACOB'S RETURN—PURSUED BY LABAN—ESAU COMES WITH A HOST TO MEET HIM,
BUT GOD TURNS AWAY HIS DISPLEASURE.

AFTER the birth of Joseph, Jacob began to think of returning to his own country, and mentioned it to Laban. But he, having greatly increased in wealth since Jacob had the care of his flocks, was unwilling to part with his nephew, and offered to give him any wages he should ask. Accordingly an agreement was made that Jacob should have for his share the cattle which

were marked and spotted in a particular manner; but it was so ordered in Providence, that this agreement turned out greatly to the profit of Jacob. This increase of Jacob's property excited the envy of Laban's sons, and they said, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's, and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all his glory." And their words were reported to Jacob. Besides, Laban himself became dissatisfied, and his countenance was not towards Jacob as before. Wherefore "the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee." He said also, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me; get thee from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." Jacob, having received this divine command, called his wives, and informed them of the directions which he had received from heaven; upon which they readily consented to go. Jacob took the opportunity to prepare for his journey and to leave the country, while Laban was busily engaged in shearing his sheep, lest he should attempt to prevent him from going, or keep back his daughters. And it was not until the third day after Jacob's departure, that the report of the fact reached Laban's ears. And his conduct showed that Jacob's suspicions of his temper were not ill-founded, for immediately "he took his brethren with him, and pursued after Jacob," but on account of the three days' start which the latter had, he did not overtake him until the seventh day, when he had reached Mount Gilead. Laban reproved Jacob for taking away his daughters by stealth, and pretended that he would have "sent them away with mirth and songs, with tabret and with harp;" and complained that he had not been permitted to kiss his sons and daughters before they departed. He also observed that it was fully in his power to do him hurt, but said he, "The God of your father spake unto me yesterday, saying, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob good or bad." One thing, however, he urged in the last place, as the ground of the most grievous of all his complaints, that they had stolen his gods. This shows that idolatry still prevailed in Mesopotamia; and, although Jacob knew it not, had entered his own family; for Rachel had stolen her father's gods when she left his house, but she managed the matter so cunningly, that the theft was not discovered, nor the possession of these idols by his chiefly beloved wife made known to Jacob. When nothing was discovered, after a very particular search, to justify this this last accusation of Laban, Jacob began to grow angry at being thus pursued, harassed, and accused, and said to Laban, "What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou has searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here

before thy brethren and my brethren, that they may judge between us both. This twenty years have I been with thee, thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it: of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction, and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." After hearing this indignant speech of Jacob, Laban felt disposed to put an end to the dispute; he therefore said, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine; and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne? Now, therefore, come thou, and let us make a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee." To this proposal Jacob very cordially consented, and immediately took a stone and set it up for a pillar, and called upon his brethren to gather stones: and they took stones and made an heap, and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it "Jegar-Sahadutha," but Jacob called it "Galeed." And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between me and thee this day;" therefore was the name of it called Galeed, (the heap of testimony;) and also Mizpah; for he said, "the Lord watch between thee and me, when we are absent one from another: If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters, no man is with us, see God is witness between me and thee." "And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast between me and thee. This heap be witness and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee; and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us; and Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread; and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and daughters, and blessed them. And Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

The country through which Jacob was now passing afterwards became the inheritance of some of the tribes, the des-

cendants of his sons; and the names of places now given were retained. After his deliverance from the pursuit of Laban his father-in-law, he proceeded on his journey towards Canaan; and as God had protected him and his family, by sending an angel to meet Laban, and to warn him to do Jacob no harm, so now the care of Providence was signally manifested to him, by a vision of angels who met him on the way. This was intended to prepare him for new dangers and difficulties which he must encounter. Upon seeing these angels of God, he said, "This is God's host; and he called the name of the place Mahanaim." It seems from this language, that there was a multitude of the heavenly host, who now appeared as an army to the eyes of Jacob. The dangers alluded to were those to be apprehended from the displeasure of his brother Esau; for, although twenty years had passed, he was not certain that the anger of his brother, which had once induced him to resolve on his death, had entirely subsided. As he drew near to Canaan, therefore, he became anxious to ascertain the temper of Esau's mind towards him. Accordingly, he sent messengers to his brother, respectfully to inform him of his circumstances, and of his approach; but they returned more speedily than was expected, and brought the unwelcome intelligence, that Esau, accompanied by four hundred men, was on his way to meet him. Jacob was exceedingly alarmed and distressed by this information, and immediately began to make the best arrangements he could, to avoid the wrath of his brother; for as to his hostile intentions he could entertain no doubt, from his being attended with such an army of men. He divided his company and flocks into two bands, so that if the foremost should be smitten, the hindmost might have some chance of making their escape. But his chief hope was wisely placed in God, to whom he addressed himself in the following pathetic prayer. "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and unto thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of the mercies and the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

To be able to plead God's own word of promise in our supplications, is a sure ground of confidence; for the Lord will remember the word in which he hath caused our souls to trust. But Jacob, while he had recourse to God by earnest prayer,

did not think that this rendered the use of every lawful means unnecessary; and as he had already made arrangements for escaping, at least with part of his company, so now he determined to try what effect kindness might have on the mind of his brother. Men are softened by a present, accompanied by the words of kindness. Jacob, therefore, sent forward a selection from the several kinds of his cattle, in different droves, directing those who conducted the first, when asked whose property they were, to say, "They are thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my Lord Esau;" and the second and third to say the same words. Jacob, having sent forward this valuable present, began to consult in the best manner he could for the safety of his wives and children, and in the night crossed over the brook Jabbok, with all his wives and his children.

When he had conveyed his family across the brook, he returned to the camp, where he was alone, "and there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he said, What is thy name? and he said, Jacob; and he said, Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name. And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place PENUEL; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day."

Undoubtedly the person with whom Jacob wrestled was God in human form, and therefore called a man. This event was so remarkable, that it occasioned a significant name to be given to the place, and also a new name to Jacob, which became also the principal name of the people whom God claimed as his own peculiar nation.

Jacob was now prepared to meet with his brother Esau. He could say, If God be for us, who can be against us! Having arranged his property and his family, "he went forward and bowed himself seven times to the earth before Esau his brother; and Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." God, it seems, had been with Esau, as he was with Laban, to change his evil purpose,

and to revive in his bosom a lively feeling of brotherly affection. God has many ways of preserving his people from their enemies; but the most effectual, and to them the most pleasing, is when he changes their enmity into kindness. Esau inquired affectionately concerning the women and children whom he saw; and did not wish to receive Jacob's present, which had gone before him; but on being pressed by his brother, he consented to accept it. He seemed also disposed to join himself to Jacob's company, but the latter wisely declined the offer, on account of the necessity which he was under of journeying very slowly. Esau, therefore, took a friendly leave of his brother, and returned home; leaving him to go on his journey at his leisure.

Thus a second time was Jacob delivered by the interposition of Divine Providence, from a near relation who sought his hurt.

SECTION XIX.

JACOB'S RESIDENCE IN CANAAN—DINAH'S MISFORTUNE—THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SHECHEMITES—JACOB GOES TO BETHEL—DEBORAH DIES—GOD APPEARS TO HIM AT BETHEL, WHEN HE BUILDS AN ALTAR TO JEHOVAH.

THE first place where Jacob rested after his wearisome journey, was Succoth; so called from the circumstance of his erecting booths there for his flocks and herds. But he soon removed to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. Here it seems he intended to take up his abode permanently, as he bought a tract of land from the children of Hamor, for a hundred pieces of silver; and here also he erected an altar, and called it Elohe-Israel; that is, *God, the God of Israel*. But how little do the wisest of mortals see of the future. An event soon occurred which rendered the patriarch's longer continuance here altogether inexpedient. Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob, as was very natural, went to visit the daughters of the land; but she was an inexperienced girl, and she ought not to have ventured among these strangers, whose manners were corrupt, without the protection of her parents, or her brothers, several of whom were now grown up. The event was unhappy. The heedless damsel was seduced by Shechem the son of Hamor, the prince of the country; but this man immediately proposed to marry her. Shechem was much in earnest to have this matter brought to a friendly settlement, and urged his father Hamor to use his influence for him with Jacob and his sons. This was a new kind of trouble to the pious patriarch. But he remained silent after he heard of the unhappy affair, until his sons, who were absent with the flocks, returned. When the young men, the brothers of Dinah,

heard how she had been treated, they were exceedingly grieved, and not only grieved, but enraged; for being their only sister, she was no doubt very dear to them. They were, therefore, resolved on a bloody revenge; but they suffered the proposal for the marriage to go on, which now was pressed most earnestly, not only by Hamor, but by the young man Schechem himself, who offered to give any dowry which might be asked of him, if he might only obtain Dinah for a wife. Jacob seems to have been an easy tempered man; and in this case he gave up the management of the business to his sons, who pretended to be pleased with the proposed match; but they alleged that there was a difficulty in the way which they could not overcome. It was unlawful for them to give their sister in marriage to a person who was not a Hebrew; but if the Schechemites would consent to have every male among them introduced into the Hebrew nation, all obstacles would be removed out of the way. Hamor and his son did not refuse to comply with these terms, for the attachment of Schechem to Dinah was exceedingly strong. They, therefore, undertook to persuade all the men of their city to agree to this proposal. And they argued with them thus: "These men are peaceable with us; therefore, let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only, herein will the men consent to dwell with us, if every male among us be circumcised. Shall not their cattle and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours? Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us." The people hearing this fair representation, were persuaded to consent, and the males of the whole town were admitted by the rite of circumcision to the Jewish nation. On the third day, Simeon and Levi, two of the brothers of Dinah, boldly attacked the men with the sword, and slew all the males. They also took the spoil of the city, and seized their sheep, oxen, and asses, and took their wives captives. As soon as Jacob heard of this unlawful and cruel violence of his two sons, he reproved them for their wicked conduct, and told them that by such doings they would render him hateful to the inhabitants of Canaan; and that as his force was small, they would combine against him, and destroy him and his house. But the young men justified their conduct by referring to the dishonour done to their sister.

Jacob's longer continuance at Shechem being inexpedient, God, who condescended to guide him in all his ways, directed him to go to Bethel, and to dwell there, and to erect an altar to God, who had there appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of Esau. This was the very place where God first appeared unto Jacob, and where was seen by him, in a dream

of the night, a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, on which the angels were ascending and descending. Here Jacob vowed a vow, and set up a sacred memorial; but he seems to have forgotten his solemn engagements entered into in this place, until God now put him in mind of his duty.

Jacob having fallen into trouble, and having found much iniquity in his own children, thought it necessary to attempt a family reformation; for however pious the head of a family may be, yet wickedness will often creep into his house, and great corruption may exist among the members of his household, of which he is kept in ignorance. Too often, fond mothers connive at the faults of their sons, and conceal their evil deeds from their father, than which there is no more certain means of leading them to perdition. In ancient times, the propensity to idolatry was unaccountably strong; Jacob, therefore, exhorted his household, and all that were with him, to put away the strange gods, that is, the idols, that were among them. He also called upon them, before his going to Bethel, which was holy ground to him, to change their garments and be clean. This, I believe, is the first instance which we have on record, of an outward religious purification; which was doubtless performed by the use of water, the element used all over the world for cleansing. We are taught by this example, that when we are about to draw near to God, in his house and in his ordinances, we should be careful to put away every thing sinful, and approach the service with reverence.

Jacob said, "Let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." The exhortation of Jacob was not in vain, for his family gave up all the strange gods which were in their hand; and their earrings—which probably had some superstitious use—and Jacob hid them under the oak which was in Shechem.

It is somewhat surprising that the Canaanites were not roused to vengeance by the treacherous and cruel slaughter of the Shechemites. Nothing would have been easier than to overwhelm Jacob and his family, by joining the forces of only a few neighbouring cities. The reason why this was not done, is given by the sacred historian: "The terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob."

Having arrived at Bethel, Jacob proceeded to erect an altar, which he called "EL-BETHEL, because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

Here Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and was buried beneath an oak, at Bethel. She must have been very far

advanced in years, as Rebekah herself, if now alive, was a very aged woman. On what occasion Deborah came into Jacob's family, we know not. Perhaps she was on a visit, as the residence of Isaac, who was still living, was at no great distance. We are not informed that Jacob visited his father immediately after his return; but we may take it for granted, that so pious a man would not be inattentive to the duty which he owed such an excellent parent.

After Jacob had fixed his residence at Bethel, God appeared to him again, and confirmed the change of his name from Jacob to Israel, and renewed his promises to him, saying, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply: a nation, and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land." As a memorial of this renewed proof of God's faithfulness and mercy, the patriarch set up a pillar and anointed it with oil, and poured it upon a drink-offering. These sacred ceremonies were mentioned in a former part of the history, except the *drink-offering*, which was probably wine, as, under the law, this liquid was constantly used for this purpose. No doubt, all these various methods of honouring and worshipping God, had been divinely appointed. The old name of Bethel, which Jacob had given to this place, instead of Luz, the original name, he now renewed. But after remaining for some time at this place, Jacob journeyed still further to the south, and came to Ephrath. And here occurred one of the most distressing events of the patriarch's life. Rachel, his first and best beloved wife, died while they stopped here. When her soul was about departing, Rachel named her child, which had just been born, BEN-ONI, *the son of my sorrow*; but his father called him BENJAMIN, *the son of my right hand*. And thus Rachel died in the road to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem; there she was buried, and Jacob placed a pillar over her grave, which was remaining, and known as the pillar of Rachel's grave, in the time of Moses.

SECTION XX.

REUBEN'S INCEST—DEATH OF ISAAC—JOSEPH'S DREAMS—JACOB'S FONDNESS AND PARTIALITY FOR JOSEPH—THE ENVY OF HIS BRETHREN—HE IS SOLD INTO EGYPT.

THE wandering life led by Jacob and his ancestors often required a change of residence, on account of the failure of pasture and water in particular districts. We find Jacob, therefore, continually removing his tent from place to place. From Ephrath or Bethlehem, he journeyed and spread his tent

beyond the tower of Edar, the exact situation of which place is unknown.

About this time, another grievous domestic trouble arose. In consequence of a great and unnatural crime committed by Reuben, he was cut off from all the privileges of the birth-right, which naturally belonged to him, as he was the oldest son.

Jacob now visited Isaac his father, who seems to have continued his residence all the time of his son's absence, at Mamre, the old dwelling-place of his father Abraham. The life of Isaac was protracted far beyond his own expectations, and that of his friends; for before Jacob left him, he thought that his end was near; and Esau, when supplanted by Jacob, seemed to think that his father's decease would occur very soon; for he deferred the execution of his malicious purpose against the life of his brother, until the funeral of his father should occur; but, after more than twenty years, Isaac is still alive. During this long period the patriarch was blind, and could have but little enjoyment of this life. Soon after Jacob's visit he died, having lived a hundred and eighty years. "And he was gathered to his people, being old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him;" doubtless in the cave of Machpelah, which was near at hand, and where his father and mother were buried.

Jacob had become the husband of four women, only one of whom, it is probable, was really beloved by him; and she was now dead, but had left two infant children, who became the darlings of the aged patriarch. Especially Joseph, the elder of the two, was beloved above all the sons of Jacob. Two of Jacob's wives were of an inferior order, having been the maids of Leah and Rachel, and were by way of distinction called concubines. Concerning one of these a fact is stated, which places her character in a very unfavourable light: of the other we have no particular information. To each of these were born two sons, those of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, were named Dan and Naphtali; the son's of Zilpah, Leah's maid, were called Gad and Asher. It is more than probable, that these boys would be lightly esteemed, in comparison of the sons of Leah and Rachel; and they would be likely to feel their degradation, and resent it. These suppositions, to say the least, are not improbable; but we are distinctly informed respecting them, that their conduct was such as to give ground for an evil report, which Joseph was careful to convey to the ears of his father. This would naturally provoke the displeasure of these youth, for among offenders, no cause produces more fierce indignation than to have their misdeeds reported to a superior: and with such young men as are guilty of secret crimes, an *informer* is the

most odious character in the world. But Jacob appears to have acted imprudently, in showing so plainly his partiality for Joseph. Perhaps he could not help feeling a peculiar affection for this child, both on account of his deceased mother, and the amiable character of the youth; but it is always improper for a parent to show an evident partiality for one child above the rest, since the certain effect will be to excite envy. Jacob distinguished Joseph, by making him a coat of great splendour and beauty, in which many colours were curiously interwoven. The envy of his brothers began to be manifested, and Joseph was not careful to lessen it, but pursued a course calculated to raise it to the highest pitch; for he related to them dreams, the plain interpretation of which was, that he was not only destined to be superior to them all, but that they were to bow down before him, and serve him. The dreams, however, were from above, as the event proved. These things, coming one after another, produced great dislike and hatred in the feelings of the other sons of Jacob towards Joseph. Some of them only wanted opportunity to proceed to the most fatal acts of violence: and it was not long before the desired opportunity was afforded. For, having driven their flocks to Shechem, where Jacob had property, and where he had lived on his return from the east, they had the opportunity of talking with one another freely, in regard to the partiality shown to Joseph by their father; and concerning the insolence—as it seemed to them—of this petted youth. Grievances of this kind are always increased by mutual communication. The sons of Jacob having been absent for some time, and no tidings having been received from them, the old patriarch began to be uneasy respecting their welfare. He determined, therefore, to despatch Joseph, who was now seventeen years of age, to see how his brothers were doing, and to bring him word. Joseph, suspecting no evil, left the vale of Hebron, where Jacob now dwelt, to go to Shechem, to see his brothers. The lad being alone, lost his way, and was found wandering in the wilderness by a stranger, who also informed him that his brothers had left Shechem, and had driven their flocks to Dothan. Joseph, therefore, receiving from the friendly stranger the proper directions, proceeded to Dothan; no doubt expecting to be received kindly by his brothers, who had been absent from their father's house for some time. But as soon as the youth appeared in sight, wearing the hated garment of many colours, these men began to plot against his life. "And they said one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh, come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But Reuben, the oldest

of Jacob's sons, though under his father's displeasure for his crime, before hinted at, yet was not of so revengeful a temper as the rest; and not only refused to join in their design of murdering their brother, but had influence to prevent them from killing him at once. He said to them, "Let us not kill him—shed no blood; but cast him into this pit in the wilderness, and lay no hand on him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again." The first thing which they did when Joseph came up was to strip off his coat, which had been the occasion of so much envy in them, and perhaps of some degree of vanity in him. Next, they cast him into a pit in which there was no water; intending, doubtless, to leave him to perish with hunger in this dark and dreary abode. Having satisfied their vengeance, they sat down to eat, as though nothing uncommon had happened. But Providence so ordered it, that at this moment, a trading caravan, partly of Midianites and partly of Ishmaelites, was seen approaching. They had come from Mount Gilead, and their camels were loaded with spices and myrrh, which they were carrying down to Egypt. The thought now occurred to Judah, who seems to have experienced some relentings about the course which they were pursuing, that it would be better to sell the lad to these merchants than to destroy his life. And he said, "What profit is there if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, and our flesh." To this proposal all assented who were present, for Reuben had withdrawn from the company, probably thinking on the most safe and effectual plan of rescuing the lad from the hands of his brothers. The bargain was soon made. Money was not the object, and therefore they were satisfied with a small price. Twenty pieces of silver was all that was demanded; and immediately the helpless boy was a slave in the hands of merchants who did not regard his cries and tears: and this we need not be surprised at, when his own brothers had no pity, when they beheld the anguish of his soul. But the scene left an impression on their conscience, which was felt long afterwards, when they were in painful circumstances. Reuben, returning after Joseph had been sold, and on going to the pit not finding him there, was filled with grief. He went to his brothers, saying, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?"

SECTION XXI.

METHOD TAKEN TO CONCEAL THE CRIME FROM THEIR FATHER—HIS GRIEF—THE MIDIANITES SELL HIM TO POTIPHAR—HIS TEMPTATION AND CONTINENCE—IS CAST INTO PRISON.

THE only difficulty which now remained was to conceal the crime from their father. This, however was not impossible, provided they could all keep the secret. The greatest danger was from Reuben, who had taken no part in the cruel act; but they might prevent his betraying them by threats, or by the knowledge which they might possess of crimes with which he was chargeable. The guilty are often faithful in concealing each other's crimes, through fear of having their own evil deeds brought to light. The device adopted to deceive old Jacob, which seems to have been completely successful, was, to dip the coat of Joseph in the blood of a kid, and to send it to their father to know "whether it was his son's coat or no." The old patriarch instantly recognised the garment, and exclaimed, "an evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." And Jacob clothed himself in sackcloth, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons, and all his daughters (son's wives) rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning." The mourning of Jacob for his darling son was, no doubt, of the most bitter kind; and his anguish would be increased by the reflection that he was devoured by wild beasts, and that he probably was the occasion of his death, by sending the child without a guide or protector on so long a journey. He also had not the comfort of depositing the body decently in the grave, with his deceased relatives; a privilege highly valued by the members of this family.

When the Midianites arrived in Egypt, Joseph was bought by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And the Lord was with Joseph; and all that was under his hand, in the house of his master, was made to prosper; so that Potiphar could not but observe that his young servant was favoured of the Lord. This induced him to intrust all his property, in the house and in the field, to the care and management of Joseph; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had. But the time of prosperity is commonly the season of temptation. Joseph had the favour and confidence of his master in an unlimited degree, so that he took no account of any of his affairs, "save the bread which he did eat." The wife of Potiphar, however, wished to tempt Joseph to the commission of a great sin. But his resolution was firm; and he said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? And when she

lay hold of him, he fled from the house, leaving his garment in her hand." Vice is seldom solitary in the human breast. The person who is capable of perpetrating one great crime, will seldom hesitate to commit another, if the temptation is sufficiently strong. This bad woman, finding herself disappointed, and her pride mortified, began immediately to meditate vengeance against the innocent youth. She called to the men of the house, and held up Joseph's garment, and accused him of having attempted to degrade and dishonour her, of which daring impudence, his garment left in her hand was witness. The wife of Potiphar having already committed herself, by falsely accusing Joseph to the other domestics, could not draw back without confessing her own crime, but must go on with her slanderous charges against the innocent and unprotected youth. She, therefore, laid up Joseph's garment, which had been left in her hand when he escaped from her, that she might show it to her lord, as proof positive of the crime which she charged against him. Joseph, though perfectly innocent, was not in a situation to contend with a slander coming from the wife of his lord. It seemed to be of little consequence whether he protested that he was innocent, or remained entirely silent. There are circumstances in which a man's declaration of his innocence will avail him nothing, and will gain no belief from others. The purest virtue may, for a season, be covered with a dark cloud. The only resource of the righteous, in such cases, is the providence of God. Let them take refuge under his omniscience, and trust in his protection. Let them also look forward to that day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, and when injured innocence shall be vindicated from every charge. The result of the accusation was, that Joseph's master caused him to be cast into the public prison. It is rather surprising that he had not put him to death. Perhaps his high confidence in his integrity and virtue, in time past, and his knowledge of his wife's disposition, might have left a suspicion on his mind, that the whole truth had not been told to him; and this especially, if Joseph was permitted to relate the circumstances, as they really occurred. But whatever he might suspect, he could do no less than expel him from his house, and cast him into prison. It does not appear that he ever troubled himself any farther about the young man. In tyrannical governments, it is no uncommon thing for persons to be thrown into prison, and to be entirely forgotten. Thus it might have been with Joseph; for he had no friend in Egypt to inquire after him, or to care for him. But God, by his providence, takes care of the stranger and the orphan. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did not forget this sorely injured and grossly slandered youth; for he gave him favour in the eyes of the keeper of the prison.

“And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him; that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.”

SECTION XXII.

DREAM OF THE BAKER AND BUTLER OF PHARAOH IN THE PRISON—JOSEPH’S INTERPRETATION—THE FULFILMENT—DREAM OF PHARAOH—JOSEPH SENT FOR TO INTERPRET IT—HIS COUNSEL TO PHARAOH, AND EXALTATION.

IT so happened while Joseph was here confined, that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt had offended their master, and were put into the same prison. And the captain of the guard, or keeper of the prison, gave these persons in charge to Joseph, and he attended on them. And they both dreamed a dream, in the same night; and when Joseph came in to them in the morning, he observed that they were sad; and he said, “Wherefore look ye so sad to-day? And they said, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said, Do not interpretations belong unto God? Tell them to me, I pray you.” And the chief butler told his dream: “Behold, a vine was before me, and in the vine three branches, which budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. And Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them in Pharaoh’s cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh’s hand.” And Joseph said, “This is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place, and then thou shalt deliver his cup into his hand.” But said Joseph, “Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee; unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.” The chief baker, hearing that the interpretation of the butler’s dream was favourable, was encouraged to tell his own, which, in some respects, resembled it. He said, “Behold, in my dream, I had three white baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket was all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.” And Joseph said, “The three baskets are three days. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head from thee, and shall hang thee on a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.” And accordingly, on the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birth-day,

he restored the chief butler to his place, and hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted unto them. But in his joy and prosperity the butler did not "remember Joseph, but forgot him."

It is well for God's children that he does not forget them; but whether they are in prison, in poverty, or in sickness, his compassionate eye is ever upon them, and his faithful care will never leave them. Joseph's prospect of release seemed to have entirely passed away. He no doubt waited anxiously for some time, to see whether his friend the butler would use his good offices with the king, in his behalf; but two whole years having elapsed, and no relief having been obtained, nor any intimation that any effort had been made for his discharge, he must have felt something of that sickness of heart which is produced by "hope deferred." But God, who can control the hearts of kings as well as others, sent a dream to Pharaoh, which answered the purpose of bringing to the recollection of the butler his own dream, and the interpretation of Joseph, and his sin in forgetting his benefactor. Pharaoh's dream was double, but both parts had the same signification. The magicians and wise men of Egypt were utterly unable to give any satisfactory interpretation; upon which the chief butler related the circumstances of his own dream, and the interpretation of Joseph. Pharaoh immediately sent to the prison, and ordered the young Hebrew to be brought before him. Joseph therefore shaved himself, and changed his clothes, and then presented himself before the king. Pharaoh said, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it." Joseph's reply was pious and modest. He said, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then Pharaoh related his dreams, as follow: "In my dream I stood upon the bank of the river, and behold there came up out of the river, seven kine, fat-fleshed, and well-favoured, and they fed in a meadow. And behold seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and ill-favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and behold seven ears came up on one stalk, full and good. And behold seven ears, withered and thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. And I told this unto the magicians, and there was none that could declare it unto me." Joseph, upon hearing these dreams, did not hesitate, nor ask

time for consideration, but immediately interpreted them as follows: "The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine and the seven good ears are seven years, and the dream is one. And the seven ill-favoured kine and the seven blasted ears shall be seven years of famine."—"Behold there come seven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt; and there shall arise after them seven years of famine, and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land. And the plenty shall not be known in the land, by reason of the famine following; for it shall be very grievous." And as to the repetition of the dream, Joseph, informed the king, that this was intended to give the greater assurance of the thing, that God had established it, and would shortly bring it to pass. Joseph then proceeded to advise what ought to be done. "Let Pharaoh," said he, "look out for a man, discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt; and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part [of the produce] of the land of Egypt, in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the fruits of these good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land, against the seven years of famine, which shall be in all the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through famine." This advice of Joseph seemed to Pharaoh and all his servants wise and seasonable. And the king was persuaded, that no better man could possibly be found to set over this business, than the one who had given the advice. He, therefore, said to his servants, "Can we find such a man as this, in whom the spirit of God is." And to Joseph he said, "Forasmuch as God hath shown thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou." And Pharaoh said, "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt." And he said unto Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt." And Pharaoh gave Joseph a new name, ZAPHNATH-PAANEAH, which means, *the revealer of secrets*. And he gave him for a wife ASENATH, the daughter of *Poti-pherah*, priest, or prince of On.

SECTION XXIII.

JOSEPH'S ADMINISTRATION.

THE ARRIVAL OF HIS BROTHERS—HIS TREATMENT OF THEM—HE RETAINS SIMEON AND SENDS FOR BENJAMIN.

WHEN Joseph stood before Pharaoh, he was thirty years old. Being now placed in the highest authority by the king, he went forth to the execution of his important office. That he might better understand the condition of the country, he passed through the whole land of Egypt. And as the years of plenty immediately commenced, he began to lay up food in storehouses, throughout the cities; and the quantity was so great that it could not be numbered. And this he did, until the seven years of plenty were ended.

During this period his wife Asenath had two sons: the elder he named Manasseh, *forgetting*; because, said he, "God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." The second he named Ephraim, *fruitful*; because, said he, "God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

As soon as the seven years of plenty were ended, the years of famine commenced. This dearth was not confined to Egypt, but extended to all the surrounding countries. And when under the pressure of the famine, the people of Egypt cried unto Pharaoh, he referred them to Joseph. Now was seen the wisdom of erecting public storehouses, and filling them with provision; for the people took no care to lay up corn for the approaching scarcity. The famine there was very grievous; and the people must have perished through want, had it not been for the public granaries, which Joseph now caused to be opened, and from which corn was sold to the Egyptians. This distressing famine reached the land of Canaan, where Jacob and his sons dwelt; and he having learned that corn could be had in Egypt, directed his sons, instead of standing and looking on one another, to go down thither and buy, that their lives might be preserved. It is not improbable, that it was unpleasant for these men to think of going to Egypt, when they recollected that they had sold their brother to be a slave there; but in necessity there is no choice. Therefore, all Joseph's brothers, except Benjamin, set off to Egypt, to buy corn. Jacob's affections, since the loss of Joseph, seem to have been fixed chiefly on Benjamin, the only other child of his beloved Rachel. He refused, therefore, to permit him to accompany his brethren, lest some accident should befall him. When Joseph's brethren arrived, it was necessary to present themselves before him; for as he was governor of all

the land, no corn could be sold without his permission. When these foreigners, in the garb of shepherds of Canaan, were introduced, they bowed themselves before him, with their faces to the earth—thus fulfilling the dreams which had so provoked their envy. Joseph instantly knew his brothers, although he had been absent from them for twenty-three or twenty-four years; but they had not the least idea that the great man, in whose presence they were, was their injured brother Joseph. Although his heart was full of kindness, yet he determined to make them reflect on the guilt of the enormous crime which they had committed. He, therefore, spoke roughly to them, and said, "Whence come ye?" And he said, "Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land are ye come." They protested that it was not so, but that they had come to buy food. "We are," said they, "all one man's sons: we are true men, thy servants are no spies." But Joseph affected not to believe them, and still insisted that they were spies. On which, they, conscious that they were speaking truth, began to be more particular in their narrative. They said, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." The feelings of both parties must have been very strong at the mention of this last circumstance, but of a very different kind. They were now in distress in the country to which they had sold their brother, and the remorse of conscience, which at other times they might find means to quiet, now filled them with anguish. Joseph could not help recollecting all their hatred; and especially their cruelty, when, turning a deaf ear to his piteous cries and earnest supplications, they sold him for a paltry sum of money to travelling merchants, who, it was known, would carry him to a distant country to be a slave for life. In such a transaction, though all may consent, there are various degrees of guilt. Reuben, we know, did not join in the crime of his brothers. But there is no evidence that Joseph knew any thing of his favourable disposition and designs. Judah had prevented them from imbruing their hands in his blood, and prevailed upon them rather to sell him than put him to death. Probably, Simeon was foremost in proposing and seeking the death of Joseph, as he is known to have been both cruel and treacherous in his disposition; and Joseph, in selecting one to be bound in prison while the others went home, would naturally fix on the one who appeared to him to be the most guilty. However this may be, he continued to accuse them as spies; and at first proposed that all of them should remain except one, who should be despatched to bring their younger brother; and accordingly, he shut them all up in

prison for three days. How wretched must have been the feelings of these men, when thus overtaken with misfortune in a strange land. At the expiration of three days, Joseph changed his plan; reflecting, no doubt, that their families must suffer greatly, or perhaps perish with want, if they did not return with provisions. He now, therefore, told them, that one of them must be left bound in the prison, while the rest returned with corn for their houses. And one thing which he said would have been consoling to them, if they had been pious; that is, that he was a worshipper of the true God. He charged them to bring their youngest brother; that by this proof it might be known that they were true men. Their words would thus be verified, and they should not die. In thus demanding Benjamin to be brought to Egypt, Joseph seems rather to have consulted his own feelings, than the peace of his father's mind, of which he should have been more tender: but it does not behoove us to judge with severity the conduct of a man placed in circumstances so peculiar. He had no evidence yet, that these men had ever repented of the crime of which they had been guilty; or that their feelings towards him were at all changed; and he deemed it necessary to subject all concerned to some uneasiness, well knowing that it would be fully compensated by the kindness which he meant to show them.

They now began not only to reflect on the wickedness of their conduct in their cruel treatment of their brother, but also to speak to one another on the subject; and their conversation was in the hearing of Joseph, but they supposed he did not understand them, as he had uniformly spoken to them by an interpreter. "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." And Reuben said, "Spoke I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear; therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Upon hearing these confessions and upbraidings of his brethren, the heart of Joseph was affected, and he withdrew from them, that they might not see him weep, and then returned, and conversed with them. And he took Simeon, and bound him before their eyes; and commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way.

SECTION XXIV.

THEIR MONEY RETURNED—JACOB REFUSES TO LET BENJAMIN GO—BUT THE FAMINE PRESSES, AND HE AT LENGTH CONSENTS—JOSEPH, AFTER BRINGING HIS BROTHERS INTO TROUBLE, MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN, AND SENDS TO HIS FATHER.

WHEN they had proceeded some distance on their journey homeward, and had stopped at an inn, one of them, whose sack was opened on the occasion, found his money in the mouth of the sack; of which, when he gave information to his brethren, they were alarmed, and their hearts failed them; and they said one to another, "What is this that God hath done unto us?" And when they arrived at home, they told Jacob all that had happened to them; and when they had emptied their sacks, every man's bundle of money was in his sack, at the sight of which both they and their father were afraid. But when Jacob heard of their engagement to take Benjamin with them when they returned again for corn, and to redeem their brother who was left bound in prison, he was greatly disturbed, and said, in the language of bitter complaint, "Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me." From these words of Jacob, it would seem that he had received some information, or entertained some suspicion, respecting the true fate of Joseph, and that the first account was not true; for he charges his bereavement of him in particular, on his sons. And it is scarcely possible, that a secret lodged with so many persons would not in time leak out; especially as one of them had not consented to the wicked deed of the others, and had fully resolved to rescue him out of their hands. Reuben was now the only one who seems to have had confidence to reply to the cutting reproaches of his father. And he said, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again." But it would not do. Jacob absolutely refused to let Benjamin go, saying, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." But the famine continuing to rage without mitigation, as soon as the provision was spent, which they had brought from Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Go again, buy us a little food." Judah replied, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food. But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so

ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? And we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel, his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever. For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time." Judah, who was truly eloquent, prevailed at length; though probably want had more influence in gaining the old man's consent, than the persuasive speech of his son. And Israel said, "If it must be so now, do this: take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds. And take double money in your hand: the money that was found in your sacks, carry back; peradventure it was an oversight. Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." Accordingly, they went, and came and stood before Joseph. When he saw that Benjamin was with them, he invited them all to dine with him that day. But these plain shepherds were abashed when they were introduced into the house of the governor, and thought that some accusation would be brought against them, for the money that they had found in their sacks. They therefore addressed themselves to the steward of the house, and informed him of the discovery made of the money in their sacks; and told him that they had brought it back, and other money to buy corn. But he quieted them, assuring them that he had received their money; and told them that the God of their fathers had given them the money which they found in their sacks. And he brought out their brother Simeon, and gave them water for their feet, and feed for their asses. On their part, they got ready the present, which they had brought for the governor, against his coming at noon. When he arrived, they all bowed themselves before him to the earth. He inquired of their welfare, and said, "Is your father well? the old man of whom you spake, is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive: and they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance." And when he saw his brother Benjamin, he said, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son." But Joseph was unable to command his

feelings any longer; "and he went out, and sought a place to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there." And when he had composed himself he returned, and gave orders to place the dinner before them. But he and the Egyptians did not eat with them, because the Egyptians thought it wrong to eat bread with the Hebrews. The brethren of Joseph must have been surprised at the order in which he placed them at table; for the first-born was placed first, according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth. From his own table he sent them messes; but five times as much to Benjamin as to any of the rest. By degrees their fears subsided, and they ate and drank, and were merry with him. It seemed to these men, that their difficulties were now ended. But Providence had new trials for them before they left Egypt. Joseph, who began to be impatient of the concealment and constraint under which he acted, was determined to bring the business to a speedy end. He commanded his steward, in filling the sacks with corn, to put again every man's money in the mouth of his sack, and to put his own silver cup into the sack of the youngest. Next day, as soon as it was light, they were sent away; and when they had got out of the city, Joseph ordered his steward to pursue them, and to charge them with dishonesty and ingratitude. The steward did as he was commanded; and they said unto him, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again to thee, out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of our lord's house, silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen." The steward was more moderate in his demands. He only required that the person in whose possession the cup might be found, should be made a slave, while the rest should be considered blameless. Honesty was the strong point of character in which these men felt themselves to be upright. They were afraid of no accusation on this ground; and felt so much mutual confidence, that they had no fears for one another. They, therefore, promptly unloaded their asses, and submitted to a search, which, beginning at the eldest, went on to the youngest. But, what was their grief and astonishment, when the cup was actually found in Benjamin's sack. They rent their clothes, laded their asses, and went back to the city. As soon as they came into the presence of the governor, they fell before him on the ground; and he said, What deed is this that ye have done? did ye not know that such a man as I can certainly divine? Then Judah, whose simple eloquence has already been noticed, came forward, and addressed to him one of the most pathetic speeches which is on record in any language. Judah seemed to

consider that the liberty of all of them was forfeited; but Joseph, like his steward, did not view any one as implicated, except the person with whom the cup had been found. But how could they bear the thought of returning to their father without Benjamin; and, especially, to Judah, who had urged his father so much to send him, and had become security for him, it must have appeared worse than death. He, therefore, drew near, and made the following touching address.

“O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant, for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man’s face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant, my father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife [Rachel] bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

“Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us, (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad’s life;) it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.”

There is truly something noble in the conduct of Judah, on this occasion—in offering himself as a substitute for his brother. It was a degree of generosity not often to be witnessed; and the offer rises in our estimation, when we take into view, that his governing motive was respect and affection for his aged father.

Joseph's feelings were so affected by this speech of Judah, which referred to himself in a way that must have touched him greatly, that he was unable any longer to conceal his emotions: and he cried, "Cause every man to go out from me."—"And he wept aloud; so that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard him. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me: and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen; and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee, (for yet there are five years of famine,) lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them, and after that his brethren talked with him."

A more interesting scene than this is not recorded in any history, and can scarcely be conceived of. The kindness, tenderness, and generosity of Joseph to his brothers, who had so deeply injured him, is worthy of all admiration. When Pharaoh heard what had happened, and that Joseph's brethren were come, the event was pleasing to him and to his servants; and he authorized Joseph to invite his father and brothers, with their families, to come and live in Egypt, in the best of the land; and also directed that wagons should be sent to carry their wives and children, and their father. They were directed not to regard their moveable property, as they would enjoy the good of the whole land of Egypt. Joseph gladly executed Pharaoh's orders, and gave also to each man changes of clothes; but to

Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of raiment; and to his father he sent ten asses, laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses, laden with corn, and bread, and meat, for his father by the way. When he sent away his brothers, he exhorted them—"See that ye fall not out by the way." Upon their arrival at home, they told Jacob that Joseph was yet alive, and was governor over all the land of Egypt. The news was too overwhelming for the mind of Jacob; he fainted and believed them not, at the first; but when he beheld the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of the old man revived. "And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."

SECTION XXV.

JACOB, AFTER ASKING COUNSEL OF GOD, GOES DOWN TO EGYPT TO HIS SON.

BUT Jacob would not take so important a step as removing his whole family into Egypt, without asking counsel of God, who had hitherto directed him in all his ways. He, therefore, journeyed southward, until he came to Beersheba, and there being on the borders of Canaan, he offered sacrifices unto the God of Isaac his father. "And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob: and he said, Here am I. And he said, I am the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt: for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand on thine eyes." After this clear revelation of the divine will, Jacob hesitated no longer, but taking his sons, and their wives, and their children, and their flocks and herds, and all that they possessed, they went down into Egypt.

At this time Reuben had two sons; Simeon, six; Levi, three; Judah had had five, but two of them were dead; Issachar had four; Zebulun, three; Gad, seven; Asher, four, and one daughter, and two grandchildren: Joseph was already in Egypt, and had two sons. Benjamin, though the youngest, was the father of ten sons; Dan had only one, and Naphtali had four. These, exclusive of Jacob himself and Joseph and his two sons, make the number sixty-six; and with them, the whole number of Jacob's family, exclusive of his son's wives, was seventy. In this enumeration of Jacob's descendants, there are several things remarkable. The first is, that among so many children and grandchildren, the proportion of females should be so small. Only two are mentioned in the sacred history; Dinah, Jacob's daugh-

ter, who was either dead, or gone from her father's house; and Serah, the daughter of Asher. Another thing worthy of remark is, that Benjamin, who is so often called a lad, and sometimes a child, and a little one, should be the father of ten children. On this fact it may be observed, that Benjamin was now thirty-five or thirty-six years of age; and, as to his being called a lad, &c., these appellations are rather to express the tender affection of his father towards him, than to signify that he was not a man. The word *little* is, in Hebrew, the same as the word for younger.

When Jacob came near the land of Goshen, he sent Judah before him, to announce his arrival. "And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen, and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." Joseph, having instructed his brethren how to behave, and what to answer, when introduced to Pharaoh, made haste to inform the king of the arrival of his father. His object was to obtain for them the privilege of dwelling in Goshen, which seems to have been that part of Egypt which was next to the wilderness, towards the land of Canaan, because Jacob and his sons arrived here before they came to the city where Joseph and Pharaoh resided. It is probable that this region, on account of its vicinity to the uncultivated parts of the country, was peculiarly suited to be the residence of shepherds. And Joseph directed his brethren, when Pharaoh should question them respecting their manner of life, to confess that their occupation had been to take care of cattle, from their youth; and that their fathers had followed the same; for by so doing, they would gain the privilege of remaining in Goshen. For as all shepherds were despised by the Egyptians, the people would be unwilling that they should come into the centre of the country, to mingle with the other inhabitants. The business was arranged according to Joseph's direction, and the result answered his expectations. Pharaoh, upon hearing that the men were shepherds, and that it was their wish to remain in Goshen, readily gave the permission. He, therefore, told Joseph that the whole land of Egypt was before him, and that he might give to his father and brethren the best of it; but as they had selected Goshen, he directed that this part of the country should be assigned to them; and requested, that if he knew any of them to be men of activity, he would make them rulers over his cattle.

SECTION XXVI.

JACOB'S INTERVIEW WITH PHARAOH—PRESSURE OF THE FAMINE—JOSEPH'S POLICY.

JOSEPH now introduced his father to the king; and Jacob, when he came into the royal presence, pronounced a benediction upon Pharaoh. It is probable that the patriarch had the appearance of being older than he really was, for he was lame, and had passed a life of trial and trouble. Few men have ever experienced greater changes or more heart-desolating calamities. Pharaoh, therefore, as soon as he saw him, asked him how old he was. To this Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." The particular spot which Joseph selected for the residence of his father and brothers, and their families, was Rameses, the best of the land; and there he supplied them with the necessary support, distributing food to every family, according to its numbers. The famine had now risen to its height, and was very sore, both in the land of Egypt and in Canaan. The only resource of the people, to preserve them from death, was in the stores which Joseph had collected; and he, as a faithful servant, considered all this corn as the property of the king, at whose expense it had been obtained and laid up. Instead therefore, of giving it away, he sold it to the people, as long as they had any money to give in exchange; and when their money failed, Joseph offered to take their cattle, which, if they had remained in the hands of their owners, must have died speedily. This supply, however, only saved them for one year; and when this was ended, the people came to him in great distress, declaring that the whole of their money and their cattle were already expended, and nothing now remained but their bodies and their land. "Wherefore," said they, "shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh." And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them. So the land became Pharaoh's. And Joseph removed the people, everywhere into the cities, where provisions were stored. The land of the priests, however, was not sold; for they received from Pharaoh a portion for their support, so that they were under no necessity of selling their lands. Joseph has been much censured by some persons for his course in regard to the people of Egypt; but it would be difficult to show in what the injustice of his conduct consisted. What he

ought to have done if the kingdom and stores had been his own, is another question. But as the agent and steward to whom this great business was committed, there is every evidence that he acted justly and wisely. And now, having fairly purchased the land, he gave seed to the people to sow the land; and of the increase he required only a fifth part for the king, leaving the rest for their own use. Surely there was nothing ungenerous or unjust in this regulation, which from this time became perpetual. Joseph might have made all the people Pharaoh's servants, for they repeatedly offered to become such; but he only established it as a law that the king should have a fifth part of the increase of all the land, except that of the priests, to which Pharaoh obtained no title.

SECTION XXVII.

JABOB'S RESIDES IN EGYPT SEVENTEEN YEARS—HIS END DRAWS NIGH—HIS INTERVIEW
WITH JOSEPH, AND BENEDICTION OF HIS SONS.

ISRAEL having obtained, as has been related, the land of Goshen, and being there supplied with food in abundance, without toil, multiplied exceedingly. Jacob lived after he came down to Egypt, seventeen years; so that the whole age of Jacob was a hundred and forty-seven years. When the patriarch found that his end was drawing near, he called for Joseph, and caused him to swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, but carry him to the burying-place of his fathers, in the land of Canaan. Soon after this, Jacob being sick, Joseph came to see him, and brought his two sons, that they might receive their grandfather's blessing before he died. And they informed Jacob that his son Joseph was come, on which he "strengthened himself and sat upon the bed." "And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, I will make thee fruitful and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born to thee in the land of Egypt, are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when as yet there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and I buried her in the way of Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem." When Jacob beheld Joseph's sons, whom he had not before observed to be present, he said, "Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, they are my sons, whom

God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them." But Jacob's eyesight had greatly failed, so that he could see nothing distinctly. Joseph brought forward the lads, and Jacob said, "I had not thought to see thy face; and lo, God hath showed me also thy seed." And when Joseph presented his sons to his father for his benediction, he bowed himself to the earth. And he held Ephraim in his right hand, opposite to Jacob's left; and Manasseh in his left hand, opposite to his father's right; but Israel stretched out his right hand, and placed it on the head of Ephraim the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh the elder, evidently doing this not by accident, but designedly. He first blessed Joseph himself, and then said, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long to this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head; and Joseph said to his father, Not so, my father, for this is the first-born; put thy right hand on his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh; and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again into the land of your fathers. Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorites with my sword, and with my bow."

SECTION XXVIII.

JACOB'S DYING PROPHECY RESPECTING HIS SONS—HIS DECEASE.

JACOB now called together all his sons, and being inspired to foretell future events, he went on to prophecy what would befall each of them as a tribe and nation. It is worthy of remark, that the moral character of the father seems to be impressed on his descendants, and their destiny is made to depend in a great measure on the conduct of him from whom they derived their descent.

Reuben was the first-born, but though he was "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power," yet, on account of a base crime already referred to, he is excluded from the chief blessing, and is pronounced to be unstable as water, and it is foretold that his tribe shall not rise to high excellence or great power.

The treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi come now into remembrance, in the case of the Shechemites, whom they inhumanly murdered, after deceiving them, when they were unable to defend themselves. "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." This last prediction was most exactly accomplished, in the after history of these two tribes. Simeon having lost a large portion of his numbers in the wilderness, obtained an inheritance, not in a district by himself, but in scattered portions among the other tribes; and it is said that the men of this tribe travelled about as schoolmasters; so that they were literally scattered abroad, and divided in Israel. And all know that Levi had no inheritance with his brethren; but, having received the priesthood, his people were divided among the other tribes, each of which furnished a certain quota of cities for their habitation.

Judah receives a rich blessing, and the future dignity and power of the tribe answered to the patriarch's prediction. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, art thou gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." This is undoubtedly the chief blessing of all; for two peculiar things are promised—superiority over the other tribes, and the possession of a sceptre and lawgiver; and secondly, that the Messiah should arise from this tribe, for thus must we interpret the word Shiloh. The temporal blessings of this tribe were also very rich. Their country abounded in vineyards and flocks; so that wine and milk were the characteristics of Judah. He is compared to the lion, which became, through all ages, the ensign of this tribe, and is believed to have been the figure on its standard. **THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH** is also one designation of the Messiah.

The maritime situation of the tribe of Zebulun is exactly foretold, and the boundaries of its possessions, on the great sea,

are described, even unto Zidon. As this tribe was on the coast, so it is described as having harbours and ships.

Issachar is described as having a pleasant land, but an abject spirit; and as a servant of tribute. Accordingly, we scarcely read of a distinguished person from this tribe, nor any distinguished dignity which it possessed.

In most of these predictions there is an evident allusion to the literal import of the names of Jacob's sons; as here, when Dan is introduced in his order, it is said, "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel." (The word *Dan* signifies to judge.) Dan is compared to a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels: so that his "rider shall fall backward." We know very little of the character and history of Dan, as a separate tribe; but what is recorded, exactly corresponds with this description.

At this point Jacob seems to have been exhausted. He paused, and lifted up his soul to God in an earnest ejaculation, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Then he proceeded. "Gad,"—which name signifies a troop—"a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last." "Out of Asher"—which signifies *riches*, or property—"his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." "Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words."

But now the patriarch comes to his beloved Joseph, which as to mere temporal blessings, the benediction may seem to be the richest of all; but does not include the two things before mentioned as peculiar to Judah, namely, government and the Messiah. It is as follows: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

The only difficulty here is to understand who is meant by the shepherd, and stone of Israel, which was to come out of this tribe. These titles apply very exactly to the Messiah, but we have seen that he was to proceed from Judah. It is very probable, however, that these words contributed to produce in the minds of some of the Jews, a notion of a twofold Messiah, the one to spring from Judah, who should be a ruler, and the other

from Joseph, who should be a sufferer. May it not be possible, that through the line of females received by marriage into the tribe of Judah, or by some other intermingling of the tribes, Messiah may have derived his descent from both these tribes?

Of Benjamin it is said, he "shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

After Jacob had finished blessing his sons, "he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite; in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. (There they buried Abraham, and Sarah his wife: there they buried Isaac, and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.) The purchase of the field, and of the cave that is therein, was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

SECTION XXIX.

JACOB IS BURIED ACCORDING TO HIS REQUEST IN CANAAN—MOURNING ON ACCOUNT OF THE PATRIARCH.

WHEN Joseph perceived that his father had ceased to breathe, he "fell upon his face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel." The art of preserving human bodies, by embalming them, was certainly better understood in Egypt, in ancient times, than it ever was in any other country, as is evident by the numerous mummies, which unto this day are found in the caves and subterraneous catacombs, and some of which are probably almost as ancient as the time of Joseph. It was customary to mourn forty days for persons embalmed; but in this case, the Egyptians, by reason of their great regard for Joseph, and their veneration for the aged and pious patriarch, extended their mourning to seventy days. And when the mourning was ended, Joseph informed Pharaoh of the oath which his father had made him swear, in regard to his burial, and Pharaoh readily granted him permission to carry the body of his father to Canaan; and all the servants of Pharaoh accompanied him, and, also, all the elders of Israel, and all the elders of the land of Egypt; and all Joseph's brethren, and all their households, except that they left their young children, and their flocks and herds in the land of Goshen.

“And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and they made a mourning for his father seven days.” When the people of the land saw this funeral procession, and observed their bitter lamentation, they said, “This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians,” and on this account the place received the name of *Abel-mizraim*; that is, *the mourning of the Egyptians*. And his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre. “And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father.”

SECTION XXX.

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN SUSPICIOUS OF HIS FRIENDSHIP—CHARACTER OF JOSEPH—LENGTH OF HIS LIFE—HIS INJUNCTION RESPECTING HIS BONES—HIS DECEASE.

“AND when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph, peradventure, will hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent messengers unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin, for they did unto thee evil; and now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him;” and said unto them, “Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly to them.”

The character of Joseph, as here exhibited, is exceedingly amiable. His brothers, disturbed by their own guilty fears, could not enter into his kind and benevolent feelings. They could not but think, that now their father was out of the way, and all restraint removed, he would be disposed to avenge himself upon them for their cruel treatment. After so long a manifestation of kindness and forgiveness, it cut Joseph to the heart, to find them entertaining such suspicions of his motives and designs; so that he wept, when they presented their supplication before him. From this history we learn how troublesome a thing guilt is. These men were, for a while, successful in covering their transgression from men; but after more than a score of years, their sin found them out, and they were sore afflicted by the lashes of conscience, while suffering under the severe pressure of external affliction.

Joseph lived to see Ephraim's children of the third generation; and the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up on Joseph's knees. And when he perceived that his end was approaching, he said to his brethren, "I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." And he caused the children of Israel to swear, that when they removed to that land, they would carry with them his bones. "So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

PART II.



THE ISRAELITES.

SECTION I.

THE CONTINUANCE OF THE HEBREWS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT—THE CRUEL EDICTS OF THE EGYPTIANS AGAINST THE MALE HEBREW CHILDREN—THE BIRTH, CONCEALMENT, EXPOSURE, AND ADOPTION OF MOSES—MISERABLE BONDAGE OF THE HEBREWS—MOSES KILLS AN EGYPTIAN, AND FLIES TO ARABIA, WHERE HE ENTERS INTO THE FAMILY OF JETHRO, PRIEST OF MIDIAN, WHOSE DAUGHTER HE MARRIES.

THE period of the residence of the Israelites in Egypt, has been understood differently by learned men; for while most maintain that it did not exceed two hundred and fifteen years, some are of opinion, that it could not be less than four hundred years, in conformity with the prediction of God to Abraham, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; AND THEY SHALL AFFLICT THEM FOUR HUNDRED YEARS." This, taken strictly, decides the question at once. But it has been alleged, with much plausibility, that these four hundred years should be calculated from the time when the prediction was uttered; and includes all the time of the residence of Isaac and Jacob in Canaan, as well as the time spent in Egypt. And this interpretation is strongly supported by the Septuagint version, and the Samaritan text, which contain a clause, which expressly declares, that the four hundred years comprehended the time of their sojourning in Canaan; and even if this is a gloss which has crept into the text of these copies, yet it shows how this matter was understood in very ancient times. But some of the subsequent words of this same prediction appear to favour this interpretation not a little. God says, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again;" for it seems altogether probable, that these generations commenced with Abraham; and the word generation here, evidently is synony-

mous with a century of years. Another argument in favour of the common opinion is, that the number of successive descendants of the sons of Jacob are too few for a residence in Egypt of four hundred years. For example, when Israel went down to Egypt, Levi had three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Amram, the father of Moses, was the son of Kohath, and grandson of Levi. If we suppose that four hundred years elapsed, or more than three hundred before Moses was born, it will comport very badly with the rapid multiplication which is spoken of. It can hardly be believed, that in so long a period there would be so few births, in succession. And it is remarkable too, that Jochebed, the wife of Amram, was the daughter of Levi. This man, therefore, married his own aunt; but at this time the law regulating the degrees of kindred within which marriages were forbidden, was not given. The only cogent reason for supposing that the Israelites lived four hundred years in Egypt, is, the great multitude to which they had increased by the time of the Exodus. But where people are healthy, and enjoy the comforts of life without excessive toil, their increase will always be surprising, until an exact calculation is made; for the ratio of increase is geometrical. Let it be considered, also, that God blessed this people, according to his repeated promise, in multiplying them beyond all parallel. It is therefore, no how incredible, that this single family of seventy males should, in the space of two hundred and fifteen years, have grown to be a nation of two millions of persons. In this country, in three hundred years, a few adventurous colonists have swelled to the enormous population of more than twenty millions of souls. The increase of the Israelites was not more surprising than this. It was therefore, an unexpected thing to find the learned Rosenmüller maintaining in his Scholia, that the Israelites resided in Egypt four hundred years.

How long the descendants of Jacob enjoyed good treatment and liberty, cannot be ascertained. Joseph lived nearly a century after he came to Egypt. During his lifetime, there was no unfavourable change in the condition of his brethren. It seems probable that the king that arose, "who knew not Joseph," was not of the same family as Pharaoh, before whom Joseph stood, and whose prime minister he was; but some usurper or invader from a foreign land, who was literally ignorant how great a benefactor Joseph had been to this nation; and how much the royal family was indebted to him. This king, after he ascended the throne, observing that the Israelites were an entirely distinct people from the Egyptians, and that they increased in numbers above the Egyptians, beyond all comparison, was filled with alarm, lest they should seize upon the supreme power; and especially, "lest if war should fall out,"

that there would be danger that they should join with the enemy. He began, therefore, to consult and contrive how he might check this rapidly increasing population. The plan which he devised was indeed cruel, but if carried into effect, would have answered the purpose. It was to put the male children to death, as fast as they were born. But God disappointed his first attempt to accomplish this end. Another method of attaining the object was then devised. A decree was made, that without exception, every male of the Israelites should be cast into the river Nile. This law, it seems, was executed with rigour, but for how long a time is not known. During this time, Moses was born; and being a child of uncommon beauty, his parents, who were pious, determined that they would conceal him as long as they could. In pursuance of this resolution, they succeeded in evading the king's officers for three months, but such was the vigilance of those charged with the execution of the cruel mandate, that they were unable to conceal the child any longer. Still, however, entertaining, as it would seem, a hope of providential interposition, they prepared an ark of bulrushes, and rendered it water-tight; and placing the little boy in this small vessel, they launched it upon the river, and retired, but left the sister of the child in a covert place, to watch what would become of him. It is probable, that the parents of Moses resided in or near the royal city; for we find the daughter of the king, with her female attendants, coming to the river, near the place where the ark was left, to bathe. And she, having spied the ark among the flags where it had been left, directed her maidens to bring it to her. And when she opened it, she beheld a lovely infant; and the babe wept. The female breast, in every country, is susceptible of the feelings of humanity. The princess conjectured that it must be one of the Hebrew's children; for she was aware of the cruel edict which had gone forth against the male infants of this afflicted nation, and knew also, the severity with which the law was enforced. But yielding to the emotions of her own compassionate heart, she resolved at every risk to save the child. While she was revolving this purpose in her mind, providentially the little girl left to watch, presented herself, and observing that her little brother was viewed with compassion by the princess, she had the presence of mind and consideration, to ask her if she should call a nurse. This was the very thing needed to carry her design into execution; she therefore instantly expressed her consent; not suspecting, probably, that this officious little girl was sister to the babe in her possession; or that the nurse who was promptly at hand to obey her commands, was the mother of the child. There is, indeed, no evidence that she was ever informed of this fact; or that she ever suspected that the nurse of Moses

was his own affectionate mother. The address of Miriam, Moses' sister, was in the following simple words, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" "And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go; and the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said, 'Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.'" This believing mother cast her lovely child, when she could preserve him no longer at home, upon Providence; and now that careful Providence casts him back into her own bosom, in circumstances in which she could cherish the infant without fear; yea, God so ordered the affair, that the mother received rich compensation from royal hands, for cherishing the beloved fruit of her own womb. Never did nurse more promptly or joyfully engage in the duties of her vocation. "And she took the child and nursed it; and the child grew; and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son." For humanity's sake, we may hope, that the cruel edict under which Moses was born and exposed, was of short continuance; as we hear no more about it; and it is a fact, that cruel laws soon become odious among any people, whoever may be the victims of them. Human feelings revolt against the murdering of young children by wholesale; and the continued increase of the Israelites proves that this cruel edict could not have been long executed; for then the increase of population must have ceased, and Moses would have had no male contemporaries. It is probable, therefore, that hard and oppressive servitude was substituted for this murderous edict against the infants.

The Israelites were now reduced to a state of oppressive bondage. They still inhabited Goshen, and lived separately from the Egyptians, but they were required to labour in brick and mortar for the king; erecting buildings for his pleasure or caprice. As the object was to keep them at hard service, that they might have no time to meditate any schemes of deliverance, it is not an improbable supposition, that the pyramids were erected by their labours. For unless some such work was undertaken, it is hard to conceive how five or six hundred thousand men could, for many years, be kept employed in making brick.

The first we hear of these oppressive burdens imposed on the Israelites, was, when Moses was grown to be a man, for then "he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens." The mother of Moses had been his instructor, as well as his nurse. She did not fail to communicate to him the secret of his descent, and to inspire him with a desire to deliver his brethren from the cruel bondage under which they were labouring. Moses, however, was educated in the court of

Pharaoh, and was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians. He was brought up exactly as if he had been a prince of the royal blood; for the daughter of the king had adopted him as her own son, and educated him as such. It is related by Josephus, that he was received by the king, in default of male offspring, as the heir apparent to the crown. But while such splendid objects were presented, and within the reach of Moses, his mind was occupied with other thoughts and designs. He sympathized deeply with his oppressed brethren, in their grievous afflictions, and was resolved to exert himself for their relief. Indeed, it seems, that he had early received a divine revelation, that he was destined to be the deliverer of Israel from their iron bondage. And he expected that they would be ready to recognize him as such. When he beheld the oppression which his brethren endured, his heart was warmed with indignation; and observing an Egyptian smiting an Israelite, and being a man of great bodily strength, he slew the Egyptian, first looking around to see that there were no persons present who might inform against him; little suspecting that the man whom he rescued from death would bring him into danger, by publishing the fact. But going out the second day, he observed two of the Hebrews striving together. "And he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" Upon hearing this, Moses perceived that the transaction of the former day, in which to save the life of a brother he had slain an Egyptian, was known, and would, consequently, soon reach the ears of the king. And in this he was not erroneous in his judgment, for Pharaoh had not only heard the report, but was so much enraged on account of the act, that he resolved to put Moses to death. Probably, he had been growing jealous of him for some time; or he would not have been disposed to proceed at once to extremities, before he knew the exact circumstances of the case. But Moses, having received timely warning, fled from the land of Egypt, and went into Arabia, into the land of Midian. Having come an entire stranger, and a fugitive, into this country, he sat down by a well. It was so ordered in Providence, that he should come into the neighbourhood of a very wise, pious, and distinguished man, namely, Jethro, the priest, or prince, of Midian. Probably, he united in himself, as was customary in many nations, the highest civil and sacred offices. The daughters of this eminent man, seven in number, in accordance with oriental customs, kept the flocks of their father; and on this occasion, they had driven them to the well where Moses was resting himself; "and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds

came and drove them away." Probably there existed some dispute respecting the property of this well, as we find was often the case in the time of the patriarchs; for to those who led the life of shepherds, no other permanent possessions were of much importance: or, this part of the country may have been infested with a set of selfish, unaccommodating shepherds, who "felt power and forgot right;" or, they may have been, for reasons unknown to us, hostile to Jethro and his family. Often the very excellence and wisdom, as well as the wealth and power of an individual, makes him an object of envy with the people around him. Moses, observing the rough and uncourteous treatment of these interesting shepherdesses, by these ill-natured shepherds, immediately interposed; and being a man of courage and prowess, and in the prime of life, he found no difficulty in delivering them from their oppressors; and assisted them in watering their flocks. It seems that this was no singular case, but one of common occurrence; for when they returned home, Reuel, their father, said, "How is it that you are come so soon to day?" Commonly, it is probable, they had to wait until all the other shepherds had watered their flocks and had departed. Their modesty prevented these young women from inviting Moses to accompany them home: and he was not disposed to intrude into the family of a stranger, on whom he had no claims. Reuel, who is here called the father of these young women, was their grandfather; for in Numbers x. 29, Hobab, another name for Jethro, is called the son of Raguel, (doubtless, the same name as Reuel;) when he heard that an Egyptian delivered them out of the hand of the shepherds, and drew water for them to water their flocks, reproved them for being so uncivil as not to bring the stranger to the house; and immediately sent them back to invite the man, that he might receive some refreshment. Hospitality to strangers has been a characteristic of the humblest of the Arabs for four thousand years: no obligation is by them viewed to be more sacred than the duty of hospitality to any fellow-creature whom Providence brings under their protection. Moses was, therefore, kindly received as a respected guest by this amiable family. And the occurrence which brought them to an acquaintance with each other, was attended with very interesting consequences to both parties. One of these young shepherdesses had charms to attract the attention and fix the affections of a man who had been educated in all the learning of Egypt, and had been accustomed to live in all the luxuries and splendours of Pharaoh's palace. Moses, however, had received that wisdom from above which teaches a man the emptiness of all earthly greatness, and which led him to see that more true pleasure is found in retirement, in pious solitude in the wilderness, than in all the pomp and wealth of a royal

court. Finding himself an exile from Egypt, and not foreseeing when he should be able to return thither with safety, he was content to take up his abode in the hospitable mansion, and with the agreeable family on which he had alighted; and his affection for Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, being reciprocated, he was united to her in marriage; and she bare him a son, whom he called Gershom, which means, A STRANGER HERE: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land. She also bore him another son, whom he named Eliezer, THE LORD IS MY HELP.

SECTION II.

MOSES SOJOURNS IN MIDIAN FORTY YEARS—RECEIVES HIS COMMISSION FROM GOD TO GO AND DELIVER THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL FROM THEIR CRUEL BONDAGE—THE STRONG RELUCTANCE OF MOSES OVERCOME—HE IS EMPOWERED TO WORK MIRACLES—AARON IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIM IN THE COMMISSION.

HERE, in a country much retired, and to this day very little known, Moses spent forty years of his life; not in idleness, for he kept the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law; and doubtless, acquired stores of wisdom from a contemplation of the works and ways of God; and from more direct intercourse with the Father of his spirit by prayer and holy communion. While, in this retirement, it has been supposed by some, that he wrote the book of Genesis, and perhaps the book of Job. But this is mere conjecture, and possesses no strong degree of probability; for it is by no means certain that alphabetical writing was at this time discovered; and as to leisure, he had enough of it in the forty years which he spent in the wilderness; and there he had access to all the traditions which had been handed down through the patriarchs; from which sources of information he was cut off, while resident in Arabia. Indeed, Moses seems to have relinquished all idea of returning to Egypt; and probably had abandoned the expectation, that he was destined to be the deliverer of Israel from oppression and bondage; until the Lord appeared unto him in the burning bush, at Mount Horeb. These appear to be at least probable inferences, from the reluctance which he manifested to be commissioned to go to Pharaoh, and to his brethren, with a message from Jehovah.

The account of this remarkable transaction is as follows: "And the angel of the Lord (Jehovah) appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses, and he said, Here

am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover, he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now, therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel is come up unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses was much disturbed with this extraordinary manifestation and commission, and was by no means inclined to undertake so arduous a work. His objections originated partly in the low opinion which he entertained of his own abilities, and in some degree of culpable distrust of God. He said, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring the people of Israel out of Egypt?" But God said, "Certainly I will be with thee." And told him that it should be a sign unto him that he was sent, "that on that very mountain ye shall serve God, when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt." But Moses continued to excuse himself; and alleged that when he came to the children of Israel, they would ask the name of the God by whom he was sent; "and," said he, "What shall I say unto them?" And God gave unto Moses this name, I AM THAT I AM; or, as it might be rendered, I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE; "And God said unto Moses, Thou shalt say to the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say unto them, The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, appeared unto me, saying I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done unto you in Egypt. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt; and they shall hearken to thy voice, and thou shalt come, and all the elders of Israel unto the king of Egypt; and ye shall say unto him, the Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. And I am sure the king of

Egypt will not let you go; no, not with a mighty hand; and I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that he will let you go. And I will give the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall come to pass that when ye go, ye shall not go empty. But every woman shall borrow (ask) of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters, and ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

Here it may be proper to remark, that the king from whose anger Moses fled, was before this time dead, and who was his successor we are not informed; but this we know, that he was raised by the providence of God to the high station which he occupied, that in him the divine power might be manifested, and the name of God declared throughout all the earth. All the kings of Egypt were called by the name of Pharaoh, for many generations, although they might be of entirely different families. This man has been rendered conspicuous by the obstinacy which he manifested in refusing to let the people of Israel go, notwithstanding the wonders which were wrought before his eyes, and which he must have been convinced, nothing but the power of God could produce. His history is also remarkable for the dreadful overthrow which he met, when pursuing after the Israelites, in the Red Sea.

Moses still discovered strong reluctance to be sent on this arduous work; and alleged, that his words would not be believed; on which the Lord changed the rod which he held in his hand into a serpent, and back again into a rod; which sign he was directed to exhibit in Egypt, that the Israelites might believe that the God of their fathers had sent him. He then directed him to put his hand into his bosom, and his hand instantly became white as snow with the leprosy, when he took it out; and again he was ordered to put it into his bosom, and on taking it out, it was as instantly restored to its natural state. And he said, if they will not believe the first they will believe the latter sign. And if they continued obstinate in their incredulity after the exhibition of both these signs, Moses was directed to change the water of the river into blood. Moses now pleaded his want of eloquence, as a reason why he should not be sent, saying, "I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." "And the Lord said unto him, who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the LORD? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what to say." The extreme reluctance of Moses to engage in this expedition was still further manifested; for he now began to supplicate, that the

commission might be transferred to another, saying, "O my Lord, send I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." This was too much. The patience of God in bearing with him before was wonderful. But now, "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses; and he said, is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be unto thee instead of a mouth; and thou shalt be unto him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." It seems probable from what is here said, that Aaron had heard of his brother's place of residence, and was now on his way to visit him, and consult with him respecting the miserable condition of the people of Israel.

SECTION III.

MOSES TAKES LEAVE OF JETHRO—CIRCUMCISION—AARON, HIS BROTHER, JOINS HIM, AND RECEIVES A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE MESSAGE OF JEHOVAH—THEY GO TO THE HEBREWS FIRST, AND THEN APPEAR BEFORE PHAROAH, AND EXHIBIT THE MIRACLES WHICH THEY WERE DIRECTED TO PERFORM—PHAROAH'S HEART IS HARDENED AND THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE IS MORE WRETCHED—GOD PROMISES DELIVERANCE.

MOSES having received from God this important commission, returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and requested of him permission to visit his brethren in Egypt, and see whether they were yet alive. To which this good man answered, "Go in peace." It was revealed unto Moses, that all those in Egypt who had sought his life were dead; so that he might now return in safety as it related to former transactions. He, therefore, took his wife and his sons, and set off on his journey to Egypt. And as he was commanded, he took with him the wonder-working rod, that he might exhibit to Pharaoh the miracles which he was directed to perform. He was instructed to say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, even my first-born; let my son go that he may serve me; and behold if thou refuse to let him go, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born."

Moses, it seems, had neglected the circumcision of his children, on which account he was met and menaced with death, by the angel of the Lord. Zipporah, through whose influence, probably, the neglect had taken place, now performed the ceremony herself; and then pettishly said, "Surely a bloody husband art thou to me."

And when Moses was on his way, the Lord directed Aaron

to go forth and meet him; and he went into the wilderness, and met him at the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, and informed him of the commission which he had received, and the signs which he was authorized to exhibit; and let him know the part which he was appointed to act under this important commission. It is probable, that Moses sent back to her father's house, Zipporah and his sons, either from the inn where they must have remained some time, on account of the circumcision; or, from this mount, after he met with his brother, and learned the miserable condition of the Israelites in Egypt. It is not at all probable that she accompanied him to Egypt, and was thence sent back; and we know she was with her father when Moses brought the people out of Egypt, and during the first part of their journey in the wilderness; for in the xviii. chapter of Exodus, we read, that Jethro brought to Moses while encamped before the mount of God, his wife "after that he had sent her back."

Moses, accompanied by his brother Aaron, having entered Egypt, as he had been directed, gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron, who acted as the spokesman of Moses, repeated before the people, the message which God had sent. And then, in confirmation of their commission, they exhibited the miracles which Moses had been directed to perform. "And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

Moses and Aaron having successfully executed their commission to the elders of Israel, went boldly unto Pharaoh, and demanded, in the name of the Lord, that he would let the people go to hold a feast in the wilderness. The king seems to have been surprised at the communication, and said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." They informed him that the God of the Hebrews had met with them, and required that the people should go out into the wilderness to sacrifice to him. Pharaoh now became incensed, and charged Moses and Aaron with drawing off the people from their work, and ordered them to get to their burdens. And to prevent them from listening to schemes of this sort, he directed the task-masters and officers of the people, to require of them the usual quantity of brick, but instead of supplying them with straw, as heretofore, to leave them to gather it for themselves. "They be idle," said he, "therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let more be laid upon them, and let them not regard vain words." The people were placed in wretched circumstances, the task-masters required the undiminished number of

bricks, and yet furnished them with no straw, and "hasted them, saying, fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw." And the officers of the children of Israel, whom the task-masters had placed over them, from among themselves, and who were held responsible for the work of those under them, were now beaten, because the tasks were not finished as before; and they came and cried unto Pharaoh, complaining that they were beaten for not having the work done, when they were not furnished with the requisite straw; declaring that the fault lay not with them, but with his own people. "But he said, ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord." The officers of the children of Israel now found that they were in an evil case; and when they met Moses and Aaron, they said, "The Lord look upon you and judge, because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us." This bitter complaint of the Israelites greatly disturbed the mind of Moses. He returned unto the Lord and said, "Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

In answer, God assured Moses, that eventually Pharaoh would be constrained to let the people go, and would even drive them out of the land. Then he said, "I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but, also, by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers! And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for a heritage: I am the Lord." Moses now communicated these gracious promises to the children of Israel, but they hearkened not unto him, "for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage."

The Lord now commanded Moses to go again unto Pharaoh and to demand of him to let the people go out of his land: bu

Moses said, "Behold the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me, how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" But the only answer was a repetition of the former command. And he moreover informed him, that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened, so that he would not let the people go; and thus there would be occasion for him to multiply his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring the children of Israel from among them." And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them.

At the time when Moses and Aaron went in to speak to Pharaoh, the former was eighty years of age, and the latter eighty-three.

SECTION IV.

AARON'S ROD BECOMES A SERPENT—THE MAGICIANS OF PHARAOH IMITATE THE MIRACLE—MOSES AND AARON TURN THE WATER INTO BLOOD—THIS ALSO IMITATED BY THE MAGICIANS—THE MIRACLE OF THE FROGS—THIS ALSO IMITATED BY THE MAGICIANS—THE DUST CONVERTED INTO LICE—MAGICIANS CONFUNDED.

THE Lord now directed them when they went into Pharaoh, to cast down the rod and it would become a serpent. They did so accordingly, in the presence of Pharaoh and his servants. The king then called in the wise men, and the sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt; these also, by the sleight of hand, or by the aid of evil spirits, cast down their rods, and they either really, or in appearance, became serpents: but God's superiority over their diabolical arts was even now manifested; for Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. But the magicians had been so successful in imitating the miracle of Moses and Aaron, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused to let the people go.

Moses and Aaron were next commanded to meet Pharaoh at the brink of the river, and again to demand of him to let the people go; and when, as before, he refused, Aaron took the rod and stretched it out over the waters of Egypt, and they were all turned to blood, and the fish in the river died, and the river stank; and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. The magicians imitated this also, by turning water into blood; but it must have been on a very small scale, for all the rivers, streams, and pools were already converted into blood; so that "all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the river."

But Pharaoh remained obstinate, and went into his house, still refusing to comply with the command of the Almighty; and did not lay to heart the wonderful manifestation of divine power; which, in two instances, had taken place before his eyes.

The next plague inflicted on the Egyptians by the command of God, was the multiplication of frogs throughout the whole land. They were found in frightful abundance, not only in the river and in the fields, but came up into their houses, their bed-chambers, and their beds; and even into their ovens and kneading-troughs. And this miracle was also imitated by the magicians; but manifestly, on a contracted scale, and probably in a secret place, where they could play off their arts of jugglery. The land was already filled with frogs, and there was no difficulty in procuring as many as they would for the purposes of deception. But it seems, these sorcerers had no power to rid the country of the frogs which were spread over it: for Pharaoh makes no application to them for relief from the plague; but says to Moses and Aaron, "Entreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people: and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the Lord." And Moses promised that on the following day, it should be done as he desired, that he might know that there is none like unto the Lord God. "And Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord did according to the word of Moses." "But when Pharaoh saw there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them."

The fourth miracle which Moses, by divine command, wrought for the punishment of the Egyptians, was still more distressing than any of the preceding. The dust of the land was turned by the stretching out of Aaron's rod into lice.

The magicians were entirely confounded by this miracle: for, when they resorted to their enchantments, they could effect nothing like this; and this furnishes a strong argument to prove, that they were mere impostors; for, if they had really power to produce living serpents and frogs, by their diabolical arts, I see not why they could not as easily produce lice. But in this they failed, and said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." There was no room for their delusive arts, in this case; or, they became alarmed at these manifest indications of Almighty power. Some, indeed, suppose that God himself enabled the magicians to perform the first miracles, and then withdrew his aid to show the superiority of Moses and Aaron; but this seems to me to be an unreasonable supposition, and a course of proceeding unworthy of Almighty God. It would be, in the first place, giving the attestation of miracles to an imposture; and, in the next place, it would be a competition for superior-

ity, in a case where the power of God was exerted on both sides. We have to choose, then, between the hypothesis of a diabolical agency, enabling these magicians to go as far as they did, and that of the arts of imposture and delusion, in which wicked men may become so adroit, that they easily impose upon the ignorant and unsuspecting, as is proved by the experience of every day.

SECTION V.

THE MIRACLE OF "DIVERS KINDS OF FLIES"—THE MURRAIN—THE HAIL—PHARAOH AFFRIGHTED BY THE THUNDER WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE HAIL—BUT HIS HEART REMAINS OBDURATE—THE PLAGUE OF THE LOCUSTS—OF THE MIRACULOUS DARKNESS.

AFTER the plague of the lice, the magicians relinquished the contest, and made no further effort with their enchantments. The next plague was of flies or gnats, which in the cv. Psalm, are called "divers kinds of flies." Swarms of these troublesome insects filled their houses, and greatly infested the Egyptians. But in this case, a line of distinction was drawn between the people of Israel and the Egyptians; for in the land of Goshen, there were no swarms of flies. The pressure of this judgment was heavy on the people, and Pharaoh began again to relent, and would have compromised the matter, by giving the Hebrews permission to offer sacrifices in the land of Goshen, where they dwelt; but to this Moses would by no means agree, because *their* sacrifices were an abomination to the Egyptians; consisting of animals held sacred and even worshipped by them; but he insisted, that they should go three days journey into the wilderness. At length Pharaoh seemed to consent, provided they did not go very far away. Upon this Moses again entreated the Lord to remove the swarms of flies, which was accordingly done. But no sooner was the plague removed, than Pharaoh again hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go.

The fifth plague was a grievous murrain upon the horses, the asses, the camels, the oxen, and the sheep in the land of Egypt, generally; while, in Goshen, not an animal belonging to the children of Israel died. Still, however, Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused to let the people go. Wherefore Moses was directed to take the ashes of the furnace, and sprinkle it towards heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh; "and it became a boil breaking forth on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt;" "and the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians."

When this judgment was no more regarded by Pharaoh than any of the former, Moses was directed to rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? Behold, to-morrow, about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now. Send, therefore, now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the Lord amongst the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses; and he that regarded not the word of the Lord, left his servants and his cattle in the field." Accordingly, when Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, the Lord sent thunder and hail; and the fire ran along upon the ground. And there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. And the hail smote, throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both of man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail." Pharaoh was greatly moved by the severity of this judgment; and having called Moses and Aaron, he exclaimed, "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord (for it is enough,) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." The king was evidently frightened by the unusual thunder which accompanied this storm;—a rare thing in the land of Egypt. Moses, although he knew that Pharaoh would not fulfil his promise, yet prayed for a cessation of the hail; and his petition was granted. "The flax and the barley was smitten; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled; but the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not grown up."

Pharaoh's heart remaining obstinate, and he still refusing to permit the Israelites to depart, Moses and Aaron went in and said unto him, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, how

long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go that they may serve me: else if thou refuse, to-morrow will I bring the locusts into thy courts. The condition of Egypt was now so deplorable that the servants of Pharaoh began to entreat him to let the people go. "Knowest thou not," said they, "that Egypt is destroyed?" Upon which he said to Moses and Aaron, "Go, serve the Lord your God, but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, we will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord." But Pharaoh would not hearken to this; but insisted that only the men should go, which was the original request, and when Moses and Aaron did not yield in the least, he drove them from his presence.

The plague of the locusts now came upon the land of Egypt; "For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh was now seized with another fit of repentance, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you; now, therefore, forgive my sin, only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only. And Moses went out and prayed to the Lord, who sent a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; so that there remained not one locust in all the land of Egypt."

The next plague sent by the hand of Moses on the Egyptians was not attended with so much danger to human life, as some of the rest, but it was one replete with horror. It was a total darkness for the space of three days. During this period no one saw another, and they were unable to remove from their place; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Pharaoh now consented that they should go, and take their wives and children; but not their flocks and their herds. But they said, "Our cattle shall go with us, there shall not be a hoof left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither." With this unyielding demand, Pharaoh was so much displeased, that he said in his wrath, "Get thee from me; take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

SECTION VI.

INSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER—THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FIRST-BORN OF ALL THE EGYPTIANS—THE EXODUS.

AFFAIRS were now coming to a crisis. The Lord commanded Moses to speak to the people, that every man and every woman should borrow, or rather, *ask* of their neighbours, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. "And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants; and in the sight of the people."

And Moses made known to the people that about midnight, the Lord would go forth into the midst of Egypt, and would slay all the first-born in the land of Egypt; from the first-born of Pharaoh on the throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant, that sitteth behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. But that against the children of Israel not a dog should move his tongue, against man or beast. "And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land."

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month in the year to you. Speak ye to all the children of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house, take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night; roasted with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs shall they eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roasted with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning, ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste:

it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord, throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

Thus the solemn feast of the passover was instituted, to be a memorial of the deliverance of the children of Israel from the desolating plague which fell on every house of the Egyptians, by means of the sprinkled blood of a lamb on the door-posts of their houses. And it can hardly be doubted, that this same ceremony of a slaughtered lamb and sprinkled blood, had a prospective as well as a retrospective aspect; it was a type of the deliverance to be effected by the LAMB OF GOD, as well as a memorial of a deliverance from the destroying angel, who passed through Egypt.

It was ordained that the passover should be celebrated annually, on the same day of the month; that all the Israelites, by families, should partake of it; but that no stranger should be admitted, until all his males were circumcised. And they were directed, when they came to the land of Canaan, and their children should inquire, "What mean you by this service?" they should say, "This is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses."

The commands of God were immediately obeyed by the Israelites. And at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt; "and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." Pharaoh now gave orders in good earnest, that Moses and Aaron and all the people of Israel should depart from Egypt. "And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We be all dead men." This strong desire to get rid of a people who seemed to be the occasion of such dreadful judgments, seems to have had much influence in disposing them to give them whatever they asked; so that the Israelites went out of Egypt, as had been predicted to them, laden with the spoils of the Egyptians, which they had voluntarily given into their hands.

SECTION VII.

NUMBER OF THE PEOPLE—TIME OF SOJOURNING—CHANGE OF THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR—REDEMPTION OF THE FIRST-BORN—THE WAY WHICH THEY WERE LED—JOSEPH'S BONES—SUCCOTH—PILLAR OF FIRE AND CLOUD.

THE number of persons, besides children and a mixed multitude, who went up out of Egypt that night, was six hundred thousand men. And their first journey was from Rameses, in Goshen, to Succoth, so called from the booths which they erected there.

“Now,” says Moses, “the sojourning of the children of Israel, [in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan] was four hundred and thirty years.” The period, as here given, commences with the first promise made to Abraham, (Gen. xii. 2,) after he entered the land of Canaan, which was thirty years before the time when it was foretold that his seed should be oppressed and afflicted in a strange land, four hundred years. It was especially commanded that no part of the flesh should be carried out of the house where the paschal lamb was eaten; and a more important regulation was, “a bone of him shall not be broken.”

This month had been originally called *Abib*, and was the seventh of the civil year of the Hebrews, but its name was now changed to *Nisan*; and they were directed to reckon it henceforward, the first month of their year.

In consequence of the redemption of the first-born of Israel as above related, God laid claim to every first-born of man and beast, among the Hebrews. When it happened to be of clean animals, appointed to be used in sacrifice, it was offered as a burnt-offering to the Lord; but when it was an unclean animal, as an ass, it was redeemed by a lamb, or its neck was directed to be broken. And all the first-born of the children of Israel were considered as consecrated to the Lord, and must be redeemed; but, afterwards, the Lord took the whole tribe of Levi as a substitute for the first-born, as will be related hereafter.

From the land of Egypt to Canaan, there was a direct way, which the sons of Jacob had passed with ease, several times; but the Lord led not the people along this way, which led through the territory of the Philistines, although that was near; because these people were hostile and warlike; and it would have discouraged the hearts of the people to have encountered such enemies, immediately after commencing their journey, and they might have been disposed to return again to Egypt; but “God led the people through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea,” which was a circuitous route.

The people were not forgetful of the solemn injunction of Joseph to carry his bones with them, when God should visit them, and bring them up out of the land of Egypt.

Succoth has been mentioned as the first stage which they made after leaving Egypt; their next was Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. In conducting this great host, God was pleased to become their guide, in a very extraordinary and miraculous manner. Before the armies of Israel, in the day time, there appeared a bright cloud in the form of a pillar, and at night it appeared like a pillar of fire, which constantly went before them, in their marches, and never forsook them, during the forty years that they wandered in the wilderness. From Etham they were directed to take their route by Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal Zephon. As far as can be judged from the present topography of the country, this route led them in a southern direction along the coast of the Red Sea, until they could in that direction proceed no further.



SECTION VIII.

PHARAOH PURSUES THE ISRAELITES, AND OVERTAKES THEM AT THE EDGE OF THE RED SEA—ALARM OF THE PEOPLE—PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE—THE SEA DIVIDED BY THE ROD OF MOSES.

As soon as Pharaoh and his people had time to recover from their consternation on account of the death of the first-born, and it was told to the king that the people fled, he began to repent that he had let them go, and thus was deprived of the services of this great multitude, who had been treated as slaves. Pharaoh, therefore, quickly summoned an army of chariots of war, and of horsemen, to pursue after the Israelites, and overtook them encamping near the sea, in the place before mentioned. And when the Israelites saw the Egyptians marching towards them, they were greatly alarmed, and cried unto the Lord. They also reproached Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, and said, "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness, wherefore hast thou dealt with us to carry us out of Egypt? It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel,

that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry land, through the midst of the sea. And I, behold I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them, and I will get me honour on Pharaoh and upon all his host, and upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." And now, lest the Egyptians should make a sudden assault upon this great multitude of unprepared people, the angel of the Lord who had hitherto gone before the host in a pillar of cloud and fire, removed, and went behind them; and came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and while it furnished light to the latter, to the former it occasioned dense darkness; so that during the whole night they did not approach near to the Israelites. And when Moses stretched his rod over the sea, the waters were divided; for "the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind, all that night, and made the sea dry land. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them, to the midst of the sea." And towards the morning watch, the Lord impeded the progress of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drew them heavily; and the Egyptians began to think of flight; for they said, "The Lord fighteth for them." By this time the Israelites having reached the opposite shore—for the channel of the sea at this place was narrow—Moses was directed again to reach forth his hand over the sea, and the waters immediately returned, and overwhelmed the flying Egyptians, their chariots, and their horsemen, and all their host; so that of this powerful army not one remained alive. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore; and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses."

On this occasion, Moses composed a song, the oldest poetic composition in existence, unless we should suppose that the book of Job was written before this time. "And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." And they sung the song which Moses had composed, and accompanied it with their instruments.

SECTION IX.

ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS—WANT OF WATER—MARAH—ELIM—WANT OF FOOD—MANNA PROMISED—SABBATH—QUAILS—DESCRIPTION OF THE MANNA—REGULATIONS FOR COLLECTING IT—POT OF MANNA TO BE LAID UP FOR A MEMORIAL.

THE Israelites were now delivered from this formidable enemy; but they were in a wide and howling wilderness. The name of that part of the wilderness into which they now had entered, was Shur. And having marched three days without finding water, at length they came to Marah, where they found water, but it was bitter, hence the name given to the place. The people began now to manifest their rebellious disposition, for they murmured against Moses and said, "What shall we drink? And when Moses cried unto the Lord, he showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they were made sweet. And leaving Marah they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees, and they encamped there by the waters."

At some of these stages they must have continued a number of days, as on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing from the land of Egypt, they arrived at their next resting place, which was in the wilderness of Sin, on the way from Elim to Sinai. The provisions which they had brought with them from Egypt being exhausted, the people began to be in want; and regretted that they had ever left the flesh-pots of Egypt, where they did eat bread to the full; and they murmured against Moses, who constantly had recourse to the Lord for help. And he said, "I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day; that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." This is the first clear intimation which we have in Scripture of the observance of the Sabbath after its institution; and the mention of it is made in that familiar manner, which would induce us to think, that it was no new thing: and there was nothing in the circumstances of the people which could be a reason for setting apart the seventh day of the week, at this time, as a day of rest. To overawe the agitated people, and to reprove their wicked murmurings, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. What that appearance was, which is called **THE GLORY OF THE LORD**, we cannot certainly tell; but it was doubtless a very bright appearance; but whether there was seen, on these occasions, any person in the form of man, cannot be gathered from the sacred record. But the Lord not only promised to furnish bread for this great

congregation, but flesh also; the latter was first given: "For in the evening the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the host." And when the dew disappeared the people saw "a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost, on the ground." "And when they saw it, they said, *manna—what is it?*" And thus this extraordinary bread received its name. They were now directed by Moses to go out and gather, every one for himself; and when they brought it in to be measured with an omer, "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered, every man according to his eating." Moses had given strict orders, that no portion of the manna should remain until the morning, but the people disobeyed his voice, and kept of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank; and he was much displeased. Every morning they gathered what was necessary for that day; except that on the sixth day, they collected double the usual quantity, namely, two omers for one man. And Moses said unto them, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning; and that which was laid up on the sixth day did not stink; neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, eat this to-day, for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." Notwithstanding these plain directions, some of the people went to gather on the seventh day and found none. This perverseness occasioned another exhortation respecting the observation of the Sabbath, "See, for the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." That is, no man was permitted to go out to collect food on the Sabbath; but this did not prohibit them from going out to worship; or even to lead their ox or ass to watering; or to relieve the sick and afflicted. "So the people rested on the seventh day." The appearance of the manna was like coriander seed, white; and its taste was like wafers made with honey. In order that future generations might have a memorial and sensible evidence of this extraordinary and long continued miracle, Moses directed the people to fill an omer with the manna, and to put it up before the Lord. This command seems to have been anticipated, here; for it is said that Moses and Aaron laid it up before the TESTIMONY to be kept: but the ark of the testimony in which the manna was deposited, did not yet exist. The command, however, might have been given now,

and the execution of it deferred until this depository was prepared for its preservation.

SECTION X.

REBELLION OF THE PEOPLE AT REPHIDIM FOR WANT OF WATER—THE ROCK SMITTEN
—THE PEOPLE ASSAILED BY THE AMALEKITES—JOSHUA DEFEATS THEM.

THIS miraculous bread that fell from heaven, was the sustenance of this great multitude of people, not merely for a day, or a week, or a month, or a single year; but for forty years.

From the wilderness of Sin, the people journeyed again, and came to Rephidim; and here a new distress began to be experienced. They were supplied with bread, and had received an abundant feast of flesh; but now water failed. Never was there a more rebellious, discontented people than those whom Moses was now conducting through the wilderness; and whatever disaster was experienced, the blame was cast upon him, who had no more power to prevent it, than any other man. Instead of humbly crying to God for a supply of water, which they had every encouragement to do, with confidence, they began to chide with Moses; and said, "Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said, Why chide you with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?" But they continued to murmur against him, saying, "Wherefore is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our cattle, with thirst?" The clamour against him, on this occasion, was so violent, that when Moses cried to the Lord for help, he said, "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me." By this time, the host of Israel had approached the mount of Horeb, a part of the range of Sinai; and the Lord commanded Moses to take with him the elders of Israel, and go and stand on the rock of Horeb, and to smite the rock with the rod with which he at first smote the river, when its waters were turned to blood. And Moses did according to the word of the Lord, in the sight of the elders of Israel; and the name of the place was called Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord: the latter of these names signifies *chiding*, and the former, *temptation*. Among other impious things, they said, "Is the Lord among us or not?" And now a new calamity befell them. "Amalek came and fought with them at Rephidim." And Moses said to Joshua, "choose out men, and go and fight with Amalek. To-morrow, I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. So Joshua fought with Amalek; and Moses, and

Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. And when Moses held up his hand, then Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon, and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the one on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." And the Lord said unto Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it **JEHOVAH-NISSI**; that is, **JEHOVAH MY BANNER**. Because the Lord had sworn that he would have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Where the Amalekites now dwelt is unknown; long after this they are found inhabiting the south part of the land of Canaan. Saul, the first king of Israel, lost the divine favour by neglecting to execute the divine vengeance on this nation.

Here also we have the first notice of a man more famous than all others after Moses, for the frequent and familiar intercourse which he had with God, and for the wonderful works which he was enabled to perform. It may be asserted that Joshua was the witness of more stupendous miracles than any man who ever lived upon earth. At this time, though appointed commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel, he must have been quite a young man, and is so called, after this time.

Although Moses represented to Pharaoh that he wished to go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices unto Jehovah; yet no favourable opportunity seems to have occurred for this service, until after the defeat of the Amalekites. Moses then, for the first time, as far as appears, erected an altar; and no doubt offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; for an altar has no other use than for sacrifices. The name given to it seems to relate to the victory just achieved, by the help of the Lord, and to the oath that there should be unceasing war with Amalek. **THE LORD IS MY BANNER**, was a fit device to be inscribed on the standard of Joshua, who was the instrument of the Almighty in destroying a great multitude of people.

SECTION XI.

JETHRO'S VISIT TO MOSES—HIS WISE COUNSEL—INSTITUTION OF OFFICERS—JETHRO RETURNS HOME.

WHILE Israel was encamped at Mount Horeb, Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, having heard how he had brought the people out of Egypt, came unto him, with Zipporah his wife, and his two sons, Gershom and Eliczer, whom Moses, after starting with them to Egypt, sent back again, as has already been related. This must have been a most gratifying visit to Moses; and, therefore, as soon as it was announced that his father-in-law had arrived, "he went out to meet him, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel; whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. Jethro appears to have been eminently devout as well as wise; for on hearing the narrative of Moses, he was so excited, that he burst forth in praises to God, saying, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. And Jethro," who was a priest, "took burnt-offerings and sacrifices for God;" and as it was customary every where, to feast on the remains of such sacrifices, as were not entirely consumed upon the altar, Aaron and the elders of Israel came and "eat bread with Moses' father-in-law, before God;" that is, at the altar, where offerings had just been made to God.

When Jethro observed how the people came to Moses with their causes and disputes from morning until evening, and that he had no assistance, and no relaxation from the severe duties of the judgment-seat, he found fault with his arrangements, and told him that at this rate he would wear out both himself and the people; "For," said he, "this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, and I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee. Provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons. And it shall be that every great matter they shall

bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself; and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall go to their place in peace." And Moses perceived at once the wisdom of the counsel of his father-in-law, and took immediate measures to carry this convenient plan of polity into effect. But as he knew the importance of having the cordial consent of the people to these new measures, he addressed himself unto them, and said, "I am not able to bear you myself alone. The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times as many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you! How can I myself alone, bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife. Take ye wise men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you." Thus, in Deuteronomy, we read that Moses left the choice of rulers to the people; but in Exodus it is said, "Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. There is, however, no inconsistency in these accounts. He presided over the whole business and appointed to office such persons as the people elected, and this was a much safer as well as a much more popular method of making a selection, than if he had depended on his own judgment, or on the opinion of a few ministers about his person. Here then, we have the commencement of a genuine, republican government. The idea of a regular gradation of rulers or officers, was suggested by Jethro, but the manner of choosing them by the free suffrage of the people at large, was the plan of Moses himself. It is especially worthy of remark, in the counsel of Jethro, that he offers it on condition it should meet the approbation of God. "If," said he, "God command thee." No doubt Moses received an intimation from the Lord that the polity recommended was good; and in this way we may observe how God makes use of the wisdom which he has given to his servants to devise useful and convenient plans, for the government of his people, even when he was daily making revelations of his laws and of his will. Jethro, having aided his son-in-law in forming a system for the government of this nation, took his leave, and departed into his own land, for the present; although, as we shall see in the sequel of the history, he came back again, and probably accompanied Israel to the land of Canaan.

SECTION XII.

MOSES CALLED UP INTO THE MOUNT—COMMUNICATES THE WORDS OF JEHOVAH TO THE PEOPLE—TREMENDOUS EXHIBITION ON MOUNT SINAI—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS UTTERED IN A VOICE OF THUNDER—VARIOUS OTHER LAWS.

THREE months had now elapsed from the time the children of Israel had gone out from Egypt; and they entered the wilderness of Sinai; for they had left Rephidim, where they lay encamped near Horeb, for some time, and had proceeded to the desert of Sinai, which was something farther to the east. Sometimes, Horeb and Sinai are taken for the same mountain, as they belong to the same range; but properly they are distinct mountains, at no great distance asunder. Moses had now arrived at the place where God had met with him and spoke to him from the midst of the burning bush. This was a sacred spot; and surely no other place on earth was ever the scene of more stupendous miracles. Moses was now called up into the mount, and the Lord charged him to say to the children of Israel, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." And Moses called the elders of Israel and laid before them all these words. And the people answered with one accord, and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." So easy a thing is it to obtain the profession of obedience, even from a rebellious people. In all communications from God to the people, and from the people to God, Moses acted as the mediator or *internuncius*.

Moses now received orders to go and "sanctify the people to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes." We have already had occasion to remark one instance of this kind of ablution, or external purification, in the family of Jacob, when he was on his way to Bethel, to fulfil his vow, in the history of the Patriarchs. As it was a cleansing with water, it seems to have had something of the nature of a baptism; and the tradition of the Jewish rabbies, that the custom of proselyte baptism had its origin in this ancient manifestation of the divine presence, which rite of sanctification is not altogether improbable. It was never practised, but in view of some great solemnity, to which the people were approaching: and thus also, when the Lord himself came to sojourn upon earth, John, who was sent to prepare his way, called the whole Jewish nation to repentance, and also to the washing of baptism. In this case, at mount Sinai, the prescribed ablution was to prepare the

Israelites for the extraordinary descent of Jehovah upon the mountain on the third day, in the sight of all the people. And Moses was directed to set bounds around the mount, and to forewarn the people, that whoever touched the mount should die; and whether it were man or beast it should either be stoned or shot through. And Moses sanctified the people according to the command of God; "and on the third day, in the morning, there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount; and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount." Again, God gave express orders that the people should keep themselves within the prescribed limits, and not break through to gaze; otherwise, they would bring swift destruction upon themselves; "and thou shalt come up, thou and Aaron, but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord; lest he break through upon them." It is difficult to determine who are to be understood by the *priests* mentioned here. We know that the Aaronic priests were not yet consecrated, and we never read of any other priesthood among the Israelites. It may, however, be argued with great probability, that wherever there are sacrifices there must be priests; and it is reasonable to suppose, that there existed a set of men appointed to this service. And there occurred a fact in the sequel of the history which confirms this idea; where Moses directed *the young men* to offer sacrifices, before Aaron was consecrated.

From the midst of the darkness, in a voice of thunder, God now spoke all the words of the ten commandments of the moral law. When the people heard the tremendous voice of God speaking to them, and saw the thundering and the lightnings, and heard the voice of the trumpet, they removed and stood afar off: and they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die." But Moses encouraged them not to fear, though at the first he was himself so terrified, that he said, as the apostle informs us, "I exceedingly fear and quake." These words are not recorded here, but it is remarkable, that in one instance it is said that Moses spake, but what he said is not mentioned. After this the Lord spake only to Moses, and he communicated what was said to the people. The first solemn message related to the worship of idols. The words are remarkable as showing that

images and idols were first used as a means of worshipping Jehovah. "Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." Directions were then given to make an altar of earth; and to sacrifice thereon burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, sheep and oxen. And then this important promise was given, which is in force to this day: "IN ALL PLACES WHERE I RECORD MY NAME, I WILL COME UNTO THEE, AND I WILL BLESS THEE." It was also ordained, that for the sake of decency, they should not ascend the altar by steps. From what is here said, it appears, that burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, were the two kinds of sacrifices in use, before the institution of the Levitical ritual. The first of these was entirely consumed by fire on the altar, and among the Greeks obtained the name of holocaust, (entirely consumed:) the peace-offerings were presented on the altar, but only a small part of the flesh was consumed, and the remainder furnished a feast for the worshipper and his friends. In every case, however, the blood was entirely drawn from the animal, and partly sprinkled on and around the altar, and partly poured on the ground, at its foot.

The next communication related to Hebrew servants; directing, that in no case, should they be obliged to serve more than six years: if the servant, however, preferred his master's house to liberty, he might remain, but in token of perpetual servitude, he was to have his ear bored to the door post; but this transaction was ordered to take place before the judges; that there might be no injustice done.

SECTION XIII.

LAWS RESPECTING MURDER—LEX TALIONIS—MISCHIEF BY AN OX—OPENING A PIT—
PENALTY FOR STEALING AN OX OR A SHEEP—THE KILLING OF A THIEF—GOODS IN
TRUST—ANIMALS BORROWED—SEDUCTION—IDOLATERS—WITCHES.

It was ordained, that in all cases, wilful murder should be punished with death: but for him who slew a man unintentionally, a refuge from the avenger of blood should be provided.

It was also capital for a child either to strike or to curse his parents; and the person who stole a man and sold him was also punished with death. The man who inflicted a bodily injury on his neighbour, so that he was rendered incapable of work, was bound to pay all the expenses of his cure, and his wages for the time of his confinement.

And it was specially ordained, that a man who killed a servant, by striking him with a rod, should by no means be permitted to escape condign punishment; but if death did not immediately ensue, and yet the servant should die after several

days, it was to be presumed, that the death was owing to another cause, since men would not be apt to destroy their own property.

The rule prescribed to the judges in apportioning punishments to crimes, was the most just that could be conceived. It was what has been called, "the law of retaliation." "Life for life; eye for eye; tooth for tooth; hand for hand; foot for foot; burning for burning; wound for wound; strife for strife." But if a man deprived a servant of his eye or his tooth, he was to be deprived of his services, and the servant received his freedom.

An ox that gored a man was directed to be slain; and the owner of an ox, known to push with his horns in time past, if being forewarned to keep him up, he neglected to do it, and the ox kill a man, the ox shall be put to death, and also his owner: but in this case, he was permitted to redeem his life by paying a fine. And where the ox killed a servant, his owner was bound to pay for his loss, and the ox, as before, was to be stoned.

He who opened a pit and left it uncovered, was responsible for all the injuries which might ensue; and where the ox of one man killed that of another, the law was, that both should be equally divided, the living ox by being sold, and the dead ox also; but if the offending ox was known to push in time past, and his owner kept him not in, then he was bound to pay for the slain ox, and take his carcase to himself.

For the stealing an ox, the penalty was, to restore five for one; and four sheep for a sheep.

In the day time, it was reckoned murder to put the thief to death, if apprehended in the act; but not so in the night; because death is not the proper punishment for theft, but restitution; and yet the law of self-defence will exculpate a man for killing a thief when found breaking into his house in the night.

The same principle of responsibility recognized in the law respecting a noxious ox, is applied to fire. This being a dangerous element, when not carefully guarded, the man who lets out fire which destroys his neighbour's property, is liable for all the injury suffered; so also, if a man put his cattle into another man's field; out of the best of his own he was bound to make restitution.

If money or other property were committed in trust to any one, and was stolen, the person from whom it was stolen, was required to take an oath before the judges, that he had not put his hand to his neighbour's goods.

An animal borrowed, if it died when the owner was present,

the borrower was not bound to make it good; but if he was not present, then the borrower was responsible.

It was a law, that the man who seduced a woman should certainly marry her; unless the father of the woman utterly refused, and then a fine was imposed, equal to the dowry of a virgin.

A witch was not to be suffered to live.

Idolaters, and persons guilty of unnatural crimes, were to be punished with death.

SECTION XIV.

PROVISION FOR THE POOR, THE STRANGER, WIDOW, AND ORPHAN—LOANS TO A BROTHER—PLEDGES—SPEAKING EVIL OF RULERS—FIRST-FRUITS—ANIMALS TORN BY WILD BEASTS—SLANDER FORBIDDEN—DUTIES TO ENEMIES—SABBATICAL YEAR—ANNUAL FESTIVALS—THE PASSOVER—FEAST OF TABERNACLES—AND FEAST OF HARVEST OF PENTECOST—LEAVEN FORBIDDEN IN THE SACRIFICES—OTHER LAWS.

A SPECIAL provision was made for relief to the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless. The very words of this law are worthy of our consideration. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow nor fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

Money lent to a brother who was poor, was to be without interest or usury.

When a neighbour's garment was taken in pledge, the law required, that it should be restored before the going down of the sun.

It was expressly forbidden to speak evil of judges or magistrates.

The firstlings of the flocks and herds, the first fruits of the field, the garden, and the wine-press, were the Lord's.

The flesh of animals torn by wild beasts was forbidden to be eaten by the Israelites.

Slander and false witness are expressly prohibited.

And it was forbidden to follow a multitude to do evil; and especially not to advocate an unrighteous cause, to decline after a multitude.

Neither were they permitted to countenance a poor man in his cause; that is, when it was unjust; neither might they wrest the judgment of the poor.

No enmity of another can exonerate us from the obligations of neighbourly conduct towards him; therefore, it was enjoined, that if a man met the ox or ass of his enemy going astray, he

should surely bring it back to him; or if he saw his ass lying under a burden, he should by all means assist him.

Great disapprobation is manifested towards all partiality and injustice in the settling of disputes between man and man. No gift was allowed to be received by judges from either party concerned in a cause.

As the people were commanded to do all their secular work in six days, and rest the seventh day; so they were directed to sow the land and gather in the fruits for six years, but the seventh year they were to let it lie uncultivated. The reason here assigned for the rest of the weekly Sabbath, is a political one, and still of as great force as at first, "That thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thine handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed;" and the reason assigned for a sabbatical year was, "that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat?" for in this year, no man was permitted to gather into his barn any of the spontaneous productions of the earth: these were free to all, and the owner of the field had no peculiar claim to them.

Three times in the year, all the males were required to appear before the Lord. At the feast of the PASSOVER, or of unleavened bread, on the fourteenth of Abib or Nisan, of the institution of which, a particular account has already been given; at the feast of HARVEST, which was to be celebrated fifty days after the passover, and was therefore called by the Greeks, PENTECOST; and the feast of INGATHERING, at the end of the year, which is commonly called, the feast of TABERNACLES; because during its celebration, the people cut down branches of trees and made themselves booths, in commemoration of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness. This feast was set to the fifteenth day of the seventh month. And as their families and habitations would be peculiarly exposed, when all the males were absent, a special promise was given, that during these visits of piety to the place where the Lord should record his name, no one should desire their land, or molest their families. Thus, also, there was a special promise, that the sixth year should be so abundantly productive, that there would be no danger of want from having their fields untilled on the seventh.

Some laws were given, the reason of which does not clearly appear. Of this sort is the one forbidding leaven to be offered with any of their sacrifices; and that none of the fat of a sacrifice should remain until the morning. Probably many such regulations were intended to guard the people against the superstitious rites of the heathen around them. Some precepts, however, seem to have had no other end than to cherish humanity, and kind feelings even to animals. Such as this, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk."

SECTION XV.

THE ANGEL OF GOD PROMISED TO GO BEFORE THE PEOPLE.

To encourage the people, and prevent their murmurings, the Lord said, "Behold I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice: provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies; and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perrizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them; nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy the people to whom thou shalt come. And I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little, will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land. And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea, even unto the sea of the Philistines; and from the desert unto the river; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land; lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods it will surely be a snare to thee."

SECTION XVI.

MOSES, AARON, NADAB, AND ABIHU CALLED INTO THE MOUNT—GLORIOUS APPEARANCE OF GOD—TABLES OF THE LAW.

MOSES was, after this, called up into the mount, and directed to bring with him Aaron and his two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: but these were to worship afar off, and Moses alone to come near the Lord. And

Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And early in the morning he builded an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. "And he sent young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord." Some remarks have already been made on the existence of priests in Israel, before the consecration of Aaron, and reference was made to what is here stated. We have also here a more particular account than occurs before, of the ceremonies in relation to the blood of the sacrifices; "And Moses took half of the blood and put it into a basin; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar." Having committed to writing the laws which had been committed to him by the Lord, and which the people had repeatedly promised that they would obey, he now took the book containing this covenant and read it in the audience of the people. "And they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." And Moses took the blood which he had put in basins, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." After this solemn ratification of the covenant, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, went up on the mount. "And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink." The visible appearance, on this occasion, must have been that of the Angel of the Covenant, the Son of God, who often appeared in the form of a man; and sometimes, as in this instance, surrounded with glory.

It was not sufficient that the law of the ten commandments should be uttered by the voice of God, and written by Moses in the book of the law, the Lord now directed Moses to come up to him in the mount, and he would give him tables of stone, which should contain the law and commandments. On this occasion, Moses was accompanied only by Joshua. "And he said unto the elders of Israel, tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have matters to do, let him come unto them. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount. And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."

SECTION XVII.

OFFERINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE—PATTERN—CURTAINS—ALTAR—LAVER—HOLY,
AND MOST HOLY PLACE, AND THEIR FURNITURE.

AT this time, directions were given to Moses in relation to offerings of gold, and silver, and brass; blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat's hair, and ram's skins dyed red, and badger skins, and shittim wood; oil for the light; spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx-stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breast-plate, for the purpose of making a sanctuary, or house of worship, in which God might, as it were, dwell among them. The exact pattern of this structure was shown to Moses in the mount; and he was ordered to be careful to make a tabernacle, and the instruments and furniture thereof, exactly according to the pattern which he had seen. The tabernacle itself was directed to be made with boards, plated with silver, and inserted in sockets; and held together by cross-bars, and by braces at the corners. Over this frame several sets of curtains were suspended. The first of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet. And above these, another set of curtains, of goat's hair, eleven in number; to be a covering on the tabernacle. And as an outer covering of the whole, there was a canopy of ram skins dyed red, and skins dyed blue.

The tabernacle was to be divided into two compartments, the exterior of which was to be twenty cubits in length, and ten cubits wide; and the interior, which was THE MOST HOLY PLACE, ten cubits square. The entrance into the outer tabernacle, or holy place, was by an opening covered by a thick impervious curtain; and the separation between the holy and most holy place, was by another curtain of most precious materials and workmanship. The furniture of the exterior apartment was, first, the golden candlestick of pure beaten gold, with its seven ornamented branches, or stems, with their respective lamps and oil vessels. 2. The table of shew-bread covered with plates of gold, on which twelve loaves were placed every Sabbath morning; and those were directed to be eaten by the priests within the sacred precincts. And, 3. The golden altar, or altar of incense. Within the inner veil, in the interior recess of the tabernacle, called the most holy place, was the ark of the covenant, a chest covered all over with pure gold, the lid of which, called *the mercy-seat*, or place of atonement, was a piece of gold on which, at each end, were formed cherubims, whose faces were turned inwards, towards the mercy-seat. Within this sacred chest were deposited the two tables of the law, written

by the finger of God—the pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded. The tabernacle was so constructed, that it could readily be taken down, and carried from place to place. It was situated within a court, a hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, near the western extremity. This court was everywhere surrounded with pillars, on which were suspended curtains, except in the front, where was a wide gate, closed by a curtain. In this court was also placed the altar of burnt-offerings, at no great distance from the entrance of the tabernacle, and between the altar and the tabernacle stood the laver, which was continually replenished with water, where the priests washed their hands and feet, and the pieces of the victims, which were placed on the altar.

SECTION XVIII.

DESIGNATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS TO THE PRIEST’S OFFICE—SACERDOTAL GARMENTS—MATERIALS OFFERED FREELY—WISDOM GIVEN TO EXECUTE THE WORK—AMOUNT OF GOLD AND SILVER CONTRIBUTED—WHENCE OBTAINED.

As there was now to be a sacred edifice for the worship of God, and a great increase of ritual services, it became necessary to have a priesthood entirely consecrated to this service. Accordingly, the whole tribe of Levi was selected to aid, as there might be occasion, in the religious services of the tabernacle: but the family of Aaron who belonged to this tribe, were sanctified to be priests, of whom Aaron was chief priest. The priests were consecrated with many ceremonies, and a particular costume was prescribed to them, which they were bound to wear, whilst ministering in or about the sanctuary. The robes of the high-priest were as splendid and rich as the most precious materials and costly work could make them. No prince or potentate ever wore habiliments more elegant and decorous. It is not necessary to describe the several parts of the high-priest’s dress. A good painting or print will give the reader a clearer idea of it, than any description which we could give in words. It may, however, be satisfactory to specify the mitre and the breast-plate. The former was an elegant turban encircled with a crown, on the front of which was a golden plate, inscribed with the words “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” The breast-plate was, however, the richest, most splendid, and most important part of the whole. In it were inserted twelve precious stones, each of a different species from the rest; and on each of these was inscribed the name of one of the tribes of Israel; so that the twelve tribes of Israel were engraven on these stones, which were set in ouches of gold. And on the shoulders where the breast-plate was fastened to the other parts of the dress,

there were two clasps containing two very large stones of the most valuable kind, on which also were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes; six on the one, and six on the other. The high-priest wore this precious and splendid dress, when he ministered in the tabernacle, except when he officiated on the day of atonement, on which occasion he put on what were called the linen garments, which he wore in common with the other priests.

The offerings requisite for the costly edifice now erected, and for all the furniture of the court, and the tabernacle, and for the garments of the priests, were made voluntarily by the people, not grudgingly, but willingly, and with so much liberality, that it became necessary for Moses to make proclamation, that materials sufficient for the whole work were already in hand, and to request the people to withhold their hands, and bring no more offerings.

There were also men inspired with wisdom and ingenuity by the Spirit of the Lord, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary. The chief of these wise-hearted men were Bezaleel and Aholiab, to whom the execution of the whole work was committed. There were also wise-hearted women, "who did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen." And others spun goats' hair; and to make the laver, the women gave up their brazen mirrors. Thus "the children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord; every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses."

The whole amount of gold used in the structure of the tabernacle was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels: and the silver, an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels. It has sometimes been inquired, whence had the Israelites, who had just come out of the oppressive bondage of Egypt, resources to supply so much gold and silver and other precious materials, for the building of the tabernacle? To which it may be replied, that some of them, especially the descendants of Joseph, were rich, for we do not read that their property was taken away by the Egyptians. Again, they received large quantities of gold and silver from the Egyptians the night on which they forsook Egypt, as has been before related; and it is exceedingly probable that they found great spoils at the Red Sea; for the bodies of the Egyptians were washed on shore; and the Israelites were thus enriched by their enemies, in more ways than one.

SECTION XIX.

ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE—LAWS RESPECTING SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS—SIN-OFFERINGS—UNBLOODY SACRIFICES—DRINK-OFFERINGS—FLOUR-OFFERINGS.

THE erection of the tabernacle took place in the first month of the second year, and first day of the month, after they left Egypt. When the tabernacle was reared up, and all its furniture disposed in its proper place, "the cloud covered the tent of the congregation; AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onwards in all their journeys. But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not, till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and a fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."

The laws now given respecting sacrifices, offerings and various other things, were exceedingly numerous, and need not be recited in detail. Some general remarks, together with a notice of some remarkable statutes and ordinances, will be sufficient for our purpose.

The earliest kind of sacrifice of which we have any account, was the burnt-offering, which might be of the herd or of the flock; or in case of poverty, doves or pigeons. The ceremonies used in this sacrifice, were the following: the animal, of whatever kind, whether of the herd or flock, was required to be a male, and without blemish. The place of making the offering was at the door of the tabernacle. The person making it did it "of his own voluntary will," and when the animal was presented, the offerer put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it was accepted from him, "to make an atonement for him." When the bullock or the lamb, was killed by the person presenting him, and the officiating priests caught the blood, and brought it and sprinkled it round the altar. The animal was then skinned, and cut in pieces; and the priests having kindled a fire on the altar, placed the pieces in order on the wood, and the whole was consumed; the inwards and legs were, however, first carefully washed in water. This was called, "an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord." The place of slaying the burnt-offering was on the north side of the altar.

The next sacrifice, which was in use before the time of Moses, was the peace-offering. Of these, the only part burnt on the altar was the fat; the breast and the right shoulder were waved or heaved before the Lord, and belonged to the officiating

priests, by means of which they received a large part of their support. The remainder of the peace-offering was for the use of the offerer, who made a feast upon the same, and eat it within the sacred precincts of the courts of the Lord, where there were conveniences for cooking, and rooms in which families and select companies might meet. The peace-offering might be male or female, of the flock or the herd.

The sin-offering and trespass-offering are treated of distinctly in the law, but in what the difference between them consisted it is not now easy to say, except that the former was in some cases offered for the whole congregation; the latter only for private persons. It will be sufficient, therefore, to give a brief description of the sin-offering.

When the priest himself sinned, he was required to offer a young bullock, without blemish, for a sin-offering; and he was to bring the animal before the Lord, that is, to the door of the tabernacle, and lay his hand upon his head, and there kill him; the officiating priest then received the blood, and dipped his finger into it, and sprinkled it seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary, and also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense, and poured the remainder of the blood at the bottom of the altar. The fat was burnt upon the altar, as in the case of the peace-offerings, but the skin and the flesh, and other appurtenances of the bullock, were not burnt upon the altar, but carried out to a clean place, entirely without the camp, and there burnt.

When a sin-offering was made for the whole congregation, the ceremonies were the same as now described, except that the elders of the congregation laid their hands on the head of the sacrifice.

The sin-offering of a ruler of the people was different. He was required to bring before the Lord a kid of the goats, a male, and the blood was put on the horns of the altar of burnt-offerings. And the sin-offering of one of the common people differed in nothing from that of the ruler, except that the animal offered was to be a female, instead of a male. In every case, this offering was made on account of some sin committed, of which the offerer was conscious: and when he presented his sacrifice he laid his hands upon its head, and made confession of his sin; and the priest by sprinkling the blood on the altar, made an atonement for him, and his sins were forgiven.

In regard to the trespass-offering, the law provided, that when the offerer was too poor to bring a lamb or a kid, he might present two turtle doves, or two young pigeons; or if he was unable to provide even these, he might bring the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, on which no oil or frankincense was to be

placed: and the priest burned a portion of this offering on the altar, and the remainder fell to him.

But when a man sinned in relation to the holy things of the Lord, he was required to make amends for the injury in the holy thing, and to add a fifth; and to make an atonement for his offence, he was to bring a ram for a trespass-offering.

Besides these bloody sacrifices there were prescribed various offerings of the fruits of the earth. These commonly consisted of fine flour, on which frankincense was poured, and also oil. The officiating priest took a handful of this flour, thus prepared, and burnt it upon the altar, for a memorial. This was an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. Every offering of flour was seasoned with salt; but neither leaven nor honey were ever permitted to be mingled with these offerings. Sometimes, the flour was baked in a pan, or formed into cakes; the ceremonies were in this case the same as before. The priest burnt a handful on the altar, and the remainder was allotted as a compensation unto him. These offerings of flour or cakes often accompanied the sacrifices, especially the peace-offering. The offerings of flour, baked and unbaked, which the law enjoined, are, in our version, called *meat-offerings*, which, as the word *meat* is now commonly understood, is wrong; they should be denominated *bread-offerings*, *flour-offerings*, or *grain-offerings*. They never consisted of the flesh of animals.

Drink-offerings of wine, also accompanied the various animal sacrifices; the quantity poured out being answerable to the size of the sacrifice.

SECTION XX.

CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES—HOLY FIRE.

AARON and his sons were consecrated to the priest's office with many solemn ceremonies. The whole congregation was assembled at the door of the tabernacle; and Moses washed Aaron and his sons with water; and put on them their sacerdotal robes; and then anointed them with the holy oil; and he also anointed with the same the tabernacle and all its furniture, and the altar and all its vessels, and the laver and its foot, and sprinkled a portion of it on the altar seven times. Then Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the bullock for a sin-offering, and slew it; and Moses took the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar. And he took all the fat of the inwards and burned it on the altar, with the liver and the two kidneys; and burnt the flesh and skin and other appurtenances without the camp, as in the case of other sin-offerings. Then Aaron

and his sons put their hands on the head of the ram for the burnt-offering, and killed it, and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar, round about; and he burnt the head and the fat, and the legs upon the altar.

Next, Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon its head, and slew it; and Moses took of the blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot: and did the same to his sons. Aaron then waved the shoulder of the sacrifice, together with the fat, and unleavened bread, which when it was done, Moses received them from the hand of Aaron and his sons, and burnt them on the altar: but the breast he waved before the Lord, but did not burn it, but reserved it for himself, as being the portion of the officiating minister. And again, Moses took of the blood and the anointing oil, and sprinkled it on Aaron and his sons, and on their garments. After these solemn ceremonies, Aaron and his sons were forbidden to go out of the door of the tabernacle for seven days, when the period of their consecration would be ended.

On the eighth day, Aaron and his sons entered on the public duties of the sacerdotal office, by sacrificing a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. And the people were commanded to bring a kid for a sin-offering, and a calf and lamb for a burnt-offering; also a bullock and a ram for peace-offerings; and an offering of flour mingled with oil. These sacrifices were intended as a preparation for the manifestation of the divine presence which was about to take place. These also Aaron offered for himself and sons, and for the people, and put the blood upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the remainder at the bottom of the altar, and with the other ceremonies appropriate to each kind of sacrifice. When these offerings were completed, Aaron, as being now fully invested with the office of high-priest, "lifted up his hands towards the people, and blessed them." After which Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle, and when they came out, they again blessed the people: and THE GLORY OF THE LORD appeared unto all the people. And fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed the burnt-offering on the altar, and the fat of the other sacrifices. "And when the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces."

This fire, thus kindled, was to be kept alive, and never to be suffered to go out; and all offerings made by fire, whether on the altar of burnt-offerings, or on the altar of incense, must be made by the holy fire on the altar.

SECTION XXI.

THE SIN AND FEARFUL PUNISHMENT OF AARON'S ELDEST SONS.

NADAB and Abihu, the oldest sons of Aaron, who had just been with him consecrated to the priest's office, and one of whom would doubtless have been his successor in the office of high-priest, regardless of the commandments of the Lord, and probably elated with the distinction which they had received, took their censors, and put common fire therein, and offered strange fire before the Lord, instead of the holy fire from the altar. "And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." Moses, upon this manifestation of the divine displeasure, spoke to Aaron and said, "This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." This was indeed a heavy affliction and sore trial to Aaron; but he behaved himself as became a saint, for he "held his peace." Moses directed that the bodies of these men should be taken away from the sanctuary, out of the camp. He then forbid Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, to make any of the usual expressions of grief, such as uncovering or making bald the head, and rending their garments, lest they should die; "but," said he, "let your brethren the whole house of Israel bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle; for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you."

It is not an improbable conjecture, that these young men had made too free a use of wine, and that intoxication might have been the occasion of their sin; for in the very next precept which was delivered, it is enjoined, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die. It shall be a statute, for ever, throughout your generations; and that ye may put a difference between holy and unholy; and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them."

Moses became more exact in looking into the conduct of Aaron and his remaining sons; and gave them special directions what offerings were to be eaten in the courts of the Lord. And after scrutiny, finding that the kid of the people for a sin-offering had been burnt, instead of being eaten by the priests, as had been commanded in regard to this particular sin-offering, contrary to the custom in other cases of the sin-offering, he was displeased with Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar, and said, "wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place? Be-

hold the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place; ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place." But Aaron excused himself on account of some impurity contracted by accident; which rendered it unsuitable that he should partake of what was so holy. When Moses heard this he was satisfied.

SECTION XXII.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS—LEPROSY, LAWS RESPECTING IT.

THE distinction between clean and unclean animals existed anterior to the deluge; for we find it made the ground of a great difference in the number of each admitted into the ark; and there can be little doubt, but that this distinction originated with the divine institution of sacrifices. Those animals which, according to the primitive institute, might be offered in sacrifice, were considered clean, and all others unclean. And this does not exclude the idea that the former were better suited for human food than the latter; for the selection of certain species for sacrifice may have been made with some reference to this very thing. It is true, that sacrifices were only offered from the herd and the flock, and one species of birds; but the obvious reason was, that other clean animals were wild and could not always be had, when any particular sacrifice was required to be offered.

In the Levitical law, all unclean animals are prohibited as articles of food; and all clean animals are allowed. In regard to quadrupeds, the rule of distinction was, that all animals, both dividing the hoof and chewing the cud, are clean, and might be used as food; all other quadrupeds were prohibited, as unclean. In regard to birds, there were no clearly marked criteria, whereby the clean and unclean were distinguished, the law therefore contains an enumeration of the species which were unclean.

In regard to fishes, the criteria were as distinct as of quadrupeds. Those animals, in the water, which were furnished both with fins and scales might be eaten, but all others were unclean.

Insects, and all creeping things, in general, were prohibited; yet some few species were allowed to be used as food.

As this distinction of clean and unclean animals originated with the institution of sacrifices, it ceased when they were abrogated; and now nothing is "common or unclean;" although, some animals are much better adapted for human food than others; and generally those animals are most used for food, which, according to the ritual law, were reckoned clean. Some animals are said to be very unsuitable for food in one climate and country, which may be eaten without inconvenience in an-

other country, where the climate is different. Thus in the hot countries of Asia, particularly in the sandy regions of Arabia, where cutaneous diseases are frequent, and of a malignant kind, it has been thought, that the flesh of swine is very unfavourable to health.

The leprosy was a disease of so impure, and probably, also contagious a nature, that persons infected with it were carefully separated from the rest of the people; and as some skill was requisite to distinguish this foul disease, in its incipient state, from other cutaneous diseases of a less noxious kind, this whole matter was committed to the priests, who were authorized to determine when it was proper for any one to be sent out of the camp, on the account of the leprosy; and when the cure was so complete, that the leper might be again restored to the society of his friends. And when a leper was pronounced clean, there were certain things required of him, which might on no account be neglected. The signs by which the leprosy might be distinguished are particularly laid down in the 13th chapter of Leviticus; and the ceremonies to be used when the priest pronounced a leper clean, are as particularly detailed in the 14th chapter of the same book.

Rules are also given for detecting a cankerous, consuming disorder, analogous to the leprosy in man, which invaded and destroyed garments and houses, in that climate.

SECTION XXIII.

LAWS OF PURITY AND HEALTH.

A WOMAN, after childbirth, was reckoned unclean for one week, if she had given birth to a male; for two weeks when a female; but for her complete purification, one month must elapse in the former, and two months in the latter case. After which, it was prescribed, that she should offer a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or turtle dove for a sin-offering: but in case of such poverty as rendered the offering of a lamb impracticable or inconvenient, the law was fulfilled by two turtle doves, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering and the other for a sin-offering. It may not be improper here to remark, that the Virgin Mary, the blessed mother of our Lord, was so poor, that she was able only to make the offering of two turtle-doves.

Laws were also ordained, declaring that all running issues, and impure discharges, rendered the subjects of them unclean, and showing how they were to be purified.

No ceremonial uncleanness, however, was so great as that

contracted by touching a dead body; or a bone, or the grave of a human being. Whoever, however necessarily, or accidentally, touched the dead body of a man, was unclean for seven days; and in order that he might be clean, at the end of this period he was required to purify himself on the third day, and on the seventh. Whoever was defiled by the touch of a dead body, and entered the sacred enclosure without purification, defiled the tabernacle of the Lord, and exposed himself to the punishment of excision. The death of any person in a tent rendered all who were present unclean, for seven days; and not only the persons but the vessels in the tent were unclean. It is difficult to account for the rigour of this ceremonial law. It probably had its origin in the necessity of counteracting some superstition respecting the relics of the deceased, which is not now known. Certainly, the shameful superstition of Christians in relation to relics, would render any regulation important which would have had the effect of putting an end to it.

The method of purifying those rendered unclean by the touch of a dead body was singular. A red heifer on whose neck the yoke had never come, was slain by the priest, and her blood sprinkled seven times towards the tabernacle. Then one took the heifer and burnt her wholly in the presence of the priests, who took cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. The priest then washed his clothes and bathed his flesh, and was unclean until the even. Next, a man who was clean gathered up the ashes of the heifer, and laid them up without the camp, in a clean place; and then it was to be kept for the people, as "a water of separation," "a purification from sin." Whoever then was defiled by a dead body was purified by putting some of the ashes of the heifer into a vessel of running water, which a clean person sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on the unclean person; or, on the tent and its furniture; and on the seventh day the man was to purify himself and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and at even he should be clean.

Another extraordinary law in the Mosaic code was that relative to the woman suspected of adultery by a jealous husband. A potion, called bitter water, was, after much solemn ceremony, given to the suspected wife to drink, by the priest; the effect of which, if she was guilty, was, that her body swelled in an extraordinary manner, and the woman, according to the awful denunciation of the priest, became a curse among her people. But if she was innocent, no such effects ensued. The whole ceremonial of this appalling transaction may be read in the 5th chapter of Numbers; but these ceremonies the Jewish rabbies multiplied tenfold.

SECTION XXIV.

THE VOW OF THE NAZARITE.

ANY persons who chose might take upon themselves the vow of the Nazarite, "to separate themselves unto the Lord." The person thus separated, was bound to drink no wine, nor strong drink, nor vinegar of wine, or of strong drink; nor to drink any liquor formed from grapes; nor to eat grapes, moist or dried; nor, indeed, any thing from the vine tree, from the kernel to the husk. All the days of his separation, no razor was to come upon his head, but he was to let the locks of his hair grow. And during his separation he was carefully to avoid the touch of a dead body; and even if his father, mother, brother, or sister, should die in the time, he was not to touch their bodies. But if any one happened to die suddenly by him, then he was required to shave his head on the seventh day, and on the eighth day to offer two turtles or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering, and thus make an atonement for him that had sinned by the dead, and hallow his head that same day. And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the day of his separation, and shall bring a lamb for a trespass-offering; but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled. And when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and he shall offer one male lamb for a burnt-offering, and a female lamb for a sin-offering; and a ram for a peace-offering; and the usual offerings of flour, oil, and wine, the accompaniments of the aforesaid sacrifices; "and the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offerings." And the priest took the shoulder of the ram, and unleavened cakes, and put them on the head of the Nazarite after his hair was shaven, and the priest waved them for a wave-offering before the Lord. When this ceremony was ended, then the Nazarite might drink wine.

There were, however, Nazarites who became such by the vow of their parents, before they were born, as Sampson. These abstained from wine and strong drink all their lives, and suffered their hair to grow, without being shorn or shaven.

SECTION XXV.

GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT.

THE only service performed in the interior recess of the tabernacle, called THE MOST HOLY PLACE, was on the tenth day of the seventh month, which was, "THE DAY OF ATONEMENT," a day of humiliation and fasting; for, although the word for fasting is not found here, nor in the whole Pentateuch, yet the Jews have ever understood, that this "afflicting of the soul" was by fasting; and, therefore, this day obtained the name of THE FAST; as being the only day of this kind prescribed in the law. On this interesting day, the high-priest himself officiated; and to prepare himself for his work, which was not only solemn, but difficult and laborious, he prepared himself for several days before; and in the morning of this day, he put on his linen garments, after bathing himself in water. Then he took a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. He took also two goats, and presented them before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he cast lots on the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other for *azazel*, rendered *scape-goat*, in our version. The goat on which the Lord's lot fell, was to be offered as a sin-offering unto the Lord; but the *scape-goat* he presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness. And the high-priest took the bullock which was for a sin-offering for himself and his house, and slew it. And he took a censor full of burning coals of fire, from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and brought it within the inner veil, into the Most Holy Place. And he put the incense on the coals of fire on the censor before the Lord, that the cloud of incense might cover the mercy-seat, that was over the ark of the testimony, that he might not die. Then the high-priest took of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat he sprinkled of the blood with his finger, seven times.

Having completed this solemn service, on his first entering the Most Holy Place, he returned and slew the goat which was for a sin-offering for the people, and carried its blood within the vail, and sprinkled that after the same manner, as the blood of the bullock. And this sin-offering was intended to be "an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins." While the high-priest entered within the vail, no man was permitted to be in the other part of the tabernacle, until he

returned. When this part of the service was finished, he went out, and sprinkled of the blood of the bullock and of the goat upon the horns of the altar seven times, "to hallow and cleanse it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Then the high-priest took the live goat, and laid both his hands upon its head, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, and putting them on the head of the goat, sent him away by a fit man into the wilderness. "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited. And he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." The high-priest, when he completed the work of atonement, changed his garments, laying aside those in which he had administered in this solemn service, he washed his flesh, and put on his official robes, which he usually wore in the tabernacle, and came and offered the burnt-offerings for himself and for the people. But the bodies of the sin-offerings, whose blood had been carried within the veil, were carried without the camp and burnt there; and both he who carried away the scape-goat, and he who carried the bodies of the sin-offerings were required to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh, after which they came into camp. "And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year."

SECTION XXVI.

LAWS RESPECTING THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES—SACERDOTAL BENEDICTION.

No man could be admitted to the priesthood who was not of the family of Aaron: Providence stood pledged therefore to preserve this family from extinction as long as the Levitical priesthood continued; and the event corresponded with the pledge; for although the office of high-priest was transferred from one branch of Aaron's family to another, the succession continued without interruption until the destruction of the second temple. As every priest must be a legitimate descendant of Aaron, it was necessary that every one claiming a participation in this sacred office should be able to show by undoubted genealogical tables his regular descent; hence the great importance of such tables. And to this the Apostle refers in the epistle to the Hebrews, when treating of Melchisedek, whom, says he, was "without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life;" which was as much as to say, his name is no where found in the genealogical tables of the priests.

But a regular descent from Aaron was not sufficient to entitle a man to this office, if he had any deformity or bodily defect. Every thing of this kind was considered a complete disqualifica-

tion for the priesthood. And that there might be no doubt respecting the kind of defects which were intended, a particular enumeration of them is given in the law, which the curious reader may find in the 21st chapter of Leviticus.

As the priests, when on service at the tabernacle, lived upon the holy things which had been offered on the altar, it became necessary to point out the persons who might partake of this sacred food, and the state of ceremonial purity requisite in the priest himself, to qualify him to eat of the holy things. These regulations may be found in the 22d chapter of Leviticus.

The priests were not required to lead a life of celibacy, but there were some restrictions in regard to their marriage which were peculiar. A priest was required to marry a virgin, or the widow of a brother priest. And their families were bound to be peculiarly studious of purity; and a violation of chastity by the daughter of a priest was visited with a severity of punishment unknown to the Mosaic law, in other cases. She was ordered to be burnt with fire.

Besides the service of the altar, where the priests officiated by rotation, and by lot, it belonged to them to instruct the people in the law of the Lord. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge;" and on public occasions to pronounce a solemn benediction on the people; which was in the following form: "*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee! The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!*" And the Lord said, "They shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

The remainder of the tribe of Levi, although not priests, were solemnly consecrated to the service of God, and were given to the family of Aaron as assistants in carrying the tabernacle and its furniture; and in keeping guard around the sacred precincts; and in conducting the music used in the public service of the sanctuary. This tribe received no allotment of land with the other tribes, but had forty-eight cities with their suburbs, assigned to them, of which thirteen were appropriated to the priests, and thirty-five to the Levites. They were much occupied in giving instruction through the tribes, and in administering justice. They were under peculiar obligations to be holy men, "Let them that bear the vessels of the Lord be holy."

SECTION XXVII.

LAWS RESPECTING INCEST.

ALTHOUGH in the family of Adam, brothers and sisters must have intermarried, and hence it is evident that there can be nothing simply immoral, or repugnant to the feelings of nature, prior to education, in such a connexion; yet, as soon as the human race became numerous, reasons both moral and political would readily suggest themselves, against marriages between very near relatives. It would, however, have remained a perplexing and difficult subject, and much corruption and confusion might have ensued, had not positive directions been given to regulate this matter. Some rules relative to this point doubtless were in force before the time of Moses; but now it seemed good to the great Legislator, to draw a distinct and definite line between the lawful and incestuous intercourse of the sexes. It has, indeed, been doubted how far this law extends in its prohibitions; and it has also been questioned, whether these laws are now in force, or were abrogated with the ceremonial part of the Levitical economy. On this subject it may be sufficient for our purpose to remark, that the institution of marriage is not one which can be considered of a fluctuating or variable nature. There could be no reason why stricter laws should be prescribed to the Jews, than are now necessary. It may be presumed, therefore, that if we can ascertain what the divine will was, under one dispensation relative to this matter, this should be considered as still obligatory; except when it can be shown, that some special regulation had relation to the political condition of a people peculiarly situated. The laws in Leviticus, chap. 18, respecting the degrees within which marriage was prohibited, had no connexion with the ceremonies instituted by Moses; but were given to preserve the people of Israel from conforming to the corrupt customs of the Egyptians, and Canaanites. And, if we conclude that these laws are not now in force, the consequence will be, that we have no positive laws whatever, in the whole Bible, forbidding incest; and if so, marriages are lawful, so far as the Bible is the rule, between the nearest relatives; not excepting parents and children. Some are willing to go the full length of the law, so far as the relationship is one of consanguinity, but they are unwilling to admit, that persons related by affinity only, are guilty of the crime of incest, when they marry within the limits prohibited to blood relations. But if we take the law as a rule, we must take it as a whole, and sub-

mit to it in its full extent; and if we deny that the prohibition of marriage between relations by affinity extends as far as to those of consanguinity, where shall we draw the line? Will not the consequence be, that a man may marry his father's widow; or a woman marry her mother's husband? Either, there is no incest in the marriage of relations by affinity, or the prohibition extends as far in regard to such relationship, as to that of consanguinity. It may still, admitting this rule, be difficult to decide precisely in regard to some degrees of kindred, whether they are lawful or unlawful. Then it is best to keep on the safe side. No man is liable to offend by avoiding to intermarry with a near relation, but he may offend by marrying within the prescribed limits.

SECTION XXVIII.

MISCELLANEOUS LAWS.

THE poor were provided for by having the privilege of glean-
ing, after the reapers, and picking up what they dropped; and
so also in regard to the vintage, and olive-yards, something was
to be left for the poor and the stranger.

The wages of a hired man were required to be paid on the
evening of the same day in which the work was performed.
Regard is had, in the law, to the misfortunes of the blind and
deaf; and a prohibition was given, not to place a stumbling-
block before the former, nor to curse the latter. There must be
no respect of persons in judgment; neither in favour to the
poor or the rich. Tale-bearing is particularly and expressly
forbidden; and officious appearance against another as a wit-
ness, is forbidden. Fraternal rebuke is enjoined; and the
neglect of it is considered in the law a species of hatred of our
brother. All hatred and revenge are expressly forbidden, on
the ground that we are bound to love our neighbour as our-
selves. Heterogeneous mixtures of animals in breeding or
ploughing, and of different materials in weaving garments, and
of diverse kinds of seed in sowing the ground, are prohibited,
as being contrary to nature, which is beautiful in its simplicity.

The eating of blood or fat, or the flesh of strangled animals,
is repeatedly forbidden.

All enchantments, or observance of times, and consulting of
wizards or witches, is forbidden on heavy penalties. Old age
was to be specially respected. The law was, "Thou shalt rise
up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man."
Strangers dwelling among them were not to be oppressed, but

treated kindly, for they were never to forget that they were once strangers, in Egypt, themselves.

Strict justice and equity were required in traffic; "just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin." All unnatural lust, and idolatrous practices, are repeatedly forbidden; and especially the cruel practice of sacrificing children to Moloch.

An Israelite could not be brought with his family into perpetual bondage. If, through the pressure of poverty, he sold himself, yet at the year of Jubilee he had the privilege of going out free with his children. But of the heathen round about, they were permitted to buy bond-men and bond-women; and of the strangers that sojourned among them. "And ye shall take them for an inheritance to your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond-men for ever." And an Israelite, who through poverty had been obliged to sell himself to a stranger might be redeemed by any of his near kindred; and the price of redemption was made to depend on the number of years between the time and the return of Jubilee, when, of course, every Israelite obtained his liberty, to whomsoever he might be bound.

SECTION XXIX.

DAILY SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE.

THE fire on the altar was to be kept continually burning; and, therefore, several fires or piles, according to the Jews, were built up. As the offering of sacrifices produced, necessarily, much defilement, the first thing in the morning was to cleanse the altar, by carrying away the ashes, and the fragments of the sacrifices of the former day that might remain. This was done by the person to whom it was allotted, very early in the morning, and here, it may be proper to remark, that the services of the altar, especially at the public festivals, requiring many persons to be employed, to prevent confusion, the several parts were apportioned by lot; so that every man knew precisely what duty he was to perform.

The prescribed daily service, consisted of the sacrifice of two lambs, as a burnt-offering; the one in the morning, the other in the afternoon. These sacrifices were accompanied with prayers, and hymns of praise, sung by the choir of Levites in attendance. The blowing of trumpets when the sacrifice was laid on the altar, was a part of the ceremony observed. The offering in the afternoon was about the hour of nine; or, three o'clock, according to our computation of time.

The burning of incense within the sanctuary took place at the same time that the morning and evening sacrifices were laid upon the altar without. It was also a part of the daily service to trim the lamps of the golden candlestick. From our version, it would seem, that the lamps were put out in the day time, and burnt all night; but it may well be questioned whether this is correct. The original word means "to cause to ascend," that is, to trim the lamps so as to cause the light to rise. And as the tabernacle had no window, the light of the lamps was as much needed in the day as in the night, and more, because the service performed in the sanctuary was all required to be done during the day.

SECTION XXX.

TABLES OF THE LAW.

MOSES having been called up to the sacred mount, was kept there for no less than thirty days, during which time he did neither eat nor drink. Here God communed with him face to face, as a man with his friend. "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him, upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." "The tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."

The people becoming impatient at the long delay of Moses on the mount, insisted on it that Aaron should make them gods to go before them. To this impious proposal, Aaron, through fear, too readily acceded, and directed them to bring him their ear-rings, out of which he made a golden calf; which when they saw, they exclaimed, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Aaron directed an altar to be built for it, and proclaimed a feast to the Lord, for the ensuing day. "And they rose up early and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." The Lord now commanded Moses to go down, as the people had grossly corrupted themselves, and had made themselves a calf and worshipped it; and the Lord proposed to Moses that he would destroy this stiff-necked people, and make a great nation of him; but this disinterested man preferred the glory of God to his own advantage. "And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt,

with great power and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever." This earnest prayer and expostulation had the desired effect, "for the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." And Moses went down unto the people with the two tables of testimony in his hand. And Joshua, who was with him said, "There is the voice of war in the camp." "And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, nor the cry of those that are overcome." And when Moses drew near, he saw the calf, and the people dancing around it; "and his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." Moses then upbraided Aaron for what he had done; who excused himself by alleging the perverseness of the people. He then stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." Moses commanded them to gird on their swords, and to pass through the camp, "and slay every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, and every man his companion." And the sons of Levi did so; "and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother, that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." Moses after this expression of holy indignation, went to the Lord and entreated him to pardon the sin of the people; and in the disinterested fervency of his spirit, he went so far as to say, "If thou wilt not forgive their sin, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whoever sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made."

And the Lord directed Moses to hew two tables of stone like unto the first, and said, "I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest. And be ready in the morning, and come up to mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee; neither let any man be seen through

all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before the mount." And Moses did as he was commanded. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, "*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty: visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third, and to the fourth generation.*" "And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped."

And the Lord communed with Moses on the mount; and repeated to him some of the laws which had before been given; "and he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water." And when Moses came down from the mount, with the tables of testimony in his hand, he was not aware that the skin of his face shone; but when Aaron and all the people saw him, they were afraid to come nigh him. Moses called unto them; and he put a veil on his face while he talked with them: "And he gave them in commandment, all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai." When Moses went in before the Lord, he took the veil off until he came out. And when he spake to the people, he put the veil again upon his face, "And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone."

SECTION XXXI.

DEPARTURE FROM MOUNT SINAI—ORDER OF MARCH.

BEFORE they began their march, Moses received orders to make two silver trumpets, for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. When they sounded both trumpets it was a signal for the assembling of the whole congregation; but when the princes only were to be convened, they blew upon one of the trumpets only. When they blew an alarm, or made a broken sound with the trumpets, the eastern part of the camp was to go forward; upon a second alarm, the southern part of the camp were to put themselves in motion. The blowing on these trumpets was at all times made the duty of the priests; and they were to be sounded when the people went to war; and also in days of rejoicing; and particularly, at the commencement of every month, when the priests were commanded to blow the trumpets over the sacrifices which were then offered.

It was on the twentieth day of the second month, in the

second year, that the signal for marching was given, by the taking up the cloud from off the tabernacle of the testimony. "And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran."

In the first rank marched the tribe of Judah with Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, as their leader.

Then Issachar, whose chief captain was Nathaneel, the son of Zuar.

Then Zebulun, whose leader was Eliab, the son of Helon.

These three tribes marched in the front, before the tabernacle, which was borne after them by the sons of Gershon and Merari.

Then marched the tribe of Reuben, led on by Elizur, the son of Shedeur.

After him came the tribe of Simeon, whose captain was Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai.

And next the tribe of Gad, over which was Eliasaph, the son of Deuel.

Then came the Kohathites bearing the ark and other holy vessels of the sanctuary, in the centre of the camp.

Behind the Kohathites, and next in order, marched the tribe of Ephraim, over which was Elishama, the son of Ammihud. And Manasseh led on by Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur.

Next marched Benjamin, whose leader was Abidan, the son of Gideoni.

Then followed the tribe of Dan, over which was Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai.

And Asher, whose leader was Pagiel, the son of Ocran.

And Naphtali brought up the rear, whose leader was Ahira, the son of Enan.

This order of march was uniformly observed at all times; during all their journeyings through the wilderness.

SECTION XXXII.

MOSES' INVITATION TO HOBAB.

"AND Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto a place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, I will not go, but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And he said, leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest, we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead

of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." Although it is not said here whether Hobab, which seems to be another name for Jethro, went along with his son-in-law or not, yet his offering no further objection gives ground for the inference, that he did. And that this was the fact, can be ascertained from what is said in the first chapter of Judges, where we read, "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees, with the children of Judah, into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad: and they went and dwelt among the people."

After leaving Sinai, the Israelites marched three days before they came to a resting-place; "And the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day when they went out of the camp. When the ark set forward, Moses was accustomed to employ the following solemn prayer, "*Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.*" And when it rested, he used the following, "*Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.*"

The prospect was now, that in a short time the Israelites would have been at the end of their journey; and doubtless this would have been the event, if they had not rebelled against the Lord. So, when the time came for their departure from Horeb, the Lord said, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount. Turn ye, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereto, in the plains, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea-side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, and unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you, go in and possess the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give it to them and to their seed after them."

SECTION XXXIII.

THE PEOPLE REBEL AGAINST MOSES—A BURNING SENT AMONG THEM—THE LORD PUTS HIS SPIRIT ON THE ELDERS.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the miracles which they had witnessed, and all the wonderful deliverances which they had experienced, the people continued to murmur and complain; and the anger of the Lord was again kindled against them; "and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp." And when the peo-

ple cried unto Moses, he prayed unto the Lord, and the fire was quenched. On account of this burning, the name of the place was called, Taberah.

But soon the perverseness of this stiff-necked people discovered itself again. They remembered the fish, the cucumbers, and melons, which they enjoyed abundantly in Egypt; and also the leeks, onions, and garlick, of which they were very fond: and they had become weary of the manna, which was dry and always the same; for when they gathered it, it had the appearance of coriander seed, or bdellium; but before it was eaten, it was ground in mills, and then baked into cakes, in pans; and when thus prepared, its taste resembled that of fresh olive oil. This spirit of murmuring revived so frequently, and was now so general—for all the people wept throughout their families, standing in the door of their tents, and was so unreasonable, since they were well supplied, every day, with nutritious and pleasant food—that Moses was much disturbed in mind, and poured out the following bitter complaint before the Lord: “Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom (as a nursing father beareth the sucking child) unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? For they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.” The Lord, therefore, directed Moses to assemble to him the seventy elders of Israel, who had already been appointed judges and elders over the people, and when they were convened at the door of the tabernacle, the Lord took of the spirit that was upon Moses, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and when the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied, and did not cease. But two of the elders, Eldad and Medad, remained in the camp, and the Spirit rested upon them also; for they were of the number that were written, but went not up to the tabernacle. And a young man ran and told Moses that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp. And Joshua said, My Lord, Moses, forbid them. And Moses said, enviest thou for my sake? Would God, that all the Lord’s people were prophets; and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.” Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

But as the people had complained so bitterly of the want of flesh, the Lord promised that they should have it, not for one or

a few days, as on the former occasion, but for a whole month, until it came out at their nostrils, and became loathsome. Thus did God in righteous judgment grant the requests of this discontented people. As it is said in the Psalms, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls." And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp on every side. And the people gathered the quails all that day and night, and next day; so that he that gathered least had ten homers. "And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." The name of this place was, therefore, called Kibroth-hattaavah, (*the graves of the lusters*;) "because there they buried the people that lusted." It is altogether probable, that this pestilence was produced by the quails; in that hot region, so much flesh was unwholesome; and so much animal matter putrifying about the camp, must have greatly infected the air.

SECTION XXXIV.

NEW TROUBLES ARISE FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER.

MOSES, as we have seen, had married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, prince of Midian, in Arabia. This is the country which was originally called Ethiopia, (Cush,) which name was afterwards transferred to the country on the other side of the Red Sea. Miriam and Aaron, it would seem, were not well pleased with this woman; or they felt the prejudices which are common against people of a foreign nation; and as marrying among strangers had met with the disapprobation of the patriarchs, they took occasion, at this late hour, to find fault with their brother for bringing an Ethiopian woman into their family. But the real spring of this behaviour appears to have been spiritual pride. They both had received, in some degree, the gift of inspiration; and Aaron had been highly honoured by being made high-priest, and also the instrument of God and Moses, in the wonderful works wrought in Egypt; and they envied the authority which Moses exercised, and thought that he took too much upon him, and did not bring them forward before the people, as much as they wished. Therefore, they said, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us?" Now, there never lived a man upon earth, who was less ambitious of power and authority than Moses; or who was less disposed to arrogate to himself what did not belong to him, or to deprive others of

their just rights. On this occasion, he seems to have remained entirely passive, as there is not a word recorded, as having been spoken by him. But the Lord espouses the cause of the meek, and quickly vindicates their rights, and their character. "And the Lord spoke suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, the Lord will make himself known unto him in a vision, and speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was enkindled against them, and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and behold Miriam became leprous white as snow; and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and behold she was leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us wherein we have done foolishly and have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed, when he cometh out of his mother's womb." "And Moses," whose spirit of forgiveness and forbearance knew no bounds, "cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. And the Lord said, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days; and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. And afterward the people removed from Hazaroth and pitched in the wilderness of Paran."

Why Miriam only was punished for this offence, in which Aaron was engaged with her, must be left to conjecture. Probably, the discontent originated with her, and her brother had been influenced by her to join in the complaint against Moses: or the sacerdotal character of Aaron rendered it unsuitable that he should be visited by a judgment of this sort, which would have utterly disqualified him for the duties of his sacred office.

SECTION XXXV.

MEN SENT TO EXPLORE THE PROMISED LAND.

HAVING passed through the terrible wilderness of Paran, the children of Israel came to Kadesh-barnea, which is near the mountain of the Amorites, on the border of the land of Canaan. And Moses now exhorted the people to go up immediately, and possess the land which lay before them; and told them not to be afraid nor discouraged. But the whole of the people united in a petition that they might be permitted, in the first place, to send men, to search out the land, and bring them word by what way they must go up, and into what cities they should first come. This proposal was entirely pleasing to Moses; and also met with the approbation of God; for we read in Numbers, that "God spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men that they may search out the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them. And Moses, by the command of the Lord, sent them from the wilderness of Paran. And these were the names of the men. Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua, the son of Zachur; of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat, the son of Hosi; of the tribe of Judah, Caleb, the son of Jephunnah; of the tribe of Issachar, Igal, the son of Joseph; of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea, the son of Nun; of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti, the son of Raphu; of the tribe of Zebulun, Gadiel, the son of Sodi; of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi, the son of Susi; of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel, the son of Gemalli; of the tribe of Asher, Jethur, the son of Michael; of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi, the son of Vophsi; and of the tribe of Gad, Geuel, the son of Machi. In catalogues of the tribes, Levi was no longer numbered, as being consecrated to the service of the sanctuary; and by means of Joseph's two sons, the number of the twelve tribes was kept up, without counting Levi.

The orders given to these men were, that they should go up and "spy out the land of Canaan, and see what it is; and the people that dwell therein, whether they be weak or strong, few or many; and what sort of land they inhabit, whether it be good or bad; and what kind of cities they have; whether they dwell in tents, or in strong holds; and whether the country was covered with wood, or was bare; and finally, they were directed to bring back with them some of the fruits of the land, as the season was that of the first ripe grapes. So these men explored the country from the south, where they entered it, even unto Hameth. Among the places which they visited, was Hebron, one of the oldest towns in the world, for it was built

seven years before Zoan, in Egypt. Near this spot their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had been accustomed to pitch their tents; and here also was the cave, where these patriarchs lay sleeping in the dust. But, at this time, it was in the possession of the sons of Anak, three of whom, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the spies saw with terror and dismay; for they were men of gigantic stature. And in passing through the country, they came to a certain valley of extraordinary fertility, where they found clusters of grapes of such enormous size, that they resolved to cut down a branch, and suspend it on a staff or pole, so that the grapes might not be crushed, and carry it back to the camp, in compliance with the orders which they had received. This valley and the brook which passed through it, received the name of Eshcol, on account of the cluster of grapes, which the children of Israel did cut down from thence. And they returned, after having spent forty days in exploring the land. And they came to Moses at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran, and reported what they had seen, and showed the fruit of the land. And they all testified that the country was exceeding good, a land flowing with milk and honey: nevertheless, the majority said, "The people be strong that dwell in the land; and the cities are walled and very great;" and above all they said, "We saw the children of Anak there." They also reported that the Amalekites dwelt in the south, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites in the mountains, and the Canaanites along the sea coast, and along the valley of Jordan. This report of the majority of the spies greatly intimidated the people, and a fearful state of commotion was produced in the camp; but Caleb and Joshua endeavoured to compose and encourage the people; and exhorted them to go up at once and take possession of the land; for said they, "We are well able to overcome it." But the men who went up with them said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." And thus they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, saying, "The land eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of stature; and there we saw the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

SECTION XXXVI.

THE PEOPLE REBEL AGAINST MOSES AGAIN—GOD'S DISPLEASURE—DECLARES WITH AN OATH THAT NONE BUT CALEB AND JOSHUA OF ALL THAT GENERATION SHOULD EVER POSSESS THE PROMISED LAND.

THE people became more and more agitated; and "the whole congregation lifted up their voice and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the congregation murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or, would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly; and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun, who were of the number of those that went to spy out the land, rent their clothes, and addressed the multitude, saying, "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us; a land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord; neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not." But the spirit of rebellion had become too violent to be quelled with words, however reasonable or persuasive. Therefore, instead of yielding to Caleb and Joshua, they resolved to put them to death by stoning; and would instantly have executed their purpose, had not THE GLORY OF THE LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel. "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me; and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they. And Moses said unto the Lord, The Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land; for they have heard, that thou, Lord art among this people; that thou Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them; and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I

beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy; and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with THE GLORY OF THE LORD. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened unto my voice; surely they shall not see the land, which I swear unto their fathers; neither shall any of them that have provoked me see it: but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land, whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. To-morrow, turn ye, get ye into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea." "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless, ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear, to make you dwell therein, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I, the Lord, have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die." Accordingly, "the men which Moses sent to search out the land, who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord. But Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still." And when Moses told all the words of the Lord unto the children of Israel, they mourned greatly. "And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised; for we have sinned." But Moses commanded them not to go up, for the Lord was not among them; and told them they would be smitten by their enemies. "But

they presumed to go up to the hill-top; nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah."

SECTION XXXVII.

THE REBELLION OF KORAH, DATHAN, ABIRAM AND ON, WITH TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY PRINCES OF THE CONGREGATION.

THE great rebellion mentioned in the last section, and the heavy punishment incurred, did not terminate the perverse conduct of this stiff-necked people; nor relieve Moses from further and even greater troubles. For now, certain leading men of the tribes of Levi and Reuben, formed a combination with two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, men of celebrity and influence, against Moses and Aaron. Their pretext was, that Moses and Aaron took too much upon them, and lorded it over God's heritage. They said, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" And when Moses heard their allegation, he fell on his face. But he simply referred the whole matter to the proper tribunal, to the decision of God. "To-morrow," said he, "the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him; even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do; take you censers, Korah and all his company, and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow: and it shall be, that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy; ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi. Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord; and to stand before the congregation, to minister unto them. And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi with thee, and seek ye the priesthood also? for which cause both thou, and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?" It is evident from this cutting reproof and expostulation, that this rebellion was instigated by Korah, who was the cousin of Moses and Aaron; and who envied the latter the honour conferred upon him in being invested with the office of the high-priest. And by his artful representations he had brought over almost all the leading men

of Israel to be on his side, and to join with him in his complaint against Moses and Aaron, for usurping an undue share of power over the people. It seems that Dathan and Abiram were not present at this altercation between Moses and Korah; and when they were summoned to make their appearance, they said, "We will not come. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up." Upon hearing this accusation, Moses was exceedingly angry, and said unto the Lord, "Respect not their offering. I have not taken one ass from them; neither have I hurt one of them." As is usual in such cases, different persons entered into this rebellion with different motives. Dathan and Abiram were dissatisfied that the people were kept so long in the wilderness; and especially, since the prospect was, that they would continue wandering there for many years to come.

On the next day appeared Korah and all his company, two hundred and fifty princes, with their censers, before the tabernacle; and Aaron stood also with his censer; and the whole congregation were assembled; and they took every man his censer and put fire in them, and laid incense therein, and stood in the door of the tabernacle with Moses and Aaron; and THE GLORY OF THE LORD appeared unto all the congregation. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from the congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

But Moses and Aaron entreated for the people, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and wilt thou be wroth with the whole congregation? And the Lord said, Speak unto the congregation, saying, get you up from out of the tabernacles of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents; and their wives and their sons and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me.

But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." And he had no sooner finished speaking, "than the ground clave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that was round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." By the command of God the censers of these men were made into broad plates, for the covering of the altar, because by being offered before the Lord, they had, as it were, been hallowed.

But on the succeeding day, the children of Israel, whose rebellious spirit nothing could subdue, began again to murmur against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." And the congregation assembled against Moses and Aaron; but when they looked toward the tabernacle, behold the cloud covered it, and THE GLORY OF THE LORD appeared. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, "Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them, as in a moment; and Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces. And Moses said to Aaron, "take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar and put on incense, and go quickly into the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun. And Aaron ran into the midst of the congregation, and behold the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed." The number who died of the plague, on this occasion, was fourteen thousand seven hundred, beside them that fell with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

To prevent all future contests about the right to the priesthood, all the tribes were commanded of God, each to bring a rod; and on every rod was written the name of the chief of the tribe who brought it; and Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi. These rods were directed to be laid up before the testimony, and it was declared, that the man's rod whom the Lord had chosen, should blossom. And when an examination was made of the rods, the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, had budded and blossomed. And Moses was directed to lay up Aaron's

rod for a memorial, and it was preserved for generations in the ark, with the pot of manna.

SECTION XXXVIII.

SECOND MURMURING ON ACCOUNT OF THE WANT OF WATER.

WHILE Israel remained encamped at Kadesh, Miriam who was several years older than either Moses or Aaron, died, and was buried there. "And there was no water for the congregation; and the people chode with Moses and Aaron, saying, Would God we had died when our brethren died before the Lord. And why have ye brought the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have you made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs or vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." Upon this trying occasion, as before, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, at the door of the tabernacle; and THE GLORY OF THE LORD appeared unto them. And the Lord directed Moses to take the rod, and collect the congregation, and to speak to the rock, and it should bring forth water. But Moses, chafed and provoked with the unceasing rebellion of the people, instead of simply doing what the Lord commanded, said to them, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank and their beasts also." But this conduct of Moses greatly displeased the Lord, therefore he said, "Because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring the congregation into the land which I have given them." This place also, like the former, received the name of Meribah, because there the children of Israel strove with the Lord.

SECTION XXXIX.

MESSAGE TO THE KING OF EDMOM—DEATH OF AARON.

FROM Kadesh, the direct way for the march of the children of Israel was through the country of Edom. Moses therefore sent messengers to the king of Edom, to solicit a peaceable passage through his territory; and they were commissioned to say, "Thus saith thy brother Israel, thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us; how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt, a long time, and the Egyptians vexed

us and our fathers; and when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel and hath brought us forth out of Egypt, and behold we are in Cadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy borders. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country. We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells. We will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left until we have passed thy borders." But the king of Edom would not grant this favour to Israel; and threatened them with a hostile attack if they should attempt to enter his country. And when they repeated their request, offering to pay for the water which their cattle might need, still they met with a positive refusal. They were, therefore, under the necessity of turning their march another way; endeavouring to pass around the land of Edom; and in their progress they came to mount Hor, which became famous on account of the death of Aaron; for he having been a partaker of the sin of Moses which excluded him from the land of promise, was also prevented from entering Canaan. The circumstances of Aaron's death were unusual and solemn. Moses was directed to take him and Eleazar, and bring them up unto mount Hor; and they went up in the sight of all the congregation. And then Moses stripped off Aaron's sacerdotal robes, and put them upon Eleazar his son. And Aaron died there, in the top of the mountain; and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

While Israel was endeavouring to encompass the land of Edom, where they found the way exceeding difficult, so that the hearts of the people were much discouraged, they were attacked by Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the south. At first he had some success against Israel, and took some of the people prisoners, but they vowed a vow, that if the Lord would deliver their enemies into their hand, they would utterly destroy their cities; and the Lord heard them, and gave them the victory: and accordingly they utterly destroyed them and their cities, and called the name of the place, Hormah.

SECTION XL.

FIERY SERPENTS INFEST THE PEOPLE ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR REBELLION.

THE people having again sinned against God and Moses his servant, saying, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread; therefore, the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the

people; and much people of Israel died." They now began as usual to repent, and came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and thee. Pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." And again Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole, and whoever that was bitten of the fiery serpents, when they looked upon it, lived." From our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, we learn, that the erection of this brazen serpent on a pole for the healing of the dying Israelites, was a type of the lifting up of the Son of man on the cross, for the salvation of sinners; and that the manner of obtaining the cure was the same. "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The armies of Israel continued their march and came successively to Oboth, Ije-Abarim, which is on the coast of Moab, Zared, and Arnon, which river is the boundary between the territory of Moab and of Ammon; and thence they journeyed to Beer, or the *well*, where the Lord gave water to the people; on which occasion Moses composed a hymn which the people sang. "Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it. The princes digged the well; the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." Their next stage was Mattanah; then Nahaliel; then Bamoth, in the valley, which is in the country of Moab, and from thence to the top of Pisgah. Having now reached the borders of the Amorites, Moses sent messengers to Sihon, the king of the country, to obtain permission to pass through his country, promising not to turn aside from the highway into the fields or vineyards, nor to drink the water of his wells, but to march directly through the land, until they had passed his borders. But Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his borders, and not content with a refusal of this reasonable request, he collected an army and went forth to attack Israel, in the wilderness. And at a place called Johaz, a battle was fought, in which Sihon was completely overthrown. And Israel took possession of the country of the Amorites, from Arnon to Jabbok on the borders of Ammon, and dwelt in their cities; and they took Heshbon the royal city, which Sihon had built and ornamented with much pains.

After vanquishing the Amorites, and taking possession of their country, they went up by the way of Bashan; and Og, king of Bashan, came out and fought with them at Edrei; but was utterly overthrown, and all his people destroyed.

SECTION XLI.

BALAK SENDS FOR BALAAM TO CURSE ISRAEL.

THE children of Israel having conquered the Amorites who dwelt on the east side of Jordan, had nearly reached the end of their journey; for they were now encamped on the plains of Moab, over against Jericho. And it does not appear that they had the least intention of attacking Moab; indeed they were prohibited to meddle with the children of Lot. But Balak the son of Zippor, who was at this time the king of the Moabites, was greatly alarmed at seeing so great a multitude of people on his borders; and especially after he had witnessed the utter overthrow of the Amorites, by the armies of Israel. He was convinced that in the usual course of war, he had no prospect of success against such a host, now accustomed to the use of arms. After consultation, therefore, he sent messengers to Pethor, on the Euphrates, to bring from thence, Balaam, the son of Beor, to curse the people of Israel, because they were too mighty for him. The fame of Balaam must have been very great in the east, when it was believed in remote lands, that he had power to destroy whom he would, and to render whom he would prosperous.

At this time it would seem that Moab and Midian formed one nation, or were confederate, for Balak at first, consulted the elders of Midian, and then joined them in the embassy with the elders of Moab, to Balaam. They carried with them "the rewards of divination;" no doubt, a royal present; and delivered to Balaam the message of Balak. Balaam, although a bad man at heart, was really a prophet, and had been accustomed to receive by inspiration communications from God. He hoped that in this case he might receive a permission to engage in a work which promised him so much profit. He did not, therefore, give an immediate answer to the messengers, but detained them that night that he might know the mind of God. And, accordingly, God did come to him and inquired, who they were whom he had with him in the house. And then said, "Thou shalt not go with them: thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed." In the morning, therefore, Balaam sent back the messengers, saying, "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." It is probable from the turn of this answer, and from other circumstances, these ambassadors were convinced, that the inclination of the prophet was to accompany them; and this may account for Balak's sending another embassy of princes, more in number and more honourable than the first, who were authorized to promise the highest honours and rewards which

he could ask, if he would go and curse the people of Israel. But Balaam assured them, that if they were to give him a house full of gold, he could not go beyond the word of the Lord to do less or more. But instead of giving a prompt and decisive refusal, which he should have done, he detains them, that he might again inquire of the Lord. Well, in the night, "God came to Balaam, and said, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab."

God sometimes grants the earnest requests of his creatures in judgment for their wickedness in entertaining such desires. This was evidently the case in regard to Balaam; for although he now directed him to go with the men, in direct opposition to what he had at first commanded, yet "God's anger was enkindled, because he went." Perhaps what was said by way of permission, was merely meant for trial, to see whether the avarice of the prophet would lead him to embrace the opportunity of going. And now when he was on his journey, the princes of Moab had probably gone on before, "the angel of the Lord stood in the way, an adversary against him." Balaam was riding on his ass, accompanied by his two servants, "and the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way; and his sword drawn in his hand, and the ass turned aside out of the way and went into the field. And Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way. But the road here passing between two walls, the angel placed himself so exactly before her, that the ass in avoiding him turned to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall, and he smote her again. The angel then removed forward to a place, where the passage was still narrower, so that the ass had no way to turn; and when she saw the angel she fell down under Balaam; and his anger was kindled and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for then would I kill thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine, unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times; behold I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. And the ass saw me and turned from me, these three times; unless she had turned

from me surely I would have slain thee and saved her alive. And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me. Now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. But the angel of the Lord said, Go with the men; but only the word that I speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak." As he was so intent on going, the Lord permits him to follow the bent of his inclination; but lets him know how much he was displeased with him for entertaining such a wish, after what he had said to him at the first; and although he permits him to go; yet he places him under such a restraint, that he would be able to say or do nothing of what Balak wished. Balak, however, was greatly pleased when he found that Balaam had come, and went out to meet him to the extreme border of his coast. And when he saw him, he gently upbraided him for not coming at once, since it was in his power to advance him to honour. But Balaam assured him that although he had come, it was not in his power to say any thing, but that word which God should put into his mouth. And Balak invited him to a rich feast at Kirjath-huzoth.

SECTION XLII.

BALAM BLESSES ISRAEL.

BALAK, with raised expectations, took Balaam up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might take a view of the hosts of Israel, who were encamped on the plains of Moab. Balaam directed that seven altars should be erected on the elevated spot to which he had been conducted; and a bullock and a ram for each altar, should be prepared for burnt-offerings. And leaving Balak by the sacrifices, he went himself to another place alone, in the hope of receiving a message from God, and in this expectation he was not disappointed; for God met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, "Return unto Balak and thus shalt thou speak. And he returned unto him; and lo, he stood by his burnt-sacrifice, and all the princes of Moab. And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous,

and let my last end be like his. And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them altogether. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth? And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me into another place, from whence thou mayest see them; thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shall not see them all; and curse me them from thence. And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah; and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. And he said unto Balak, Stand here by the burnt-offering, while I meet the Lord yonder. And the Lord met Balaam and put a word in his mouth." And when he returned, "Balak said unto him, what hath the Lord spoken? And he took up his parable and said, Rise up Balak and hear, hearken unto me thou son of Zippor. God is not a man that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath, as it were, the strength of a unicorn. Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought? Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. But Balaam answered, Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that must I do. And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee to another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence." And he brought him to the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon; and there he builded seven altars and offered a bullock and a ram on each, as before. "And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face towards the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel abiding in his tents, according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O

Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side; as the trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters; and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn; he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion; who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee; and cursed is he that curseth thee. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together and said, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore, flee now to thy place. I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour. And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak. And now, behold, I go unto my people; come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days. And he took up his parable, and said, I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel; and shall smite the corners of Moab; and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion; and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock; nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable and said, Alas, who shall live, when God doeth this? And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur; and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever. And Balaam rose up and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way."

SECTION XLIII.

SEDUCTION OF THE ISRAELITES BY THE DAUGHTERS OF MOAB.

BUT although Balaam now returned home, it was not long before he was recalled; for we learn from an apostle, that the plan of enticing the children of Israel to sin, by means of the daughters of Moab, was of his devising. For we not only read that he fell into error, and loved the wages of unrighteousness; and that his going after the messengers of Balak, was a madness, which was rebuked by the speaking of the dumb ass; but in the book of Revelation, we read of some at Pergamos, who held the doctrines of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. This extraordinary man and inspired prophet, although he was not permitted to curse Israel, yet could devise a plan by which they might be seduced into idolatry and fornication, by which means a multitude of the people perished.



SECTION XLIV.

PUNISHMENT OF THE ISRAELITES.

THE plan of seduction recommended to Balak by Balaam, seems to have been to invite Israel to the sacrifices of their gods. At these sacrifices, luxurious feasts were celebrated; and where licentious indulgences were not only tolerated, but formed a part of the service required of them, by their impure religion. The principal deity of the Moabites, was Baal-peor, one of the most abominable of the heathen gods; whose rites were a mixture of cruelty and obscenity. To this strange god, the Israelites invited to the sacrificial feasts, bowed down; so that "Israel was joined to Baal-peor; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord, against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And slay ye every one his man that were joined unto Baal-peor." And while the children of Israel were weeping before the door of the tabernacle, one of the children of Israel brought into the camp a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses and all the congregation. Upon which Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the chief-priest, seized with a holy zeal, rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and went after the man into his tent; and thrust both of them through the body with the javelin. And the act, though vio-

lent, was pleasing to God; so that from this time, the plague which had commenced its ravages among the children of Israel was stayed. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore, say, Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it and his seed after him; even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." The person who was thus made the victim of a holy indignation was no common man; but a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites; whose name was Zimri, the son of Salu. And the Midianitish woman also was of a chief house in Midian. Her name was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur. The Lord now commandeth Moses henceforth to treat the Midianites as enemies, "for," said he, "they have vexed you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor; and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake." Whether these Midianites, who now seem to have been incorporated with Moab, were of the same nation as Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, it is difficult to determine. The identity of the name renders it probable that they were a part of the same tribe; for the Arabs then, as now, were a migratory race, often shifting their place of abode, but still delighting in the wilderness; thus exhibiting in all ages, the justness of the description of sacred writ, in which they are represented by "a wild ass."

SECTION XLV.

SECOND CENSUS OF THE PEOPLE.

It is an inevitable inference from the result of the enumeration, which was now ordered, that the tribe of Simeon were chief in the transgression and in the punishment; for it will appear by a comparison with the former census, that this tribe had lost more than half its number.

And the Lord said unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, saying, "Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward."

Upon a comparison of this census with the one taken after the people came out of Egypt, the result will be as follows: The tribe of Reuben had decreased, during their wandering in the wilderness, by the number of 2770. The decrease of the tribe of Simeon was 37,100, nearly two-thirds of the whole num-

ber. The tribe of Gad had diminished by 5150. Judah had increased 1900. Zebulun had increased by 3100. The increase of Manasseh was 20,500. The decrease of Ephraim was 8000. The increase of Benjamin was 10,200. The increase of Dan was 1700. The increase of Asher, 11,000. And the decrease of Naphtali, 8000. Taking all the tribes together, there was a decrease of 1820. This census, however, does not include the tribe of Levi; but they were numbered by themselves; and their increase during the forty years of their sojourning in the wilderness was 1000. The reason why this tribe was not numbered with the others, was, that they had no inheritance among the children of Israel; and the intention of taking an accurate census of the tribes was, to prepare the way for an equitable distribution of the land of Canaan among them. For the Lord said unto Moses, "unto these shall the land be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few the less inheritance. To every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him."

By the census now taken in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho, the fulfilment of God's threatening against the rebellious Israelites was most manifest; for among those now numbered, there was not a man whom Moses and Aaron the priest had before numbered, when they took the census of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, "they shall surely die in the wilderness, and there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun."

But as the males alone were numbered, and the inheritances were to be distributed according to the enumeration, it is obvious, that if in any family the male line should fail, and females only remain, they would be deprived of their just share of property. A striking instance of this kind actually occurred. For the children of Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, were all daughters, five in number; and finding, that by the operation of the general law they would be deprived of their share of the inheritance, stood before Moses and Eleazar and the princes of the congregation by the door of the tabernacle, saying, "our father died in the wilderness, and he was not of the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons, why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore, a possession among the brethren of our father. And Moses brought the case before the Lord; and the Lord said, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right; thou shalt surely give them an inheritance among their father's brethren; and cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And this became a statute

in Israel, that where there were no sons, daughters should inherit; only they were required to marry within their own tribe, that the possession of one tribe might not be transferred to another.

SECTION XLVI.

OVERTHROW OF THE MIDIANITES.

As the Midianites, had a chief hand in seducing the Israelites from their duty, God commanded Moses, to avenge the children of Israel on the Midianites, before he was gathered to his people. Moses, therefore, directed that each tribe should furnish a thousand men for the war; and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest was sent with the army, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand. And they warred against the Midianites, and slew all the males. And they slew the five kings of Midian; and also Balaam the son of Beor they slew with the sword. And they burnt all their cities and their goodly castles, and took the women and children captives; and took possession of all their flocks, and all their goods. But when they returned to the congregation, Moses expressed strong displeasure with the officers of the army because they had saved the women alive; for these, said he, caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor; on which account there was a plague sent among the people. The order was therefore given to slay all the male children and all the women, except virgins who had not been contaminated. But the men who went on this military expedition, as having been stained with blood, and as having necessarily touched the dead bodies of the slain, were not permitted to come into the camp for seven days; and all their raiment, and all their vessels were required to be purified; and all the metallic substances were ordered to be made to go through the fire; the purification of other things to be by water.

And on the seventh day they were all required to wash their clothes, and then to come into the camp.

As a very rich prey had been taken, Moses, by the command of God, directed that it should be divided into two equal parts; the one moiety to be given to the men of war who went out to the battle; and the other to the congregation; and from the part allotted to the army one five-hundredth part was to be levied, and given to Eleazar the priest; and of the part assigned to the people, a levy of one-fiftieth to be given to the Levites. The number of sheep taken was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand. And the beeves seventy-two

thousand; sixty-one thousand asses; and of human persons, thirty-two thousand virgins. These females, it is highly probable were all children; and therefore unpolluted with the vices which were prevalent among the adult women. According to this calculation, the number of persons slain must have been very considerable. It was remarkable evidence of an extraordinary protection, that when the officers mustered their men, on their return, there was not one man missing. And the officers who went out on this expedition, having been so remarkably preserved and prospered, "brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man had gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, ear-rings, and tablets, to make an atonement for their souls before the Lord." And the sum of their offering was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels, which Moses and Eleazar brought into the tabernacle, for a memorial of the children of Israel before the Lord.

SECTION XLVII.

THE TRIBES OF REUBEN AND GAD ASK PERMISSION TO TAKE THEIR INHERITANCE ON THE EAST OF JORDAN—ALSO THE HALF TRIBE OF MANASSEH—THEIR REQUEST IS GRANTED.

THE children of Reuben and of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle; and seeing that the land of Jazar and the land of Gilead was a place for cattle, they came to Moses and Eleazar, saying, "If we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan." To which Moses answered with displeasure, "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall you sit here? And wherefore discourage you the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land, which the Lord hath given them? Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. For when they came up into the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the Lord had given them. And the Lord's anger was kindled the same time; and he sware, saying, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, because they have not followed me fully, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord. And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed. And behold ye are risen up in your father's stead, an increase of sinful men,

to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel. For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people." And they came near to him and said, "We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones. But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place. We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side of Jordan, because our inheritance is fallen to us, on this side Jordan, eastward. And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, and before Israel, then afterwards ye shall return, and be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if ye will not do so, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out." So the children of Reuben and Gad fully assented to the proposal of Moses, and answered, "as the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do."

And Moses gave unto the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad, (and now the half tribe of Manasseh had united with them,) the kingdom of Sihon, the king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the land with the cities thereof, and all the coasts round about.

And they immediately began to build cities, and prepare places for their families, and for their flocks; or rather, they repaired the cities which already existed in that country, and changed their names. In this distribution, Gilead fell to Machir, the son of Manasseh; and Heshbon, Elealeh, and Kirjathaim, to Reuben; and Dibon and Aroer and Ataroth, to Gad.

Thus two tribes and a half, out of the twelve, were already provided for; and their armed men were in a much better condition to carry on the war against the Canaanites, than those who were accompanied by their families.



SECTION XLVIII.

A RETROSPECT OF THE JOURNEYINGS OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.

FOR forty years this whole nation were made to wander in the wilderness, on account of their sins and rebellion against God, and against his servant Moses. Where they spent the greater part of their time, or how they were occupied, during this long period, we have no means of knowing. It is not improbable, that they remained years in the same place;

but in all their movements they were guided by the pillar of cloud in the day, and of fire by night; so that they were never at a loss when they should march, or where they should encamp. And during all this time they were regularly supplied with "angel's food;" and with water from the rock, which followed them. But respecting a large portion of the incidents which befell them in their journeying, we have no record; and we may be sure therefore, that the knowledge of these things is no how necessary for the edification of the Church. As it is, we have a number of striking facts, well suited to furnish admonition and warning to all who seriously consider them. And in a country so barren, and to a people who had no occupation but marching from station to station, there must have been great sameness in the transactions of every day.

Moses, it is true, has given us, in the 33d chapter of Numbers, forty-two stations, where the Israelites successively encamped; but we are not informed of the distances between these stations; nor of the time spent at any one of them; and it is now impossible to ascertain where they were situated; or in what direction they were journeying when passing from one to another.

There are some difficulties attending this long residence in the wilderness, which we know not how to solve; as, for example, how the numerous flocks and herds were supplied with pasturage; but we need not perplex ourselves about such matters, because He who could provide food for more than two millions of human beings for forty years, could easily provide provender for the sheep and cattle also. Indeed, it is probable, that the same manna which furnished sustenance to the men, was made use of to feed the beasts which accompanied them. A greater difficulty would be to understand, how so great multitude of people could be furnished with decent clothing during their residence in this inhospitable region, if we were not expressly informed that their shoes and raiment did not wear out during the whole journey. As, at the end of their march, Moses says, "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness, your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy feet." Deut. xxix. 5.

The whole distance from Mount Horeb to Kadesh-barnea, which was on the borders of the wilderness next to Canaan, was no more than a journey of eleven days. And from the time of leaving Kadesh-barnea, until they crossed the brook Zered, was no less than thirty-eight years. Thus long did they remain in the wilderness after they once came almost in sight of the promised land.

SECTION XLIX.

DEUTERONOMY, OR RECATITULATION OF THE LAW.

MOSES having been expressly informed that he should not go into the land of Canaan, and the people having now arrived near to Jordan, in the plains of Moab over against Jericho, he was aware that he was approaching the close of his earthly pilgrimage; and was therefore desirous of putting the people in remembrance of the various divine laws and institutions which he by the command of God had delivered to them. He recounts to them therefore, how he had appointed judges by taking "wise and understanding men from among themselves, and made them officers of different ranks, to assist in the administration of affairs. He then relates how he had, at the suggestion of the people, selected twelve men to explore the land; and how on account of the murmuring and rebellion of the people they were then prevented from taking possession of the country; and how the Lord declared that none of those then above twenty years of age should ever enter Canaan; but their children only. He reminds them that they were prohibited from meddling with Edom, Moab, or Ammon; since God had not given them their countries for a possession. But he recounts to them the conquest which they had made of the country of the Amorites, when Sihon and Og made war upon them. He solemnly charges them to avoid every species of idolatry: calls to their remembrance the awful exhibition of the divine glory at Horeb, and the various commandments and ordinances which they had then received; and desires them to recollect that they had there seen no manner of similitude, when the Lord spoke to them out of the midst of the fire. This was intended to teach them not "to make a graven image the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female; the likeness of any beast that is on the earth; the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air; the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground; the likeness of any fish that is in the waters, beneath the earth. And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all the nations under the whole heaven." He next tells them how the Lord was angry with him, for their sakes, and sware that he should not go unto the good land. After which he returns again to repeat his warnings against idolatry, and predicts the dreadful consequences of this crime. He speaks of the cities of refuge which he was directed to set apart. Then calling the attention of all the

people, he repeats unto them the ten commandments which they had heard from the mouth of the Lord at Horeb, and which he had written afterwards on two tables of stone; which he followed with the following solemn and impressive exhortation to obedience: "Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Moses directs the people to exterminate the nations of Canaan; to form no covenants or marriages with them, lest they should turn their hearts away from following the Lord. Their altars and images and groves they were commanded to destroy. He admonishes them of the danger of forgetting God in the time of their prosperity, and recounts the way by which they had been led, and the deliverances which they had experienced. He encourages them to expect the presence and guidance of God, in taking possession of the promised land, and warns them not to provoke God as did their fathers when they made the golden calf; and repeats all the transactions connected with that memorable transgression. He again exhorts them to render love and obedience unto God, and to destroy all memorials of idolatry; and commands that enticers to idolatry should certainly be put to death, whoever they might be. He also recited some of the ceremonial laws which had been given them, particularly those which related to clean and unclean animals; to tithes and offerings; to the seventh year; to the three great annual festivals, the passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. He also instructs them anew respecting the rites of sacrificing; and the provision made for the priests and Levites. He recites the law respecting the setting apart six cities as places of refuge for the manslayer; and gives rules respecting the number of witnesses which should be required, making it necessary that in the proof of any crime, there should be two or three witnesses; no man was to be convicted on the testimony of one witness. He also directed what punishment should be inflicted on false witnesses; the rule which he established was severe but equitable; whatever punishment the false witness would have brought

upon the innocent person arraigned, the same should he be adjudged to suffer; "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." Moses also gave precepts respecting making war and peace; and directed that a priest should be appointed to accompany the army to encourage the people; and the very words which he should speak to the people were set down. "Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies; let not your hearts be faint. Fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified, because of them; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you." And the officers of the army were to permit every one who had built a new house and had not dedicated it, and him who had planted a vineyard and had not yet eaten of its fruit, and him who had betrothed a wife and had not taken her; and also every one who was fearful and faint-hearted, to return home. Proposals of peace were always to be offered, and if the people submitted they were merely to be made tributary; but this rule had no application to the inhabitants of Canaan who were doomed to utter destruction; lest they should teach you to do after their abominations, which they have done unto their gods. In besieging cities, fruit-trees were to be preserved. He gives directions for expiating a murder, where the perpetrator was unknown; and for the punishment of a rebellious son, who was both a glutton and a drunkard. Persons suspended on a tree must be taken down, before night; "for he that was hanged was accursed of God." He gives a variety of laws respecting matters of minor importance; as in relation to strayed cattle and articles of property lost; concerning the unlawfulness of an interchange of apparel between males and females; respecting fringes or tassels on the borders of the garments; respecting garments of different materials, as linen and woollen. Peculiar laws were given for the detection and punishment of incontinency before marriage. Laws of discipline to regulate the receiving of persons into the congregation of the Lord are made known. Cleanliness is strongly inculcated by the Mosaic laws. It was allowed, when in the vineyard or field of a neighbour to eat what was needed, but not to carry any thing away. Moses permits divorce, on condition that the husband write a bill of divorcement, and give it into her hand, and then she might be married to another. The stealing of their brethren to make merchandise of them, was punishable with death. Punishment by stripes was not allowed to exceed forty; and lest this law should be transgressed they commonly stopped at thirty-nine. A peculiar law is announced respecting the treatment of the man who refused to marry his deceased brother's widow. Modesty in women is provided for by a severe law; and perfect justice and fairness in trade is

again strongly enjoined. The laws respecting first-fruits, tithes, and other offerings, are particularly announced. When Moses had finished revealing all these laws, a solemn form of covenanting between God and the people is given; and they avouched the Lord to be their God, and promised obedience; and the Lord avouched them to be his peculiar people.

SECTION L.

THE LAW TO BE INSCRIBED ON PLAISTERED STONES—THE BLESSINGS FROM MOUNT GERIZZIM, AND CURSES FROM MOUNT EBAL.

MOSES having now completed the recapitulation of the laws and ordinances, which had been given by divine command, with the elders of Israel exhorted the people, saying, "Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister. And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee; a land that floweth with milk and honey, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye are gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister. And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt not lift up an iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon, unto the Lord thy God. And thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly."

"And Moses and the priests, the Levites, spake unto all Israel saying, Take heed and hearken O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments and statutes, which I command you this day."

"And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan, Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse, Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali." Then he enumerated the curses which the Levites should denounce with a loud voice; and at every denunciation the whole congregation were to say, Amen. The crimes unto which these curses were annexed, were

idolatry; dishonouring of parents; removing a neighbour's land-mark; perverting the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow; incest with a father's wife; bestiality; incest with a sister, half-sister, or wife's mother; secret assault upon a neighbour; the slaying of the innocent for reward. And at the close, there was a general curse upon every man who did not confirm all the words of the law to do them. Then Moses proceeded to enumerate the blessings with which the Lord would bless them if they should prove obedient. "The Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth; and all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face. They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle; and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee her good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season; and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God; which I command thee this day to observe and do them. And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words, which I command thee this day, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them."

Then Moses went on with a series of curses answering to the blessings already mentioned. But not contented with these general denunciations of the divine judgments, he enters into a particular enumeration and vivid description of the kinds of misery which should certainly overtake them, if they proved disobedient and rebellious. "The Lord," says he, "shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest

thine hand unto for to do; until thou be destroyed, and thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee until he have consumed thee off the land whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass; and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down upon thee until thou be destroyed. The Lord shall make thee to be smitten before thine enemies. Thou shalt go out one way, and flee seven ways before them; AND SHALT BE REMOVED INTO ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH. And thy carcase shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. The Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways; and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee." "Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given to another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them, all the day long; and there shall be no might in thy hand. The fruit of thy land and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always; so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes, which thou shalt see. The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the soul of thy foot unto the top of thy head. The Lord shall bring thee and thy king whom thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee. Thou shalt carry much seed into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it. Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them; but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes, for the worms shall eat them. Thou shalt have olive trees through all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit. Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. All the trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. The stranger that is within thy land, shall

get above thee very high: and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee and thou shalt not lend to him, he shall be the head and thou shalt be the tail.

Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee and consume thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not to the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes, which he commanded thee. And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not thy God with joyfulness, and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."

SECTION LI.

A PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND CAPTIVITY OF THE JEWS.

"THE Lord will bring a nation against thee from afar, from the ends of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young. And he shall eat the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil; or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustest, throughout all thy land; which the Lord thy God hath given thee; in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. So that the man that is tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom; and towards the remnant of his children which he shall have; so that he will not give to any of them the flesh of his children, whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and tenderness; her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, and towards her young one that cometh from between her feet; and towards her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them, for want of all things, secretly in the siege, and straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates. If thou wilt not

observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this dreadful and glorious name, THE LORD THY GOD. Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful; and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues and of long continuance; and sore sickness, and of long continuance. Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of, and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou art destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number; whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even to the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee. And thou shalt fear day and night; and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning, thou shalt say, Would God it were even! And at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning; for the fear of thine heart, wherewith thou shalt fear; and for the sight of thine eyes, which thou shalt see. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women; and no man shall buy you."



SECTION LII.

COVENANT OF HOREB RENEWED IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB.

MOSES having finished the recital of past events, and having pronounced blessings on obedience, and denounced curses on disobedience, now, in the plains of Moab, assembled the whole congregation, and caused them afresh to enter into covenant with God, saying, "Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God, your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel. Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldest

enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee, this day. That he may establish thee this day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God; and also with him that is not here with us this day." He seizes this opportunity to warn them against the idolatry of the heathen which they had seen in Egypt, and by the way. "Lest there should be among you, man or woman, or family or or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations. Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood. And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenness to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man; and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him to evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant, that are written in the book of the law."



SECTION LIII.

VALEDICTORY OF MOSES CONCLUDED.

THE dreadful denunciations of judgments upon the people in case of disobedience, left, no doubt, a deep and melancholy impression on the minds of the considerate. Moses, therefore, goes on to inform them, that when under their calamities they should be disposed to consider their ways, and repent, and return unto the Lord their God, and obey his voice; they, and their children, with all their soul; that then the Lord their God would turn their captivity, and have compassion on them and would return and gather them from all the nations, whither the Lord their God had scattered them. And that even if they should be driven out to the utmost parts of heaven, from thence would the Lord God gather them, and fetch them. "And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land, which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,

that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses on thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day. And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy land for good; for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers. If thou hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and his statutes, which are written in this book of the law; and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee, this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, that thou mayest do it. See I have set before this day, life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day TO LOVE THE LORD THY GOD, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee, in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you, this day, that ye shall surely perish; and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou goest over Jordan, to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record, this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice; and mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

"And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel, in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates; that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their children which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the

Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

And Moses, by the command of God, gave to Israel a song, which they were to teach their children; which would be a witness against them when they should forsake the law of the Lord. This sublime and instructive song is recorded in the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy; and as it cannot be read too often, the reader is requested to turn to it and peruse it, before he proceeds farther.

SECTION LIV.

INAUGURATION OF JOSHUA, AND BLESSING OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.

"AND the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thy days approach that thou must die; call Joshua and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the congregation. And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud; and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be amongst them, and will forsake me and break my covenant, which I have made with them. Then shall my anger be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because God is not among us." "And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong, and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them; and I will be with thee."

"And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran; and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people, all his saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, and the tribes of Israel were gathered together. Let Reuben live and not die, and let not his men be few. And this is the blessing of Judah. Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people. Let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou a help to him from his enemies. And of Levi he said,

Let thy Thummim and Urim be with thy Holy One, whom thou didst prove at Masseh, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah. Who said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, for they observed thy word and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of those that rise up against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again. And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long; and he shall dwell between his shoulders. And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath. And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun; and for the precious things put forth by the moon; and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof; and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock; and his horns are like the horns of unicorns, with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth. And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. And of Zebulun he said, rejoice Zebulun in thy going out; and Issachar in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand. And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad; he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people; he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel. And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp, he shall leap from Bashan. And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, possess thou the west and the south. And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his feet in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days so shall thy strength be. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall, say, Destroy them.

Israel shall then dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be in a land of corn and wine; and his heaven shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency. And thy enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

It is remarkable, that in the above benediction, Simeon is entirely omitted; the number twelve is made by Levi, who, in other cases is not numbered with the tribes. The reason for the omission may be conjectured, but cannot be assigned with any certainty. There is a similar omission of Dan in the book of Revelation.

SECTION LV.

DEATH OF MOSES.

MOSES, having finishing his farewell instructions, and having laid his hands on Joshua, and consecrated him to be his successor and the leader of the hosts of Israel, "went up from the plains of Moab, unto the mountain of Nebo, one of the peaks of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho; and the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan; and all Naphtali; and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plains of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zohar. And the Lord said unto him, 'This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I WILL GIVE IT UNTO THY SEED. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over the river. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.'" But the devil, it appears, had some knowledge of the place; for he entered into a contention with Michael, the archangel, respecting the body of Moses, as we are informed by the apostle Jude. What the object of Satan was, is not mentioned; but it probably was to make the body of this distinguished servant of God an occasion of idolatry, by inducing the Israelites to pay divine honours to it. And it has been conjectured, that some of the heathen deities originated in the history of Moses. Some are of opinion that God raised Moses immediately to life and translated him to heaven; but if this had been the fact the Scriptures would have mentioned so remarkable an event. It is true, he appeared with Elijah on the mount of transfigura-

tion, and conversed with our Saviour respecting his decease which was shortly to take place at Jerusalem, but whether in his own body, or in one borrowed for the occasion, we are not informed.

And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old, when he died; forty of which he spent in Egypt; forty in Midian; and the remaining forty in the wilderness. No man, perhaps, ever underwent as much toil and painful solicitude, and certainly no other mere man was ever admitted to an intimacy with God, so familiar and lasting. But although he was subjected to so much anxiety and unceasing trouble from the people, yet, at the close of life, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." His death therefore was neither the effect of the decay of vitality by old age, nor of the wasting of sickness; but was miraculous. God, who had supported his breath thus far, now took it away; and he breathed out his soul, probably, without pain. If men's future reward is to be proportioned to their works, then will Moses stand high in the ranks of heaven; for his works were many and great; and if we look at the motives by which he was actuated, we shall not find among the children of men one whose spirit was more disinterested and entirely devoted to the service and honour of God.

"And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days." "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

PART III.

THE ISRAELITES.

FROM THE DEATH OF MOSES TILL THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REGAL GOVERNMENT.

SECTION I.

ENTRANCE OF THE HOST OF ISRAEL INTO THE PROMISED LAND UNDER THE CONDUCT OF JOSHUA, THE SUCCESSOR OF MOSES.

“Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, to the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites; and unto the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success. Have not I commanded thee, be of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Joshua having received this divine direction and encouragement, without delay proceeded to execute the orders of Jehovah. "Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go to possess the land which the Lord giveth you to possess it. And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Remember the word which Moses, the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; until the Lord hath given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them. Then shall ye return unto the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising. And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words, in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage."

The spirit and conduct of these two tribes and a half, who had received their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, was truly disinterested and noble, through the whole transaction of taking possession of the promised land. For nearly seven years, they were absent from their homes, separated from their wives and children, and engaged in an arduous warfare, in the results of which they had no personal interest. Indeed, it seems probable, that the heaviest brunt of the war fell to their lot; for being light armed, and free from the incumbrances which impeded the operations of others, they were placed in the front of the battle, and when exploring parties were needed, it would be natural to select them for such services.

When the necessary preparations were made in the host for the invasion of Canaan, Joshua thought proper to send two men from Shittim, where they were encamped, to act as spies, and to bring back a report of what they observed. The city which was nearest to them, and situated at no great distance from the Jordan, was Jericho, sometimes called "the city of palm trees," because in ancient times many trees of this species grew there. These two men having passed over the river, came secretly to

Jericho, and found entertainment in the house of a harlot, whose name was Rahab. Some have endeavoured to establish the opinion, that Rahab was not a harlot, but a keeper of a tavern, or house of entertainment for travellers. This last may be true, but there is no need to depart from the common acceptation of the word rendered "harlot:" it is used commonly in one uniform sense, and we know no good reason why it should not be so interpreted here. It may be observed, however, that among the heathen, in ancient times, no peculiar disgrace was attached to persons of this description. Even among the Greeks and Romans, women of high distinction and great accomplishments, and who were admitted into the highest circles of fashion, and rolled in wealth and luxury, lived a dissolute life. One of the judgments of God upon those who wilfully turned away from the knowledge and worship of the true God to idolatry, was, the giving them up to vile affections—to work all manner of uncleanness with greediness. The crime of fornication was so common among all classes, that all sense of its evil was obliterated; and it was scarcely reckoned among the vices. It is altogether probable, therefore, that Rahab was not more profligate than most or all of her sex in Jericho; for we must remember, that the sins of the Amorites were now full; and we learn, that long before this, they were addicted to the most unnatural crimes. But whatever might have been the wickedness of this woman's former life, in the days of her ignorance, she was a vessel of mercy, and received from the Lord the precious gift of faith, and with it all other spiritual graces. Though these men whom Joshua sent were not long in the house, yet probably, they were there long enough to give this woman a history of God's wonderful dispensations towards the people of Israel; and doubtless she had heard much of the wonders which God had wrought in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness; for these events were noised abroad far and near; so that the hearts of all the nations round about trembled at their approach; and now they had been encamped for some time in the plains of Moab, which were over against Jericho.

As every eye was now watchful, the entrance of the spies into the city, and into the house of Rahab, was observed, and immediately information was given to the king of Jericho; for it was told him, "behold there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel, to search out the country." Upon which, the king sent instantly to Rahab's house; ordering, that she should bring out those men who had come "to search out all the country." They were now placed in circumstances of peculiar jeopardy; and had not their friendly hostess possessed much presence of mind, as well as faith and courage,

their lives would have been forfeited. But she brought them up to the flat roof of her house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had spread out on the roof. And having secreted the spies, she said to the king's officers, "There came in men unto me, but I wist not whom they were; and it came to pass, about the time of shutting the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went I wot not. Pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them." The king's officers hearing this from an inhabitant of the city, concerning whom they entertained no suspicions, pursued after the spies on the way to Jordan; but when they went out they took the precaution to shut the gates after them, so that if they should happen to be still lurking within the walls, they might be prevented from escaping.

Having put the pursuers upon a wrong scent, Rahab went up to the roof of the house where she had concealed the men, and said, "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; and what ye did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath. Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will show kindness also to my father's house, and give me a true token. And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." The spies solemnly promised, that her request should be granted. "Then she let them down by a cord through the window, for her house was upon the town-wall—and she said unto them, Get ye to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, and the pursuers be returned; and afterward may ye go your way." Before the men departed they agreed with her respecting a sign by which the Israelites should be able to distinguish her house; and the token agreed upon was, that the same scarlet line by which she was now about to let them down, should be fastened to the window, and that all her father's house should be collected in her house, and remain there; for if any of them went out into the street, they would not be security for his life, and his blood should be on his own head. "And whosoever shall be in the house with thee, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit

of thine oath, which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According to your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed, and she bound the scarlet line in the window. And they went and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned. And the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. So the two men returned and descended from the mountain, and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befel them. And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants of the country faint because of us."

That Rahab was a true believer at this time, and that her conduct in receiving and concealing the spies was pleasing to God, we have the testimony of our inspired Apostle, who places her in that famous list of believers, whose names are recorded in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, and says, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." There is no difficulty in understanding how a woman who had lived a licentious life should become a true believer; for many women of the same character became penitents in the time of our Saviour. Indeed, they were more ready to receive his doctrine, and to attach themselves to him as his disciples, than the self-righteous Pharisees. But how can we reconcile with piety, the conduct of Rahab, in telling a palpable falsehood to the king's officers, in order to preserve the lives of the spies? Is it lawful to do evil that good may come? Is it right, on any occasion, to violate truth? Some have maintained that a falsehood was no sin, when the only end to be answered by it was the preservation of human life, or female chastity; and that there is no moral evil in deceiving those who are engaged in perpetrating a horrible wickedness. They allege, that we are not bound to declare the truth to those who have no right to know it, and whose only motive in demanding it, is that they may commit an atrocious crime. This is a plausible doctrine, and in many cases, would be very convenient to prevent evils which are imminent. But however plausible it may appear, at first sight, it is not sound. If admitted, how far would it lead us? Would it not follow, that, in every case, where we thought we could do good by a falsehood, we are at liberty to resort to it? The consequence then would be, that all confidence among men would be destroyed. We should not know when good men declared any thing, whether to credit it or not; for they might be persuaded, for some reason, that a lie would be promotive of some good end. It will not answer, to say, that the right to tell a lie is confined to cases of great importance, and when by

this means evils not otherwise to be avoided, can be prevented; for if we may violate truth for a greater good, we may also for a less; and if the principle be once established, the distinction between greater and less will be of little consequence. Every man will judge for himself, whether the occasion is such as to justify a falsehood; and he will have no clear rule by which to form his judgment. The establishment of such a principle of morality, if it did not expel all truth from the earth, would have the effect to destroy all confidence among men; and would, in this way, introduce innumerable evils. We must maintain, therefore, that a lie is never justifiable; and that, although it is not always necessary to declare all the truth that we know, we are never at liberty to declare that which is not true. This being the correct principle of morals, in regard to speaking the truth, we cannot justify the conduct of Rahab, in resorting to a falsehood to deceive the men who were in pursuit of the spies; and although her faith in receiving the spies is celebrated by Paul, yet he does not praise the means which she used to secrete them. The difficulty still returns, how can we reconcile the commission of such a sin with the existence of piety. On this I would remark, that the best of human beings are frail and imperfect. Good people often labour under grievous mistakes in regard to the law of God, as well as other things. In early ages there was less light on the subject of moral duty, than in later periods: many things which were then uncertain and obscure, have been elucidated by the experience of ages, and more especially, by the clearer revelation of the Divine will. In all past ages, some things which are now almost universally reckoned sinful, were not viewed to be wrong. I might give as instances, the persecution of men for their religious opinions when erroneous, and the slave-trade. All the reformers agreed in opinion that heretics ought to be pursued with punishment by the secular power; and until within half a century, no one seems to have considered the moral evil of trading in human beings, and of bringing them into a state of involuntary servitude. During the prevalence of these errors, all sorts of persons participated in the sins which arose out of them. Calvin and Cranmer were concerned in bringing heretics to the stake; but their conduct met with the general approbation of good men at that time. So John Newton, after his conversion, followed the slave-trade, without a suspicion, as he informs us, of its evil; and so did many other good men. But sins of ignorance differ exceedingly from the same sins committed against light. From a careful attention to the history recorded in the Old Testament, it appears, that it was commonly received as a principle, and acted upon by the patriarchs and others, that to preserve life, it was lawful to depart from the truth.

Thus, we find Abraham teaching Sarah to say, that she was his sister, which, though true in a certain sense, was nevertheless intended to deceive. We find Isaac guilty of similar conduct, on a similar occasion. The same is true of many others, and particularly of David, who, on several occasions, declared what was not true; and none of these persons appear to have been sensible that they were doing wrong. It seems, therefore, that in former times, it was admitted as a principle of morals, that it was lawful to utter a falsehood, or to use deceitful words, to preserve life. Is it to be wondered at then, that a woman who had been brought up in idolatry, and had lived a licentious life, and was but just converted to the true religion, should have erred in such a case? It would have been truly wonderful, if in opposition to the universal current of opinion, she had perceived the moral evil of deceiving those who came to apprehend the men whom she believed to be the servants of Jehovah. While therefore, we cannot justify the means which she employed to do good, we can readily believe that her motives were pure, and her faith strong. She erred, indeed, but it was the error not merely of one, but of the age; yea, of all antiquity; in which she had as participants, some of the most eminent saints who ever lived. And we should not be too rigid and censorious in judging the faithful of former ages, when it is not improbable, that our more enlightened posterity may see, that most Christians of the present day, have been living in the practice of some things which to them will appear to be inconsistent with the purity and perfection of Christian morals.

SECTION II.

THE PASSAGE OF THE ISRAELITES OVER THE RIVER JORDAN.

WHEN Joshua had obtained the information which he desired, he removed from Shittim, and encamped on the bank of Jordan. Here he remained for three days; and the officers passed through the host, and marshalled and prepared them for the invasion of the land, which lay before them. "And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Come not near to it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go, for ye have not passed this way heretofore. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant

and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know, that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Gergashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth, passeth over before you into Jordan. Now, therefore, take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man; and it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests, that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, before the people; and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the waters, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks, all the time of harvest,) that the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down from the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." The Lord now said to Joshua, "Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man; and command you them, saying, Take you hence, out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones; and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night." And Joshua directed these twelve men to pass over before the ark of the Lord, and to take up a stone, every man upon his shoulder; that when, in time to come, children should ask their fathers, saying, "What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord"—"and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." And agreeably

to the orders of Joshua, twelve stones were taken up by the men selected, one from each tribe, and they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there;" and Joshua set them for a memorial, where they remained standing for many years. When the congregation of Israel had finished crossing the river, then the priests who had stood all this time at the entrance, also passed over. In the van of this army were forty thousand light armed soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh, who, according to their previous engagement, having received their own inheritance on the east side of the river, now went forward in the front of the host, to aid their brethren in the conquest of the land of Canaan. This passage of Jordan was effected over against the plains of Jericho. Joshua was now held in reverence by the people, as Moses had been before him; and as soon as the priests had come up out of the channel of the river, over which all the people had passed, as on dry land, immediately, the waters of Jordan returned to their place, and flowed over all the banks, as they did before. This remarkable event occurred on the tenth day of the first month, which corresponded with our March or April. The place of the first encampment of the Israelites was at Gilgal, a name given on account of an event to be mentioned immediately. Here the pillar, or monument formed with the twelve stones taken from the bed of the river, was erected, on which occasion, they were commanded to hand down to their children a particular explanation of the purpose for which this monument was raised. "Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land, for the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until you were passed over; as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever."



SECTION III.

CIRCUMCISION OF THE ISRAELITES AT GILGAL—THE PASSOVER IS OBSERVED—THE MANNA CEASES—THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOST OF THE LORD APPEARS TO JOSHUA.

WHEN the kings who resided on the west side of Jordan understood that Israel had actually passed the river, and that the Lord had dried up the waters before them, their heart melted within them.

Joshua now received a commandment from the Lord to circumcise the males of the children of Israel; for, although all

who came out of Egypt had there been circumcised; yet this rite had not been performed on any born in the wilderness, on account of their continual journeyings: and nearly all the males therefore, of the whole host had now to submit to this ceremony; for of all who had come out of Egypt, in adult age, no more than two remained. All the men of war, except Caleb and Joshua, had fallen in the wilderness; but many who were children when the Exodus took place, were still living, as indeed God promised that this should be the event, when he sware, that none of the adults should ever enter the promised land. During the time that the people were recovering from the effects of this painful ceremony, they remained in their camp, at Gilgal. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you," therefore, the name of the place was called Gilgal, which word means, "to roll away."

There was a peculiar reason for attending without delay to the duty of circumcision, because the time for the celebration of the passover was near at hand, and it was expressly provided, that no uncircumcised man should be permitted to partake of this ordinance. Whether the passover had been celebrated in the wilderness, we are not informed. If it was, the qualification of circumcision must have been wanting. The probability however is, that this ordinance also was omitted, during the long period of Israel's sojourning in the wilderness; for they knew not, when stationary, at what moment they might receive the signal to march; and the celebration of the passover with the accompanying feast of unleavened bread, required a period of seven days leisure. But having now entered into Canaan, they kept the passover at the appointed time, on the fourteenth day of Nisan. "And they did eat of the old corn of the land, on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn in the self-same day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." These words of the sacred historian suggest another reason why we should suppose that the passover was not celebrated while the people remained in the wilderness; because during that period, they had no bread suitable for the purpose. They had plenty of manna, but this was a very different thing from bread of wheat or barley. If their enemies had come upon them while sore, in consequence of circumcision, or even while engaged in the observance of the passover, they would have found them in a poor condition to defend themselves; but God had struck such a terror into the minds of the Amorites and Canaanites, that they had no spirit to attempt any thing. Joshua, doubt-

less, felt great solicitude, in the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed; but like Moses, he trusted confidently in the Lord, whose commands he was executing. While the army lay encamped near Jericho, he seems to have taken a solitary walk towards that city, when there appeared to him a man with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua was not a man to be intimidated, and marched up to this armed man, and said, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come." Joshua perceiving that it was a manifestation of Jehovah himself, "fell on his face to the earth, and worshipped, and said, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, loose the shoe off thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground."

SECTION IV.

THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO—THE CURSE DENOUNCED BY JOSHUA AGAINST THE MAN WHO SHOULD REBUILD THIS CITY.

THIS captain of the Lord's host who appeared unto Joshua, was Jehovah himself; the Angel of the covenant, who attended the children of Israel in all their pilgrimage. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, see, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city, seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the rams' horns, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and every man shall ascend up straight before him. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let the seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord." When these orders were obeyed by the priests and people, they were further commanded by the leader, not to shout nor to make any noise with their voice, until they should receive a command to do so. And when they had encompassed the city every day for six days, returning each day into the camp, that on the seventh day, Joshua gave orders for the peo-

ple and priests when they had gone round the city, and which on this day they repeated seven times, to shout, for the city was given by the Lord into their hands. And it was declared, that the whole city and all its inhabitants should be devoted to destruction; except, that Rahab and her friends should be spared, because she hid the messengers that had been sent, and had received a solemn promise that she should be preserved. And the people were warned by all means, "to keep themselves from the accursed thing," lest they should themselves fall under a curse, and bring trouble into the camp of Israel. It was declared, however, that "the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron should be consecrated to Jehovah, and should belong to the treasury of the Lord." And as soon as the priests and people had encompassed the wall the seventh time, on this seventh day, the trumpets were sounded, and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, they shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell flat, so that the people went up every one straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua gave special orders to the young men who had been sent as spies, "Bring out the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her; and they brought out Rahab and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel." "And they burnt the city with fire and all that was therein; only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord."

And Joshua denounced a heavy curse on the man who should rise up and rebuild Jericho, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city, Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." This first onset in the invasion of Canaan, and the miraculous overthrow of Jericho, while it raised the fame of Joshua very high, as being the instrument of God's vengeance, spread consternation among the people of the land.

The imprecation of Joshua in this case was not spoken of himself, but from the inspiration of God; and the words spoken were not a vain, empty threat, but the prediction was literally fulfilled many hundred years afterwards, when Hiel, the Beth-elite, laid the foundation of Jericho in his first-born, Abiram, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, Segub. 1 Kings xvi. 34.

SECTION V.

THE TRANSGRESSION OF ACHAN—THE ATTACK UPON AI, AND THE DEFEAT OF THE ISRAELITES—JOSHUA'S DISTRESS—THE LORD'S COMMUNICATION TO HIM—ACHAN DETECTED AND PUNISHED WITH ALL HIS HOUSE—RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN THIS TRANSACTION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the solemn warning which Joshua gave to the people respecting the spoil of the city of Jericho, which was all accursed, and not to be touched, except the silver and the gold, the iron and brass, which were consecrated to the treasury of the Lord, there was found a man, among the children of Israel, who had not faith and virtue enough to enable him to resist the temptation of purloining and hiding in his tent, some articles on which he had set his covetous heart. This was Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah. On account of this deliberate disobedience of his positive commandment, "the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel."

Jericho being in ruins, Joshua next directed his attention to a city named Ai, which was beside Beth-aven; on the east side of Beth-el. According to his usual custom, he took the precaution of sending spies to examine the strength and situation of the place. Their report was, that the inhabitants of this place were not numerous, and that there would be no need for the whole army to be put in motion against a city so inconsiderable; and they recommended, that two or three thousand men should be detailed for this service. Accordingly, Joshua sent three thousand men upon this apparently easy expedition. But the event did not answer the expectation; for, when the men of Ai came out against this band, they seemed to be panic struck, and fled with precipitation, and thirty-six of their number were left dead on the field; and the enemy pursued them from before the gate, even unto Shebarim. Upon this the hearts of the people melted, and became as water; and Joshua appears to have been afflicted and confounded in the greatest degree, for "he rent his clothes, and fell to the ground, upon his face, before the ark of the Lord, until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, alas! O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought the people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs upon their enemies! For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great

name? And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and have put it even amongst their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, sanctify yourselves against to-morrow for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought, according to your tribes; and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the households which the Lord shall take, shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing, shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath; because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel. So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken." Then the family of the Zarhites was taken—Next, Zabdi was taken; and he brought his household man by man, and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, and hide it not from me. And Achan said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, of fifty shekels weight, then I courted them, and took them, and behold, they are hid in the earth, in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and behold it (the Babylonish garment) was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters, and his oxen and his asses, and his sheep and his tent, and all that he had, and brought them to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this

day; and all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones;" which remained for a long time in this valley, a monument of God's displeasure against sin.

In this portion of sacred history, there are several things highly worthy of particular observation. The first is, that "the love of money is the root of all evil." This man, like Judas, was led away by covetousness. Thousands and tens of thousands are slaves to the same vice. Perhaps no sin is more common in the pale of the Church; for although it often prompts men to rob and steal, and thus expose themselves to infamous punishments, yet this may strike its roots deep, and have entire possession of the man, while no irregularity appears in the outward actions. Often, indeed, covetousness restrains its votaries from vices which can only be practised with expense, because such conflict with its nature.

The next remark is, that however secret men's crimes may be, and however successfully concealed from the eyes of men, there is an eye which strictly marks them; and often, in the providence of God, sins which were committed in darkness, are unexpectedly and wonderfully revealed. In the case of Achan, the appeal seems to have been to the lot, and this mode of detection was ordered by God himself, and was, therefore, infallible; but unless God direct to such means, for the discovery of secret crimes, it would be presumptuous in us to resort to the lot for the detection of the guilt of a culprit. The displeasure of Jehovah against a deliberate transgression of his positive commandment, is here strangely exhibited; and for the sin of one man, his wrath is enkindled against the whole congregation of Israel. Achan seems to have been penitent, but this could not save him from condign punishment. Repentance sometimes comes too late; or to speak more properly, the regrets of a sinner when his crimes are detected, and punishment about to be inflicted, has in it nothing of the nature of true repentance. And if the unhappy man was pardoned, yet it was necessary that a public example should be made, on such an occasion, for a terror to others. We are taught here also, that God punishes a man's family with himself. It does not appear that they personally participated in the crime of Achan; but they must suffer with him. His wife and children, and even the dumb animals, are made partakers of his punishment. Men may pronounce this to be unjust, but God will not subject himself to be judged at our bar. The Judge of all the earth will do right; but little do we know, in many cases, what it becomes him to do. The truth is, that his whole administration by his providence, recognizes this same principle. Children are involved

in the poverty, in the disgrace, and in the diseases of their parents; and who will undertake to arraign the Almighty, and pronounce sentence of condemnation upon him? His ways are always just and equal, although the reasons of his conduct may not be revealed unto us. Burning alive was not one of the punishments usually inflicted in the Jewish commonwealth; but in this case, and some others, the bodies were burned after death.

This translation furnishes the only instance, as far as I recollect, of any thing censurable said or done by Joshua. His confidence in God, and obedience to his will, seems to have approximated near to perfection; but when he saw the people, in a dastardly manner, fleeing before their enemies, his spirit was overwhelmed, and he said, "Would to God that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!" This was wrong; for God had promised Canaan to Israel, and had specially commissioned Joshua to invade the land, and had miraculously opened his way to take possession. But Joshua, like Moses, his predecessor, was more concerned for the glory of God's great name, than about his own welfare or reputation. We see what misery and confusion a single sin may produce in a family, and a nation. As to the punishment inflicted on this unhappy man and his family, Joshua had nothing to do with it, but to execute the commandment of Jehovah. In this, as in all the other severe inflictions of vengeance on the inhabitants of Canaan, Joshua can no more be charged with cruelty than the angel who slew the first-born of Egypt, or on him who in one night slew a hundred and four score thousand men in the Assyrian army. Whatever God commands must be done. No obligation can exist to the contrary, when he makes known his will. Even Abraham must consent to slay his only and well beloved son, in whom all the promises centred, when Jehovah commanded him to make this sacrifice. And as it relates to the divine attributes, there is nothing more derogatory to justice and goodness in taking away the lives of men, women, and children, by the sword of men, than by the hand of an angel; and nothing in either of these methods of putting an end to human life, more inconsistent with these attributes, than accomplishing the same thing by an earthquake, a famine, or a plague. The objection to this part of the sacred history is, therefore, without foundation.

When the wickedness of a nation rises to a certain pitch, or fulness, it seems necessary that they should be exterminated. In the time of Abraham, it is given as a reason why God did not put him in possession of the land of Canaan, "that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full;" but now, in the time of Joshua, they were ripe for destruction. When a people are

universally addicted to unnatural and abominable crimes, it is right—it is best, that they should be swept from the earth. Such was the moral condition of the old world, before the deluge—such was the state of Sodom and Gomorrah; and such now was the moral character of the inhabitants of Canaan.

SECTION VI.

AI AGAIN ASSAULTED AND TAKEN BY STRATEGEM, AND UTTERLY DESTROYED—JOSHUA ERECTS AN ALTAR IN EBAL AND OFFERS SACRIFICES—WRITES A COPY OF THE LAW ON STONES—FROM MOUNT GERIZIM AND EBAL PRONOUNCES THE BLESSINGS AND THE CURSES.

ACHAN being now removed, the obstacle to a successful attack upon Ai no longer existed, and God commanded Joshua to march fearlessly against the place; saying, "I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land; and thou shalt do to Ai, and her king, as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves." Joshua was directed to place an ambush behind the city. Accordingly he selected thirty thousand men, and sent them off by night to take a position near the city, but behind it; with directions, that as soon as he and the main body of the army should come before the city, and by a feigned retreat should draw out the men of the city in pursuit, then they should rise up from their ambush, and seize the city, and set it on fire. That night Joshua lodged in the midst of the people; and early in the morning he arose and marshalled the host, and marched in their front, with the elders of Israel, up to Ai, and pitched on the north side of the city. Between the camp of the Israelites and Ai, there was a valley; here he placed another ambush on the west of the city, of five thousand men; and he himself spent that night in the midst of this valley. The king of Ai, flushed with his former victory, and confident of success, was not backward to commence hostilities; but he was not aware that he was almost encompassed by his enemies; and, especially, he had no suspicion of the ambush which lay concealed behind the city. Joshua and all Israel, as soon as they were attacked, "made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness." All the men of Ai instantly pursued after them, and were drawn away from the city; so that there "was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el, that went not out after Israel." And fearing nothing, they left the city open. Joshua now gave the preconcerted signal to the men who lay in ambush, and "they arose, and entered into the city, and took it, and hasted, and set the city on fire." And when the men of Ai looked

behind them, they saw, and behold the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way; and the people of Israel who had fled towards the wilderness, turned back upon the pursuers, and seeing the smoke of the city ascending, they fell upon the men of Ai, and slew them. And the men who had seized the city now came forth, and attacked the men of Ai on the other side; so that being hemmed in by two armies, none of them were permitted to escape. But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. When the Israelites had smitten the inhabitants of Ai in the field, they proceeded, according to the commandment of the Lord, to put to the sword all who remained in the city. "And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand." "For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil, Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according to the word of the Lord, which he commanded Joshua. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it a heap and desolation for ever. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree, until eventide; and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones.

Joshua having again proved victorious over his enemies, and being an eminently devout man, who had feared God from his youth, he availed himself of the interval of rest which he now enjoyed, to fulfil the command of God given to Moses, and he erected an altar in mount Ebal, to the Lord God of Israel. "As Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses. An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lifted up any iron. And they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And he wrote these upon the stones, a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark, and on that side, before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord; as well the stranger as he that was born among them: half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them against mount Ebal; as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them." (Josh. viii.)

SECTION VII.

THE GIBEONITES DECEIVE JOSHUA AND THE PRINCES, AND OBTAIN FROM THEM AN OATH THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE DESTROYED—THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE HAD THEM TO VIOLATE THEIR ENGAGEMENT AND DESTROY THIS PEOPLE WHO HAD IMPOSED ON THEM—JOSHUA CONSIDERS THE OATH OBLIGATORY—THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF THE OBLIGATION OF VOWS.

HITHERTO the people of Canaan appear to have been so panic-struck, that they had not the consideration to enter into any league or combination with one another, to make opposition to the formidable host who had invaded the country. But at length, recovering, in a manner, from the stupor into which fear had cast them, they began to concert measures for their own defence. The kings which were in the hills and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, received intelligence of the progress of the invading army, and gathered together, with one accord, to fight with Joshua and with Israel.

But the Gibeonites, who were near, when they heard of the utter destruction of Jericho and Ai, and probably knew that Joshua's orders were to exterminate all the nations of Canaan, resolved to have recourse to deceit and cunning to avoid the impending destruction. "They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors; and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-bottles, old and rent, and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them. And all the bread of their provisions was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country, and therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, (for the Gibeonites belonged to this nation) peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, we are thy servants. And Joshua said, Who are ye? And whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God; for we have heard the fame of Him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth; wherefore our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, spake unto us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them; and say unto them, We are your servants, therefore, now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses, in the day we came forth to go unto you; but now behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy.

And these bottles of wine which we filled were new, and behold, they are rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them; and made a league with them to let them live; and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. And it came to pass, at the end of three days, after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them." And on the third day, the children of Israel came to their cities, the names of which were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. "And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel." But the congregation were not contented with the conduct of their princes in sparing the Gibeonites, and murmured against them on account of this thing, probably because they were disappointed in their expectation of the spoil of these wealthy cities. "But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel, now, therefore, we may not touch them. This we will do to them, we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation." "And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, we were very far from you, when you dwell among us? Now, therefore, ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. And they answered Joshua and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore, we were sore afraid of our lives, because of you, and have done this thing. And now behold, we are in thine hand; as it seemeth right unto thee to do unto us, do. And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hands of the children of Israel, that they slew them not." It would seem that it was attended with some difficulty to rescue these people out of the hands of the congregation, who were intent on their destruction. I have ascribed this destructive inclination to avarice; but it may have originated in a conscientious regard to the divine authority; and to an opinion that an oath obtained by fraud and falsehood was not obligatory.

We noticed one wrong thing in Joshua, when Israel fled before the men of Ai; and here we find that he failed again in

that vigilance which was required by his high and responsible station. When the ambassadors of the Gibeonites appeared before him, and told a false but plausible story, Joshua entered into a treaty with them, without applying to the Lord for direction, which he had the privilege of doing at all times. By depending on appearances, and confiding in his own judgment, he was led into error, and connected Israel in a league with a people whom the Lord had positively commanded him to destroy.

In this transaction, we learn how solemn and inviolable is the obligation of an oath. Although this oath was obtained by fraud, and was injurious to the interests of the children of Israel; yet it was not judged lawful to nullify or violate it. No doubt there may be cases in which an oath, obtained by falsehood and fraud, is void, and the person swearing is free from guilt, although he fails to perform what he has bound himself by an oath to do; but when we are deceived through our own negligence, and the thing promised is not in itself unlawful, an oath or vow is obligatory. No injury or inconvenience which the fulfilment will occasion the person, can exempt him from its sacred obligation. To take an oath is a solemn act of religion, but should never be resorted to, unless there exists a real necessity for it; and when a man has laid such a bond upon his soul, he should with all sincerity and fidelity perform the thing which has proceeded out of his mouth. "It is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay." And the upright man described in the fifteenth Psalm, is represented "as swearing to his hurt and not changing." The subjection of these Gibeonites to a state of bondage and servile labour, was a just punishment for the imposition which they practised.

SECTION VIII.

POWERFUL COMBINATION OF THE KINGS OF CANAAN TO DESTROY THE GIBEONITES—
 JOSHUA IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THEIR DANGER, AND HASTENS TO THEIR
 RELIEF—COMBINED KINGS DEFEATED—WONDERFUL MIRACLE OF THE SUN STAND-
 ING STILL—THE EXECUTION OF FIVE KINGS.

THE combination of most of the kings of the country was rendered more firm, in consequence of the conduct of the Gibeonites; for "Gibeon was a great city," and was situated in the very heart of the country. The chief of this combined force was Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, who associated with himself, Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Deber king of Eglon; and their first object was to smite Gibeon, on account of the defection of which city they were greatly incensed; and policy led them

to wish to destroy an enemy existing in their midst. These five kings, therefore, marched against Gibeon, and besieged the city, while Joshua and the Israelites were still encamped at Gilgal. The Gibeonites being utterly unable to resist so great a force, as now appeared before them, sent an express to Joshua, to come speedily to their succour, saying, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants, come up to us quickly, and save us and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us." When Joshua received this urgent message, he determined to march immediately to the aid of his new allies, or subjects rather; and in doing this, he did not proceed without Divine direction, as in the case of forming a league with his people; for "the Lord said unto him, Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee." Joshua, that he might come upon the combined forces of the kings of the Amorites unexpectedly, marched during the whole night, and suddenly fell upon them and smote them with a great slaughter, and he chased them along the way that goeth to Beth-horon, Azekah, and Makkedah. And to aid Joshua in this important battle, the Lord fought from heaven, by sending upon the Amorites hail-stones of enormous size; so that there were more that died with the hail-stones than were slain by the sword.

As the natural day was insufficient for the destruction of this numerous host, Joshua was enabled to perform one of the most stupendous miracles which ever took place on our globe. Inspired with a strong faith in the power of God, he said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day: and there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel." Many ingenious conjectures have been indulged by the learned critics, by which the extraordinary character of this miracle might be so explained, as to render it more easy to be believed. But their learned labour is not needed. It is as easy for God to stop the sun in his course, as to perform any other work. It need not be objected, that the language is not consistent with sound philosophy, because the sun does not move, or go down and rise; for the language used is agreeable to the usage of all nations, and of all individuals who speak intelligibly. The most accurate and learned astronomer, when speaking or writing for the instruction of the common people, or indeed, for any people, always employs the popular language. To do otherwise would not only be insuffer-

able pedantry, but ridiculous folly. It is poorly worth while for any to strive to make the miracle less than it appears to be; for, as was hinted, it is as easy for God to work a great as a small miracle—to stop the wheels of nature, as to move an atom. It has also been solicitously inquired, whether profane history contains any vestige of this wonderful miracle; and it has been supposed that both in Egypt and China some vague tradition of the event had been handed down. But here again, we need care but little whether heathen writers contain any notice of this astonishing event or not; for we know that their authentic histories do not commence until a thousand years after the time of Joshua. The five kings, whose army was utterly defeated, fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. Joshua, upon being informed of this, directed the cave to be closed with great stones, and guarded, to prevent their escape. The fleeing remnants of the routed army were pursued, and many of them slain, before they could enter into their famed cities. When Joshua and his men had returned from the pursuit and slaughter of their enemies, he gave orders that the mouth of the cave should be opened, and the kings brought out; and he called for all the men of Israel to assemble, and ordered the captains of the men of war to put their feet upon the necks of these kings. And Joshua said, “Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong, and of good courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.” These five kings were now brought out and slain, and hanged on five trees, where they remained suspended until the evening. And at the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded that they should be taken down off the trees, and cast into the cave in which they had hid themselves. He now proceeded to destroy the city of Makkedah, as he had destroyed Jericho. He left nothing remaining alive, according to the word of the Lord. And from Makkedah, Joshua marched against Libnah, which he treated in the same manner. And from Libnah he passed to Lachish, and although Horam king of Gezar came to help Lachish, it availed nothing; for this city was devoted to destruction in the same manner as those already mentioned. And from Lachish he marched against Eglon, “and fought against it, and they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed.” The next city which they attacked was Hebron, which was devoted to utter destruction. The same was done to Debir. Thus Joshua conquered all the hill-country, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings; all the country from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza; and from Goshen to Gibeon. “And all these kings, and their land, did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought

for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal."

SECTION IX.

A NEW COMBINATION UNDER JABIN—JOSHUA DEFEATS HIM, AND TAKES HAZOR, HIS CAPITOL—CONQUEST OF THE WHOLE HILL-COUNTRY—PARTS UNCONQUERED.

THESE rapid conquests and the total destruction which ensued, struck terror into the inhabitants of the land far and wide. A new combination of kings was therefore formed, under the influence and direction of Jabin, king of Hazor, who associated with himself, Jobab king of Madon, together with the kings of Shimron, and of Achshaph. To these were added the kings that were on the north of the mountains; and on the plains of Cinneroth; and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor, on the west. And besides these, Jabin called to his aid the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh. When all these were gathered together, with their horses and chariots, they formed a very numerous army, who, in multitude, were like the sand upon the sea-shore. And this mighty host came and pitched at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them, for to-morrow, about this time, I will deliver them all slain before Israel; thou shalt hough their horses and burn their chariots with fire." So Joshua came suddenly upon them at the waters of Merom, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who chased them and smote them to great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward. And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire; and he turned back and took Hazor, the capital of Jabin, which was the head of all the surrounding kingdoms; and after putting all the inhabitants to the sword, he burnt the city with fire. In the same manner did Joshua destroy all the cities of the kings, who were confederated with Jabin. "And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves." But as to those cities which stood still, and entered not into this confederacy, Joshua burned none of them.

Thus did Joshua subdue all the hill-country, and all the south country; and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel and the valley of the same; even from mount Halak that goeth unto Scir, unto Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under mount Hermon. For a long

time Joshua was engaged in making war with all those kings. "There was not a city that made peace with the Israelites, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour; as the Lord commanded Moses."

The Anakims who dwelt in Hebron, Debir and Anab, who had filled the Israelites with so great dismay formerly, were now attacked by Joshua, and cut off from the mountains of Judah. The only remnants of the children of Anak, inhabited Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions, by their tribes. And the land rested from war."

The following is a succinct view of the country conquered, and taken possession of by the children of Israel. On the other side Jordan, towards the rising sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east; and from Aroer, which is on the bank of Arnon, unto the river Jab-bok, which is on the border of Ammon. And from the plain to the sea of Cinneroth on the east, even to the sea of the plain, which is the salt-sea on the east. This country which had belonged to Og king of Bashan, who was of the family of the giants; and to Sihon king of Heshbon, did Moses, the servant of the Lord, give to the Reubenites and Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

And the country which Joshua subdued, on this side Jordan, extended from Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, to mount Halak. The towns conquered were thirty and one, viz: Jericho, Ai, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon, Gezer, Debir, Geder, Hormah, Arad, Libnah, Adullam, Mak-kedah, Tappuah, Hephher, Aphek, Lasharon, Madon, Hazor, Shimron-meron, Achshaph, Taanach, Megiddo, Kedesh, Jok-neam of Carmel, Dor, Gilgal, and Tirzah.

The conquests which Joshua made were very important, as the cities which he subdued were situated in the centre of the country, and contained the densest population. But many districts and towns remained still in the possession of the original inhabitants, whom God directed Joshua to exterminate. He was now, however, far advanced in years, and less fit than formerly for the incessant labours and watchings which appertained to a military commander. "And the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." The unconquered country extended from Sihor on the confines of Egypt, to the bor-

ders of Ekron, northward. This territory lay along the Mediterranean Sea, and included the five lords of the Philistines, who are so conspicuous in the wars waged by the Israelites. The Canaanites, who inhabited the south; the region round about Sidon, together with the country on the east of Lebanon, and extending to mount Hermon, unto the entrance of Hamath, were still unconquered. All these nations the Lord had promised to drive out from before the children of Israel.

SECTION X.

JOSHUA DIVIDES THE LAND AMONG THE NINE AND A HALF TRIBES—CALEB'S SPEECH AND PORTION—OTHNIEL CONQUERS KIRJATH-ZEPHER, AND RECEIVES CALEB'S DAUGHTER ACHSAH AS HIS REWARD—LOT OF JUDAH—OF EPHRAIM—HALF TRIBE OF MANASSEH—THE CASE OF ZELOPHEHAD—CHILDREN OF JOSEPH COMPLAIN OF THE NARROWNESS OF THEIR LIMITS.

ORDERS were now given to Joshua to proceed to the division of the land by lot, between the nine and a half tribes, who as yet had not received their inheritance; for, as has been related, the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, had received their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, agreeably to their own request; still, however, the land allotted to them was not entirely subdued; for some of the former inhabitants continued to dwell in the land among the Israelites. This was particularly the case in regard to the Geshurites and the Maachathites. The country of the Amorites, on the east of Jordan, which was distributed by lot among these two tribes and a half, was very rich in cities, and abundant in pastures; on which account, it was chosen by the Reubenites and Gadites, because they abounded in cattle. It will be remembered, in all the accounts of dividing the land among the twelve tribes, Levi is never reckoned, for with the two sons of Joseph, whom Jacob adopted as his own sons, there were twelve without counting the tribe of Levi; that is, Joseph himself is not reckoned, but each of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, was counted as a distinct tribe. The reason of the exclusion of the tribe of Levi from a share in the division of the country, is very remarkable, and is often and emphatically repeated—"Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire, are their inheritance;" or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance." Besides Joshua, there was but one man remaining in Israel, who was grown to maturity, when the people came out of Egypt. This was Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenecite. He was of the spies whom Moses sent to survey the land, and with Joshua, not only gave a true report of the goodness of the land, but having

faith in God, these men encouraged the people to go up immediately and take possession of the country. While by a solemn oath Jehovah declared that none of the rest of the people who came out of Egypt at adult age, should enter Canaan, it was promised that this honour and reward should be conferred on Joshua and Caleb. In this respect, they had the preference to Moses himself and Aaron the saint of the Lord, both of whom were excluded from this privilege, on account of improper conduct at Meribah. When Joshua and Eleazar, and the heads of the fathers, had come together to make a division of the land, the venerable patriarch Caleb presented himself before them, and delivered the following speech: "Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning thee and me, in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to to spy out the land, and I brought him word again, as it was in my heart. Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me, made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware, on that day, saying, surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever; because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God. And now, behold the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old: and yet I am strong this day, as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so now is my strength for war, both to go out and to come in. Now, therefore, give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day, (for thou heardest in that day, how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced,) if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said." "And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron, for an inheritance." This city was therefore established to his family, and was possessed by them for a long period; "because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." The original name of Hebron, was Kirjath-arba, which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. Caleb, however, had to dispossess the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, who had their residence in Hebron. And as Debir, the former name of which was Kirjath-sepher, belonged to his inheritance, Caleb promised his daughter Achsah, to whomsoever would smite this city and take it out of the hands of the inhabitants. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, enterprised the conquest of this place, and accomplished it, and received the prize which had been offered. Achsah was probably the only daughter of this

venerable patriarch; and she seems to have possessed a great influence over her father; for although he had given her a possession, called the "South land," yet she requested another, which contained springs of water. "And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs." The inheritance of Caleb fell within the limits of the tribe of Judah. The land which was allotted to this numerous and important tribe, was bounded on the west by the great, or Mediterranean sea, on the south by the river of Egypt, which was the southern boundary of the Holy Land; on the east by the salt, or Dead sea, and by a line running north from this sea to Jerusalem, which passed through the valley of the son of Hinnom, and terminated in the midst of Jebus or Jerusalem, where it met the possession of Benjamin; and the northern boundary passed off to the great sea, in a line somewhat circuitous. This was an exceedingly fertile and populous region, and was crowded with strongholds and walled towns. The sacred historian mentions nearly a hundred cities which fell within the inheritance of Judah. Many of these were large and populous; but we should remember, that every town which was enclosed by a wall, and entered by gates, is, in the language of Scripture, called a city.

The next tribe which received its inheritance was that of Ephraim, which included a large territory, extending from Jordan to the Mediteranean; and contained within its limits the inheritance of some of the lesser tribes; as did also that of Judah.

Manasseh had received on the east of Jordan, the one-half part of their inheritance; the remaining part was allotted to them along-side of the territory of Ephraim.

In regard to one family in this tribe, there occurred a case which was brought for decision "before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes." The case was, that Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Mileah, and Tirzah. These laid claim to the inheritance of their father; and indeed, Moses had determined by Divine direction, that when there were no sons, the daughters should inherit; so that the land might be kept within its proper tribe. These heiresses were, however, required to contract marriages only with men of their own tribe.

Several of the cities allotted to Manasseh, were situated within the limits of Ephraim; for the sacred historian says, "Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh, belonged to the children of Ephraim. And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river; these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manas-

seh." This must mean that some of the cities which were allotted to Manasseh lay within the borders of Ephraim. And the river Kanah was the dividing line on one part between these tribes; for it is said, "southward it was Ephraim's and northward it was Manasseh's; and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east. And Manasseh had also several towns within the borders of Issachar and Asher.

On account of this mixture of the tribes, in their possessions, it is rendered impossible, to delineate distinctly, the geography of the habitations of the several tribes. Most maps are in this respect very inaccurate, and the possessions of the tribes laid down by mere conjecture. That territory which included Bethshean, Ibleam, Dor, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, with the towns and villages which lay in these districts, was the principal part of the inheritance of the tribe of Manasseh. But although this fine country was allotted to them, they possessed really only a small portion of it; for they "could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land;" yet when the Israelites waxed strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute, but did not utterly drive them out.

The children of Joseph, although they obtained the best of the land, yet were not well satisfied with their portion, therefore, they spake to Joshua, saying, "Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto? And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there, in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. And the children of Joseph said, the hill is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites that dwell in the valley have chariots of iron. And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people and hast great power, thou shalt not have one lot only, but the mountain shall be thine, and thou shalt cut it down; and the outgoings of it shall be thine; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong."

SECTION XI.

SHILOH THE RESIDENCE OF THE ARK—SEVEN TRIBES YET DESTITUTE OF AN INHERITANCE—THE LOTS OF BENJAMIN—OF SIMEON—OF ZEBULUN—OF ISSACHAR—OF ASHER—OF NAFTALI—OF DAN—JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE.

ABOUT this time Shiloh was selected as the place to which the tribes of Israel should resort for divine worship; and at this place the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation.

“But there remained among the children of Israel, seven tribes which had not received their inheritance.” And as they seemed reluctant to go forward to take possession of the land allotted to them, Joshua exhorted them earnestly, and said, “How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you.” And he directed them to select three men from each tribe, to go through the land and describe it, according to the inheritance of each; and to divide it into seven parts, not interfering with the allotments already made. These men went forth through the land, and described it by cities, into seven parts, in a book, and brought it to Joshua, who cast lots for them, in Shiloh, before the Lord.

As we have seen, Judah had a large territory in the south of Palestine, and the sons of Joseph to the north. Now, upon casting lots, the inheritance of Benjamin came up between these two; that is, between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. Their possession extended from Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, but was very narrow, being a mere slip of land, running along the north border of the tribe of Judah. Jerusalem was partly within the lot of Benjamin, and partly within the tribe of Judah. The inheritance of Benjamin was of an irregular shape, for while it lay along the northern limit of Judah, it also included a slip of land on the east of Judah, extending from Jericho to the mouth of the Jordan. The number of cities which fell to this tribe was twenty-six.

The next lot came forth to Simeon, whose inheritance was entirely included within the limits of Judah; for it was found, that the children of Judah had an undue proportion allotted to them; therefore, seventeen cities were given to the Simeonites, out of their inheritance. This was by far the smallest tribe of the twelve, and owing to a destruction caused by the divine judgments upon them, when they entered Canaan, their number was not half as great as when they left Egypt. And as these cities were not contiguous to each other, but scattered through various parts of the tribe of Judah, that prophecy by the mouth of Jacob was fulfilled, which saith of Simeon and Levi, “I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.”

The next lot which came up was for Zebulun. The inheritance of this tribe was in a very fertile country, near the sea of Cinneroth or Galilee, as it was afterwards called; and, indeed, the territory of this tribe formed a part of the district of country, which, in after times, obtained the name of Galilee. The number of cities allotted to Zebulun was only twelve, but the soil was exceedingly fertile, and they could extend their border northward without restriction.

The inheritance of Issachar touched upon that of Manasseh, and extended from mount Tabor on the west, to the river Jordan. The number of their cities was sixteen.

The inheritance of Asher lay along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, including mount Carmel on the south, and the "strong city of Tyre," and "great Zidon," on the north. This territory though small in extent, was the richest of all, on account of the very lucrative trade which was carried on within its borders; answering to Jacob's prophecy, "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties."

Naphtali had a fertile inheritance along the Jordan, and on the sea of Cinneroth, along-side of Zebulun. These two tribes are therefore commonly mentioned together, in the propheets. "The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles." This prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, when the Lord Jesus Christ came and dwelt in Capernaum, which city was on the borders of these two tribes. And by his preaching and miracles, in that dark region, was fulfilled the other part of the prophecy, which is thus applied by the evangelist Matthew: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

Dan was the last tribe which received their inheritance. Their territory lay on the extreme north, and the land which was left from the other lots was too small for Dan, which was a numerous people. They were, however, an enterprising and warlike tribe, and therefore, they marched against a place called Leshem, which they took, and having put the inhabitants to the sword, they dwelt in their place; but changed its name from Leshem to Dan, after the name of their father. This name has given rise to an infidel objection to the sacred Scriptures; for it is alleged, that this place was called Dan as early as the time of Abraham, for it is related in Genesis, that he pursued the army who had taken Lot, unto Dan. To this objection, bishop Watson answers, first, that there is no proof that by the word *Dan* a city is intended; that in ancient maps the river Jordan is laid down, as formed by two streams in this very region, the one of which was named Jor, and the other

Dan; out of which two words, was formed Jordan. And in the second place, he shows that where the name of a city is changed, the old name becomes obsolete, and is forgotten, and the name substituted is usually inserted in all documents which are in common use; for otherwise the people would not know what place is spoken of.

After the division of the land among the tribes, the children of Israel requested Joshua to select an inheritance for himself; for this disinterested man had as yet appropriated no portion of the country to his own use, nor had he laid in any claim; but now at the request of the people, he asked for Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim. There he built a city, which he made the place of his residence until his death.

Thus was the land of Canaan divided by lot among the several tribes, by Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the children of Israel. This whole transaction took place in Shiloh, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. It was a solemn, religious act; an appeal to Jehovah, to designate the habitations and possessions of each tribe; and it would seem from an attentive consideration of the history, that not only the inheritance of each tribe, but of each family, was determined by the religious use of the lot. Indeed, unless this was the fact, the utmost confusion must have attended the distribution of the land among the people.

SECTION XII.

CITIES OF REFUGE APPOINTED—CITIES FOR THE LEVITES—SUBURBS TO THE CITIES ALSO GRANTED.

THE important business of dividing the land among the several tribes having been accomplished, Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, proceeded to execute certain orders which Jehovah had given to Moses. The first was, to appoint cities of refuge, to which "the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee," when he was pursued by the avenger of blood. By this law it was ordained, "that when he that doth flee unto one of these cities, shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand, because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not before-time. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment; and until the death of the high-priest that shall be in those days. Then shall the slayer return and come

unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled." "And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba (which is Hebron) in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bazer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh."

The next thing which claimed their attention was a provision for the residence of the Levites. As they received no inheritance in land, with the other tribes, it was altogether necessary that they should have cities assigned to them, in which they might dwell. This had been directed in the time of Moses, and now, when all the other tribes had been put in the possession of their inheritance, "the heads of the fathers of the Levites came unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. And they spake unto them at Shiloh, in the land of Canaan, saying, The Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites, out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities and their suburbs." The first allotment of cities was made to the family of Aaron, thirteen cities, most of which were selected from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. There was a wise providence in placing the priests in cities near to the place of the tabernacle, that they might be at hand to take their turn of service in the sanctuary. The remainder of the family of Kohath received their allotment of cities from the tribe of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.

The family of Gershon received by lot out of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali; and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

The children of Merari out of the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun, twelve cities.

The whole number of cities given to the Levites was forty-eight; and with every city there were suburbs, including a certain territory round about the city, for their flocks and herds.

"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land, which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all he swore unto their fathers. And there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

SECTION XIII.

THE ARMED MEN OF THE TWO AND A HALF TRIBES HAVE LEAVE TO RETURN—
JOSHUA'S TESTIMONY AND EXHORTATION—THEY BUILD AN ALTAR NEAR JORDAN—
IMPRESSION OF THIS EVENT ON ISRAEL—THEIR DEPUTATION AND SOLEMN MES-
SAGE—THEIR SATISFACTORY ANSWER—THE PEOPLE REJOICED AT THE SUCCESSFUL
ISSUE.

THE conquest of Canaan being now so far completed that there was no longer any occasion for the services of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who had aided their brethren through the whole war, they were dismissed by Joshua, to return home to their families beyond Jordan, with the following ample testimony of their fidelity, and solemn warning to be obedient to the commands of God. "Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them; therefore, now, return ye unto your families, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you, on the other side Jordan. But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him and serve him, with all your heart, and with all your soul." "So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away, and they went unto their tents." And Joshua said, "Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren."

The children of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh took their leave of their brethren at Shiloh, and took up their march for their possessions in the land of Gilead. But when they came to the border of Jordan, they built there a great altar, which was intended to be a visible memorial of their relation to that land. Their brethren of the other tribes, upon hearing of this transaction, supposing that the object was to set up a separate place of worship, and to forsake the tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh, were greatly excited, and having assembled at Shiloh, they determined to go up and prevent this schismatical course by the force of arms. But wiser counsels prevailed; and they resolved before going against their brethren in hostile array, to send a deputation to inquire into the affair. Accordingly, Phinchas, the son of Eleazar the priest, was selected as

the head of this embassy, and with him ten princes, each one of whom was the head of the house of their fathers, among the thousands of Israel. And when they came to their brethren, they said, "Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, What trespass is this ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that ye have builded an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord? Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord, but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord? And it will be, seeing ye rebel to-day against the Lord, that to-morrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us; but rebel not against the Lord, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar besides the altar of the Lord our God. Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man perished not alone in his iniquity." To which deputation and message, the children of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, returned the following answer: "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel shall know, if it be in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord, (save us not this day,) that we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord; or if to offer thereon burnt-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let the Lord himself require it; and if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come, your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan between us and you; ye children of Reuben and children of Gad, ye have no part in the Lord. So shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord. Therefore, we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice; but that it may be a witness between us and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before him, with our burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; that your children may not say to our children, in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord. Therefore, said we, it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, not for burnt-offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you. God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for

sacrifices, beside the altar of the Lord our God that is before his tabernacle."

Phinehas and the princes associated with him were entirely satisfied with this explanation, and said to the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, "This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord: now, ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord." And when the deputation returned to the children of Israel, and made a report of their interview with their brethren, the thing pleased "the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt."

"And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar ED: for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God."

SECTION XIV.

PROSPEROUS CONDITION OF ISRAEL—JOSHUA'S SOLEMN ADDRESS TO THE ELDERS AND PEOPLE—HIS VALEDICTORY—HIS PROPOSAL THAT THEY SHOULD NOW CHOOSE WHOM THEY WOULD SERVE—DECEASE OF JOSHUA AND ELEAZAR.

THINGS now went on prosperously with the Israelites for many years. Their enemies round about were subdued, and they had taken possession of their respective inheritances. Joshua still lived in the midst of them; and there are many strong proofs, that this generation which took possession of Canaan, was more distinguished for ready obedience to the commandments of God, than any other before or after. Their zeal for the purity of God's worship, according to his appointment, is remarkably manifest in the preceding history. The disposition of the people generally may also be inferred from the good conduct of the children of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh, as appears by the testimony of Joshua, and by their pious and conciliatory conduct as evinced in the foregoing history.

But Joshua having now become an old man, called for all Israel and their elders, and for their heads and their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, "I am old and stricken in age, and ye have seen all that the Lord God hath done unto all these nations, because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you. Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the Lord your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight, and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised to you. Be ye, therefore, very courageous

to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom, to the right hand or to the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them; neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand; for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you. Take good heed, therefore, unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from this good land, which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them: then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you."

Some time after the delivery of this solemn and admonitory discourse, Joshua collected, not merely the princes and heads of the tribes, and elders and officers, but gathered unto Shechem all the tribes of Israel, and addressed them as follows: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; 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, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac; and I gave unto Isaac, Jacob and Esau; and I gave unto Esau, mount Seir, to possess it, but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and plagued Egypt, according to that

which I did amongst them, and afterward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers, with chariots and horsemen, unto the Red sea. And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt; and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. Then Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel; and sent and called Balaam, the son of Beor, to curse you; but I would not hearken unto Balaam, therefore he blessed you still, and I delivered you out of his hand. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho; and the men of Jericho fought against you; the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them: of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not do ye eat. Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him, in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." "And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods. For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed. And the Lord drave out from before us, all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land; therefore will we also serve the Lord, for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God: he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord. And Joshua

said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him; and they said, We are witnesses." "Now, therefore," (said he,) "put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone and set it up there, under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said unto all the people, behold this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he hath spoken unto us: and it shall, therefore, be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. And Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance."

"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.

"And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

"And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim."

Thus all the men of this pious and obedient generation were gathered to their fathers. Probably the period which intervened between the conquest of the land, and the decease of Joshua, Eleazar, and their contemporaries, was the most peaceful and prosperous which this nation ever enjoyed; confirming practically the truth of that aphorism of Solomon, **RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION.**

SECTION XV.

JUDAH AND SIMEON DIRECTED TO ATTACK THE CANAANITES—THOUGH SUCCESSFUL THEY COULD NOT EXPEL THE CANAANITES FROM EVERY PART OF THEIR LOT—BENJAMIN NOT ABLE TO EXPEL THE JEBUSITES—MANASSEH VERY UNSUCCESSFUL IN RECLAIMING THEIR POSSESSION—SOLEMN MESSAGE OF THE ANGEL OF GOD—CHARACTER OF THE GENERATION WHO FIRST POSSESSED CANAAN—THE PEOPLE FORSAKE GOD AFTER THE DECEASE OF THIS GENERATION—GOD RAISES UP JUDGES—WHEN THE JUDGES WERE DEAD THEY AGAIN GRIEVOUSLY PROVOKED GOD TO ANGER.

AFTER the death of Joshua, it was determined to make a fresh attack upon the Canaanites, a large number of whom continued in the midst of the Israelites, and retained the possession of some very important places; but it was piously resolved to ask counsel of God, and to ascertain his will, in regard to the particular tribes which should engage in this expedition. The answer of the Lord was, that Judah should go up against the Canaanites; and it was promised that the land should be delivered into his hand. But as the lot of Simeon was included in that of Judah, so that they might be said to have a common interest in the conquest, it was agreed that they should unite their forces, until the conquest was completed. The king who made most resistance was Adoni-bezek, whom they found in Bezek, which no doubt was his residence and possession; for his name signifies "the lord of Bezek;" and they readily subdued all that opposed them, and slew ten thousand men in Bezek. Adoni-bezek, seeing his forces routed, fled, but the Israelites pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And this was a just retaliation for his own acknowledged cruelties; and he seems to have felt the justice of the treatment, for he said, "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table. As I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died."

The tribe of Judah engaged in many successive expeditions against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.

In the former part of this history, we saw that Moses earnestly entreated Jethro, his father-in-law, to cast in his lot among them, and go with them; for his past experience of his piety and wisdom led him to think that his presence would be very serviceable in all their journey through the wilderness. This invitation Jethro at first declined; but Moses entreated him with great earnestness not to leave them. It does not there appear, however, whether he prevailed with his father-in-law to accompany him or not. But here the writer of the book of

Judges decides this point, by saying, "And the children of the Kénite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees, with the children of Judah, into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people." But although the children of Judah and Simeon were successful in their wars with the Canaanites, and extended their conquests into the country of the Philistines, which was included in the inheritance of Judah, and although they were able in general to expel the Canaanites from the mountains, "they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." And although the children of Judah had succeeded in taking that section of Jerusalem which lay within their border, yet the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites continued for a long time to dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem. (Judg. i. 8—21.)

The children of Joseph also were not negligent in endeavouring to expel the Canaanites from their inheritance. They directed their efforts against the city of Bethel; but the former name was Luz. They sent spies to explore the condition of this city, and when they drew near, they saw a man come out of the city; and they promised that they would show him mercy, if he would discover to them the entrance of the city; and when the city was taken, and the inhabitants slain with the sword, this man and all his family were preserved. "And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and named it Luz."

But Manasseh was not so successful as the tribes just mentioned, in driving out the people who remained in the lot of their inheritance. In Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, and Megiddo, the Canaanites continued to dwell, and could not be expelled. But when Israel was strong they were made tributary. Besides, there were many places in all the remaining tribes, from which the Canaanites were not driven out; but the children of Dan were not only unable to dispossess the original inhabitants, but "the Amorites forced them into the mountain, and would not suffer them to come down to the valley. The fact was, that the Israelites did not faithfully address themselves to execute the commandment of Jehovah, in relation to the inhabitants of Canaan; but after a while began to live familiarly with them, and to engage in commerce, and enter into alliances with them. This disobedience, from whatever motive it might spring, was very displeasing to God; and as those leaders were dead through whom the Lord commonly had communicated his will to the children of Israel, he now sent them a solemn message and reproof by his angel; that is, the angel of the covenant, who had accompanied them through all their

journeyings in the wilderness, and who appeared to Joshua, when he entered Canaan, as the captain of the Lord's host. This angel now came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; and ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land, and shall throw down their altars. But ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore, I also said, I will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you." And when the angel of Jehovah spake these words unto all the children of Israel, the people lifted up their voice and wept. And hence, the place was called Bochim (weeping). And they sacrificed there unto the Lord. This was doubtless by the express direction of Jehovah, who had spoken unto them, otherwise it would not have been lawful to offer sacrifices anywhere but at Shiloh, where the tabernacle of the Lord was erected.

It has been already remarked, that that generation of Israel who conquered and first inhabited the land of Canaan, was, perhaps, the most righteous of that nation. This seems to be implied in what the sacred historian says of the generation that succeeded them. "And," says he, "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim," who was the principal deity of the Canaanites. "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, and served Baal and Ashtaroth: and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers, that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil; as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed." But they were not utterly forsaken, for, from time to time, the Lord raised up judges, who delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them. "And when the Lord raised up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them." But they would not hearken to their judges, but bowed themselves down to other gods, and turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord. "And when the judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to

serve them and to bow down unto them: they ceased not from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice, I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord, to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua."

SECTION XVI.

OTHNIEL DELIVERS ISRAEL—EHUD DELIVERS THEM FROM MOAB, AND SLAYS TEN THOUSAND MEN.

"AND the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, Perizzites, and Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war; and the Lord delivered Chusan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died."

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. And he gathered unto him Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm-trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed; and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh, and he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. But he him-

self turned again from the quarries that were in Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer-parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. And the haft also went in after the blade, and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out again." Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. When the servants came and saw that the doors of the parlour were locked, they supposed that he wished to be in privacy, and they waited a long time, until they were ashamed. At length they took a key and opened the door, and behold their lord was fallen down dead upon the earth. And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and fled to Scirath. And he blew a trumpet in mount Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount; and he said, "Follow me, for the Lord hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hand; and they went down after him and took the fords of Jordan, towards Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over; and they slew of Moab at that time, about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel; and the land had rest fourscore years."

SECTION XVII.

SHAMGAR—DEBORAH JUDGES ISRAEL—BARAK ASSOCIATED WITH HER—THE TRIBES
SUMMONED TO THE HELP OF THE LORD AGAINST JABIN—SISERA DEFEATED—HIS
DEATH BY THE HAND OF Jael—SONG OF DEBORAH AND BARAK.

THE next deliverer raised up to Israel after Ehud, was Shamgar, the son of Anath; but of him, only one particular action is left on record, but this is a very remarkable one, and shows that in bodily strength he must have been indeed a mighty man. The event to which reference has been made, is, that with an ox-goad, he slew of the Philistines six hundred men: and it seems, that by this heroic act he delivered Israel from subjection to these troublesome neighbours. As no period of time is mentioned, during which Shamgar ruled over the people, it is probable, that he is only mentioned as a deliverer on account of this one extraordinary exploit.

"And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead; and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the cap-

tain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel."

At that time the Lord raised up a woman to be a prophetess, and to exercise judgment over his people Israel. Her name was Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth; and her usual residence was under a palm-tree, between Beth-el and Ramah, in mount Ephraim; to which place the Israelites resorted for judgment.

Under the impulse of Divine inspiration, Deborah sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam, out of Naphtali, and said unto him, "Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and the children of Zebulun; and I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver him into thine hand. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee; notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh; and Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And he went up with ten thousand men at his feet, and Deborah went up with him. Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. And they showed Sisera that Barak, the son of Abinoam, was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not the Lord gone up before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots and all his host, with the edge of the sword, before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles; and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left. Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she

covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty; and she opened a bottle of milk and gave him drink, and covered him. Again he said, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground, (for he was fast asleep and weary,) so he died. And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples: so God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel."

Upon occasion of this victory, Deborah and Barak sang a song of triumph and of praise. It abounds with striking thoughts and bold figures, and may be taken as a specimen of the earliest poetry. The only song or poem, of earlier date, which has come down to us, is the song composed by Moses, and sung by Miriam, with her female companions, after crossing the Red sea. The reader will be gratified by some extracts from an ancient poetical composition.

"Praise ye the Lord, for the avenging of Israel,
 When the people willingly offered themselves.
 Hear, O ye kings, give ear, O ye princes:
 I, even I, will sing unto the Lord,
 I will sing praise to the God of Israel.
 Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir,
 When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
 The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped;
 The clouds also dropped water.
 The mountains melted from before the Lord;
 That Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel.
 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath;
 In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,
 And the travellers walked through by-ways.
 The inhabitants of the villages ceased,
 They ceased in Israel, until that I, Deborah, arose—
 That I arose, a mother in Israel.
 They chose new gods—then was war in the gates;
 Was there a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?
 My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
 That offered themselves willingly among the people.

Bless ye the Lord.
 Speak, ye that ride on white asses,
 Ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.
 —From the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water;
 There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord;
 Even the righteous acts towards the villages in Israel;
 Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.

Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song:
 Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive,
 Thou son of Abinoam.

Then he made him that remaineth have dominion
 Over the nobles, among the people.
 The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.
 Out of Ephraim was a root of them against Amalek.
 After thee, Benjamin, among thy people.
 Out of Machir came down governors,
 And out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.
 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah,
 Even Issachar; and also Barak.
 He was sent on foot into the valley.
 For the divisions of Reuben, were great thoughts of heart.
 Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds,
 To hear the bleatings of the flocks?
 For the divisions of Reuben were great searchings of heart.
 Gilead abode beyond Jordan:
 And why did Dan remain in ships?
 Asher continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his breaches.
 Zebulun and Naphtali were a people
 That jeopardied their lives unto the death, in the high-places of the field.
 The kings came and fought;—
 Then fought the kings of Canaan,
 In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.
 They took no gain of money.
 They fought from heaven—
 The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
 The river of Kishon swept them away—
 That ancient river—the river of Kishon.
 O, my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.
 Then were the horse-hoofs broken
 By the means of their prancings—the prancings of their mighty ones.
 Curse ye Meroz—said the angel of the Lord—
 Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof:
 Because they came not to the help of the Lord—
 To the help of the Lord against the mighty.
 Blessed among women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be:
 Blessed shall she be above women, in the tent.
 He asked water, and she gave him milk;
 She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
 She put her hand to the nail,
 And her right hand to the workman's hammer;
 And with the hammer she smote Sisera:
 She smote off his head, when she had pierced,
 And stricken through his temples.
 At her feet he bowed—he fell—he lay down—
 At her feet he bowed—he fell—
 Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,
 And cried through the lattice,
 Why is his chariot so long in coming?
 Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
 Her wise ladies answered her—
 Yea, she returned answer to herself:
 Have they not sped—have they not divided the prey?
 To every man a damsel or two—
 To Sisera a prey of divers colours of needle-work—

Of divers colours of needle-work on both sides,
 Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil.
 So let thine enemies perish, O Lord :
 But let them that love him be as the sun
 When he goeth forth in his might."

In this song, those tribes who willingly came forward to fight the battles of the Lord, are celebrated with due praise; but severe censures are passed on those who remained at home at this time, when the services of all were needed. Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, and Naphtali, are recorded as having done their duty. While Reuben, on account of his divisions and internal distractions, was not in a situation to render any aid. And Dan and Asher, though near to the field of battle, clung to their ships and sea-coast, and furnished no help in the contest. But why do we hear nothing of Judah, commonly the foremost in all pious enterprises; and on whose borders the battle was fought? I know not the answer to this question. One place, no where else mentioned in Scripture, is here made memorable, by the curse denounced against it by the angel of the Lord, for not coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Why Meroz was singled out for this anathema, when so many others were delinquent, cannot now be ascertained. But this city stands as a beacon to all future generations.

SECTION XVIII.

MIDIAN OPPRESSES ISRAEL—A NAMELESS PROPHET IS SENT WITH A MESSAGE FROM GOD TO ISRAEL—THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARS TO GIDEON, WHO SACRIFICES A KID TO JEHOVAH, AND THE ANGEL, AFTER DELIVERING HIS MESSAGE, ASCENDS IN THE FLAME—GIDEON THROWS DOWN THE ALTAR OF BAAL BY DIVINE DIRECTION—JOASH, GIDEON'S FATHER, REFUSES TO GIVE HIM UP—A GREAT HOST GATHERED AGAINST ISRAEL—GIDEON COLLECTS THE PEOPLE—ASKS FOR A TWO-FOLD SIGN, WHICH IS GRANTED.

THE national distresses of Israel, in every instance, were owing to their transgressions. The language of the sacred history is, "The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord," and then the Lord "sold them," or "delivered them into the hands of their enemies." The nation which next obtained the dominion over them, was Midian; and their rule was exceedingly oppressive; so that the children of Israel were driven to take refuge in the dens of the mountains, and in the caves and strongholds. And the labours of agriculture were rendered almost useless, for when "Israel had sown, the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou came unto Gaza; and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up

with their cattle, and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers, for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." It is a remarkable evidence of the goodness, long-suffering, and gracious condescension of the Lord, that in all cases when the people cried unto him, he mercifully interposed for their deliverance. On this occasion, he sent a prophet, who said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up out of Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage. And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you; and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land. And I said unto you, that I am the Lord your God. Fear not the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but ye have not obeyed my voice." Whence this prophet came, or whither he went after he had delivered his message, we are not informed; neither are we able to tell his name, or designate the family or tribe to which he belonged. This mission of a prophet was evidently intended to bring the people to repentance for their sins in departing from the worship of Jehovah, and going after the gods of the Amorites.

But a more august ambassador was now sent. "The angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak, which was in Ophrah, that belonged to Joash, the Abi-ezrite; and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. And Gideon went in and made ready a kid, and leavened cakes of an ephah of flour; the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a

pot, and brought it out to him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon the rock, and pour out the broth; and he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom." And this altar remained for many years in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. The Lord now gave direction that he should, on that very night, throw down the altar of Baal, which was erected on a rock in that place, and should build there an altar to the Lord, and offer upon it the second bullock of seven years old; and he was directed also to cut down the idolatrous grove, which had been planted by the altar of Baal, and to use the wood for the burnt-sacrifice which he was about to offer. "Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him; and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered on the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said to all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him? He that will plead for him, let him be put to death, whilst it is yet morning. If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal."

"Then all the Midianites, and Amalekites, and the children of the east, were gathered together; and they went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and Abi-ezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also was gathered after him. And he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali, and they came up to meet them. And Gideon said unto God,

If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said," let the sign which I request be granted. "Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early in the morning, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece; a bowl-full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night; for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."

SECTION XIX.

GIDEON COLLECTS HIS FORCES—A MERE HANDFUL IN COMPARISON OF MIDIAN, YET THE LORD TELLS HIM THERE ARE TOO MANY—ALL ARE DISMISSED EXCEPT THREE HUNDRED—GIDEON GOES TO THE MIDIANITISH HOST, AND HEARS A DREAM WHICH ENCOURAGES HIM—THE ENEMY ARE THROWN INTO CONFUSION, AND SLAY ONE ANOTHER—TWO PRINCES OF THE MIDIANITES ARE TAKEN, OREB AND ZEEB—THEIR HEADS CUT OFF.

WHEN Gideon had collected his forces, he pitched by the well of Harod; and the Midianites were on the north side of them, in the valley, by the hill Moreh. Although the men of Israel who were with Gideon, were few in comparison of the host of Midian, yet in the Lord's account they were too many; for he said unto Gideon, "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now, therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return, and depart early from mount Gilead; and there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many, bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there." The method of trial, which, by Divine direction, decided who were to go and who return, was singular. Gideon was commanded to place by themselves as many of the men as took up the water in their hands, and lapped it as a dog; but all those who bowed down on their knees to drink were directed to return home. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped, will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets, and went forth to meet the Midianites, who lay encamped in the valley

beneath. "And the Lord said unto Gideon, Arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thy hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant, down to the host, and thou shalt hear what they say, and afterwards shall thy hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant, unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites, and all the children of the east, lay along the valley, like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent and smote it, that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And when Gideon heard the dream, and the interpretation thereof, he worshipped, and returned to the host of Israel, and said, Arise, for the Lord hath delivered Midian into your hand. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, with lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, When I come unto the outside of the camp, as I do, so shall ye do. When I, and all that are with me, blow with the trumpet, then blow ye the trumpets also, on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon. So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came to the outside of the camp, in the beginning of the middle watch, and they had but newly set the watch; and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake their pitchers; and held the lamps in their hands, and the trumpets in their right hands, to blow withal; and they cried, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon. And they stood, every man in his place, round about the camp; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets; and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host; and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together, out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. And Gideon sent messengers through all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at

the wine-press of Zeeb, and pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon.”

SECTION XX.

THE MEN OF EPHRAIM COMPLAIN OF GIDEON—THE CONDUCT OF THE MEN OF SUCCOTH AND PENUEL—ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA, KINGS OF MIDIAN, TAKEN AND SLAIN—THE PEOPLE WISH TO MAKE GIDEON THEIR PERMANENT AND HEREDITARY RULER—HE REFUSES—HIS IDOLATRY—MIDIAN SUBDUED—THE PEOPLE ENJOY A LONG REPOSE.

“AND the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply. And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated towards him, when he had said that. And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hands, that we should give bread unto thine army? And Gideon said, Therefore, when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then will I tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briers. And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. And he spake unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men; all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east; for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents, on the east side of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host, for the host was secure. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, and discomfited the host, and returned from the battle before the sun was up, and caught a young man of Succoth, and inquired of him, and he described the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof; even threescore and seventeen men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, are the hands of Zebah and Zal-

munna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city. And he said unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they: each one resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his first-born, Up, and slay them: but the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks."

So great a deliverance having been wrought by the hands of Gideon, the people were very desirous that he should become their permanent governor. "Rule thou over us," said they, "both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you." This conduct of Gideon was both pious and disinterested. Men, in common, are disposed to grasp at power, whenever the prize is within their reach, and make little inquiry whether they can rightly exercise it or not. But Gideon understood that God himself had undertaken to be the king over Israel, and therefore he was right in declining the authority with which they wished to invest him. He was, however, contaminated with the idolatry in the midst of which he had so long lived; and now he requested of his men, that every one should give him the ear-rings of his prey; for many of the people whom they conquered, being Ishmaelites, wore golden ear-rings. These were they who by the sacred historian are called "the children of the east;" for the Ishmaelites or Arabians dwelt on the east of Palestine. It seems, however, that from a very early period, the Midianites and Ishmaelites were mingled together, as the travelling merchants to whom Joseph was sold by his brethren are called both Midianites and Ishmaelites; or the Ishmaelites may have been called Midianites.

Gideon's army made not the least objection to this proposal of their leader, but said, "We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein, every man, the ear-rings of his prey; and the weight of the ear-rings was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold, besides ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian,

and the chains that were on their camels' necks." Now the request of Gideon did not proceed from avarice, but from a love of idols; for having received this large present of gold, he proceeded to make an ephod, and placed it in Ophrah, the city where he dwelt. And this became a snare not only to himself, but to all Israel; for they were led away to worship this golden ephod.

Midian being completely subdued, the people of Israel enjoyed a long repose; and Gideon continued long among them, even forty years; but he married many wives, and had a numerous offspring; for the sacred historian informs us, that he had no less than seventy sons by his wives; and one, afterwards more distinguished than all the rest, by his concubine, who dwelt in Shechem. The name of this last was Abimelech. Gideon, who was also called Jerubbaal, "died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites."

Perhaps Gideon's object in making the golden ephod, which became a snare to Israel, was to draw the people off from the worship of Baalim; for as soon as he was dead, we read "that they made Baal-berith their god. And they remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side. Neither showed they kindness to the house of Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel."

SECTION XXI.

AMBITION OF ABIMELECH THE SON OF GIDEON—HIS CRUELTY—THE PARABLE OF JOTHAM—TRANSACTIONS AT SHECHEM—CONTEST OF GAAL AND ZEBUL—ABIMELECH SUDDENLY COMES AND SMITES GAAL AND HIS PARTY—ABIMELECH KILLED BY A WOMAN.

ALTHOUGH Gideon was free from ambition, and refused to be king over his people when they requested it, and promised to make the office hereditary in his family, yet a very different spirit actuated Abimelech, his son by his concubine; for no sooner was his father out of the way, than he began to intrigue with the inhabitants of Shechem, where his mother's friends appear to have had influence, to make him king over them. And as the seventy legitimate sons of Gideon stood in the way of his ambition, he did not cease from his machinations until he accomplished the destruction of all of them except one, who escaped the general massacre of his brothers at Ophrah, by concealing himself. The name of this only survivor of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal was Jotham. The people of Shechem and Millo now proceeded to make Abimelech king, which trans-

action took place "by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem." When Jotham heard of this ungrateful proceeding towards his father's house, "he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you." Then he delivered the following apologue or parable, the first composition of this kind of which we have any account, and which contained a cutting sarcasm on the inhabitants of Shechem, for making such a worthless man as Abimelech their king. "The trees," said he, "went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us; but the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, whereby they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou and reign over us; but the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us; and the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us; and the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." Jotham having uttered this beautiful but cutting fable in the hearing of the Shechemites, with great severity reproached them for their ungrateful and cruel conduct towards his father's house; putting it to their own consciences to answer whether they had acted "truly and sincerely in making Abimelech king;" and whether they had "dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, according to the deserving of his hands." "For," said he, "my father fought for you, and adventured his life far; and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: and ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother. If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech." "And Jotham," having delivered this speech on mount Gerizim, "ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there for fear of Abimelech, his brother."

Men of cruelty and blood are, in the course of a righteous providence, commonly overtaken sooner or later with condign

punishment: "Their sin will find them out." And frequently the very people whom they have made the instruments of their cruelty become the executors of God's vengeance upon them. This was the fact in regard to the Shechemites, whom Abimelech had employed as his agents in putting to a violent death the seventy sons of his father; for these same people began now to conspire against Abimelech their king; or, as it is strongly expressed in the sacred history, "God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech; that the cruelty done unto the three-score and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, who slew them; and upon the men of Shechem who aided him in the killing of his brethren."

Abimelech did not make Shechem his usual place of residence, but Arumah, which was at some distance; and Zebul acted as his deputy at Shechem, where he had been left the governor. But there came into the city a certain man by the name of Gaal, with a number of others, his associates; this man appears to have been of insinuating manners and popular address; for he soon gained the confidence of the Shechemites, which Zebul the deputy of Abimelech could not prevent. At the season of the vintage, which was always a time of joy and festivity, and also of religious services in honour of their gods, this man went out with the people to the vineyards. When the people of Shechem had gathered their grapes, and trode them in the wine-press, and when they were thus feasting in the house of their god, and their hearts were merry; while they did eat and drink, they were induced, no doubt by the influence of Gaal and his associates, to curse Abimelech the king, whom they had placed over them. "And Gaal himself said, who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Is not he the son of Jerubbaal? and is not Zebul his deputy?" "Would to God the people were under my hand, I would soon remove Abimelech." This seditious discourse of Gaal and the people greatly provoked Zebul the governor; and he sent messengers privily unto Abimelech, and informed the king of the treasonable speeches which had been made; and, moreover, that they were about fortifying the city against him. He advised Abimelech to rise up by night with his people, and to lie in wait in the fields or forests near the city; that as soon as the sun was up, and the gates should be opened, he might attack the city; and when Gaal and the people came forth to repel the assault, and to pursue the assailants, as being ignorant of their number, Abimelech might fall upon them and obtain an easy victory. This course was pursued by Abimelech, and he arose in the night; and dividing his men into four

companies, he laid wait round about Shechem. In the morning Gaal went out and stood in the gate, not being aware of the ambush which was round about the town; and when he saw the men of Abimelech approaching, who had risen up from their ambush, he said to Zebul, the governor of the city, "Behold there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as if they were men. And Gaal spoke again, and said, See, there come people down by the middle of the land; and another company comes along by the plain. Zebul well knew who they were that were approaching; and feeling confident that Abimelech would be able to overcome the conspirators, and seize the city, he said, "Where is now the mouth which said, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? Is not this the people whom thou hast despised? Go out, now, I pray thee, and fight with them." Gaal, finding that he must either fight or submit, went out with the men of Shechem who had conspired with him, and fought with Abimelech; but he was unable to withstand him, and fled before him, and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering in of the gate. On the next day, Gaal and the people of Shechem went forth from the city; for Zebul the governor forced them to depart; his party having, by this time, become the strongest. As soon as Abimelech had notice of this movement, he divided his forces into three companies, and laid wait; so that as soon as they came into the field he arose upon them and smote them. And Abimelech and his company rushed forward and stood in the entering of the gate of the city, to cut off the retreat of the conspirators; and then the other companies fell upon those that were in the field, and slew them; and having defeated those that had come out, he now assaulted the city and took it, the same day, and slew the inhabitants who had rebelled against him; and beat down the walls and sowed the place with salt. Part of the people of Shechem, however, had retreated to a hold connected with the temple of the god Berith. When Abimelech was informed that many had taken refuge in this tower, he took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid it on his shoulder, and commanded his men to do likewise, and they set fire to the hold and burnt it, with about a thousand persons who had fled thither for refuge. Thus the city of Shechem was brought to desolation, and its inhabitants were utterly destroyed; a just punishment for their cruel and ungrateful conduct towards the house of Gideon.

And Abimelech himself did not long escape the vengeance of a righteous Providence; for having obtained such a signal victory over the Shechemites, he went on to besiege another city,

the name of which was Thebez; and he took it; but there was here also a strong tower, into which the inhabitants fled, and into which they carried their most valuable property. While he was pressing on the siege of this tower, and had come near to it to set it on fire, as he had done at Shechem, "a certain woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man, his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, a woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died." Here we see that the ruling passion of this ambitious man was strong in death. "Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father's house, in slaying his seventy brethren. And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads; and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal."

SECTION XXII.

TOLA JUDGES ISRAEL FOR TWENTY YEARS—IS SUCCEEDED BY JAIR—THE ISRAELITES DECLINE TO IDOLATRY—FALL UNDER THE DOMINION OF AMMON—A REFORMATION COMMENCED—JEPHTAH CALLED TO LEAD THE ARMY.

AFTER the death of Abimelech, the chief power, for twenty-three years, was in the hands of Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, of the tribe of Issachar. His usual place of residence was at Shamir, on mount Ephraim. In this place also was he buried; but of his character, or achievements, no record has been left.

Tola was succeeded by Jair, a Gileadite, who continued in office two and twenty years. The only remarkable thing which is recorded of him, is, that he had thirty sons, who rode on thirty ass-colts, and possessed thirty cities, which for a long time were called Havoth-jair. These cities were situated in the land of Gilead. We are not informed in what city Jair had his residence, but the place of his burial was Camon.

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon." The oppression which took place bore heaviest on the tribes who inhabited the east side of Jordan, in the land of Gilead; but after a while the Ammonites passed over Jordan, and invaded the territory of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim,

so that the whole of Israel was sorely distressed. In this extremity, "the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and have served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites; from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines. The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you, and I delivered you out of their hand: yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee: deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

As the children of Israel had now, by penitence and public confession, commenced a reformation, and of course would be disposed to cast off the oppressive yoke of their enemies, the Ammonites, their oppressors, collected an army, and encamped in Gilead, intending to inflict a heavy punishment upon the tribes of Israel. But the children of Israel were not disposed any longer to submit, and therefore they also assembled their forces, and encamped in Mizpeh. "And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead." There lived, at this time, "a mighty man of valour," by the name of Jephthah. He was an illegitimate son of Gilead; but as he had sons by his lawful wives, these, as soon "as they were grown up, thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, thou shalt not inherit our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob, where he gained influence, and probably lived by predatory incursions into the neighbouring countries; for we read, "that there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him." Tob was probably in Arabia, which was adjacent to the country of Gilead; and we know that the inhabitants of that country, from the days of their forefather Ishmael, have been "wild men," and have subsisted by carrying on a predatory warfare against the surrounding nations. Their hands were against every man, and every man's hand was against them.

The elders of Gilead being well acquainted with the valour and military talents of Jephthah, sent a deputation of their number to fetch him from Tob, to aid them, or rather preside over them, as their captain, in the existing war against the Ammonites; for their message to him was, "Come, and be our captain,

that we may fight with the children of Ammon." "And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? And why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?" The elders of Gilead assured Jephthah that they were now sincerely desirous of having him for their chief and head, over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And they confirmed their declaration by a solemn oath, saying, "The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words." Upon which, Jephthah consented to go with them, and to take upon himself the charge of the war against the Ammonites. "And the people made him head and captain over them:" and Jephthah entered into a solemn engagement with them, before the Lord, in Mizpeh.

SECTION XXIII.

JEPHTHAH ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE BY NEGOTIATION—CLAIMS OF THE KING OF AMMON—JEPHTHAH'S JUST VIEW OF THE WHOLE SUBJECT IN HIS ABLE ANSWER.

JEPHTHAH being now invested with the chief command of the forces of Israel, determined, as became a wise and patriotic man, to make an effort to obtain a redress of grievances by negotiation. He, therefore, sent ambassadors to the king of the Ammonites, instructed to address to him a solemn memorial and remonstrance, in which he clearly exhibited the justice of the cause of Israel. These ambassadors were directed, first, to say, "What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?" To which message, the king of Ammon answered, "Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, even from Arnon unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan; now, therefore, restore those lands again peaceably." To which Jephthah, by his messengers, replied, "Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon. But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh, then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land; but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto; and in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab, and he would not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom; and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab, for Arnon was the border of Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon. And Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land, unto our place. But Sihon trusted

not Israel to pass through his coast; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel; and the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon, and all his people, into the hand of Israel, and they smote them; so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok; and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. And now, art thou any thing better than Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? Why, therefore, did ye not recover them within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me. The Lord, the Judge, be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon." From this sensible and just remonstrance of Jephthah, it appears, that he possessed an accurate knowledge of the past history of the Israelites. The narrative of events which he gives, agrees exactly with the history contained in the books of Moses. There is here also an important note of the period of time which had elapsed since the children of Israel arrived at Jordan, on their march from Egypt. Perhaps, however, a round number is used by Jephthah, as coming near to the time; for precision as to the exact number of years was not essential to his argument. He mentions three hundred years, as the period during which the children of Israel had had possession of the country now in dispute. This period would be of great importance in fixing the chronology of the Bible, if we could depend upon it as being entirely exact, for it is extremely difficult to ascertain the time which had elapsed from the length of the government of the successive judges, since there might have been intervals when no judge exercised authority over the people; and we do not know exactly how long it was from the entering Canaan to the commencement of the authority of the first judge, after the death of Joshua.

SECTION XXIV.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW—HIS DAUGHTER COMES OUT TO MEET HER FATHER—HIS DISTRESS
—HER PIETY AND SUBMISSION—AN INQUIRY WHETHER JEPHTHAH ACTUALLY PUT
HIS DAUGHTER TO DEATH—LAMENTATION FOR HER BY THE DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL.

NEGOTIATION having proved ineffectual to bring the Ammonites to reasonable terms, Jephthah prepared for war. "Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." In the marginal reading, we have *or* instead of *and*, in this last sentence; and this, many learned commentators consider the true interpretation; for although the Hebrew particle is used for *and*, in a vast majority of instances, yet there are many cases in which it must be rendered *or*, to make a sense consistent with the context. And in this passage there exist strong reasons for such an interpretation. Jephthah seems to have been a man of sense, and to have had a regard for justice and right. He was, moreover, according to the testimony of Paul, a man distinguished for his faith, as his name is inserted in the catalogue of eminent believers, which this apostle has given us in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews: and in this very passage, he is represented as acting under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Now it is not reasonable to suppose that such a man would make a vow to offer as a burnt-offering a human being, much less his own daughter, if one of these should first come out of the house to meet him? Or, suppose a dog, or a swine, to have been the animal to meet him, would he, as an Israelite, have dared to offer such a sacrifice on the altar of God? Or would the high-priest have permitted such a profanation. The vow to offer as a burnt-offering a human being, or an unclean animal, would have been an impious vow, which God never could have accepted and answered: but the vow of Jephthah was effectual. He obtained of the Lord the very favour which he petitioned for in making this vow. From all these considerations, I am disposed to favour the marginal reading, and this opinion is confirmed by the manner in which the execution of the vow is related; of which an account will immediately be given. The sense of the vow, then, according to this explanation, is, that if he should be successful in overcoming Ammon, Jephthah promises, that what-

ever person or animal should come out of his house to meet him, should be devoted unto God; or if an animal suitable for sacrifice, should be offered up as a burnt-offering. "So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer even until thou came to Minnith, twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

"And Jephthah came to Mizpeh to his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child. Beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee on thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity: I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass, at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to the vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in a year."

The lamentation made in this case by Jephthah, was not greater than was natural, upon the supposition that his daughter was to spend her life in celibacy, in some retired place: for this cut off all hope of offspring, the desire of which is instinctive, and among the Israelites was peculiarly strong; so that to be without any one to be their heir and successor, was deemed in that nation a grievous curse. But if Jephthah had now felt himself bound by his vow to offer up his daughter as a burnt-offering, his signs of sorrow would have been much more violent. We may well suppose that he would, instead of being contented with a single pathetic lamentation, have rent his clothes, and laid himself down upon the ground, covered with sackcloth and ashes, for at least seven days. It is also reasonable to conjecture, that his eyes would now have been opened to perceive the rashness and impiety of such a vow; and that he would now deeply lament his sin in

making it. And if the army of Israel interposed by force to prevent king Saul from putting Jonathan to death, when he had brought himself under the obligation of a vow to that effect, we may well suppose that Jephthah would not have been permitted to sacrifice his only child, if he had felt himself bound to perform the act. The truth, however, is, that all such vows, as being contrary to the law of God, cannot create a moral obligation; for then man, by his own wicked act, might nullify the law of God.

Again, the way in which Jephthah's daughter received the information of her father's vow, shows that it could not be that she understood that she was to be offered up as a burnt-offering. Certainly, the offering of human victims, except to Moloch, was a thing unknown in Israel; and the idea of being thus sacrificed, must, at the first hearing of the intention, have been shocking and overwhelming to the feelings of a young female; and however ardent her filial piety, she could not so calmly and cheerfully have requested her father to fulfil his vow; especially, her piety if at all enlightened, would have revolted against being made a sacrifice in direct violation of the law of God. The request to spend two months with her companions, "to lament her virginity," seems to prove that the vow of Jephthah related not to the death of his daughter, but to a life of celibacy in some recluse place. That there did exist some custom of this kind in Israel, is probable, from many sources of evidence. The same conclusion is deducible from the statement, that she never had intercourse with any man; which on any other supposition would be a strange and irrelevant remark. ↵

The record, "that Jephthah did with her according to his vow" is scarcely reconcilable with the idea that he killed his child. The sacred historian would have entered more into the circumstances of an action so extraordinary, as we find done in the case of Abraham, when commanded to offer up Isaac for a burnt-offering. And we might have expected some remark to justify or condemn the act, lest it should be inferred from the bare mention of the fact, that such vows, and such actions in fulfilment of them, were lawful to other persons.

The last sentence in the history of this transaction is difficult of interpretation. "That it became a custom for the daughters of Israel to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in the year." This does, indeed, as here translated, seem to indicate that she had been sacrificed, at least, was dead. But this version is not literally exact, and was evidently made to suit the hypothesis which we reject. The literal translation here is, as in many other places, set down in the margin: "The daughters of Israel went yearly *to talk with* the daughter

of Jephthah, four days in the year." Now, while this is utterly repugnant to the common interpretation, it not only accords with that which we defend, but furnishes a convincing evidence of its truth. For if the daughters of Israel could talk with her, she certainly was still in the land of the living. And if she was shut up in some reclusive place, this visit would be a very natural and proper thing. One other remark on this passage is, that we never find that it was a custom in Israel to have an anniversary mourning for the dead.

From all these considerations, the opinion that Jephthah did not offer up his daughter as a burnt-offering, seems to be highly probable, if not absolutely certain.



SECTION XXV.

INGRATITUDE OF THE PEOPLE TOWARDS JEPHTHAH—HIS VINDICATION OF HIMSELF AND BRETHREN—THE MEN OF EPHRAIM SMITTEN AT THE FORDS OF JORDAN—DETECTED BY THEIR PRONUNCIATION OF A WORD—JEPHTHAH DIES, AFTER A GOVERNMENT OF ONLY SIX YEARS.

INGRATITUDE to benefactors and deliverers, and discontent with the most favourable circumstances, are the characteristics of the multitude in every country. The men of Ephraim were not satisfied to enjoy the fruits of Jephthah's great victory. When the country of Gilead, the possession of the Reubenites, was subdued and oppressed by the Ammonites, earnest application had been made to the tribes on the west of Jordan, to aid in expelling these oppressors; but they, being themselves in no immediate danger, neglected to send any assistance to their suffering brethren, on the other side of the river. But now, when a great victory had been obtained by the courage and generalship of Jephthah, the Ephraimites made it the ground of a fierce accusation against him, that they had not been invited to take part in the war. "Wherefore," said they, "passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? We will burn thy house upon thee with fire. And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hand; wherefore, then, are ye come up unto me, this day, to fight against me?" But these unreasonable men would not be satisfied with any explanation. Jephthah was under the necessity of contending with them in battle, or of giving himself and his property into their hands. To threats, the men of Ephraim also added bitter reproaches, saying, "Ye Gileadites

are fugitives of Ephraim." But their insolence met with a signal chastisement; for in the battle which ensued, they were beaten, and fled: but the Gileadites seized the fords of Jordan, and intercepted and slew the fugitives. It was difficult, however, for the men who guarded the fords to distinguish, in all cases, between friends and foes; therefore, when any one asked permission to go over, "they said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said Nay, then said they unto him, Say now *shibboleth*; and he said *sibboleth*, for he could not frame to pronounce it aright." Then they took him and slew him, at the passages of Jordan; and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. This was a severe stroke on this proud tribe; but they had nobody to blame but themselves: they engaged in this war without the shadow of a reason, and God in just displeasure gave the victory to Jephthah, who trusted in him. From this narrative it appears, that by this time some difference had arisen in the pronounciation of the Hebrew language; at any rate, a difference in the sound of one letter; and, as is often the case, the men of Ephraim were unable to frame their organs so as to give the true sound to the word selected as a test. Hence, probably, the origin of the double sound which that letter has to this day.

The government of Jephthah lasted no more than six years. He seems to have died a natural death, as we read that he "was buried in one of the cities of Gilead."

SECTION XXVI.

IBZAN OF BETH-LEHEM—NATURE OF THE THEOCRACY—ELON OF ZEBULON NEXT
JUDGES ISRAEL—ABDON OF EPHRAIM—GREAT INCREASE OF POPULATION AND THE
NUMBER IN THEIR ARMIES.

THE next judge or ruler in Israel, was Ibzan of Beth-lehem. This man seems to have lived in peaceable times, as there is no account of any enemy infesting Israel in his days: the successful war against the Ammonites, under Jephthah, seems to have, for a while, intimidated the foes of Israel. The only thing which the sacred historian has thought proper to relate of this Beth-lehemite is, the remarkable fact, that he was the father of thirty sons and thirty daughters; and by means of these he formed an extensive connexion, and thus enlarged his influence; for he sent abroad his daughters, giving them in marriage to the men of the land; and sent and took wives to his sons from abroad. The period of Ibzan's government was also short; he judged Israel only seven years, and died, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

The rulers of Israel, during the period of which we are now

treating, were not taken from any particular family or tribe, but were brought forward by the providence of God, or by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The government of Israel, so far as the enacting of laws was concerned, was a theocracy: no rulers, prophets, judges, or priests, had any authority to alter these laws. The elders of the people, seventy in number, and the officers of different degrees of authority, who were established by Moses, were regularly continued, and in all that related to the ritual law and the worship of the tabernacle, the high priest and other priests had the right to regulate every thing agreeably to the commandments of the Lord by Moses. But when the country was invaded by a foreign foe, or fell under the power of some oppressive tyrant, there was need of an extraordinary ruler, with something of the power of a dictator, who might concentrate the forces of the tribes, and lead them out to battle. Or, when disputes arose between the tribes themselves, there was required a judge, whose authority would be respected on account of his tried wisdom and public services; or more especially, because he gave evidence that he was acting under the direction, and as the vicegerent of God.

The next judge raised up by the providence of God, was Elon, a Zebulonite. I do not remember that mention is made of any prophet or other distinguished man beside, arising out of this tribe. To this fact reference seems to have been had, when it was said, "Search and see, whether any prophet ariseth out of Galilee." Elon judged Israel ten years, and died, and was buried in Ajalon, in the country of Zebulon: and this is the only circumstance left on record concerning him.

The next judge or ruler was of the tribe of Ephraim. His native place, which was also the place of his burial, was Pirathon. His name was Abdon, and that circumstance by which he was chiefly distinguished, was, that he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode upon seventy ass-colts. The duration of his reign was eight years. His father's name was Hillel, and his native town was in the mount of the Amalekites.

From the number of children which are frequently mentioned in the sacred history as belonging to one family, we are led to believe that the increase of population among the Israelites was extraordinary. A former judge had thirty sons, and as many daughters; and Abdon had no less than forty sons. It is by no means necessary to suppose, nor, indeed, is it at all probable, that all these were born of one mother. The custom or polygamy, to a greater or less extent, prevailed through all the period of which we are now treating. Though never expressly sanctioned by divine authority, like divorce, it was permitted to exist. From these instances of a numerous progeny, we may account for the greatness of the population, the accounts of

which have appeared to some altogether extravagant, and incommensurate with the narrow limits of the country; and it must be remembered, that, in those days, every man was a soldier, and was expected to turn out when an enemy invaded the country.

SECTION XXVII.

AN ANGEL APPEARS TO THE WIFE OF MANOAH—AND AGAIN TO HER AND HER HUSBAND—SAMSON IS BORN—A NAZARITE FROM THE WOMB—ISRAEL UNDER THE YOKE OF THE PHILISTINES—SAMSON SEEKS A WIFE OF THIS RACE AT TIMNATH—SLAYS A LION ON HIS WAY TO VISIT HER—HIS MARRIAGE—HIS RIDDLE—ITS MEANING DISCOVERED BY HIS WIFE—HIS METHOD OF PAYING THE FORFEIT—HIS WIFE GIVEN TO ANOTHER.

THE children of Israel furnish a striking proof of the proneness of human nature to depart from God. They were probably no worse than any other nation would have been in the same circumstances; and yet they were for ever disposed to revolt against the Divine government, although, in the providence of God, they uniformly suffered for their disobedience. The surrounding nations, through whose influence they were led astray, were also the instruments made use of by a just sovereign, to chastise them for their sins. For forty years they were under the grinding oppression of the Philistines. At the close of this long period of affliction the angel of the Lord appeared unto the wife of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, who had never borne a child, and said unto her, "Thou shalt conceive and bear a son. Now, therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing. For lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son: and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible; but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name." "Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again unto the woman, as she sat in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, behold the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. And Ma-

noah said, Now let thy words come to pass: how shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him? And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord: for Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? So Manoah took a kid with a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord. And the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar: and Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have showed us all these things; nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these.

“And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.” When he became a man, he was, at certain seasons, under a divine impulse from the Spirit of the Lord, in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson was a man of supernatural strength of body, which endowment was connected with his condition as a Nazarite; but he seems to have been also a man of strong passions, over which he did not exercise that control which the principles of virtue and piety required. One of the evils arising to the Israelites from their subjection to the Philistines was, the intermarriages to which it gave rise, between their young people. Samson, among others, fell into this snare. Happening, at Timnath, to see a young woman of the daughters of the Philistines, with whom he was greatly pleased, he requested his parents to procure her as a wife for him. In vain did they remonstrate against his purpose, for his passion had obtained the complete mastery over him, and he insisted that his father should get

this woman for him. His parents, finding it useless to oppose the headstrong inclination of their son, yielded to his wishes with great reluctance; not knowing that Providence was ordering and disposing of this event to bring about a deliverance of the people from the yoke of the Philistines. They, however, judged it expedient to go down with their son to Timnath.

And when Samson came to the vineyards of Timnath, a young lion came roaring against him: "and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand." At this time his parents were not present with him, and he did not inform them when they came up of the event which had occurred. This visit to the woman of Timnath served to rivet his attachment, and at this time all matters were agreed upon between the parties. Accordingly, at the appointed time, Samson returned to Timnath to celebrate his nuptials; and feeling a curiosity to see what had become of the carcass of the lion which he had slain on his former visit, he turned aside, and "behold there was a swarm of bees, and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat; but he told them not that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion." From this account it is evident that some months must have elapsed between these two visits; for that was required to render it practicable for a swarm of bees to build their combs and prepare their honey in the carcass of the lion. In that warm region, where it rains but seldom in the summer season, it is probable that the carcass had become dry, and so, the intestines being taken out, and the body suspended on the limb of a tree, might furnish a very convenient receptacle for a swarm of bees.

The marriage feast was celebrated for seven days, according to the custom of the place; and thirty companions were provided to attend on the bridegroom. "And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: but if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, entice thy husband that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire. Have ye called us to take that we have? Is it not so? And Samson's wife wept

before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not. Thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted; and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him. And she told the riddle to the children of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day, before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend."

This history furnishes us with an instructive example of the evils which attend intermarriages between the children of God, and his enemies. We see also, that that which begins in sport may end in death. A wedding feast has often generated broils which terminated in woful disaster.

SECTION XXVIII.

SAMSON, NOT KNOWING WHAT WAS DONE, COMES TO VISIT HIS WIFE—HER YOUNGER SISTER IS OFFERED BY THE FATHER—SAMSON DECLINES ALL FURTHER CONNECTION, AND SETS THE GRAIN OF THE PHILISTINES ON FIRE—SLAYS A THOUSAND MEN IN LEHI—A MIRACULOUS FOUNTAIN OPENED IN THIS PLACE.

It appears that Samson was not informed that his wife had been given to another, and being sincerely attached to this treacherous woman, he came down in the time of harvest, with the present of a kid, to visit her, and was about to enter her chamber, but was prevented by her father, who now informed him that his wife had been given to his companion. For this strange proceeding her father offered no other reason than the impression which he had received, that he, Samson, had lost all affection for his wife. But willing to conciliate a man whom he had so much injured, and fearing the displeasure of a man whose passions were impetuous, and whose strength was irresistible, he offered to him as a wife his younger daughter. And, said he, "Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Take her, I pray thee, instead of her." Samson declined all further connexion with this family, and began to meditate vengeance against the whole nation of the Philistines. Having suffered so

heavy an injury, he laid a plan to destroy their corn which was standing in the field, and also that which was gathered into shocks. The plan adopted was, to catch three hundred foxes, (or jackals as some suppose,) and to tie them two and two by the tails, and to insert a burning brand, or torch, between each pair, and then to let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines. And the conflagration proved destructive not only to the standing corn and the shocks of grain already reaped, but also to the vineyards and olives. When the Philistines found that this destruction of their property had been caused by Samson the son-in-law of the Tinnite, because his father-in-law had taken away his wife and had given her to his companion, they determined to wreak their vengeance on him, as having given the provocation; and accordingly they came up and burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson, when he understood that the Philistines had come up with hostile intentions, attacked them and slew many of them, and then retired from their country and dwelt on the top of the rock Etam. The Philistines being determined to revenge themselves for all these injuries, marched with a considerable force into Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. "And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, and to do to him as he hath done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this thou hast done unto us? And he said, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No, but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hands. But surely *we* will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him from the rock. And when he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his hands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith." And "he cast away the jaw-bone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi," the import of which is, *the lifting up of the jaw-bone*. "And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw, (or rather in Lehi, for the place had already received this name,) and there came

water thereout, and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived; therefore he called the name thereof *En-hakkore*," that is, *the well of him that called*; which, says the sacred historian, "is in Lehi unto this day."

From these last words, it is evident that our translators were mistaken in supposing that the water issued from the jaw-bone; for it appears that the bursting forth of the waters was not temporary but permanent; and surely this perennial spring did not run continually from a jaw-bone. The simple fact is most obvious. From the weapon which Samson employed, the place received its denomination of Lehi. In this place there was a hollow, from which God caused a fountain to issue to allay Samson's thirst, and this became a perennial spring or well.

SECTION XXIX.

MORAL CHARACTER OF SAMSON—HIS LOVE OF DELILAH—BY TAMPERING WITH HER
THE PHILISTINES LEARN WHEREIN HIS GREAT STRENGTH CONSISTED—HIS HEAD
SHORN AND HIS EYES PUT OUT—IS PUT INTO THE PRISON AT GAZA AND KEPT
AT HARD LABOUR.

THE character of Samson was not very consistent. Although a consecrated Nazarite from his birth, yet he was a man much under the dominion of his passions. If we had nothing else to guide our judgment but this history of his acts, we should not be ready to draw the conclusion that he was a pious man: but as Paul has given him a place, as well as Jephthah, among distinguished believers, we must not hesitate to admit that, with all his imperfections, Samson was a sincere servant of God. The most objectionable part of his recorded life, was his illicit connexion with strange women, of which we have several examples; but in every instance, these amours became a snare to him. At Gaza his enemies surrounded the city, and only waited for the morning light, to put him to death; but this man, of more than human strength, "rose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron."

The most fatal attachment, however, which Samson cherished for the daughters of the Philistines was for a deceitful woman "in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah." The lords of the Philistines, understanding how much he was under her influence, offered her a very large reward if she would find out and reveal to them the secret of his astonishing strength of body, and on what it depended. Samson at first deluded her,

and said, "If they bind me with seven green withes that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man." Accordingly, they, receiving the green withes from the lords of the Philistines, had him bound with them; but as soon as the men who lay in wait attempted to seize him, "he brake the withes as a thread of tow is broken, when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known." Again he was beset by this ensnaring woman to reveal the secret; and she now added reproaches to her entreaties. Upon which he told her, if they would bind him with new cords which had never been used, he would be helpless as another man; but when this experiment was also tried, "he brake them off his arms as a thread." A third time he deceived her, by saying, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web," I shall be weak as another man; but when this was done while he was asleep, and the Philistines arose upon him, "he awaked out of his sleep and went away with the pin of the beam and with the web." Delilah now became exceedingly importunate, and called in question Samson's love for her. "And she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so that his soul was vexed unto death." He therefore, at length, revealed unto her his whole heart, and said, "There hath not come a razor upon my head, for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man." From this it appears, that Samson's extraordinary strength did not depend on any muscular force which he naturally possessed, but was a supernatural endowment; and this is also signified in those passages where it is said, that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Delilah perceiving that she had now succeeded in eliciting from him the secret which he had so industriously concealed before, caused, while Samson slept, a man to shave the seven locks of his head; and then brought his enemies upon him. "And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself, and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." The Philistines, now finding that their formidable enemy was completely in their power, proceeded in the first place to put out his eyes; and then took him down to Gaza, "and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house."

Wretched, indeed, was the condition of Samson, and small was the prospect that he would ever again have it in his power to retaliate upon his enemies, and the enemies of God, for their treachery and cruelty; but the providence of God is mysterious, and the retributions of vindicatory justice are often terrible, even in this world. It was so ordered, that this judge in Israel, who had in his lifetime destroyed so great a number of this

accursed people, should be able, in the moment of his death, to destroy more of the Philistines than during his whole life.

While immured in the prison his hair began again to grow, and his former extraordinary strength was restored. The Philistines were all gross idolaters, and of the devoted race of the Canaanites, whom the Israelites were commanded to extirpate. The god which they worshipped was called Dagon, and was represented by an image or idol, which was partly a fish, and partly man, of which an account has heretofore been given. In Gaza there was a spacious temple dedicated to this idol; and the Philistines, having now overcome their greatest enemy, celebrated a feast in this temple, and "offered a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And when their hearts were merry, they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And when he was brought out of the prison, he made them sport. And they set him between the pillars." It seems that this huge edifice rested upon two large pillars, which stood near to each other. "And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up; of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Then his brethren, and all the house of his father, came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years."

SECTION XXX.

ORIGIN OF IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL IN THE HOUSE OF MICAH—THE DANITES SEND SPIES TO SEEK A NEW HABITATION—SIX HUNDRED MEN ARE SENT OUT TO SEIZE A COUNTRY VISITED BY THE SPIES—THEY CARRY OFF MICAH'S GODS AND THE PRIEST WHO OFFICIATED—THESE IDOLS THEY SET UP AND WORSHIPPED FOR A LONG TIME.

THE sacred historian, after finishing the history of Samson, who is thought to have been contemporary with Eli, goes back to give an account of the rise of idolatry among the people of Israel, after the death of Joshua. A certain woman of mount Ephraim had amassed a considerable sum of money, which her son, whose name is Micah, stole. The old woman, who had no pious feelings, seemed to have suspected her son of the theft, and poured out curses on the person, whoever he might be, who had taken her treasure. Micah feeling uneasy in his conscience, and finding that he was suspected, came forward and confessed his crime, and restored the money to his mother. She now declared that she had "wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord." This, at first view, seems to have been a very pious act; but the truth was, that her religion was deeply infected with the spirit of superstition and idolatry; for she designed it for "a graven image, and a molten image." And, accordingly, a sufficient quantity of the restored silver was put into the hands of the founder, and these images were formed, and placed in the house of Micah: and that this idolatrous worship might be conducted with suitable ceremony and pomp, this man erected a building or temple, purposely for the reception of his gods. He also "made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest." This introduction of idolatry met with no resistance, for at that time there existed no king in Israel, nor any other governing power to restrain the practice of iniquity, "but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Soon after the erection of this house of idolatrous worship, a young Levite from Beth-lehem-judah, who by the mother's side seems to have been descended from the tribe of Judah, left his native place, and wandered off in search of a place, until he came to the house of Micah, who invited him to take up his abode with him and officiate as his priest; for he thought that this young man being a Levite was better suited for the sacerdotal office than his own son, whom he had before consecrated. To this proposal, the young Levite acceded, and Micah promised to give him ten shekels of silver, by the year, and a suit of apparel, and his victuals. "Then said Micah, now I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

In those days of anarchy, the Danites feeling themselves straitened for want of room, sent five men of valour to look out a suitable place to which some of them might emigrate. These men came, in their expedition, to the house of Micah, where they recognized the young Levite, and finding that he officiated here as a priest, they requested him to ask counsel of God, whether their way would be prosperous. The priest soon gave them a favourable response, saying, "Go in peace: before the Lord is your way wherein ye go." It may be remarked here, that in the first advances towards idolatry, the object was not to introduce other gods, but to worship the true God by images, or other visible representations. Thus, when the Israelites forced Aaron to make the golden calf, Jehovah was professedly the object of their worship; and when Jeroboam set up the idolatrous calves in Dan and Beth-el, the object was, to worship Jehovah by these images. And so, in this case, Micah and his priest considered their images as means of worshipping the true God.

These five spies of Dan, having received an encouragement from the young priest, proceeded on their journey, until they came to Laish, where they found a good country, and a people living quietly and securely; and they appeared to be without any means of effectual defence against invasion, "for there was no magistrate in the land," and no man was restrained from following his own inclinations by any fear of civil rulers. These people seem to have nominally appertained to the Zidonians, but being far off, and not engaged in commerce, they were suffered to pursue their own course unmolested. When the spies returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, whence they had gone out, they gave a very favourable account of the country which they had discovered. They represented it as "a very good land"—"a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth," and as one of sufficient extent and easy to be possessed. Upon hearing this report, the Danites despatched "six hundred men, appointed with weapons of war." This little army, conducted by the spies, came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah; and being informed of the "house of gods" which was here, they sent in the five men who were acquainted with the place, "to take the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image." And when the priest said, "What do ye? they said, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people." As soon as Micah and the men of

his house were informed of the robbery which had been committed, they pursued after the children of Dan, and overtook them, and cried after them. "And they turned their faces and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and what have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went their way; and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his own house."

This company of the tribe of Dan now prosecuted their enterprise against the people of Laish, whom they found in the same careless and defenceless state which had been represented by the spies. "And they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire; and there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon; and they had no business with any man." "And they built a city and dwelt therein; and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father." "And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh."

Although idolatry was a capital crime, according to the laws given to the Israelites, as being the highest treason against God their king, yet during this period of anarchy, which preceded the raising up of judges to govern the land and enforce the laws, no notice was taken of this open defection of the children of Dan from the worship of the true God. It seems that the worship of these images of Micah continued for a long time, even as long as the tabernacle remained at Shiloh.

The transactions mentioned in this section, and also those recorded in the following, are commonly believed to have occurred while Phinehas was high-priest.



SECTION XXXI.

HISTORY OF THE LEVITE AND HIS CONCUBINE, AND THE WAR AGAINST BENJAMIN.

How much, under God, we are indebted to the existence of civil government, can only be known by contemplating a people among whom there is no such institution; or where the ordinance is so far perverted, and salutary authority so far relaxed,

that wickedness is left without restraint, and lust and violence reign triumphantly. Some memorable examples of this kind we have on record for our instruction and warning in the sacred volume, as in the case of the people whose wickedness provoked the Almighty to inundate the world with a flood of waters. Such also was the character of the cities of the plain, which were overwhelmed with a storm of fire and brimstone; and such likewise was the character of the seven nations of Canaan, whom God ordered the Israelites to exterminate, lest they should be led to learn their abominable ways. And this precaution was not unnecessary, for we find here recorded, a degree of shameful wickedness in a town inhabited by the children of Benjamin, which places them upon a level with Sodom itself.

A certain Levite, who sojourned on the side of mount Ephraim, married a woman of Beth-lehem-judah. She is indeed called a concubine, but concubines, among the Israelites, were really wives of an inferior order; and, as such, were required to be true to their husbands. This woman, however, proved unfaithful, and she also went away from her lord to her father's house, at Beth-lehem-judah, and remained there "four whole months." "And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his own servant with him, and a couple of asses. And she brought him in to her father's; and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him." And for three days his father-in-law entertained him in the most friendly and hospitable manner. And when, on the fourth day, the Levite was ready with his wife and servant, to proceed on his journey homeward, his father-in-law pressed him to take some refreshment before he took his departure; and when they had eat and drunk together, he then urged him to be contented to remain all night. And the next morning, it being the fifth of his sojourning with his father-in-law, the same friendly urgency was used to detain him longer; and while they enjoyed themselves in feasting together, the day wore away, and his father-in-law said, "The day draweth towards evening, I pray you tarry all night. Behold the day groweth to an end: lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to-morrow, get you early on your way, that you may go hence. But the man would not tarry that night, but rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus (which is Jerusalem). And his wife, his servant, and the two asses, accompanied him. And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. And the master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger that is not of the children of Israel.

We will pass over to Gibeah. And he said to his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah."

The general principles by which the Levite was governed in selecting a place of lodging for himself and company, were sound and good; for, so far as we consistently can, we should avoid familiar intercourse with the wicked, and should be reluctant to partake of their hospitalities; and we should always seek to cast in our lot, and take up our residence, among the professed people of God. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour." But, sometimes, the worst people are found within the pale of the visible church; and certainly no description of wicked men are more to be dreaded than hypocrites. It would be better to fall into the hands of the savages of the wilderness, than to come under the power of false professors. The event, in the case before us, was very unhappy. "For they passed on and went their way, and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. And they turned aside to go in, and lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in he sat him down in a street of the city; for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging." This want of common hospitality was remarkable in a city of the east, and particularly among the descendants of Abraham; and was indicative of a wretched state of morals. In most places, in ancient and modern times, there was a competition to get possession of strangers, as is now remarkably the case in the interior of Arabia. But Gibeah seems to have resembled Sodom in this respect, as well as being addicted to crimes against nature. At length, however, "an old man came from his work, out of the field, at even;" and when he saw a way-faring man in the street of the city, he inquired of him, whence he was and whither going. To which the Levite gave him a direct and satisfactory answer; and let him know that no person who should receive them would be subjected to expense on their account, for they had come furnished with straw and provender for the asses, and with bread and wine for himself, his handmaid, and the young man who was with him. "And the old man said, Peace be unto you, howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me, only lodge not in the street. So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink." While the Levite was enjoying himself in a convivial manner, the house was beset by a company of lawless wretches, the sons of Belial, who beat at the door, and demanded of the master of the house, that the guest whom he entertained should be brought out unto them, for the vilest purposes. Entreaties and expostulation availed nothing in restraining these monsters of iniquity; and as the

least of two evils, the Levite gave up his wife to be treated by these men raging with lust, agreeably to their pleasure. The result was, that in the morning the woman was found dead at the door of the house where her lord was; and her hands were on the threshold. Her husband, not suspecting at first that she was dead, said, "Up, and let us be going;" but none answered. Finding that she was really dead, "he put her upon an ass, and gat him unto his place. And when he was come into his house, he took a knife and divided her into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. And it was so, that all that saw it, said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt, unto this day. Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds." The method pursued by the Levite had the effect of arousing the people to indignation; so that they assembled at Mizpeh, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead. The host now convened amounted to the number of four hundred thousand men that drew the sword. And, although the messengers who passed through the land with the pieces of the murdered woman, had spread the report of the horrid transaction; yet before inflicting deserved punishment on the inhabitants of Gibeah, they called for the Levite, the husband of the woman, and demanded of him a full declaration of the affair, "saying, Tell us how was this wickedness?" And he related the matter distinctly before them; and concluded by saying, "they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold ye are all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel." When they heard his narrative, all the people arose as one man, and determined on taking vengeance on the wicked city; but as so large an army did not seem to be needed for the enterprise, they selected by lot one tenth part of the whole number, and appointed others to supply them with provisions. Thus were the men of Israel knit together as one man, resolved to inflict condign punishment on this devoted city.

SECTION XXXII.

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN REFUSE TO GIVE UP THE GUILTY PERPETRATORS OF THE ENORMOUS WICKEDNESS—THEY DEFEAT THE OTHER TRIBES WITH GREAT SLAUGHTER IN TWO SUCCESSIVE BATTLES—ON THE THIRD DAY THE MEN OF ISRAEL PLACED AN AMBUSH, AND DREW THE MEN OF BENJAMIN FROM GIBEON, BY A PRETENDED FLIGHT—THE TRIBE NEARLY EXTINGUISHED—THE ISRAELITES REPENT OF THEIR EXTERMINATING SEVERITY.

HERE we have a striking example of the strength of the spirit of party, or rather of tribe or clan. The great body of the Israelites being now prepared to punish the wicked inhabitants of Gibeah, did not wish to involve the residue of the tribe of

Benjamin in the guilt and punishment of this city. They therefore sent messengers through all the tribe of Benjamin, to expostulate with them, and to demand that the perpetrators of this wicked act should be delivered up to them, that they might be put to death, and thus evil be put away from Israel. "But the children of Benjamin would not hearken unto the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel," and immediately prepared for war, determined with their small force to go out against the assembled host of all Israel. Upon being numbered, it appeared that their whole available force was no more than twenty-six thousand men; but this number did not include the men of Gibeah, who amounted to seven hundred. But the Benjamites were skilled in war, and of desperate courage. In their army, at this time, they had a very remarkable corps of seven hundred men, who were all left-handed, every one of whom could sling stones at a hair-breadth, and not miss. As was before stated, the men of war from the other tribes formed an army of four hundred thousand men; but it was not judged necessary that more than a part of these should actually go up against their brethren; and feeling the solemn crisis which had arrived, they wished to take no important step without asking counsel of God. They therefore assembled at the house of God, at Shiloh, particularly to inquire which of the tribes should first go up to the battle against the children of Benjamin. "And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first." "And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah, and went out to battle against Benjamin. And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day, twenty and two thousand men." This was a most unexpected and unaccountable disaster. No doubt there was something wrong in the conduct or in the spirit of the Israelites, which had provoked the Lord thus to give them into the hands of a small number of wicked men. This event appears the more strange, as the people seemed to have been actuated by a spirit of piety in what they had undertaken, and had in a public manner sought counsel of the Lord. The sacred history does not unfold to us the reason of Israel's being forsaken of God, on this occasion. Their conduct, however, upon meeting with this unexpected defeat, seems to have been proper and pious. They did not abandon themselves to despair, but encouraged themselves to make another effort, hoping that in a second encounter they should be more successful than in the first: but again they deemed it right to ask counsel of the Lord; and in performing this act of worship, they were much affected, and wept before the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother?"

And the Lord said, Go up against him." On the second day, battle was joined with the children of Benjamin, and the result was nearly as disastrous as on the former day; for, on this occasion, Benjamin went forth from Gibeah, "and destroyed down to the ground, of the children of Israel, eighteen thousand men." "Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up, and came to the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until the even, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord."

What was before stated, as to the time when these transactions occurred, is expressly confirmed, for it is said, "that Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before the Lord in those days." The same inquiry was made of the Lord, as on the former occasions of consulting him, "Shall I again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord said, Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into thy hand." Israel had now, taught by experience and misfortune, become less confident in their own prowess, and more attentive to those stratagems of war by which success is often obtained; for they now placed men in ambush round about the city, and then drew off the men of Benjamin to a distance; who, flushed with their two recent and extraordinary victories, thought of nothing else but achieving a third victory, and "began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah." And they succeeded in slaying about thirty men of Israel. "And the children of Benjamin, said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways." And the liers-in-wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah. And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore, but they knew not that evil was near them. "And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel; and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day, twenty and two thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword." While the men of Benjamin were engaged in the battle, and by stratagem were drawn off to a distance from the city, the liers-in-wait rushed into the city, and slew the inhabitants with the edge of the sword. As soon as they had gained complete possession of Gibeah, they signified the fact to their brethren, by kindling a great flame with smoke, which sign had been agreed upon beforehand. When the men of Benjamin looked back, and saw by the flame and pillar of smoke that the city was in the possession of their enemies, they found that they were indeed in an evil case. And when they turned and fled

towards the way of the wilderness, still they could not escape, for "the battle overtook them; and the men of Israel inclosed the Benjamites round about, and trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sun-rising. And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men: all these were men of valour." That is, this number was slain in the field of battle; but to these must be added five thousand who were taken and slain on the highways; and also two thousand who were pursued to a place called Gidom, and slain there; so that, omitting smaller numbers, there fell of Benjamin that day twenty-five thousand valiant men. And the only remnant which escaped of their whole army, were six hundred men, who escaped to the rock Rimmon, where they abode four months. The children of Israel, not contented with the signal vengeance taken on Benjamin, by the destruction of all their men of war, carried desolation into their country, "and smote the people with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city, as the beast, and all that came to hand." It would seem that the whole army of Israel were now filled with such indignation against the whole tribe of Benjamin, for their wicked conduct in screening the men of Gibeah from deserved punishment, and were actuated by so strong a desire to revenge the death of the forty thousand men of Israel slain in the first two battles, that they proceeded to consign to utter destruction the whole of this tribe on whom they could lay their hands. But when the violence of their wrath began to cool, and they reflected on what they had done, and that one of the twelve tribes had perished from Israel, they were penetrated with grief, and went up to the house of God at Shiloh, "and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices and wept sore; and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel? And on the morrow the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings."

SECTION XXXIII.

JABESH-GILEAD SEVERELY PUNISHED FOR REFUSING AID—THE YOUNG VIRGINS OF THIS PLACE ONLY PRESERVED, FOR WIVES TO THE SURVIVING BENJAMITES—THE DAUGHTERS OF SHILOH SEIZED AND CARRIED OFF FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.

THERE was another affair which now engaged their attention, and which eventually was made to have a connexion with the preservation of the tribe of Benjamin from becoming utterly extinct. When the people had first assembled from the tribes of Israel, on the unhappy occasion which has been mentioned, they were inspired with such a zeal against the Benjamites that

they entered into a solemn oath that none of them would give them their daughters for wives; and they moreover swore, that whatever city had neglected to come up with the congregation unto the Lord unto Mizpeh, the inhabitants thereof should surely be put to death. And when the people were numbered, it appeared that none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead were there; and in fulfilment of the great oath by which they had rashly bound themselves, they now despatched twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. They were, however, directed to save alive and bring back with them all the young virgins whom they might find, that they might serve for wives to the small remnant of the men of Benjamin, who were known to be concealed in the rock Rimmon. This expedition speedily and literally executed their orders upon the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, and returned with four hundred virgins. The congregation of Israel now entered into a negotiation with the six hundred Benjamites in the rock Rimmon: and they entered into a treaty of peace with them, and gave them for wives the females who had been saved alive from Jabesh-gilead; but as their number was six hundred, and the women were only four hundred, there was still a deficiency of wives for the remnant of Benjamin. The human passions are prone to oscillate from one extreme to another. The indignation which had burned so hotly and destructively against this unhappy tribe, was now turned into the tenderest compassion, and with compunction for the severity which led them nearly to extirpate one of the tribes of Israel. Therefore "the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? And they said, There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped from Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel." The device which was now adopted to supply the deficiency of wives for these men, bears a strong resemblance to the rape of the Sabines by the Romans, at a later period. There was shortly to be a feast at Shiloh, on which occasion it was customary for companies of young damsels to amuse themselves by dancing in the vineyards, which were on the way between Bethel and Shechem. In this place the Benjamites were directed to lie in wait, and to catch every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and to bear them off to the land of Benjamin. And the elders of Israel promised that when the fathers or brethren of the daughters of Shiloh came to make complaint, we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes. And the men of Benjamin did so,

and took wives according to their number, whom they caught, and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.

SECTION XXXIV.

HISTORY OF RUTH, AND NAOMI HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.

FROM the Bible history we learn, that the occurrence of famine was no uncommon event in Judea. If there was a failure of the former or latter rains, there was of course a deficiency in the productions of the earth: the first of these rains occurred in autumn, about the time of sowing the winter grain; the last in the spring, when the wheat and barley were coming to maturity. Between these seasons, during the summer months, very little rain fell; a shower in harvest was reckoned an extraordinary occurrence. As the land was filled with a dense population, a famine was a fearful calamity, and occasioned a miserable death to many. The usual method of avoiding it was to flee to some of the neighbouring countries, where bread was in abundance. Thus, on one of these emergencies, during the government of the Judges, a man of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Elimelech, took his wife Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and went and abode in the land of Moab. But whilst he fled from death in one form, it overtook him in another, soon after his emigration. Often families are induced to seek new habitations on account of the pressure of particular evils, but while they escape difficulties of one kind, they are apt to fall into others not less grievous. This man was in good circumstances in Judea, but in a strange land his property wasted away, and his own life was cut short. As might have been expected also, his sons formed matrimonial alliances with the daughters of Moab, which kind of connexions, in all ages, have been a snare to the people of God. Here, also, they were far removed from the house and ordinances of Jehovah, and exposed to all the abominations of idolatry. Calamities frequently come in clusters. After a sojourn of about ten years, both these young men died also in the land of Moab, it would seem nearly about the same time. Thus was Naomi bereaved of her husband and her two sons, and left destitute in a foreign country. The name of one of her daughters-in-law was Orpah, and of the other Ruth, who after the decease of their husbands chose to live with Naomi; and they seem to have formed a strong attachment to their mother-in-law; for when she, upon hearing that the Lord had visited his people in the land of Judea, in giving them bread, resolved to return to her native country, these young women, although they had

parents of their own, insisted upon accompanying her. But as she was reduced to poverty, and had no prospect of any easy method of support, begged them to relinquish the idea of going with her, and to return each to her mother's house. "Go," said she, "return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept. And they said, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters, why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons, would ye tarry for them till they were grown? Would ye stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." When Naomi saw that her determination was fixed, she ceased from all further attempts to dissuade Ruth from going along with her.

After this tender scene, the two widows, poor and desolate, travelled on until they came to Beth-lehem, the former residence of Naomi, from which she, with her husband, had emigrated many years before. The inhabitants of the place were greatly excited when they recognized their old neighbour again restored to them after so long an absence. But they could with difficulty be persuaded that she was indeed the identical person whom they had once known as a resident among them. Doubtless, time and sorrow had made a great change in Naomi's person; and her condition as well as her person was sadly altered. No wonder, therefore, they said to one another, with surprise and some degree of doubt, "Is this Naomi?" When the afflicted widow heard her old neighbours address her by this name, the import of which is "pleasant," she said with emotion, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara," the meaning of which is "bitter:" "for," said she, "the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again

empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" The time of the arrival of Naomi and Ruth at Beth-lehem was, "in the beginning of barley-harvest." Thus that death from which Elimelech and his sons fled, overtook them in the land where they sojourned; and that poverty, the dread of which had induced them to leave the holy land, now came heavily upon the family. Their substance had wasted away in a foreign country; so that when Naomi returned, she was in a state of abject poverty. This circumstance will account for the earnestness with which she entreated her daughters-in-law to return and live with their friends; and it furnishes strong evidence of the strength of Ruth's attachment to her, or rather the strength of that piety towards the God of Israel which animated her breast. Naomi, however, had rich relations in Bethlehem, but possessing an independent spirit she would not obtrude herself upon their attention, much less solicit any favours from them.

But Naomi, though poor and desolate, trusted in God, and was blessed with a daughter-in-law who loved her most tenderly, and was not ashamed to labour for her subsistence. As these widows had no harvest to gather in, their only resource for a living was to avail themselves of that provision made for the poor in the law of Moses, by which they were permitted to follow the reapers, and glean such handfuls as they happened to drop, or such stalks as were left standing in the corners of the field. Ruth, of her own accord, proposed to engage in this work; and it so happened, that the first field into which she entered, belonged to a near relation of her mother-in-law, whose name was Boaz, and who was a man of extensive property and wealth. Boaz appears to have been a man of piety as well as wealth; for when he came out of Beth-lehem to the field to see the reapers, his salutation was, "The Lord be with you." And their answer corresponded with the piety of the master's salutation; for they said, "The Lord bless thee." There is something exceedingly pleasing in these ancient forms of pious intercourse. Very different is often the language of reapers and their employers in the harvest-field in our day. The attention of Boaz was now directed to Ruth, whom he had not before seen; and he inquired of the overseer of the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?" To whom the servant answered, "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, I pray you let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves, so she came and hath continued even from the morning until now. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter, go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after

them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn." This unexpected condescension and kindness from the wealthy owner of the harvest afflicted this poor young stranger not a little; for "she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly to thine handmaid, though I be not like thine handmaids. And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves and reproach her not, and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." Thus was an acquaintance formed between these worthy persons, who, though in very different external circumstances, Providence had determined should be united in the most intimate and tender bond known upon earth. We see here, that virtuous and praise-worthy conduct, even in humble circumstances, may attract the attention and even the esteem of those in superior stations. Boaz had heard, it seems, the whole story of the devoted attachment of this young Moabitess to her afflicted mother-in-law, and how, for her sake, and more especially for the sake of her religion with which she had become enamoured, that she was willing to leave her own father and mother and her native land, and to sojourn in a land of strangers, where she was under the necessity of gleaning in the harvest-field for a scanty subsistence for herself and her aged friend. But great as were the sacrifices which she had made, and urgent as were the necessities under which she laboured, and the privations of abject poverty which she endured, she neither repined nor murmured at her hard lot, but cheerfully submitted to her afflictions, and with alacrity performed the labours required by her circumstances. And until this time it is not probable that she entertained any hope of rising into a more favourable condition. It

is evident that Boaz was instantly struck with the appearance of this young woman. Although it is not recorded, it is more than probable that, like many other of the good women who have been honoured with a notice in the sacred Scriptures, she was of a beautiful aspect, and of a modest and becoming demeanour. But Boaz, a pious and prudent man, was prepared by the good report which he had heard of the kindness of Ruth to her mother-in-law, his near relation, to entertain kind feelings towards her; yet it does not appear that the idea of making her his wife had yet taken possession of his mind. The fact was, that according to the levirate law of Moses, the right of claiming her in marriage belonged to another, who stood in a nearer degree of kindred to the husband of the Moabitess than Boaz.

When Ruth returned in the evening to her mother-in-law, laden with the fruits of her successful gleaning, the inquiry was made, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou?" And when Naomi heard that she happened to fall into the field of Boaz—for this was not the effect of any pre-concerted plan—she was sensibly affected with the providence which led her daughter-in-law to that place, and also with the remarkable kindness and condescension of her rich relative. She exclaimed, therefore, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is of near kin unto us; one of our next kinsmen." Ruth also informed her mother-in-law, that she had received a pressing invitation to glean in the field of Boaz, until the end of the harvest; which was very pleasing to Naomi, for she was glad that she could labour among those who would treat her respectfully. And accordingly she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harvest, and wheat-harvest, and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

SECTION XXXV.

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH—HER SON OBED WAS THE FATHER OF JESSE, THE FATHER OF DAVID.

THERE is nothing concerning which we are more likely to fall into grievous mistakes, than by judging of the manners and customs of ancient nations by what is common among us. That which in one age is reckoned perfectly innocent, and as laying not the least foundation for censure or reproach, would, in another country and age, be considered highly indecorous.

Naomi, who understood the laws and customs of the Jews, began now to entertain the hope, that notwithstanding their

depressed circumstances, Boaz would be induced to perform to her amiable daughter-in-law the part of a near kinsman, by taking her to wife and raising up seed to his deceased relative. The only difficulty was to bring him to understand that this duty devolved on him, unless another kinsman, who was still nearer should claim his right. Naomi, therefore, formed a plan for bringing the matter to a crisis. Whether her advice was in every respect prudent and becoming, we are not able to judge. Many transactions of the patriarchs and early ages of the world cannot but appear strange to us; and we know that the record of a fact in the sacred Scriptures does not give it the stamp of divine approbation. Bad actions as well as good are left on record; and not only the bad conduct of wicked men, but the slips and falls of the most eminent saints. Even if we should be obliged to censure the device of Naomi as imprudent and unjustifiable, and as an unwarrantable exposure of the chastity of her daughter-in-law, it will reflect no discredit upon the Bible; it will only be another example of the imperfections of the saints. As has been intimated, however, we are incompetent judges of this transaction, unless we had a more complete knowledge of the customs of the ancient Israelites, relative to such matters.

It was customary at the end of harvest, to celebrate a feast, at which the master associated in a free and friendly manner with his labourers, and ate and drank with them in a cheerful manner. Something of this kind seems to have been done by Boaz, at the threshing-floor where his servants were winnowing barley. Naomi directed Ruth to wash, anoint, and dress herself, and to go to this place; and told her precisely how she was to act. That "when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, and he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn, that she should go and lay herself down at his feet, and uncover his feet." The young woman trusted implicitly to the prudence and integrity of her mother-in-law, and acted precisely as she was directed. And doubtless Naomi proceeded upon the full persuasion that Boaz, being a good and honourable man, and a near relative, would not take advantage of the helpless young stranger, who was about to cast herself upon his generosity. Circumstances which would be a powerful temptation to one whose virtue is weak, may be perfectly safe to another who lives habitually in the fear of God.

Boaz knew not that a woman lay at his feet, until about midnight, he observed her, and was afraid; and he said, "Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid, spread, therefore, thy skirt over thy handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman." These words, which had been put into her

mouth, imported a claim to be taken as his wife, according to the law of the Lord. This claim, it appears, widows were allowed by custom to make. Indeed it was no more than asserting their right; just as a wife would claim her own husband, to whom she had been legally joined in marriage. But if there was any thing indecorous in making this request, there was certainly no iniquity in it; and whatever of imprudence or forwardness any may judge to have been in this conduct, it must not be charged upon the modest Ruth, who in the whole business followed implicitly the directions of her mother-in-law, who had been her only instructor, in all that related to the law of the Lord. But, that the request of Ruth was not considered unbecoming or improper, appears from the answer of Boaz, who seems to have been highly gratified with the opportunity of declaring his mind to his fair kinswoman. "And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter; for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich." He considered it a strong evidence of her virtue and kindness to the family of her deceased husband, that she who was not bound by the judicial law of the Israelites, but might have sought a husband among young men of other families, should be disposed to yield a cheerful obedience to the laws of her adopted country, and should be disposed to claim him as her husband's substitute and successor, who was considerably advanced in years. This appears to be his meaning when he speaks of her not following young men, whether rich or poor. This honourable man now promised to comply with the request of Ruth, as far as it was legally in his power. He said, "My daughter, fear not, I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now, it is true, I am thy near kinsman; howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part; but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth."

It gives us a favourable opinion of the inhabitants of Bethlehem at this time, that they were capable of appreciating, as they did, the character of Ruth, in the humble vale of poverty in which she walked; and that their chief citizen was a man of so much integrity and honour: that, although living in the possession of wealth and reputation, he was disposed to perform a sacred duty towards a poor relative, if it should not be performed by another, to whom it first appertained.

When Ruth returned to Naomi, bearing a valuable present of six measures of barley from Boaz, and related to her all

that had passed between them, her mother-in-law said, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall, for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." This sagacious and pious mother in Israel saw the leadings of Providence in this whole affair, and she perceived that it would not be long ere the will of Heaven in regard to her daughter-in-law would be satisfactorily developed.

As Naomi correctly judged, Boaz suffered no time to elapse, before he brought this matter, in which he was deeply interested, to a decision. He took the first opportunity of addressing himself to the kinsman referred to above. And that every thing might be transacted in the presence of a competent number of witnesses of suitable weight of character, "he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here, and they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's. And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me that I may know, for there is none to redeem it besides thee, and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it." At that time it was a custom in Israel to confirm bargains of this kind by the ceremony of plucking off the shoe and giving it to his neighbour, and this was considered a testimony of the validity of the contract. "Therefore, the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee; so he drew off his shoe." And Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people, ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's of the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem. And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

Although Naomi returned home in abject poverty, she still had a title to her husband's land; and it appears from the language of Boaz to his kinsman, that the widow had a right to sell her right. The law requiring a brother, or the nearest male kinsman, to marry the widow of a brother deceased, was intended to preserve the inheritance in the family, and to prevent the extinction of families. The first-fruits of such marriages were legally reckoned to the deceased, and inherited as if they had been his real posterity. When the widow of a deceased Israelite was, at the time of his death, past the age of child-bearing, the law would not apply; and this was doubtless the fact in regard to Naomi; but this did not affect the rights of her son's widows. As these sons had as good a title to their part of the landed inheritance as their father, their widows would have a claim. The nearest kinsman seems at first to have supposed that the inheritance of his deceased relatives would become his, by paying Naomi a reasonable sum for her right; but when he found that there was in the family a young widow whom he must marry, in order to comply with the law, he relinquished his right to Boaz. The reason which he assigned for declining to redeem the inheritance was, lest he should by this means mar his own. The meaning may be, that to redeem the inheritance of these three persons would require such a sum as would render it necessary for him to alienate a part of his own inheritance. The Jewish commentators, however, are of opinion, that this kinsman had a wife and children already, and did not wish to increase his expenses by enlarging his family, lest by this means he should waste or mar his inheritance.

“So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.” “And the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi, and they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

SECTION XXXVI.

BIRTH OF SAMUEL.

IN the town of Ramathaim-Zophim, was a man whose name was Elkanah, an Ephrathite. This man had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah; the latter of whom bare children, the former, none.

Elkanah was a devout man, and "went up yearly to Shiloh to worship, and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts." This probably should be interpreted as not meaning that he went up merely once in the year, but that he was regular in his attendance at each of the annual feasts, according to the prescription of the law. At this time Eli was the high-priest, a man advanced in age, who had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who officiated at the tabernacle as priests of the Lord. At the solemn feasts which were celebrated at Shiloh, Elkanah dealt out liberal portions to his wife Peninnah and all her children, but to Hannah, who was his chiefly beloved wife, he gave a worthy portion. But as Hannah, though the favourite of her husband, bare no children, her rival took occasion to provoke and fret her; and this she did, not once or twice merely, but continually, especially when the family went up to Shiloh to the annual feasts. On this account Hannah was sore vexed, and wept, and refused to eat. "Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" But, Hannah, although she arose up, after the feast was over, still continued to indulge her grief; and in the bitterness of her soul she prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. "And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall come no razor upon his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." No good man was ever more misled by appearances than Eli, in the present instance. He imputed to intoxication, what

was the effect of a spirit deeply troubled, and earnestly wrestling with God in prayer. But although good men are liable to fall into mistakes of this kind, they are ever ready to renounce their errors, when the truth is clearly made known. Therefore, upon finding that Hannah was a very different kind of person from what he had taken her for, he changed his tone towards her instantly, and addressed her in the most affectionate manner, and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight." From this time Hannah recovered her wonted cheerfulness, and her countenance was no more sad. Believing prayer has a wonderful effect to dispel sorrow, and diffuse cheerfulness through the soul. Let all who are in bitterness of spirit, and suffer under a load of grief, seek relief at a throne of grace. Let them cast their burdens on the Lord and he will sustain them, and will turn their darkness into light, and cause them to exchange their griefs and complaints for joy and rejoicing.

The family of Elkanah having completed their service at the tabernacle in Shiloh, prepared to return home; but before they set out on their journey, as became a pious household, they engaged in a solemn act of worship to Jehovah, at the place where he had recorded his name, and where he had his residence between the cherubim: and they returned to Ramah, where he dwelt.

In due season Hannah received the answer to her earnest prayer, and enjoyed the happiness of embracing a son, whom she called Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the Lord." When Elkanah went up to Shiloh with all his house, Hannah did not at this time accompany him; "for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah, her husband, said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good. Tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word; so the woman abode and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young; and they slew a bullock and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore, also, I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there."

SECTION XXXVII.

HANNAH'S DIVINE SONG.

As Hannah manifested the ardour of her piety by the fervency of her prayer, so she was prompt and cordial in her thanksgiving to God for his mercy, when her petition was granted. The pious and elevated song which, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she was enabled to sing on this occasion, is left on record for the edification of the church through all succeeding ages:

“My heart rejoiceth in the Lord.
 My horn is exalted in the Lord.
 My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies,
 Because I rejoice in thy salvation.
 There is none holy as the Lord.
 For there is none besides thee;
 Neither is there any rock like our God.
 Talk no more so exceeding proudly,
 Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth,
 For the Lord is a God of knowledge,
 And by him are actions weighed.
 The bows of the mighty men are broken;
 And they that stumble are girt with strength.
 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread;
 And they that were hungry ceased:
 So that the barren hath borne seven,
 And she that hath many children is waxed feeble.
 The Lord killeth and maketh alive:
 He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.
 The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich:
 He bringeth low and he lifteth up:
 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
 And lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill,
 To set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne
 of glory.
 For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
 And he hath set the world upon them.
 He will keep the feet of his saints,
 And the wicked shall be silent in darkness;
 For by strength shall no man prevail.
 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
 Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them.
 The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth,
 And he shall give strength unto his King,
 And exalt the horn of his anointed.”

SECTION XXXVIII.

SAMUEL IS LEFT AT SHILOH—ELI'S SONS—GOD'S MESSAGE TO ELI, BY A NAMELESS PROPHET.

ELKANAH and his family having accomplished the object of their visit to Shiloh, returned again to Ramah, but the child Samuel was left at the tabernacle by his mother, according to the vow which she had vowed unto the Lord, that he should be lent unto the Lord as long as he lived. Samuel, therefore, ministered unto the Lord, before Eli the priest; and although he was not of the sacerdotal race, and could not officiate in any service which belonged peculiarly to the priests, yet, as a consecrated Nazarite, he might have the privilege of remaining near the tabernacle, and of performing such services as were not appropriated to the family of Levi.

“The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.” They were both rapacious and licentious; and instead of setting an example of piety before the people who frequented the tabernacle at Shiloh, they not only acted corruptly themselves, but caused the people to offend against the Lord. “Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.” Eli, though himself a pious man, had not acted with fidelity towards his sons, but had connived at their irregular proceedings, which neglect was very offensive in the eyes of the Lord.

“But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord.” And this prayer of the high-priest was abundantly fulfilled; for Hannah became the mother of three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel remained at Shiloh, and grew in stature, and conducted himself so wisely and piously, that he greatly pleased the Lord; so that he began early to reveal himself unto him. The sons of Eli, instead of reforming their vicious lives, increased in their wickedness; and their father did indeed speak to them when he heard of their repeated and enormous acts of wickedness, and said, “Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people; nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear. Ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If a man sin against another, the judge shall judge him, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat

for him?" This reproof was entirely too mild, and seems to have been given at too late a period, for it is assigned as a reason why it took no effect, that the Lord had determined to slay them. These young men ought to have been removed entirely from the service of the altar and the tabernacle. There were men enough of the sacerdotal order to perform these sacred services: and Eli, as the high-priest, had the authority to commit to whom he would the several parts of divine worship which was daily celebrated at the tabernacle. At any rate, his rebukes should have been more seasonable, more frequent, and more severe, for conduct which was so enormously wicked; and it seems that the young men made no attempt to conceal their transgressions: their sin was so public that all the people were acquainted with it, and, as is commonly the fact, all others knew it sooner than their father; for his knowledge was derived from public report. A pious father cannot be held responsible for the bad conduct of his sons, if he has faithfully performed his duty towards them; but if he has been acquainted with their acts of iniquity, and yet has refrained from reproofing them; or if he has neglected to exercise wholesome discipline, and to remove them from those situations in which they have much power to do evil, he is guilty of a grievous sin, and one for which God will punish him with chastisements which will cause his own heart to bleed, and the ears of every one that heareth of them to tingle. And perhaps, among good men, no sin is more common than undue lenity towards sons, who are living in open transgression of the commandments of God. If they suffer the evil to run on for a long time, and should at last undertake to administer reproofs, they may come too late, and, as in the case of Eli, may produce no salutary effect. Such parents, however, commonly receive, in the providence of God, and from his word and Spirit, frequent admonitions of their duty. During the whole period of the theocracy, there were inspired men in Israel. It is probable that some of these received communications only at particular times, and were appointed to deliver special messages to individuals. In a number of cases, prophets are introduced as delivering communications from God, of whom we never hear any thing more, and whose names are not even given in the sacred record. We have an example of this sort in the history of Eli. "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt, in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my

sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation: and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore, the Lord God of Israel saith, I said, indeed, that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me, for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thy heart: and all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in one day they shall die, both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart, and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine Anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass that every one that is left in thy house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

This solemn message from an anonymous prophet claims the attention of all parents, and especially of the ministers of the Lord. There is awful severity in the judgments denounced on the house of Eli, which were executed literally, as the sequel of the sacred history clearly demonstrates. The case of Eli's iniquity is pointed out distinctly by this unknown man of God. It was, that he honoured his sons more than he honoured God. Let all parents beware of the sin of preferring the indulgence and gratification of their children to the honour and glory of God. Let them remember that the temptations to this sin are exceedingly strong, on account of the strength of parental affection; and it is an insidious evil, because it does not consist in any positive act, but in the mere neglect of our duty: and it is often connected with a kind and amiable disposition, which feels an insuperable reluctance to inflict pain on the persons beloved. But it is a fair trial of the state of the heart. It serves to show whether we love God or our children with supreme affection.

SECTION XXXIX.

JEHOVAH SPEAKS TO THE CHILD SAMUEL, AND REVEALS HIS PURPOSE IN REGARD TO ELI'S FAMILY—ELI'S HUMBLE SUBMISSION.

ABOUT this time the instances of divine communications had become rare; "and there was no open vision." Some time had elapsed since the anonymous prophet had been sent with God's awful message to Eli; and yet no reformation had taken place in his sons; and it does not appear that he had become more faithful and decisive in the treatment of his sons, and probably the deep impression which the prophet's words must have made upon his mind, was nearly obliterated, when it pleased God to send him another message by his young servant Samuel, who ministered unto the Lord before him. "And it came to pass, at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again; and he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord; neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. And the Lord came and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel: then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth. And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin I will also make an end, for I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not. And, therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord; and Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son, and he answered, Here am I. And he

said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me, of all the things that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." As the Lord is very merciful and repenteth him of the evil which he has intended and threatened, it cannot be doubted, that if Eli, upon the first divine warning, had immediately set himself to reform his house and to restrain his sons, or to put them out of the way of doing so much evil, the dreadful judgments denounced against his family would have been averted; for in such threatenings there is commonly an implied condition, that if the parties concerned repent and turn unto God with all their heart, their iniquities shall be forgiven. But when men persevere in transgression, there is a certain point beyond which mercy will not pursue them; when the Lord utterly refuses to hear any intercessions or accept any sacrifices or offerings in behalf of the guilty transgressor. There is a day of grace; and there is a time when, in just judgment, the things which make for peace are hidden from the eyes of men. Eli and his sons might have escaped from these heavy judgments, if they had repented when the man of God was sent with the solemn admonition, which we have recorded above; but now, the day of grace was past. Now the purpose of God is irrevocably fixed, that his house shall not be purged, and that the threatened punishment shall fall upon him. The submission of Eli to the divine will in this matter is truly remarkable. He was conscious of his own ill-desert, and was convinced that he justly deserved to suffer all that had been threatened. He said not a word, therefore, in extenuation of his sin; nor did he complain of the severity of the divine wrath; nor ask that the awful curse should be averted or mitigated. He bows in submission to the divine will, and meekly says, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." He knew that the Judge of all the earth would do right; and as he had revealed that his sin should not escape punishment, he sees nothing left for him but humble submission. There is a remarkable parallelism between the conduct of Eli and that of Aaron. Indeed, the resemblance between these two saints is very striking, and also between the calamities which befel them. Both were high-priests—both had irreligious sons, who, while they ministered at the altar, by their transgressions provoked Jehovah to cut them off; and it is probable that, in either case, the oldest of these young men, if he had lived, would have been advanced to the office of high-priest. When Nadab and Abihu were struck dead, "Aaron held his peace;" and Eli spoke, but only said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

From the time that the Lord made himself known unto Samuel, when a child, he continued more and more to make communications unto him, until it was well understood from Dan even to Beer-sheba, "that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." "And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel by the Word of the Lord." And the word of Samuel was regarded by all Israel as a revelation from God; and he was respected and venerated as a prophet of the Lord.

SECTION XL.

THE ISRAELITES DEFEATED BY THE PHILISTINES—THE TWO SONS OF ELI SLAIN, AND THE ARK TAKEN—THE INTELLIGENCE OVERCOMES ELI, WHO FALLS BACK AND BREAKS HIS NECK—THE WIFE OF PHINEHAS ALSO EXPIRES.

IN this period a war occurred between the Israelites and their inveterate foes, the Philistines. The Israelites encamped in a place which afterwards received the name of Ebenezer, on account of a circumstance which shall hereafter be mentioned. The Philistines pitched not far off, in a place called Aphek. The contending armies soon joined battle, and Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. "When the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." This was a very unlawful enterprise. The ark, when deposited in the tabernacle, was not to be removed, but by divine direction; and on this occasion, no prophet was consulted, and no inquiry was made of the Lord by Urim and Thummim, or by any other means; but a hasty resolution was formed in the camp, under the consternation produced by their recent defeat. Besides, it was a weak and superstitious opinion that the mere presence of the ark could save them from their enemies. If God was not on their side, in vain did they trust to the ark, which was, indeed, a symbol of the divine presence, but possessed no power whatever independent of God. Eli, to whom the care of the ark belonged, ought firmly and strenuously to have resisted this desecration of the ark of the covenant; but it was the weakness of this good man not to be able to oppose the will of others, even when it was evil. And his two wicked sons, who seem to have had the charge of the tabernacle and its sacred furniture, would be disposed to comply with the wishes of the people and the elders. Accordingly,

they sent to Shiloh and brought from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims. Hophni and Phinehas accompanied the impious and mad expedition. "And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp, and they said, Wo unto us, for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Wo unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men, and fight." Battle was now joined, and again Israel was smitten, and the people fled to their tents, and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. The sad tidings of this disastrous defeat was brought to Shiloh by a man of Benjamin, who came the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. Eli, who was in great anxiety, had taken his seat by the wayside, watching; "for his heart trembled for the ark of God." As soon as the tidings were heard, there arose a general cry of distress among the people, which, when Eli heard, he said, "What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old, and his eyes were dim that he could not see." And when he was informed that this man had come immediately from the camp, he said, "What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there has been also a great slaughter among the people: and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from the seat backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man and heavy; and he had judged Israel forty years. And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings, that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not, for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named

the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband." And in her last moments she repeated what may be considered a sad prediction, "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."

SECTION XLI.

THE ARK CARRIED TO ASHDOD AND PLACED BY DAGON—THIS IDOL FALLS ON THE FLOOR, AND IS MUTILATED—THE PHILISTINES, AFFLICTED WITH DISEASE AND MICE, SEND BACK THE ARK.

THE Philistines having got possession of the ark of God, brought it to Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. Next morning a remarkable thing was discovered by the inhabitants of Ashdod. "Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day."

However the lords of the Philistines might have triumphed, in consequence of the capture of the ark of the Lord, yet it now became an embarrassing question how they should dispose of it; for the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, causing them to be afflicted with a painful and troublesome disease; so that they said, "The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our God. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither. And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction." "Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron." But the Ekronites, as soon as it arrived, cried out, saying, "They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there." And the men who did not die were afflicted with a very disagreeable disease; so that the cry of the city went up to heaven. The time of the continuance of the ark in the land of the Philistines was seven months.

In their perplexity, they "called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass-offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. Then said they, What shall be the trespass-offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch-kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: and take the ark of the Lord and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass-offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us."

This advice of the priests and diviners was strictly followed; so they "took two milch-kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: and they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh. And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord. And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed sacrifices, the same day unto the Lord. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day." And the great stone, on

which the ark was set down, was called Abel; which stone was for a long time afterwards a noted object in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.

It is a remarkable fact, that all the heathen who inhabited these regions seem to have been well acquainted with the history of the redemption of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. The wonders then wrought had been widely reported, and had left a deep impression on the minds of the nations.

The judgments inflicted on the Philistines in consequence of the capture of the ark, seem to have been of three distinct kinds. First, upon their gods, as in the case of Dagon, who was horribly mutilated by the introduction of the ark of the Lord. This idol is said to have partaken of the form of a man and of a fish. The upper part was the head, body, and arms of a man, proceeding from the mouth of a monstrous fish, which was the inferior portion of the god.

The second judgment was a troublesome and shameful disease, on all classes of men, and by which multitudes were carried off.

The third was an army of mice, who devoured the fruits of the field. Such judgments have been experienced by other nations.

In the advice of the priests and diviners, with much that is superstitious and childish, we find some salutary counsel. They seem to have known that the God of Israel was the true God, and should be honoured; but they were for dividing this honour with their own deities. This is the grand error of Pagans, that they admit into their creed a multitude of gods. They have no objection to increasing the number of their deities, provided the new ones are not intolerant to the old. But the God of Israel is a jealous God, and will not share his glory with dumb idols.

But the men of Beth-shemesh, though they appertained to Israel, acted more irreverently towards the ark of the Lord than did the Philistines; for we do not read that the latter attempted to gratify their curiosity by raising the mystic lid which covered this sacred chest, but these men of Israel had the impious audacity to look into the ark of the Lord; and a large number of them were smitten of the Lord. There is probably some error here in the Hebrew copy, through the mistake of early transcribers. The number slain, as here recorded, is fifty thousand and three-score and ten men; which seems to be too many for a single city, on the very borders of the country. In other copies, instead of fifty, we have five thousand, which is a much more probable number. But as we know not the population of this city, the name of which signifies the *house of the sun*, we cannot determine that the number in the Hebrew text may not

be correct. If there were some hundreds of thousands of inhabitants in the town, as many as fifty thousand may have been smitten on account of their irreverent curiosity.

“And the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, and fetch it up to you. And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it to the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.”



SECTION XLII.

SAMUEL JUDGES ISRAEL—APPOINTS A DAY OF PUBLIC PRAYER AT MIZPEH—DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES AT EBENEZER.

SAMUEL'S reputation as a prophet being fully established through all Israel, he took upon himself to judge Israel. But suspecting that many of them were addicted to the worship of the gods of the heathen round about them, he addressed an exhortation to all Israel, saying, “If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.” This was a glorious reformation which now took place in Israel, by which idolatry was banished from the land; the people all bent to engage in the worship of Jehovah. The preaching of Samuel, so far as we are informed, was the only means employed in accomplishing this reformation.

Samuel finding that the people were now in a favourable state, wished to confirm their good impressions, and therefore appointed a general meeting of all the tribes at Mizpeh, that he might engage in solemn prayer in their behalf. “And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.” From the time that the ark of the Lord was removed from Shiloh, that place, after having been the residence of Him who dwelt between the cherubim, for

several hundred years, appears to have been utterly abandoned; and we hear no more of it except when its utter desolation is incidentally mentioned. And as it was expedient to have some central place for the meeting of the tribes, Samuel seems to have selected Mizpeh for this purpose.

When the Philistines heard of this general assembly of the children of Israel at Mizpeh, they seem to have taken it for granted that the meeting had for its object a consultation respecting war, they, therefore, went up against Israel. "And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines." They remembered their recent defeat, and the disastrous circumstances which accompanied it; but they did not now impiously bring the ark into the camp, or trust to this external symbol, as they had before done. But being convened for solemn prayer and fasting, and having Samuel, a man mighty in prayer, in the midst of them, they besought him to intercede for them. "Cease not," said they, "to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them until they came under Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites." It may be remarked here, that when Israel sought the help of Jehovah, and put their trust in him, they were uniformly successful, whether their foes were many or few; but, on the other hand, when they trusted in an arm of flesh, or in their own devices, they were defeated by their enemies.

The influence of Samuel on this whole nation was great and salutary. Seldom has any individual been able to govern a populous nation so effectually, or to bring a whole people so unanimously to the worship of the true God. But this was accomplished entirely by moral means. Samuel had no other authority over the children of Israel than that which arose from their

persuasion that he was a prophet, and that his counsels and exhortation were dictated by the Spirit of God. His example also corresponded with his professions and office; and the power which he had with God by prayer, was signally manifested on the occasion just mentioned, when he had scarcely done speaking, before the Lord thundered against the Philistines and put them to flight.

It may seem to be a departure from the law of Moses, that Samuel, who was not of the Aaronic family, should himself offer sacrifices to God, and that this should be done, as it frequently was, by him, in other places than where the altar of God was stationed. The only satisfactory explanation of this is, that prophets, acting under the immediate inspiration of God, had the privilege of sacrificing independently of the priesthood, and wherever they happened to be; just as men inspired to preach, need not, as others, apply to men for ordination. So Paul received his commission as an apostle, from the hands of no men, but was sent by a commission immediately from God. Just so, Samuel, acting under the influence of a plenary inspiration, had a right to do in God's worship whatever he was directed by the Holy Ghost to do; and also to perform ceremonies which others not inspired have no right to imitate. Thus we find this holy man not only offering a sucking lamb for a burnt-offering, but also pouring out water before the Lord. And in the sequel of the history we find him offering sacrifice at Ramah, when Saul was anointed, and at Beth-lehem when David was anointed.

Samuel continued all his life to judge Israel, and that he might perform his duty more effectually, he annually took a circuit, in which he had several important stations, where he met with the people. The principal of these were Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh; but his place of residence, when not on his circuit, was Ramah, where he had a house, and where also he exercised his office of judge of Israel; and here, we are informed, "he built an altar to the Lord." His conduct on this subject has already been explained, and it is unnecessary to repeat what was before said.

SECTION XLIII.

SAMUEL IN HIS OLD AGE ASSOCIATES HIS SONS AS JUDGES WITH HIMSELF—THEIR BAD CHARACTER—THE PEOPLE DEMAND A KING—SAMUEL IS DISPLEASED—BUT GOD DIRECTS HIM TO COMPLY, BUT TO EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF KINGLY GOVERNMENT—BY INSISTING ON A KING THEY REJECTED NOT SAMUEL BUT GOD—THE TENDENCY OF POWER TO ABUSE.

BUT when Samuel became old, not being able, as in the days of his vigour, to transact all the judicial business which called for his attention, he associated his sons with him in this important trust. The names of his two sons were Joel and Abiah; and as he could not conveniently visit, in his judicial circuit, the southern part of Judea, he stationed them at Beer-sheba. But excellent as the example of Samuel was, both privately and officially, his sons did not follow it. Whether he, like Eli, was too indulgent to his children, and connived at their faults, we are not informed, and we cannot infer his negligence, from the fact that they turned out badly; for often the best education and the most faithful warnings are lost on the children of the pious. It is very natural, however, for parents to be blind to the failings of their children; and at least, it may be presumed, that Samuel was mistaken in thinking that these young men were qualified to be judges in Israel. But whether he could have known their character or not, the event proved, that in that very point in which judges should be strong in virtue, they were weak, for "they walked not in the ways of their father, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. This bad conduct was so notorious, "that all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Here was indeed a most important proposal growing out of the mal-administration of these young men. The people had been well satisfied with the administration of Samuel himself, as is implied in the complaint brought against his sons. They did not hurt the old prophet's feelings by exaggerating the misconduct of his sons, but merely said, "thy sons walk not in thy ways." But why should they have desired a king? Undoubtedly, the thing was ill-advised, as appears by the judgment, not only of Samuel, but of God himself; but they were influenced by human policy: they saw no prospect of a righteous administration after the decease of Samuel; and they dreaded, it is probable, that miserable anarchy, by which their nation had so often been afflicted, since their settlement in Canaan; and they wished, therefore, to have a king, invested with absolute authority to keep the multitude

in order. But besides these considerations, they were influenced by another motive, not so honourable to them, as the servants of Jehovah; they felt ashamed of the remarkable dissimilarity of their government to those of the surrounding nations. All these, however small, were governed by kings, who assumed great state, and went out with the people to war: but they appeared as a nation without a head, and doubtless this was a matter of reproach to them among the heathen, therefore they said, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

This request seems to have come unexpectedly to Samuel, and he was far from being pleased with it. But he was a man who would judge nothing, and do nothing, without consulting the Lord. Therefore, before he gave any answer, he carried the important subject to a throne of grace by prayer. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now, therefore, hearken to their voice; howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." "And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen: and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and set them to ear his ground, and reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king, which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed

them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city."

Israel, the most highly favoured nation upon earth, was yet the most ungrateful and rebellious towards their God and King. Although they had for centuries been protected and delivered, by a succession of stupendous miracles, yet they distrusted the power and providence of God, and asked for a king, that they might be like the other nations.

We learn from this portion of sacred history, that God often grants those requests which are not pleasing in his sight: in just judgment, he permits people when they are bent on a particular course to pursue it. According to that of the Psalmist, when speaking of this very subject, "And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul."

From God's description of a king, we learn that the tendency of power is to abuse. The principle of selfishness and pride is so strong in human nature, that it is to be expected, that he who is invested with absolute power over others, will exercise it for his own interest and gratification. Kings are commonly among the most corrupt of the human race; not because they are naturally worse than others, but because they are under fewer restraints, and are exposed to stronger temptations. This description of kingly power and injustice is in perfect accordance with the fact as it commonly exists. There may be a state of anarchy so miserable that even a king might be a blessing; or rather, the least of two evils; but any people capable of self-government are mad when they desire a king. The expenses of civil government had been scarcely felt before by the Israelites, but by the erection of a monarchy, they subjected themselves to a heavy burden of taxation.

PART IV.

FROM THE INSTITUTION OF THE REGAL GOVERNMENT TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

SECTION I.

SAUL'S ELECTION AS KING—HIS VICTORY OVER NAHASH AND THE RENEWED CONFIRMATION OF HIS KINGDOM—SAMUEL'S CHARGE—SAUL'S FIRST OFFENCE—JONATHAN'S EXPLOIT AND DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES—SAUL SENT TO DESTROY THE AMALEKITES—HIS SECOND OFFENCE, AND REJECTION FROM THE KINGDOM.

WE come now to a crisis in the history of the Jewish people. Previous to this time they had existed as separate families, rather than as one nation. Their unity, so far as they were one, arose from a common relation to Jehovah as their king, and not from any allegiance to one earthly king. They were a religious, rather than a political people. But now they had wickedly rejected God, "who had saved them out of all their adversities and tribulations," and had made themselves a king, or rather demanded one at the hands of Samuel. In their pride and unbelief they would not have God to reign over them. Henceforth, therefore, we shall find them like the other nations of the earth, united under one earthly prince, and not so immediately under the care and government of God. They are no longer one, simply as the worshippers of Jehovah, but also as the subjects of a king.

The person whom God had chosen, and directed Samuel to invest with the kingly office, was "Saul the son of Kish," "a Benjamite, and a mighty man of power." It appears, in the course of the narrative, that this same person was afterwards freely chosen by the people. The appearance of Saul was striking, and likely to find favour with the mass of the people. "He was a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he, from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." The earlier years of Saul's life were spent in the management of his father's estate. At the time of his introduction to the prophet, he was in the discharge of this duty, searching after the lost property of his father. The search was fruitless, and, as a last resort, Saul determined, at the sug-

gestion of his servant, to enter the city and consult the seer or prophet. "So they went unto the city where the man of God was; and when they were come to the city, behold, Samuel came out against them for to go up to the high place." It was a feast-day, and the people were waiting until the prophet should come and bless the sacrifice before they should eat. "And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of; this same shall reign over my people." Before any inquiry, Samuel informs Saul that the stray asses which he sought were found, and then announces to him in these words his selection to the kingly office: "And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?" On the morrow, as he was about to depart, and they were come without the city, "Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" This was the outward calling of Saul. But as God, when he calls any one to a particular duty, does so ordinarily both by an inward and outward calling, so it was with this lately anointed king. As he turned away from Samuel "God gave him another heart:" and when he met the company of the prophets, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and Saul also prophesied among them." This was the inward authentication of the outward call: for the prophet assures him that when these things should come unto him, "then he might know that God was with him."

Although Saul had thus been anointed king, there was another step necessary, before he could enter fully upon the duties of that office. It was necessary that this divine calling should in some way be manifested to the people. Accordingly Samuel calls another assembly of the people at Mizpeh. He tells them of God's former care over them, and of their sinful rejection of him, and then proceeds in the use of the lot to point out the tribe, family, and person, whom the Lord had chosen. Saul was thus publicly taken; and when brought among the people, "they gave a shout, and said, God save the king." Samuel, however, was careful to correct any misapprehensions as to the power of the newly made monarch. He expounded to them the royal rights and prerogatives: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord." Thus the first Hebrew monarch began his reign as a constitutional king, chosen by God, anointed by the prophet, and accepted freely by the people.

There was soon an occasion for Saul's services. The very danger which had led to the election of a king was now at hand. "Nahash the king of the Ammonites came up and encamped

against Jabesh-gilead," a town lying east of Jordan, and not far from the Sea of Galilee. The only condition on which he would spare them at all, was that he might "thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel." Such a demand was unendurable, and as all Israel would share in the reproach, "they sent throughout all their coasts for help." When these messengers came to Gibeah, Saul was at his ordinary labour in the field. But when he heard the "tidings of the men of Jabesh, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent." Saul numbered his forces, and sent his promise to the people of Jabesh-gilead that "To-morrow, by the time the sun be hot, ye shall have help." And on the morrow "Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning-watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day, and scattered them so that two of them were not left together." This sudden and decisive victory, by the courage and energy of Saul, left no doubt in the minds of any as to his fitness for the kingly office. A demand arose for the punishment of those who had opposed his election; but Saul at once repressed it, and said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." Then all the people, with the sanction of Samuel, "went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." We may view this transaction as the solemn public renewal, and final establishment, of the kingdom of Saul.

While the people were thus together, Samuel warns them, and their chosen king, against tyranny and impiety. He appeals to them as to his own example while judge. "Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand." He reminds them of the faithfulness of God in raising up for them judges and deliverers in every emergency. He then charges them as to their future conduct: "If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord; then shall both ye, and

also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God. But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers." To impress upon them this charge, and awaken in them a sense of their sin, in rejecting God and choosing a king, Samuel, by a miracle, calls down thunder and rain.* Startled by this sign of the divine displeasure, the people confess their sin, and cry for mercy; and then he proceeds to comfort them with the assurance of God's mercy. "Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn ye not aside: for then should you go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he has done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

"Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah." This marks the beginning of a royal standing army. A step toward that result which they desired, that they might be like all the nations. Saul had now fully taken the reins of government. Samuel appears in the rest of his history, mainly as a prophet. He exercises no longer the functions of a judge.

Those hereditary enemies of Israel, perhaps aware of the change in the Hebrew state, and having lost the remembrance of their overthrow at Mizpah, began to make new encroachments. Their garrisons already held some of the heights of Israel. And Jonathan, a bold, good man, "smote the Philistines that were in Geba." This was the signal for a general war. Preparations were made on both sides. "Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear, and called the people together to Gilgal." "And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand," or more probably three thousand "chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude: and they came up and pitched in Michmash." So large an army terrified the Hebrews, and some concealed themselves, some went over to the east of Jordan, but the larger part remained trembling with their king. While

* Among ourselves thunder and rain are far from uncommon at this season of the year. But all modern travellers agree that rain seldom, if ever, falls from June to October, or during the harvest.

in this position, awaiting the coming of Samuel, his army gradually diminishing, Saul committed that sacrilege for which he lost the kingdom. "And Saul said, Bring hither the burnt-offering to me, and the peace-offering. And he offered the burnt-offering." At the end of his offering, Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him. "And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, therefore said I, the Philistines will come down upon me, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord, I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering. And Samuel said, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue." "And Samuel arose and went unto Gibeah of Benjamin." Deserted by the prophet, Saul was now abandoned by the people: only six hundred men followed him in his distress. The power of the Philistines was immense, and the Israelites were spoiled of their armour, so that on the day of battle, "there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people, but with Saul and Jonathan his son was there found."

A deep valley ran between Gebal and Michmash, between the small band of Saul and the host of the Philistines. On its opposite sides there were two sharp rocks or hills, standing out from the walls of the valley, on which the following bold exploit took place. Now, while lying thus near to each other, "it came to pass that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man that bare his armour, Come and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few." The result will show that this faith was not in vain. The young man consents: "Behold I am with thee, according to thy heart." They both reveal themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and said, "Come up, and we will show you a thing," meaning that they would punish them for their temerity. But this was the very sign which Jonathan had fixed upon as favourable, and he said unto his armour-bearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel." This bold adventure was the beginning of a most astonishing victory. A mysterious influence seems to have deprived the garrison of all power of resistance and of flight. "They fell before Jonathan to the number of twenty men," on the very ground on which they stood. A sudden terror falls upon the whole army. "And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people:

the garrison and the spoilers they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling. And Saul's watchmen looked, and beheld the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another." Seeing this strange spectacle, and finding Jonathan absent from his band, Saul wished to consult the high-priest, "for the ark of God (or the ephod, as some read) was at that time with the children of Israel." "While Saul talked unto the priest, the noise in the host of the Philistines increased" so rapidly that he could not delay. He stops the priest in the midst of his inquiries, "and all the people that were with him assembled themselves and came to the battle: and behold every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture." The Hebrews that had been with the Philistines in bondage, now turned to fight with their countrymen: and those who had hid themselves in the mount, when they heard that the Philistines fled, "even they also followed hard after them in the battle." "So the Lord saved Israel that day." Throughout their whole history we read of few deliverances more remarkable than this: in which the hand of God was more apparent. There was no restraint to the Lord on that day to save by few.

It was not all well, however, with Israel. Their very success led them into a snare and distress. Elated with his victory, and eager in the pursuit of his foes, Saul had foolishly adjured the people, saying, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people—though the honey dropped from the comb at their side—tasted any food, for they feared the oath." In the long pursuit, they became weary and faint: and Jonathan, who heard not the rash curse of his father, "dipped his rod into the honey and ate." The eagerness of Saul defeated itself. Jonathan alone, who had broken the oath, had strength to follow the enemy, and argues against the imprudence of his father. "If the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of the enemy, had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?" Nor was this the only bad result of the oath. When evening came, when the people might eat, "they flew upon the spoil, slew them upon the ground, and did eat them with the blood," directly contrary to the Mosaic law. And it was told Saul, "Behold the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood." "And he said, Roll a great stone unto me, and bring me hither every man his ox and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat, and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood. And Saul built an altar unto the Lord: the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord." It seems probable that the very stone upon which the

beasts were slain, was made into an altar, and sacrifices offered before the people were allowed to go any further.

The impatient monarch now proposes an immediate pursuit of the Philistines, but the priest checks his zeal, and counsels him to inquire of God. "And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day." God was evidently displeased. Sin was lying somewhere. "And Saul said, Draw ye near hither all ye chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But none of the people were base enough to betray their deliverer. He then resorts to the lot. All Israel stood upon one side, Saul and Jonathan upon the other. And "Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so, and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines." In the whole of this transaction Saul appears as vindictive, rash, and cruel. He looks upon the Philistines not as the enemies of the people of God, but as personal foes. In his eagerness to crush them he involves his own people in severe distress by a rash oath. And then, as if utterly unconscious where the real guilt lay, he purposes the death of his own son, who had ignorantly broken the oath. That God in his providence should single out Jonathan instead of Saul, does not imply that Jonathan was the guilty one; but simply designates him as the person who had incurred Saul's foolish curse. The people judged rightly that the guilt was contracted by Saul, and therefore they rescued their deliverer from his hands.

Saul now pushes his wars and conquests on every side. Beyond Jordan, and south and east of the Dead Sea, he is victorious over Moab, Ammon, and Edom. Northward he carries his arms against the kings of Zobah. And whithersoever, in the words of the narrative, "he turned himself, he vexed his foes."

In the full tide of his success, Saul receives a command from the Lord, through the prophet, to "go and smite Amalek, and

utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman." Nothing could justify such a war as this, but an express command from God. This Saul had. Some of the reasons for this command we know. This nation had attacked the Israelites in their coming out of Egypt; and for this, among other reasons, God had purposed their destruction. And he has a right to do what he will with his own; and though we now do not know why he should do as he does, yet this we do know, that the judge of all the earth doeth right. Saul proceeds, partially, to execute the command. He gathered the people together, and marched them to a city of Amalek. He then warned the Kenites—the family of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses—to depart from among the Amalekites, lest they should perish with them. "And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah, until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt." He spared the king, but destroyed the people. "But Saul and the people spared the best of the sheep, oxen, and of all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them." He spared the king because of his rank, he himself being a king. He spared the spoil to increase his riches. In both he broke the divine command. Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, : for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." In the interview between the prophet and king, Saul appears to have no idea of his guilt. He salutes him with a "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." And when Samuel asked "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears? he replied, The people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." Then Samuel uttered the severe rebuke, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said unto me this night. When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? and sent thee to utterly destroy the sinners of the Amalekites. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord." Saul then claimed that he had obeyed, and throws the blame of a partial disobedience upon the people. "But the people took of the spoil, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." And Samuel uttered that great truth, so often repeated in Scripture, but so seldom learned, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Saul, startled with this denun-

ciation, confessed his sin, and besought Samuel to remain with him in his intended sacrifice. But Samuel said, "I will not return with thee," and as he turned to go away, Saul laid hold upon his mantle and rent it. And Samuel said, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom from thee this day: and the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." Then he said, "I have sinned, yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before all Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God." So Samuel joined him in his sacrifice. The utmost extent of Saul's repentance, was the fear lest he should be publicly abandoned by the prophet, and then by the people. There was no genuine sorrow for his sin. But he did not feel himself yet so secure in the affections of his people that he could safely lose the influence of the aged prophet, much less openly array himself against it. Hence his assumed humility, and his earnest prayer that Samuel would at least publicly honour him. This sacrifice finished, the prophet sent for the Amalekite king and executed the command of God. As a judge he sentences the king to death; who suffers justly for his cruelties. After this second and flagrant offence, Saul was no longer countenanced by the venerable prophet. "And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul; and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel."

SECTION II.

AN OINTING OF DAVID—HIS INTRODUCTION TO SAUL—HIS BATTLE WITH GOLIATH,
AND VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES—THE FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN—
DAVID'S ESCAPE FROM SAUL'S ANGER, AND HIS MARRIAGE—SAUL THREATENS
HIS LIFE—DAVID'S FLIGHT TO SAMUEL—HIS RETURN TO JONATHAN, AND
FINAL PARTING.

SAUL having thus rejected God, having refused to administer the kingdom, under the divine command, and as a king only in a subordinate sense, was now rejected by God. The next step was the choice of his successor—the man who stands pre-eminent among all the Hebrew kings—who walked, as it is testified, "after God's own heart," who received and held the kingdom, as only the vicegerent of Jehovah. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." To guard himself from the anger and violence of Saul, who had become jealous and suspicious of the prophet, Samuel

was directed to "go and sacrifice at Bethlehem," "to call Jesse to the sacrifice, and anoint whomsoever the Lord should name." "And Samuel came to Bethlehem, sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice." When they came, he looked upon the eldest, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." The other sons of Jesse passed before the prophet in succession: "but the Lord had not chosen these." And Samuel said unto Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" And he said, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep." And he said, "Send and fetch him;" and he sent and brought him." "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." It is doubtful whether David or his brethren at this time understood the meaning of this anointing. It was followed by no practical result: and he was devotedly loyal long after this to Saul. At all events he took no means to bring about the real result to which it pointed. Meantime, however, that Spirit which was given to him, was evidently fitting him for the high trust unto which he had been chosen.

The introduction of David to Saul was brought about by his skill as a minstrel. From his break with the prophet, a change had manifestly passed over the character of Saul. His pride and vain-glory had given place to despondency and gloom, and these had now settled down into the deepest melancholy; this melancholy assumed a fiendish cast, and would seem to have been, from its spasmodic and violent form, not merely the natural working of a disappointed spirit, but of a supernatural power, very much like the possessions in the times of our Lord. To relieve these fits, Saul's servants proposed that he should "seek out a man who is a cunning player upon the harp; and it shall come to pass that when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand and thou shalt be well." The person chosen was the son of Jesse, who is described again "as cunning in playing, a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." "And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer. And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp and played with

his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

David next comes before us as a champion of the Israelites against their inveterate foe. The armies of the Israelites and the Philistines were again encamped upon the opposite sides of a valley; and again God saves his people by few. "And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span." His armour corresponded with his size. "And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants of Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants, but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day." At this proud challenge, Saul and all Israel were dismayed and greatly afraid. While the armies were in this position, David, who had returned from Saul to his father, comes again to his elder brethren in the camp. He came just as the host was going forth to the fight, "and shouted for the battle. For they had put the battle in array, army against army." While David talked with his brethren, there came up the champion of Gath, and repeated his defiance; and David heard it. As usual, all Israel fled from before him. David, indignant at the reproach cast upon his people, inquires, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel, for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And they answered, "The king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." These words of David were rehearsed before Saul, and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." To make known the ground of his confidence, and to secure the favour of Saul, David relates his adventure while tending his father's flocks. "There came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb of the flock, and I went out after him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord that delivered me from their power, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Saul then arms David for the encounter; and he assayed to go, but afterwards turns back and lays aside his arms, "for he had not proved them."

“And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook or valley, and put them in a shepherd’s bag, which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.” When the Philistine saw his youthful and unarmed opponent, he disdained him, and said, “Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.” Then said David, in the calm courage which faith in God ever gives, “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and take thine head from thee: and will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with spear and sword; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hands.” As they drew on near to each other, David took from his bag a stone and slang it, “and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.” But there was no sword in the hand of David. “Then he ran, and took the sword of the Philistine, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel shouted, and pursued after them unto Gath and Ekron, with a great slaughter.” The victory was complete.

As David went forth against the Philistine, Saul inquires of Abner the captain of the host, “Whose son is this youth?” “And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is.” And as David returned from the battle, Abner brought him before the monarch with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said, “Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.”* David, as we are told, brought the trophy of his victory to Jerusalem; and the sword he left with Ahimelech the priest, as a tribute of thankfulness to Jehovah for the victory.†

* It has been objected to this passage that Saul must have known David. He had played before him, and been chosen as one of his armour-bearers. Why then should he ask as to his parentage? It is possible that Saul should have forgotten David. He was not permanently fixed at court, and had been absent at the present time. This is the more likely, as David was present with Saul in his frantic moods. And it would certainly be no uncommon thing, that a king, in the number of his attendants and courtiers, should forget the appearance of a youth just changing into manhood.

† Jerusalem was partially in the hands of the Jebusites, but not so much so as to prevent this triumphal procession from resting there: and Jerusalem is here mentioned, as it soon became pre-eminently the city of David.

On his return, he was welcomed by Saul and received into the most intimate friendship by Jonathan. Saul henceforth wished him constantly in his presence. "And the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." This was the beginning of that well-known and unchanging friendship. A covenant was formed between them. And Jonathan, as the highest visible token of his love, stripped himself of the robe and armour that was upon him and gave them to David. From this time the history of Saul merges into that of David. "Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people." As he came back from his expeditions, or as he marched from city to city with the trophy of that first great victory, he was met and welcomed by the women; and as they played upon their instruments of music, they said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." "Saul was very wroth, and said, What can he have more but the kingdom?" From that day and forward, David was eyed by Saul only as an enemy. His jealousy took complete possession of him, and knew no bounds. In the moments of his phrenzy, and while David played as at other times, Saul threatens his life. "And Saul cast his javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul." He did not, however, yet publicly break with him; he could not, probably, dispense with his service. He accordingly retains him still, though simply as one of his captains. David was still gaining by his wisdom and courage in the popular favour. Afraid to attack him openly, Saul basely plots his destruction. He promises his daughter in marriage to David, on the condition that he should be valiant for him; with a concealed hope and design that he should fall by the hands of his foes. When the time came to fulfil his promise, he gave his daughter to another. Learning, however, that his younger daughter was attached to David, he renews the promise; when David modestly states his life and lineage, and his unfitness for such a station as the king's son-in-law, Saul obviates all objection, by demanding, as the sole condition to marriage, that he should slay an hundred Philistines to avenge the king of his enemies. In thus appealing to David's known chivalric and patriotic feelings, Saul craftily and meanly sought his ruin. David accepted the condition. "He arose with his men, and went and slew two hundred Philistines," and brought the proofs of the deed and laid them before the king. "And Saul gave him Michal, his daughter, to wife." With his wife, David won Saul's continual enmity. "Then the Philistines came forth again." In the progress of

the war David "behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul: so that his name was much set by."

Frustrated in all his previous attempts, the king now changes his policy, and gave positive orders to his son and his servants that David should be slain. But Jonathan told David, saying, "Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee, now therefore take heed to thyself until the morning. And I will go out and stand beside my father, and commune with him of thee, and what I see I will tell thee." Jonathan pleads with his father for David, he recounts his great services, his self-denials, and his blameless life; and remonstrates against the sin of thus shedding innocent blood. "And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan; and Saul sware, as the Lord liveth he shall not be slain." And Jonathan brought David again into the presence of the king. In the war with the Philistines David was again victorious; but with every victory, Saul's anger increased. He attempts a third time to slay David with his own hand. There was no longer any safety for David at court, and he escaped by night to his own home. Saul's messengers were in rapid pursuit, and waited only for the morning to slay him. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain. So David fled and escaped,* and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt at Naioth." When Saul heard it, he sent messengers to take David. No sanctuary, however sacred, could now restrain the vindictive king. When the messengers saw the company of the prophets, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, "the Spirit of God came upon them, and they also prophesied." It happened the same with the second and third band. At last Saul also went to Ramah, and asked for Samuel and David. "And one said, they be at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither, and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied, until he came to Naioth. A whole night and day he lay naked and prostrate before the prophet." His fierce wrath yielded for a time to the stronger influence and restraint of the Spirit of God.

David in the meantime escaped from Ramah and came to Jonathan, who was yet ignorant of Saul's purpose, and said to him, "What have I done? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" Jonathan could not be persuaded that his fears were well grounded, and said, "God forbid! thou

* It was about this time that David composed the 11th and 59th Psalms. The former seems to be his earliest extant composition, and gives a beautiful view of his faith and trust in God, under all these adversities. In the latter, he prays for deliverance, and that the right may be vindicated, and the obstinately wicked punished.

shalt not die; behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so." David then solemnly calls God to witness, and said, "Thy father knoweth that I have found grace in thy eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." The feast of the new-moon was now at hand, when it was customary for David, as a member of the royal family, to sit with the king at meat. David excuses himself to Jonathan, both from fear of Saul's anger, and that he might go to Bethlehem, and join his own family in their yearly sacrifice. It was agreed upon between these devoted friends, that if David's absence were noticed, Jonathan should make his excuse to the king. The answer of the king was to test his disposition towards his son-in-law. If he say thus, "It is well, thy servant shall have peace; but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him." Jonathan then covenants, in the most tender and solemn manner, to show David the purposes of his father, whether good or evil; and David, on his part, enters into an equally solemn covenant, "to show kindness to the house of Jonathan for ever, even when the Lord should have cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth."

When the feast-day came, David's seat was empty, and although Saul perceived it, he made no inquiries, for he thought some ceremonial uncleanness had kept him from being present. On the second day, the same vacant seat was noticed, and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day? Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem, to sacrifice there with his family and brethren, therefore he cometh not unto the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse, to thine own confusion and the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom: wherefore, now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?" But Saul was now beyond argument. The only reply was to cast a javelin at the empty seat of David. "So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame."

In the morning of the third day, Jonathan went out to the field, to the place agreed upon, where David had concealed

himself, after his return from Bethlehem, and in the appointed way told David of the evil desigus of his father. And there, alone, was that most touching meeting and parting of these faithful friends. "And David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city."

SECTION III.

DAVID'S FLIGHT AND FIRST SOJOURN WITH THE PHILISTINES—HE COMES TO THE CAVE ADULLAM—SAUL KILLS THE PRIESTS—DAVID DELIVERS KEILAH AND IS HUNTED BY SAUL—HE SPARES SAUL'S LIFE—DEATH OF SAMUEL—DAVID'S ADVENTURE WITH NABAL—HE SPARES SAUL'S LIFE A SECOND TIME—HIS SECOND FLIGHT TO THE PHILISTINES.

THERE was no longer any safety for David, while within the reach of Saul's power. With a few young men he flees hastily to Ahimelech the priest, at Nob, which lay most probably in his course toward the hill country of Judah. The appearance of David, and the small number of his followers, excited the fear of the priest, and he asks the reason of his coming. David feigns that he was sent in haste upon a secret mission by the king. This is the first stain we find upon David's character. In the severity of his trials, his trust in God and the justice of his cause seems to have failed him for a time; and he fell into prevarication and falsehood, which was attended with a most fatal result. Under the pretence of pressing haste to execute the royal commission, he obtains from the priest the shew-bread and the sword of Goliath. The conversation between David and the priest was overheard by a certain man of the servants of Saul, "who was detained before the Lord that day; and his name was Doeg the-Edomite, the chiefest of the herdsman of Saul."

The pursuit of Saul was so eager that David was compelled to take refuge with his most inveterate foes. "And he fled for fear of Saul, and went to Achish, the king of Gath." But there was no security here. The servants of Achish remind him that it was this David of whom they sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of the king of Gath." Perplexed and harassed, and driven from one thing to another, he had not yet recovered his faith in God's promises and providence; and to avoid the present danger, "changed his

behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad." Apparently convinced of his insanity, (though other reasons probably led to the same result,) Achish sends him away.*

Returning from the Philistines, "David came to the cave Adullam," a large cavern not far from Bethlehem. And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, or in debt, or discontented, flocked to him, and he became captain of four hundred men, a band which soon swelled into six hundred. Among these were some of the mighty men who appear so often in the history of David; especially the three mightiest of the thirty, of whom Abishai, the brother of Joab, was chief. It was while David was in this cave, and Bethlehem was garrisoned by the Philistines, that an incident occurred which shows how strong an attachment had already sprung up between David and the chief of his followers. David longed for water from the well of Bethlehem. "And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well, and brought it to David." He was too generous and conscientious, however, to gratify his appetite at so great a risk. He would not drink thereof, "but poured it out unto the Lord, and said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it." It is from such casual events that we learn the peculiar disposition of David, which gave him such popularity and influence among the people.† The first care of David was for his parents. "He brought them to the king of Moab, and said to him, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold."

He was not suffered to remain there long. The prophet Gad warned him to depart and flee into the land of Judah. "And he came into the forest of Hareth," somewhere in the south of Judah.

The narrative now returns to Saul and his deeds. He abode still at Gibeah. And when he heard that David was discovered, he makes a mournful appeal to the Benjamites, as his own tribe, for assistance and pity. "Then answered Doeg the Edomite, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and the sword of Goliath." Saul's

* It was most probably at this time that David composed that beautiful 34th Psalm—so consoling to the afflicted, and so encouraging to the righteous. Soon after, or at the same time, we must place the 56th Psalm, expressive of his trust in God's promise.

† We have David's spiritual experience, while in this cave, recorded for us in the 142d Psalm.

anger was now kindled against the priest, "and he sent for Ahimelech, and all the priests at Nob; and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse." Ahimelech was ignorant that Saul viewed David as an enemy. "Who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more." But Saul would not listen to reason. His purpose was formed. He determined to strike terror into all David's friends, by one terrible example. Ahimelech and all the priests must die. He gave orders to his footmen that stood about him "to slay the priests of the Lord." But no native Israelite, much as they feared the king, was ready for such a deed as this. And the king said to Doeg, "Turn thou and fall upon the priests; and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day, fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, besides oxen, and asses, and sheep." So terrible was the insane wrath of Saul. Nor was this all. In a later allusion we learn that he slew the Gibeonites, who were probably servants of the priests, as the tabernacle was at Gibeon: a deed which afterward brought down upon his descendants a fearful retribution.* Only one of the sons of Ahimelech escaped, and fled to David. "And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the priests. And David said, I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh thy life seeketh my life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

While David was in the forest of Hareth, it was told him that the Philistines were fighting against Keilah. Overcoming all sense of his injuries, he immediately goes to their relief. Although having the Divine authority, some of his men feared to venture upon so bold an undertaking. "Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his men went and fought with the Philistines, and brought away the spoil, and smote them with a great slaughter."

All the patriotism of David produced no effect to relax the savage pursuit of Saul. He leaves him no rest in the place he had delivered; but gathers quickly all the people to go

* To these events we must trace the origin of the 52d Psalm. And probably several others are the expressions of David's experience at this time; *e. g.* the 17th, 109th, 140th, 35th, and 64th.

down to Keilah to besiege David. Hearing of the mischief purposed against him, he asks counsel of God, through the priest. "Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? And the Lord said, He will come down. They will deliver thee up." "Then David and his men arose and departed out of Keilah, and went and abode in the strongholds in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day; but God delivered him not into his hand." While hunted through this wilderness by Saul, he received a visit from Jonathan, who strengthened his hand in God, and said, "Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee. And they renewed their covenant before the Lord."

The Ziphites could not be relied on. The power of the monarch was too great, and the fierceness of his wrath in the slaughter of the priests, too recent, for any one with safety to offer protection to David. On every side he met with the basest ingratitude and treachery. The Ziphites went to Saul with the welcome information that David concealed himself with them, and proposed to deliver him into the king's hand. Saul pronounces a blessing upon them, and bids them "return and search out more thoroughly the lurking places, and then I will go with you." They return to their land, and Saul and his men followed after them. In the meantime David has escaped and gone farther south, in the wilderness of Maon. Saul pursued after him, and nearly grasped his prey. "For Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men went on the other side of the mountain, and made haste to get away; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them."* Just as the infuriated monarch was about to lay his hand upon his foe, God interposed for his deliverance. "There came messengers unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land." Wherefore he returned from pursuing after David; and they called the place, Sela-hammah-lekoth, that is, rock of divisions; because, says the Targum, the heart of the king was divided to go hither and thither. David now went and dwelt in the strongholds of Engedi, west of the Dead Sea.

As soon as the state of his kingdom permitted it, and the king had returned from following his foreign enemies, he enters

*We have on record, in the 54th Psalm, the feelings of David in this trying experience: which should be read in connection with the history, if we would reach any just notion of his faith.

again personally in the search for David. "He chose three thousand men out of all Israel, as a force which could crush every thing which looked like rebellion; and went to seek David and his men, "upon the rocks of the wild goats." It was here that Saul fell into the power of his foe, and had not David been a man of great piety, who feared God, and the powers ordained of him, there would now have been an end of the strife. "The men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as seemeth good unto thee. Then David arose and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, privily. And his heart smote him, and he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed. So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul."

Saul soon left the cave, and went on his way without any suspicion that he had fallen into the hands of his foe. David also followed, and bowed himself, saying, "My lord the king, wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, David seeketh thy hurt?" As a proof against all these reports, and the suspicions of the king's own heart, he appeals to the fact that he had thus spared his life: and then calls upon God to judge between them. "The Lord judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand." The magnanimity of David seems to have touched Saul's better nature, and, for the time, overcame the malicious purpose of his heart. And he said, "Is this thy voice, my son David? Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil, and thou hast showed me this day how that thou hast dealt well with me. Wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know well that thou shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hands: swear now, therefore, unto me, by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul;" and Saul, for a time, seems to have ceased from his pursuit.* It is evident from this confession of Saul, that he must already have known that David was the person chosen by God to be his successor; and therefore that he was striving against God. It is equally evident from the Psalm written at this time, that David confidently expected the kingdom. He is not in haste, however. He waits until God's time. He takes no measures of

* It was at this point in his history, that David, as we are told, composed the 57th and 63d Psalms; which show how intensely he suffered, and how earnest were his longings for the worship and communion of the sanctuary.

his own to secure that result, to which he looked forward. He is never driven, even under the stress of a most unrelenting persecution, to an act of disloyalty.

In this brief moment of peace, the whole nation are called to mourn around the grave of Samuel. "And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah." A simple notice for the end of so great a man, but one which shows how strong a hold Samuel had upon the heart of the whole nation.

While David was in the wilderness of Paran, he fell in with the shepherds and flocks of Nabal; a man of large wealth, but close and churlish. From the narrative, it appears that David and his men had protected Nabal's flocks while in the wilderness, and expected as their reward a supply of food. He sent, accordingly, his young men, but Nabal meanly denies their request, and adds insult to his denial. Provoked by this refusal, David arms his men, and in the heat and suddenness of his passion, threatens the whole house of Nabal with utter destruction. While on the way to execute his purpose of vengeance, he is met by Abigail the wife of Nabal; who, by a timely present, and a wise answer, disarms his rage, and averts his revenge. David, now sensible of the unreasonableness and sinfulness of his wrath, thanks God that he had been thus kept from carrying it into execution. He was strongly tempted to take vengeance into his own hand, and nothing but the providence of God had prevented him. But though Nabal thus escaped the wrath of man, he was soon visited for his sin, with the judgment of God.

Not long after the death of her husband, David sent "and communed with Abigail to take her to wife." In true oriental style the marriage contract is formed. "And she arose with her maidens and went after the messengers of David, and became his wife." David took also Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they were both his wives. Prior to this, during the flight of David, Saul had taken his daughter, David's wife, and married her to another; and this may be the reason why David felt himself at liberty to form another marriage. Saul's policy was to cut David off from any claim to the succession.

What time had passed since David's first flight from Saul we do not certainly know. Nor can we tell the length of this temporary peace. It does not appear, however, to have lasted long. The destruction of David was the ruling desire of Saul, and we soon find him again in his character as a persecutor. The men of Ziph again attempted to betray David into the hands of the king; and Saul eagerly avails himself of their offer. He marched out into the wilderness where David was concealed, and encamped with his men around him. David adopts the bold expedient of going over to the king's camp

with but one attendant. "So David and Abishai came to the people by night." A deep sleep, evidently more than natural, rested upon the whole band, both king and warriors; so that no one knew of their presence. Abishai said to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day; now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." But though thus strongly tempted, David stays the hand of his companion, and forbids him "to touch the Lord's anointed." Taking the spear and the cruse of water from the head of Saul, they departed, and stood on the top of a hill afar off. And David called again to the king, and appealed to him on the same grounds as before. Then Saul said, "I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will do thee no harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day. I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly. Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place."

Notwithstanding this assurance of Saul, and his present relentings, there was plainly no safety for David in his land. Even in the wilderness he had met only with treachery. Those whom he had delivered had plotted his destruction. Pressed on every side with the savage pursuit of the king, he, at last, as if in despair, forms the unbelieving and desperate resolution of joining the Philistines—the enemies of his God and people. And David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more, in any coast of Israel." "And he arose and passed over, with the six hundred men that were with him, unto Achish, king of Gath." It is probable that the Gittites had heard of the rupture between David and Saul; and they no doubt hoped that David would now be as useful a friend as he had before been a dangerous enemy. He was therefore well received, although on a previous occasion he had been distrusted and feared. The break was so complete, that, in their view, there could be no reconciliation; and they therefore welcomed him to their land, and gave him Ziklag for a possession. David remained there a year and four months. During this time he received many additions to his followers; "men of might, and helpers in the war: whose faces were like the faces of lions, and men as swift as the roes on the mountains:" whose names are prominent in the subsequent history of David's reign. "From day to day they fell to him, to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God."

SECTION IV.

DAVID'S WARS AT ZIKLAG—SAUL'S INTERVIEW WITH THE SORCERESS AT ENDOR—
HIS DEATH AT GILBOA, AND THE LAMENTATION OF DAVID.

WHILE David was at Ziklag, he engaged in an exterminating warfare with the wandering bands lying south of Judah. "And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive," lest they should bring tidings to Gath; took the spoil, and returned to the Philistine king. When asked in what direction his incursions were made, David so answers (without telling an absolute falsehood) as to deceive Achish, and led him to believe that he had plundered his own country. The credulous king believed David, saying, "He hath made his people utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever."*

The Scriptures tell us things as they are, they never cover up the defects or sins of kings, or prophets, or apostles. This whole flight of David has its ground (naturally enough to human nature) in a weak faith, and this particular transaction must be viewed as a blot upon his religious character. The wonder would be, however, (did we not know the power of God's grace,) that he had not fallen more sadly. On every natural principle we should find him acting far otherwise than he did. It was the grace of God only which kept him from utter despair, and from joining the enemies of his people, in truth as well as in form.

New accessions were constantly made to his power, from almost all the tribes of Israel; so that David now occupied the position of an independent prince.

Achish soon required the aid of his new ally. "And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men." David, without giving a formal consent, replied, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. On the marshalling of the Philistine forces, David joins in with the men of Achish. We know not what David designed to do:

* Though the standard of moral rectitude is immutable, so that the same actions, attended with the same circumstances, are always good or evil; but the standard of morality as it exists in the minds of men varies from time to time. In some ages, the evil of certain immoral acts is not perceived, and the general sentiment and practice are erroneous. In such cases good men fall into the common current, and without scruple perform acts which in a more enlightened age are seen to be wrong. This seems to have been the case in regard to the sin of falsehood. In the early ages of the world, it seems not to have been thought wrong to utter a falsehood to deliver an enemy, or to save life, or to accomplish some great good. It is a good rule, therefore, that the actions of men in one age, as to their criminality, ought not to be judged of as if committed in another age, when the knowledge of the true standard of morals was more perfect.

we may judge, however, from his previous conduct, that he would never be found in arms against his own brethren. More probably he waited until God, in the course of his providence, should make known what course he should pursue. He was spared from the trial of taking the decision into his own hands, by the jealousy of the other Philistine princes. They feared lest, in the battle, he should forsake his new friends and join the ranks of his countrymen. They were wroth with Achish, and persuaded him to send David and his men back to the place he had appointed them. No words of the king of Gath could change the purpose of the other lords. Achish, therefore, called David, and sent him back to Ziklag. On his return, David received still further additions to his forces, and he was soon to need their aid.

The absence of David had not been unnoticed by his foes. The Amalekites had seized the opportunity "and invaded the south and Ziklag, and smitten it and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives that were therein, and went their way."

When David and his men reached the city, they found it burned, "and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives; and they lifted up their voice and wept." And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, "because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons, and for his daughters; but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." "And David called Abiathar the priest, and inquired at the Lord. Shall I pursue this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." Obtaining this assurance, he pursued them with the utmost rapidity. Some were too faint to proceed in the chase, and were left behind; while the stronger, amounting to four hundred, still pressed on. At length they fell upon an Egyptian, a servant of the Amalekites, who had been left by his master to die in the wilderness. He engages to bring David to his foes. And when he had brought him down, behold they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing, because of the spoil they had taken. In the midst of their revelry, David fell upon them and smote them, so that there escaped not a man of them, save those who rode upon the camels and fled. David not only recovered all that had been carried away, but a large spoil which this marauding band had collected from others, fell to his hands. The promise which he had received was more than verified.

On the return of the victors with their spoil, they were met and welcomed by the two hundred who were unable to follow David in the pursuit. It was proposed by some of these reck-

less and unprincipled men, who followed David for the plunder they might get, that those only who had engaged in the battle should share in the spoil. David was just, and said, "Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us; but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And he made this an ordinance in Israel from that day and forward."

By the customs of that kind of warfare, a large part of the spoil fell to David; which he sent as a present unto "the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord." He remembered especially all the places where he had been wont to haunt, and whose kindness he had experienced in former days. There can be no doubt, but that this policy strengthened his hold upon the affections of his brethren of Judah, and opened the way for his return soon after.

While these events were taking place with David, the Philistines were pitched in Shunem, in the plain of Jezreel. "Saul had gathered all Israel together, and pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. He inquired of the Lord, but received no answer, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." He proceeded therefore to seek a woman with a familiar spirit, and inquire of her. Such a one was found at Endor. In the early part of his reign, Saul had put the Divine law against these necromancers into rigid execution. He therefore now went under a disguise to the woman by night, and asked her to bring him up whom he should name. Saul's religion was mere superstition. He had killed the priests of Jehovah, and sundered himself from his prophets, and was now left to this desperate resort; an aggravation of all his previous sins. The woman objected that her life would be in danger; and Saul swore that no punishment should happen to her. "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up to thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel." "And the woman saw Samuel, and cried with a loud voice: and spake to Saul, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid, what sawest thou? And she said, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself."* He

* It does not appear from this account, that the woman used any witchcraft. She was taken completely by surprise. The moment that Saul named the prophet, he appears to her. In the clause, "and when the woman saw Samuel," which implies that some time elapsed between the request of the king and the appear-

tells the prophet of his sore distress, and of his desertion by God; and that he had come to him in this emergency, for comfort and instruction. "Then said Samuel, Wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?" He reminds him that this distress was come upon him solely in consequence of his own sin; and then proceeds with the awful prophecy of what should still befall him. "Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord shall also deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." When the troubled king heard these words, his strength failed him, and he fell straightway all along upon the earth. With this sad message as his only hope, he returns to his army, and not long after, the decisive battle took place. "The men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and his sons, and slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons." Saul, wounded and pressed by his foes, calls upon his armour-bearer "to kill him with the sword, lest the uncircumcised should come and thrust him through and abuse him." When his armour-bearer refused, Saul fell upon his own sword, and died with his sons. The Philistines stripped the fallen king of his armour, "and cut off his head," and sent it to publish their triumph in the house of their idols, and among the people. "And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth, and fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan." The men of Jabesh-gilead, however, grateful for the deliverance which Saul had wrought for them, "went and took the bodies of Saul and his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried them there; and they fasted seven days." "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit. And the Lord turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

On the third day after his return from the pursuit of the Amalekites, David receives intelligence of the sad defeat. A young Amalekite came from the camp of Saul, and told David "that the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan are dead also." And David said, "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan be dead?" Looking upon David as the probable heir to the crown, and hoping for a reward, the man professed that he had, at Saul's request, slain him with his own hand, and

ance of the vision—the word "when" is inserted by the translators. In the original, the appearance follows immediately upon the request; and no time is left for the practice of her rites.

produced the crown and bracelet as sufficient evidence of the king's death. "Then David and his men mourned and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel." And David said unto the young man that told him, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thy hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" And he "called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died." And David said, "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed. And David lamented over Saul and Jonathan his son." The generous impulses of his nature found expression in a beautiful and touching lamentation, which has come down to us, as a testimony to his loyalty, to the depth and purity of his friendship for Jonathan, and to his thoroughly Hebrew heart, while living in the midst of their bitterest foes.

SECTION V.

DAVID MADE KING AT HEBRON—THE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN DAVID AND ABNER, OR
ISH-BOSHETH THE SON OF SAUL—ABNER'S REVOLT AND DEATH—THE MURDER OF
ISH-BOSHETH.

AFTER this mourning for Saul, David's first care was to inquire of the Lord, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah. And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And he said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron." So David and his men, with their households, went up and dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. On learning that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul, he sent messengers unto them, blessing them for their kindness to the house of Saul, promising to requite this kindness unto them, and calling upon them to strengthen their hands, and be valiant. For though Saul was dead, yet they need not despair, for there was still a king in Judah, who stood ready to protect them.

David, however, did not come to the throne without opposition. A large part of the people, either from policy or from attachment to the house of Saul, arrayed themselves against him. "Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host," was the mainstay of this opposition. He proclaimed "Ish-bosheth the son of Saul king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and Ephraim and Benjamin, and over all Israel. But the house of Judah followed David." A civil war soon began to rage. Abner gathered the servants of his newly-made king, and came from Mahanaim to Gibeon; threatening the territory of Judah. An army from David, with Joab for its general, came out to meet

them; and they sat down the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side.

While the armies were in this position, Abner proposed that the question should be decided by twelve men from one army fighting twelve from the other. The challenge was accepted; "the men went from each side, and caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side: so they fell down together." This was the beginning of a general fight, "and the battle was very sore, and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David." In the course of the flight, Abner was so keenly pursued by the swift Asahel, Joab's younger brother, that he was forced to turn about and slay him in self-defence. The pursuit lasted until the sun went down. "And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves after Abner, and stood on the top of an hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?"

"And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. So Joab recalled his men with the trumpet." It seems probable from this reply of Joab, that he was commanded to act only on the defensive: and that the battle would not have taken place, except for the foolish challenge of Abner. Three hundred men perished on the side of the Israelites, while only nineteen, with Asahel, were wanting from the forces of Judah.

With the remnant of his army, Abner recrossed the Jordan, and returned to Mahanaim; and Joab and his men came to Hebron.

"Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." It was not, however, with any great fury, nor does it appear to have been followed with any very disastrous results.

While the war was thus lingering on, a fierce quarrel arose between Ish-bosheth and Abner, which served to decide it. Abner resolved no longer to uphold the house of Saul. To the just reproof of the king, the proud captain replies that he would translate the kingdom "from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah." He accordingly sends messengers to David, to make the best terms he could, offering to bring all Israel under his authority. David refused to enter into any treaty with him, unless he should first restore to him Michal his wife, whom Saul had taken from him. "And Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband; and her hus-

band went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim ;" not far from the territory of Judah. After delivering her to David, Abner conciliates the elders of Israel, assuring them that God had promised, by the hands of David, to deliver his people from the hands of the Philistines, and from all their enemies. He then comes to David, and engages to go and bring all Israel, who should then acknowledge him their king.

Soon after Abner had departed, Joab came to Hebron, from some incursion, with a great spoil, and they told him, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away in peace." Joab went immediately to the king and remonstrated against letting Abner go away in peace. Thou knowest Abner "that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. Why is it that thou hast sent him away?" After this rude rebuke of the king, Joab went out from David, called Abner back, and upon pretence of a private conference, took him aside and assassinated him. When David heard it, he said, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever, from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house." The real cause of this murder was, no doubt, a fear on the part of Joab, lest Abner should supersede him in the king's favour, and for his great services in bringing over the Israelites, be rewarded with the generalship. The pretended cause was, that Abner had slain his brother Asahel. David not only declared his innocence, but commanded a public mourning to be made for Abner. "And they buried him in Hebron. And the king lifted up his voice and wept, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all Israel understood that it was not of the king to slay Abner. And all the people took notice of the king's mourning, and it pleased them; as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people." Although David felt himself at that time unable to punish these murderers, he yet leaves them in the hands of a righteous and Almighty God. "The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

The death of Abner did not long retard the course of events. Every day was adding to the power of David. When Saul's son heard that Abner was dead, his hands were feeble, and all Israel was troubled. The spiritless Ish-bosheth could not long sustain his own cause; and it was evident that David must soon be acknowledged king. Two brothers, "Baanah and Rechab, the sons of Rimmon," aiming to 'secure the favour of David, "came to Ish-bosheth at mid-day, and slew him as he lay on his couch, and beheaded him, and brought his head to David at Hebron." David received the murderers as they

deserved. He tells them how he had treated the Amalekite, who professed to have slain Saul, "and how much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house, shall he visit them with a like punishment?" Without any delay, he commands them to be slain, "and their hands and feet to be cut off, and hung up over the pool in Hebron. The head of Ish-bosheth, they buried with all honour in the sepulchre of Abner at Hebron."

SECTION VI.

DAVID MADE KING OVER ALL ISRAEL—HE CAPTURES JERUSALEM—DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES—THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM—DAVID COMMANDED NOT TO BUILD THE TEMPLE.

DAVID had now reigned seven years and six months over Judah.* "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over all Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel." In the book of Chronicles we are told that those who thus came from all the tribes of Israel, to this election of David, "amounted to three hundred and forty thousand men; men of war, that could keep rank, who came with a perfect heart, to make David king, and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king; and they were with David eating and drinking three days, and there was joy in Israel."

Such was the happy commencement of David's reign. His army had previously been occupied in the war with Abner; but now that he was crowned king of the whole nation, he determined to signalize his new power by a great exploit. Jerusalem was still in the possession of the Jebusites; a strong fortress in the midst of David's kingdom. Of this Jebusite town the king determined to possess himself. So confident were the Jebusites in the strength of their position, that they met the demands of David with a message of defiance. "Except thou take away the lame and the blind thou shalt not come in hither;" as though a lame and blind garrison was able to

* There is some difficulty in reconciling the two years of Ish-bosheth's reign with the seven years and a half of David's. We must suppose either that five years had passed away before the reign of Ish-bosheth began—which seems more probable—or that David reigned five years at Hebron after the death of Ish-bosheth, and before the taking of Jerusalem.

defend it against every assault. And David said, "Whoever scaleth the wall, and smiteth the Jebusites first, shall be chief and captain." As usual, Joab was the first to mount the wall, and was accordingly confirmed in his command. "So David took the stronghold of Zion, and called it The city of David." From this time Jerusalem became the royal residence. David fortified and adorned it. "And David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him."

It was at this time that the alliance between David and Hiram king of Tyre began. The friendly offices so necessary to the prosperity of both kingdoms were long continued. "And Hiram sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons, and they built David an house. And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel." But he was not left long in quiet, to build palaces or fortify his city. Foreign war was impending. So long as there was civil war in Israel, the Philistines had maintained peace; but when they heard that David was anointed king, they immediately prepared for war. They marched in force "and came and spread themselves in the valley or plain of Rephaim," southwest from Zion, and separated from it by the valley of Hinnom. David inquired of the Lord, "Whether he should go up to the Philistines." And the Lord answered, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand." "And David came and smote them there, and said, The Lord hath broken in upon mine enemies before me as the breach of waters, and called the name of the place Baal-perazim." They left their images and gods upon the field of battle, and David took and burned them. This repulse had little effect upon the Philistines. They soon returned, and with an increased force encamped upon the same plain. When David again inquired of the Lord, he was forbidden to go up and attack them. In order to gain a more complete victory, he was commanded "to fetch a compass behind them," and attack them upon the rear. He was not to make the attack until he should hear the movement "in the tops of the mulberry trees, for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." And David did as the Lord commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba unto Gazer. And the fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.

After this defeat of his enemies, David was at liberty to carry out his intention in regard to Jerusalem. His first care was that the royal city should be honoured with the presence of God. No place had yet been chosen, in which God would fix his dwelling. The ark, with the symbol of the Divine presence, had been carried from place to place, and rested at

length for some years at Kirjath-jearim. David now prepared a place for it, in his chosen city; and removed it to its new abode. So important an action was not entered upon without much consideration, and with great solemnity. "And David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand, and consulted with their officers, and said, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere that are left in all the land of Israel, and to the priests and Levites, that they may gather themselves to us, and let us bring the ark of God to us. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So all Israel were gathered, and went up to Kirjath-jearim, to bring up thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims." The ark (contrary to the command that it should be carried only by the sons of Kohath) was placed upon a new cart; and David and all the house of Israel rejoiced before the Lord, as the vast procession moved on. But this joy was turned into mourning. As they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, the ark was shaken, and Uzzah, who was in charge of it, rashly put forth his hand to hold the ark. "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error, or rashness, and there he died by the ark of God. "And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me? So he brought not the ark home to himself, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite," where it remained three months. "And the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all that he had."

When this signal favour of Providence was made known to the king, he determined again to secure its presence in his capital. But learning wisdom from the previous judgment, he conforms himself, this time, to the method in which alone the ark could be safely moved. Having called the chiefs of the Levites, he exhorts them; "Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us; for that we sought him not after the due order." In obedience to the royal command, the priests and Levites sanctified themselves, for the removing of the ark. Some were to bear the ark upon their shoulders, others were to accompany it as singers and musicians,* while the whole procession was led by the priests "with the sound of the trumpet." As soon as those who bore the ark began to move,

* The song which they sang at different parts of their progress may be found in the 68th Psalm.

“oxen and fatlings were sacrificed.” The king himself, laying aside his royal garments, and clothed with a linen robe, mingled with the Levites in their songs and dances. “So David and the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and joy; and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it;” (the old tabernacle was still at Gibeon;) “and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord.” After this he turned and “blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts,” and dismissed them to their homes with royal munificence.

“Then David returned to bless his household.” While the ark was passing into the city, Michal had witnessed David’s public dancing, and despised him in her heart. She looked upon it as degrading to a king, and did not spare her reproaches when she met her husband. David’s reply was just and spirited. “It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord: therefore will I play before the Lord.” It was but the expression of his religious feelings, the manifestation of his gratitude to Jehovah, to whom he owed his kingdom and his prosperity. And if this rendered him contemptible in the eyes of any, he was ready yet to be more humble than this, and base in his own sight. He was ready to submit to any service however low, or unkingly, if thus he might honour God, and confess his subjection to him.

Having thus brought the ark to its resting-place, and secured the Divine presence—the glorious Shechinah—in the royal city, he appointed the priests and levites to their respective offices, and provided for the more regular and splendid public worship; and then delivered to Asaph the chief singer, and his brethren, this beautiful hymn of praise and thanksgiving:

1. “Give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.
2. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.
3. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.
4. Seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face continually.
5. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;
6. O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen ones.
7. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.
8. Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;
9. Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;
10. And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant,
11. Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance;

12. When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.
13. And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people;
14. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes,
15. Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.
16. Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation:
17. Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.
18. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.
19. For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.
20. Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.
21. Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.
22. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come before him; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
23. Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.
24. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say, Among the nations, the Lord reigneth.
25. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.
26. Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.
27. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his merey endureth for ever.
28. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.
29. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And let all the people say Amen, and offer praise to Jehovah."

Henceforth, Jerusalem was not only the royal, but sacred city, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." There the solemn feasts were celebrated. Thither the tribes constantly repaired; and there God dwelt between the cherubim, and shone forth to bless and save his people.

David now formed the design of building the temple. His pious heart gave him no rest while the ark of God dwelt in curtains, and he himself abode in palaces. Moved by the past mercies of God towards him, and finding himself at rest from all his enemies, he said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." Nathan immediately replied, "Go, do all that is in thy heart: for God is with thee." He thought the purpose of the king so just and proper that there could be no doubt of the Divine approval. But God had other purposes. That same night "the word of the Lord came unto Nathan: Go tell David, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in. From the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, I have

not dwelt in any house. Neither spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? Now, therefore, so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I took thee from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name like unto the name of the great men of the earth. Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more, neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as aforetime. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will *make thee an house*. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son. If he commit iniquity, I will chastise him with the rod of men; but my mercy shall not depart from him as I took it away from him that was before thee. And thine house, and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever."

As soon as David heard this gracious message from God, he went to the tabernacle, and poured out his grateful soul in the warmest expressions of true devotion.

"Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought us hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of men, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God; for there is none like unto thee, neither is there any God beside thee. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, which thou redeemest from Egypt from the nations and their gods. For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever, and thou becamest their God. And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken, concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is God over Israel; and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore has thy

servant found in his heart to pray this prayer before thee. And now, Lord, thou art God, and thy words be true; therefore, now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.”*

The whole of this prayer is a beautiful expression of true piety. The deep humility, the devout confidence in God and his promise, which it everywhere breathes, show clearly the power of his religion in the monarch's heart. It is delightful to see one so great in the eyes of men, thus humbling himself before God, and summing up all his desires in that one simple prayer, which any pious heart will gladly appropriate to itself, “*and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.*” He who has this, has all things.

SECTION VII.

DAVID'S WARS—THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY—DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH—THE WAR WITH THE AMMONITES.

SOON after this, we find David engaged in wars with the surrounding nations. In the concise summary given us, we are not told distinctly from what cause they originated. The first nation against which he turned his arms, was the Philistines, the inveterate enemies of David and Israel. This attack, were there no other reason, was fully justified by their aggressions when he ascended the throne. His victory was complete. “He smote them, and took Metheg-ammah, or Gath, and its cities;” which would seem to have been the most important posts of that people. So effectually were they subdued, that we hear nothing more of their inroads for twenty years afterwards. From an incidental notice (1 Kings ii. 39) it appears that David treated these foes with great kindness, and most probably left one of their native princes as their governor or tributary king.

This was followed quickly by another, more deadly, against the “Moabites. And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; with two lines he measured to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.” This account seems to imply that a part of the land, which had taken the more active part in the war, was put to the sword, and a larger part, or a “full line,” subjected to tribute. The unusual severity which characterized this war, probably arose

* To perpetuate the remembrance of this great promise, David composed the 2d Psalm—and perhaps also the 45th and 110th.

from a conspiracy on the part of these nations to check and destroy the rising power of David.*

This war was in turn almost immediately followed by another, with a far more powerful king. The occasion of this war was an attempt on the part of Hadadezer king of Zobah, to recover his border, at the river Euphrates. David met and totally routed his forces, took "from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen." Hadadezer called to his aid the Syrians of Damascus; but they were unable to resist the victorious monarch, who again defeated them with great slaughter. The Hebrew king did not fail to improve his victory. He pressed on into the heart of the country, and garrisoned the captured cities. "And the Lord," we are told, "preserved David whithersoever he went." When it is remembered that the country which the king of Zobah invaded, was a part of the promised land, and as such a part of David's kingdom, the strict justice of this war cannot be questioned. And besides, we cannot doubt that David, who was accustomed to inquire of Jehovah on all important questions, undertook these wars under the Divine warrant and permission.

From these wars, the king returned with large spoils. "He received gifts also from Toi king of Hamath," whom David by his victories had freed from the oppression of Hadadezer. All these, with the silver and the gold taken from other nations, David dedicated to the Lord; bearing in mind the temple which was to be built.

While David was engaged at the north in the war with the Syrians, another enemy threatened his kingdom from the opposite quarter. Regarding this as a favourable opportunity, the Edomites treacherously invaded the country. From the title to the 60th Psalm, it appears that this invasion was made while the war with Syria was still going on. A part, therefore, of the army was despatched through the length of the land to meet this new foe. The battle took place in the valley of Salt, lying south from the Dead Sea, and David's forces were completely victorious. The enemy suffered great loss; and their cities were compelled to receive Hebrew garrisons. "Joab was left in the land of Edom, subduing the land, and burying the dead. He remained in the country six months, with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom." The expressions "all Israel" and "every male" in this brief account, explain each other. In both cases we can understand only those who were in arms. Were any other reason necessary to convince us, that this was not the war of utter extermination, which some have wished to

* We have no intimation of this in the history; but from the 83d Psalm 4—8, it may be fairly inferred.

make it; we should find one all-sufficient in the fact, that Hebrew garrisons were necessary to keep the land in subjection. What need would there be for garrisons were there none but women and children left in their towns or country?

From the renowned warrior, David passes easily and naturally to the wise and peaceful prince. "He reigned over all Israel and executed judgment and justice, among all his people." During this interval of peace, he, most probably, completed the systematic organization of the standing army. To relieve the country from the expense attending so large a force, and to make the duty as light as possible, for those who composed the army, he divided them into monthly courses of twenty-four thousand men each. Every course was commanded by one of the chief of the fathers, and every subdivision by its own captain and officers. Each of these bodies were in active service for one month in the year, and then returned to their private employments; while the whole were liable to be called into service in any emergency, and constituted a well drilled and effective force, to repel any assault and provide for the national security. Besides this, every tribe had its particular ruler, to whom was committed the administration of civil affairs, and who were responsible to the king alone. Over the crownlands, and royal treasures he appointed twelve officers: "over the treasury; over the store-houses in the fields; over the tillage; over the vineyards; over the wine cellars; over the olive and sycamore trees; over the herds in Sharon and the valleys; over the camels; over the asses; and over the flocks." Among the king's council, were Jonathan, David's uncle, Ahithophel, Abiathar, Jchoiada, the son of Benaiah, and Hushai the Archite, David's faithful friend and companion. Joab was captain of all the forces. Jehoshaphat, son of Ahilud, was recorder. Zadok, the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, were chief priests; and Seraiah was the scribe. And Benaiah, the son of Jchoiada, was captain of the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of the king were chief rulers.

Another element in David's character now presents itself to our notice. He was not only a brave warrior, a just and able ruler, but a faithful friend. Nothing could make him forgetful of his covenant with Jonathan. In the midst of all his cares, he found time to think and act for the welfare of the descendants of his former friend. "Is there yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" It was no ordinary favour which the king intended to bestow upon the remnant of this broken family. For when Ziba, an old servant of Saul, was brought to him, he repeats his question in the most emphatic form, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God (*i. e.* the highest

favour possible) unto him?" In answer to this inquiry, Ziba told him that Jonathan "had yet a son living, who was lame in his feet." David immediately orders him to be brought to the court; and in the kindest manner addresses him, "Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness, for Jonathan, thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, and thou shalt eat bread continually at my table." Ziba was to farm the heritage, and bring in the fruits for his master's sustenance, or the maintenance of his household. Ziba undertook the charge, while Mephibosheth dwelt at court, "and eat at the king's table as one of the king's sons." This was princely kindness to the only heir of a fallen and rival house; but was such as became the true and unselfish friendship of Jonathan and David—as beautiful as it is rare in the history of our selfish world.

The peace which had now lasted for some years, was suddenly broken by the strangest and most unprovoked insult on the part of the Ammonites. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, a former friend of David, died; upon which David sent an embassy to comfort Hanun, the new king. The intention of David was strangely misinterpreted; his ambassadors were regarded as spies; and sent home with gross insult; contrary to all public faith, hospitality, or law. Instigated by his counsellors, Hanun took the servants of David, "and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle," and, thus disgraced, sent them away. When this was made known to David, he sent to meet his ambassadors, and ordered them to remain at Jericho until their beards were grown, and then return.

When the Ammonites saw that they had made themselves odious to David, they prepared immediately for war, "and hired aid from the Rehobites and Zobahites, twenty thousand footmen, from the king of Maacah one thousand, and from Ish-tob twelve thousand men." Aware of this vast preparation, David saw that war was inevitable, and that there could be no delay; Joab and the whole host of mighty men were sent to meet the enemy. The Ammonites drew up their forces under the walls of the city, and the Syrians in the field by themselves. Joab however profited by this division. When he saw the plan of the enemy, he took the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians; and the rest of the army, under Abishai his brother, he arrayed against the Ammonites. And he said, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for

the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

The hired Syrians soon broke and fled from the attack of Joab; upon which the Ammonites fled also from before Abishai, and entered into the city. Joab returned with his victorious army to Jerusalem. The war, however, was not to end here. "When the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that were beyond the river Euphrates; and they gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Helam." Affairs were now at such a crisis as to demand the presence of the king himself. Gathering a general levy of all his forces, "he crossed over Jordan, and came to Helam." In the battle which followed, David was again successful; the men of seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand footmen, perished in the fight, and Shobach their captain fell with them. The Syrian princes, who were subject to Hadarezer, made peace with David, and the Ammonites were left to carry on the war, which they had provoked, alone.* At the opening of the next campaign, Joab was sent against the Ammonites. "He wasted their country, and came and besieged Rabbah, its capital." After a long, but successful siege, Joab sent messengers to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters. Now, therefore, come with the rest of the people and encamp against the city and take it; lest I take the city and it be called after my name." "And David gathered the people, and went and took Rabbah; and took the crown of their king, the weight whereof was a talent of gold, with the precious stones; and the spoil of the city in great abundance. And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln.† So did he with all the cities of the Ammonites; and David and all the people returned to Jerusalem."

* Internal evidence fixes the twentieth and twenty-first Psalms to this period of the history. The one to be sung probably as the king entered upon the war, and the other celebrating his return.

† This is the rendering of our version. But the original may be rendered: And he put them to saws, and to harrows, or mines of iron, and to axes, &c., *i. e.* he reduced them to slavery. There is no necessity or justice in supposing David guilty of the cruelties which our translation seems to imply.

SECTION VIII.

DAVID'S SIN IN THE AFFAIR OF BATH-SHEBA AND URIAH—HIS DOMESTIC AFFLICTIONS—ABSALOM'S REBELLION—DAVID'S RESTORATION TO THE KINGDOM—INSURRECTION OF SHEBA.

WHILE Joab was urging forward the siege of Rabbah, David remained at Jerusalem. Up to this point nothing had occurred to mar the character of David. He could claim with truth, "I have kept the ways of Jehovah, and have not wickedly departed from my God." In all the scenes of his eventful life, in his distress, and in his prosperity, he had been kept from the ruling power of temptation or sin. But, as if to show us that no human character was perfect, we now find him falling into grievous and shameful sins. The sacred historian in no way conceals or excuses this awful fall. While walking upon the roof of his palace, the king was smitten by the beauty of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his bravest warriors. Hurried away by his guilty passion, he passed at once all the restraint of law and religion. Startled at the consequences of his sin, he sends for Uriah, to conceal, if possible, his guilt, and avoid the disgrace and punishment to which he was justly exposed. When Uriah appeared, David inquired "how the people did, and how the war prospered," and then dismissed Uriah to his home. But the brave soldier, inured to the hardships of the camp, refused to go to his house, and spent the night with the guards of the royal palace. When asked the reason of his conduct, he replied, That it was sufficient for him to share with his general and his fellow soldiers; while they were encamped in the field he would rest with them. On the following day, David renewed his attempt in a grosser manner, but without changing the purpose of this true-hearted and gallant soldier.

Foiled in every attempt to conceal his sin from the injured husband, the unhappy king found no resource in his extremity, but in a deeper crime. It was resolved that Uriah must die; but the crime was committed through the hand of another. "And David wrote to Joab, by the hand of Uriah, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may be smitten and die." He found in Joab a fit instrument for his purpose. The command was no sooner received than it was executed. Uriah fell, the monarch was freed from present danger; and Joab succeeded in coiling another strand around the infatuated king. A messenger was despatched to the court with an account of the loss, and the readily satisfied king replied to his officer, "Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another:

make thy battle more strong against the city and overthrow it." After the usual time of mourning for her husband, the king publicly espoused Bath-sheba, and she became his wife, and bare him a son.

With the sins of adultery and murder, and constant hypocrisy, upon his conscience, we should not have expected that he could long remain at ease. David was no hardened and habitual sinner. A strong temptation had overtaken him, and buried him beneath its power. One sin had driven him on to another, until he had accumulated this fearful load of guilt. His conscience was quieted and stunned. For a length of time he appears to have felt no remorse. We hear from him no confession, no prayer for mercy. Sin has done, what it ever does, and ever will do. It has not only brought guilt upon his soul, but it has blinded, so that he shall not see its stains.

But there were other eyes that had beheld his conduct. The sleepless eye of God was upon him, "and the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the Lord;" and, though he was unmindful of his guilt, he was soon to feel its heavy weight. And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. By an artful fable, the prophet brought the king to pronounce sentence upon himself, and then made the application. "There were two men in the same city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him." David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die: and shall restore the lamb fourfold."

And Nathan said to David, "*Thou art the man.* Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel; and delivered thee from the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives, and the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah, and hast taken his wife for thy wife. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine

eyes, and give them to thy neighbour: for thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel."

This fearful sentence roused the conscience of David from its slumbers. He was at once convicted of his sin; and like every true penitent, confessed without extenuation or excuse. His religious feelings claimed again their supremacy. And David said, "I have sinned against the Lord." The genuine nature of David's repentance may be clearly gathered from the 51st Psalm, which he penned upon this occasion. It has been the memorial of his sin, and of his repentance. It has been the language of every true Christian, in all his returns to God—the language of the church in all her confessions. It could have been breathed forth only from a broken and contrite heart. The terms of his confession tell us, how deep was the sense of guilt; and the earnest longings after God—the seeking of a pure heart—the prayer for the welfare of Zion, all proclaim that this was no feigned repentance, wrung from him by a desire to avert the punishment he feared; but a deep, sincere, and godly sorrow, springing from his sense of the odiousness of sin, and of the wrong which he had done. In no part of his life does the deep religious principle of David appear more conspicuous than in this. Ordinary piety might have resented so sudden and bold a reproof, especially when seated upon a throne. But David, the victorious monarch, bows himself at once, and submits to the just sentence of God. "*I have sinned against the Lord.*" Upon this ingenuous confession, Nathan pronounces his pardon. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die. But since by this deed, thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die."*

However sincere his repentance, it did not stay the results and punishment of his sin. The child was suddenly taken ill. David "humbled himself, fasted, and besought God for the child." His prayer was not granted, and on the seventh day the child died, according to the sentence of the prophet. While the child was ill, the king refused all sustenance, and lay in deep distress; but when he perceived that the child was dead, "he rose from the earth, anointed himself, and went into the house of the Lord and worshipped, and came to his house and took the food offered him." Surprised at this, his servants asked the reason of his conduct. And David said, "while the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

* It seems probable, that it was at this time also, the 32d and 33d Psalms were written.

Soon after this, Solomon was born, of whom it is said, "the Lord loved him."

The star of David was now sinking to the horizon. The Hebrew kingdom had reached the highest point in strength and real glory. Its first true king was the bravest and the best. His reign hitherto had been successful, almost beyond parallel; but from this time it is sullied by "domestic shame, misery, and confusion."

The loss of the child was soon followed by a heavier stroke, in the unbridled passion of his eldest son Amnon. He had fallen desperately in love with his half-sister Tamar; and by the advice of Jonadab his cousin, feigned himself sick, and sought from David, that his sister might come and prepare him food in his presence. The unsuspecting king consented, and the plot succeeded according to the wishes of those who had formed it. No entreaties or remonstrances on the part of Tamar could save her; and the innocent and helpless fell a victim to incestuous passion and brutal violence. Having sated his passion, the sensual wretch sent her away to bear her shame. "And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garments, and laid her hand on her head, and went away weeping." Thus sorrowing, she met Absalom her brother, who took her, desolate, to his home, exhorted her to bear her injury with patience, and concealed his purpose of revenge. Such a crime as this could not long be kept from the king. But great as was his anger, he appears to have spared his guilty son. The remembrance of his own sin may have stayed the sword of justice. For some reason the author of this abominable wickedness escaped for a time.

But though retribution was delayed, it was still preparing. The purpose of revenge lay smouldering in Absalom's heart, and two years after was carried into execution. The festival of sheep-shearing furnished the occasion for his revenge. "He invited his brothers to the feast, and Amnon" among the rest. It was with some difficulty that he persuaded the king to consent to this arrangement; but his urgency prevailed, and he let Amnon and all his sons go with him. The opportunity did not pass unimproved. Absalom charged his servants, that in the height of the feast, they should assail Amnon and slay him; "fear not, have not I commanded you?" The servants did as they were commanded. Amnon fell in cold-blooded murder. "The king's sons rose from the feast and fled." The evil report, however, flew before them; while they were yet in the way, news came that all the king's sons were slain. "Then the king arose, tore his garments, and lay upon the earth." But Jonadab saw what the fact was, and urged the king to moderate his grief. "Let not my lord take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead, for

by the appointment of Absalom the thing hath been settled." The result proved this conjecture right; he had scarcely done speaking, when the terror-struck sons appeared, and wept over the loss of their brother. Thus one sin became the cause of another; and the latter in turn is the punishment of the former, as often happens under the holy providence of God.

Absalom immediately fled to his grandfather, Talmi, king of Geshur, where he was secure from the just anger of his father, and the reach of a broken law. The unhappy king, mourning over Tamar and Amnon, still longed for the return of his exiled son.

Three years passed before he was allowed to return. The subtle Joab perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom, and he took steps to secure his return. "He sent to Tekoah, and brought thence a wise woman," and told her to feign herself a mourner, as one that had long mourned for the dead; and to come and make known her sorrow to the king. The tale which Joab taught her to relate, was one well calculated to rouse the paternal feelings of David. According to her instructions the woman went, and obtained audience of the king; and in the most earnest manner entreated his aid. "I am a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. And thy handmaid had two sons, and they strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one slew the other. And behold the whole family is risen up, and demand him that smote his brother, that they may kill him, for the life of his brother; and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth. And the king said, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee." Lest the king's conscience should scruple to interfere with the course of justice, the woman takes all the consequences to herself. "My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me and on my father's house: and the king and his throne be guiltless." He then gave her a still stronger assurance that her prayer was granted: but as if still fearful, she urged again her petition, and the king then confirmed his promise by an oath: "As the Lord liveth there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth." Having thus gained his attention, and secured from him a solemn promise to spare a living son, though guilty of murder, she brings out the real object of her petition. And she said, "Wherefore, then, hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one that is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home his banished." She bases her argument on the universality of death, and that no punishment of the murderer could restore him to life who had been slain; and further, that God himself, in the law for the avenging of blood, and the

cities of refuge, had devised means that his banished be not expelled from him. She then excuses her bold attempt, and throws herself "upon the royal mercy. For as an angel of God, so is my lord the king, to discern both good and bad."

David at once perceived that this did not originate with the woman, and traced it to its true source. He yielded, however, to the suggestion; and commanded Joab to bring Absalom again to Jerusalem. Joab went to Geshur, and brought the exile home; but David refused to see him for two full years more.

Absalom was noted throughout the kingdom for the beauty of his person; a thing of no small importance in a land where *personal* appearance went far towards power. The confinement which he was compelled to endure, was a sore trial to this ambitious man; who was already looking forward to the throne. From selfish motives, therefore, he sought a full reconciliation with his offended father, upon whose favour every thing depended. In this extremity he appealed to Joab, but without success. "At length, by setting on fire the barley-field of Joab," he forced an interview. To Joab's complaint he makes no answer, but this, "Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now, therefore, let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me." Joab went to the king and told him; and when he called for Absalom, he "came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom."

The reconciliation, though only feigned on the part of Absalom, was still sufficient for his purpose. Having obtained the favour of the king, this ungrateful son plunged madly into his desperate career. Availing himself of his personal accomplishments and winning manners, he gained the favour of the people. He prepared and maintained the pomp and retinue of a king. To ingratiate himself still more with the people, "he stood beside the way to the palace; and it was so that when any man had a controversy, and came to the king for judgment, Absalom inquired into his cause; and told him, See thy matters are good and right, but none will hear thee from the king." By these insinuations against his father's government—by an indiscriminate flattery towards all who came to the court, Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Having secured numbers to his interest, he thought the people ripe for rebellion. He covers his treason with the mask of piety. Under pretence of paying a vow, which he had made during his exile, he gains permission from the king to go to Hebron, a sacred city, Absalom's birth-place, and a strong fortress. When he left the king, he took with him two hundred men; who went with him to attend the feast, and without

any knowledge of his secret designs. At the same time he sent spies to his retainers "throughout all the tribes in Israel," saying, "As soon as ye shall hear the sound of the trumpet, ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron." After his arrival at Hebron, he called to him Ahithophel, David's counsellor, and who was no doubt privy to the conspiracy. Having thus obtained possession of this important place—once the seat of David's government—he was proclaimed king. The people flocked to him in large numbers, "and the conspiracy was strong."

News soon came to David that "the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom." Astounded by the suddenness of the event, and the evident signs of disaffection throughout the kingdom, David resolves upon instant flight, "lest Absalom overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." Most of the king's servants were faithful; and "he went forth, and all the people after him," and tarried in a place that was not far off. The whole body of the king's guards, Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites, passed on before him.* (In the midst of the general apostacy of the Israelites, it is pleasant to see the conduct of Ittai the Gittite, who, though a stranger, still follows David in his flight; and though warned of the danger, adhered to the king with a faithfulness and strength of affection which might well have shamed his rebellious subjects.) No time was to be lost. The impending danger forbade any delay. "And all the country wept with a loud voice, and the people passed over: the king himself also passed over the brook Kidron, toward the way of the wilderness." Zadok and Abiathar, and the whole body of the Levites went with the king, "bearing the ark of the covenant of God." "And he said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." This was bearing affliction with Christian resignation—a hope and trust in God worthy of all imitation.

The ark of God was carried back to Jerusalem, and David remained in the plain until he should receive word from Zadok and Abiathar of what was passing in the city. These men remained true to their king in all his adversity; though forbidden by their office to leave the ark, and go with him in his flight. Their services in the city were of far more avail than they could have been in the camp.

* In his present distress, David composed the third Psalm. In this dark time, we find him still able to put his faith in God, quiet his fears, and look forward to a certain deliverance.

David then went on in the flight, "by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that was with him covered every man his head and went up, weeping as they went." He went as a mourning penitent rather than a king. No Christian can read this account without being reminded of another ascent up the sides of this same mount, by a far greater King than David, and who yet walked under a heavier load of sorrow.

In this journey he heard of the treason of Ahithophel;* and David prayed, "O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness; for the counsel of Ahithophel in these days, was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God." As he reached the top of the mount, he was met by his faithful counsellor Hushai, whom he sent to the city, to defeat, if possible, the counsel of Ahithophel, and to advise the priests in their plans to assist the king. Hushai returned to Jerusalem, and found Absalom there.

The incidents in this flight crowd thickly upon each other. Not long after David had passed the summit of the mount, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him with a liberal supply for his necessity. The king asked after his master; and Ziba said, "He abideth at Jerusalem, for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." The ingratitude and perfidy of such conduct, if the report was true, justify fully the sentence of David, in revoking his former grant to Mephibosheth, and bestowing the lands upon his servant.

David found enemies to taunt him in his adversity, as well as friends to comfort. Scarcely had he left Ziba, when he fell in with "Shimei, the son of Gera, of the family of Saul, who came out and cursed still as he came." In his fury and rage "he cast stones at the king, and said, Come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial; the Lord hath returned upon thee the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned." It is no wonder that such bitter insults to the king should excite the indignation of his officers. But David restrained their anger, by a reference to the wise and just providence of God, and to his present affliction. "If my son seeketh my life, how much more may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." And the king, and all the people came weary, and refreshed themselves at Bahurim.

While David was thus hastening on in his flight, Absalom had entered the city, and held his council. This success

* On this treachery of Ahithophel, David penned the 55th Psalm.

appears to have been more complete than he had anticipated. When Hushai saluted him with a "God save the king," Absalom reproached him with his apparent want of kindness to David his friend. He was now too hardened and bold to feel that his reproach fell with tenfold more force upon a traitorous son. In an artful reply, Hushai concealed his real purpose, "Whom the Lord and all Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide. Whom should I serve? should it not be his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence." Flattered with this, Absalom gave him a place among the number of his counsellors.*

In the council, Ahithophel was yet pre-eminent. He saw well that in so desperate an enterprise no half-measures would do, and he did not hesitate to advise the most violent steps. He felt it necessary to show the people that there was no possibility of reconciliation; and to do it, "he urged Absalom to take public possession of his father's concubines." The graceless pupil yielded readily to his wicked teacher; and Nathan's dreadful threatening to David was fulfilled.

"Ahithophel, moreover, said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will pursue after David this night, and will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only, and will bring back the people unto thee in peace." Absalom felt no compunctions at the idea of thus murdering his father; but resolved to hear further the advice of Hushai, whom he now supposed firmly attached to his interests. This was the fatal step in his course. In all human probability, had he followed the advice of Ahithophel, David must have fallen. When Hushai learned the counsel of Ahithophel, he immediately condemned it, and with specious reasons justified his opinion. For, said he, "Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps; and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. Behold he is now hid in some hold!" And if some of those who attack him should fall, the whole party would be struck with terror, "and the hearts of the most valiant melt; for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men. I therefore counsel that all Israel be gathered for the fight—that thou go to battle in thine own person,"—"that thus with the whole host we light upon thy father as dew falleth on the

* The morality in this reply of Hushai, is questionable. It may easily be justified by the principles of political prudence, or state reasons; but it is not so clearly right on the principles of Christian morality.

ground, or if he be gotten into a city, that we then bring ropes and draw into the river till there be not a stone found there."

The argument and counsel of Hushai prevailed. The advice of Ahithophel was rejected, by the unanimous consent of the council. "For," says the record, "the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom;" *i. e.* the wisest advice was overruled by the providence of God, so that this unnatural son might receive the just punishment of his crimes.

Ahithophel now saw that all was lost; and went forthwith "to his house and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."

At the same time, Hushai sent to David by Zadok and Abiathar the results of the council, and tidings of his danger. The sons of the priests who were to bear the message, were discovered and pursued; but they avoided their pursuers, and reached the king with the message of his faithful servants in the city, "Arise and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you." "Then David arose, and they that were with him, and they passed over Jordan; by the morning light there lacked not one that had not gone over. And they came to Mahanaim."

While David was at Mahanaim, there came to him, with abundant supplies for himself and his men, Shobi the son of Nahash the Ammonite, Machir, with whom Mephibosheth had long dwelt, and Barzillai the Gileadite. In this fruitful district David had leisure to recruit his wearied followers, and to call around him the brave men who were still loyal to their king. In the mean time, Absalom was urging on his preparations. All the men of Israel had been gathered. Amasa, Joab's nephew, was made captain of the host. And Absalom himself, at the head of his army, passed over Jordan in pursuit of his father. The armies of the father and son were pitched in the land of Gilead. The fate of the kingdom was to turn upon a single battle.

David arranged his forces in three divisions, one under Joab, a second under Abishai, a third under Ittai, the Gittite. He proposed to take the command in person; but the people would not permit it. They thought it more prudent that he should remain in the city, with a reserve force to aid them in case of necessity. The king yielded to their wishes. As the army marched out to battle, David charged his generals, "in the presence of all the people; Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom."

The engagement took place in the wood of Ephraim, on the east side of Jordan. David's forces were victorious, and the rebel army routed with the loss of twenty thousand men, the

larger part of whom fell in the flight. Absalom perished by a most singular fate. In riding through the wood, his head and hair became entangled in the branches of an oak, and he was left hanging in the air, by the escape of his mule. In this situation he was discovered by one of Joab's men, who carried the intelligence to his general. Joab at first reprov'd the man for sparing the rebel, and then hastened away, in open contempt of the command which he had received, to slay him, while the king could not interfere. When this was done, he recalled his troops from the pursuit. "And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him." Thus perished this miserable man: the only monument of his ambition was the pillar which he had erected in his lifetime, and which served to perpetuate the remembrance of his crimes.

When Ahimaaz requested to bear tidings of the victory to David, Joab, who knew with what regret David would hear the death of his son, refused to let him go. Another messenger was sent, who was present and witnessed the death of Absalom. Ahimaaz renewed his request, and at last obtained permission to go. In the way to the city he passed Cushi, who had started before him. As they came to the city, "David was sitting by the gates" waiting to hear the event of the battle. Ahimaaz reached the gate first, and cried to the king, "All is well, and fell upon his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hands against my lord the king." David's first inquiry was for the life of his son. "Is the young man Absalom safe." Ahimaaz replied, that when he left the scene of battle "he saw a great tumult, but knew not what it was." Just at this time the official messenger was brought to the king, and said, "Tidings, my lord, the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee." The anxious father repeats the question, "Is the young man, Absalom, safe?" and Cushi answered, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people; for the people heard say that day, how the king was grieved for his son. And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away, when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face and cried, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

When Joab learned the public and immoderate grief of the

king for his son, and saw its effect upon the army, he went boldly into the king, and with the most heartless effrontery reproved him for his conduct. Instead of excusing his own disobedience of orders, he reproaches the king for his grief. "Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants which this day have saved thy life. For thou hast declared this day that thou regardest neither princes, nor servants; for this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all we had died, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants; for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night." This firm, but imperious and unjust remonstrance, had its effect. "David arose and sat in the gate, and all the people came before the king."*

The death of Absalom put an effectual end to the conspiracy. On all sides the loyalty of the people began to regain its ascendancy. The sense of the injustice which they had done to David served to quicken the remembrance of the obligations which they owed to him. "The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and out of the hand of the Philistines; now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" Everywhere the sentiments of affection and duty were bringing the people to their allegiance to David.

Though this was the state of all Israel, the tribe of Judah had not yet publicly moved; and David sent messengers "to the elders of Judah, saying, Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh, why are ye the last then to bring back the king to his home?" To Amasa, Absalom's general, he sent a special message. "Art not thou of my bone and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab."† The message was effectual. "The heart of all the men of Judah was turned to David as the heart of one man, and they sent unto the king, Return thou and all thy servants. So the king returned and came to Jordan."

In his return, the king was accompanied by a large number of those who had sustained him during the rebellion. As he came to the Jordan, he was met by the tribe of Judah, who had come to conduct him home. With the tribe of Judah came

* During this exile of David from the temple, he appears to have penned several of his most beautiful Psalms. We owe probably the 42d, 43d, 70th, 71st and 143d, to this occasion.

† This has been thought a very impolitic and unjust measure. But it should be remembered, that Joab, though loyal, had forfeited all right to the command by his disobedience of orders, and his excessively haughty demeanour. As to the prudence of the message, Amasa was most probably the most influential man in the tribe of Judah, and once secured to David's interest, would bring the whole tribe with him. David no doubt hoped in this way to break the domineering power of Joab.

Shimei with a thousand men of Benjamin, and Ziba with his servants. As soon as the king had crossed the river, Shimei cast himself at his feet, made an humble confession of his sin, and sought the king's pardon. Abishai again seeks permission to put him to death, because he had cursed the Lord's anointed. But David reproved his officious zeal: "Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel? Therefore the king sware unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die." The same faith which led David to bear patiently his malignant curses, now kept him in his prosperity from taking vengeance into his own hands.

Soon after Shimei, Mephibosheth came to congratulate David upon his return. From the day the king had departed, "Mephibosheth had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes." There was every apparent sign of deep grief. When they reached Jerusalem, David inquired why he had not gone with him. He answered that his servant "had deceived him," and had slandered him to the king; "but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes." David stopped him in his apology. "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said thou and Ziba divide the land." Whatever was meant by this decision, Mephibosheth was completely satisfied. "Yea," he says, "let him take all, since the king is come again in peace unto his own house." It seems probable that David intended to restore the original arrangement between Mephibosheth and his servant, and of course revoke the sentence he had passed when Ziba met him in his flight.

David next proceeded to reward the kindness and faithfulness of the aged Barzillai. "Come thou," said the king, "over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem." Barzillai had sustained him at Mahanaim as his king, but David would take him as a guest into his own dwelling and table. The good old man replied, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? Can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again; that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham, let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee." David granted his request, and as they parted "the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him, and he returned to his own place; but Chimham went on with him."

In the late rebellion, some of the people had become seriously disaffected towards the king. A quarrel arose between the tribe

of Judah and the rest of Israel, as to the mode in which David was conducted home. The Israelites found fault with Judah that they had "stolen the king from their brethren." The men of Judah plead their near relation to David. The quarrel became serious, "and the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel." Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, took advantage of the strife, and blew his trumpet and said, "We have no part in Judah nor inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel." Inflamed with their strife, the fickle multitude followed after Sheba.

In the mean time the king reached Jerusalem, rearranged his family, and prepared to suppress the insurrection. Orders were given to Amasa "to assemble the men of Judah," who were faithful, and hold himself in readiness for further orders. Amasa went to obey the command, but from some cause tarried longer than the time appointed him. During this delay, the insurrection of Sheba was growing into a rebellion; and threatening to become more serious even than the revolt of Absalom. David therefore commissioned Abishai to take forces and quell the conspiracy. Under this commission Abishai and Joab (though Joab had received no orders) "took the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and the mighty men, and pursued after Sheba." When they reached Gibeon, they fell in with Amasa their cousin, and Joab, without any hesitation, and under the pretence of friendship, murdered him as he had murdered Abner long before. Leaving one of their men to stand by the body, they hastened on in the pursuit. But when the men saw Amasa lying in his blood, they stood shocked at the spectacle, and with reluctance followed Joab in his expedition.

Sheba had gone through the tribes gathering the disaffected, and with a considerable force had taken refuge in Abel-Beth-maachah. Joab and his men pressed the siege with great vigour. As they were about to take the city, a wise woman cried to Joab, and said, "I am one of them that are peaceful and faithful in Israel; thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel; why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?" Joab answered that this was not his purpose, "Far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy. I seek only Sheba, who hath lifted up his hand against the king; deliver him only, and I will depart from the city." To avoid the siege, the people of the city listened to the advice of the woman, cut off Sheba's head, and cast it over the wall to Joab. This was the end of this wicked insurrection. With the death of Sheba all disaffection ceased. Joab withdrew with his army, and returned to Jerusalem. He was yet sufficiently powerful to escape the punishment he deserved. In fact David was now in the hands of his general, and felt himself unable to execute the

sentence which his own sense of justice would have led him to pass. The brave, haughty, imperious man, was still over all the host of Israel, and justice slumbered for a time.

SECTION IX.

FAMINE OF THREE YEARS—WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES—THE PESTILENCE—THE PREPARATION FOR THE TEMPLE—SOLOMON MADE KING—DAVID'S CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE AND SOLOMON—DAVID'S DEATH.

BETWEEN the threatening of David by the prophet Nathan, and the death of Sheba, nearly thirteen years had passed away. This whole interval was one of heavy cares and civil strife. Between the grief over his own sin—the mortification at the unnatural and sinful conduct of his sons—and the facility with which his subjects were drawn away from their allegiance to the throne—there was little peace to the unhappy king. Nor were his trials all past.

When Saul, in his anger, murdered the priests at Nob, he slew also, as it seems probable, the Gibeonites,* who were servants of the priests, and thus (as well as by special covenant) under the peculiar care of God. This violation of public faith did not pass unnoticed. God was pleased “to make inquisition for the blood which had thus been unrighteously shed;” and sent a famine upon the land for three successive years. David inquired of the Lord what was the cause of the judgment. And the Lord answered, “It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.” Thus warned, David sent for the remnant of this people, and asked what must be done, that an atonement might be made, and that “ye may bless the inheritance of Israel.” They answered that they would have neither silver nor gold, “but that seven men of the sons of Saul who had consumed them, should be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul.” The king said, “I will give them;” but sparing the family of Jonathan (and all the male line of Saul, who alone could ever have made any claim to the crown) he chose two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, “and the five sons of Merab, the daughter of Saul.” These seven were delivered to the Gibeonites, and hanged. The broken-hearted Rizpah “took sackcloth and spread it upon the rock, and watched there for five long months, until the rain dropped upon it out of heaven.” “The bones of these seven, with the bones of Saul and Jonathan, David took

* Whether Saul slew these Gibeonites, on the occasion here mentioned, or not, does not appear clear from the narrative. It may be that, in his blind zeal, in the early part of his reign, he thought to secure the favour of the people and of God, by putting these Gibeonites to death. In either case the offence is the same, and the act in express violation of the treaty of Joshua and the Israelites.

and buried in the sepulchre of Kish. And after that, God was entreated for the land."

Thus God, by his sovereign appointment, expressed his abhorrence of the crime of Saul. It is not necessary to suppose that those who perished were implicated in crime; they suffered, indeed, but they suffered in virtue of his appointment, who had the lives of all in his hands, and can rightfully recall them to himself when and how he pleases. In this melancholy transaction, David stands clear from all blame or jealousy of the house of Saul, by the very terms of the narrative, and from the fact that he spared all the male descendants of that house, who were at this time numerous in Israel.

At this point of the narrative, the restless Philistines appear again. Four severe battles were fought between David and the Philistines. In the first of these, David fought in person, and waxing faint was nearly slain by a Philistine giant; but Abishai came to his relief "and smote the Philistine and killed him." Alarmed at this sign of his increasing age, the men of David swore unto him, saying, "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." In each of the succeeding battles, a Philistine of gigantic stature fell by the hand of David and his servants. These irreconcilable enemies were thus effectually humbled, and the rest of David's reign was free from foreign war. "And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song—in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hand of his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul." "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in him will I trust." He relates his trust in God, in the time of his distresses—the wonderful manner in which God had delivered him—his own integrity in his adherence to God; and then closes with an ascription of all his military success and prosperity to God alone, and a solemn thanksgiving for all the mercies he had received. "He, Jehovah, is the tower of salvation for his king; and showeth mercy to his anointed, unto David and to his seed for evermore. Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, I will sing praises unto thy name."

After these closing wars with the Philistines, the Hebrew kingdom enjoyed an interval of peace and prosperity. They were free from foreign wars, and the people remained happy and contented under their government. But at length an incident took place which marred this scene of peace in which David's long reign seemed about to close. "The anger of the Lord was moved against Israel, and Satan, as the adversary, was permitted to tempt David to number the people." David yielded to the temptation. Pride in his flourishing kingdom, or perhaps a desire after foreign conquest, moved him to this step,

so offensive to God, and in direct contempt of that promise, that the seed of Israel should be innumerable. Joab was commissioned to take the census. At first he remonstrated against the measure. "The Lord make his people an hundred times as many as they be; but why doth my Lord the king delight in this thing, and make himself a cause of trespass to Israel." The king's word, however, prevailed against Joab; and they went forth to number the people. After a census of nine months, they gave their return to the king. The two statements vary as to the number, so far as it was taken; but they may be nearly reconciled by supposing that the military were not enrolled in one case, whereas they were included in the larger number. The census was never fully completed. The duty was odious to Joab, and offensive to God; "and Levi and Benjamin were not counted."

Wrath fell from the Lord while the census was going forward, "and he smote Israel." David's conscience condemned him, and he said unto God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done; but now, I beseech thee, O Lord, do away with the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. And the Lord spake unto Gad, the prophet, Go and tell David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things, choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee; either three years of famine, or three months flight before thine enemies, or three days pestilence from the destroying angel throughout the coasts of Israel. David replied, I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies; but let me not fall into the hand of man." The pestilence came, "and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men." When the angel reached Jerusalem, the command came, "It is enough, stay now thine hand." "And the angel stood by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite." David then assumed to himself the sin and the guilt. "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house, but not on my people that they should be plagued." Upon this humiliation of David, and intercession for his people, the message came by the prophet, "Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah." David went as the Lord commanded; purchased the ground at its full price, "and built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the plague was stayed from Israel." Araunah at first wished to give the ground, the victims, and the fuel, to the king; but David refused. He was unwilling "to offer unto the Lord that which cost him nothing." And besides, it is probable that he had received some communication that the spot thus chosen by God as a place of offering, was to

be the place for the temple, and to become the seat of the public worship of all the tribes of Israel.* “Then David said, This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel,” thereby consecrating it for that temple which was “to be builded for the Lord, exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries.”

With all the strength which yet remained to him, this pious king now set himself to prepare for the temple. Although forbidden to build it himself, he felt called upon to do what was in his power to hasten it forward. The rest of his days were devoted to this work. “An hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, brass and iron without weight, wrought stones, and cedar wood in abundance, were prepared to build the house of God.” Solomon and the princes of Israel received the charge to arise and build. While engaged in this peaceful work, so suited to the closing days of a long and troublous reign, his attention was called to the question concerning the succession to the throne. It was no doubt well known to all at the court, that David had selected Solomon for heir. He himself appears to have considered it as decided, and did not anticipate any opposition to the choice. But Adonijah the son of Haggith, the king’s eldest son then living, (Amnon and Absalom, the first and third sons, had been slain, and Chileab the second had probably died,) laid claim to the throne as his inheritance. Like Absalom, he was of goodly person and a favourite with his father. For some time he had maintained a princely state and retinue, and David had not forbidden him. Encouraged by this permission of the king, he conferred with Joab and Abiathar, and with their advice formed the purpose of usurping the kingdom. With Joab as the head of the army, and Abiathar as the head of the priests, he felt certain of success, “and invited the king’s sons and the men of Judah” to a banquet, when he was to be crowned king. Those who were known as friends to Solomon were not invited. “Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.” David seems to have been in utter ignorance of Adonijah’s design. Nathan first acquaints Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, with this conspiracy; and urges her by her own life and the life of her son, to go to David and claim the fulfilment of his promise, “that Solomon should reign after him and sit upon his throne.” Bathsheba went to the king, who was now enfeebled with age, and ministered to by Abishag the Shunamite, and said, “My lord, thou swearest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me; and now Adonijah reigneth, and

* For the consecration of this place David wrote the 30th Psalm.

thou knowest it not. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him." While she was yet speaking, Nathan the prophet came in, and confirmed her intelligence. David at once recalled his wonted energy, and in the most solemn terms renewed the grant to Solomon. "As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I swear unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day." Bathsheba received the appointment of her son with the deepest reverence and thankfulness, and said, "Let my lord, king David, live for ever." David, however, once fully roused to the danger, did not let the matter rest here. "And the king said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah; and they came before the king. And he said, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon, and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel, for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. And Benaiah said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too." They went down accordingly, with the Cherethites and Pelethites, and anointed Solomon king. "And they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, God save king Solomon; and they rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them."

The joy of the people, at the peaceful succession of Solomon to the throne, disturbed the feast of Adonijah and his friends. They were not left long in doubt, as to the cause of rejoicing, Jonathan the son of Abiathar came and said to Adonijah: Verily, king David hath made Solomon king, and moreover, the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed, and said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it." Upon this intelligence, the feast was broken up, "and every man went his own way." No notice was immediately taken of the actors in this conspiracy. Adonijah fled, "and took hold on the horns of the altar;" but Solomon sent for him, and publicly pardoned him, and dismissed him to his own house. Thus Solomon, by the Divine election, as well as by the choice of his father, was made king over Israel.

Having thus exalted Solomon to the throne, and established the civil government of the kingdom, David "gathered together

the princes of Israel, and the priests and Levites," and regulated the methods and orders of public worship. The Levites, from thirty years old and upward, numbered thirty-eight thousand, of whom twenty-four thousand were to set forward the work of the temple, six thousand were judges and officers, four thousand porters, and four thousand praised the Lord. They were divided according to their courses among the sons of Levi. The priests, the sons of Aaron, were to offer the offerings, to burn incense, and to bless in the name of Jehovah. These also were divided into twenty-four courses, sixteen among the sons of Eleazar, and eight among the sons of Ithamar. The singers under Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, were divided into twenty-four courses of twelve each. To the porters also, David assigned their distinct offices and services. The solemn and gorgeous temple-service was thus provided for. The splendid ritual of the Old Testament economy was completed. The work of David was nearly done. The covenant people were in possession of the promised land; the ark of God, with the visible glorious presence of him who dwelt upon it, had received a resting-place; the chosen spot for the temple had been determined, and the order of its services appointed; nothing remained but that the man of God should deliver his dying charge, and go to rest with his fathers.

"And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem. Then David the king stood up upon his feet and said, Hear me, my brethren and my people: as for me I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood. Howbeit the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover, I will establish his kingdom, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. Now therefore, in the sight of all

Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God; that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong and do it."

Then giving Solomon the pattern for the temple and its porches and buildings, an account of the materials he had amassed, and the order of Priests and Levites which he had fixed, he concludes his charge to the young king, "Be strong, and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."

To strengthen the interest of the people in this work, David exhorts them, by his own example, to consecrate of their substance to its completion. Because I have set my affection to the house of my God, "I have given, of mine own proper good, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver; who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?"

The royal munificence of David secured a hearty response to this appeal from the people. "They offered willingly and rejoiced, because with perfect heart they offered unto the Lord. They gave liberally of gold, silver, brass and iron, besides precious stones for the service of the house of God."

David's heart was filled with delight at the willing sacrifice of the people. And David said, "Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all: and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none

abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared, to build thee a house for thy holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.* At the call of David, the whole assembly, with one voice, joined in the joyful public worship.

A second time they professed their allegiance to Solomon as king; who now reigned on the throne of his father, and received the acclamations of a loyal people. "And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel."

As David felt death drawing nigh, he called Solomon and gave him a final charge. "I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his commandments, as written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper, and that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me."

He then charged Solomon to remember Joab, and to deal with him as the murderer of Abner and Amasa. "Do according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." It is plain that this command did not spring from any resentment on the part of David. According to every law, human and divine, Joab deserved to die. David was culpable in allowing him to escape justice so long. Doubtless it rested upon his conscience now as death approached; and he felt that he could not depart in peace, unless by some means he could clear his throne and government from any share in the murder of those innocent men; and therefore he charged Solomon, as the administrator of the law, to see justice enforced.

He lays it upon Solomon as a solemn duty to cherish the remembrance of Barzillai's kindness, "and to deal favourably with his sons: to let them be as those that eat at thy table."

And at the last, he commands the king, his son, to watch the conduct of Shimei, and to treat him not as a guiltless man; but

* It seems probable that David poured forth his own emotion in the beautiful and prophetic 72d Psalm.

yet, since I have sworn to spare his life, "bring thou his hoar head down to the grave with blood;" or as it may, and probably should be rendered, "bring NOT his hoar head down to the grave with blood." Solomon evidently understood the command in this latter sense; for while he executed justice upon Joab, he spared the life of Shimei. He ordered him, indeed, as a seditious and evil-disposed person, to build his house in Jerusalem, and to remain under the eye of the court, on the pain of death. Farther than this he did not understand the command of David to reach. Shimei accepted the conditions, which Solomon imposed, with gladness, and dwelt in peace at Jerusalem. It was only when he violated these conditions, and gave ground for suspicion that he was again bent upon his seditious work, that Solomon passed sentence of death upon him. He did not perish in consequence of David's charge, (and this makes it perfectly clear that David never intended his death,) but in consequence of his own restless and lawless spirit. He died no doubt as a traitor, for we are told at the time of his death that the kingdom was then established in the hand of Solomon.

Then followed, in the closing scene of his eventful life, these last words of David: "David the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David." After a reign of forty years, he died, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour. As a warrior, he was brave, prudent, keenly alive to the sufferings of his soldiers, and beloved and trusted by those whom he commanded. His brilliant victories testify to his ability. As a king, he was wise to counsel, and energetic in carrying his plans into execution. He was kind to the suffering, and impartial in the execution of justice. He used his power as one accountable to God. As a man, he was affectionate and generous, noble in all his impulses, forgiving to his enemies and grateful to friends. As an inspired poet, his name and memory have been and will be cherished by every pious heart. As a worshipper of the true God, he was steadfast, sincere, humble, and trustful, a pattern to those who

came after him. And though he fell grievously, yet he submitted to reproof, humbled himself before God in the truest repentance, and obtained an abiding sense of his mercy. He may justly be numbered among the greatest and the best, not only of kings, but of men.

SECTION X.

SOLOMON KING—HIS SACRIFICE AT GIBEON—DEATH OF ADONIJAH AND JOAB—SOLOMON PREPARES TO BUILD THE TEMPLE—THE TREATY WITH TYRE AND EGYPT.

SOLOMON came to the throne, when the country was in a profound peace; which lasted, with but slight interruption, during his long reign. He began his reign in the spirit of that solemn charge which he received from the lips of a dying father. It is said of him that "he loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father; only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places." It will be remembered, that while the ark was brought to Jerusalem, the tabernacle and the brazen altar remained at Gibeon. Thither the young king, having called his chief men, went, to commence his reign, with a solemn public sacrifice to God; for that was the great high place, and there Solomon "offered a thousand burnt-offerings." On the night following the sacrifice, God appeared to him in a dream, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." And Solomon said, "Thou hast showed unto David thy great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king, in stead of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people." The petition of Solomon was peculiarly acceptable to God, and God said, "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life, but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king; behold, I have done according to thy words: I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments,

as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days." After this answer to his prayer, Solomon awoke from his vision, returned to Jerusalem, and offered burnt-offerings before the ark of the Lord, and made a feast to all his servants.

The gift which Solomon had received, he had immediate occasion to exercise. There were two women dwelling alone, in the same house, each with an infant child. Through the neglect of the mother, the child of the one died. Aware of her loss, she arose at midnight, and went and exchanged her dead son for the living one of her companion. The true mother of the living child brought her complaint before the king, and claimed her son. But the other denied her crime. Each one claimed the living as her own. There appears to have been no evidence of any kind, by which the controversy could be decided. Solomon saw that the only way to determine it was by an appeal to the instinctive affection of a mother for her offspring. And the king said, "Bring a sword, and divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." But the heart of the real mother answered at once to the appeal, "and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; while the other said, Divide it." The wise plan of the king succeeded, and he gave sentence, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment, and feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

While this was taking place, the restless spirit of Adonijah was again at work. In his extreme old age, David, by the advice of his servants, had taken Abishag the Shunamite among the number of his wives. Her beauty attracted the love of Adonijah, and he came to Bathsheba, and urged her to ask from the king Abishag for his wife. The design of this request appears in the way he urges his suit. "Thou knowest," he said, "that the kingdom was mine, howbeit, it is now turned and become my brother's, for it was his from the Lord." Adonijah knew well that the request was a treasonable one, and thus Solomon understood it. For when his mother urged the request of Adonijah, he replies, "Why dost thou ask Abishag for him? ask also the kingdom." Solomon immediately adopted the most stringent measures, and treats his brother as a condemned traitor. "God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life." And he sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, "and he fell upon him that he died." This was certainly summary justice; if indeed any state policy can make such arbitrary measures fall under the name of justice. But it is difficult for us to enter fully into all that was implied in Adonijah's suit; and it would seem probable, that there were other signs of his treasonable disposition,

which led Solomon so instantly to punish. This probability is increased, by the fact that Abiathar and Joab—Adonijah's supporters in his former conspiracy—are here again connected with him. Their punishment immediately follows. Abiathar was banished to his own possessions, at Anathoth, and deprived of his priestly office—a fulfilment of the threatening of God to Eli, "that the priesthood should depart from his house." Abiathar was the last priest of the house of Ithamar, (of which family Eli was,) and the priesthood returned again to the house of Eleazar, in the person of Zadok.

When Joab heard that his partners were punished, he fled unto the "tabernacle of Jehovah, and caught hold on the horns of the altar." Benaiah was sent to bring him from his sanctuary, but Joab refused. He trusted to escape justice, through the protection of the altar. Solomon, however, well understood that the altar could be no sanctuary for the hardened criminal. Benaiah was again despatched to go and slay him, even at the altar; "that thou mayest take away the innocent blood from me, and from the house of my father, which Joab shed, who fell upon two men more righteous than he." So Benaiah went as commanded, and fell upon the "hoary criminal," and slew him, and he was buried in his own house, in the wilderness. Thus fell David's wicked but bravest general. Justice had at length overtaken him, and a broken law was executed.

As Zadok was made priest in the room of Abiathar, so Benaiah was placed in the room of Joab, as captain of the host.

With the crushing of this conspiracy, Solomon's throne was established in peace. Around him were gathered, as chief men and counsellors, the sons of his father's friends. "Over the tribute were twelve general officers, whose charge it was to provide for the royal household; for every day thirty measures of fine flour, and sixty of meal, thirty oxen and an hundred sheep," besides other things in like profusion. The whole nation enjoyed an unparalleled state of happiness and prosperity. His kingdom swelled into vast dimensions—"from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates, and from Dan to Beersheba: Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry; and every man dwelt safely under his vine, and under his fig-tree."

In the midst of this worldly prosperity Solomon remained faithful in his attachment to the true faith, and to the charge which had been laid upon him. "He determined to build the temple for the name of the Lord, and an house for his kingdom." "Of those who were strangers in the land, seventy thousand men were numbered to bear burdens, and eighty thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them." While engaged in these preparations

he received an embassy from Hiram, king of Tyre, congratulating him upon his coming to the throne. An alliance had existed between this king and David. Their territories lay contiguous, and were mutually necessary for each other. Solomon entered readily into the kind designs of Hiram, and a league and treaty of commerce was made between them which lasted throughout their days.

To the embassy of Hiram, Solomon replied, "Thou knowest that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God, for the wars which were about him on every side. But now the Lord my God hath given me rest, and I purpose to build an house to the Lord my God, as the Lord spake unto David my father. And the house which I build is great, for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I, then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? Send me now, therefore, a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, that can skill to grave with the men that are with me, whom David my father did provide. Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, and almag-trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants, even to prepare me timber in abundance. And behold I will give to thy servants twenty thousand measures of wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and an equal number of baths of oil and of wine." Hiram entered cordially into the plans of Solomon. He seems to have been a worshipper of the true God: at least he recognized fully his gracious providence. "Because the Lord hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them;" and he adds, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding to build an house for Jehovah." At the same time he consented fully to the treaty stipulations which Solomon had proposed. The Tyrians were to cut the timber of cedar and fir, and deliver it at Joppa, the nearest seaport to Jerusalem; and the Hebrews were to deliver, in turn, the grain, and oil, and wine, which had been agreed upon. A man skilful in all the curious works which were to adorn the temple, was found and sent to Jerusalem. He was of mixed descent; his father a Tyrian, and his mother of the daughters of Dan—of the same name with the Tyrian king.

Solomon immediately raised a levy of "thirty thousand men," and sent them to Lebanon, "ten thousand a month by courses, to aid the Tyrians in hewing the timber, and squaring the vast blocks of stone." The work was thus fairly commenced, although as yet the ground had not been broken upon which that splendid structure was so noiselessly to rise.

From the alliance with Tyre, Solomon turned his attention to Egypt, and entered into a treaty with Pharaoh. A matrimonial alliance was formed, and he took the daughter of Pharaoh "to wife, and brought her into the city of David." The result of this alliance, formed in direct violation of the command of God, was by no means happy; indeed, in the progress of his history, we find it producing the most lamentable defection and apostacy.

SECTION XI.

THE TEMPLE, ITS FURNITURE, THE DEDICATION—GOD APPEARS A SECOND TIME TO SOLOMON.

HAVING thus gathered the materials, "in the four hundred and eightieth year after the Exodus out of Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign, in the second month, the month Zif, Solomon began to build the house of the Lord." The site of the temple is fixed in Chronicles, "Solomon began to build at Jerusalem, in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite." Mount Moriah was situated in the south-eastern quarter of Jerusalem. It was a steep eminence, whose summit was not at first sufficient for the buildings of the temple. On its precipitous sides walls were built up, and the interval filled in with earth, to increase the level surface. The stones in this foundation were of great magnitude, and some of them remain until the present time. The dimensions and proportions of this renowned structure have been the subject of much dispute. According to the first account, it was "sixty cubits in length, twenty cubits broad, and thirty high." The second account adds, "that the porch was one hundred and twenty cubits high," while the Jewish historian, Josephus, gives its height as sixty cubits. There is no difficulty whatever in the Scripture accounts; the one gives the height of the body of the building, the other that of the porch. The porch stood at the eastern extremity of the building. At the entrance of the porch were the two brazen pillars—"Jachin on the right, and Boaz on the left." These pillars were cast eighteen cubits high, and twelve cubits in circumference. Chapiters, or capitals, five cubits high, were placed upon the pillars. Around these were wreaths of net-work and chain-work. These chapiters were wrought "with lily-work, and pomegranates, two hundred, in rows round about the chapter. Two wreaths encircled each chapter, and two rows of pomegranates were upon each wreath." The pillars were not used for support, but for ornament, and were probably emblematical.

The temple was surrounded by three stories of chambers,

“each one of which was five cubits high.” The lower chamber was five cubits broad, the middle six, and the upper one seven. As the walls went up they were not so thick, and the increased width of the chambers arose from the rests or offsets in the wall. The entrance of these chambers was probably from without, “for the door for the middle was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle-chamber, and out of the middle into the third.”

“Above the chambers were the windows of narrow lights.” The temple was built of “stone made ready before it was brought to the place, (so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building.)” The stone, however, were covered with boards of cedar, and the cedar overlaid with pure gold.

The walls within, and the ceiling, were lined with cedar, and the floor was covered with planks of fir. The walls, also, were overlaid with gold, and ornamented with “carvings of palms, and flowers, and cherubims,” “and garnished with precious stones.” The upper row of chambers were also overlaid with gold. Coming within the temple we find it divided into two apartments—“the holy, and the most holy, or holy of holies.” “The holy was forty cubits long,” with the width of the temple, “and the most holy twenty cubits square.” A wall of cedar separated these, which, like the other walls of the temple, was overlaid with gold, and covered with cherubims and flowers.

The walls and the floors of the most holy were covered with pure fine gold, amounting “to six hundred talents, and the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold.” The doors of the outer temple were made of fir and hung upon posts of olive-trees, with hinges of gold; but the doors of the oracle, or most holy, were entirely composed of olive. Both doors were made “with folding leaves, and richly adorned with cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers, and covered with pure gold.” By the door between the holy and most holy, which was most probably left open, “hung the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, with cherubims wrought thereon.”

Within the oracle were “two cherubims, each ten cubits high. Their wings were five cubits each: from the uttermost part of the one wing to the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. Both cherubims were of one size. They were placed upon their feet, with their faces inward; so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. The cherubims were overlaid with gold.” These were distinct from, and much larger than those which overshadowed the mercy-seat. Within the holy of holies stood only the ark of the covenant; and here the priest alone entered once

every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. The veil which concealed it from the gaze of the people was not yet rent: the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing.

Without the veil, within the holy place, "stood the golden altar of incense." In place of the single candlestick, which was in the tabernacle, "there were ten candlesticks of gold, with their lamps and flowers, five on the right side of the holy place, and five on the left." There were also ten golden tables, five on the right side, and five on the left. "The hundred bowls, and the lamps, and snuffers, and basons, and censers, and spoons, and all the vessels for the house of God, were of pure gold."

The temple was surrounded "by an inner court, or court of the priests; built with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams." According to Josephus, this court was three cubits high. In this court, on the right side of the temple, eastward, over against the south, was placed the molten sea. This immense brazen laver, "was five cubits high, ten in diameter, and thirty in circumference. It contained two thousand baths."* It was supported by twelve brazen oxen, three looking toward each quarter of the compass. "It was an hand-breadth thick, and the brim of it was wrought with the flowers of lilies: and below the brim it was enriched with varied devices." This sea was for the personal and ceremonial ablutions of the priests. Besides this molten sea, there were ten lavers standing upon ten brazen bases, used for the cleansing of the sacrifices. The bases were regarded as master-pieces of art. They were four cubits square, and three cubits high; surrounded with borders of carved lions, oxen, and cherubim. Beneath the borders were other ornaments, which are not described. Each base was mounted upon brazen rollers, or wheels. The lavers which were placed upon the bases, were four cubits, and contained forty baths. They were arranged five on each side of the court. In this court also stood, most probably, the brazen altar which Solomon made, twenty cubits long, and twenty cubits broad, and ten cubits high.

Besides this inner court, there was still another great court, or outer court, or as it was called in later periods, "the court of the Lord's house." Still beyond this, there were added spacious buildings, or porticos; some built by Solomon, and others at a later period.

"The castings and vessels of the temple, were made by Hiram, the Tyrian, in the plain of Jordan, in the clay ground between

* In Chronicles it is 3000. It was probably capable of containing the larger amount; but usually held the smaller.

Succoth and Zarthan." "Solomon was seven years in building the temple."

The sanctuary, or temple itself, was not so celebrated for its size, as for its magnificence. Standing on a lofty summit, easily seen from all directions, covered with gold, and adorned with the most costly materials; it must have been not only a conspicuous, but a splendid object. It was no doubt an object of admiration to every beholder; but glorious as it stood, its true glory was yet wanting. That which made it not only to be admired, but revered by every Israelite, was yet to enter it.

Solomon having thus completed the building, and brought in the consecrated things, assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, out of Zion, the city of David. And all the elders of Israel assembled themselves to king Solomon, at the feast, in the seventh month. The priests and Levites took up the ark, and brought it and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all "the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, did they bring up. And the priests brought the ark into its place, into the oracle of the temple, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. And they drew out the staves, so that the ends of them were seen in the holy place before the oracle. While this was going on, Solomon and all the congregation were sacrificing before the ark; and the Levites which were singers, of Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun, with their brethren, arrayed in their priestly garments, stood at the east end of the (brazen) altar, sounding with trumpets. And it came to pass, as the priests came out from the temple, and all the singers as one, made one sound in praising and thanking God; when they lifted up their voices, with trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that, then, the house was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." He for whom the temple had been built, had come, and taken possession of his dwelling.

"Then spake Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. And the king turned his face, and blessed all the congregation of Israel, (for they were all standing.) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it. I am risen up in the room of my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is

the covenant of the Lord, which he made with our fathers when he brought them out of the land of Egypt." "Then spreading his hands toward heaven, he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart; who hast kept with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him: thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. Therefore, now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day. That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place: and when thou hearest, forgive. If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him, and the oath come before thine altar, in this house, then hear thou in heaven, and do and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, and justifying the righteous. When thy people Israel be smitten before their enemies, because of their sin, and turn again, and confess thy name, and pray unto thee: then hear thou in heaven, and forgive their sin, and bring back thy people into the land of their fathers. When the heaven is shut up because of their sin, if they pray toward this place, then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants; that thou may teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon the land of their inheritance. If there be in the land famine, pestilence, or whatsoever plague or sickness, whatsoever prayer shall be made by any man or thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, then hear thou and forgive, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest, (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men,) that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest their fathers. Moreover, concerning a stranger, when he shall come and pray toward this house, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth

to thee for: that all the people of the earth may know thy name to fear thee. If thy people go out to battle, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and pray toward this house, hear thou their prayer and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them into captivity: if, then, they shall bethink themselves, and repent, and make supplication, saying, We have sinned and done perversely; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, and pray toward this house; then hear thou their prayer, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive; for they be thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out of Egypt, for thou didst separate them from all people of the earth, to be thine inheritance. Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now, therefore, arise, O Lord God, into thy resting-place, thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.”*

When Solomon had made an end of praying, he rose up from kneeling, “and stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel. Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people; there had not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers, let him not leave us nor forsake us, that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments. Let your heart, therefore, be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes and keep his commandments, as at this day.”

When this prayer was closed, and the benediction was pronounced, “fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offerings and the sacrifices. And when the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

“Then the king, and all the people, offered sacrifices before the Lord; and Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king, and all the people, dedicated the house of the Lord; and the court which was before the

* The 47th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, and 136th Psalms, were probably composed on this occasion. The last words of Solomon's prayer may be found, with some variations, in the 132d Psalm.

house; for there he offered burnt-offerings, for the brazen altar was too small for the number of the offerings."

On this joyful occasion, Solomon, and all the congregation, from the entering of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, held a feast of fourteen days: seven for the feast of tabernacles, and seven for the dedication. "On the eighth day, or the day after the feast, he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and Israel his people."* Thus happily was this great work accomplished. God had visibly, by the fire from heaven, accepted the offering of his people. The ark of the covenant, with the glorious Shechinah, found its last resting-place. Jerusalem was the place where God was known; and where, alone, he could safely be worshipped by sacrifices and offerings. From henceforth, the high-places were sinful and idolatrous.

After this the Lord appeared to Solomon, and said unto him, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and will keep my statutes and judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people: and at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished and hiss; and shall say, Why hath the Lord done this unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them; therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil." A threatening which was soon fulfilled. Here, as always, we find the promises of God conditional—they are given only upon a covenant; and in the history we shall find that as the condi-

* In Chronicles, it is said that the king dismissed the people on the twenty-third day of the month—which would be the ninth day, or the second after the feast. Some suppose, that a part of the people remained over till the ninth day, and were re-dismissed by the king.

tions on the part of the people were not fulfilled, so they failed to receive the promise. The people whom we now behold so joyful and prosperous in their service of Jehovah, we shall soon see (what the prophetic prayer of Solomon seemed to anticipate) bowing down to idols, and the wretched captives of their foes. This holy temple, now standing unrivalled in its beauty and richness, was soon plundered of its wealth, desecrated by the worship of false gods, a hissing and astonishment among the nations. So true is it that all prosperity, outward as well as inward, depends upon a close adherence to the worship and service of God.

SECTION XII.

SOLOMON'S OTHER BUILDINGS—THE SOURCE OF HIS WEALTH—SOLOMON'S OFFENCE,
THE TROUBLES OF HIS LATTER DAYS—HIS DEATH.

SOLOMON'S wealth was mostly expended in building. Besides the temple, he built a palace for himself, which occupied thirteen years in its erection. "He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon," which was more extensive than the temple, though far less splendid. "Around both these palaces there were large porches," or colonnades. A peculiarly splendid abode was erected for the queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. All these buildings were of costly stones, of immense size, and covered with cedar. "In the porch of judgment, at the royal palace, was the great throne of ivory, overlaid with pure gold. The ascent to the throne was by six steps, and on each side were stays, and two lions stood beside the stays; and upon the six steps were twelve lions." In the palace at Lebanon "were two hundred targets of beaten gold, of six hundred shekels each; and three hundred golden shields, of three pounds to each shield. All the vessels of this house, and all Solomon's vessels, were of pure gold, none were of silver, it was nothing thought of in the days of this king."

Besides these private palaces, Solomon built and fortified the cities of Gezer, which he had received as a dowry with the queen, Pharaoh's daughter; Hamath, which he captured; Tadmor in the wilderness; the cities which had been given to Hiram,* and by treaty receded to Israel; "and all the cities of store, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and all that which Solomon desired to build in the land of his dominion."

* When Hiram came to see the cities which Solomon had given him in the land of Galilee, he was dissatisfied. And as these princes remained on friendly terms, and soon after we find Solomon fortifying these very cities, we must suppose that some other reward had been given to the king of Tyre for his generous assistance, and that the cities of Galilee returned to their former king.

The men who were employed in "these works were the remnant of the Canaanites, whom the children of Israel were unable to destroy. Solomon used these as bondmen in the more laborious and menial parts of his service; while the native Israelites filled the stations of trust and honour. "They were his officers, his men of war, the rulers of his chariots and horsemen, and rulers over those that wrought in the work."

To carry forward and complete these vast designs, and to maintain the kingdom in all the luxury and splendour in which it was now existing, required a constant influx of wealth. The drain upon the royal treasury must have been immense. No resources within the kingdom itself could have furnished anything like an adequate supply. Accordingly, we find the people of Israel, and the king himself, now, for the first time, engaged in foreign commerce. Here again Solomon had recourse to his friend and ally the king of Tyre. As his own subjects were almost entirely an agricultural people, they were unfitted to build or man the ships necessary for this traffic. But by the aid of Hiram the plan was executed. "Solomon fitted out a fleet in Ezion-geber, beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom." The fleet was manned with a mixed crew of Hebrews and Tyrians. It sailed to Ophir, and brought thence in gold four hundred and twenty talents to the king. Besides the direct return, in the precious metals, these ships were no doubt laden with the merchandize of the east, which were disposed of all along the shores of the Mediterranean; and thus Palestine became the centre, for a time, of that lucrative trade.*

The king was at the same time engaged in another trade—from Egypt, through his dominions across the Syrian desert, and so on eastward. What were the avails of this trade we are not informed, but it was probably large; as we know from more recent history, that this commerce has always conferred great wealth upon those who were engaged in it. "Linen yarn, horses and chariots, were brought from Egypt, and sold to the Syrians; and Solomon's servants had a complete monopoly of the whole trade."

In the course of this traffic, Solomon's wealth and wisdom became widely known. The splendour of his court attracted the admiration of other monarchs. "And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his heart. And they brought every man his present; vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, and garments, and armour, and spices, and harness, and mules, a rate year by year." Among

* It seems probable (though it is not certain from the narrative) that Solomon and Hiram had another fleet trading along the coasts of the Mediterranean as far as Tarshish.

others who were thus drawn to the king, was the queen of Sheba. Her territories lay in the southern part of Arabia. When the report of Solomon's wisdom reached her, she came, with a large retinue, and a present of gold and spices, and precious stones, to prove Solomon with hard questions. Solomon answered all her questions. The impression made upon the queen, by the wisdom of Solomon, and the splendour of his court, and the temple service, was almost overwhelming. "There was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not their words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king to do judgment and justice."

The whole revenue of the king, from all these sources, was six hundred threescore and six talents* of gold a year, besides that which came from the merchantmen, from the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country. Silver was in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars as the sycamore trees for abundance.

This unexampled tide of prosperity began to have its influence. There are few, perhaps, who could have lived in the midst of such luxury, and wealth, and power, without being corrupted by them. Solomon, at least, with all his wisdom, fell, and fell most lamentably. He has given us his own experience, filled with solemn warnings, in the book of Ecclesiastes. He drank the cup of earthly joys, and left upon record for us the satisfaction which they gave, in that short sentence, Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. "But Solomon loved many strange women, beside the daughter of Pharaoh"—women of the surrounding nations, with whom God had expressly forbidden all intermarriage. Solomon clave unto these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. These guilty alliances were not long in producing their result. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians; and after

* The difficulty in regard to the weight of the talent may be removed, by supposing that in the time of Solomon it had no definite weight, but signified a flat piece of metal, which might be larger or smaller, as we use the word ingot. For if we take for a talent the weight assigned to it in the tables, as Prideaux says, the whole house might have been built of solid gold.

Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which sacrificed unto their gods. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other gods. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and give it unto thy servant. Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."

We are not informed in the history, what effect this warning had upon the guilty and besotted king. We may gather, however, from the tone of his later writings, that he was brought to true repentance and a happy reformation. It was too late now to avert the calamity which was threatened. The clouds were rapidly gathering around this once happy empire. The scene of peace and prosperity was suddenly overcast. The low mutterings of discontent might be heard. It was beginning to be felt that pomp and outward show did not constitute real happiness. A heavily taxed people were growing restless under their burdens. In these conditions it only needed the sin of Solomon to bring about rebellion and civil war. Nor was this all. Foreign and subject nations were beginning to rouse themselves to resistance. On the south-east, Hadad, of the royal blood of Edom, was troubling the Israelitish king. In the slaughter of the Edomites, by Joab, Hadad, then an infant, had escaped, and flying from one place to another had at last reached Egypt. He grew in favour with the Egyptian king, and eventually married into the royal family. On learning the death of David, he had returned to his own country, and began "a petty warfare which Solomon did not repress."

On the north, another adversary appeared, in the king of Damascus. Rezon had revolted from Hadadezer king of Zobah, and with a band of followers had made himself master of Damascus, and now reigned there. In the later years of Solomon's reign, his power began to be formidable. Both these enemies, as we are told, were permitted thus to annoy the king of Israel, as a punishment of his sin.

A more serious enemy, however, arose in the midst of his own kingdom. "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite, had distinguished himself as a man of valour." Solomon, seeing his worth, had exalted "him to be a ruler over the house of Joseph."

From his energy and valour, he had no doubt acquired great influence among the northern tribes. To this person, God sent the prophet Ahijah. As Jeroboam came from Jerusalem, the prophet met him in the field, alone; "and rending his garment into twelve pieces," delivered his energetic message. "Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. Because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped other gods, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my judgments. Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hands, he shall have one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem; and I will make him prince, all the days of his life. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hands and will give it thee, even the ten tribes; and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my commandments as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will afflict the seed of David, but not for ever." This doing of Ahijah soon came to the ears of the king; "and Jeroboam's life was no longer safe." He therefore fled into Egypt, unto Shishak, and remained there until the death of Solomon.

In the midst of these thickening calamities, Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. It was well for him that he did not live to see the results of his conduct. He had reigned forty years, with scarcely any thing to check the flow of prosperity. He found the kingdom strong, and apparently containing the elements of perpetuity; he left it in actual decay. He came to the throne in a time of peace; he left it shaken by foreign war, and internal strife. A united people welcomed him to the kingdom, with great joy; he so ruled that few probably mourned over his death. With all his great wisdom, a love of display, a voluptuous life, and a sinful departure from the true God; brought misery upon a happy people, and covered his own name with deep disgrace. And yet few, perhaps, would have stood the test to which he was subjected, better than Solomon. It is more difficult to meet the trials of prosperity than of adversity. It is no uncommon thing to see men fail here, who have walked without reproach through the very deepest of afflictions. And the fact that, though he was thus under the power of the world, and his own corruption, he yet, by God's grace, recovered himself, and died in the fear of God, ought to redeem his character, in some measure, from the reproach under which it lies. At all events, in

any just estimate of his character, we must take into account his virtues, as well as his vices; his wisdom, his generosity, his zeal at first for the worship of God, as well as his love of the world, and his shameful idolatry.

SECTION XIII.

DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM—REHOBOAM'S REIGN, AND DEATH—JEROBOAM, THE CONTEMPORARY OF REHOBOAM AND ABIJAM.

SOLOMON left but one son, "Rehoboam, the son of Naamah, an Ammonitess, who was forty-one years old when his father died," and he prepared to ascend the throne. "All Israel had assembled at Shechem; and thither Rehoboam went to receive the kingdom, and their allegiance. In the mean time, Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, and appeared boldly as a leader among the congregation of the people. Jeroboam, and the congregation through him, demanded a reduction of the taxes, as a condition of their service. "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now, therefore, make thou the service of thy father, and the yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." Three days were taken for deliberation: during which Rehoboam consulted with his counsellors. The old men who had stood before his father, and were better acquainted with the true condition of things; advised him to treat the request of the people kindly, "and speak good words unto them." The young men, who had grown up with the king, on the contrary, advised him to return a threatening answer, which should bring the disaffected to submission. When the appointed day came, Rehoboam, following the advice of his young companions, answered the people roughly, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The haughty monarch was left to take his own course. There was no sympathy between him and his people. The cruelty of this answer at once crushed every loyal feeling on the part of his subjects. Through his folly and pride, was wrought out, by the providence of God, the prediction which the Lord had spoken, by Ahijah the Shilonite, to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The words of the king brought things to a crisis. The disaffection, which might have been satisfied by prudent concessions, ripened into rebellion. The people said to the king, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." Rehoboam was not at first aware of the extent of the defection; and sent Adoram to collect the tribute.

The excited people "stoned him to death," and the terrified king fled in haste to Jerusalem. "So Israel rebelled against the house of David; but the cities of Judah remained faithful to their king." All the northern and eastern tribes took Jeroboam and made him king: and it seems probable, that the tribe of Benjamin was carried away with them; though it soon returned to its allegiance.

The first thoughts of the king were to recover his dominion by war. For this purpose, he collected from Judah and Benjamin an hundred and eighty thousand chosen men. But as he was about to march, Shemaiah the prophet came with a message from God to this infatuated king: "Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren; return every man to his house; for this thing is from me." The civil war was thus, for a time, averted; they obeyed the word of the Lord, and returned home.

Rehoboam had learned prudence from the severity of the lesson which he had received. Although there was no amity between him and Jeroboam, yet we do not learn that he took any active measures towards regaining his kingdom. Aside from the prohibition of the prophet, there were reasons of state sufficient to keep him from such a hopeless and ruinous undertaking. After his return to Jerusalem, he devoted himself with great energy to fortifying the remnant of the kingdom which remained faithful. He had probably learned the purposes of the king of Egypt; for the towns which he built and garrisoned were chiefly situated in that part of his kingdom lying toward Egypt. Doubtless, also, Hadad the Edomite was becoming more and more formidable.

While Rehoboam was thus preparing himself against any attack from without, he was gradually gaining adherents from the best of the Israelitish kingdom. Grieved at the idolatry of Jeroboam, "the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to Judah and Jerusalem. And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and Rehoboam, for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon."

Even Judah, however, did not long resist the example of its kings. Solomon had worshipped the gods of his wives; and Rehoboam, probably, followed in the steps of his father, at least so far as his mother's religion was concerned, and the whole tribe almost immediately lapsed into idolatry and the most abominable sin. "And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and provoked him to jealousy with their sins; for they built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high

hill and under every green tree." There were also those who practised the most shocking immoralities, for which the Canaanitish nations had been destroyed from the land. We can hardly believe that those who dwelt almost in sight of the temple, and beneath the protection of Jehovah, should sink so soon into the very lowest depths of sin. But the example of the great was fatally contagious; and there was no strength of principle in the mass of the people to resist it.

A nation so lost to all true religious principle could not expect any longer the protection of God. A rod was prepared for them, which they were soon to feel. "It came to pass, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number, and took the fenced cities of Judah." It is probable that Jeroboam persuaded Shishak to undertake this expedition, in order to cripple and embarrass his rival. As the Egyptian host drew near to Jerusalem, Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam, and the princes of Judah, and said, "Thus saith Jehovah, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak." The message of the prophet brought the king and princes in humility before God. "And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, he sent the prophet, saying, I will not destroy them, but will grant them some deliverance. Nevertheless they shall be the servants of Shishak; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries." Accordingly the Egyptian king came to Jerusalem, took away the treasures of the temple and of the king's house, and the golden shields which Solomon had made. For some reason (most probably the submissive reception which Rehoboam had given him) Shishak retired without doing any other serious injury to the kingdom. The real cause of this inexplicable conduct, was the unconscious influence exerted by God upon the mind of the Egyptian king. The time when the kingdom of Judah should be destroyed had not yet come, and Rehoboam was left in the peaceful possession of his throne.

Like his father, Rehoboam had taken a multitude of wives. The favourite queen was Maachah, the daughter or granddaughter of Absalom. Her son Abijam, or Abijah, was made chief amongst his brethren, and educated as the heir to the throne. After the invasion of Shishak, we hear little more of this king. He replaced the golden shields with others of brass, which were carried before him when he went to and came from the temple. We know not whether the repentance and humiliation was genuine or not. In some cases it was so, for we are told "that in Judah, things went well;" but whether there was a real change in the life of the king is not certain. The last

record we have is, "that he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord." He died, after a reign of seventeen years, and was buried in the city of David; and Abijam his son reigned in his stead. Rehoboam received the kingdom, embarrassed with the results of Solomon's luxury and sin. His foolish and haughty answer to the prayer of an oppressed people, brought about the disastrous event which chiefly marks his reign. In his later years he appears as a prudent, but irreligious king; and left his diminished kingdom in a prosperous condition, and under an efficient government, to his son Abijam.

Meanwhile Jeroboam was not at all fulfilling the charge which Ahijah had given him. Immediately after his election to the throne of Israel, he built Shechem, as the capital of his kingdom, and Penuel on the east of Jordan, to secure the allegiance of the eastern tribes. His next care was to provide for the people a religion. He feared that the people, if they were allowed to go and sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem, would return in their affections to Rehoboam. He therefore devised a political religion by which he hoped to retain the hearts of his subjects. "He made two calves of gold, (such doubtless as he had seen worshipped during his exile in Egypt,) and said to the people, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Dan, and the other at Bethel," at the northern and southern extremes of the kingdom. The plan became a sin to Israel. The people fell in readily with the suggestion of Jeroboam. Solomon's idolatry had, no doubt, prepared them for such a step. He appointed likewise priests out of the house of Levi. He ordained feasts like those which God had commanded by Moses, but upon different days. "So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel, in the month which he had devised in his own heart, and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel."

While Jeroboam "stood at the altar burning incense, there came out of Judah a man of God, by the word of the Lord, and cried against the altar, O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee; and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." "And he gave a sign, Behold, the altar shall be rent and the ashes shall be poured out."

Jeroboam ordered him to be arrested, but the arm of the king, which he put forth against him, was withered. And the altar was rent, as had been predicted. The astonished monarch now asks the man of God to pray that his hand might be restored. And he besought the Lord, and the king's hand was

restored as before. Jeroboam now asked the man who had warned him to come and share his hospitality. "But the man of God said, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee; for so was it charged me by the Lord, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." It will be remembered that Bethel was the seat of a school of the prophets. The sons of an old prophet, who dwelt there, overheard the conversation between the man of God and the king, and told their father. The old prophet immediately pursued after the man of God, and found him resting under an oak. Under the pretence that he had received a message from God to this effect, he persuades him to return, and eat and drink at his house. While they were yet at the table, the word of the Lord came, denouncing punishment upon the man of God for his disobedience, in returning and eating in the house of the false prophet. The sentence was almost instantly executed. As he was returning after the meal, a lion met him in the way, and slew him, and there stood sentinel over his carcass, until intelligence was carried into the city; and the old false prophet came and took the body of the man he had seduced, and carried him to the city for burial. And they buried him, and mourned over him, saying, Alas! my brother. After the burial, the old prophet charged his sons that they should bury him in the sepulchre with the man of God: "lay my bones beside his bones; for the saying which he cried, by the word of the Lord, against the altar of Bethel, and against all the high places in Samaria, shall surely come to pass." All these miracles, and even the death of the true prophet for his disobedience, made no lasting impression upon Jeroboam. He still went on in his evil way. "And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, to destroy it from off the face of the earth."

We have no full account of the mode in which Jeroboam administered his government. From his known energy and bravery, we may judge that he did not lose any part of his kingdom without a struggle. The only other incidents recorded in his history, occur in the reign of Abijam, king of Judah.

Abijam succeeded to the throne of Judah without any commotion. His reign was short and without any great interest. The only memorable thing recorded of him, is the battle so disastrous to Jeroboam. It was not to be expected that these rival kingdoms, though bound together by many ties, could yet remain long without war. During the reign of Rehoboam, both kings had other objects which demanded their attention. Neither had the time nor the means to attack the other. They were fully employed in securing their own kingdoms, without molesting others. Still there was no cordial friendship between them. On the first opportunity the smooth-

ered enmity breaks out into open war. The contest terminated, for the present, in a single and bloody battle. Abijam led out an army of four hundred thousand chosen men. Jeroboam met him with an army twice as large, all mighty men of valour. The armies met in Zemaraim, in mount Ephraim. In the presence of both armies, Abijam asserts the justice of his cause, and encourages his followers with the assurance that Jehovah would fight for them. "Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel. Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom to David for ever? Yet Jeroboam hath rebelled against his lord, and gathered to himself vain men, the children of Belial. And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hands of the sons of David. Have ye not made golden calves for gods, and cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron. But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him, and the priests, the sons of Aaron, wait upon their service; and burn unto the Lord offerings and incense, and keep the charge of the Lord our God.* And behold God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper." This address, no doubt, had its intended effect. It must have dispirited the forces of Jeroboam. They were not so far lost to their former religion that they could array themselves against God with clear consciences, or stout hearts. They at first surrounded the men of Judah; but at the shout of the battle they fled, and God delivered them into the hand of Judah. "There fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men." As the fruit of the victory Abijam took the cities of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephraim, all bordering towns between Benjamin and Ephraim. "Thus the children of Israel were brought under, for a time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers."

Abijam reigned only three years, "and walked in the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God. Yet for David's sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem." With this short and melancholy record Abijam's history terminates. He was buried in the city of David, and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

Jeroboam never recovered from the shock of that disastrous battle. His energy and courage failed him. He doubtless felt that the hand of God was upon him. For just previous to

* This artful speech was true in the main; but comes with an ill grace from Abijam, who was only an indifferent character. It was true, however, that the temple service was continued, and doubtless many of the people of Judah were sincere worshippers of the true God; while Israel was very generally corrupted with the idolatry of Jeroboam.

this, or at this time, he had received that startling message from the prophet who had anointed him, threatening the utter destruction of his whole family. The occasion upon which he received it was the following. His favourite son, Abijah, was dangerously ill, and the anxious father sent his wife, disguised, to the aged prophet Ahijah, to learn what should be the fate of the child. As the mother came to the door, the prophet (previously informed by God of her coming) salutes her as the wife of Jeroboam, and delivers his message of woe. "Go, tell Jeroboam, thus saith the Lord, forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast not kept my commandments, and followed me with all thy heart, therefore I will bring evil and utter destruction upon the house of Jeroboam. Him that dieth in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it. And when thy feet enter into the city the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn over him; and he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel. Moreover, the Lord shall raise him up a king who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam. For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger; because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin." As the stricken mother came to her beautiful palace at Tirzah, the child died; and they buried him, and all Israel mourned, according to the word of the Lord.

Suffering under the loss of his army, and sick at heart with the death of his son, and the woes to come in the future, Jeroboam, after a reign of twenty-two years, died, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead. Jeroboam was a brave man, but not a great one. His sole object was to prevent the re-union of the tribes. In doing this, he committed the grand error and sin of his life. He lacked entirely trust in God. He did not recognize, in any sense, his subordination to God, as the real King of Israel. He attempted, like Saul, to rule the kingdom upon mere worldly principles, and in doing this, he fell into sin, and the sin brought with it swift destruction.

SECTION XIV.

THE GOOD REIGN OF ASA—CONTEMPORARY KINGS OF ISRAEL—NADAB, BAASHA, ELAH, ZIMRI, (OMRI AND TIENI,) OMRI ALONE, AHAB.

*Asa came to the throne of Judah at a propitious moment. The victory of Abijam had materially increased the strength of the kingdom. Its consequences were felt during the first ten years of Asa's reign, in a happy peace. Asa began his reign in a totally different spirit from his two predecessors. "He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. He took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed the idols that his fathers had made." So thorough was the reformation, that the queen-mother (or grandmother) was removed from her authority, and her idol destroyed. But the high places at which Jehovah was worshipped were not removed. "Nevertheless, his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days; and he brought the things which his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, into the temple, and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment." The happy consequences of this reformation were everywhere visible. The Lord gave the land rest. The pious king brought around him all the real worshippers of Jehovah in the land. They flocked to his standard with great enthusiasm. His enrolled soldiers were five hundred and eighty thousand, all mighty men of valour. This scene of quiet was soon changed by a threatened invasion from the south. Zerah the Ethiopian (or Cushite) came against him with a numerous host, stated as a million of men, with three hundred chariots. Relying upon Jehovah, Asa went out to meet him, and set the battle in array, in the valley of Zephathah. "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, Lord, it is nothing for thee to help, whether with many or with them who have no power: help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee." This prayer was heard. The multitude of the Cushites were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host, and Asa and the people pursued them even unto Gerar. "And they smote the cities round about Gerar, (for the fear of the Lord came upon them,) and took away very much spoil, and sheep and camels in abundance."

As the victorious host of Judah were returning with their spoil, they were met by the prophet Azariah, the son of Oded, with this encouraging message: "Hear ye me, Asa, and Judah, and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while ye be with him;

and if ye seek him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you. For a long season Israel (Judah) hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they, in their trouble, did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. In those times God did vex them with adversity. Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded." Encouraged by this message, Asa addressed himself with new energy to extirpate idolatry. Many strangers from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, fell to him out of Israel. Then these, with all Judah and Benjamin, "in the fifteenth year of Asa, entered into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul; that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire: and he was found of them, and the Lord gave them rest round about."

This was a genuine and lasting revival. So far, Asa's reign was one of the happiest of the kings of Judah. But, in his later years, his faith failed him. When Baasha, king of Israel, came and took Ramah, and built and fortified it, "to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to the king of Judah,"* Asa, the conqueror of Zerah, whose faith had taught him that God could help alike with few or many, now employed the wealth of the temple and the royal treasures to induce the king of Syria to come to his aid, by attacking Baasha. Benhadad, the Syrian king, hearkened to his request, and sent an army against the king of Israel. The plan succeeded. Baasha, when he heard of the Syrian invasion, left building of Ramah, and went to protect his own dominions. With the materials which Baasha had accumulated, Asa built Geba and Mizpah. The unhappy king thus removed his enemy, but incurred the reproof of Hanani the seer. Reminding the king of his former faith and consequent victory, he charges him with the present defection: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards him. Herein thou hast done foolishly,

* In the Chronicles it is said that this took place in the 36th year of Asa; but Baasha died in Asa's 26th year. We must therefore suppose that the time was reckoned from the division of the kingdom, or that a mistake has crept into the account of the chronicler. The first supposition would agree very well with the history, but apparently conflicts with the statement that the peace lasted until Asa's 35th year. But if we make this date also to count from the division, then all will be clear. In favour of this may be urged, that Baasha's attack seems to have been prompted by the passing over of so many to covenant with Asa to serve the Lord: which took place in the 35th year after the separation. We cannot be certain, however, where the mistake lies. It may easily have entered in the course of so many years, and many transcriptions.

therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." Enraged at the bold reproof of the prophet, Asa put him in prison; and, it is added, he oppressed some of the people at the same time, probably those who had disapproved of his conduct. During the last three years of his reign, Asa suffered from disease, but he sought only to the physicians, and not to the Lord for relief. His afflictions seem, for a time at least, to have hardened him more than to correct his faults. He found it easier to relax his hold upon God than to regain it. After three years of suffering, and in the forty-first year of his reign, Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried in his own sepulchre, in the city of David, with a costly and magnificent funeral.

Asa was one of the few kings who obtained the praise that he walked in the steps of David his father. His sincere and prudent zeal against the idolatry of his fathers, and the thoroughness with which he carried out the reformation, entitle him to a place among the best of the kings. He kept steadily in view his true position, as the vicegerent of God, who was the real King of his people. He acted generally from conscience, and not from policy. And though his latter years are stained with unbelief and cruelty, yet we cannot but hope that he lived to repent of his errors, and died in the spirit and blessings of that covenant: "to seek the Lord God of his fathers with all his heart."

We return to the kingdom of Israel. In the second year of Asa, Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, began to reign over Israel. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father. Early in his reign, he marched with a large army into the country of the Philistines, and laid siege to Gibbethon. The siege was cut short by the assassination of the king. Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the tribe of Issachar, rose up against him and slew him, and all his house, until the word of the Lord concerning Jeroboam was fulfilled. Nadab reigned but one year and part of the second; a part of the year being counted as a whole. The dynasty of Jeroboam perished with Nadab.

There does not appear to have been any serious opposition to the designs of Baasha. He succeeded immediately to the honour and power of the king he had murdered. His reign began during the third year of Asa; and he also did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way and sin of Jeroboam. We know little of his reign, except the war with Asa, which ended with the affair at Ramah. We may gather from the account of this event, however, that he had formed an alliance with Benhadad the king of Syria (Damascus). This was probably formed in the early part of his reign. His kingdom thus secure on the north, he turned his arms against Judah, but was called back by the faithless conduct of Benhadad, who, taking the

bribe of Asa, had invaded the kingdom of Israel. In the latter part of his life, he also received a warning from God, by the mouth of Jehu the son of Hanani, in like terms with that sent to Jeroboam, and threatening the destruction of his whole house as a punishment for his sin; for he also made Israel to sin. It is worthy of notice that these men, and the other wicked kings, were not punished alone for their own sin; but for their influence in drawing away the people of God from his service. It would be well if this lesson were borne in mind by those placed in stations of trust and honour. After a reign of twenty-four years, Baasha died, and was buried in Tirzah, (now a royal city,) and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

Elah gave himself up to drunkenness and revelling. His army, under Omri, were sent against Gibbethon, from which the Israelites had retired when his father Baasha murdered Nadab. In the second year of his reign, Zimri, captain of half his chariots, while Elah was drinking himself drunk in the house of the steward, at Tirzah, slew him, and usurped his authority. As soon as Zimri was seated on the throne, he slew the whole house of Baasha, and "left it utterly desolate." Thus expired another of the Israelitish dynasties.

Zimri did not long enjoy the reward of his crimes. So soon as the army at Gibbethon learned that Elah was slain, and the throne usurped by the traitor, they made their general, Omri, king. The siege of Gibbethon was again raised. Omri, with the army, marched to Tirzah, and took the city, after a short siege. Zimri fled to the royal palace, "and burnt the king's house over him with fire," and died, for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord. The murder of Elah, the election of Omri by the army, the march to Tirzah, and the suicide of the murderer, occupied only seven days. Omri did not come to the throne without opposition. The nation were divided into two equal parts, "half of the people followed Tibni son of Ginath, and half followed Omri." After a long conflict, Tibni was conquered. He was unable to cope with the superior generalship and disciplined forces of his rival, and Omri became sole occupant of the throne. There was no principle involved in all these strifes. And though God in his providence used one of these men to punish another, and thus wrought out his holy purpose; yet they were actuated only by the most selfish and cruel lust of power. No one of them appears to have had a thought of any religious reformation. All were alike firmly wed to their idolatry.

Omri came to the throne without any great crime. He reigned in all twelve years, from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-eighth year of Asa. Five of these years were spent in

the war with Tibni. The only thing recorded* of Omri, aside from his religious character—which was worse than any of the kings before him—is the selection of a new capital. Tirzah was incapable of sustaining any siege. Omri himself had taken it almost by storm. He accordingly purchased a hill from Shemer, from whom the city took its name, Samaria. This important city was finely situated, both for strength and beauty. The hill upon which it was placed, rose from the centre of a large plain. The surrounding country was fertile and highly cultivated: and the strength of the place may be best learned from the siege it sustained in the subsequent history of this kingdom. After completing this work, Omri died, and was buried in Samaria. Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

Ahab was both a weak and wicked king. It is recorded of him, “that he did more to provoke the Lord-God of Israel to anger than all the kings that went before him.” The sin of the previous monarchs of Israel consisted in the worshipping of the true God by images. In addition to this, Ahab, having married Jezebel, the daughter of Eth-baal, king of the Zidonians, went and worshipped false gods—Baal and Ashtoreth (Astarti.)* He built a temple and altar to these gods in his capital. The abominable and obscene rites which accompanied the worship of these idol gods, could not but outrage the feelings of every true Israelite. The prophets were unsparing in their rebukes, and consequently incurred the deadly hatred of Jezebel. She took it upon herself to defend the worship and priests of Baal; and Ahab, who was the slave of this haughty woman, gave her the weight of his authority. Now began the martyr age of the prophets. There were large numbers of them at this time in Israel. One man (Obadiah, the governor of the king’s house) concealed and sustained an hundred. Many were murdered. More probably fled into the neighbouring kingdom. Everything went as Jezebel wished. The weak king publicly worshipped her idols; and the whole nation, apparently, bowed the knee to Baal.

* From an allusion, in the later history, it appears that he must either have been at war with Syria (Damascus) or else have tamely submitted to his authority. For Benhadad boasts to Ahab that his father had made streets in Samaria. A little incident occurred in the reign of Ahab, showing clearly the fulfilment of the divine threatenings. Notwithstanding the curse of Joshua, a man by the name Hiel determined to rebuild Jericho. “He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates in his youngest son Segub.”

† It is generally believed that Baal and Astarti were personifications of the sun and moon, the most ancient idolatry of the eastern nations.

SECTION XV.

AHAB'S REIGN CONTINUED—HISTORY OF ELIJAH THE PROPHET—AHAB'S WAR WITH BENHADAD—THE SIN OF AHAB—THE REIGN OF JEHOSEPHAT, KING OF JUDAH—THE DEFEAT AT RAMETH—JEHOSEPHAT'S CIVIL GOVERNMENT—HIS COMMERCE—HIS WAR WITH MOAB AND AMMON.

IN this sad state of the kingdom, the prophet Elijah appears before us. This great and bold reformer breaks in upon us, as he probably did upon the idolatrous king, without any warning, and with that startling message.* “And Elijah the Tishbite said to Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these three years, but according to my word.” With this message ringing in his ears, he left the guilty king. He knew what was to be expected from the merciless disposition of Jezebel. “And the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.” Elijah did as commanded, and was fed as was promised. From the want of rain the brook failed, and God, taking care for his faithful servant, “commanded him to go to Zarephath, which belonged to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went, and found the woman at the gate of the city gathering sticks, and called to her to bring him a little water to drink. As she was going for the water, he asked her to bring him a morsel of bread in her hand.” At this request the generous woman was brought to confess her situation. “As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse: and behold I am gathering sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.” She also, in a strong faith, went and did as directed, and to her the promise was abundantly fulfilled.

This was all evidently miraculous. The whole history here contains more miracles than any other part of the sacred his-

* It is worthy of notice that the history of Elijah and Elisha occupy more space than the political history of the kingdom. The same thing is characteristic of the whole history, and shows its design. Only those kings are dwelt upon at any length whose reigns are in some way connected with the religious condition and training of the people. This is the main element in all the books.

tory, if we except the period of the exodus, and the life of our Lord.

While Elijah abode at Zarephath, the only son of the widow fell sick and died. In her anguish the mother came to the prophet, "and said, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" Moved at the sight of her grief, "Elijah took her son and laid him upon his own bed, And cried unto the Lord, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord: O Lord my God, I pray thee let the child's soul come to him again." The Lord heard the voice of Elijah; the child was restored to life, and the astonished mother professes her faith, "by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." Thus was this woman rewarded for her faith and her kindness to the exiled prophet.

After three years, Elijah, by the command of God, goes to meet Ahab, and declare to him the return of rain. The king had not been quiet in the mean time. Finding the word of the prophet true, and his land suffering from thirst, he had sought for Elijah, and had sent to every kingdom, taking an oath from them that they knew not where he was. It was with no kind intention that Ahab sought Elijah. He had been only hardened by his reproof, and sought his life.

The land was now groaning with a famine. As Elijah went to Ahab, he met Obadiah, a good man, one who feared God in the midst of the general apostacy, and had showed kindness to the persecuted prophets. Obadiah was in office at the court, and was now going in one direction, while the king went in another, in search of water. When Obadiah met the prophet, he fell on his face, and said, "Art thou that my lord Elijah?" He answered, "I am; go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here." Obadiah objected that while he was gone Elijah would disappear, and the disappointed king would slay him in his anger. He pleads his former kindness to the prophets, in the persecutions of Jezebel, as a reason why he should not thus be exposed to the cruel tyranny of Ahab. "Then Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day." Obadiah went and called the king. When Ahab saw Elijah, "he said, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel: but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Then follows the scene between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. At the command of Elijah, Ahab, who was now awed by the miraculous

powers of Elijah, gathered all Israel and the false prophets at Carmel. Elijah then appealed unto the people: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. The people answered not a word." Elijah then proposed that Baal's prophets should build an altar, and slay the sacrifice: and that he, as the only prophet of the God of Israel, should do the same; and that the God who answered by fire from heaven should alone be worshipped as the true God. The besotted idolatrous priests accepted the proposition. They first built their altar, prepared their sacrifice, and called upon Baal from morning until noon. Elijah then taunted them: "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or peradventure he is sleeping, and must be awaked." Provoked by this irony, they lacerated themselves with knives, but to no purpose. When this farce had gone so far that all were satisfied, Elijah called all the people unto him, and repaired the broken altar of the Lord. And took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes, and built an altar, surrounded with a deep trench. Upon the altar were laid the pieces of the victim; and then four barrels of water were poured upon the sacrifice and the altar. To show that there was no fraud, this was done a second and a third time, until the trench was full. Then, at the time of the evening sacrifice, in the calmness and majesty of a simple faith, with no outcries or cuttings, he utters his prayer: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water in the trench. When the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, The Lord he is the God: the Lord he is the God." While the people were yet under the influence of this astonishing miracle, Elijah commanded them to take these false prophets and slay them at the brook Kishon, which ran at the foot of the mountain. Ahab, no doubt, gave his consent to the sentence of the prophet, which was in accordance with the express command of God's law. (Deut. xiii. 5.)

He then promised the king that there should be abundance of rain, and went again to the top of Carmel to pray that the promise might be fulfilled. After waiting long, and sending his servant seven times to look for its approach, his prayer was answered. A little cloud arises out of the Mediterranean, gradually covers the heavens with blackness, and pours its waters upon the thirsty earth. And Elijah went with Ahab to Jezreel.

We should think that such a series of miracles would have convinced the wicked Jezebel, or at least have awed her into submission to the service of Jehovah. But the moment she learned the execution of her prophets, she avows her purpose to take the life of Elijah, in revenge. To escape her wrath, the prophet fled into Judah, from thence to Beersheba, and from thence a day's journey into the desert, toward Sinai. He who had been so bold, and reproved Ahab to his face, was now fearful before the passion of this haughty woman. In despair, at the want of the success he had probably anticipated, he requests that he may die. "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." While in the desert, "an angel touched him, and said, Arise, eat. And he looked, and behold, a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head: and he did eat and drink, and laid down again." This was repeated a second time, and in the strength of this the prophet went forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God.

In Horeb the Lord appeared to him, with the question, "What dost thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." To the despairing prophet, God revealed himself, in a strong wind, in the earthquake, and in the fire; and after these displays of his power, he came in the still small voice; "and when Elijah heard it he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the mouth of the cave." The same question was asked as before, and the same answer returned. And the Lord said, "Go to the wilderness of Damascus, and anoint Hazael king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat prophet in thy room. He that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and he that escapeth Jehu shall Elisha slay." God having thus appointed the instruments by whom he would vindicate his justice, encourages the sinking faith of Elijah, by this unexpected assurance: "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, which have not bowed the knee unto Baal." So he departed thence and found Elisha ploughing in the field; and he cast his mantle over him; and immediately Elisha left all and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him. He could not mistake or resist the divine impression, which followed the act of Elijah. Like the apostles, at the calling of our Lord, there was no delay or questioning. Elijah now disappears from the history for a time. Doubtless he and his scholar were earnestly engaged in the private duties of their

office; building up the schools of the prophets, and strengthening the faith of the true Israel of God.

During the general apostacy, and probably led on by the distress of the people in the famine, Benhadad, the king of Syria, invaded the dominions of Ahab. He came with a large number of tributary princes; and advanced, without serious opposition, to the capital itself. Exulting in his success, he sent messengers to Ahab; "thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also, and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine." The terrified Ahab consented at once to his insulting demands: "I am thine, and all that I have." Upon this submission Benhadad sends again the former message, with this addition, that his servants should search the palace and houses of Samaria, and take away whatever was desirable to its owner. This outrageous demand gave Ahab the courage of despair. He called a council of his officers, and they advised him not to consent. To Benhadad's demand, he replied, that he would do as at first proposed, but further he could not go. The Syrian king boasts that he would utterly destroy Samaria. "The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. And the king of Israel answered, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Benhadad now prepared to execute his threat, and pressed the siege with vigour.

In this emergency, the prophets, who were always in the true sense patriotic, appeared to encourage the king, whom they knew mainly as a persecutor, but now as the defender of God's chosen people. One of them assured him, in the name of Jehovah, "Behold, I will deliver the great multitude of thine enemies into thy hand, this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." And Ahab said, By whom? The prophet answered, By the young men of the provinces, and that the king himself should lead in the battle. Ahab then numbered two hundred princes, and seven thousand men. With this small force he marched out, and attacked the Syrian host, while engaged in drinking and feasting. Benhadad gave his orders without leaving his cups, that the company of the Israelites should be captured and brought into the camp. But a sudden panic seized his men. A supernatural fear fell upon them, and they were powerless before the Israelites. Benhadad and his host fled, and the king of Israel smote the horses, and chariots, and Syrians, with a great slaughter.

The prophet warned the victorious king to strengthen himself for another attack. The Syrians were not discouraged at their defeat. The battle which they had lost had been fought with chariots, and upon rough ground. The counsellors of

Benhadad advised him to number an army like the previous one, and to meet the Israelites in the plain; where (as they termed them) the gods of the hills would not assist them. At the return of the year, accordingly, Benhadad came with his host, and encamped in Aphek, probably in the great battle-plain of Esdraclon. The children of Israel, who went out to meet them, were like little flocks of kids, while the Syrians filled the land. At this juncture Ahab was again assured of success. "A man of God came to him, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because they said, The Lord is God of the hills and not God of the valleys, I will deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." After seven days the Syrians were again defeated, with numerous loss. An hundred thousand men perished in the battle, and twenty-seven thousand by the fall of a wall in Aphek. By the advice of his servants, the boastful Syrian now casts himself upon the mercy of Ahab. Instead of using his victory to break the power of his enemy, and the enemy of God and the true religion, this infatuated king salutes him by the name of brother, and sends him away in peace, with the condition that the cities which his father had taken should be restored, and Ahab should have the right of building streets in Damascus.

Upon this, a prophet, getting another man to wound him, presents himself, covered with ashes and disguised, to the king, with this parable: "Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and behold a man turned aside and brought a man unto me: and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." The king replied, that the judgment should be according to the agreement. And the prophet, taking the ashes from his face, applied the parable to the king. "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." The victorious king, in the midst of his triumphs, returned to Samaria, displeased and sorrowing.

We now get a glimpse of the private life of this wicked king, and Elijah breaks upon us again with his bold and stern rebukes. Near by the palace of Ahab was the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. Ahab wished to secure it as an addition to his gardens, and offered to purchase it at its value. But it was the inheritance of Naboth, and, by the law of God, could not be alienated. He therefore declined the offers of the king. Vexed at his failure, Ahab went to his palace, and refused to see his friends, or even to eat bread. Jezebel, learning the cause of his grief, and knowing no conscience at any steps which might

reach her ends, regardless of all law, both of God and of humanity, sent her commands to have Naboth slain, under pretence of blasphemy. The rulers were ready to obey her commands. A religious fast was proclaimed, false witnesses were brought to prove the guilt of Naboth; he was condemned and executed, though innocent; and Jezebel went with the welcome intelligence to her childish and pettish husband. And Ahab went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth.

But he was not to enjoy the possession thus wickedly acquired. At the command of God, Elijah went down and found Ahab in his new possession, and said to him, "Hast thou killed and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. And Jezebel also shall the dogs eat by the wall of Jezreel." Upon this rebuke of the prophet, Ahab humbled himself, and apparently repented, though after-events proved it insincere. Yet even this assumed temporary repentance led to a modification of the sentence. Elijah was informed that the evil which was denounced upon Ahab himself, should not come until the days of his son. The remainder of Ahab's life is inwoven with the history of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, to which we now return.

Jehoshaphat ascended the throne at the age of thirty-five, after the long and prosperous reign of Asa, his father. "He walked in the first ways of David, and sought the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." He was still more zealous against the idolatry and sinfulness of the land than Asa. "Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand: and he had riches and honour in abundance." In the third year of his reign, he established an itinerant ministry of princes and Levites, who went throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people out of the book of the law of the Lord. Thus faithful to God, the kingdom of Judah was united and happy, while their brethren of Israel were rent and distracted with civil wars. The fear of the Lord fell upon the neighbouring kingdoms, so that they made no war with Jehoshaphat. The Arabians and Philistines brought large presents and trinkets. With a united people at home, and at peace with foreign nations, Jehoshaphat "waxed great exceedingly, and built castles and store cities." His army was divided into five parts, under five generals, and amounted to one million one hundred and sixty thousand men,

men of valour. There were, besides, the forces in actual service as guards of the cities. Under this king, Judah rose to a power and wealth which it had not known since the separation. For more than half his reign, Jehoshaphat was thus contented and prosperous. At length, however, he committed the great mistake of joining himself in affinity with the impious Ahab. He united his son Jehoram in marriage with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

While at the court of the Israelitish king, Ahab proposes that they should unite their forces, to wrest Ramoth-gilead from the hands of the king of Syria.* This was an important place in the country of the eastern tribes. Jehoshaphat accedes to the proposition at once. He was not, however, willing to commence the war without consulting God by the prophets. Ahab gathered his false prophets, and they, of course, gave him the highest assurance of success. Still Jehoshaphat was not satisfied, and, at his request, Ahab sent and called for Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord, at the same time stating that he hated him on account of his faithful reproofs. As the two kings, in royal apparel, were sitting in the gate of Samaria, and the false prophets were vociferously urging them to go to the battle, Micaiah came into their presence. To the question of Ahab, he answered in the words of the false prophets, but in an ironical tone, "Go and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." Ahab adjured him to tell nothing but the truth, and the prophet answered, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep without a shepherd: and the Lord said, *These have no master*; let them return every man to his house in peace." Ahab understood this as a discouraging answer, and as an implied reflection upon his weakness, and blamed Micaiah. The prophet then relates a vision which had been made known to him: that God had permitted the false prophets to persuade Ahab to go to Ramoth to die there. To the injuries and insults of the false prophets, this bold man answers only by referring them to the time when his predictions should be fulfilled. The enraged king commands him to be imprisoned until he should come in peace. "And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Harken, O people, every one of you." The fearful words of the prophet did not change the purpose of the kings. They marched against Ramoth. In the battle, Ahab, fearing the truth of the prophet's words, disguised himself, while Jehoshaphat fought as king. Benhadad ordered his officers to direct all their efforts

* Ahab was thus reaping the reward of his morbid clemency to this faithless and ungrateful king. It had not been more than twelve years since Ahab spared his life, and we find him already in possession of a part of Ahab's dominions.

against the king of Israel. They accordingly pursued after Jehoshaphat, but, discovering their mistake, turned back to seek Ahab. Ahab's scheme did not save him. "A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness, or armour." (God accomplished his purposes and fulfilled the word of the prophet, even by what we term a random shot.) The battle was obstinately contested till night, when the order was given for every man to seek his city, and every man his country. Ahab died at evening, and was buried in Samaria. The blood from his chariot was given to the dogs, according to the word of Elijah. His son Ahaziah reigned in his stead. Ahab was of a weak, yielding character, and, under the influence of Jezebel, sold himself to work wickedness. His reign is only remarkable as it includes so large a part of the miracles and teachings of Elijah; which, however they failed of producing any permanent effect upon the mind of the king, must yet have been a great blessing to the seven thousand pious of Israel.

When Jehoshaphat returned from Ramoth, Jehu the son of Hanani met him, and reprov'd him for his unwise expedition. "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God." He then went through his kingdom, reclaiming those who had wandered from the faith. He established judges in the cities, and charged them "to judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment. Wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts."* A supreme council, composed of priests, Levites, and chief of the fathers, was established at Jerusalem. To these the more important causes were referred for adjudication: and they were charged to deal faithfully and courageously in the fear of Jehovah. Amariah the chief priest was to preside in all religious questions, and Zebadiah, ruler of the house of Judah, in civil matters.

Having thus provided for the administration of justice, Jehoshaphat turned his attention to commerce. He built ships at Ezion-geber, to go to Ophir for gold. That port, and the intervening country, were still under the power of Judah. At first he allowed the king of Israel to take part in the enterprise. For this the ships were broken. Taught by the prophet Eliezer as to the cause of the misfortune, Jehoshaphat declined any

* It seems most probable that the 82d Psalm was composed at this time, and addressed to these judges.

further offers from Ahaziah, and prosecuted the enterprise alone. The trade does not appear to have been very successful, and was not long continued.

Soon after this, we find Jehoshaphat in alliance with the kings of Israel, and engaged in carrying on a war with Moab. Moab had fallen to the kingdom of Israel in the separation. Until the death of Ahab it remained in subjection, but then rebelled. Jehoshaphat lent his aid to the king of Israel in reclaiming it to his subjection. Exasperated at the part he had taken in this war, the children of Moab turned their wrath against him. They enlisted the Ammonites and Edomites in their cause, and secured aid from the Syrians. From all these sources a large army was gathered, and marched against Jehoshaphat. They entered the land of Judah, and pitched their camp at Engedi. Alarmed at this array, "Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." The whole congregation were assembled, and the king stood in the court of the temple, and prayed, acknowledging the sovereign power of God in all things, and in planting Judah as a nation; pleading his promises to hear the cries of his people in their emergency; urging their present danger and distress as a ground and motive for his present interference, closing with these memorable words of humility and faith, "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." In the silence that pervaded that vast assembly, a single voice was heard, pronouncing deliverance. Jahaziel, a Levite, moved by the Spirit of the Lord, encouraged them to go without fear and meet the enemy, "and then to stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, for the battle is not yours, but God's." Upon this assurance, the king, and all the congregation, bowed their faces, and offered praise unto God. In the morning they went as directed to meet their threatening foe; but not so much in the strength of arms, as in the strength of faith. As they went, the singers went before them, praising God, "whose mercy endureth for ever." When they began to sing, the allied forces, from a supernatural influence, quarrelled among themselves, and destroyed one another; so that when the army of Jehoshaphat reached the scene of strife, their enemies were fallen, "and nothing was left for them but to take the spoils of the slain." After four days they returned with great joy, and songs of thanksgiving. "And the fear of God was on all those countries when they heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest round about." Thus ended the days of this pious king. "He reigned twenty-five years, and departed not from that which

was right in the sight of the Lord." He was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

Jehoshaphat was among the best of the kings of Judah. The kingdom was never more happy or prosperous than under his reign. He sought the Lord with all his heart; and proved the power of a strict adherence to his faith, to make a people both great and good. He was loved by his people, respected by foreign nations, and feared by his foes. He did more to settle the kingdom upon its right principles than all who had preceded him, from David onward. He was never elated by success. He was humble and relying upon the guidance and arm of God in all events. He strictly adhered to his principles to the last; and in the final public act of his life, his humility and his faith shine the clearest. He stands before us as a model of a wise, benevolent, and pious king.

SECTION XVI.

AHAZIAH'S REIGN—HISTORY OF ELISHA, AND THE REIGN OF JEHORAM—NAAMAN THE LEPER—THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA AND ITS MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE—THE ANOINTING OF JEHU AND HAZAEL—THE REIGN OF JEHORAM AND AHAZIAH KING OF JUDAH.

THE remaining acts of Jehoshaphat's reign follow those of the king of Israel. He could not well extricate himself from the alliance he had made. We resume, therefore, the thread of the Israelitish history, at the time of the death of Ahab. Ahaziah his son came to the throne at a most unfortunate juncture of affairs. His kingdom weakened by the disaster at Ramoth, and the hearts of his best subjects alienated by the shameless idolatry of Ahab, he did nothing to reclaim their affections, "but walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and did evil in the sight of the Lord; and served Baal, and worshipped him."

After a short reign of between one and two years, he met with an accident which was fatal in its result: "He fell through a lattice in his upper chamber, in Samaria, and was sick." True to the idolatrous faith of his parents, Ahaziah sent to consult Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. On their way thither, the messengers were met by Elijah, sent from the Lord with this message to the king: "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now, therefore, saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up." Thus warned, the messengers suddenly return to their master, and deliver the message which they had received. From the description of his

person, as well as from the tenor of his words, the king knew that the man who had thus boldly arrested his servants, was Elijah. Determined to secure him, he sent a captain and fifty men to bring him into his presence. The officer went up to the prophet, and said, "Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down and consume thee and thy fifty;" and fire came down and consumed them. This was repeated a second time, with a like result. Still persisting in his purpose, and unaffected by the judgments his men had experienced, a third captain was sent to arrest the prophet. This captain, wiser than his master, came and besought Elijah, "O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight." His prayer was granted. Warned of God, the prophet arose at once, and went down to the king; and repeats the message in person which he had previously sent by the king's messengers. "Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord, which Elijah had spoken; and Jehoram, or Joram, (his brother,) reigned in his stead."*

Elijah had now finished his public labours; and the time of his departure was at hand. Conscious of this, he determines upon a circuit among the schools of the prophets, giving them his final instructions and benediction. Elisha, who had been forewarned of his master's coming departure, steadfastly adhered to his purpose of accompanying him in this last journey. At Gilgal, at Bethel, and at Jericho, Elijah urges him to remain, but the only answer of this faithful follower is, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." As these two went on, they came to the Jordan, and Elijah, as if to make a last display of the miraculous power so long intrusted to him, "took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither so that they two went over on dry ground." Before he was taken from him, Elijah asked Elisha what he should do for him; and Elisha, conscious of the difficult duties before him, answers, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." "And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." "As they still went on and talked, behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." "Elisha saw it, and said, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." But though bereaved, he was not without support; he

* In 2 Kings i. 17, it is said that Jehoram's reign began in the second year of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. As Jehoshaphat reigned after this nearly eight years, it is supposed that he admitted his son to reign with him for nine years before his death. The date here refers to the years of his reign as associate king.

had fulfilled the condition, and he received the promise. The mantle of Elijah remained with him, (that mantle with which he had been called, that mantle with which the last miracle of Elijah had been wrought,) as a pledge and token of the spirit and power of Elijah.

Having thus followed his master to the last, he turned back, and smiting the waters of Jordan, said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he had also smitten the waters they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over." Witnessing both miracles, the sons of the prophets at Jericho "went out to meet Elisha, and bowed themselves to the ground before him, and said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." Wanting the faith or knowledge of their master, as to the ascension of Elijah, they seek leave to go and search for him. Elisha gave a reluctant consent; and the search was vain.

Elisha wrought another miracle at Jericho. The waters of that city, like most of the springs near the Dead Sea, were brackish. The men of the city came to the prophet for help, and as if to confirm their faith in the fulness of his Divine mission, he took salt and cast it into the waters, "and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land; and the waters were healed."

He now passes on from Jericho to Bethel, another school of the prophets. On his way thither, there came out little children (or perhaps young men,) instigated by their idolatrous parents, "and mocked him, saying, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head." There was an evident allusion to the ascent of Elijah in these words, and an impious assertion of their unbelief. God was insulted by the insults heaped upon his prophets: Elisha, inspired to pronounce their sentence, turned back, and pronounced a curse upon them, "in the name of the Lord." The judgment was speedily executed; "there came forth two she-bears from the wood, and tore forty and two children of them." The prophet then went on to Carmel and Samaria.

The history of Elisha now falls in with the civil history of the kingdom. Joram was better than his father Ahab. Either from the influence of the prophet, or from the influence of Jehoshaphat, with whom he was in alliance, he took away the statue of Baal. The reformation, however, went no further than this. There was no attempt made to correct the sin of Jeroboam. After the death of Ahab and the defeat at Ramoth, the king of Moab, who had been tributary to Israel, revolted. Joram persuaded Jehoshaphat to join him in an expedition to bring this king back to his allegiance. It was probably impossible for him now to reach or subdue Moab in any other way. The ways on the east of the Dead Sea were shut in by the victorious Syrians under Benhadad. The joint armies of Judah and Israel, with the army

of the king of Edom,* were therefore led through the wilderness of Edom. After a seven days march, they were distressed for the want of water. Joram was in despair at the calamity, but Jehoshaphat inquires for a prophet. One of Joram's servants told him that Elisha was present in the camp; upon learning this, the three kings went down to his tent. "And Elisha said to the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father and mother." The king urges the danger and straits of the army, and impliedly confesses the inability of his father's gods to help. Still, however, the prophet, unsatisfied with this insincere profession, continues, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee." Then calling for a minstrel to sooth his agitated spirit, he commands them in the name of the Lord, "Make this valley full of ditches; for thus saith the Lord, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord; he will deliver the Moabites also unto your hand, and ye shall smite their cities, and mar their land." According to the prediction, in the morning the water came, and that in great abundance.

The same water proved a snare to the Moabites. Learning the approach of the kings, they had marshalled their forces, and were now in sight of their enemies. Looking upon the water, as it lay under the light of the morning sun, they supposed it to be blood, and that the allied forces had smitten each other. They then rushed on, confident of victory. Instead, however, of a deserted camp, they met the Israelitish army ready for battle. They fled at once in the greatest panic, and were pursued to their own land; their cities were beaten down, their trees felled, their land marred with stones, and the king himself besieged in his capital. In despair at his misfortunes, the king of Moab attempts to cut his way through the forces of his enemies and escape. Failing in this, he then sacrificed his eldest son, as a burnt-offering, on the wall of his capital city. Struck with horror at this dreadful act, the kings of Judah and Israel withdrew their armies and returned into their own land.

The narrative turns at once from this last extremity of war to the mission and deeds of Elisha as a messenger of good. The widow of a prophet tells him that her husband, having died in debt, the creditor was come to take her sons as bondmen, and pleads for his assistance. Elisha asks what she had wherewith she could aid herself. She replied, there was nothing

* The king of Edom mentioned here, 2 Kings. iii. 9, could only have been a viceroy or governor, as we are expressly told 1 Kings xxii. 47, that there was no king in Edom at this time.

left save one pot of oil. He then commanded her to borrow empty vessels from her neighbours, and fill them from the single vessel until they were full. The widow did as she was directed, and selling the oil, thus miraculously multiplied, paid her debt, and saved her children from bondage.

In the course of his journeyings Elisha came to Shunem, where lived a "great woman." She often entertained the prophet hospitably. Perceiving him to be "a holy man of God," and longing to enjoy his converse, she at length proposed to her husband that they should build a chamber for the prophet, where he might rest in his journeys. The chamber was built and furnished, and eventually the prophet became its occupant. Grateful for this constant kindness, he commanded Gehazi, his servant, to call the woman, and said, "Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care: what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of his host?" She chose, however, to decline the prophet's offer, "and to dwell among her own people." Still she lacked, as Gehazi had learned, one thing to complete her happiness. "She had no child." Upon learning this, Elisha had her recalled, and promised her a son. The child grew up until he was able to accompany his father into his harvest-field, and then the hopes of his friends were crushed by his sudden death. The godly mother immediately turns herself to him from whom she had received her son by promise. She had faith that he who had given her the child could now restore him to her. She accordingly goes with all haste to the man of God. To the remonstrance of her husband, she simply answers, "It shall be well." "So she came to the man of God, at Carmel;" and to the questions of Gehazi, who had been sent to meet her, "Is it well with thee, and thy husband, and thy child?" she answers with a wonderful faith and resignation, "It is well." When she came where the prophet was, with all the depth and tenderness of a mother's sorrow, she informs him of her loss. "Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?" Elisha immediately sent Gehazi to lay his staff upon the child. But the mother, conscious that her son was dead, was not thus easily satisfied. "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee," was her steadfast purpose. Gehazi's errand, as the mother had conjectured, was in vain. "The child had not awaked." When Elisha reached the house, he found indeed that it was no swoon, but natural death. "He went in, therefore, and shut the door, and prayed unto the Lord." Then using the natural means, which Elijah had used in a like case before him, his prayer was answered, and the child, raised to life, was restored again to its mother.

The next event recorded in the history of Elisha was heal-

ing of the poisoned pottage. "There was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were seething their pottage." One of their number, by mistake, had gathered a poisonous fruit, and mingled it with their food. As they were about to eat, they discovered the mistake, and, appealing to Elisha, he cast meal into the pot, and miraculously neutralized the poison, so that they eat with safety.

He then feeds and sustains, with twenty small loaves, an hundred of his brother prophets—a miracle which reminds us, very strongly, of those which were wrought by our Saviour, in his day.

Some time in the course of the previous events, occurs the history of Naaman, the Syrian general. This man was of great importance to his king; by his hand, indeed, had God given deliverance to Syria. But, with all his greatness, he was an incurable leper. Among the servants of his wife there was a captive Israelitish maid, who had heard of Elisha, and gave utterance to her faith, "Would God my lord were with the prophet in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." This saying was told to Naaman, and by him to the king. Naaman went to the king of Israel, with letters from the king of Syria, and a large present in silver and gold. The king saw in it only a plan to provoke a war; but Elisha sent to him to let Naaman "come to him, and he should know that there is a prophet in Israel." Naaman went accordingly, with all his train, and stood at the door of Elisha. As a leper he could not enter the house, and Elisha went not out to meet him, as he had expected, but sent and told him to "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean." Enraged at this, because he was not healed in the way he expected to be, Naaman was about to return home; but, yielding to the wise entreaties of his servants, he at length went to the Jordan and washed, "and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Gratitude soon led him back to the door of the prophet, which he had just left in pride and anger. He professes his faith in the God of Israel as the only true God, and urged the prophet to take a reward. But Elisha refused. He then asks for earth enough to build an altar unto the Lord, "for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offerings nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord." He sought, however, the indulgence to attend the king of Syria into his idol temple of Rimmon. Elisha, without answering directly his request, dismissed him in peace. Scarcely had he departed, when he was overtaken by Gehazi, who, less scrupulous than his master, had followed the lordly Syrian, and with a lie in his mouth sought from him a gift in the name of his master. Naaman, in the flow of his gratitude, urged upon him double

what he asked. Gehazi returned with his ill-gotten spoil, and having laid it away, "went in and stood before his master." The prophet asked him where he had been; and on his answering, No whither, Elisha, clothing himself in the attributes of a judge, rebuked sternly his avarice, and pronounces upon him the terrible doom, "The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence, a leper as white as snow."

Whatever may have been the morals of the people, the prophets maintained their integrity. An instance of this occurs in the narrative. In the increase of their number they went out to build beside the Jordan, and Elisha went with them. In the course of their labours, while cutting a beam, the axe head of one of them fell into the river. The loss was small, but the axe was borrowed, and this added greatly to the loser's distress. Elisha, however, relieved his anxiety, by miraculously causing the iron to swim.

In the course of the history, Elisha appears again as connected with the interests of the state. The kingdoms of Israel and Syria were again at war. All the plans which Benhadad laid were revealed unto Elisha, and by him made known to the king of Israel. The king of Syria, thus frustrated in every attempt, suspected some traitor in his camp, but on inquiry his servants told him that it was Elisha "who tellest the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Upon this Benhadad sent an armed band, "a great host, to compass Dothan, and bring the prophet to his camp." He does not seem to have thought that this plan could be foreseen and frustrated, as well as the others which he had laid. When they rose in the morning "the host compassed the city with horses and chariots." The servant of Elisha was alarmed; but Elisha calmed his fears, and in answer to his prayer, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The prophet now went forth to meet the enemy, and in answer to his prayer again, "the Lord smote the Syrians with blindness." Elisha then led them to Samaria, where their blindness was removed, and the astonished Syrians saw the prophet in the midst of the city. Jehoram, who saw his enemy thus within his power, would have put them to death, but the prophet prevented him, and sent them back to their master. This put an end to the present campaign. The king of Syria saw that it was vain to contend against supernatural power, and abandoned the contest for the present.

Soon after this, however, Benhadad again led his armies into Israel, and laid siege to Samaria. So strict was the siege, that all communication was cut off, and Samaria suffered the horrors

of a famine. The famine was so severe that the very vilest substances were sold at an enormous price. Nor was this all. Parents, mothers were found feeding upon their deceased children. In his distress, at such scenes at this, the king plunges deeper and deeper into sin, and at last, by a solemn oath, swears to take the life of Elisha. But God forewarns the prophet of his danger; and to the messengers who were come to take him, he predicts by the word of the Lord, "to-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." This promise was incredible to the faithless Israelites, notwithstanding all the miraculous deliverances which they had witnessed. A lord who heard the assurance, openly expressed his unbelief, and the prophet rebuked him with the sentence, "thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not eat thereof." On the following night "the Lord caused the Syrians to hear the noise of a great host," as of the Hittites and the Egyptians, and they arose and fled, and left their tents filled with gold and food. Four lepers, who were hanging around the gate, had resolved, in despair, to cast themselves upon the mercy of the Syrians. When they reached their camp, they found that they had fled. Loading themselves thrice with the spoil, from the Syrian camp, they at length brought the "good tidings to the city." The news was communicated rapidly to the king. Joram at first suspected a snare; that the Syrians had feigned a retreat to lure them from the city, and then turn upon them and take them before they could find a refuge within its walls. Sending out spies, however, he found that the flight was real. As far as Jordan "the way was strewn with garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste." "And the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians," so that the prediction of Elisha was literally fulfilled. Another prophecy also was fulfilled. The lord who had expressed his unbelief of the prophet so boldly and tauntingly, was made keeper of the gate, and in the press of the people, to secure the food, "he was trodden and died;" he saw the abundance, but did not eat thereof.

At some interval after the siege and deliverance, though directly following it in the narrative, we have given to us God's gracious care of the pious Shumanite. As a seven years' famine was about to come, Elisha warned her "to go with her household and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn." She did as Elisha advised, "and went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines." At the end of seven years she returned, but found her land in the possession of others. She went immediately to the king with her cause; who was just then, providentially, listening to Gehazi's account of Elisha's miracles.

Gehazi told the king that this was the woman whose son Elisha had raised to life. Impressed with this coincidence, the king ordered an officer "to restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land until now."

We find Elisha next in Damascus. He went, probably, to fulfil the command given long before to Elijah his master. Hearing of his presence, Benhadad sent Hazael with a present "to the man of God, to inquire whether he should recover from the disease" under which he was then suffering. Elisha answered, "Thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die." The prophet "then settled his countenance and wept." Upon being asked the cause of this, by Hazael, he replied, "I know the evil thou wilt do in Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, their young men, women, and children, wilt thou slay." "Hazael said, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." Hazael went from the prophet, and commenced his career of crime by murdering his master. Soon after this, Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel. Having thus fulfilled the command given to Elisha, we hear no more of him till the reign of Joash. His efforts to reform the people were comparatively fruitless. At length, in a good old age, he was called to follow his master. Among those who gathered around the dying prophet was Joash king of Israel. The king wept over him as the stay and hope of Israel. The prophet once more feeling the inspiration of God upon him, directed the weeping king to take a bow and arrows, and "shoot from the window, eastward." The arrows were symbolical of the Lord's deliverance, and the deliverance from Syria. He then told him "to smite with the arrows upon the ground, and he smote thrice and stayed." Elisha reproved him for not smiting oftener, "for then hadst thou smitten Syria until thou hadst consumed it, but now thou shalt smite it but three times." "Then Elisha died and was buried:" and as if to honour him after death, his bones were gifted by God with the power of restoring a dead body to life. Elisha was little less eminent than Elijah. Though less stern, he was still severe in his reproof of the apostate kings. His miracles were numerous and stupendous; but they failed in accomplishing that for which many of them were wrought. He died as he lived, in the midst of a general apostacy, and with the sad conviction that the chosen people were still to suffer as a consequence of their sins. Men were more willing to weep over his death, as a public calamity, than to yield to his instructions while living.

Having thus followed out the life of Elisha, we turn back to bring up the history of Judah and Israel to the rebellion of Jehu, which exerted so important an influence on both kingdoms. Upon the death of Jehoshaphat, his son Jehoram, who had reigned for some years jointly with his father, succeeded "to the kingdom of his father." Fenced cities were given to the other members of the royal family. Jehoram did not follow the example of his pious father; "but walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab." This departure from the faith was due to the influence of his wife, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, a woman, who, like her mother, knew no restraints in crime. The deplorable results of Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab were already manifest. "Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant he had made with him, and promised him and his children a light for ever."

During his reign the Edomites revolted from the dominion of Judah, "and made themselves a king." Jehoram marched with a large army to recover his dominion, but though successful in a single battle, he was not able to subdue the rebels so as to bring them under tribute. At the same time Libnah revolted, "because he had forsaken the Lord." The specific act which gave rise to this revolt, was probably the inhuman murder of his brothers by the wicked king; such an act might very naturally excite discontent in the fenced cities over which these brothers were placed. Aside from the loss of the Edomites, his kingdom was invaded by the Philistines and Arabians, who ravaged the land, plundered the royal palace, and carried captive the wives and sons of the king, except the youngest son Jehoahaz.

In the midst of his wretchedness and idolatry, he received a warning from Elijah, (who though now dead had been inspired to write this warning, and delivered to one of the prophets to give to the king,) denouncing heavy calamities and personal afflictions, as a punishment for his apostacy and crimes. The sickness which the prophet threatened came upon him in his latter days. After a short reign of eight years, and suffering two years under sore diseases, he died, and public opinion denied him the customary honors of a royal funeral, and refused him burial in the sepulchres of his fathers.

Ahaziah, (Jehoahaz,) his youngest son reigned in his stead. Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned but one year; "like his father he walked in the ways of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord." Jehoram's advisers, and the queen-mother Athaliah, were his only counsellors, "to his destruction."

He immediately joined himself with Joram king of Israel, in a war against Hazael at Ramoth-gilead. In the battle Joram

was severely wounded, "and returned to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds." While lying in his palace he received a visit from the king of Judah, and then occurred the rebellion of Jehu, which was so fatal to both.

SECTION XVII.

JEHU'S CONSPIRACY—AND REIGN—ATHALIAH USURPS THE THRONE OF JUDAH—
JOASH THE KING OF JUDAH—JOASH KING OF ISRAEL—THE HISTORY OF AMAZIAH
AND JEROBOAM (II.)—THE REIGNS OF UZZIAH AND JOTHAM—THE CONSPIRACY
AGAINST ZECHARIAH KING OF ISRAEL—THE CIVIL WAR UNDER MENAHEM, AND
THE INVASION FROM ASSYRIA.

JEHU was anointed king in the camp at Ramoth-gilead. At the command of Elisha, one of the prophets came to the camp, and calling Jehu "from among the captains of the host," "poured oil on his head," and said, Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, and thou shalt smite the house of Ahab, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel." Jehu returned to the council of his fellow captains, and informed them of the commission he had received. They were prepared for the intelligence, and without dissent hastened "to the top of the stairs," and spread their garments beneath his feet, "and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king." This was done in presence of the army, and without any opposition. Jehu lost no time and took no half measures. He immediately entered his chariot and drove for Jezreel, to be the first to tell of his own conspiracy. Joram and Ahaziah were both at Jezreel. Jehu's coming was seen by the watchmen of Jezreel, and two messengers, one after another, were sent by the king to meet him, and were commanded by Jehu to fall in with his own company in the rear. By this time the watchmen recognised the driving as that of Jehu. The king himself now went forth to meet him, and Ahaziah went with him. They met in the field of Naboth. Joram saluted his general with, "Is it peace, Jehu?" "And he answered, What peace, so long as the idolatries of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many." Joram turned to flee, but Jehu, who knew no warning, drew a bow with his full strength, and shot the king through the heart. He then ordered the body to be cast into the field of Naboth, that the word of the Lord by Elijah might be fulfilled: "The blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons will I requite thee in this field." (Ahaziah escaped, but he was pursued and wounded so that he died at Megiddo, a town west of Jezreel, and not far from the mountains of Carmel. "His ser-

vants carried him to Jerusalem and buried him in the sepulchres of his fathers.)*

Jehu went on and entered the city. The news of his conspiracy, however, went before him. Jezebel in the mean time attiring herself in her queenly dress, stood at the window and saluted Jehu as he passed, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" Jehu, unmoved at her question, commanded the eunuchs to throw her down. They did not hesitate to obey his command, and this proud and guilty woman was trodden under foot by Jehu's horses. After he had obtained possession of the palace, and had dined, Jehu sent his servants to bury Jezebel. They found only a few remnants of her body, and as they came to tell their fierce master, he quotes the prophecy of Elijah, "In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel."

Samaria, the capital, was still in the hands of Ahab's sons. Jehu therefore wrote letters to the elders of the city, telling them to choose one of Ahab's seventy descendants, and make him king; but upon receiving a submissive answer, he commands them to show their submission, by beheading their master's sons. The command was executed, and the heads of the slain were brought to him at Jezreel. As he came forth the next morning, he found them lying at the entering of the gate. In the sight of these heads, Jehu explains his conduct as the executioner of the Divine purpose: "and of the word which the Lord had spoken by his servant Elijah." After this he "slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, his kinsfolks and his priests." He then proceeded to Samaria. On the way thither he fell in with the brethren, (relatives, probably nephews,) of Ahaziah, who had heard nothing of the conspiracy, and were on their way to salute the king and queen. These also were taken by this blood-thirsty man, and slain, to the number of forty-two. Further on, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab, and took him into his chariot, that he might "show him his zeal for the Lord," which was now plainly only a cover for his own fierce ambition. When he reached Samaria, he repeated the same exterminating process which he had carried on at Jezreel. With these fell the house and family of Ahab, and the third dynasty of Israel.

Still, however, a large part of his commission remained unexecuted. The adherents and priests of Baal were yet living, and these were strictly within the scope of his commission. To reach his end, Jehu feigns himself a zealous worshipper of Baal, and "proclaimed a solemn assembly" for the idol god. All

* The account in Chronicles xxii. 9, varies slightly from that given in the Kings, which we have followed, (2 Kings ix. 28.)—It seems probable that the events related in the rest of the 9th, and first part of the 10th chapters, occurred before the death of Ahaziah. This would reconcile all the main differences in the two accounts. The narrative of the chronicler is here more condensed.

the worshippers of Baal were brought to this feast. The temple at Samaria was thronged with worshippers, who were clothed with priestly vestments. Those who were suspected of any attachment to the Lord God of Israel, were, by the command of Jehu, carefully excluded. When the temple was thus full, soldiers were posted at every door, who, at a signal from the king, rushed in and put every worshipper to the sword. The images were then brought out and burned, and the temple broken down and defiled.

Although Jehu was thus zealous against the service of Baal, he failed utterly of entering into the true spirit of his calling. He fell readily into the policy of Jeroboam, and maintained the worship of the calves at Bethel and Dan. For this partial obedience he received the assurance "that his children, to the fourth generation, should sit on the throne of Israel." For his disobedience in following the sin of Jeroboam, his dynasty was limited to four generations, and his own reign was troubled with the inroads of the Syrians under Hazael. All the east of Jordan was wrested from his dominion. We hear no more of him than that he reigned twenty-eight years, and was buried in Samaria. Jehu was remarkable for the energy and decision of his character. He was fierce, but his passion never mastered his reason. His plans were adopted, and never flinched from, whatever their execution might cost. His zeal was selfish; it reached no farther than the interests of religion squared with his own ambition. He was raised up by God for special ends, but the methods by which he reached those ends were only his own; and he only is accountable for them. His motives were bad; and we cannot but feel horror-struck at the cruelties and barbarous deeds which everywhere mark his course. Jehoahaz, his son, reigned in his stead.

While the worship of Baal was thus exterminated in Samaria, it fled and established itself in the holy city. Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, was yet in power at Jerusalem. When she heard of the murder or execution of her mother, and her son, she determined to grasp the sceptre herself. Seizing the opportunity, she put all her grandchildren to death except Joash, an infant son of Ahaziah, who was rescued by her daughter, the wife of Jehoiada, the priest, and kept secretly "in the house of the Lord for six years." In the seventh year of Athaliah, Jehoiada revealed the secret to the officers of the guard, "the chief of the fathers, and to the Levites." Finding them loyal to the true heir to the throne, he "brought them into the temple and showed them the king's son." The whole assembly swore allegiance to Joash. Every thing was secretly arranged by Jehoiada, and the Levites and officers, for the crowning of the young king. The courses of the Levites were not dismissed,

so that a large number were congregated in and about the temple. The spears and shields, which had been dedicated and placed in the temple, were given to the captains of the guard. On the day appointed, the young king was brought out into the court of the temple, the crown was placed upon his head, the testimony was given to him, "and they anointed him king." They then clapped "their hands, and shouted, God save the king."

When Athaliah heard the joyful shouts of the people, and the music of the instruments, she came to the temple, and, seeing the newly crowned king surrounded by the people, rent her clothes, and cried, "Treason!" Jehoiada ordered her to be removed from the courts of the temple, and slain.

"Jehoiada then made a covenant between the Lord, and the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord's people." Having thus solemnly covenanted with God, we naturally expect to find them jealous for his honour. From the place of covenanting they rose up and "went to the house of Baal (which Athaliah had built) and brake it down;" its altars and images were broken to pieces, and its priest slain before the altar. The orders and courses of the temple service were restored, and the kingdom settled upon a firm foundation. This revolution was so discreetly planned and executed, that but two persons perished; the usurper and the idolatrous priest.

Joash began to reign in his seventh year. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. During the minority of the king, Jehoiada was regent, and the government was well administered: "but the high-places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high-places." Even Jehoiada found it impossible to break up this custom to which the people were wedded. The attention of Joash was soon turned to the dilapidated condition of the temple, and orders were "given to the priests that the money and dedicated things should be brought into the house of the Lord;" and with the avails of these they were directed to repair the breaches of the house. The priests, however, were not so earnest as the king. In the twenty-third year of his reign nothing had been done. The priests were now called to an account, and another expedient adopted to secure the end. A proclamation was made through Judah, to bring to the Lord the collection that Moses laid upon Israel in the wilderness. "Jehoiada took a chest, and made a hole in the lid of it," and in this all the money-gifts for the temple were deposited. The people offered willingly. After a time the high-priest, and the king's scribe, took the money and counted it, "and gave it to those that did the work, that had the oversight of the temple." "So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by

them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it." They made no vessels of gold and silver until the temple was thoroughly repaired, and then, from the money left, these vessels were made. In all this work, the officers "dealt faithfully," though held to no strict account for the money they received.

Jehoiada died at the advanced age of an hundred and thirty years. "And they buried him among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, (Judah,) both toward God and toward his house." After his death, Joash, seduced by the princes of Judah, who had never heartily consented to Jehoiada's religious government, "left the God of his fathers, and served groves and idols." The prophets were sent with their warnings, but were not heard. The infatuated king, galled by the bold reproof of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, notwithstanding all the kindness he had received from Jehoiada, "stoned his son with stones," till he died. And when Zechariah "died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it." For this apostacy from the faith, and this ingratitude to the family of Jehoiada, Joash was visited with the Divine displeasure. The Syrians came into his land, with a small band defeated his army, devastated the country, and besieged the king in Jerusalem. He was able to bribe Hazael to depart, with the treasures of the temple and the crown, and thus preserve himself from entire destruction. Beside these outward calamities, he was visited with a painful disease, and at last died by the hands of his own subjects, who conspired against him "for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest." He was buried in the city of David, but not in the sepulchre of the kings. "Amaziah his son reigned in his stead."

During the long reign of Joash king of Judah, the kingdom of Israel had been undergoing serious changes. Jehoahaz the son of Jehu came to the throne when its power was shut in on every side by the victorious Syrians. The whole land east of Jordan, which constituted two-fifths of the kingdom, was in the possession of Hazael. He did nothing to recover his dominion; but was hemmed in more and more by the armies of Hazael, until at length "all his forces amounted to only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen." Reduced to this extremity, "Jehoahaz besought the Lord; and the Lord hearkened unto him, and gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from the hand of the Syrians, and dwelt in their tents as beforetime." This saviour was Joash his son, who reigned for two years with his father, and then succeeded him in the throne. He bears a fairer character than the most of the Israelitish kings, though he also followed the steps of Jeroboam. It was this king who came and wept at the death-bed of Elisha, and was assured by the prophet that he should be

victorious over the Syrians. The prediction of Elisha was soon fulfilled. In three successive battles the Syrians were defeated, and the cities which they had taken restored to the kingdom of Israel; "for the Lord was gracious unto his people, and had compassion on them; and would not destroy them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Meanwhile Amaziah had also been strengthening himself against his foreign enemies. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not as David his father." As soon as he ascended the throne he "slew the servants which had murdered his father." "But the children of the murderers he slew not, according to the law of Moses"—"that the children should not die for the sin of their fathers." He immediately prepared to check the inroads of the Edomites. For this purpose he gathered the thousands of Judah and Benjamin, from twenty years old and upward. To this immense army he added, as hired forces, "an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel." As he was about to march, a prophet directed him to dismiss his hired forces. Amaziah obeyed, (and thus manifested that he knew his true position as subordinate to Jehovah, the real king,) though it cost him the loss of their aid, and the sacrifice of the reward he had given them. The Israelites were, however, exasperated at their treatment, and on their homeward march "fell upon the cities of Judah, smote three thousand of their inhabitants, and took much spoil. Amaziah led his army "into the Valley of Salt," (the old battle-ground of David's army and the Edomites,) smote ten thousand of the Edomites, captured Selah, their capital city, and cruelly murdered ten thousand of the captives by hurling them from the tops of their native rocks.

After this complete victory, the king strangely adopted the gods of the nation he had conquered, and worshipped them as his gods. For this the anger of the Lord was kindled against him. A prophet was sent to remonstrate against this sin and folly, but his counsel was rejected. The king was hardened to his own destruction.

Puffed up with his victory over the Edomites, Amaziah sent a challenge to Joash, inviting him to battle. Joash, at first, tauntingly declined the challenge; but Amaziah pressed it upon him, and, at last, he marched out and met the king of Judah at Beth-shemesh. The men of Judah were routed; and Joash, capturing the boastful king, entered Jerusalem without resistance. He then "brake down the wall for four hundred cubits," "took the gold and silver, and the vessels that were found in the temple, and the king's treasures, and returned to Samaria." This disastrous fortune came upon Judah "because they sought after the gods of Edom." Amaziah, however, still reigned upon

the throne of David. He never regained the confidence of his subjects, and, like his father, fell a victim to conspiracy. He was slain at Lachish, but brought to Jerusalem and buried in the royal sepulchre. Azariah (Uzziah) his son, who was only sixteen years of age, came to the throne.

After his victory over Judah, Joash returned to Samaria. He did not long survive his conquest. His reign, on the whole, was prosperous. Under his dominion Israel was partially restored to its former glory. He died in peace, at Samaria, and Jeroboam, his son, reigned in his stead. Jeroboam followed in the steps of his father. His reign was long and flourishing. He prosecuted successfully the war with Syria, restored the ancient border, retook Damascus and Hamath, and, so far as the short account reaches, was universally victorious. From the prophet Amos (who wrote during this reign) it appears that this outward success was not followed by any religious reformation. The prophet, accordingly, threatens the Divine displeasure. Nation after nation is called into judgment, and at last the guilty Israelites are cited, and the sentence of God's justice pronounced. Jeroboam reigned forty-one years, and left the kingdom to Zachariah his son.

After this short history of Jeroboam, the narrative brings us back to the kingdom of Judah. Uzziah was made king by the popular will. During the first part of his reign, (while Zechariah, a man of eminent piety, lived,) "he sought God," and prospered. He was successful in his wars against the Philistines, Arabians, and Ammonites. He built the walls and towers of Jerusalem. He dug wells and erected towers in the desert, for his flocks. "He loved husbandry," and fostered it. He organized the army anew, into bands, under twenty-six hundred chiefs, who were sent to war by rotation. For all this host he provided armour, "spears, and helmets, and bows, and slings." He had engines "for shooting arrows and great stones," invented, and placed upon the towers and bulwarks of Jerusalem. "And his name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped until he was strong."

At length, however, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; "he went into the temple of the Lord, to burn incense, and transgressed against the Lord his God." Azariah, the priest, reproved him for his daring presumption, and prevented him from the sacrilege he designed. In the midst of his strife with the bold and conscientious priest, and in the very act of burning incense, he was smitten with the leprosy, and thrust out by the priests. "And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and he dwelt in a several house: and Jotham was over the house, judging the people of the land."

This took place some time before the close of his reign, and

Jotham therefore was associated with his father in the government. Upon the death of Uzziah, Jotham began his reign alone, and reigned sixteen years. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, avoiding the sin of his father. He ruled in the fear of God, and he was prospered accordingly. The Ammonites were constrained to pay a heavy tribute: "The high gate of the temple was built"—new fortifications were constructed in Jerusalem, "castles and towers" were erected "in the mountains of Judah, and in the wilderness." "So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." Jotham died, lamented by his people, and was buried in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.*

While the kingdom of Judah was enjoying these long and prosperous reigns, the neighbouring kingdom was in the midst of civil war. Jeroboam had scarcely died when we find the restless spirit of this people manifesting itself. There appears to have been no strong attachment to any reigning family. Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, had scarcely seated himself on the throne, when Shallum "conspired against him, and slew him before the people, and reigned in his stead." With this king the dynasty of Jehu ceased, according to the word of the Lord to him, "Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel until the fourth generation."

Shallum reigned but one month, when he, in turn, was slain by Menahem, the son of Gadi. Menahem spared no cruelties to establish himself upon the throne; every one who opposed his usurpation was put to the sword. Like the other kings of Israel, he followed in the steps of Jeroboam, "and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." The most memorable event in his reign was the invasion of Pul, the king of Assyria. This is the first that we hear of that kingdom or empire, which was to exert such an influence upon these kingdoms, and which occupies so large a space in the world's history. Menahem at once purchased a peace, and exacted the money, by an arbitrary and oppressive tax, from his people. The ambitious monarch of Assyria was satisfied for the present; but the extortion of Menahem left him little to hope from the loyalty of his people. While he lived, all insurrections were suppressed; but when, after a reign of eleven years, he left the throne to Pekahiah, a conspiracy broke out immediately. One of his captains, Pekah, son of Remaliah, rose up against him, and slew him in the royal palace, "and reigned in his room." Pekah's reign was not a peaceful one.

* In the days of these kings, we have Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah, the prophets. From the warnings in which these prophets abound, we cannot fail to see that the nation was becoming more and more corrupt.

He had scarcely obtained the kingdom when another invasion from Assyria threatened the land. This time the king was not to be satisfied with a bribe—he came for spoil. All the northern part of the kingdom fell a prey to his power, and its inhabitants were carried captive to people his capital. Thus began the fulfilment of that threatening which God had uttered by Moses, against his apostate people. So general was this devastation, that Ephraim alone henceforth expresses the whole kingdom. This terrible calamity drew forth the prophet Isaiah. We hear him lamenting over Ephraim, and yet adding, as the end of all, the mournful conviction: “for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.” Indeed, none of God’s judgments, terrible as they were, made any salutary impression on the people.

SECTION XVIII.

THE REIGN OF AHAZ—THE FALL OF SAMARIA, AND DESTRUCTION OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL—THE GOOD REIGN OF HEZEKIAH—MANASSEH REIGNS WICKEDLY—THE REIGN OF AMON.

HAVING thus lost a large part of his kingdom, and finding himself unable to reclaim it, Pekah allies himself with Rezin king of Damascus, in an attack against the quiet land of Judah. To this kingdom we must now return. From the prophet Isaiah, we learn that the war was cruel as it was unexpected. It began in the latter days of Jotham. The fortresses which he had constructed were now of great service. But just at this juncture, when his experience was most needed, he was removed from the throne, and the kingdom left to the young and inexperienced Ahaz. To add to their calamity, Ahaz proved one of the most corrupt of the kings of Judah. “He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, made molten images for Baalim, caused his sons to pass through the fire, and sacrificed and burnt incense in every high place.” As we might expect, the armies of such a king could not stand against their foes. They were given into the hands of Rezin and Pekah. A large number of the people were carried captive to Damascus. In the battle with Pekah, one hundred and twenty thousand fell, and a greater number still were taken captive. But as the king of Ephraim returned to Samaria* “with his captives and his spoils,” the prophet Obed met him and forbade the enslavement of their brethren. The nobles of Ephraim generously seconded the

* Rezin appears to have gone on with his army across the kingdom of Ahaz, to the desert of Arabia, and captured the city of Elath, at the head of the Red Sea. This shows clearly how effectually Ahaz was subdued, when a hostile army could pass through the land without opposition.

message of the prophet, and said unto them that came from the war: "Ye shall not bring in the captives hither; for whereas we have offended against the Lord, ye intend to add more to our sins and our trespass." Upon this double remonstrance, the captives were fed and clothed, and carried back to their brethren at Jericho.

While Ahaz was thus suffering from the allied powers of Syria and Ephraim, he was also attacked by the Philistines on the south, who took possession "of six towns, with their villages." At the same time the Edomites threw off the yoke of Ahaz, marched into Judah, "and carried away captives."* "For the Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz, who made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord."

The distress of Ahaz wrought no reformation. Though warned by Isaiah (vii. 10.) not to fear, and assured of deliverance from his foes, he yet "sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria," "to save him from the hand of Syria and Israel." With the ambassadors he sent all the treasures, royal and sacred, and even became tributary to the monarch of Assyria. The Assyrian king accepted the conditions, marched immediately against Rezin, slew him in battle, and captured Damascus. Upon this, Ahaz went to Damascus to meet his new ally. While there, he sacrificed to the gods of Syria. Nor was this all; he determined to carry the nation with him in his idolatry. He found Urijah the priest a fit instrument for his purpose. Against the king's return, Urijah had constructed an altar after the pattern which had been sent from Damascus. Upon this altar the king himself, with his more guilty priest, offered offerings and sacrifices continually. The brazen altar was removed from its place, the lavers were taken from their bases, the brazen sea taken down from the oxen "that were under it, the doors of the house of the Lord were shut up," "and altars built in every corner of Jerusalem." Thus, having abolished the public worship of God, and made high places unto other gods in every city, this miserable king passes from our notice. The only record which remains is, "that he was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings." He had lived to see his country wasted, his subjects made captive, and his kingdom pass into a more tributary power. The ally which he sought in his distress proved a troublesome protection, whose temporary favour could be bought only with the wealth of the kingdom. Hezekiah, his son, reigned in his stead.

In the meantime, the kingdom of Israel was rapidly tending to its fall. Pekah did not long enjoy his victory over Ahaz. He was slain in a conspiracy by Hoshea, the son of Elah.

* Perhaps we may place the prophecy of Obadiah here.

“Hoshea did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel before him.” Fearing the Assyrian power, Hoshea entered into an alliance with So, king of Egypt, and failed in his tribute to Assyria. This caused Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, to march an army into the land of Israel and besiege Samaria. After a three years’ siege Samaria was taken, “and the people of Israel carried away into Assyria.” Hoshea had reigned nine years,* and with him the kingdom of Israel came to its end. “For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and had feared other gods.” For this they were punished. Although warned by the prophets, and besought to turn from their evil ways, yet they had rejected his statutes and his covenant, and gone after the heathen and their vanities. They had left the commandments of the Lord, and worshipped Baal. “They had caused their sons to pass through the fire, and used enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil.” “Therefore, the Lord was very angry, and removed them out of his sight: as he had said by all his servants, the prophets.” They had not fallen from any political necessity, but solely from their apostacy and sin. From the days of Jeroboam, onward, every king had failed utterly to recognize his true relation to God, and therefore they were rejected.

While the Israelites were thus removed to other parts of the Assyrian empire, men from Babylon, Ava, Sepharvaim, and Hamath, were brought in to supply their place. These inhabitants brought their idolatry with them, and, being infested with lions, sent to the king of Assyria. A priest accordingly was sent to them, “who should teach them the way (as they termed it) of the God of the land.” Thus originated the mixed religious worship of the Samaritans; “they feared Jehovah and served their own gods.” This sad end of Israel did not fail to attract the notice of the prophets of Judah. Their calamity is made the ground of warning to the nobles of Jerusalem. A warning, alas! not heeded, though faithfully and repeatedly pressed upon their attention.

Still, however, the kingdom of Judah was yet to experience the favour of God. The prophecy of Isaiah received its first fulfilment in the coming of a better earthly king. Hezekiah came to the throne at the age of twenty-five, and immediately began to restore the true religion. “He did that which was

* The chronology of this reign is much perplexed. Some have supposed that there was a space of ten years between Pekah and Hoshea. The duration of the kingdom of Israel (whatever means we may adopt to reconcile different dates) will be about two hundred and fifty years. We may refer a part of the prophecy of Hosea to this reign.

right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done." The temple was again opened and repaired; the priests and Levites were restored to their offices; all the high-places, and images, and groves, with "the brazen serpent that Moses had made," were destroyed. The pious king, confessing the sin of his fathers, acknowledging the justice of God in his punishments, calls upon the priests to sanctify themselves, and join him "in a covenant with the Lord God of their fathers, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us."

The priests and Levites seem to have entered cordially into the plans of the king. In large numbers they sanctified themselves, and then "cleansed the house of the Lord." They began their work on the first day of the month, and finished upon the sixteenth. Hezekiah, having thus kindled the zeal of the priests, and purified the temple from all its abominations which Ahaz had brought into it, "gathered the rulers of the city," "and went up to the temple" to sacrifice sin-offerings "for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah." In the most solemn manner they confessed their sin, "laying their hands upon the head of the victims," "and sprinkling the altar with their blood," "and thus made an atonement for all (Israel) Judah." While the sacrifices were going on, the services of the public temple-worship were re-instituted. The king and all the congregation bowed and worshipped, and the Levites, with their instruments, "sang praises unto the Lord in the words of David, and of Asaph the seer." Then followed a multitude of thank-offerings, "from all the free-hearted of the congregation." So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order. "And Hezekiah rejoiced and all the people, that God had prepared the people, for the thing was done suddenly."

This revival of genuine religion was evidently a work of the Spirit of God, and brought with it a renewal of the great annual feasts. It was resolved to keep the passover on the second month, one month after the ordinary time, "for the priests were not sanctified, and the people were not gathered" at the usual time. Accordingly posts were despatched to the remnant of Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to "turn unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel," and join in this service. "Be not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but turn again unto the Lord, and enter his sanctuary. For if ye turn again, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, and shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him." Some of the Israelites laughed the couriers to scorn. Some received the message gladly, and came to Jerusalem. All Judah came as with one heart, "moved by the hand of God."

The multitude having assembled, they first took the altars of incense in the city, "and cast them into the brook Kidron." Then they killed the passover, and the priests sanctified themselves, "and presented the offerings according to the law of Moses." Many of the people, gathered in such haste, were not ceremonially clean, but Hezekiah prayed, "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." The prayer was heard, and the people were healed. So profound was the impression of this service, that the whole multitude resolved to keep "other seven days: and they kept them with gladness." During these days the Levites were employed in teaching the people. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests blessed the people; and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place, even unto heaven."

From this feast, the people, full of pious enthusiasm, went throughout the land, breaking the images in pieces, cutting down the groves, and throwing down the high-places and altars, till they had destroyed every vestige of idolatry, when every man returned to his own abode.

The courses of the priests and Levites were next set in order, the set feasts established, and the tithes secured. From every quarter the willing people brought in abundance, "from the third to the seventh month." Store-rooms were prepared for that which was left, after the abundant supply of the priests. Over these free-will-offerings and dedicated things men were appointed, whose office it was to distribute to the priests according to their genealogy. "Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah; and in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, he did it with all his heart and prospered." "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him."

Having thus accomplished this great work of reformation, he marched his armies against the Philistines, "and smote them unto Gaza." Encouraged by this success, he threw off the yoke of Assyria. Sennacherib the king of Assyria came at once with an army to bring him to subjection. Unable to cope with so formidable a power in battle, Hezekiah prepared himself and Jerusalem for a protracted siege. The fountains were closed, the walls were repaired, and a second wall built around the city; weapons were made, and captains set over the men. In this emergency the king encourages his men, "Be strong, and not dismayed, for there be more with us than with him. With him

is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles."*

At length, however, when the Assyrians had reached Lachish, Hezekiah's courage and faith failed, and he sent to Sennacherib, saying, "I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear." Sennacherib consented to withdraw his army on payment of "three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold." Hezekiah gave him the gold and silver of the royal treasures, and of the temple, and the gold which was upon the pillars of the temple.

The Assyrian king broke faith with Hezekiah, and still carried on the war. While he continued at Lachish he sent forward his servant, Rabshakeh. Coming to Jerusalem, Rabshakeh delivered his message in the most insulting manner to the king, and to Jehovah, whom they worshipped. He charges them with relying upon Egypt; he blasphemes the God in whom they trusted; he taunts them with their weakness; and at last pleads that he was obeying a divine commission in thus seeking to destroy Jerusalem. Turning from the king's messengers, he addresses himself to the people; urges them to renounce their trust in Jehovah, to rebel against their king, to pay a tribute to Sennacherib, to wait until he should come and remove them from their land, and closes his oration with a blasphemous assertion that the God whom they trusted was in no way different or more powerful than the gods of Hamath or Arpad. To this insulting speech no answer was given. When the report came to Hezekiah, he went at once to the temple. His only refuge now was in God. To Isaiah the prophet, the king sent a report of this speech; with an expression of his hope and confidence that God would hear the words of the king of Assyria, and vindicate his own name and honour. For this result he asks the prophet to pray. To this message Isaiah was directed by God to reply, "Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

Meanwhile Rabshakeh had returned to his master, who was now besieging Libnah. He heard the rumour that the king of Ethiopia was coming to meet him. Enraged at his disappointment, he sent again to Hezekiah other messengers, with a threatening letter containing much the same boasting and insult as before.

With this letter Hezekiah went in before the Lord and prayed: "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the

* From Isaiah xxx., which was written about this time, it appears that some of the nobles (probably not the king) had sent to Egypt for aid.

cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear; open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he hath sent to reproach the living God." "Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only."

Isaiah was sent with an answer to this prayer, strengthening the faith of the king. He charges Sennacherib with his blasphemy; shows him the true position in which he stands, as the instrument of God, and not, as he supposes, doing what he did for his own aggrandizement: tells him that his work was accomplished, and that it was the purpose of God that he should go no further. He then promises blessings to the remnant of Judah, and the escaped of Zion; and closes with a most positive prediction, that the king of Assyria should not so much as come near the city, "for, saith the Lord, I will defend this city, to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." "On that very night the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and eighty-five thousand." "Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, and as he was worshipping in the house of his god, his own sons smote him with the sword." Thus Jehovah interfered for his own honour, and saved his people who trusted in him.

But Hezekiah was to experience another salvation at the hand of God. At the same time that he was delivered from the Assyrians, "he fell sick unto death." Isaiah came to him with a message from the Lord confirming his worst fears. "Thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." The love of life, and the state of his kingdom, led him to pray that the sentence might be changed; "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." The prayer was heard. Before the prophet had left the palace, the word of the Lord came to him, "Tell Hezekiah, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years. At Isaiah's command a lump of figs was laid upon the boil, and he recovered. In the meantime, however, while the cure was going on, Hezekiah demanded a sign to confirm his faith. At his request the sign was given him, the shadow of the sun went back upon the dial of Ahaz, "ten degrees, which it had gone down."*

* In the account of this miraculous cure, given us in Isaiah xxxviii., we have the song of Hezekiah upon his recovery. With the close of Hezekiah's reign, a large part of the prophet's duties were finished.

The miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army, and cure of Hezekiah, drew the attention of foreign powers. Among others, the king of Babylon sent presents, "for he had heard of Hezekiah's sickness." "Hezekiah's heart was lifted up" at his importance, and made a display of all his treasures to the Babylonish ambassadors. For this he was reproved by the prophet, with this startling announcement, that all that was in his house, and his own descendants, should be carried captive by this very kingdom of Babylon. With his usual submission to the providence of God, Hezekiah replied, "Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken, is it not good if peace and truth be in my days." The rest of his reign was prosperous. He increased in wealth, beautified Jerusalem, increased the number of store cities, and after the fifteen years were passed, he was gathered to his fathers, and slept in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David. His character and memory were held in the highest respect, and he was sincerely mourned by a whole people, the best tribute to the life of a wise and good king. He is the most spotless of the kings of Judah.

His son Manasseh came to the throne at the early age of twelve years. The enemies of Hezekiah's reform appear to have had the control of his early years. Either from this cause, or from his own disposition, he took directly the opposite course from his father: "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen." The altars which Hezekiah had broken down, were again rebuilt; altars for Baal were placed again in the temple, even in its very courts; his sons were made to pass through the fire; familiar spirits were sought for, and a graven image that he had made, placed in the house of God, where Jehovah had placed his name. Under the influence of this king, the people were seduced to do more evil than did the nations which God had cast out before them.

Prophets were sent to reprove him, but in vain. The judgments which had fallen upon Samaria were shown to be impending over Jerusalem, but they excited no alarm: instead of a reformation, they hardened the infatuated king, and he added to his iniquities "by shedding innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." At length the threatenings of God's just displeasure were executed. The Assyrian generals came with an irresistible host. Manasseh attempted flight, "but was overtaken among the thorns, bound with fetters, and carried away to Babylon." In this affliction, he came to himself, "and besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." As if to show that sincere prayer was never vain, this miserable king was heard and restored to his kingdom in Jerusalem. On his return he built the wall without the city of David, fortified

the city, "took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in Jerusalem, and repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon. He could not, however, remedy the effects of his own early bad example. "The people sacrificed still in the high-places, but unto the Lord only." After a long but disastrous reign of fifty-five years, "he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house." The happy scene of his father's reign was thus quickly overcast with heavy clouds; and though his repentance seems sincere, yet we may see how little a late repentance can atone for an early crime, and how little in itself it stays the progress of God's justice. He did much evil, though we may hope that he died a good man.

Amon succeeded his father at the age of twenty-two. "He also did that which was evil, as his father Manassch did, and served and worshipped the idols that his father served, and forsook the Lord God of his fathers." He did not, however, follow his father in his good days. "He did not humble himself as his father did." After a reign of two years, of which we hear nothing, "he was slain by his servants in his own house." The people, however, revenged the murder of the king, and slew those "who had conspired against Amon," "and made Josiah his son king in his stead."

SECTION XIX.

JOSIAH'S REIGN—THE FINDING OF THE COPY OF THE LAW—JOSIAH'S REFORMATION
—JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOIAKIM—THE FIRST REMOVAL OF THE PEOPLE TO BABYLON
—JEHOIAKIM—THE SECOND REMOVAL TO BABYLON—ZEDEKIAH, THE LAST KING OF
JUDAH—THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM.

JOSIAH was only eight years of age when he was placed upon the throne. But the change was a happy one for the kingdom. From the first he was well inclined. "He did that which was right," followed the steps of David, "and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." In his sixteenth year he began to show more clearly his disposition, and in the twentieth he commenced the work which characterized his reign. Judah and Jerusalem were again purged of the high-places, the altars of Baalim were broken down, and the images and groves cut down, and the molten images ground to "dust and sown upon the graves of those who had sacrificed to them." The bones of the priests were burnt upon the altars. Not content with cleansing Judah and Jerusalem, he went also and did the same in the cities which had belonged to Israel.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, and twenty-sixth of his age, he began to repair the house of the Lord his God. According to the king's commandment, the officers over the treasury

went to Hilkiah the priest, and took the sum of the money which the people had offered, "and gave it to the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the Lord." The men did the work faithfully and honestly.

In the course of this pious work, Hilkiah the high-priest found "a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses," which seems to imply that it was the original copy as written by Moses himself. When this was read to the king, it produced the greatest consternation. Whether he was entirely ignorant of the law previously, which is scarcely probable, or whether the denunciations against the sins of the land, coming from that venerable and authoritative copy, may have produced convictions of sin which other copies had failed to produce; in whatever way we may account for it, the reading of this book alarmed even this pious king with the sense of his sin, and the fearful sins and dangers of the kingdom.

In his alarm, Josiah sent his servants with Hilkiah, "to inquire of the Lord for them that are left in Israel and Judah." They went "to Huldah the prophetess," with the message of the king. Her answer assured him that the wrath which he feared should surely come. "Thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book" of the law: "Because they have forsaken me and have burned incense unto other gods, therefore my wrath shall be poured upon this place, and shall not be quenched." The piety of Josiah was not, however, left unrewarded. His repentance, and humility, and prayers, gained for him the sentence that he should "be gathered to the grave in peace, and his eye should not see all the evil" that was to come upon Jerusalem.

Upon receiving this answer from the prophetess, the king immediately "gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, and went up to the temple, with the priests and prophets, and all the people, both small and great," and read the book of the law in their hearing. "And he stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart, and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant."

Having thus in their hearts returned to God, they at once carried out a thorough reformation throughout the land. The temple was cleansed of its remaining pollutions; the images and altars of Baal were everywhere destroyed; all the idolatrous priests were put down; the high-places, where they had burned incense, were defiled. Moreover, the king, in person, went to Bethel, brake down the altar and grove, took the bones of the

idolatrous priests "and burned them upon the altar, according to the word of the Lord," which he spake by the man of God to Jeroboam. As he had done in Bethel, so he did throughout Samaria—breaking down the altars, slaying the idolatrous priests, and polluting their places of worship with the bones of men. All the workers with familiar spirits were banished.

When this was done, and the king had returned to Jerusalem, he prepared to celebrate the passover. Placing the priests in their charges, and the Levites in their courses, according to the writing of David, he commanded to kill the passover, and sanctify themselves "according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses." Josiah, and the princes and the priests, gave willingly to the people victims for the passover and offerings. Every thing was done carefully, and strictly in accordance with the institution given by Moses. The singers, also, were present. In its conformity with the Mosaic institution, and perhaps in its magnificence, "there was not holden such a passover from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept."

But all this availed not to avert the calamities which were now threatening them. The hour of God's mercy had passed, for "the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him."

The time for that removal which had been promised Josiah was now at hand. His kingdom was probably tributary to Assyria or Chaldea; and when Pharaoh-nechoh went up against Assyria, Josiah came out to meet him. Pharaoh sent ambassadors to persuade the king of Judah not to fight; urging that he was in haste to execute the commands of God. "But Josiah would not turn his face from him." The battle was fought in the valley of Megiddo, and the king of Judah was wounded in the fight. His servants took him from his war-chariot, and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died, after a reign of thirty-one years. No king so "followed the Lord with all his heart" as Josiah. No king was more sincerely lamented by his people. By the good, he was universally mourned. The prophet Jeremiah composed an elegiac ode to his memory, which was long preserved among the people.* He did what he could to stay the progress of the destruction fast coming upon his kingdom; and though his efforts were vain, he was yet kindly taken away from the evil which was approaching.

Josiah fell in battle, and did not appoint his successor. The

* This prophet commenced his prophecy in the thirteenth year of Josiah. From the general strain of his prophecy, we may infer that in the midst of the external reformation under Josiah, the mass of the people were still corrupt. Subsequent history proves this.

people therefore took (Shallum) Jehoahaz his son, and anointed him king. He did that which was evil, (notwithstanding his father's example) and reigned but three months. It seems strange, that in this short time he could so have corrupted himself, as to deserve this bad character. But there are no limits to the evil heart, aside from the grace of God. At the end of three months Pharaoh returned from a successful expedition, took Jehoahaz captive, placed his elder brother (Eliakim) Jehoiakim on the throne, and laid the land under a heavy tribute.

Jehoiakim was compelled to tax the people, in order to raise the tribute money for Pharaoh. He also, like his brother, did evil in the sight of the Lord. It is plain now that many of the royal household could not have partaken in the revival of pure religion under Josiah. The hearts of these sons remained untouched. We hear little of the first year of his reign, but from hints in the prophecy of Jeremiah, we may gather that he was oppressive to the people, and the determined enemy of the prophets. In the third year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against him and took him captive, with the design of removing him to Babylon; but afterwards restored him to the throne. Some of the vessels of the temple, and a number of the people, among whom was Daniel, were at this time carried to Babylon. In the following year the Egyptians were defeated on the banks of the Euphrates. (Jer. xlvi. 2.) In the same year Jeremiah caused a collection of his prophecies to be made, and to be publicly read in the temple. Jehoiakim sent for it, to hear what it contained. Displeased with its bold reproofs, he took the leaves as they were read and cast them into the fire. Upon this a new roll was made, to which were added heavier denunciations still. But all this had no effect upon the king.

After three years he threw off the yoke of the Chaldeans, in the face of the earnest remonstrances of Jeremiah. For this he lost his throne. The armies of the Chaldeans soon came, and took possession of Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was slain, and his body left without burial, as Jeremiah had foretold. He reigned eleven years. The king of Babylon placed his son Jehoiachin on the throne; but soon afterwards returned and besieged Jerusalem. When Nebuchadnezzar appeared before the city, Jehoiachin immediately went out and surrendered, with all his family and the whole court. He was carried to Babylon, with all his household, princes, artificers, craftsmen, and smiths, to the number of ten, or perhaps eighteen thousand men. With these there were taken also the royal treasures, the treasures of the temple, and the vessels of the temple, which Solomon had made. Little was left now but the mere form of nationality. Still it was not now Nebuchadnezzar's

purpose to destroy Jerusalem. Accordingly he placed (Mattaniah) Zedekiah, the youngest son of Josiah, upon the throne. Jehoiachin, as we afterwards learn, was held as a captive until Nebuchadnezzar's death, when he was taken from prison, and made to sit at the king's table, "and his throne was placed above the thrones of all the captive kings at Babylon."

Zedekiah was but twenty-one when he began to reign. He followed in the footsteps of his father, and, as a consequence, was left of God without support in his afflictions. He followed the advice of his nobles, rather than that of Jeremiah. In the fourth year of his reign (Jer. li. 59) he went to Babylon, and returned. In the face of the most solemn oath, he rebelled against the king of Babylon, (probably about the ninth year of his reign,) and made alliance with Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar soon came to punish his faithless vassal. In the ninth year and the tenth month, he laid siege to Jerusalem. For a year and a half it resisted the whole force of the Chaldeans. While the siege was going forward, the king of Egypt came and interrupted the progress of the Chaldean arms. In these moments of respite, Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah to inquire what would be the fate of the war, and to ask his prayers for success. Jeremiah replied that the Chaldeans should return and capture the city. When the prophet attempted to pass from the city, to the land of his inheritance, he was arrested, under the pretence that he was about deserting to the enemy, and cast into prison. For a time he was cruelly treated; afterwards he was placed in the court of the prison, but at last, at the instigation of the nobles, cast into a loathsome dungeon, from which he was taken at the request of Ebed-melech, one of the king's servants.*

As Jeremiah foretold, the Chaldeans returned; and in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, and the fourth month, the city was broken up, and the men of war fled. It was only by the closest blockade that this result was secured. Zedekiah was pursued and overtaken at Jericho, and brought to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah. By the command of the Babylonian king, his sons were inhumanly slain before his eyes, and his eyes then put out, and the miserable king, loaded with irons, was borne to Babylon.

In the following month, Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, came to Jerusalem, burnt the temple, the royal palace, all the houses of the nobles, and brake down the walls. The brazen pillars, and all the vessels of the temple which remained, were now carried to Babylon. The officers of Zedekiah were taken

* The prophetic writings of Jeremiah, while they do not contain so many historical statements, are yet so connected with the history, that we must read them in connection with these latter reigns, if we wish to gain any correct view of the moral state of the nation.

to Riblah and slain. The common people were scattered over the land for the purpose of tillage; and a number still were carried to Babylon. The kingdom of Judah had thus existed about three hundred and eighty-seven years after the separation. It fell solely from the transgressions of the people and their rulers. God dealt with them in great forbearance, "sending to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." Therefore they were carried as servants unto Babylon; "until the land should enjoy her sabbaths." The history of these nations of Judah and Israel, would be worth studying (if for no other reason) for the lessons of political wisdom which might here be learned; for God deals with nations now as then. The principles of his administration are always the same. The causes of national prosperity or adversity lie in the moral condition of the people. The decay of national strength must go on at equal steps with the progress of national corruption. We mistake greatly, and deprive ourselves of the benefit of this part of history, if we suppose that the Israelites are, or were, the only nation who suffer for their sins. They are not the exception, but the example; whose history has been written in its true light, and stands out as a warning and a lesson to those who are engaged in the work of governing the nations.

SECTION XX.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE JEWS IN THEIR CAPTIVITY.

JEREMIAH was found among the captives at Riblah, and left free to go into Babylon or remain in the land. He chose to return to Judah, and placed himself with Gedaliah, who had been made ruler over the people in Judah. Gedaliah was successful in recalling around him a number of the men of Judah, who took the oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. The Jews also, from Moab, and Edom, and Ammon, returned and placed themselves under Gedaliah. His course, however, was soon ended. A part of those who had escaped the Babylonians, regarded him as in some way the cause of their misfortune. Among these was Ishmael, "one of the seed royal," who, with ten others, conspired against Gedaliah, and slew him at Mizpah. All the Jews who were with the governor were slain also. These conspirators, in turn, were conquered by Johanan, one of Gedaliah's officers, and driven to take refuge among the Ammonites.

Johanah, fearing the vengeance of the Chaldeans, in spite of Jeremiah's remonstrances, took the remnant of Judah, and the king Zedekiah's daughters, and Jeremiah the prophet, and fled into Egypt.

Five years afterwards, Nebuzar-adan again visited Jerusalem, and made a final deportation of the inhabitants to Babylon. The remnant which was left attract no more attention. They seem to have been without any government, or perhaps to have fallen under the mixed population and religion of Samaria. The land was utterly desolate, and enjoyed its Sabbaths.

The Jews in captivity were gradually gaining in favour with their conquerors, though oftentimes insulted and reproached for their faith—(see 137th Psalm.) Yet, as Daniel came into power, and the throne of Babylon became vacant by the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar, the reign of their bondage was materially alleviated.

We learn also from Ezekiel, as well as from the circumstances attending their return, that they were acquiring wealth and importance.

In the meantime they saw the power which had subdued them gradually going to decay. Rent with intestine quarrels, and threatened with the growing power of the Persians, it could not long endure. At last the Persian army came to Babylon itself. The Chaldee forces were no match for these new foes. After a single battle the Babylonian king fled, and took refuge in his capital. After a siege of one year, Babylon itself, unexpectedly, while the king was revelling in his sensual pleasures, (and had sacrilegiously turned the vessels from the temple into drinking cups for himself and his princes,) fell into the hands of Cyrus. With his accession began the Jews' release.

PART V.

FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY TO THE CONQUEST OF JUDEA BY THE ROMANS.*

SECTION I.

FROM THE EDICT OF CYRUS, PERMITTING THEIR RETURN TO THEIR OWN LAND, TO THE FINISHING OF THE SECOND TEMPLE.

CYRUS, king of Persia, having taken Babylon, and become the sole sovereign by the death of his uncle, who in Scripture is called Darius the Mede, made a decree, that as many of the children of Israel as chose should return to Judea, and rebuild their city and temple. To aid them in this pious and patriotic work, he directed that supplies should be granted them from his own revenues; and, also, that they should be at liberty to receive donations from their brethren who chose to remain in Chaldea. It is said, that Cyrus was induced to resolve on this measure, by having the remarkable prophecies which related to himself shown to him by Daniel the prophet, who was still alive at Babylon, though very old.

The decree of Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued about five hundred and thirty-six years before the birth of Christ. On this occasion, Cyrus brought out all the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple at Jerusalem, and gave them into the hands of the leaders of the Jews, who were about to return to their own land. The chief leaders were Zerubbabel, who was of the royal seed, and Joshua, who was by regular descent the high-priest of the nation.

* The principal authorities depended on for the facts recorded in the following history, are Josephus, Joseph Gouonides, and the author of the First book of Maccabees. As far, however, as the Jewish history is connected with that of other nations, the facts may be corroborated by the testimony of Grecian and Roman historians. The compiler of this work acknowledges, however, that the statement of facts and dates, in this period, have been, for the most part, extracted from the learned work of Dean Prideaux, entitled "CONNEXION, &c.," of which it may be considered an abridgment.

The number of vessels of gold and silver, delivered by Cyrus into the hands of Zerubbabel and Joshua, was five thousand four hundred. They who returned to Judea, at this time, were not all from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; but some of the other tribes, carried away by Tiglath-pilezer, Shalmanezar, and Esarhaddon, also returned with their brethren. The whole number of this first company was fifty-two thousand three hundred and sixty; whereas they who are numbered in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, as belonging to Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, amounted to no more than thirty thousand. Of the twenty-four courses of priests instituted by David, no more than four returned, making up the number of four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine persons. The rest either remained, or had become extinct. But to keep up the ancient number of courses, each of these four divided itself into six, and took the names of those which had become extinct.

The first work to which they addressed themselves, after their return, was the erection of an altar of burnt-offerings; so that the daily service of God, according to the law of Moses, might immediately be resumed.

Next, they proceeded to lay the foundation of the temple. This they erected exactly on the site of the old edifice, and made it of the same length and breadth, and according to the same plan; but as they were poor and few in number, the building fell very far short of the glory and riches of the first temple, built by Solomon. So that when it was finished, many of the old men, who had seen the former edifice, wept aloud, on account of the meanness of this second temple, when compared with the glory of the first.

The Jews are accustomed to say, that five things were wanting in the second temple, which existed in the first. These were, 1. Urim and Thummim. 2. The ark of the covenant with its sacred contents. 3. The holy fire on the altar, enkindled from heaven. 4. The Shechina, or visible symbol of the Divine presence, over the mercy-seat. 5. The spirit of prophecy. To which might be added as a 6th, The holy anointing oil, made by Moses for the consecration of the priests, and of the kings.

It is a tradition among the Jews, that all the copies of the Holy Scriptures were lost; and that Ezra, by inspiration, restored the whole. But this is manifestly incorrect; for Daniel had the books of the Prophets, and "Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of his God;" and as soon as the people returned, we find, that they had copies of the law. The autographs of these books, preserved in the temple, were doubtless lost, and many new copies were probably now made under the

direction of Ezra; and from these circumstances, probably, the tradition just mentioned took its rise.

When the ten tribes were carried away from the land of Israel, the king of Assyria brought inhabitants from other countries to occupy their place. These were heathen, and worshipped various false gods, but knew nothing of the worship of Jehovah. Being greatly infested with beasts, they attributed this judgment to their not knowing "the manner of the God of the land." Whereupon the king of Assyria ordered, that one of the priests who had been carried away from that land, should return and teach the people how to serve the God of the country. This priest took up his residence in Bethel, and having brought with him a copy of the law of Moses, instructed the people how Jehovah should be worshipped: nevertheless, they did not abandon, at first, their former deities, but united the worship of them with that of the true God. In process of time, these foreigners became incorporated with the poorer people of Israel, who were left in the country; and the mongrel race received the name of Samaritans, which name the few who remain there to this day still retain. The Samaritans were more despised by the Jews than the heathen themselves. They were also called Cutheans, and no greater reproach could be cast on any one by a Jew, than to call him a Samaritan or a Cuthean. After some time, they seem to have abandoned their gross idolatry, and pretended that mount Gerizim was the place originally appointed by God for his worship. They preserved among them the law received from the Israelitish priest, copies of which, in their peculiar character, have come down to our times; but the other books of the Jewish Scriptures they did not receive.

Upon the return of the Jews to rebuild their temple, the Samaritans came to them, and expressed a great desire to unite with them in the work, and in the worship of God; pretending, that ever since the days of Esarhaddon, they had been worshippers of Jehovah. But Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the elders of Israel, utterly refused to have any connection with them, and informed them that the decree of Cyrus related only to the Jews. This refusal to admit the Samaritans to their communion, was because they suspected them of insidious designs, and knew, that whatever they might now profess, their religion was corrupt. The Samaritans were greatly offended at this repulse, and set themselves, by every means, to obstruct the building of the house: and, although, they could not alter the decree of Cyrus, yet by bribes and other underhand dealings, they had influence with his ministers, to cause many hinderances to be thrown in the way of the Jews. By this means the animosity between the two nations was enkindled to a flame; so that, ever

afterwards, no people ever hated each other with a more bitter hatred; which is sufficiently evident in the gospel history.

Daniel, although living when the Jews returned to build Jerusalem, was too old to revisit his native country. He must at this time have been eighty or ninety years of age: for he was carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and was then a young man; since which time, seventy years had elapsed. He was a man greatly honoured by God, and had great influence and authority, both during the reign of the Chaldean and Persian kings. Josephus informs us, that he built a famous palace at Susa, which, he says, was remaining in his time; and finished it with wonderful art; in which it became the custom to bury the Persian and Parthian kings; and in honour to the founder, it was always committed to the custody of members of the Jewish nation. Here, according to tradition, Daniel died and was buried, where they pretend to show his sepulchre to this day. The place is now called Tuster. The year of his death is uncertain, but he did not long survive the restoration of his countrymen: and the loss of such a wise and influential friend at the court of Persia, must have been great indeed to all the Jews; but especially to those engaged in the arduous enterprise of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.

But about seven years after this work commenced, the Jews met with a still heavier loss, by the death of Cyrus himself. Concerning the place and circumstances of the death of this extraordinary man, we have no record in the sacred writings, and other historians are so entirely disagreed, that we cannot speak with certainty. Xenophon makes him die in his bed in Persia, when a little above seventy years of age; but Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Justin, relate, that he made an unsuccessful attack upon Scythia, where being defeated and slain by the queen of that country, his head was cut off, and placed in a barrel of blood.

Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses, who is thought by some to be the Ahasuerus of Scripture, the husband of Esther. This man was exceedingly different in character from his father; and, indeed, during his whole reign, acted more like a madman than a person in his senses. Having taken offence at Amasis, king of Egypt, he marched a powerful army into that country, which he subdued. Amasis, however, was dead before his arrival, but he prosecuted the war with great violence, and having got possession of Memphis, the capital, put the young king, the son of Amasis, to death, by causing him to drink bullock's blood. The body of Amasis he dug up, and treated with the greatest indignity. The stratagem which he used to take Pelusium, was, to place cows, cats, dogs,

&c., before his army, and thus march up to the walls; these being objects of worship with the Egyptians, they chose rather to be conquered, than to run the risk of killing any of the venerated animals. He made a second expedition to Ethiopia, which was unsuccessful. At this time he sent forty thousand men to destroy the temple of Jupiter Hammon, all of whom were overwhelmed in a storm of sand. Finding the people of Memphis rejoicing on account of the discovery of the bull Apis, he commanded that he should be brought to him, and on seeing the animal which the superstitious people adored, he ran his sword into the thigh of the bull, of which wound he died. The priests, he ordered to be whipped, and in every way manifested his contempt and detestation for the superstitions of the people; for the Persians worshipped no idols, but only the sun and fire.

It is related, that the king of Ethiopia sent Cambyses his bow, with a message, that when the Persians could bend such a bow, they might think of invading Ethiopia. Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and brother of the king, being the only man in the army who could with ease bend the bow, Cambyses became jealous of him, and sent him off to Persia, where, in consequence of a dream, he had him put to death. He had one beautiful sister, the daughter of Cyrus, whose name was Meroe; her he married, contrary to all law and usage. From her is derived the name of an island in the Nile, between Egypt and Ethiopia. This woman he was accustomed to take with him in all his expeditions. But on a certain occasion, in a fit of passion, he struck her a blow, which, she being pregnant, caused her death.

Cambyses, having reigned nearly eight years, and being on his return from Egypt, a herald from Shushan, the palace of the kings of Persia, met the army, and proclaimed Smerdis the son of Cyrus, king. Now Smerdis had already been put to death, secretly, by the order of Cambyses, as stated above; but the case was this, the prince whom Cambyses had left to govern Persia in his absence, had a brother who bore a remarkable resemblance to Smerdis. This young man the crafty Magian set upon the throne, having learned the secret of the death of the true Smerdis. Cambyses seized the herald, and after a careful examination having ascertained that his own brother was really dead, and that this pretended Smerdis was the brother of the governor, set forward with his army to dethrone the impostor, and punish the governor; but as he mounted his horse, his sword slipping from its scabbard, gave him a wound in the thigh, of which he died in a few days. The Egyptians considered this as a special judgment on the king for his impiety, in

killing Apis; for they remarked, that the part of his thigh into which the sword entered, was the same which he had wounded in the bull.

During the reign of Cambyses, the work of rebuilding the temple, we have reason to believe, advanced very slowly. The Samaritans, we know, sent a petition to obtain an order to have the building arrested; but how it was received, or whether it produced any effect, we are not informed.

The pretended Smerdis reigned only seven months. By profane historians he is called by several other names; but in Scripture he is named Artaxerxes. As soon as he was settled on the throne, after the death of Cambyses, the Samaritans wrote a letter to him, setting forth that the Jews were rebuilding their city and temple at Jerusalem; and that, as they had always been a rebellious people, there was much reason to suspect, that as soon as the work was accomplished, they would withdraw their allegiance from the king. For proof of what they alleged, they referred to the ancient records of the kingdom; requesting, that search might be made, whether the facts stated by them were not true. Upon which, Artaxerxes having ascertained that the Jews had carried on obstinate wars with his predecessors, and that their city had been taken and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, gave order, that the building should cease; whereupon, the Samaritans came immediately to Jerusalem, and by force caused them to desist from the further prosecution of the work.

Smerdis, or Artaxerxes, endeavoured by every method to ingratiate himself with the people; and, with this view, remitted all the taxes due to the government. And to secure himself on the throne, he took to wife Atossa, daughter of Cyrus, who had before been the wife of Cambyses her brother.

At length, however, it began to be suspected among the nobles of Persia, that this was not the true Smerdis. One of them whose name was Otanes, undertook to make a discovery, by means of one of the wives of the king. He had ascertained, that the Magian who resembled Smerdis, had on some occasion lost his ears; wherefore this woman was to find out whether her husband had ears or not. It being found that he had none, it became certain that he was an impostor. Otanes, then, associated six others of the nobles of Persia with him, who entering into the palace slew the king, and his brother Patizethes, who had been the contriver of the whole plot; and bringing out their heads, showed them to the people, and laid open the whole imposture. Such was the indignation of the multitude against these men, that they slew all the Magians whom they could find.

The idolatry of the world, at this time, was divided between

the worshippers of images, who were called Sabeans, and the worshippers of fire, who were called Magians. The Magian sect, who were followers of Zoroaster, prevailed greatly in Persia, and a few of their successors are still found in the mountains of that country, under the name of Gauri or fire-worshippers.

Smerdis being now out of the way, a consultation was held by the nobles of Persia respecting the form of government which should be adopted. Otanes was in favour of democracy, Megabyzus of aristocracy, and Darius Hystaspes of monarchy. The last mentioned opinion prevailed, and Darius himself was advanced to the throne. He was the son of Hystaspes, a noble Persian, who had followed Cyrus in all his wars. The other nobles concerned in this revolution, stipulated that they should enjoy peculiar privileges, one of which was, that they should always have free access to the royal presence, without ceremony, except when the king was in his harem.

The building of the temple having been arrested by an edict of Smerdis, the work was not immediately resumed upon the accession of Darius. The remissness of the Jews in prosecuting this sacred object, occasioned severe judgments on the land; and to awake them from their apathy, Haggai the prophet was sent to them with a message from Jehovah, which is recorded in the book which bears his name. This solemn exhortation, had the effect of stirring up the leaders and the people to return to the work of rebuilding the temple. Towards the close of the same year, another message was sent to the Jews, by the same prophet, announcing that the glory of the second house should be greater than the glory of the first; and that THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS should come, and that this temple should be filled with the glory of Jehovah. Zechariah the prophet was also commissioned to preach to the people at the close of the same year.

At the beginning of the second year of Darius, the work was recommenced; but the Samaritans betook themselves to their old malicious practices; and to obstruct the work, applied to Tatnai, who had been appointed governor, on this side the river. They alleged that the Jews were acting wholly without authority in this business. Tatnai, to satisfy himself, came to Jerusalem, and upon being shown a copy of the edict of Cyrus, did not forbid the work, but wrote an account of the whole matter to the king. Whereupon, search being made, the decree of Cyrus was found among the rolls, in the royal palace at Ecbatana, in Media. Darius, upon this, ordered that the decree of Cyrus should be carried into complete effect, and threatened severe punishments against any who should dare to obstruct the work.

The seventy years captivity, predicted by Jeremiah, may be considered as commencing either in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when the first Jews were carried captive to Babylon, and then the end of this period will be in the first year of Cyrus: or, eighteen years afterwards, when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, and then the close of the seventy years will be on the second year of Darius, when the decree of Cyrus was renewed and republished, and all obstructions to the carrying on the work taken out of the way.

The kings of Persia having removed their residence from Babylon to Shushan, the inhabitants of the former city began to think of a revolt from the dominion of the Persians. For several years they were employed in collecting and treasuring up provisions, within the walls of the city. In the fifth year of Darius, the revolt took place; the Babylonians openly renouncing their allegiance. Darius now collected a mighty army and besieged the city; but the walls were so thick and high, and the gates so strong, that all attempts to reduce it by force must have been ineffectual: and there was so much vacant ground within the city and so large a store of provisions had been accumulated, that there seemed no prospect of reducing it by famine. The desperate determination of the besieged was also manifested in a very extraordinary way. In order to lessen the number of consumers of their stock of provisions, they resolved to put to death all persons who could not be useful in the defence of the city; especially, all the females were slain, except one for each family. And the probability was strong that they would have been able to defend themselves successfully against the Persian army, had it not been for the device of a nobleman, by the name of Zopyrus, who having cut off his own ears and nose, fled to the Babylonians, pretending that he had been thus cruelly treated by Darius. They received him confidently, for there seemed to be no room to suspect treachery, in such a case; and, by degrees, he so insinuated himself into their favour, that they gave him the command of the city; upon which he immediately opened the gates to the Persians. Darius took signal vengeance on the leaders of this rebellion, by crucifying no less than three thousand of the nobles. And to prevent the danger of a second revolt, he almost levelled the walls of the city, reducing them from two hundred, to fifty cubits; and took away the hundred brazen gates, by which the entrance had been guarded. The reign of Darius was long, but turbulent. He invaded Scythia with an army of seven hundred thousand men, but the expedition was not prosperous. He succeeded, however, in subduing Macedonia, and in bringing under his authority some of the western provinces of India. Towards the latter part of his reign he was involved in wars with the

Ionians, who had revolted, and with the states of Greece; which disputes led on to the great war between the Greeks and Persians, which was so signal in the reign of his successor.

In the sixth year of Darius, according to the Jewish computation, the temple of Jerusalem was finished, and was dedicated with great joy and solemnity, in the month Adar.

Twenty years had elapsed from the second of Cyrus to the seventh of Darius; so long was the second temple in building. At this dedication, it seems, that the 146th, 147th, and 148th Psalms were sung; for in the Septuagint version, they are called the Psalms of Haggai and Zechariah, by whom they were probably composed for this solemn occasion.

The decree of Darius for finishing the temple having been granted at Shushan, the eastern gate, in memory of that event, received the name *Shushan*; on which was engraved a picture of that city, which remained until the final destruction of the temple by the Romans.

On the 14th of Nisan, the next month after the dedication of the temple, the passover was celebrated at Jerusalem. This was a season of great rejoicing to the Jews who had returned to Judea.



SECTION II.

FROM THE COMPLETION OF THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, TO THE MISSION OF NEHEMIAH.

THE Samaritans, when the temple was finished, refused to pay the tribute for carrying on the building which had been first assigned for this purpose by Cyrus, and afterwards by Darius. The Jews, therefore, sent Zerubbabel the governor, with Mordecai and Ananias, two principal men among them, to make a complaint to Darius, of the injury which they sustained, in being deprived of the king's bounty, contrary to the edict which he had made in their favour. The king, upon hearing this complaint, issued an order to his officers in Samaria, requiring them to see to it that the Samaritans obeyed his edict, in paying their tribute to Jerusalem, as formerly, and give the Jews no further cause to complain of them.

The Tyrians, after the taking of their city by Nebuchadnezzar, having been reduced to a state of servitude, continued under the yoke for seventy years, agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah xxiii. 15-17. But when this time was expired, Darius permitted them again to have a king of their own, which favour seems to have been granted, because of the service rendered to him in his naval expeditions. After this

restoration, they arose speedily to a state of prosperity and power.

Darius lived to be an old man, and was a prince distinguished for wisdom, clemency, and justice. Before his death, being desirous of fixing the succession to the throne, he appointed Xerxes the son of Atossa (the daughter of Cyrus) to be his successor; for, although he had other sons who were older than Xerxes, yet they having been born before Darius ascended the throne, he judged that it was most proper to grant the kingdom to him who was first born after his accession to royal authority; and, no doubt, the influence which Atossa had over Darius was the principal reason of this determination. But it deserves to be remarked, as an uncommon fact, and much to the honour of the parties concerned, that while this matter was under consideration, it created no alienation of the affections of the competitors for the crown, from each other. And, when Xerxes was raised to the throne, Artabazanes, the eldest son, gave no indications of envy or dissatisfaction, but treated his brother with all affection, served him with fidelity in his wars, and at last died in his service, being slain in battle.

Darius did not long survive the settlement of the succession to the throne upon his son Xerxes. He died in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, and four hundred and eighty-six years before the birth of Christ.

The tradition of the Jews is, that in the last year of Darius, died the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, from which time the spirit of prophecy ceased from among the children of Israel.

Xerxes, having ascended the throne, confirmed to the Jews all the privileges granted by his father; especially, the right to the tribute from Samaria, for furnishing the temple with sacrifices for the service of God, according to the law of Moses. The Egyptians having revolted before the death of Darius, Xerxes went against them with an army; and, in a short time, the rebels were reduced again, and their yoke made heavier than before.

Xerxes, being much elated by his success against the Egyptians, listened the more readily to the counsel of his son-in-law Mardonius and others, who persuaded him to undertake an expedition against Greece. Three years were spent in making preparations for this war, and troops were collected from every part of the Persian empire. In the fifth year of his reign, which was the four hundred and eighty-first before the Christian era, he led his enormous army towards Asia Minor, and took up his winter quarters at Sardis.

To distract the attention of the Greeks, Xerxes entered into

a league with the Carthagenians, who it was agreed should fall upon the Greeks who dwelt in Sicily and Italy.

The army with which Xerxes marched into Greece was much the most numerous recorded in history. The infantry alone are said to have been one million seven hundred thousand men, and the cavalry eighty thousand; which, with the necessary drivers of the chariots and camels, must raise the number of his land-army to one million eight hundred thousand men. His fleet consisted of twelve hundred and seven ships, besides galleys, transports, &c., which were three thousand more, manned by five hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred men. It was moreover, reckoned, that the nations who submitted to him on the way, and after he crossed the Hellespont, increased his army by the addition of three hundred thousand men, besides those on board of the two hundred and twenty ships added to his fleet, who were calculated to be at least twenty-four thousand more. Herodotus says, the whole number of fighting men were two millions six hundred and forty-one thousand six hundred and ten; who, with the servants, sutlers, mariners, women and children, make the whole number of persons not less than five millions. Other historians make the number smaller; but no one makes it less than two millions. Xerxes occupied a whole week, day and night, in crossing the Hellespont, by two bridges of boats; the army passing upon one, and the carriages and beasts of burden on the other. At the straits of Thermopylæ, he was met by Leonidas, king of Sparta, who, with a band of six thousand men, had the desperate resolution to oppose the progress of this mighty host; and for three days, this devoted band of patriots actually hindered the Persian army from proceeding, and killed twenty thousand of their men. But at length a passage was effected over the dead bodies of the devoted Spartans, who determined to perish, rather than see their country laid waste by a hostile army. The Persian monarch had the pusillanimity to treat the dead body of the brave Leonidas with dishonour, by cutting off the head, and suspending the trunk upon a gallows.

Xerxes would not have succeeded so soon in forcing his way through the straits of Thermopylæ, had not a secret path been pointed out by a treacherous Greek, by means of which the Persians were enabled to attack the Greeks in the rear. Upon this, all fled except Leonidas and three hundred of his followers, who had resolved to devote themselves for their country. Besides the twenty thousand Persians slain on this occasion, Xerxes lost two of his own brothers.

The fleets of the belligerents soon met in conflict, and naval battles occurred, in which much blood was spilt, and much execution done; but nothing decisive took place until the battle of

Salamis, in which the Grecian fleet, under the command of Themistocles, gained a great decisive victory. To witness this action, Xerxes had ascended an eminence on the neighbouring promontory, where, seated on a splendid throne, he had the mortification to see the utter ruin of his great fleet; and fearing lest his retreat should be cut off, he hastened to recross the Hellespont; but upon his arrival found that the bridges which he had erected with so much labour and expense, had been broken by a storm; so that he was forced to cross in a common fishing boat, and betake himself immediately to Sardis.

On the same day, according to Herodotus, on which the victory of Salamis took place, the Carthagenians, the confederates of Xerxes, met with a dreadful overthrow at Panormus in Sicily; where their fleet was burnt, their general, Hamilcar, slain, and one hundred and fifty thousand fell in the field of battle. Others, however, maintain, with more probability, that this defeat occurred on the day in which Leonidas arrested the progress of the Persian army at Thermopylæ.

Mardonius, the general of Xerxes, being left in Greece with three hundred thousand men, (the rest of the army having followed the king to Sardis,) endeavoured to make peace with the Grecians, but they, elated with victory, and confident in their own strength, declined all negotiation, and collected an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, on the isthmus of Corinth. Mardonius, however, although his army was now not less than three hundred and fifty thousand, withdrew from their neighbourhood. The Grecian army under the command of Pausanias the Lacedæmonian, and Aristides the Athenian, pursued him; and, at the city of Platea, a decisive engagement took place, in which Mardonius was slain, and the Persian army cut to pieces. Artabazus, one of the Persian generals, foreseeing the event of the battle, made his escape with forty thousand men: all the rest were destroyed, except about four thousand. On the same day a naval action took place, at Mycale, in which the Persian fleet was burnt.

Thus was this vast armament, the greatest which the world ever saw, almost annihilated by a mere handful of men. Xerxes returned home chagrined and mortified; and taking Babylon on his way to Shushan, plundered the temple of Belus, and carried away the dedicated treasures; and, especially a golden table, which Darius had not ventured to remove.

Scaliger is of opinion that Xerxes was the Ahasuerus of Scripture, in which he is followed by many, especially by Jahn in his history of the Hebrew Commonwealth. One principal reason alleged in favour of this opinion, is derived from the name of one of Xerxes' queens, which was Hamestris, between which and Esther there is a strong resemblance; but Prideaux objects,

that Xerxes had a son by Hamestris, who was of marriageable age, according to Herodotus, in the seventh year of his reign: whereas, Esther was not married to Ahasuerus until the seventh year of his reign; and the putting away of Vashti occurred in the fourth year of his reign, when Esther was first selected, among other virgins, for the king's purposes. It seems, therefore, impossible, that Hamestris the wife of Xerxes, and Esther the wife of Ahasuerus, were the same person. Moreover, Hamestris was a woman of licentious character, of which many instances are given by the Greek historian; but no such thing can be said of Esther. But Jahn considers Xerxes to be not only Ahasuerus of the book of Esther, but also the Artaxerxes of the book of Ezra, as he is mentioned next after Darius Hystaspes; and observes, that the names Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, were given to many kings; and that Daniel, (ch. ix. 1.) calls Astyages of the Median line, Ahasuerus. The opinion of Usher is, that Darius Hystaspes was the Ahasuerus of Scripture, and that Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, was Vashti, and Artysona the Esther of the Scriptures; but according to Herodotus, this queen was also the daughter of Cyrus, but Esther we know was a Jewess. Moreover, he informs us that Atossa, before she was divorced, had four sons and one daughter, all born after Darius was king, which is altogether inconsistent with what we read in the book of Esther—that Vashti was put away in the fourth year of the reign of Ahasuerus.

Josephus mentions that there were many Jews in the great army of Xerxes which marched into Greece, and the same may be inferred from the description of the various nations and languages, composing this immense army, by Herodotus; and, as a great multitude of Jews were still resident in Babylonia and Media, it would be strange if this had not been the fact.

The restored Hebrews do not appear, during all this time, to have been in a prosperous condition. They seem to have had no stable and regular government, and the administration of justice was exceedingly defective.

Xerxes, after many unsuccessful efforts to subdue the Greeks, relinquished all further attention to this war, and gave himself entirely to a life of voluptuous ease; in consequence of which he fell into contempt with the people. Artabanus, the captain of his guards, formed a conspiracy against him, and having slain him in his bed, went to Artaxerxes his third son, and charged the murder on his elder brother, Darius; which the young man believing, went immediately to the chamber of Darius, and by the assistance of Artabanus slew him also. The second son, Hystaspes, was absent; Artabanus, therefore, had no difficulty in placing Artaxerxes on the throne; but his real object, in this plot, was to secure the kingdom for himself and

his sons, of whom he had seven, all occupying stations of importance. The young king, however, discovered his design, and prevented its execution by cutting him off with his adherents. Artaxerxes is said to have been the handsomest man of the age in which he lived; but was surnamed Longimanus, or *long-handed*; because, when he stood upright, his hands reached as low as his knees. He is said to have been a prince of mildness and clemency. Notwithstanding all that has been said in favour of other hypotheses, it is much more probable that Artaxerxes Longimanus was the husband of Esther; and this is expressly asserted by Josephus. The Septuagint version, also, uniformly renders Ahasuerus by Artaxerxes; and the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther call him by the same name. This opinion has many advocates among both the ancients and the moderns, is more free from difficulties than any of those already mentioned, and accords entirely with the extraordinary kindness towards the Jews, manifested in his sending, first Ezra, and then Nehemiah, to their assistance. Jahn, however, seems to think that Ezra was sent to Jerusalem in the reign of Xerxes, who he supposes is called Artaxerxes, as well as Ahasuerus; but this is improbable.

Artaxerxes Longimanus, having put Artabanus out of the way, was still exposed to danger from two quarters. First, the seven sons of Artabanus still lived, and had great power; and secondly, his brother Hystaspes, whose birth-right the throne was, had an army in Bactria, and would doubtless claim his right. He soon, however, mastered the first difficulty, by taking signal vengeance upon all who had any connection with the murderers of his father. To subdue his brother, he sent an army into Bactria; which, though at first repulsed, succeeded the next year in subduing him.

It seems to have been in consequence of having conquered all his enemies, that he made the festival mentioned in Esther, which was prolonged for one hundred and eighty days. This feast was celebrated in Shushan; on which occasion, his queen Vashti refusing to exhibit herself, was divorced; and, soon afterwards, Esther was selected to become queen in her place. Her uncle Mordecai was of the number of those carried captive from Jerusalem, in the reign of Jeconiah; and having no children of his own, had undertaken the education of Hadassah or Esther, the daughter of his deceased brother. This young woman being exceedingly beautiful, was among the virgins selected by Hegai, the king's chamberlain; and after undergoing a year's purification, was introduced to the king; and being by him preferred to all the rest, was advanced to the dignity of queen. By her interposition, the Jews, scattered throughout the Persian empire, were preserved from total de-

struction, which had been prepared for them by Haman, the favourite of the king.

In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and the 458th B. C., Ezra received an ample commission to return to Jerusalem, and to take with him as many of his nation as were willing to accompany him; with full authority to regulate and reform the Jewish commonwealth, according to their own laws. This great favour was probably granted in consequence of the request of Esther, who before this had been introduced into the king's harem. Ezra was a descendant of Seraiah the high-priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar at the time Jerusalem was taken. He is indeed called in sacred Scripture the son of Seraiah; but it was scarcely probable that he was a son of the first generation, and we know that the Hebrews call all descendants sons. He was a holy man, and profoundly skilled in the knowledge of the Scriptures. In the king's commission, Ezra is called "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." Ezra vii. 6. He left Babylon, for Jerusalem, on the first day of the month Nisan, and stopping at the river Ahava, until all his company should come, he there proclaimed a day of solemn prayer and fasting, to implore the blessing of God on their journey. On the first of the fifth month he arrived at Jerusalem, and presented the various gifts with which he was intrusted for the service of the temple.

The Egyptians, ever impatient of a foreign yoke, revolted again in the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes, and called in the Athenians to their assistance; who, having at that time a fleet of two hundred sail at Cyprus, gladly laid hold of the opportunity of crushing the Persian power in Egypt. Artaxerxes intended to go himself at the head of the expedition against Egypt; but being dissuaded from exposing his own person, he sent one of his sons; or, as some say, one of his brothers, Achæmenides, who marched with an army of three hundred thousand men, and encamped on the banks of the Nile. But in the meantime the Athenians had beaten the Persian fleet at sea, sailed up the Nile, and joined Inarus, whom the Egyptians had set up for their king; and falling on the Persian army, defeated them in a great battle, killing one hundred thousand men, and among the rest Achæmenides the general; whereupon the remainder of the Persian army fled to Memphis, but were immediately pursued by the Egyptians and Athenians, who took two parts of the city. The Persians, however, kept possession of the other part, which was the largest and strongest, when they suffered a siege of nearly three years; during which time they valiantly defended themselves against their assailants, until at length they were succoured by the arrival of a reinforcement from Persia.

Themistocles, the famous Athenian general, who had gained so glorious a naval victory at Salamis, being banished from his own country by the ostracism, sought refuge in the Persian court, where he was received with great kindness, and treated with much attention. Artaxerxes being now resolved to send an army into Attica, that he might divert the Athenians from Egypt, selected Themistocles to be the general of this expedition against his own country. The Athenian general, not willing to disoblige the king from whom he had received so many favours, and at the same time, abhorring the idea of making war on his native country, determined to put an end to his own life; therefore, inviting all his friends together, and having sacrificed a bull, he drank its blood, and died.

An army of three hundred thousand men was sent against Greece, under the command of Megabyzus. This general, when Inarus the king of Egypt submitted, had promised a general amnesty, which was confirmed by Artaxerxes; but the latter, at the instigation of his mother, was at length induced to put Inarus, and fifty other leading Egyptians, to the death of the cross. Megabyzus was so much displeased at this want of good faith in the king, that he revolted with the troops under his command, and twice defeated the royal forces sent against him; but was afterwards received again into favour.

The Peloponnesian war, so famous in Grecian history, between the Lacedemonians and Athenians, commenced in the thirty-fourth year of Artaxerxes. This war, so destructive to the power of Greece, lasted for twenty-seven years; but although application was made to Artaxerxes for aid by the Lacedemonians, he prudently declined all interference in the contest. The miseries brought upon Greece by this war, were greatly increased by the desolating plague, which prevailed, especially, at Athens.

Ezra exerted himself greatly at Jerusalem to have the worship of God completely restored; but the work for which he has been most celebrated, both by Jews and Christians, was the collection and revision of the sacred books. In this work, it is said, he was assisted by the Great Synagogue of one hundred and twenty men, among whom the Jews reckon Daniel and his three friends, the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, and Simon the Just; but between the first and last of these there was an interval of two hundred and fifty years. It seems, therefore, more reasonable to suppose that the Great Synagogue were not at all contemporaries, but a succession of learned men, who devoted their attention to the preparation of correct copies of the Scriptures.

There is a story (already referred to) in the second apocryphal book of Esdras, and believed by most of the Christian

fathers, that all the sacred books were lost, during the captivity; but this is directly contradicted by Scripture. No doubt, the autographs preserved in the temple, were destroyed with the ark; but that all copies were destroyed, is a groundless opinion. It is probable, however, that correct copies were, at the restoration, few in number; and therefore, Ezra, who was a "ready scribe," and an inspired man, took pains to prepare authentic copies of all the sacred books, and collected them into one volume, that the people might have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the whole of that revelation, which God, from time to time, had caused to be penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But as many of the people who returned from captivity had lost the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, by so long a residence in a foreign country, Ezra appointed certain persons who were skilled in both the Hebrew and Chaldean languages, to give a version or paraphrase of the lessons which were publicly read from the Scriptures. These paraphrases, at first, were not written, but the sacred text was explained to the people by the interpreter, sentence by sentence, as the reader proceeded; but in process of time, several persons undertook to commit them to writing; a number of which have come down to our times under the name of Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrases; which are nothing else than a free translation of the Hebrew into the Chaldee, with explanatory remarks. The oldest and best of the Targums, are those of Onkelos on the Law, and Jonathan on the Prophets; the language of which is purely Chaldaic, and approaches near to the style of Chaldee found in the book of Daniel and Esther. The language of the later Targums is impure, being much mixed with foreign words and idioms.

No authentic history of the origin of these Paraphrases has reached us. They seem to have been altogether unknown to Origen and Jerome, the only persons among the fathers who understood Hebrew. From this, some learned men have argued, that they were written after the fourth century: but considering the style of the oldest of them, this opinion is destitute of all probability. It seems most reasonable to believe, that the Targums, at least those of Onkelos and Jonathan, were written in Babylonia, where a large number of Jews resided from the time of the captivity, until long after the Christian era. This supposition best accords with the style of these paraphrases, and accounts for the ignorance of the fathers, above mentioned, in relation to them. As to the age in which they were written, nothing can be said with certainty. They are commonly referred to the first century, or a period somewhat earlier; but this is matter of mere conjecture. They may have been written long before the Christian era;

but however this may be, they probably contain the old hereditary comment of the Jews who lived before the time of Christ, and are therefore of great importance in controversies with the modern Jews.

About this time also, it is probable, commenced the synagogues of the Jews, of which we read so much in the New Testament, and which to this day, form so considerable a part of the religious institutions of the Jews. As the custom of reading a portion of the Law every Sabbath now take place, it would soon be found convenient to have houses set apart, every where, for this purpose. In the public reading of the Law it was the custom to go over the whole of the books of Moses, in the course of the year, which led to a division of the Pentateuch into sections or lessons; which division is still found in all Hebrew Bibles. The reading of the prophets in the synagogue was not customary until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the Jews being forbidden any longer to read the Law, introduced the reading of certain select portions from the prophets, which was continued after the reading of the Law was resumed.

In the latter part of the administration of Ezra, great distress and confusion arose from the transgression of the people, in taking strange wives who were not of Jewish extraction. Many of the priests and leaders of the people were involved in this great guilt. Ezra was deeply afflicted on this account, and wept bitterly for the sins of the people, casting himself prostrate on the ground. He also assembled around him all who trembled at the word of the Lord; and with them he prayed, and lamented, and fasted, "because of the transgression of them that had been carried away." At length proclamation was made by authority, that all who would not, within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, come and put away their strange wives, should be punished with the forfeiture of their substance, and should moreover, be themselves separated from the congregation of the Lord. This severity had the desired effect, for the people being generally assembled at Jerusalem, and being solemnly and tenderly warned by Ezra, made public confession of their sin, and agreed to put away their strange wives. And for a warning to future ages, the principal persons who were guilty in this affair, were recorded by name. (See Ezra x.)

SECTION III.

FROM THE ARRIVAL OF NEHEMIAH TO THE INVASION OF ASIA BY ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

IN the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Nehemiah, the cup-bearer of the king, obtained permission to visit Jerusalem, and bringing a commission from the king, to act with plenary authority as governor, he of course superseded Ezra, and took the supreme direction of all affairs into his own hands. Nehemiah was a man of uncommon piety; and immediately on his arrival, devoted himself to the business of repairing, or rather rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and setting up the gates, for which work he had obtained an express commission from the king. That which stirred up the heart of this good man was, the reports brought to him of the desolate condition of the holy city, and the deep affliction of the people there.

It is altogether probable that his petition to the king, was rendered successful, in a great measure, by queen Esther; for it is particularly mentioned, that the queen was sitting by the king. (Neh. ii. 6.)

A royal decree was issued for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem; and the king, to give honour as well as safety to the mission of his favorite courtier, sent with him a guard of horse. Still, however, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Samaritans, continued to cast obstructions in the way of the execution of this work. Not only were they influenced by their old hatred of the Jews, but during the captivity they had seized on their vacant lands, which they were now required to relinquish. But Nehemiah, in spite of all opposition, pushed on the work, distributing to particular persons and companies, the several parts of the wall; so that in fifty-two days after the commencement of the work, the wall was finished.

Sanballat the Horonite, Tobias the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, were the men who continually endeavoured to obstruct the work in which Nehemiah was engaged. They laid many snares for his life, which by his courage and wisdom he was enabled to escape. During part of the time, however, the people were obliged to work on the wall with their weapons in their hands; and as they were far separated from each other, on different parts of the wall, the Tirshatha or governor, gave orders that in case of attack, the trumpet should sound, and all hands should immediately resort to him. After the walls were finished and the gates set up, a public dedication was celebrated with great solemnity, by the priests, Levites, and all the people.

The people having much public work to perform, and many

of them being poor, were under the necessity of borrowing money, of which necessity avaricious usurers took advantage, by lending out their money at exorbitant interest; by which means multitudes were ruined in their circumstances, and were forced to mortgage their lands, and sell their children for bondmen, to obtain bread for their subsistence. Nehemiah was much displeased upon hearing of this iniquity, so contrary to the Jewish law. He therefore set himself with energy to correct the abuse. After expostulating with the transgressors, he had a decree enacted in a full assembly of the people, that all money exacted for usury should be returned, and that all mortgaged lands should be restored, and thus the yoke of oppression was broken off from the necks of the poor.

Nehemiah having spent twelve years at Jerusalem, prepared to return to the Persian court, for he had received permission to be absent only for a limited time. Having arranged affairs as well as he could, and appointed Hanani and Hananiah to be governors of Jerusalem, he returned to Persia. This fact is not stated in the sacred text, but it may be inferred from the appointment of the aforementioned persons as governors, which could not have been necessary, had he continued there.

His object in returning to Persia was not to remain there, but to obtain a new commission from the king, to carry on the reformation of the Jewish church and state. It seems probable, that he was not absent much more than one year, after which he came back to Jerusalem, and continued his pious and useful labours, by establishing a strict and regular police in the city. But observing that the number of inhabitants was still too small to occupy the place, he invited the rulers and great men of the nation to build houses in Jerusalem, and dwell there: and also caused every tenth man of the tribes to be taken by lot, whom he compelled to make this the place of their residence. Every thing being now well regulated, and the city well supplied with inhabitants, it arose rapidly to a state of prosperity; so that Herodotus, the historian, who visited it not long after this time, compares it to Sardis, the metropolis of Asia Minor.

Nehemiah now addressed himself to the work of having the genealogies of the people, and especially of the priests, correctly made out; which was necessary, not only for the regulation of the landed property of the nation, but also for the service of the temple; so that no person not of the sacerdotal race might be permitted to officiate there. He, therefore, searched for the genealogies of those who first returned from captivity, under Joshua and Zerubbabel, and from these he formed new tables, by striking out such families as had become extinct, and inserting the names of those who had returned

since that time. This will account for the discrepance between the genealogies recorded in the book of Ezra, and in that of Nehemiah.

Although after the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem, the government devolved upon him, yet Ezra continued his biblical labours; and by the time that Nehemiah made his second visit, he had copies of the Scriptures corrected and prepared, and began the public reading of them at the feast of trumpets. This occurred on the first day of Tisri, which had always been reckoned the first month of the year, until the time when the Israelites left Egypt, after which they were directed to commence their year with the month Nisan. Still, however, for all merely civil matters, Tisri was reckoned the beginning of the year. At this festival, the people being assembled from all parts at Jerusalem, Ezra was requested to bring out the law and read it. A pulpit, or scaffold of wood, was erected, that he might be elevated above the people, and that there might be room, this pulpit was set up in the widest street in the city. And so intent were the people on hearing, that they assembled for the same purpose the next day, and although there fell a hard rain during the time, they remained in their place.

When Ezra had read as far as to the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, it was found that the law of God required the people to make booths of the branches of trees, and for seven days to celebrate a feast. Upon the hearing of which they determined, that when the appointed day arrived, (the fifteenth of Tisri,) they would literally comply with the requisitions of the law; which accordingly they did, and celebrated this feast with a solemnity exceeding any thing that had been witnessed since the days of Joshua. At this festival, also, Ezra took advantage of the collection of all the people, and went on with the reading and expounding of the law, which had been commenced at the feast of trumpets: and, during the whole seven days, he read to the people out of the law. The people, on hearing the precepts and commandments of the Lord, were greatly troubled on account of their transgressions, which they now found were very numerous.

Ezra and Nehemiah, to improve the present convictions and penitent feelings of the people, proclaimed a fast immediately after the feast was over. At this time they engaged the people to enter into solemn covenant with God, obliging themselves, 1st. Not to intermarry with the heathen. 2. To observe the Sabbath, and the Sabbatical years. 3. To pay their annual tribute for the support of the temple.

The conviction that the people now felt, that their transgressions were very much owing to their ignorance of the law, was

the occasion of that frequent reading of it, which eventually led to the building of synagogues, wherever a sufficient number of Jews were settled to bear the expense, and conduct the worship.

Artaxerxes died 424 B. C., after a reign of forty-one years and a few months, and was succeeded by Xerxes, the only son that he had by his queen. By his concubines he had seventeen sons, among whom were Sogdianus, Ochus, and Arsites. Xerxes, having made himself drunk at a public feast, and having retired to his chamber, Sogdianus, taking advantage of it, went in and slew him, when he had sat but forty-five days on the throne. The mother of Xerxes died on the same day.

Sogdianus having rendered himself odious to the people, by the murder of his brother, and also by that of one of his father's most faithful eunuchs, found himself very unsafe on the throne, which he had obtained so unrighteously; whereupon, he grew very jealous of his brothers, and especially of Ochus, whom he sent for, to come to him. But Ochus, apprehending some mischief, drew together a large army and marched against him, professing that it was his purpose to avenge the death of his brother. Upon which many of the nobility revolted from Sogdianus, and went over to Ochus, and having put the royal diadem on his head, declared him king. Sogdianus finding himself abandoned, entered into negotiation with Ochus, who having got him into his hands, put him to death by throwing him into a furnace of ashes.

As soon as Ochus had possession of the throne, he changed his name to Darius. Among the Greek historians he is known by the name of Darius Nothus. He for a while yielded himself up to the direction of his eunuchs and his wife. He ascended the throne 423 B. C. His brother Arsites revolted against him, but was unsuccessful, and being taken, was, like Sogdianus, thrown into a furnace of ashes—a cruel death in use among the Persians, in which the person died of suffocation, very gradually. Another insurgent, named Pysuthnes, was executed in the same manner. About the year 410 B. C., the Egyptians threw off the Persian yoke, and made one Amyrtaeus king. With the aid of the Arabians, they expelled the Persians from Egypt, pursued them as far as Phenicia, and maintained their independence sixty-four years. Ochus or Darius sent another army into Egypt, which, marching through Judea, inflicted many evils on the Jews.

Eliashib, who was high-priest when Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, died, 413 B. C., and was succeeded by his son Joiada. He had continued in the office of high-priest for no less than forty years.

About this time, Diagoras the Melian, who had settled himself at Athens, was condemned for teaching atheism; and though

he made his escape, the sentence was pronounced on him, while absent, and a talent offered to whomsoever should kill him, wherever he might be found. About twenty years before this time, the Athenians had proceeded against another philosopher, called Protagoras, for only expressing a doubt concerning the existence of God.

According to Dr. Prideaux, the first of the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel ended with the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus; for then the restoration of the Jewish state, and the worship of the temple was completed. The last act of Nehemiah, which is recorded, (Neh. xiii. 23—31,) was just forty-nine years after the work had been begun by Ezra, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. This last act was the separation of those from their heathen wives, who had transgressed the law in regard to marriage, and the prohibition of all such alliances for ever after. But it seems to have been impossible to prevent the continual repetition of this evil, and that by men in the highest stations; for Manasseh, as he is called by Josephus, the son of Joiada, married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, and when Nehemiah was using his utmost power to enforce the law, and cause the people to put away their strange wives, Manasseh rather than comply, left the nation; and relinquishing all his prospects of distinction, took up his abode with his father-in-law, the governor of Samaria.

This event gave rise to an important transaction, which perpetuated the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Sanballat obtained leave from Darius Nothus, to build on mount Gerizim, at Samaria, a temple, in imitation of the temple at Jerusalem, of which he made his son-in-law Manasseh the high-priest. Josephus places this event much lower down in another reign, but he has probably fallen into a chronological mistake. Samaria having now a rival house of worship, became the asylum of all renegade Jews. This ready reception of rebellious and excommunicated persons, produced a bitterness of hatred in the Jews against the Samaritans, which induced them to denounce against them an awful curse, and reject them from every sort of friendly intercourse; and even prevented their exercising towards them the common rites of humanity, of which there is sufficient evidence in the Gospels, as has been said before. The Jews went so far in their anathemas against the Samaritans, that they excluded them from all part in the resurrection, and would on no account receive them as proselytes.

After their temple was built, the Samaritans pretended that this was the mountain which God had chosen for his place of worship. They asserted that here Abraham and Jacob offered sacrifices and built altars; and that Joshua, when he brought

the people into Canaan, caused the blessings to be pronounced from this mountain, and on it built an altar of the twelve stones taken out of Jordan; and that very altar, they averred, was the one on which they sacrificed. But in regard to this they were guilty of a sacrilegious impiety in changing the sacred text in their copies; for, in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is said that Ebal was the mount on which the altar was built, for which the Samaritans substituted Gerizim. This corruption the Jews loudly charge upon them; but they with equal violence retort it upon the Jews, insisting that they are the corrupters of the Sacred Text; and bringing for argument, that Gerizim being the mount appointed for the pronounciation of the blessings, was a fit place for the altar, but not Ebal, from which the curses were pronounced. But all other copies of the Pentateuch, and all versions are against them. They have also added, in Exod. xx., after the tenth commandment, a command to erect an altar in Gerizim.

These two mountains are in the tribe of Ephraim. In the valley between them is Shechem, now called Naplous. This place the Jews by way of reproach called Sichar, which means, *drunken*. Near this was the field which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, and Jacob's well, where our Saviour asked water of the Samaritan woman.

The opinion is entertained by some, that Nehemiah did not return to Jerusalem until towards the close of the reign of Darius Nothus, when he was growing old. Josephus relates that he lived to a very advanced age; and this opinion, which brings down the second administration of Nehemiah to a much later period than the date commonly assigned, will accord with the facts recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah: for it can scarcely be conceived that so great abuses could have crept in during one year: such as the profanation of the temple; the violation of the Sabbath; the neglect of sending in the tithes and prescribed offerings, and various abuses in the official duties of the priests. All that the Scriptures say in regard to the absence of Nehemiah, is, "But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem; for in the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king, *and after certain days* obtained I leave of the king; and I came to Jerusalem," &c. The expression "after certain days," literally is, *at the end of days*; a phrase which, according to the idiom of Scripture, may signify a longer or shorter time. Jahn, who adopts the above opinion, supposes that the second administration of Nehemiah was contemporaneous with the events referred to in the book of Malachi, where the desolations of Edom or Idumea are spoken of, which he thinks were occasioned by the perpetual wars carried on during this period between the Persians and Egyp-

tians, whose armies often marched through this land, and laid it waste. It is expressly asserted that Joiada was high-priest during the last administration of Nehemiah, (Neh. xiii.) and the Alexandrian chronicon places the death of Eliashib, the father of Joiada, in the eleventh year of Darius Nothus, which answers to the 412 B. C. The second arrival of Nehemiah must, therefore, be placed much later, and is by Dr. Prideaux referred to the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus, but even this date is probably too early.

We have now arrived at a period where we can derive no further aid from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, for the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah, contains the latest history found in the sacred record; and the prophecy of Malachi closes the canon of the Old Testament, which, as was observed, refers to the same state of things as is referred to in the closing chapter of Nehemiah. There is, it is true, in the twelfth chapter of Nehemiah, an extension of the genealogy of the high-priests, for a long time after this, even to Jaddua, who was in office when Alexander the Great visited Jerusalem; but, undoubtedly, the high-priests who came after Joiada, were added by some one, after the canon was closed; most probably by Simon the Just.

How long Nehemiah lived, is nowhere said, but he must have been about seventy years of age at the time when the facts occurred, which are last recorded in his book. After him, the king of Persia appointed no one to be governor of Judea, but seems to have annexed this country to the province of Syria.

Darius Nothus continued to have wars with the Egyptians, until they were subdued; and also with Medes, who had revolted, and whom he brought under a heavier yoke than before. His policy towards the Lacedemonians and Athenians, in the Peloponnesian war was, to leave them to waste and destroy each other; occasionally directing his generals to assist the weaker party, so that the war might be the more prolonged. The general who was intrusted with the management of this delicate and difficult business, was Tissaphernes, a man of great talents.

In the seventeenth year of his reign, (407 B. C.,) the king sent his younger son Cyrus, to be commander-in-chief of all the provinces of Asia Minor. Cyrus must have been, at this time, a very young man, scarcely above sixteen years of age. On receiving his commission, he was directed by his father, contrary to the policy pursued by Tissaphernes, to help the Lacedemonians. The impolicy of this course was soon manifest, for the Lacedemonians, by the aid of the Persians, soon became completely victorious over the Athenians; and being

thenceforward released from this troublesome war, they turned their forces against the Persians themselves, and actually sent several armies to invade the country; one of which was commanded by the famous Agesilaus.

Cyrus gave great offence to his father, while he resided at Sardis, by putting to death two of his own cousins, sons of a sister of Darius, for no other reason, than because they, upon meeting him, did not wrap up their hands in their sleeves, as was customary on meeting with the king. An order was therefore sent for the recall of Cyrus, by his father, but assigning as the reason, that he was sick. Cyrus, before he set out on his return, had sent to Lysander the Lacedemonian general, subsidies, which enabled him to put his fleet into such a condition as to gain over the Athenians that decisive victory at the Goats' River, on the Hellespont, which put an end to the Peloponnesian war.

Soon after the return of Cyrus, Darius Nothus died, after a reign of nineteen years. By the interposition of his mother, Cyrus was reconciled to his father; and, not contented with this, she entreated to have her favourite made king, on the same principle as Xerxes was, because he was the first born after the accession of his father. Darius, however, would not yield this point, but gave the crown to Arsaces, the eldest son of Parysatis the queen, who, on ascending the throne, took the name of Artaxerxes, and to whom the Greeks gave the name of Mnemon, on account of his extraordinary memory.

It is said, that when the father was near his end, this son, appointed his successor, asked him to inform him by what art he had been able to manage the government so prosperously. To which he is reported to have made the following memorable reply: "*By doing, in all things, that which was just toward God and man.*"

Cyrus, being disappointed in his ambitious views, of ascending the throne quietly, began, as soon as his father was out of the way, to plot against the life of his brother; which, being discovered, he was taken into custody, and condemned to die; but his mother again interposing in his behalf, prevailed on the king to send him back to the government of Asia Minor, which had been left to him by his father's will. But no sooner did this ambitious young man find himself at liberty, and invested with authority again, than he began, on various pretences, to raise an army; and the cities under the government of Tissaphernes revolting from him, joined themselves to Cyrus, which occasioned a war between them. This served as a pretext for what Cyrus now did, in collecting forces. As Artaxerxes supposed, that the only object was to oppose Tissaphernes; and to blind the king yet more, he wrote letters to him, complaining

bitterly of the conduct of Tissaphernes, and entreating him to grant him aid against him. He now applied to the Lacedemonians, who were under great obligations to him, for the subsidies afforded them for the aid of their fleet, which they readily granted. All this time, Artaxerxes seems to have had no suspicion of the true designs of Cyrus. When he had raised and mustered his forces, he threw off the mask, and marched his army directly against his brother. It consisted of thirteen thousand Greeks, who were the flower of his army, and about a hundred thousand besides, drawn together from all parts, under the command of Clearchus. With this force, Cyrus marched forward without meeting much opposition, until he came to the plains of Cunaxa, in the province of Babylon, where Artaxerxes met him with an army of nine hundred thousand men, and a decisive battle was fought, in which Cyrus was slain at the very moment when his auxiliary Greeks were on the point of gaining a great victory. These Grecian troops, of whom about ten thousand remained, were now left in a most embarrassing situation, in the midst of the Persian empire, in the presence of a vast hostile army, and with a long distance between them and home; the inhabitants of the intervening countries being all inimical to the Greeks. But by valour and consummate generalship, they succeeded in reaching one of the Grecian cities on the Euxine sea, after a march of two thousand three hundred and twenty-five miles. This is the most famous retreat of which we have any account in history, and of which Xenophon, who was their leader, has given us so lively and interesting a description, in his work entitled *Anabasis*.

The death of Cyrus, and the retreat of the ten thousand, occurred in the fourth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, (401 B. C.,) being the very year in which Socrates was put to death at Athens.

The reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon was long, extending to forty-six years; that is, from the year 404 to 358 B. C. He carried on wars with the Lacedemonians, Egyptians, Cadusians, &c., but no great success attended his arms. Shortly before his decease he appointed his son Darius his successor, but on discovering that he was engaged in a plot against his life, he had him executed. The second son by the queen, destroyed himself by poison. The succession to the crown then fell to Ochus, in the year 358 B. C. He assumed also the name Artaxerxes, which seems to have been among the Persian kings what Pharaoh was among the Egyptians; but in history, this monarch is known by his own proper name of Ochus.

During the greater part of the long reign of Artaxerxes

Mnemon the Jews enjoyed peace; except when the Persian armies marched along the coast of the Mediterranean into Egypt. On one occasion there were assembled on their borders no less than two hundred thousand barbarian soldiers, and twenty thousand Greeks, together with a vast fleet, which rendezvoused at Acre.

The high-priest Joiada died in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and was succeeded by his son Jonathan, or Johanan, or Ptolemas, or John, who held the office for thirty-two years, and was the occasion of much trouble to his country.

The brother of the high-priest Johanan, whose name was Joshua, having ingratiated himself into the favour of Bagoses governor of Syria, through his agency and influence obtained a royal order that he should be made high-priest instead of his brother. Johanan not yielding to this, a contest took place between the two brothers, within the temple, when Joshua was rashly murdered by Johanan. Bagoses, on hearing of this outrage, came to Jerusalem to examine into the affair, and demanded to be admitted into the temple where the murder was committed; and when this was refused, on account of the sanctity of the place, he answered with indignation, "What! am not I as pure as the dead carcass which lies in your temple," and immediately forced his way into the interior, where Joshua had been slain. As a punishment for the murder of Joshua, he inflicted a fine of fifty drachms on every lamb which should be offered up in the temple. Some say the mulct was five hundred drachms, but this has arisen from a manifest mistake in the text of Josephus. This tax continued no longer than during the government of Bagoses, a space of about seven years.

Ochus, upon ascending the throne, was guilty of shocking cruelties towards his own relations. As soon as the death of Artaxerxes and the accession of Ochus were known in Asia Minor, all the provinces in that quarter revolted.

In the third year of his reign, (356 B. C.—100th Olympiad, and 385 after the building of Rome,) Alexander, surnamed the Great, was born at Pella, in Macedonia, on the same day that Erostratus attempted to immortalize himself by setting fire to the temple of Diana at Ephesus.

About the fifth year of Ochus, died Mausolus king of Caria, an event rendered famous in history by the extraordinary grief of his wife Artemisia, who was also his sister. For having gathered together his ashes, and powdered his bones, she took a portion of them every day in her drink till she had, in this manner, drank them all; thus making her own body the sepulchre of her deceased husband, and in two years pined away with grief. But before her death she erected for him

that famous monument at Halicarnassus, which was reckoned among the seven wonders of the world, and from which all monuments of unusual splendour are called *Mausoleums*.

In the eighth year of the reign of Ochus, the Sidonians and Phenicians revolted and entered into a confederacy with Nectanebis, king of Egypt. He sent to their aid a large body of Grecian mercenaries, by whose assistance the Persians were driven entirely out of Phenicia. The Jews also seem to have taken part in this revolt of the Phenicians. The Cyprians, too, encouraged by the success of the Phenicians, threw off the Persian yoke and joined the confederacy.

Ochus perceiving that his wars with the Egyptians had been badly managed by his generals, determined to go in person at the head of his army; and having collected three hundred thousand foot, and twenty thousand horse, marched into Phenicia. Mentor, who commanded the Grecian mercenaries, being terrified at the approach of so great an army, sent privately to Ochus, offering to deliver up the city of Sidon to him, and engaged Tennes, the king of Sidon, in the same treachery. Ochus was rejoiced at this proposal, and promised them their own terms. The Sidonians, to cut off all hope of escape from the inhabitants, that they might make a more desperate resistance, had purposely burned all their ships. When they found that they were betrayed, and that the enemy was within their walls, retired to their houses, and setting fire to them, perished in the flames, to the number of forty thousand, and among the rest, Tennes, their king, whose treason did not save him. This was the commencement of the destruction of that ancient and famous city, predicted by the prophets in such glowing language. The Phenicians, terrified with the overthrow of the Sidonians, submitted to the conqueror without a struggle.

Ochus having subdued the Sidonians and Phenicians, marched into Judea, besieged and took Jericho, and carried many of the Jews into captivity, taking some with him into Egypt, and sending many others into Hyrcania. The latter were planted near the borders of the Caspian Sea, where some modern travellers think they have discovered their posterity, at this day. (See Morier's Travels.) Not wishing to be diverted from Egypt, on which his attention was fixed, Ochus made peace with the Cyprians, by relieving them from some of the burdens of which they complained.

Ochus, arriving with his army in Egypt, besieged Pelusium, while a part of his fleet sailing up the river, encamped in an advantageous spot, and being attacked by the Grecian mercenaries in the service of the Egyptians, defended themselves, and slew a large number of the enemy. Upon which Pelusium capi-

tulated, and Nectanebis fled to Memphis, his capital; but on the approach of Ochus, he retired from Egypt into Ethiopia, thus abandoning his country, to which he never afterwards returned. He was the last native king who reigned in Egypt, for ever since that devoted country has been in the hands of foreigners. By this a remarkable prophecy of Ezekiel is fulfilled.* (Ezek. xxix. 13—16.) Mentor the Rhodian, having been of great service in this war, Ochus rewarded him with a hundred talents, and made him governor of the provinces in Asia Minor, where he acted with great fidelity to the king, and brought over to him his two brothers, Memnon and Artabazus, who were also men of extraordinary talents, who had been engaged in the war against Ochus. These brothers were of the greatest service to the king's interest, by bringing back to their allegiance many revolted provinces.

In the eleventh year of Ochus, (348 B. C.,) which answers to the 108th Olympiad, died the celebrated Athenian philosopher, Plato. Among his scholars, Aristotle was by far the most eminent, the founder of the Peripatetic sect. This man was born at a small town on the river Strymon, called Stagira; on which account he is often called the Stagirite. But the successor of Plato in the school was Speusippus. Aristotle, after the death of his master, went into Asia, and lived with the king of Atarna, a city of Mysia, whose niece he married; but after the death of this person, he went to Mytilene, and from thence to Macedonia, and became preceptor to Alexander the Great, with whom he remained eight years. After this he returned to Athens, and taught the Peripatetic philosophy for twelve years in the Lyceum. But being accused of teaching something contrary to the established religion of the State, and being unwilling to expose himself to the fate of Socrates, he retired to Chalcis, a town in Eubæ, where he died, two years afterwards, in the sixty-third year of his age. Josephus informs us that Aristotle, while he resided with Hermias, in Mysia, became acquainted with a learned Jew, from the upper parts of Asia, who had come there on business. This fact, he says, he learned from a book written by Clearchus, one of Aristotle's principal scholars.

After Ochus had brought Egypt and all his other revolted provinces into subjection, he gave himself up entirely to ease and luxury, and took no more concern about the government of the empire, which he committed to Bagoas, his favourite eunuch, and Mentor the Rhodian. In the eighteenth year of this reign, (341 B. C.,) died Johanan or John, the high-priest of the Jews, after holding the office for thirty-two years. He was succeeded by his son Jaddua, who held it twenty years. Ochus came to

* See Newton on the Prophecies.

his end by means of poison, administered by his favourite eunuch Bagoas, (338 years B. C.) after a reign of twenty-one years.

Bagoas, after the death of Ochus, having the whole power in his hands, raised Arses, the youngest of the king's sons, to the throne, and then murdered all the rest; thinking to free himself from all control by placing one upon the throne who was a king merely in name. About this time, Philip king of Macedonia, having made himself master of all Greece, determined to carry on war against the Persians, by an invasion of their country. With this view he called a general assembly of the States of Greece, at Corinth, where he caused himself to be chosen captain-general of the Grecian forces, and required every city to furnish a certain number of men. But while he was making these preparations, intending shortly to put himself at the head of his troops, he was slain, at the nuptials of his daughter Cleopatra with Alexander king of Epirus. The assassin was Pausanias, a young Macedonian, who having received great injury from one of the king's favourites, and obtaining no satisfaction from Philip, he watched his opportunity, and slew the king as he was passing in great pomp to the theatre. He was succeeded by his son Alexander, then only twenty years of age.

Bagoas, finding that Arses, whom he had placed on the Persian throne, began to suspect his villainy, resolved to be beforehand with him, and accordingly destroyed him. After producing a vacancy in this iniquitous manner, he elevated to the throne Codomanus, who assumed the name of Darius, after he was made king. He was descended from Darius Nothus. As Ochus, on his accession to the throne, had killed nearly all the descendants of Darius Nothus, it is not certainly known how Codomanus escaped. The first appearance which he makes in history is, in the character of courier, in the early part of the reign of Ochus. When this king was engaged in a war with the Cadusians, a champion of that nation challenged the whole Persian army to send out a man to fight him, in single combat. When all declined this challenge, Codomanus accepted it, and killed his antagonist; as a reward for which, he was made governor of Armenia.

Bagoas, however, finding that Darius was not a man to suit his purpose, determined to put him out of the way, as he had done his predecessors; but the king being informed of his purpose to poison him with a certain potion, when it was brought, forced Bagoas to drink it himself; and thus the traitor fell by his own artifice. In regard to personal appearance, courage, and bodily strength, Darius had no superior in all his empire. He was also, it is said, of a mild and generous disposition; but

it was his misfortune to have to contend with that irresistible conqueror, Alexander the Great.

SECTION IV.

REIGN OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT—INVASION OF ASIA BY ALEXANDER—CONQUEST OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE—SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF TYRE—ALEXANDER'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM—IS MET BY JADDUA AND THE OTHER PRIESTS—HIS STRANGE BEHAVIOUR—HIS KIND TREATMENT OF THE JEWS—CONDUCT TOWARDS THE SAMARITANS—DEATH OF DARIUS—INVASION OF INDIA—VOYAGE OF NEARCHUS—CARRICIOUS AND VIOLENT CHARACTER OF ALEXANDER—HIS DEATH.

ALEXANDER, having been appointed successor to his father as generalissimo of all the forces of Greece destined to go against Persia, after subduing all his enemies at home, set off for Persia, with no more than thirty thousand infantry and five thousand horse. Encountering the Persian army at the river Granicus, he totally defeated it, though five times more numerous than his own. His victory put him in possession, not only of all the treasures of Darius, in Sardis, but all the provinces of Asia Minor came over to him, or were subdued by force. Before he went into winter quarters, he gave permission to all his newly married soldiers to return home, and spend the winter with their wives; which custom being found among no other but the Jews, it is probable that it was borrowed from them.

Darius finding his empire so seriously menaced, exerted himself to prepare for the approaching contest, and mustered six hundred thousand men, near Babylon. He also had recourse to policy, for knowing that the Grecian States were not friendly to Alexander, he sent Memnon, the wisest of his generals, with a fleet to the Grecian seas, where the Athenians and Lacedemonians would have been ready to join him; but after taking possession of a few islands, he died, and the scheme was not prosecuted.

Darius, contrary to the advice of some of the most experienced and skilful of his generals, who advised him to wait for Alexander in the champaign country, marched to get possession of the straits which led from Cilicia into Syria. In consequence of the unfavourableness of the ground, Darius was unable to bring but a small part of his immense host into the field at once; and the Macedonians soon broke the first lines of the Persian army, and drove them back on the second, and then on the third; and thus the whole was soon thrown into perfect confusion. Such was the press of the crowd, in the narrow defiles of the mountains by which they were enclosed, that more perished that day, by being trodden to death by their own men, than were slain by the enemy. It was with the greatest diffi-

culty that Darius made his escape; but his camp and baggage, with his mother, wife, and children, fell into the hands of the enemy. This battle was fought at Issus, in Cilicia, towards the close of the year. The result of this victory was the conquest of all Syria, and its capital, Damascus, whither Darius had sent his most precious treasures, with his concubines, and most of the ladies of his court. The governor of this town, as soon as he heard of the flight of Darius, delivered it up to Alexander, who sent Parmenio to take possession.

Alexander now pursued his march through Phenicia, where all submitted to his arms, except the Tyrians; who refused him admittance into their city, depending on its insular and inaccessible situation. Alexander, naturally impetuous, and now flushed with victory; resolved, that cost what it might, he would take the place. The first thing he attempted, was to raise a bank between the main land and the island on which Tyre was now built; and by this means, after some delay he took the city. In making this causeway, he employed the rubbish of the old town, which had stood on the continent, before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Since the time of Alexander, the island has disappeared, or rather forms a part of the main land. Among the captives taken at Damascus, there was one, who, by her extraordinary beauty, captivated the conqueror of the world. This was Barsena, the widow of Memnon, a famous Persian general, of whom mention has already been made. Her, Alexander married, and by her had a son whom he named Hercules.

Tyre, being altogether devoted to commerce, was dependant on other countries for her supplies of grain; which were commonly obtained from Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Alexander, therefore, during the seige, was obliged to look to the same quarter for supplies for his army, and ordered the inhabitants to furnish him with all necessaries. The Jews pleaded, that they were bound by an oath to Darius, and refused to obey Alexander's commands. This answer greatly provoked him, who, as soon as he had finished the siege of Tyre, marched his army directly towards Jerusalem, with the intention of punishing the Jews as severely as he had done the Tyrians, for not obeying his orders. In this exigence, Jaddua the high-priest, and others who had now the chief authority in Jerusalem, being in great perplexity, and all Jerusalem with them, had no other resource, but to throw themselves on the merciful protection of God. Accordingly, they earnestly sought his favour, by prayers, sacrifices, and oblations. In answer to which, it is reported by Josephus, that God appeared to Jaddua by night, in a dream, directing him to go forth to meet Alexander, dressed in his pontifical robes, accompanied by all the priests

in their sacerdotal habits, and all the people of Jerusalem, clothed in white garments. This divine admonition they obeyed, and marched in procession to an elevated spot, not far from Jerusalem, called Sapha, where they arranged themselves in solemn order, and waited for the coming of Alexander; who, when he saw them, was struck with a solemn awe, and bending down, saluted Jaddua, with profound and religious veneration. All his attendants were astonished at this conduct, and the enemies of the Jews in his train were greatly disappointed, for they expected nothing else but to see the Jews devoted to destruction.

Parmenio could not refrain from asking him the reason, why he, whom all adored, should pay such reverence to the Jewish high-priest. He answered, that he did not worship the priest, but that God whom he served. For he said, that when he was at Dio in Macedonia, and was hesitating about undertaking this expedition, this very person had appeared to him in a dream, in the very same robes in which he now appeared, and had encouraged him to pass boldly into Asia; promising him, that God would guide him during the whole expedition, and would make him master of the Persian empire. Alexander then kindly embraced Jaddua, and entered Jerusalem with him in a friendly manner. Here Jaddua showed him the prophecies of Daniel, which predicted the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian prince; (see Dan. chap. viii.) This, it is said, inspired him with the utmost confidence of success; not doubting but that he was the person intended in the prophecy. All which disposed him to treat the Jews with great kindness, so that when they petitioned for the freedom of their country, laws, and religion, and exemption from tribute every seventh year, he readily granted them all their requests. No sooner had he left Jerusalem, than the Samaritans met him with great pomp and parade, and begged that he would also visit their city and temple. Now the Samaritans had a strong ground for their plea, because when the Jews refused to send supplies to the army of Alexander, the Samaritans readily complied with his orders; and moreover, sent eight thousand men to assist him in the siege. Alexander answered them kindly, and told them that he was then hastening to Egypt, but on his return, would consider their petition, and grant to them what they desired, as far as was consistent. They then requested freedom from tribute, every seventh year. Upon which he asked them whether they were Jews, to which they answered they were Hebrews, who observed the same laws as the Jews; and neither sowed nor reaped, in the seventh year; and that as this immunity had been granted to the Jews, they hoped it would not be withheld from them. Alexander not being at leisure to make

the necessary inquiries, deferred a decision, on this point also, till his return.

On coming to Gaza, he found it strongly garrisoned, under one of Darius's eunuchs, named Betis, a valiant and faithful man, who defended the city for his master as long as he could: as it was at the very entrance into the country claimed by Egypt, he could not pass until he had taken it. But notwithstanding all the force and art by which it was assailed, it detained Alexander two whole months. This delay, together with two dangerous wounds received during the siege, led him to treat the commander and inhabitants with inexcusable cruelty. He put to death ten thousand of them, and sent all the rest into slavery. Alexander now marched immediately to Egypt. When he arrived at Pelusium, the Egyptians flocked to meet him as a deliverer; for such was their hatred to the Persians that they were ready to welcome any other master. He was, therefore, received with open arms, and Egypt was possessed without a struggle. Even the Persian governor at Memphis, seeing that it was in vain to resist such a torrent, submitted to Alexander.

From Memphis, he projected a journey through the desert to the temple of Jupiter Hammon, situated in the sands of Lybia, at the distance of two hundred miles from Egypt. The famous temple erected here was probably in honour of Ham, the first settler of Egypt after the deluge. Alexander's errand to this place was very foolish and vainglorious. It was no other than to get himself acknowledged as the son of the god called Jupiter Hammon. In order to effect his purpose, he had sent before him messengers to bribe the priests, so that when he came, the oracle might declare what he vaingloriously and impiously wished. On his way, his sagacious eye observed a spot near the coast, over against the island of Pharos, very suitable for a city. He immediately resolved that one should be built, which he intended to make the capital of his empire, and called it Alexandria, after his own name. According to the course of trade, in those days, no situation could be more eligible; for it has before it the Mediterranean, and behind it the Nile, with a short and easy communication with the Red Sea. But the state of the world as to commerce is now entirely changed, and at present Alexandria is famous for nothing but its ruins, the remains of its former grandeur. Having laid out the city, he left the work in the hands of the famous architect, Democrates, the builder of the celebrated temple of Diana, at Ephesus, while he went on his projected journey to the temple of Jupiter Hammon, where he received from the oracle the answer which he wished, that he was the son of the god worshipped in that temple. Upon which he returned in great tri-

umph. In making this journey, his army ran great hazards in passing through the sands, for two hundred miles; where Cambyzes, as we have before mentioned, lost an army of forty or fifty thousand men. In one instance, he was preserved from death by a seasonable, but almost miraculous shower of rain.

On his return, he collected inhabitants from all quarters to people his new city, and among the rest, invited many Jews to settle there, offering them the free exercise of their own laws and religion; and even granting them the same privileges as were conferred on the Macedonians themselves. Varro relates that about the time of building Alexandria, the use of the papyrus, as a material for writing on, was discovered.

While Alexander was gone to Egypt, he left as governor of Syria and Palestine, a special favourite, whose name was Andromachus, who had his residence at Samaria. The Samaritans, it would seem, chagrined at not receiving equal privileges with the Jews, or on some other ground, set fire to the house of the governor, who was consumed in the flames. At this, Alexander was exceedingly exasperated, and on his return, put to death all who had taken any part in this affair; drove the rest out of the city, replaced them with Macedonians, and gave their land to the Jews. Those who escaped, went and settled at Sichem, under mount Gerizim, which has been ever since the principal residence of the Samaritans.

Darius, having several times in vain solicited peace from Alexander, at last determined to make a mighty effort, and collecting a vast army, marched towards Nineveh, where he was pursued by Alexander, and overtaken at an inconsiderable village called Guagimola, where a great battle was fought, and Darius' army entirely defeated, though it was twenty times as numerous as that of Alexander; and where he had all the advantage of an extensive plain to bring his whole force into active operation. This battle is usually named, not from the obscure village where it was fought, but from the city of Arbela, which was at no great distance. Any one may see in these events, how remarkably the prophecies of Daniel were fulfilled, which relate to "the ram and the he-goat," and which were interpreted to mean the kings of Persia and of Grecia. (See Dan. vii. 6; viii. 5-7, 20, 21.) Darius now fled to Media. Alexander pursued him as far as Arbela, where he took all his treasure and royal equipage, which was of very great value. Alexander then turned his course to Babylon, which city was given up to him at once by the governor.

Alexander now gave himself up to feasting and every species of dissipation. When inflamed with wine, he often acted like a perfect madman, as an example of which we may mention, that, one night to gratify the caprice of a famous Athenian

courtezan, he, and all his companions, seizing torches, set fire to Persepolis, and burned it to the ground. Hearing that Darius was collecting another army in Media, Alexander pursued after him; and on his arrival, finding that he had fled to Parthia, he continued his pursuit. This unfortunate monarch, being thus driven from country to country, and subjected to great privations and sufferings, grew desperate, and refused to proceed further. Upon which his attendants inflicted several mortal wounds on him, and left him; in which situation he was found by one of Alexander's generals; but breathed his last before Alexander himself arrived. When he saw the dead body of so great a prince, thus forsaken and mangled, the conqueror wept, and throwing his cloak over it, commanded that it should be conveyed to Susa, and be honoured by a royal burial. Thus ended the Persian empire, after it had endured, from the first year of Cyrus, two hundred and nine years.

The enterprise of conquering India was another example of the excessive vainglory of this prince. Having read in the fabulous histories of Greece, of the heroic exploits of Hercules and Bacchus, in the invasion of this remote country, he was ambitious of equalling them, as he now gave himself out to be the son of Jupiter, and began to require divine honours to be paid to him. One of his worst actions was the putting Callisthenes the philosopher to death, because he remonstrated against this foolish expedition. About the same time, also, he put Clitus to death with his own hand.

When Alexander crossed the river Indus, he gave orders to build ships, with the view of sending them down the river, and along the coast, until they should reach Persia. This fleet was committed to Nearchus, who coasted along the southern shores of Asia, until he reached the gulph of Ormus, in Persia, much about the same time that Alexander arrived in those parts, in his dreary march by land, through the barren sands of the southern parts of Persia. In this march, which was also in imitation of Hercules and Bacchus, he lost more than half his men. After his return, he married the eldest daughter of Darius, and gave the youngest to Hephestion his chief favourite; and most of his leading generals were married at the same time, to noble Persian ladies.

The mind of Alexander was capable of the most enlarged and comprehensive views, and he was full of grand projects, which few others would have conceived. One of these was the circumnavigation of Africa; another, the restoration of Babylon, which had suffered greatly, from the time that Cyrus removed the mounds which restrained the waters of the Euphrates in their channel. A third was a survey of the Caspian sea. But when unoccupied with his wars, he gave himself

up to luxury, especially to hard drinking, in which he would often spend whole days and nights; until, at length he brought on a fever by his excesses, which in a few days put an end to his life, at Babylon. The death of Alexander occurred in the first year of the 146th Olympiad, (323 B. C.) As is very common, in regard to the end of great princes, his death was attributed to poison, and this report was not only current, but fully believed among the Macedonians: and to give plausibility to the story, a great many particular circumstances, as to the manner in which the poison was concealed and administered, were circulated.

After the death of Alexander, great confusion ensued about the succession. But eventually the supreme authority was divided among his four principal generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. Cassander had for his allotment, Macedonia and Greece. Lysimachus, Thrace and those parts of Asia which lay along the Hellespont and Bosphorus; Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, and Syria; and Seleucus all the rest.

Thus the prophecy of Daniel (chapter viii. 8) respecting the breaking of the horn of "the he-goat," was most exactly and wonderfully verified. The words of the prophet are, "Therefore the he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones;" taken in connection with the interpretation, given to Daniel by the angel: "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn between his eyes, is the first king. Now, that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power." The same events are predicted in chap. vii. 5, 6, under a different prophetic emblem. "After this I beheld, and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast had also four heads, and dominion was given to it."

SECTION V.

FROM THE TIME OF THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, TO
THE DEATH OF ONIAS THE HIGH-PRIEST.

INCESSANT wars were carried on between these generals, to give an account of which, is not consistent with our plan, except so far as they are connected with the fortunes of the Jewish people.

Perdiccas, who was left in Babylon, and to whom was com-

mitted the guardianship of the young kings, the half brother, and the infant son of Alexander, was a man of great ambition, and very soon began to meditate important conquests. He first invaded Egypt, and then waged war against Ptolemy; but Ptolemy, having governed in Egypt with great wisdom and moderation, was beloved by the people, and even the Grecian soldiers in the army of Perdicas were so unwilling to fight against him, that they revolted from their leader and put him to death, after which event all the Macedonians who invaded Egypt came over to the side of Ptolemy. This prince, now observing how convenient it would be for him to regain the possession of Phenicia and India, resolved to make himself master of these provinces, which having been assigned to Laomedon the Mitylenian, one of Alexander's captains, in the original division, and confirmed to him in the second partition made by Antipater, had remained in his undisturbed possession from the death of Alexander until this time. Ptolemy at first attempted to purchase them, and offered large sums for this purpose; but failing in these measures, he had recourse to war, and sent Nicanor with a fleet into Syria, while he invaded Phenicia. But while all the country beside yielded to her power, the Jews alone refused to submit, and, for some time, stood out against him; upon which Ptolemy marched against Judea, and besieged Jerusalem. The reason of their opposition was, a conscientious regard to the oath which they had taken to Laomedon. Jerusalem being by nature strong, and being also well fortified, might have resisted long, had not Ptolemy taken advantage of their too strict observance of their Sabbath, and chosen that day for a general assault. The place fell into his hands, because none of the Jews would, on the Sabbath, defend their walls against him. Josephus, indeed, gives a different account of this transaction, but he was probably induced to conceal the truth, for fear of the ridicule of the Greeks. And we know that until the time of Matthias, the Jews did consider it wrong to fight on the Sabbath.

When Ptolemy got possession of Jerusalem and Judea, he carried away one hundred thousand of the Jews to Egypt; but observing how faithful they were to those whom they served, he chose out thirty thousand of them, to govern those towns which it was most important to preserve. And having recently added Lybia and Cyrene to his dominions, he sent many of them to occupy that country. This was the origin of the Jewish colony, who long resided there, and who were numerous in the time of our Saviour, and long afterwards. Although the real power of the empire had been usurped by Alexander's generals, yet there was an agreement among them that Aridæus his half brother, should have the title of king, and Alexander, the son

of the conqueror by his wife Roxana, who was born after his father's death, was also joined with the former in the title of king, and many wars carried on by those in actual power, were professedly in the name of these kings; the first of whom was an idiot, and the other an infant. About this time Aridæus the king, having been carried into Macedonia, was there seized by Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, and put to death. After this, the infant Alexander only had the title of king; but almost all the time that he bore it, he was a prisoner, and it was not long before he also was put to death.

In the year 312 B. C., Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, having seized on Babylon, speedily and unexpectedly arose to great power; for, by his clemency, justice, and wisdom, he so conciliated the affections of those under his authority, that from being the most obscure, he became the greatest of Alexander's immediate successors. His name is introduced here, on account of a famous chronological era, called *Seleucidæ*, or *the era of contracts*, which was made use of all over the East, by Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans. The Jews gave it the name of *the era of contracts*, because while under the Syro-Macedonian kings, they were found to use it in all their contracts; and it grew so much into use, that for a thousand years after Christ, they knew no other method of computing their time. In the eleventh century they were driven from the East, and settled in Spain and in other countries in the West of Europe. The commencement of this era corresponds with 953 of the Julian period. The Arabs call it *Tarikh Dhil-karnain*, the era of the *two-horned*, by which they mean Alexander; whose coins were often impressed with a figure of two horns. In the books of the Maccabees, this era is called *the era of the kingdom of the Greeks*. It corresponds with the year 312 B. C.

During the incessant struggles which agitated the empire, Judea had passed out of the hands of Ptolemy into those of Antigonus, whose power in the East had become enormous. Ptolemy, however, again made himself master of the country, and sent his general to seize upon Upper Syria; but the sons of Antigonus defeated him. Upon which Antigonus joined his sons, and they marched against Ptolemy, who not being able to stand his ground, withdrew to Egypt, and all these countries fell again under the power of Antigonus. But many of the inhabitants of these regions were so much better pleased with his government than that of Antigonus, that they followed him into Egypt; and among the rest a great many Jews; which still increased the number of this people there. In Alexandria, which Ptolemy wished to make the capital of all Egypt, they had a particular quarter of the city assigned to them when it

was first built, the inhabitants of which now increased to many thousand families.

Among those who went with Ptolemy to Egypt, on this occasion, was a man eminent for his wisdom and virtues, by the name of Hezekias, of the sacerdotal race. Hecataeus the historian, who accompanied Ptolemy on this expedition, makes particular mention of him, as a man not only of great prudence, but of great eloquence. He, moreover, says, that from him he learned the religion, policy, and manners of the Jews, which, he observed, Hezekias had with him, written in a book. This, doubtless, was no other than the Law of Moses. And from his acquaintance with this person, no doubt, it was, that he entertained so favourable an opinion of the Jews and their religion.

This Hecataeus composed a history of the Jews, from Abraham down to his own time; the materials for which, he probably derived from Hezekias. This led a heathen writer, in the time of Trajan, as Origen informs us, to doubt whether Hecataeus ever wrote the history; for he supposed, either that it was written by some Jew, under the name of Hecataeus, or that if he was the true author, he must have been converted to the Jewish religion. Hecataeus was a native of Abdera, a Grecian city of Thrace, memorable as the birth-place of several other great men. He was brought up with Alexander, followed him in all his wars, and lived with him in Egypt, where he became acquainted with the history, religion, and customs of the Jews. The book is no longer extant, but Josephus gives several extracts from it, in his first book against Apion. This man must not be confounded with another historian, by the same name, who lived in the time of Darius Hystaspes. Josephus informs us of another Jew, who, about this time, followed Ptolemy, and enlisted in his cavalry. His name was Mosollam. And from Hecataeus he gives us the following anecdote of him. "As I was travelling towards the Red Sea, there was a certain man in company, called Mosollom, who excelled all the Greeks and barbarians of his time in archery. While several of us were travelling on together, a certain soothsayer undertook to foretell the fortunes of our journey. He bade us all stand still; on which the Jew asked why we stood. 'Look ye,' answered he, throwing him a bird. 'If that bird stands, ye are to stand. If he rises and flies, ye must go forward; but if he flies the contrary way, ye must all go back. Upon which the Jew without speaking a word lets fly an arrow and kills the bird: at which the diviner and some others expressed great indignation. 'Are ye not all mad, said the Jew, to make so much ado about a foolish bird? How could that poor creature show us our fortune, who knows so little of his own?'"

The Arabs of the desert were, in those times, of the same

character as now. They had their stations in the recesses of the wilderness, but their occupation was that of robbers. The Nabathean tribe had Petra for their chief residence. The Hebrews called it Selah, the Arabs Hagar, all which names signify, a rock. Antigonus sent an army against them under Athenæus, who came upon Petra, when the men were all out on a predatory expedition, and carried away the women and children; but the Arabs soon returning, pursued after him, and came upon him in the dead of night, and slew all of them, except about fifty horsemen, and recovered all that had been taken from them.

Antigonus, next, sent Demetrius to take signal vengeance on these robbers; but they had early intelligence of it, and leaving a strong garrison in Petra, the rest of them took their wives, children, and friends, and buried themselves in the recesses of the wilderness. Demetrius finding it in vain to contend with such a people, offered them favourable terms of peace, and returned. In his return, it is mentioned, that after travelling thirty-six miles from Petra, he came to the lake Asphaltites, called also, the Sea of Sodom, because Sodom once stood there; and, the Dead Sea, because of the heavy, stagnant nature of its waters; and in the Scriptures, the Salt Sea, on account of its great saltness. Demetrius, observing the vast quantities of bitumen formed here, suggested to Antigonus the advantage which might result to his revenue, if he would send proper persons to gather it up. With this hint, Antigonus was pleased, and accordingly sent workmen to collect the bitumen; but when they had succeeded in getting it together, the Arabs, to the number of six thousand, fell upon them, and either slew or drove them away.

Antigonus, hearing of the rising power of Seleucus at Babylon, sent his son Demetrius to subdue that place; but although successful at first, he was ultimately baffled in his design, and Seleucus retained his power undiminished.

In this year, (318 B. C.) a treaty of peace took place, between the contending powers; according to which, it was agreed, that Lysimachus should have Thrace; Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, and Arabia; Antigonus, all Asia. But this compact was of short duration. The increasing power of Antigonus filled the others with continual alarm, and they set about measures to curtail it, which brought on new wars.

The philosopher, Epicurus, began this year (312 B. C.) to disseminate his pestiferous doctrine. He first taught at Mytilene, in the island of Lesbos, and afterwards, at Lampsacus, and the Hellespont; and finally, at Athens, of which city he was a native. Here he kept his school, in a garden, from the thirty-seventh to the sixty-third year of his age, when he died.

The sum and substance of his doctrine was, that all things exist and take place by chance. He did not deny the being of God, but held that he lived at his ease, having nothing to do either with the creation or government of the world. He taught that this world was man's all; and, therefore he was wisest who sought and attained the greatest share of earthly pleasure; but, at the same time, he taught, that this end was most certainly attained by a life of temperance and virtue.

While the power of Antigonus was rising so high in the west of Asia, that of Seleucus was extending itself still more rapidly beyond the Euphrates; so that it now reached the Indus on the East, and he began to invade the territories of Antigonus, to the West. This brought on war again between these great powers. And while Antigonus was called to the defence of his dominions against Seleucus, Ptolemy thought it a good opportunity for recovering Syria and Palestine. This he soon accomplished, with the exception of Tyre and Sidon, which being well garrisoned, were able to hold out against him. This return of Judea under the dominion of Ptolemy, occurred in the year 301 B. C. In this same year, the armies of Antigonus and Seleucus came to a battle, in Phrygia in which Antigonus, then above fourscore, was slain, and his army entirely defeated. This was the period at which that fourfold dominion of Alexander's empire, mentioned before, took place. The other competitors were now out of the way, the nominal kings, as well as almost all Alexander's kindred, being dead. Ptolemy now took undisputed possession of Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. Lysimachus took Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces along the Hellespont; Cassander, Macedon and Greece; and Seleucus all the rest of Asia.

This division of the empire, into four great kingdoms, did not take place until about twenty-two years after the death of Alexander. These were the four horns of "the he-goat" which came up in the place of "the great horn;" the four heads of the leopard; and the four kingdoms, into which the kingdom of the mighty should be broken and *divided towards the four winds of heaven*, who should not be of his posterity.

SECTION VI.

THE ACCESSION OF SIMON THE JUST—MEGASTHENES, HISTORIAN OF INDIA—BUILDING OF SELEUCIA—DESTRUCTION AND DESOLATION OF BABYLON—DEATH OF SIMON.

In the year 300 B. C. died Onias the high-priest of the Jews. He was succeeded by his son Simon, surnamed the Just, on account of the holiness of his life, and the strict justice which marked all his actions. He was the first of that name who was

invested with this office, and continued in it nine years. He is the last, according to the Jewish tradition, of the Great Synagogue, who, they say, assisted Ezra in preparing the sacred books, and settling the canon. After the battle in which Antigonus was slain and his army defeated, Seleucus took possession of the greater part of Asia Minor, and gave himself up very much to the building of cities. Sixteen he called by the name of Antioch, in honour of his father and son, both of whom were named Antiochus. The principal of these was on the river Orontes, about seventy miles from its mouth, which became the most famous city in all the western part of Asia. There Christianity early took root, and flourished under the ministry of Paul, Barnabas and others. Here the disciples were first called Christians. In the early ages of Christianity it was a metropolitan city, and its bishop held rank with the first four in the world. This city continued to be famous in the East for sixteen hundred years.

In A. D. 1265, Antioch was taken from the Christians by the Sultan of Egypt, soon after which it fell into decline, and since that time Aleppo has become the chief city in those regions; which, however, has itself been overthrown by an earthquake. Another town by the name of Antioch, in Pisidia, is mentioned in the Acts of Apostles. About this time flourished Megasthenes, who wrote a history of India, some fragments of which are preserved by Josephus, and Eusebius. He is often quoted by Strabo, Athenæus, Arrian, Pliny, Cicero and Solinus. In this work, mention was made of Nebuchadnezzar and the greatness of his power. But the book is not now extant.

In the year 293 B. C., Seleucus built Seleucia, on the Tigris, about forty miles from Babylon. It was situated on the west side of the river, opposite to the place where Bagdad now stands, and soon grew to be a very great city. Pliny tells us it had six hundred thousand inhabitants. One reason of its rapid growth was, that Babylon becoming every year less habitable, on account of the inundation of the river, which turned its level grounds into a fen, the inhabitants were glad to seek a more commodious habitation. The Babylonians, therefore, flocked in great numbers to the new city. And, moreover, Seleucus having called it after his own name, gave it many privileges above the other cities of the East.

The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah respecting the utter desolation of this great city, have been most remarkably fulfilled, even to this day. Three hundred years before Christ, it began to be forsaken. Pliny says, that in his time it was exhausted of its inhabitants, and brought to desolation. Strabo says the same. Pausanias tells us that Babylon, once the

greatest city in the world, had, in his time, (second century,) nothing left but the walls. These remained long, for they served as a park for the Parthian kings, for the keeping of wild beasts for their hunting. And in this state it was in Jerome's time, in the fourth century, for he tells us, that "except the walls, which were repaired for enclosing wild beasts, all within was desolation." And in another place, "that Babylon was nothing else but a chase of wild beasts, kept within its ancient walls, for the hunting of the king." For in Jerome's time, a race of Persian kings had possession of this country, who continued until they were dispossessed by the Saracens.

From the time of Jerome, no writer speaks of Babylon for several centuries. How the walls were demolished we know not. Benjamin the Jew, tells us, in his Itinerary, that he was on the place where the old city formerly stood, and found it then wholly desolate. "Only," says he, "some ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were then still remaining; but the men were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many serpents and scorpions that were then in the place."

Texeira, a Portuguese traveller, tells us, "that there was nothing then remaining of this old and famous city, but only some faint vestiges; and that there was no place in all the country less frequented than that tract of ground, whereon it formerly stood."

Rawolf, a German traveller, who passed that way A. D. 1574, says, "the village of Elugo lieth on the place, where old Babylon the metropolis of Chaldea did stand. The harbour lieth a quarter of a league off, where those are to go who intend to travel to the famous city of Bagdad, which is situated further to the east on the river Tigris, at the distance of a journey of a day and a half. This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare that I should have doubted very much, whether this powerful city (which was once the most famous in the world) did stand there, if I should not have known it by its situation and antiquities, that are still standing here-about in great desolation. First, by the old bridge over the Euphrates, of which some piers and arches are still remaining, built of burnt brick, and so strong that it is admirable. Just before Elugo is the hill on which the castle did stand, in a plain, where some ruins are still visible. Behind it, and near it, did stand the town of Babylon. This we see still, and it is half a league in diameter; but so completely ruined and low, and so full of venomous reptiles, that have bored holes through it, that we cannot come near it within half a mile but only in two months in the winter, when they come not out of their holes. Among these reptiles, there is a species, in the Persian language

called Egló, that are very poisonous. They are bigger than any lizards."

Of the ruins of Babylon on the western side of the river, none of these travellers make the least mention, for they speak of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, which we know was on the eastern side. One reason for introducing here, a description of the situation of Babylon is, that the reader may compare it with the prophecy of Isaiah, (ch. xiii. 19—22.) "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there; but wild beasts of the desert shall live there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

Whenever we read of Babylon, as inhabited, after the time of her desolation mentioned above, we must understand Seleucia; for that city is often called by the name of Babylon. At first it was called Babylonia Seleucia, then Babylonia, and finally Babylon. Simon the Just, high-priest of the Jews, died in the year 292 B. C., leaving only an infant son named Onias. Eleazar, the brother of Simon, therefore succeeded to that high office.

Simon, of whom mention has already been made, was certainly a very extraordinary person, as may be gathered from the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiasticus, where his pious and beneficent acts are set forth. But his chief work was the completion of the canon of the Old Testament. It is evident that the canon could not have been completed by Ezra, for the books of Nehemiah and Malachi were pretty certainly written after his time: and Chronicles, Ezra, and Esther, were probably written by himself. All these, it is probable, were added to the canon by Simon the Just, who, on account of his attention to this business, is mentioned as the last of the men of the Great Synagogue, concerning which the Jewish writers have so much to say.

The main reason, however, for ascribing this work to Simon, is, that the genealogies contained in Nehemiah and Chronicles, seem to reach down near to his time, but none of them go farther. Thus in Neh. xii. we have mention of Jaddua, who was high-priest when Alexander visited Jerusalem; and in 1 Chron. iii. we have so many generations of the descendants of Zerubbabel mentioned, that they must in all probability reach to the time of Simon.

SECTION VII.

RETROSPECT OF THE SUCCESSION OF KINGS AND HIGH-PRIESTS WHO HAD AUTHORITY OVER JUDEA, UNTIL THE DEATH OF SIMON THE JUST—SIMON SUCCEEDED BY ELEAZAR IN THE PRIESTHOOD—BY ANTIGONUS AS PRESIDENT OF THE SANHEDRIM—MISHNICAL DOCTORS—SANHEDRIM—HOW CONDUCTED—CHANGES IN THE JEWISH WORSHIP.

HAVING brought the history down to the close of the canon of the Old Testament, it may not be amiss to take a brief retrospect of the several kings and high-priests, who were in authority during this period.

As our history commences with Cyrus, he will of course stand first on the list.

- B. C. 536—Cyrus.
- 529—Cambyses.
- 522—Smerdis.
- 521—Darius Hystaspes.
- 465—Xerxes I.
- 464—Artaxerxes Longimanus.
- 424—Xerxes II.
- 424—Sogdianus.
- 423—Darius Nothus.
- 404—Artaxerxes Mnemon.
- 358—Darius Ochus.
- 337—Arses.
- 335—Darius Codomanus.

This last was the Darius who was conquered by Alexander the Great.

The nominal kings, after the death of Alexander, were Ariæus, his half-brother, and Alexander Egeus his son by Roxana; the first of whom was put to death about 313 B. C. The latter lived to be only fourteen years of age, and was put to death by Cassander, about 310 B. C. After the death of Alexander, numerous competitors arose from among his officers, who laid claim to whatever countries they were able to seize. Hence arose a confusion of historical facts, which it is almost impossible to reduce to any order. But after a series of revolutions, and incessant wars, about the year 313 B. C., the whole empire was divided between four principal successors of the conqueror.

This division of the empire, however, did not continue long.

Cassander had Macedon and Greece.

Lysimachus, Thrace, Bithynia, &c.

Ptolemy, Egypt, Lybia, Arabia.

Seleucus, the other Asiatic provinces.

The Jewish nation, though they changed masters several times, remained for the most part in connexion with Egypt, and

under the government of Ptolemy, by whom, as well as by Alexander before him, multitudes of them were transported to Egypt, especially to Alexandria, and also to Lybia, in the region of Cyrene.

The high-priests, who, in succession, filled that high and sacred office, from the return of the Jews from captivity, on the accession of Cyrus, until the time of Simon the Just, were as follows; though some have doubted whether there might not have been others between those here named, of whom we have no account.

B. C. 536—Joshua, who continued in office 49 years.			
483—Joakim,	“	“	30 “
453—Eliashib,	“	“	60 “
413—Joiada,	“	“	40 “
373—Johanah or John,	“	“	32 “
351—Jaddua,	“	“	20 “
321—Onias,	“	“	21 “
300—Simon the Just,	“	“	9 “

Simon the Just was succeeded by his brother Eleazar, his own son being too young to be invested with the office. Eleazar, the brother of Simon, executed this high office for fifteen years.

Simon the Just was also president of the Sanhedrim, or grand council of the Jews, in which office he was not succeeded by Eleazar, but by Antigonus of Socho, who was advanced to it on account of his great learning; for he was an eminent scribe in the law of God, and a great teacher of righteousness among the people.

The death of Simon, and accession of Eleazar, are placed in the year 241, B. C., and in the fourteenth of Ptolemy Soter. At this time commences the succession of those called Doctors of the Mishna. The first was Antigonus above mentioned, and the last Judah Hakkadosh, who committed the Mishna to writing, in the middle of the second century. They were sometimes called scribes, sometimes lawyers, or such as sat in Moses' seat. All these titles mean the same thing, viz: that they who were honoured with them had been brought up in the knowledge of the law of God, and the tradition of the elders concerning it, as taught in the Jewish schools and synagogues; by which the judgment of the Sanhedrim was regulated. Out of this profession were always chosen the members of the Sanhedrim, and of the court of twenty-three, which existed in every considerable town. Such were Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel, mentioned in the New Testament. They were also called elders, councillors, and rulers, for to them the judgment and execution of the law belonged.

The Jews tell us of great changes which occurred in their worship after the death of Simon the Just; as that before his

time the scape-goat was always broken to pieces when cast down from the precipice, but afterwards he escaped and was eaten by the Saracens; and that before the death of this high-priest, the lot on the day of expiation always came out on the right hand, but afterwards on the left. In his days the western lamp in the golden candlestick, always continued burning, but after his death sometimes it did not. So, likewise, as long as he lived, the fire on the altar burned bright and clear, and when they had laid on two sticks of wood, they needed no more all the day. Before this event the blessings of God so attended the distribution of the two loaves waved at the feast of Pentecost, that when they were distributed, every priest after being satisfied had something left; whereas, afterwards, the quantity was so small that the modest priests would not take any part, and the greedy were not satisfied. Here we may see at what period the age of superstition commenced among the Jews.

SECTION VIII.

THE REIGN OF PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS—TOWER OF PHAROS—SEPTUAGINT VERSION—LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA.

PTOLEMY SOTER, having reigned twenty years in Egypt, from the time of his assuming the title of king, and thirty-nine from the death of Alexander, placed his son Philadelphus, as a partner, on the throne. This event occurred in the year 285 B. C.

In the first year of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the famous lighthouse on the island of Pharos was finished. It has been reckoned among the seven wonders of the world. It was built entirely of white marble, and was furnished with lights on the top for the direction of seamen. It is said to have cost eight hundred talents; which, if estimated by the value of the attic talent, will amount to more than seven hundred thousand dollars, and if according to the Alexandrian, to double that sum. The architect, Sostratus, practised an ingenious fraud to perpetuate his own fame; for being directed to inscribe the name of the king, at whose expense it was erected, deeply in the marble, accompanied with a suitable device, he first inscribed his own name, which he plastered over with white mortar, and on this he placed the inscription directed by the king, so that for a while nothing else was seen; but when the mortar wore away, there appeared the indelible name of the artist. But as an evidence of the transitory nature of all human glory, the building itself is not to be found.

Here it may be mentioned, that what was formerly the island of Pharos is now connected with the main land, of which it forms a peninsula.

Ptolemy Soter died in the second year after his son Philadelphus ascended the throne, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He was the wisest and best of his race, and left behind him an example of prudence, decency, and justice, which none of his successors were emulous to imitate. During his long reign of forty years, Egypt, notwithstanding the continual wars in which she was engaged, was brought into a very prosperous condition.

This first Ptolemy was a great patron of learning, to promote which, he instituted a society of learned men at Alexandria, and laid the foundation of that famous library, which was afterwards greatly augmented by his successors. Ptolemy Philadelphus, at his death, left in it no less than a hundred thousand volumes; and his successors went on adding to it, until at length, it amounted to the number of seven hundred thousand volumes.

One method of obtaining books for this library was not very honourable. They seized the MSS. of every learned stranger, who came into the country, and had a fair transcript made, which they presented to the owner, while the original was placed in the library.

When Julius Cæsar besieged Alexandria, one part of this immense library was burned, containing four hundred thousand volumes. But Cleopatra afterwards augmented it by the addition of two hundred thousand volumes, brought from Pergamus; and others, until it was fully as large as it ever had been before the disaster above mentioned.

This library continued to be famous until the year 642. It is said to have been burnt by order of the Caliph Omar, whose memorable reason for this barbarous act is often repeated: "If those works," said he, "contain nothing but what is in the Koran, they are useless; but if they contain something different from what is read there, they are impious:" and accordingly the order was given to commit the whole of them to the flames. They were distributed for the purpose of heating the baths, which end they answered, during a period of six months. By some, however, all this is denied.

The person principally depended on by Ptolemy Soter, in the collection and general superintendence of this library, was Demetrius Phalereus. Indeed, according to Plutarch, he was properly the projector of the whole scheme, by whose persuasion Ptolemy was induced to engage in the enterprise. After the death of Ptolemy, only two of the captains of Alexander remained, Seleucus and Lysimachus, both of them above eighty years of age. But old as they were, and wide as the world was over which they ruled, they again engaged in war with each other; the result of which was the overthrow and death of Lysimachus, which left Seleucus master of all that had belonged

to him. This, however, he did not live long to enjoy, for on his way to Macedonia, he was assassinated by Ptolemy Ceraunus, whom he had most kindly received and entertained in his family. A more base act of ingratitude is hardly to be found in the annals of any age.

Upon the death of Seleucus, which occurred in the year 280 B. C., his son Antiochus succeeded him in the empire of Asia, over which he ruled for nineteen years.

According to Usher, the version of the Old Testament into Greek, commonly called the Septuagint, was executed in the year 277 B. C., and if we give any credit to the history of Aristæas, it must have occurred about this time; for he tells us that this translation was made while Eleazar was high-priest of the Jews, who died about the beginning of the following year. And it cannot be placed at an earlier period, because Eleazar addressed an epistle to Ptolemy, in which, according to the aforesaid author, he speaks of his queen, Arsinoe, to whom he was not married before this year.

The account given by Aristæas, and implicitly followed by Josephus, is briefly this. Demetrius Phalereus, while collecting the royal library, of which some account has been given, had heard of the book of the Jewish law, and told the king that it would be desirable to obtain a correct copy of it, and also a version in the Greek tongue.

On this occasion, certain persons, of whom Aristæas himself was one, petitioned the king for the release of the Jewish captives, who were held in bondage, alleging that unless they were released, it would be in vain to expect from the Jews a correct copy of their law, or a faithful translation of it. Upon which the king made a decree for the release of all Jewish captives, whose number amounted to more than a hundred thousand, and ordered that an equivalent for their redemption should be paid to their owners, which was computed at four hundred talents; but to this must be added the sum requisite for the redemption of the children of the captives, which raised the whole amount to the enormous sum of six hundred and sixty talents. An epistle was then addressed to Eleazar the priest, by the king, requesting a correct copy of the Law of Moses, and six elders out of each tribe to translate it into Greek. The messengers sent on this embassy were Aristæas, the author of the narrative, and Andreas, who carried as a present for the use of the temple, one hundred talents, from the king.

On their arrival at Jerusalem, they were received with great respect by Eleazar the high-priest, and by all the people of the Jews, and their requests were finally granted. A copy of the Law, written in letters of gold, was sent, and six men out of each tribe, well skilled in both languages, to turn it into Greek.

When these men arrived at Alexandria, they were received with much honour by the king, and the island of Pharos was selected as a suitable place for their residence, while occupied with the translation. Demetrius attended them all the time, and when by mutual conference, the interpreters had agreed on the version of any portion of the Law, he immediately wrote it down. Thus, in seventy-two days, the work was completed. The king having heard and approved the version, and presented to each of them three suits of garments and two talents of gold, with a cup of gold of the weight of a talent, sent them back to their own country.

The next author who makes mention of this version, is Aristobulus, an Alexandrian Jew, who flourished about 125 B. C. He is said to have written a commentary on the five books of Moses, and to have spoken of the Greek version, made under the superintendence of Demetrius Phalereus, by the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus. This book is not now extant; all that remains are a few fragments, preserved by Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius, who cite this author to prove that the Holy Scriptures were partly translated into Greek before the time of Alexander, but that a more perfect translation was made of the whole, by the care of Demetrius Phalereus.

The next who speaks of this version, is Philo, also an Alexandrian Jew, who was contemporary with our Saviour. His account agrees with that of Aristæus, as to Ptolemy's sending to Judea for elders to make this version; and their returning to the island of Pharos, all which he undoubtedly took from Aristæus; but he adds this remarkable circumstance, that in their interpretation they all agreed, to a word, whence he concludes they were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. He also states, that the Jews of Alexandria celebrated the event by a solemn anniversary, when they went to Pharos, and praised God for his divine assistance in making this version.

Josephus, who wrote his antiquities towards the close of the first century of the Christian era, closely follows Aristæus.

The first Christian writer who speaks of the origin of this version, is Justin Martyr, who flourished in the middle of the second century. He had been to Alexandria, and informs us that the account of the wonderful agreement of all the interpreters, as related by Philo, was the common belief of the Jews then residing in Alexandria; and adds, that each interpreter had a separate cell, the ruins of which were shown to him.

All the Christian fathers who come after Justin, and make mention of this subject, agree as to the foregoing facts. But by the time when Epiphanius wrote, the story of Aristæus had gathered new circumstances to render it more marvellous. He

says, that the interpreters were shut up in cells by pairs; and that to each pair one book was given, and that the whole of the books of the Old Testament were by them rendered into Greek: that when one pair had finished a book, another was given to them; and so every pair made a separate version of each book; that is, each of the twenty-seven books was translated thirty-six times. By modern critics, the whole story is believed to be fictitious, and to have been written, not by Aristæas, but by some Jew, to give celebrity to the version. And it is probable, that some fabulous circumstances are connected with the history, which were increased from time to time. But in a matter of historical fact, it seems dangerous to set aside such an array of testimony, Jewish and Christian, on the ground of probable arguments. Leaving out the wonderful facts of this story, there is nothing incredible in the substance of the narrative ascribed to Aristæas. If that history had been entirely fabulous, would it have been so implicitly adopted by Josephus and Philo, and by all the Christian fathers? It seems safest to receive ancient facts on the uncontradicted testimony of the ancients, rather than reject them upon the critical conjectures of the moderns. It should be admitted then, that this version (or at least that of the Law) was made by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and by seventy-two men obtained from Judea, for the purpose.

But whatever may be thought of the origin of the Septuagint version, there is no doubt entertained by any, that it was made at Alexandria, and by learned men of the Jewish nation, in the days of the Ptolemics. The only doubt is, whether the whole Bible was translated at once, and by the same interpreters. None of the authors quoted above, say this, except Epiphanius, whose testimony in such a case is of little value. Aristæas, Josephus, &c., speak only of the Law of Moses; and there is internal evidence sufficiently strong to convince us that all the books were not translated by the same interpreters; for there is a marked difference in the style as well as in the words used to express particular things. The faithfulness and skill too, with which the version of the several parts is executed, proves conclusively that the whole is not the work of one man, nor of one set of translators. The probability is, that the five books of Moses were first turned into Greek, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 277 B. C., and that the other books were added after no long interval, by different interpreters, until all the books of the Old Testament were finished.

There is no reason, however, to believe that any of these translators were divinely inspired. It has every mark of being a human production; yet its value is great. And this version for a long time was held in the highest veneration by the Jews,

not only in Egypt, but also in Judea, where it came into common use in those towns, in which the Greek language was spoken, and was even read in some of their Synagogues. But after the introduction of Christianity, when disputes became common and violent between Jews and Christians, the former thinking that the latter had the advantage from this version, disowned it, and betook themselves to the Hebrew original. But, as many Jews did not understand Hebrew, several persons in the second century undertook new versions of the Old Testament into Greek. The principal of these translators were, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. The version of Aquila is servilely literal, and therefore pleased the Jews; that of Symmachus was paraphrastic; and Theodotion's a medium between the two, and more like the Septuagint. In our present copies of the latter, the book of Daniel is from Theodotion's version; for the fathers, finding this very faulty in the Alexandrian translation, substituted the other in its place: the original however is still preserved. But it does not come within the compass of our work to give any history of these versions.

The most important fact, in regard to the Septuagint, with which we are concerned, is, that the writers of the New Testament, in their citations of the Old Testament, commonly quote in the words of this version. This fact proves, not only that it was in common use when the books of the New Testament were written, but also that it was considered as sufficiently faithful and accurate to be generally referred to, for the conveyance of inspired truth. It cannot, however, be hence inferred, that the whole of it is sanctioned by these quotations, for sometimes the inspired penmen give a more correct version of what they quote, and in many instances do not exactly follow the Septuagint.

Between this version and the Hebrew original, there are some important discrepancies, not commonly affecting doctrines and facts, but names and dates. In chronology, the difference is great, and learned men are still divided in opinion as to this subject; some greatly preferring the Septuagint chronology, while most Christians prefer the Hebrew. But this is not the place for discussing such a subject.

The pretence, however, that the Septuagint must be more correct than the present Hebrew copies, because taken from a copy made probably when the autograph of Ezra was extant, has no weight; because, waiving all doubts which might be started respecting the accuracy of the copy from which the seventy translated, the copies of this version have been subject to as great, and indeed much greater injuries from the carelessness of transcribers, than the Hebrew copies. We know that

as early as the time of Origen it had become very much corrupted. Still, the value of this version is great, as furnishing proof of the early existence of the prophecies of the Old Testament; as helping us, in some cases, to detect errors which have crept into the Hebrew text; and, above all, as furnishing us with the source whence the writers of the New Testament borrowed their peculiar dialect and use of the Greek language.

SECTION IX.

ORIGIN OF THE SADDUCEES—BEROSUS, THE CHALDEAN HISTORIAN—RICHES AND COMMERCE OF TYRE—ALEXANDRIA—ARSINOË, HER DEATH AND MONUMENT—CHARACTER OF PTOLEMY.

ANTIGONUS of Socho, already mentioned as the successor of Simon the Just, in the presidency of the Sanhedrim, died about the year 263 B. C. He was also the great master and teacher of the principal theological school in Jerusalem; and also the first of the doctors who gave regular instructions concerning the traditions of the fathers, which were added to the written law, for the explanation of the ceremonies. These were afterwards called Mishnical Doctors. His successors in the school were Joseph the son of Joazar, and Joseph the son of John; the first of whom was also president of the Sanhedrim, and the other vice-president.

In the days of Antigonus, the sect of the Sadducees took its rise, of which he was the occasion, although not the founder. For he having inculcated the doctrine that men ought not to serve God from mercenary, but disinterested motives; not from the hope of future reward, but from love to God himself, two of his disciples, Sadoc and Baithus, inferred that there were no rewards after this life; and separating themselves from the school of their master, they taught that there was no resurrection nor future state. Many persons being seduced by this false doctrine, a sect arose, which received the name of Sadducees, from Sadoc, one of its founders. This, therefore, is the oldest sect which we read of among the Jews. Its commencement must have been more than 263 years before Christ; for in that year Antigonus of Socho died. About this time flourished Berosus, the famous Babylonish historian. He must have written in the reign of Antiochus Theus, for his history is dedicated to this prince. He was, according to Tatian, a priest of Belus at Babylon; and lived in the time of Alexander, but dedicated his work to the third in succession from him, which was Antiochus Theus; Seleucus Nicator being the first, and Antiochus Soter the second. If this account of Tatian be correct, Berosus must have been of a great age when he published

his history; for if he was only twenty years of age when Alexander died, he must have been fourscore in the first year of Antiochus. Only some fragments of his history are extant, preserved by Josephus and Eusebius; but these are very important, as without them the series of the Babylonian kings could not be made out, and they cast much light on some passages of the Old Testament.

The greatness and wealth of Tyre were owing to her extensive trade, especially her commerce with the East. But now Ptolemy Philadelphus laid his plans to give a new direction to the precious commodities of India, and bring them to Alexandria, which he in a great degree accomplished, by establishing a depot on the western side of the Red Sea, considerably south of its northern termination, where there was a good depth of water. This place he called Berenice, after his mother. And as the road between the Nile and Red Sea lay through deserts where there was no water, Ptolemy, to remedy this inconvenience, formed a canal from Coptus on the Nile, all along the road, to supply the caravans which carried their goods with water, and at convenient distances he established inns. To protect the trade, he formed large fleets, both in the Mediterranean and Red Seas. By these wise arrangements, Alexandria became the emporium of most of the commerce between the East and the West. In consequence of which, Tyre began thenceforward to languish, until at length the prophecies respecting her utter desolation were completely fulfilled.

About the year 249 B. C., a war broke out between Ptolemy and Antiochus, the events of which it is not necessary that we should here relate.

Onias, the son of Simon the Just, being an infant at the time of his father's death, could not be invested with the office of high-priest, which was therefore bestowed upon Eleazar, Simon's brother. Eleazar also dying before Onias was of legal age, the priesthood was given to Manasseh the son of Jaddua, who executed it for six-and-twenty years, and died in the year 276 B. C. Onias now succeeded to the office.

A great revolt having taken place against Antiochus in the eastern part of his empire, he became weary of the war with Ptolemy, and a peace was made between them, 249 B. C. The condition of this treaty was, that Antiochus should divorce Laodice, his former wife, and marry Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy. Accordingly, Antiochus put away his wife, who was also his half-sister, by whom he had two sons; and Ptolemy having taken his daughter to Seleucia, near the mouth of the Orontes, and delivered her to Antiochus, the marriage was solemnized with great pomp. Thus was the prophecy of Daniel literally fulfilled. (Dan. xi. 5, 6.) "For the king's daughter

of the South shall come to the king of the North, to make an agreement." By South and North in this passage, must be understood Egypt, which lay south of Judea, and Syria which was situated to the north.

In the year 248 B. C., Arsinoe the wife of Ptolemy died, which caused him great grief; for although she was much older than himself, he doted on her. To commemorate her, he formed an extravagant project, which was, to erect a monument having a vault lined with load-stone, which should, by its attraction, cause an image of her to remain suspended in the air. This design was conceived by Dinocrates, a famous architect of that time; and so pleased Ptolemy that he commanded the work to be immediately commenced; but neither the king nor the artist lived to have it completed. This probably gave rise to the fable so long current respecting the coffin of Mohammed.

Ptolemy did not long survive his beloved wife. He was naturally of a weak constitution, which was greatly debilitated by luxurious indulgence; so that when grief for the loss of his wife was added, he sunk under the burden, and expired in his grand climacteric, after having reigned over Egypt thirty-eight years.

Ptolemy was the greatest patron of learning and the fine arts among all the kings of antiquity. Seven celebrated poets of that age are said to have resided in his court. The works of four of these, (Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron and Aratus,) are still extant. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, dedicated his work to him. Zoilus, the snarling critic, who distinguished himself by abusing Homer, also frequented the Egyptian court, but received no countenance from Ptolemy.

Ptolemy had also a passion for building. He rebuilt Acco in Palestine, on the Mediterranean, which he called Ptolemais, after his own name. This place has been famous in the history of all ages, especially in the wars of the crusades. It is now called Acre, and in our own times has been famous for the unsuccessful siege which it sustained from Bonaparte.

The city formerly famous under the name of Rabbah, he rebuilt, and called it Philadelphia after his own surname. It has long been desolate. Such was his taste for fine buildings, that it became proverbial to call an edifice of more than usual magnificence, Philadelphian. Notwithstanding the great expenses necessarily attendant on his favourite pursuits, he died exceedingly rich, leaving no less than seven hundred and forty thousand Egyptian talents in the treasury. He left also large and well furnished fleets, both in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

SECTION X.

PTOLEMY EUERGETES—BERENICE—PROPHECIES FULFILLED—THE ARUNDELIAN MARBLES.

AS SOON as Antiochus heard of the death of Ptolemy, he put away Berenice, and invited his former wife, Laodice, to return; but she knowing his fickleness, caused him to be poisoned by his servants, and placing a man who greatly resembled him in his bed, to personate him as being confined by sickness, she concealed his death until by orders, forged under her hand, she placed her own son Seleucus on the throne, which he occupied for twenty years. She also pursued Berenice and her son, with unrelenting vengeance, until she had them both put to death by the treachery of some who were about them. And here again we see the fulfilment of the sequel of the prophecy of Daniel before cited. After predicting the marriage of the king of the North to the daughter of the king of the South, as the band of agreement, he goes on to say: "But she"—that is Berenice—"shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he"—that is Antiochus—"stand, nor his arm: but she"—that is Berenice—"shall be given up, and they that brought her"—that is, her Egyptian friends—"and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her." (Daniel xi. 6.)

While Berenice was besieged by Laodice in Daphne, where she had fled for refuge, with her son, her brother Ptolemy Euergetes, who had succeeded his father on the throne of Egypt, marched with a powerful army to her relief; but before he arrived at Daphne, both she and her son were killed. He avenged himself, however, by putting Laodice to death, and making himself master of all Syria and Cilicia. He even extended his conquests, beyond the Euphrates, as far as the Tigris, and was in a fair way to reduce under his dominion all the Eastern provinces of the Syrian empire, when he was suddenly recalled to Egypt, by a sedition that had arisen there. He greatly endeared himself to the Egyptian people, on his return from this expedition, by bringing back from Persia their gods, which Cambyses had carried away; and on this account, he received the name, Euergetes, or *Benefactor*. All these events were in exact fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, who tells us, that after the queen of the South, with her son and attendants, should be cut off, and her father, who was her chief support, should be dead, "there should one arise out of a branch of her roots, in his estate"—that is, her brother Ptolemy Euergetes—and that "he should come with an army and enter into the fortress of the king of the North, and prevail against him, and carry captive into Egypt, their gods, with

their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and gold; and then come into his kingdom, and return into his own land." Now, how exactly all this was fulfilled, the history of Ptolemy Euergetes most manifestly shows. Again, it is said, in the same prophecy, that "the king of the South should continue more years than the king of the North," and such was the event, for Ptolemy Euergetes survived Seleucus Callinicus, whom Laodice had placed on the throne of Syria, four years.

The wife of Ptolemy Euergetes, also named Berenice, being very apprehensive of danger to her husband in his northern expedition, made a vow, that she would consecrate her hair, of which she was vain, as being very beautiful, if he should return safe. Accordingly it was cut off and sent to the temple which Ptolemy Philadelphus had built in Cyprus, but, by some accident, was lost, an occurrence by which Ptolemy was much disturbed. It happened that Conon of Samos, a distinguished mathematician, was then at Alexandria, who, to relieve the king's mind, and also to ingratiate himself into his favour, pretended that this hair was caught up into heaven; and showed seven stars, near the tail of the Lion, not before connected with any constellation, which he said was the consecrated hair of the queen; which conceit being countenanced by subsequent astronomers, a new constellation was added, called *Coma Berenices*, the hair of Berenice. Callimachus, the poet, wrote a hymn to celebrate the hair of Berenice.

Ptolemy Euergetes, who seems to have been of a devout turn of mind, on his return from his Syrian expedition, took Jerusalem in his way, and there caused many sacrifices to be offered up to the God of Israel, as an acknowledgment for the great success which he had experienced in his contest with the king of Syria. And it is not improbable, that the prophecies of Daniel, relative to these events, might have been shown to him.

Seleucus, in the years 245 and 244 B. C., entered into new wars with Ptolemy, for the recovery of his lost dominions, but the issue was as unfortunate as before; for being overcome in battle, he was obliged to flee to Antioch, accompanied only by a few of his followers. In consequence of the broken and disastrous state of his affairs, he invited his brother Antiochus, who was then at the head of an army, to join with him. Antiochus although he was only fourteen years of age, yet being of an ambitious turn, readily accepted the proposal, not so much to aid his brother, as to gain the empire for himself. At this time, the cities of Smyrna and Magnesia, as a testimony of their affection for Seleucus, entered into a combination to assist him with their might, and erected a column of marble, on which their mutual agreement was engraved. And it is a remarkable fact, that this identical marble is now standing in the court-

yard of the theatre at Oxford, with the inscription still distinctly legible, in Greek capital letters. It was brought from Asia, by Thomas, earl of Arundel, in the reign of Charles the First, and was given, with other marbles, to the University of Oxford, by Henry, duke of Norfolk, his grandson, in the reign of Charles the Second. These are commonly spoken of under the name of the *Arundelian marbles*.

The union of the two brothers against Ptolemy was attended with no great issue; for the latter made a peace with Seleucus, while Antiochus went on with his preparations for war. These, his brother soon suspected, were intended against himself. He, therefore, marched an army over mount Taurus, to surprise him. A battle was fought between them near Ancyra in Asia Minor, in which Seleucus was overthrown, and scarcely escaped with his life. It fared little better with Antiochus, for the Galatians, or Gauls of Asia, whom he had taken into his service, upon a rumour that Seleucus was slain, immediately plotted the death of the other brother, thinking, that if he were out of the way, the whole empire would fall into their hands. Antiochus having no other method of saving his life, gave all his treasure as a ransom for it.

Eumenes, king of Pergamus, taking advantage of the distracted state of the Syrian empire, made an attack on the Gauls and on Antiochus, and gained a victory over them. About the same time, Theodotus and Arsaces, revolting against Seleucus in the East, seized Parthia and Hyrcania. But notwithstanding all these disasters, the war continued. Fraternal discord is the most difficult to be reconciled.

The seat of war was now transferred to Mesopotamia; and about this time probably occurred the battle mentioned (2 Maccab. viii. 20) by Judas Maccabæus, in which he says that eight thousand Jews, with four thousand Macedonians, vanquished the Galatians, and slew one hundred and seventy thousand men. About this time, it was customary for the Jews to hire themselves as soldiers, to all parties, in the wars which were then carried on by the kings of the East; and their services in these wars were held in the highest estimation.

SECTION XI.

PTOLEMY EUERGETES AN ENCOURAGER OF LEARNING—SELEUCUS DEFEATED AND TAKEN PRISONER—ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM OF THE PARTHIANS—REMARKABLE HISTORY OF JOSEPH—GREAT EARTHQUAKE IN THE EAST.

PTOLEMY EUERGETES being now relieved from war, devoted his attention to the arts of peace; especially to the promotion of learning, and the increase of the vast library which his father had founded in Alexandria. Of this he made Erastosthenes, a

learned Athenian, the keeper, after the death of Zenodotus, who was appointed librarian by Ptolemy Philadelphus. The person now advanced to this office was one of the most learned men of his age, as appears from the manner in which he is frequently referred to by Pliny, Strabo, and others. He was the author of many works, none of which are now extant. The only writing of his, which still remains, is an important document, preserved by Syncellus, containing a catalogue of all the kings who reigned at Thebes in Egypt, from Menes or Misraim, down to the time of the Trojan war. It contains a series of thirty-eight kings, and has been of great service in writing the Egyptian chronology. It is one of the most authentic and important documents of remote antiquity extant in profane history. It was extracted from the most ancient records of the country, by order of Ptolemy Euergetes, and was probably intended to supply the defects of Manetho's catalogue, which commences exactly where that of Erastosthenes' ends.

In the year 250 B. C., Seleucus marched against Arsaces, who had seized Parthia and other districts in the East; but the event of this expedition was most disastrous to him, for he was not only defeated, but taken prisoner. This was the origin of the kingdom of the Parthians, which became so terrible in after times, even to the Romans, who were a terror to all others. The day on which Arsaces obtained this victory was long celebrated as an anniversary in Parthia. From this time, the conqueror styled himself king, and all his successors assumed his name, just as the kings of Egypt, for a long period, took the name of Ptolemy.

Onias, the high-priest of the Jews, who was a weak and rash man, having neglected to pay the customary tribute to Ptolemy Euergetes, and the arrears continually increasing, the king sent Athenion, one of his courtiers, to demand full payment. The arrival of this minister created a great sensation at Jerusalem; for it did not appear what course could be taken to appease the king's displeasure, as the sum requisite to satisfy the demand could by no means be raised. In this emergency, a young man by the name of Joseph, a near relation of Onias, who was in great reputation among the Jews, for prudence, justice, and sanctity, came to Jerusalem from his residence in the country, and going immediately to his uncle, the high-priest, expostulated with him freely on the course which he had pursued in relation to the tribute; and exhorted him to go immediately to Egypt and endeavour to satisfy the king. But this was a business for which Onias was by no means qualified; besides, he was now old and feeble. Upon his declining the journey, Joseph offered his own services on the occasion, which were joyfully accepted by his uncle and the people. Joseph went

immediately to find Athenion, whom he took to his own house, and entertained sumptuously while he remained; and so gained the esteem of the Egyptian minister, that he returned to the king with kind feelings toward the Jewish people, and the most favourable impressions of the character of Joseph. He also conveyed to the king the intelligence that this excellent young man would shortly attend upon him, to explain every thing which related to the tribute, so long due.

Joseph, as soon as the ambassador was gone, began to prepare for his journey, and having prepared himself with proper equipage, set off for the court of Ptolemy. On the way he happened to fall in company with some noblemen of Phenicia and Cœlo-Syria, who were going to Egypt for the purpose of farming the revenues of their respective provinces. During the journey, he learned much from these persons of the value of the revenues, which knowledge he afterwards turned to good account. Finding, when he arrived at Alexandria, that the king was at Memphis, he hastened thither, and fortunately met him returning in a chariot with his queen and Athenion. The latter no sooner espied Joseph, than he pointed him out to the king as his young Jewish friend, concerning whom he had before so often spoken to him. Upon which the king invited him into his chariot, and conversed freely with him. He complained of the ill conduct of Onias in withholding the tribute for so many years. Joseph excused his uncle on the ground of his age and weakness, in so handsome a manner, that he not only pacified the king, but gained for himself his particular favour. When they arrived in Alexandria, the king ordered that he should be lodged in the palace and maintained at his own table.

On the arrival of the day for farming the revenues of the provinces, which were set up to the highest bidder, Joseph observed that the highest sum bid for Judea, Samaria, Cœlo-Syria, and Phenicia, by his companions in travel, was no more than eight thousand talents, and being assured, from their conversation on the way, that they were worth, at least, double that sum, he bade sixteen thousand talents, exclusive of the forfeitures.

Ptolemy was pleased with the prospect of such an augmentation of his revenues, but was doubtful of the young man's ability to give adequate security. When Joseph was asked what surety he would give, he facetiously answered, that they should be persons beyond all exception, and immediately named the king and queen. The king was so delighted with the pleasantness and confidence manifested by this answer, that he trusted him on his own word, dispensing with all other pledges. Receiving now the appointment of receiver-general of the king's revenues, in the provinces above named, he set off on his way home,

accompanied with a guard of two thousand men, for his support in the execution of his office. On his arrival at Askelon, the people not only refused to pay the tribute to him, but used opprobrious language towards him; whereupon he commanded his soldiers to seize twenty of the ringleaders, on whom he executed exemplary punishment, and sent their forfeited estates to the king's treasury. The same process was repeated at Scythopolis, by which all the other places in the provinces were so intimidated, that he had no further trouble in collecting the king's revenues.

The conduct of Joseph in this high office was so marked with justice and energy, that he was continued in it, not only while Ptolemy Euergetes lived, but during the reign of his successor, Ptolemy Philopater, and also of Ptolemy Epiphanes, until these provinces were wrested from him by Antiochus the Great. Seleucus, who, it has been seen, was taken prisoner in Parthia, remained there in custody, but royally entertained by Arsaces, until the year 326 B. C., when he was killed by a fall from his horse. He left two sons, Seleucus and Antiochus, and a daughter, who was given in marriage to Mithridates, king of Pontus, with Phrygia for her dower. Seleucus being the oldest of his two sons, succeeded him in the throne, and took the name of Ceraunus. He was a weak prince, and his reign was very short.

Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, was sent to Babylonia for his education, and was there at the time of his brother's death; on which event he was sent for to Antioch, and ascended the throne, which he occupied for thirty-six years. On account of his many great actions, he received the surname of *Great*.

In the year before Christ two hundred and twenty-two, there happened a very violent earthquake in the East, which made great devastations in many places, especially in Caria, and the island of Rhodes. It threw down not only the walls of the city of Rhodes and the houses, but also the great colossus, which strided the harbour, and was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. It was a prodigious statue of brass, erected to the sun; one hundred and five feet in height, and everything else in proportion. Chares was twelve years employed in its erection, and sixty years afterwards it was thrown down. The Rhodians sent ambassadors to all the neighbouring countries to beg money for the purpose of raising this colossus again; but after collecting vast sums, they pocketed the money, pretending that an oracle had forbidden the erection of the colossus. There it lay for eight hundred and ninety-four years, when Moawiah, the sixth caliph of Damascus, having taken Rhodes, sold the brass to a Jewish merchant, who loaded with it nine hundred camels; so that it would seem that its original weight

could not have fallen greatly short of a million of pounds. Towards the close of the year 222 B. C. died Ptolemy Euergetes, king of Egypt, after having reigned over that country for five and twenty years. He was succeeded by his son Ptolemy Philopater, a very profligate and vicious prince. He was suspected of putting an end to his father's life by poison; and soon after he was seated on his throne, he added the murder of his mother, and of his brother Magas; and also of Cleomenes, king of Sparta, who had taken refuge in the court of Ptolemy Euergetes, and was a person of great wisdom and sagacity.

SECTION XII.

ACCESSION OF PTOLEMY PHILOPATER TO THE THRONE OF EGYPT—HIS CONTEST WITH ANTIUCHUS—HIS CRUELTY—VISITS JERUSALEM AND ATTEMPTS TO ENTER THE SANCTUARY—RESOLVES TO EXTERMINATE THE JEWS—THEIR PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE—HE DIES AND LEAVES THE KINGDOM TO HIS SON PTOLEMY EPIPHANES, ONLY FIVE YEARS OF AGE. ANTIUCHUS ENDEAVOURS TO CONQUER EGYPT—ENGAGES IN WAR WITH THE ROMANS—MARCHES AN ARMY TO THE EAST, TO COLLECT TRIBUTE—ROBS THE TEMPLE OF BELUS OF ITS TREASURES BUT IS SLAIN BY THE ENRAGED POPULACE—REMARKABLE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS SON HYRCANUS.

AS SOON as Ptolemy Philopater ascended the throne, Antiochus formed the design of recovering Syria, which he prosecuted with various success for several years, until about the year 219 B. C., he took Damascus, and reduced all Phenicia, Galilee, and Gilead beyond Jordan, under his dominion.

In the year 217 B. C., Antiochus marched for Egypt with a large army, and a great battle was fought between Gaza and Rhinocrura, with the two kings at the head of their respective forces; on which occasion, the presence of mind and masculine courage of Arsinoe, queen of Egypt, was strikingly exhibited, in her encouraging the soldiers, and remaining by the side of her husband through the whole battle. The result was, that although the right wing of the Syrian army, commanded by Antiochus in person, drove the Egyptians before them, the contrary occurred on the left wing, where the Syrians gave way and fled, and the Egyptians turning on the flank and rear of the other part of the Syrian forces, gained a complete victory; for Antiochus had, in his ardour, pursued so far, that he did not return in time to give any aid to his routed troops. This battle was fought on the same day that Hannibal defeated Flaminius the Roman general, at the lake Thrasimenus.

On the retreat of Antiochus, the cities of Cælo-Syria and Palestine were forward to make their submission to Ptolemy; for they had been long accustomed to the Egyptian yoke, and were better pleased with it than with the government of Antiochus. Many ambassadors presented themselves before Ptolemy, with the submission of their respective cities, and with

presents, all of whom he received kindly. Among these, the Jews were not last. Ptolemy now made a progress through the provinces which he had regained, and among the cities visited, Jerusalem was not forgotten. Here he took a view of the temple, and offered many gifts and sacrifices to the God of Israel. But not contented with an exterior view of this sacred edifice, he resolved to enter into the sanctuary, and even into the most holy place. On this occasion all Jerusalem was in an uproar. The priests and Levites were convened to hinder it, and the people to deprecate the impious act. Great lamentations were every made, and many supplications offered to God, to preserve his sacred house from profanation. But entreaties availed nothing with Ptolemy; the more he was opposed, the more he seemed resolved to execute his impious purpose. Accordingly, he pressed into the inner court; but here he was struck with such a terror and confusion of mind, that he could proceed no farther, and was carried out, in a manner half dead. On this, he left the city, filled with great wrath against the Jews, and uttering many menaces against the nation.

The high-priest now in office, who had the courage to withstand Ptolemy, was Simon, the son of Onias the second; for his father having deceased towards the close of the former year, the son had been consecrated in his room. This, therefore, was among the first acts of his pontificate: and it was well that a man of firmness and wisdom was now in authority; for affairs had been negligently managed during the whole of the administration of Onias, who was not only a weak man, but extremely covetous.

During the incessant wars between the great Northern and Southern powers, Judea, as lying exactly between the belligerents, suffered exceedingly by the passage of hostile and friendly armies. The old hatred of the Samaritans also, was not dormant during this period; but often when they observed the Jews to be unable to make resistance, they ravaged the country lying near them: carrying off many of the inhabitants, and selling them into slavery.

Antiochus, on his return, finding his own subjects in an unsettled state, thought it best to make peace with Ptolemy, which he effected by resigning all title to Cœlo-Syria, Palestine, and Phœnicia.

When Ptolemy returned to Alexandria, his anger against the Jewish nation was undiminished, and he determined to revenge himself on all those who inhabited that city. He made a decree, and had it engraven on a pillar at the gates of his palace, forbidding all to enter, who did not sacrifice to the gods he worshipped.

Alexander the Great had, in the division of the people into

ranks, placed the Jews in the first, on a level with his own Macedonians; but Ptolemy now degraded them to the third rank, among the common people of Egypt. But this was not the worst which these devoted people had to suffer. He enacted a law that they should all be branded with the badge of his god Bacchus, or be reduced to slavery. However, he provided that those who were willing to be initiated into the heathen religion should retain their privileges. Of the whole number in Alexandria, only three hundred took advantage of this immunity. All the rest stood firm to their religion, rather choosing to suffer the greatest extremities than depart in the least from it. And those who for worldly considerations had apostatized, were held in the utmost abhorrence, and excommunicated from all intercourse with their brethren.

The king, considering their measures as indicative of hostility to him, now determined that he would destroy the whole nation, wherever found. He accordingly sent out orders, that all Jews who resided in Egypt should be brought in chains to Alexandria. This being executed, he directed that all of them should be assembled in the Hippodrome, a large open space prepared for horse-races, where his purpose was to destroy them by his elephants, and then march to Judea and treat the Jews there in the same manner. But on the day appointed, when all were ready, the king did not make his appearance; for having been up late at a carousal he overslept himself, until the hour for the intended spectacle was over. It was, therefore, deferred until the next day; but another disappointment occurred from the same cause.

During all this time the Jews were kept shut up in the Hippodrome; but they ceased not day and night, with uplifted hands and loud voices, to pray to God for deliverance, which he in mercy was pleased to vouchsafe. For, on the next day, when the king being present, the elephants were brought forth drunk with wine and frankincense, that they might with more rage destroy the devoted Jews, they became ungovernable, and instead of rushing upon the Jews, turned upon the spectators, and killed many of them. It is also said, that appearances were seen in the air, which terrified the king and all the spectators. This remarkable interposition of Providence had such an effect on Ptolemy, that he relinquished his bloody purpose, and not only set the Jews at liberty, but fearing the vengeance of Heaven, restored them to all their former privileges, and gave them leave to put to death all those Jews who had apostatized from their religion.

It must be confessed, however, that the evidence of the truth of this history is not as satisfactory as could be wished. Josephus, in his *Antiquities*, does not mention it, though he does in

his book against Apion; but this we have only in the Latin translation of Ruffin. He also places it in another reign. The narrative here given is from the third book of Maccabees, which whole book relates to the persecutions endured by the Jews. It became common, after the name *Maccabees* was given to Judas and his brethren, of whom we shall speak hereafter, for all who suffered for their religion among the Jews, to be called Maccabees, for which reason the third book of the Maccabees received this title, although it treats of matters which occurred long before their time. This book is found in all the ancient copies of the Septuagint, and also in the Syriac version; but is extant in no copy of the Latin Vulgate. The first authentic mention of it is in the Alexandrian Chronicon. It is also named in the eighty-fifth of the apostolical canons, but their date is altogether uncertain.

Antiochus spent seven years on an expedition against Parthia, Bactria, Hyrcania, and other eastern provinces, which had revolted from the empire, and declared themselves independent. In this expedition he discovered great skill and generalship, but finding that there was no prospect of bringing these countries permanently under subjection, he made peace with Arsaces and the other leaders, and returned to Antioch, in the year 205 B. C.

The next year, 204 B. C., died Ptolemy Philopater king of Egypt, after having sat on the throne for seventeen years. He was a most flagitious and cruel man, and brought himself to a premature end by his debaucheries.

He was succeeded by Ptolemy Epiphanes, his son, a child of five years of age. The people finding that the vile associates of Philopater's guilty pleasures, were plotting against the young king and those who would be likely to oppose their measures, brought them to the Hippodrome, and slew them.

The young king was now committed to the care of Sosibius, an old, crafty politician, who had contrived by his cunning, to retain his power in the court for more than sixty years: and who had kept in favour with the late king, by consulting and anticipating all his voluptuous inclinations.

Antiochus, king of Syria, and Philip, king of Macedonia, on the death of Ptolemy Philopater, entered into a league to conquer Egypt, and divide the kingdom between them; but the rulers of Egypt, to defend themselves against this formidable coalition, sent an embassy to the Romans whose power had now risen to greatness, and who were ever disposed to extend it more and more. Just about this time, Scipio had defeated Hannibal in Africa, so that the Romans being delivered from a dangerous enemy, were now at liberty to turn their attention

to the east. Accordingly, they did not hesitate to take the young king under their protection.

The Jewish writers—the worst historians that ever lived—inform us, that in the year 203 B. C., Joshua the son of Perachia, was made president of the Sanhedrim, and Nathan the Arbelite, the vice-president. Of the latter they have given us no information, but of the former they tell a story the most absurd and inconsistent with chronology. The sum of it is, that for reproving Alexander, the Asmonean king, who had slain the doctors at Jerusalem, he was obliged to flee to Egypt; and that Jesus Christ being his scholar, accompanied him thither; whereas, the time which they assigned for this man's entering on his presidency was many years before the reign of Alexander the Asmonean, and two hundred years before the birth of Christ!

The war between Antiochus and the Egyptians went on, notwithstanding the Romans had sent a formal embassy to the former, announcing that they had undertaken the guardianship of the young king; and Antiochus having defeated Scopas the Egyptian general, in a great battle at Paneas, near the sources of the Jordan, soon got possession of all Palestine and Cœlo-Syria.

At this time the Jews were much disaffected towards the Egyptian government; and when Antiochus came with his army to Jerusalem, they received him with gladness, and entertained his whole army and elephants bountifully, as long as he remained. Antiochus, in return, granted them many privileges, and particularly ordained, that no stranger, of whatever quality, should pass over the sept, into the sacred inclosure of the temple.

But Antiochus was no stranger to the Jews, before this visit to Jerusalem. Many of them resided in Babylonia, who were very serviceable to him in his eastern expedition, and of whose fidelity he entertained the highest opinion. And a sedition having once arisen in Phrygia and Lydia, he transplanted two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia into those regions, with a view to keep the people quiet, by stationing them in the strongest fortresses. The descendants of these Jews were found in great numbers in Asia Minor, when the gospel was first propagated in those regions, by the labours of the apostles.

In the year 195 B. C., Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general, who had lived quietly at Carthage, being suspected of inimical designs by the Romans, fled to the court of Antiochus. When he arrived, the latter had been debating with himself about engaging in a war with the Romans; which point, however, was soon decided after the arrival of Hannibal, who had

in many battles vanquished the Romans, and who induced Antiochus to believe that with his aid they could be easily overcome.

In the same year, 195 B. C., Simon the high-priest of the Jews died, and was succeeded by his oldest son, Onias the third, who held that office twenty-four years. He had the character of being a worthy good man, but happened on evil times, and perished in them, as shall be related in its place. About this time died Erastosthenes, the second keeper of the famous library of Alexandria, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, and was succeeded by Apollonius Rhodius, the author of the *Argonautics*, who had been a scholar of Callimachus. He was called Rhodius, not because he was born at Rhodes, for he was a native of Alexandria; but he had long resided in that island, from which he was recalled to take charge of the library.

Antiochus, having determined on war with the Romans, used a wise policy in strengthening himself, by forming alliances and matrimonial connexions with the kings who might have it in their power to aid or injure him. And if he had listened to the counsel of Hannibal, who would have had him land an army immediately in Italy, agreeably to the plan pursued so successfully by himself, there is no knowing what the event might have been. But by some means, the old African general had fallen into suspicion with Antiochus, and his counsels were not followed. On the contrary, it was determined to commence hostilities in Greece. But in all his designs against the Romans, he was unsuccessful, and at last was forced to retire from all the countries of Europe, and quit all Asia west of mount Taurus, and pay the whole expenses of the war, which were estimated at fifteen thousand talents.

Antiochus, finding it very difficult to raise so large a sum of money, marched into the eastern provinces to collect the arrears of tribute which were then due. When he had come into the province of Elymais, hearing that a vast treasure lay concealed in the temple of Belus, he seized the temple by night, and rifled it of its treasures. On account of this act of sacrilege, the inhabitants actuated by the fury of religious zeal, rose against him, and slew him and all that were with him. In this statement, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Strabo, and Jerome, agree; but Aurelius Victor says, he was slain by some of his own followers.

Antiochus was a prince of clemency, justice, and beneficence; and until the fiftieth year of his age, administered his affairs with much discretion; so that his enterprises were attended with almost uniform success, which obtained for him the name of *Great*. But in the latter part of his life, declining in wis-

dom as well as vigour, his course became disastrous, and his bright prospects were greatly clouded over; for being vanquished by the Romans, he was driven out of the best part of his dominions, and was forced to accept very hard and disgraceful terms of peace. And at last lost his life while engaged in an impious enterprise; so that the close of his career formed a perfect contrast to the glory of his early exploits.

The prophecies of Daniel, recorded in the eleventh chapter, from the tenth to the nineteenth verse, had their exact fulfilment in the actions of Antiochus.

In the year that Antiochus died, Cleopatra his daughter, and queen of Egypt, the wife of Ptolemy Epiphanes, having given birth to a son, who afterwards succeeded his father, by the name of Ptolemy Philometor, all the great men and nobility of Cælo-Syria and Palestine hastened to Alexandria to present their congratulations to the king. Joseph, the king's receiver general, of whom we have spoken before, and who had continued in office all this time, being now too old to take such a journey, sent his son Hyrcanus to make his compliments to the Egyptian court.

Josephus gives a very curious account of the circumstances connected with the birth of Hyrcanus; a brief outline of which I shall now lay before the reader.

Joseph, having often occasion to visit Alexandria, in the execution of his office, on one occasion took with him a brother by the name of Solyminius, who having a very beautiful daughter of marriageable age, took her along, probably with the view of obtaining for her a respectable connexion in marriage with some wealthy Jew of Alexandria. While they were at court, Joseph was desperately smitten with the beauty of a young Egyptian girl, whom he had seen in one of the dances which took place in the palace. Being unable to suppress the violence of his passion, he solicited his brother to endeavour to obtain this beautiful dancing girl as a concubine for him. Solyminius, while he seemed to assent to his brother's proposal, yet resolved to prevent his forming such a connexion with a heathen woman; and the method which he took, according to our ideas of propriety, were very unbecoming in the father of a young virgin. For, as Josephus tells the story, instead of introducing to his brother's bed the Egyptian girl, he substituted his own daughter, and the affair was so managed that for some days the cheat was not discovered. But Joseph becoming more and more attached to his Egyptian concubine, as he supposed she was, expressed his devoted attachment to his brother, who then confessed to him what he had done, and avowed as his motive, the desire of keeping him from violating the law of God, by taking a strange wife, against which the displeasure of the

Lord had been so strongly manifested in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Joseph was so far from expressing any displeasure, that he thanked his brother for his friendship in thus taking measures to preserve him from a disgraceful transgression of the law of God. Joseph now received his brother's daughter as his lawful wife; for the Jews hold that for a man to marry his niece is no violation of the law of Moses, nor of the law of nature; but for a man to marry his aunt is forbidden, and is contrary to the law of nature; because it reverses the order of reverence and obedience which younger persons naturally owe to their near relatives of superior age and relative standing. This story should not have been introduced here, but for the important figure which Hyrcanus, the fruit of this marriage, makes in the subsequent history of the Jews.

Joseph had seven other sons by another wife, all older than Hyrcanus, to each of whom he offered the commission to go as his deputy to the court of Ptolemy; but they all refusing, Hyrcanus, then a very young man, undertook it. And as he had a very large sum of the collected tribute to pay into the king's treasury, he persuaded his father not to send presents from Judea, but to permit him to purchase in Alexandria such articles as would be suitable for the occasion. Accordingly, an order was given by Joseph to Arion his agent, to let his son have as much money as he should need. But Hyrcanus, on his arrival, instead of demanding ten talents, or any moderate sum, required a thousand talents to be paid to him; equal to a hundred thousand pounds sterling. With this money he purchased one hundred beautiful boys, as a present for the king, and as many beautiful maidens for the queen. Each of these, when presented, carried a talent in their hands. By this means he so ingratiated himself into the favour of the king and queen, that he came away with a commission to collect the king's revenues in all the country beyond Jordan. Having thus overreached his father, and having obtained for himself most of that authority and influence which his father had so long possessed, his brothers were so enraged against him, that they laid a plot to assassinate him; but being well attended, he got the better of them in the affray, and left two of them dead on the spot; on which account, his father being greatly exasperated, as well as for his unfair dealing in Egypt, refused any longer to own him. Hyrcanus now passed over Jordan, to execute his office; but his father dying soon afterwards, a violent dissension arose between him and his remaining brothers, about the possession of his estate, which was carried on with such violence on both sides, that for some time the peace of Jerusalem was disturbed by their quarrels.

The high-priest and people of Jerusalem, generally, took part

with the brothers; and Hyrcanus was obliged to retreat again beyond Jordan, where he built a strong fortress which he called Tyre, and from which he carried on a predatory war with the neighbouring Arabs. These events occurred while Seleucus Philopator, the son of Antiochus the Great, reigned in Persia; but when Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded to the throne, and had regained these provinces, Hyrcanus attracted his attention, and he threatened to execute vengeance upon him for his lawless conduct. On hearing of this, Hyrcanus fell on his sword, and killed himself. Before his death, however, he had contrived to gain over Onias, the high-priest, who undertook the safe-keeping of his treasure, and laid it up for him in the temple, which was probably the first occasion of the quarrel between Onias and Simon the governor of the temple, who is believed to have been the brother of Hyrcanus.

It seems that Joseph had been appointed governor of the temple. He was, perhaps, the first who held that office; for before this time, the high-priest seems to have had the sole authority in Jerusalem. But the kings who ruled over Palestine, no doubt found it convenient to have an officer of their own selection stationed in that important city; and Joseph being greatly in favour of the Ptolemies, as he was ever faithful to their interests, was probably clothed with authority to act for them in Jerusalem. However this may be, we find Simon a Benjamite, holding this office in the year 176 B. C., who is believed to have been the son of Joseph, as before hinted. Between this man and Onias the high-priest, a difference arose; and when Simon could not prevail, he and his associates, who are called the sons of Tobias, fled from Jerusalem, and went to Apollonius, governor of Cœlo-Syria, informing him that great treasures were concealed in the temple of Jerusalem; in consequence of which intelligence, the king sent his treasurer, Heliodorus, to bring them away.

An account of what befell Heliodorus in consequence of this sacrilegious attempt to rifle the temple of Jehovah, is related at large in the third chapter of the second book of Maccabees.

The substance of this account is, that Heliodorus, on coming to Jerusalem, notwithstanding the determined opposition of Onias the high-priest, the solemn and importunate entreaties of the other priests and Levites, and the mournings and supplications of all ranks and sexes, would not be diverted from his purpose. But when, with his guard, he had penetrated to the treasury, he was met with a fearful apparition; for "there appeared unto him a horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering; and he ran fiercely and smote at Heliodorus with his fore-feet; and it seems that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold. Moreover,

two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on the other side, and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes. And Heliodorus fell suddenly upon the ground, and was compassed with great darkness; but they that were about him took him up and put him upon a litter." And he was restored only through the prayers of the high-priest. (See the account in full, 2 Mac. ii. 3.)

SECTION XIII.

JUDEA FALLS UNDER THE POWER OF ANTIOCHUS—PREDICTIONS RESPECTING SELEUCUS—GOOD CHARACTER OF ONIAS THE HIGH PRIEST—JASON'S WICKED CONDUCT—AND THE MORE WICKED OF MENELAUS—DEATH OF ONIAS—ROBBERY OF THE TEMPLE BY LYSIMACHUS—STRANGE SIGHTS SEEN AT JERUSALEM—TEMPLE DESECRATED BY ANTIOCHUS—WRETCHED END OF MENELAUS—ANTIOCHUS INVADES EGYPT, BUT IS MET BY AN EMBASSY FROM ROME—DREADFUL PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS BY ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES.

AFTER the battle of Paneas, before mentioned, Judea and all the neighbouring provinces came under the power of Antiochus the Great. But when he made peace with Ptolemy, and gave his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to him, these provinces it was agreed should go with her, as a part of her dowry. There is, however, reason to believe, that this treaty was never executed, so far as relates to these intermediate countries: for in the reign of Seleucus, the successor of Antiochus, we find them still under the Syrian government; yet if the story of Josephus, related above, respecting Hyrcanus, is worthy of credit, they must have belonged to Egypt at the birth of Ptolemy Philometor. There seems to be, therefore, a chasm in the history of Judea, about this period. It is certain, however, from the testimony both of Josephus and the author of the second book of Maccabees, that they were in the possession of Seleucus king of Syria, at the time of his decease.

The prophet Daniel, who was so particular in predicting the fortunes of Antiochus the Great, has not passed over his successor Seleucus, without notice. He is spoken of as his successor, in the words following: "There should stand upon his estate a raiser of taxes." And it is a fact, that Seleucus was occupied during his whole reign in collecting money from all quarters to pay what had been laid upon his father, by the Romans. The whole sum was fifteen thousand Eubæan talents, which they agreed should be paid by instalments of a thousand talents annually, and the last of the years of this tribute, was the last of his life; so he did little else than gather taxes. But the prophecy goes on to say, that, "Within a few years he should be destroyed, and that neither in anger, nor in battle." And

so it turned out, for he was neither slain in foreign war, nor sedition at home, but fell by the treachery of one of his own friends.

Seleucus died in the year 175 B. C., and Heliodorus, who was the treacherous author of his death, used every effort to place himself on the throne. Antiochus the brother of Seleucus, hearing of his death at Athens, and of the treasonable designs of Heliodorus, who had secured a powerful party in his favour, applied to Eumenes the king of Pergamus, and to Attalus his brother, to assist him in getting possession of the throne, to which he was the legitimate heir; which, through policy, they did. Fearing a war with the Romans, they knew that the friendship of the king of Syria would be important. Antiochus, when seated on his throne, took the name of Epiphanes, which signifies *illustrious*, the very opposite of his true character. The unerring pen of the prophet gives an exact description of this prince, when he is called "*a vile person.*" (Dan. xi. 21.) The original, however, would be more correctly rendered, *a despicable person.* But the truth of this character is also confirmed by the most unexceptionable testimony of profane writers. Polybius, Philarchus, Livy, and Diodorus Siculus, the two first of whom were contemporary with him, all concur in describing him as a king of corrupt manners, of which they give many pertinent examples. Indeed his conduct was so extravagant and so unbecoming his royal station, that he appeared to many to be a fool or insane; and for shameless impudence, and base lust and intemperance, no one could be more debased.

Onias, who was now high-priest, was held in great esteem by all the people for his piety and justice; but he had a brother named Jason, of a very opposite character. The ambition of this man led him to the impious attempt to supplant his brother. And knowing the high esteem in which Onias was held, he prevailed upon Antiochus to call him to Antioch, that he might be out of his way. To induce Antiochus, who was in great need of money, to comply with his wishes, he offered him a large sum. In addition to what Jason gave the king for the priesthood, he offered a hundred and fifty talents more for the liberty of erecting a gymnasium and an ephibeum, according to the manner of the Greeks, in the city of Jerusalem. He also bargained with the king to have as many of the Jews, as he wished, made freemen of Antioch. This introduction of Grecian customs and Grecian amusements, had a powerful tendency to corrupt the young people of the Jewish nation, who appear by their long captivity to have been entirely weaned from their propensity to idolatry. But now, through the dissolute principles of Jason, a great corruption of manners took place. The services

of the altar were often neglected, and many of the Jews apostatized from their religion.

Upon the death of Ptolemy Philometor, Cleopatra his queen, the sister of Antiochus Epiphanes, administered the affairs of the kingdom with much prudence. But on her decease, Ptolemy Philometor being still an infant, the administration fell into the hands of some of the nobility; who speedily involved the country in a war with Antiochus Epiphanes, by a demand of the provinces of Cœlo-Syria, Palestine, and Phenicia, which had always belonged to Egypt, until the times of Antiochus the Great.

Ptolemy Philometor, having reached his fourteenth year, was crowned king, and inaugurated with great pomp. Jason, now high-priest, sent his brother Menelaus to the king at Antioch, to carry the tribute due from the province of Judea. This man, being even more unprincipled than his brother, availed himself of the favourable opportunity which this embassy afforded, to supplant Jason, as Jason had Onias. The king, regardless of the Jewish law and of the wishes of the people, for the sake of a higher price, agreed to advance Menelaus to the priesthood; but on his arrival, the party of Jason proved too powerful for him, so that he was obliged to return to Antioch. Here he showed how little he cared for the priesthood or the religion of his fathers, by offering, with his adherents, to embrace the religion of the king. His only object in aspiring to the office of high-priest, was to obtain the civil power which had been connected with it since the days of Nehemiah; for during this long period, the high-priests were invested with the principal authority in all civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs. Antiochus being much gratified with the offer of Menelaus to conform to his religion, sent now along with him to Jerusalem a sufficient force to place him in the office. Jason was therefore obliged to flee to the land of the Ammonites.

Menelaus, being now advanced to the high-priesthood, was little careful to pay the money which he had promised for the office: on which the king summoned both him and the captain of the temple to appear before him at Antioch. When they arrived at that city, the king was gone to suppress an insurrection in Asia Minor. This gave Menelaus time to make an exertion to raise the money, which he effected by purloining some of the golden vessels which belonged to the temple, and causing them to be sold at Tyre. By this means, he not only raised the sum due to the king, but was able to bribe Andronicus, and some other of the courtiers, to use their influence in his favour.

Onias still resided at Antioch, and by his piety and virtue had greatly won the affections of the people. When he was

informed of the sacrilege of his brother Menelaus, he sharply reproved him; by which he was so deeply offended, that he got Andronicus to agree to murder Onias. Onias obtaining information of this plot, fled to the famous asylun at Daphne; but Andronicus, by various flattering and false pretences, having enticed him from the sanctuary, immediately destroyed him. With this act of cruelty towards so good a man, the inhabitants of Antioch were so much displeased, that when the king returned, they made complaint of Andronicus. Antiochus as soon as he had satisfied himself of the truth of the charge, ordered Andronicus to be taken and killed on the very spot where he had slain Onias. The time of the priesthood of Onias until his death, was twenty-four years.

In the meantime a great mutiny arose at Jerusalem, respecting the vessels which had been taken from the temple by order of Menelaus. He having gone to Antioch, had left Lysimachus, another brother no better than himself, to manage his affairs during his absence. He used his instrumentality to procure the vessels above mentioned, which he sold at Tyre. The report of this sacrilegious action having got wind among the people, produced a wonderful tumult. Lysimachus, to defend himself against the multitude, collected around him about three thousand men; but the multitude becoming outrageous, fell upon them, and having slain many of them, found their way to the presence of Lysimachus, whom they put to death.

The war having commenced (170 years before Christ) between Antiochus and the king of Egypt, while he was at Tyre with his army, the Jews sent an embassy of three respectable citizens to complain of the conduct of Menelaus. These ambassadors were commissioned by the Sanhedrim, and on being admitted to an audience, made good their accusation. Menelaus, to avoid the sentence which he deserved, bribed with a great sum, one of the king's chief favourites, by whose influence it was brought about, that Antiochus, instead of punishing the sacrilegious priest, put to death the three envoys from Jerusalem.

At Jerusalem, about this time, there were seen strange sights in the air, for forty days together; horseman and footmen armed with shields, spears and swords, and in great companies fighting with each other, as in battle array; which are supposed to have been ominous of the calamities which speedily fell on that city. Similar appearances were beheld before its utter destruction by the Romans.

Antiochus met with but small resistance from the young king of Egypt, who seems voluntarily to have put himself into the power of his enemy. While he was in Egypt, the report reached him of a revolt among the Jews. Jason, thinking this

a good opportunity for recovering his lost power, marched to Jerusalem with more than a thousand men and took the city, forcing Menelaus to take refuge in the castle, and exercising the utmost cruelty on the citizens—putting to death without mercy as many of his adversaries as he could lay hands on. Antiochus marched with all his forces into Judea; and on being told that the people of Jerusalem had greatly rejoiced at a report which had been circulated of his death, he was exceedingly exasperated; and in great rage laying siege to Jerusalem, and taking the city by force, slew of the inhabitants, in three days, forty thousand persons, and sold as many more for slaves to the neighbouring nations. But the impious king not contented with these cruelties, found his way into the temple, under the guidance of Menelaus; and entering into its inmost recesses, polluted by his presence not only the holy place, but also the holy of holies. To complete the climax of his impieties, he sacrificed a sow upon the altar of burnt-offerings; and having ordered broth to be made of part of the flesh, he had it sprinkled all over the temple, that its defilement might be carried to the very uttermost. After this, he proceeded to plunder it, by taking away the golden altar, the table of shew-bread, and the golden candlestick, and other vessels, to the value of eighteen hundred talents of gold. Having completed the desecration and robbery of the temple, the wicked wretch marched home to Antioch, laden with the spoils of both Egypt and Judea. To increase the vexation of the Jews, he appointed one Philip, a Phrygian, of ferocious temper, to be ruler of Samaria; and, what was to them the worst of all, left Menelaus in the office of high-priest. As soon as Antiochus approached Jerusalem, Jason fled again to the Ammonites; but being there accused by Aretas king of the Arabians, of some injury done to his dominions in that vicinity, he fled to Egypt, and thence to Greece, hated and despised of all men, and receiving countenance from none, until at last he died miserably in exile, without even a decent burial.

When the Egyptians found that through the imbecility of Ptolemy Philometor, their country was fallen under a kind of vassalage to Antiochus, they made his brother king in his room, whose name was at first Ptolemy Euergetes; but on account of his corpulency through luxury, he was afterwards known by the name of Ptolemy Physcon, i. e. *The Fat*. This led Antiochus to make another expedition to Egypt, where, upon his arrival, he laid siege to Alexandria; but being unable to take the city, he went to Memphis, and pretended to put the whole country into the hands of the elder brother, but reserved in his own hands Pelusium, the key of the country. After his departure, the brothers were reconciled, through the

influence of Cleopatra their sister, by which means peace was restored to Egypt; the youngest brother having yielded the throne to Philometor. As soon as Antiochus heard of this revolution, he was filled with rage; for he had laid his plans to set them at war with each other, by which means he hoped the country would fall an easy prey to himself. He, therefore, sent a large fleet to Cyprus, from which island he designed to invade Egypt. This he soon after did, and having reduced it as far as Memphis, laid siege to Alexandria, which he would have taken, had he not been met by a Roman embassy, which put an end to all his fond hopes of subduing Egypt. As Popilius, the chief of this embassy, had been an intimate friend of Antiochus, when he resided, in his younger days, at Rome, he offered to embrace him in a friendly manner; but Popilius drew back, and told him that private friendship must yield to the public interest; and when he observed that Antiochus wished to gain time and not to give an immediate answer, he took his staff, and making a circle round him in the sand, peremptorily told him, that he should not move out of that circle, until he had given his reply. This interposition of the Romans was brought about by an embassy to Rome from Cleopatra and Ptolemy Physcon, during the former siege of Alexandria. The ambassadors, on that occasion, represented the dangerous height of power to which Antiochus was likely to arise, if Egypt should be added to the other countries under his dominion.

Antiochus, enraged at the failure of his design upon Egypt, but not daring to resist the Roman power which was now growing formidable in Greece, where Paulus Emilius had just obtained a great victory over the Macedonians, turned his wrath against Judea. On his march homeward from Egypt, he detached from his army two and seventy thousand men, and sent them, under the command of Apollonius, to destroy Jerusalem.

The arrival of Apollonius at the holy city was just two years after Antiochus had been there himself, as related above. At first he behaved peaceably, until the Sabbath arrived, when, the people being all collected in their synagogues, he let loose his soldiers among them; giving them orders to kill all the men, and seize the women and children, that they might be sold as slaves. This order was executed with the most horrid cruelty. The streets of Jerusalem were made to swim with the blood of its innocent inhabitants. None were spared on whom the soldiers could lay hands. Having completed this work of destruction, Apollonius spoiled the city of all its riches, pulled down the walls, and set fire to it in several places. Out of the ruins of the walls he built a strong fortress over against the temple, so as completely to command that edifice. In this for-

ness he placed a strong garrison, and there deposited great quantities of arms and munitions of war, together with the spoils which he had taken from the city. From this fortress, the garrison attacked all who came up to the temple with their sacrifices, or to worship, and shed their blood around the courts and the altar; so that in a little time, the service of the temple fell into neglect; for no one durst come up thither to make his offerings according to the law; and in this condition did affairs remain for three years and a half. At this time many of the pious Jews fled into the wilderness, where they concealed themselves in caves and among the rocks, living upon herbs and such scanty provisions as the wilderness afforded.

Antiochus, after his return to Antioch, issued a decree that all the nations within his dominions should worship the same gods which he did. This was particularly intended for the destruction of the Jews, not only those in Palestine, but also those who were scattered through the surrounding countries. The heathen conformed without scruple to the king's edict, as one form of idolatry was as good, in their view, as another. The Samaritans, also, who were forward, when the Jews were in prosperity, to claim kindred with them, now pretended that they were of Sidonian origin, and manifested no opposition to conforming to the king's edict. The whole weight of this decree, therefore, fell on the afflicted Jews. The Samaritans, moreover, petitioned that their temple on mount Gerizim, might henceforth be dedicated to the Grecian Jupiter; which being favourably received by Antiochus, he sent Nicanor to Samaria to see that it was done according to their wish. It is also a melancholy truth, that under this grievous persecution, many of the Jews also fell away into heathen idolatry, and became bitter enemies to the religion of their fathers; joining with the king in all his cruel persecutions of their brethren.

Antiochus showed that he was in good earnest in executing this decree; for he sent one Athenæus, an old man, well skilled in all the rites of the Gentiles, to carry it into full effect in Judea and Samaria. All sacrifices to the God of Israel were now prohibited, and all the observances of the Jewish religion were suppressed; their children were forbidden to be circumcised, and their law, wherever a copy could be found, was seized and destroyed. The temple itself was consecrated to Jupiter Olympus, whose image was set up over the altar of burnt-offerings, just before which they built a smaller altar, on which sacrifices were offered to Jupiter. The same change was made in the public worship at Samaria, but with the full consent of the people. Their temple was dedicated to Jupiter, under the name of *Protector of Strangers*.

The severity with which this cruel and impious decree was

executed, will appear by the following narrative: Two women were discovered in Jerusalem to have circumcised their newborn sons. The officers suspended the children around the necks of their mothers, and then led them through the streets of Jerusalem, until coming to a high part of the wall, they precipitated them from the top, and slew all who had given any assistance in the performance of the sacred rite. With the same cruelty they persecuted all who were found practising any part of their old religion. And to propagate paganism more effectually, chapels for idols were erected in every city, and sacrifices offered to their false deities. The feast of Bacchus was especially celebrated, in which the Jews were forced to join the procession, carrying in their hands branches of ivy.

SECTION XIV.

ASMONEAN FAMILY OF MODIN—CONSTANCY OF MATTATHIAS—HE AND HIS FRIENDS TAKE REFUGE IN THE MOUNTAINS—MARTYRDOM OF ELEAZAR—OF THE MOTHER AND HER SEVEN SONS—ASSIDEANS—ANTIOCHUS AIMS TO DESTROY ALL COPIES OF THE LAW—DEATH OF MATTATHIAS—JUDAS MACCABÆUS—BOOKS OF THE MACCABEES—VICTORIES OF JUDAS—ANTIOCHUS RESOLVES TO DESTROY THE WHOLE JEWISH NATION—WONDERFUL SUCCESS OF JUDAS—OCCUPIES JERUSALEM—CLEANSSES AND DEDICATES ANEW THE TEMPLE—PROPHECIES RESPECTING ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES.

WHILE these efforts were making utterly to suppress the Jewish religion, and to introduce the impure rites of heathenism, Apelles, one of the officers who had charge of this matter, came to the town of Modin, where Mattathias, a priest of the course of Joarib, had his residence. He was the son of John, the son of Simon, the son of Asmonæus; from whom the family had the name of Asmoneans. This man was truly zealous for the law of his God; and had five sons, all valiant men, and equally zealous for the law as himself. The names of these young men were, John, surnamed Kaddis, Simon, called Thassi, Judas, surnamed Maccabæus, Eleazar, named Avaran, and Jonathan, whose surname was Apphus.

Apelles having called together the inhabitants of Modin, informed them of the purpose of his visit, and persuaded them to comply with the king's mandate; and especially he addressed himself to Mattathias, as being the principal man of the place; promising, that if by his example he would induce the other inhabitants to obey, he should be advanced to great power and wealth. To which the venerable Mattathias answered with a loud voice, so as to be heard by all the people, that no consideration should induce him or any of his family to forsake the law of their God; but that they would still adhere to the covenant which he had made with their forefathers. When he had made this public declaration of his steadfastness, he saw one of the Jews

coming up to offer sacrifice on the heathen altar; at the sight of which, being transported with zeal, like Phinehas of old, he fell upon the apostate and slew him at the altar. After this, he and his sons put Apelles and all his attendants to the sword, and inviting all who were zealous for the law to follow him, retired to the mountains. Many others, in various places, followed this example; so that the wilderness was filled with the refugees who had escaped from the cruel persecution which raged throughout Judea. Against them Philip the Phrygian, governor of Samaria and Jerusalem, went out with an army. At first he persuaded them quietly to submit to the king's authority; promising a complete amnesty for all that was past. To this they all answered, that they would rather die than forsake the law of their God. On which Philip then laid siege to the cave where they were collected, and knowing their sacred regard to the Sabbath, he waited till the arrival of that day of rest, when he fell upon them, not a hand being raised in their defence, and all the men, women, and children, who were collected in that cave, were butchered.

Mattathias and his friends, who were in another part of the mountain, when they heard of this disaster, and the reason of it, held a solemn consultation; whether, in such circumstances they were bound by the laws of the Sabbath, foreseeing, that on these principles, they must all inevitably perish. The result of their deliberation was, that in such a case the law of God did not bind them to refrain from self-defence. Accordingly, it was resolved, that after this time, when assaulted by their enemies upon the Sabbath, they would fight for their lives. Having ratified this decree by the consent of all the priests and elders who were with them, they sent it to those throughout the land who stood up for the observance of the law; by whom it was received with the like consent; and ever afterwards it was made the rule, in all the wars which the Jews waged against their enemies.

The next year, 167 B. C., Antiochus hearing that his edict met with opposition from the Jews in many places, came himself to see its execution; and to strike terror into the other Jews who adhered to their law, he exercised the greatest cruelties on such as fell into his hands. It was on this occasion, as we read in the second book of Maccabees, that Eleazar suffered martyrdom; and a mother and her seven sons, who bravely encountered death, "*not accepting deliverance;*" (Heb. xi. 35,) of which transactions Josephus has also given a very particular account.

In the meantime, Mattathias and his company lay concealed in the fastnesses of the mountains, where they were scarcely accessible; and as soon as Antiochus had returned home, great

numbers of the Jews who were zealous for their religion, resorted to Mattathias, to fight for the law of their God, and for their liberties. Among these, there was a company called Assideans, men mighty in valour, and of great zeal for the law, who had voluntarily devoted themselves to a more rigid observance of it than others; whence they obtained the name of Chasidim, or Assideans, that is, *the pious*. For after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, there were two sets of religious men among them. The first were called Zadikim, *the righteous*; who were contented with an exact observance of the written law; the others, Chasidim, *the pious*; who, to the written law, added many observances, which they had received from the tradition of the elders.

The company of Mattathias increased so much, that they began to assume the appearance of a little army. He no longer, therefore, confined himself to his fastnesses, but came boldly forth into the inhabited country, and going from village to village, pulled down the heathen altars, caused the male children to be circumcised, and cut off all apostates and persecutors, wherever he came. He, moreover, re-established the worship of the true God; and having recovered several copies of the law, restored the worship of the synagogue.

One object at which Antiochus aimed in his persecution, was to destroy all copies of the law. A proclamation was therefore made by him, that every person, who was in possession of a copy, should, upon pain of death, deliver it up to his officers. By this means, all the copies of the law fell into the hands of the persecutors, except such as were carried away by those who fled into the wilderness. And when they did obtain them, they either destroyed them, or polluted them by painting on their margins the images of their gods; so that the Jews could make no further use of them. This work of destruction, however, had relation only to the books of Moses; for these only, had before this time been read in the synagogues. Those Jews, therefore, who still persisted in attending to the worship of God, being destitute of copies of the law, began now to read select portions of the prophets; and this practice has been continued in the synagogues ever since. The law and the prophets are both read every Sabbath day, wherever there is a synagogue of the Jews.

Mattathias, being advanced in years, was soon worn out with this state of perpetual warfare, and died the very next year after he had commenced his resistance to the impious edict of the king, 166 B. C. Before his death, the old man called his five sons together and exhorted them to stand up manfully for the law of their God, and with a steady courage and constancy to fight the battles of Israel, against their present persecutors.

That there might be no contention among them about pre-eminence, he, knowing the character of each, appointed Judas to be their captain, and Simon to be their counsellor. Mattathias was then buried by his sons in Modin, in the sepulchres of his forefathers, and great lamentation was made for him by all the faithful in Israel. But the place of this good patriarch was more than supplied by his son Judas Maccabæus; for as soon as his father's funeral was over, he took on him the chief command of the forces collected, according to his father's will; and his army being continually increased by those resorting to him from all parts, who were zealous for the law, he erected his standard and marched forth to meet the enemies of his God. The inscription on his standard consisted of the initial letters of the words, *mi camo-ka baalim Jehovah*; the meaning of which motto is, "who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah?" Hence, Judas was called Maccabæus, and all who followed his standard were denominated *Maccabees* or *Maccabæans*. Such abbreviations, and names formed from them, are so common among the Jews, that it will be unnecessary to give particular instances. Because Ruffin has called the eldest of the seven brothers who suffered martyrdom, Maccabæus, some have supposed that the name was derived from him; but there can be little doubt that Ruffin called him by that name, because, in this war the chief defenders of the law were so denominated.

The books which have received the title, *Maccabees*, are four in number. The first and second are contained in the Apocrypha of our Bibles, and are reckoned to be canonical by the Romanists. The third is a book, already mentioned, which contains the history of Ptolemy Philometor's attempt to destroy all the Jews in Egypt by his elephants. The fourth is a history of the martyrdom of Eleazar and the mother and her seven sons, by Josephus the Jewish historian.

Antiochus, the king, having heard that Paulus Emilius, after his victory over Perseus king of Macedon, had celebrated games at Amphipolis, on the river Strymon, proposed to do the same in imitation of him, at Daphne, near Antioch. These games were celebrated with much pomp and at great expense, for several days, during which time, the king gave himself up to his usual impudent folly and vileness, to such a degree, that many decent people left the games in utter disgust, at the indecency of his behaviour. But while Antiochus was thus playing the fool at Daphne, Judas was playing another sort of game in Judea. He went round the cities, as his father had done before, destroying the whole apparatus of idolatry, and slaying all apostates from the true religion; and not only delivered the faithful worshippers of God from their oppressors, but fortified the towns, and rebuilt the fortresses, in which he placed strong

garrisons, that henceforward they might be in a state of security.

Apollonius, who was left governor of those regions, now thought it high time to arrest the alarming progress of a force, which, in the beginning, appeared too despicable to create any apprehensions. But Judas, on the first meeting with this impious foe, who had spilled so much innocent blood in Jerusalem, fell upon his army with such vehemence and determined courage, that they could not stand before him. Apollonius himself was slain in the battle, and a great slaughter was made among his soldiers. Among the spoils taken, was the sword of Apollonius the general, which Judas took to himself, and used ever afterwards, in all his battles.

Seron, deputy governor of some part of Cœlo-Syria under Macron, on hearing of the overthrow of Apollonius, collected all the forces that were at his command, and marched into Judea, calculating on reaping a rich harvest of renown, by speedily conquering Judas, whose name now began to be terrible. But on meeting with this valiant captain, with his little army, the event was very different from the expectation of the haughty Syrian: for he met with the same fate as Apollonius, being vanquished and slain in battle by Judas, and a great slaughter made among his men.

When Antiochus heard of these two defeats, his indignation and fury were enkindled to the highest pitch, and he immediately gave orders, that all his forces should be collected, intending to march in person at their head into Judea, and inflict tremendous vengeance on Judas and his associates. Upon examination of his treasury, however, it was found that there was not money sufficient to pay his troops, which rendered it necessary to suspend his design of utterly extirpating the Jews, on which he had resolved.

Antiochus was a king of great profusion and magnificence, dealing out to his followers munificent gifts, so that he obtained the name of *the magnanimous* and *munificent*. And thus also his character exactly answered to the description of the prophet, that "he should scatter among his followers the prey, and the spoil and riches." Another prophecy of Daniel was also fulfilled at this time. "Tidings came to him out of the East, and out of the North, that troubled him;" (Dan. xi. 24—44.) For he now received intelligence, that Artaxias, king of Armenia, had revolted against him; this was from the North; and from Persia, in the East, he learned that his taxes, of which he now stood in so much need, were no longer duly paid. This failure was the effect of his laws requiring uniformity in religion, by which the minds of the Persians were disturbed and alienated.

In this difficult state of his affairs, he resolved to divide his army, and to send the one half of his forces against Judea, under Lysias; and with the other half, to march himself into Armenia and Persia. Accordingly, having invested Lysias, who was of the royal family, with authority over all the countries on this side the Euphrates, and having committed to his tutelage his infant son, then seven years of age, he set out on his march to the East, taking the route over mount Taurus into Armenia; where, having vanquished Artaxias, and made him prisoner, he marched directly into Persia.

Lysias, intent on executing the king's orders, which required him utterly to destroy and extirpate the whole nation of the Jews, and to settle the country with people brought from among other nations, among whom the lands of the Jews were to be divided, made haste to send an army into Judea; which seemed to become more necessary every day, as intelligence was constantly received of the progress made by Judas, in bringing all places under his authority. The conduct of this army was committed to Ptolemy Macron, governor of Cœlo-Syria, who appointed Nicanor his lieutenant, and sent him before him with twenty thousand men. Gorgias, an old and experienced soldier, was associated with him in command. But Ptolemy was not long in following with the rest of the forces, which, when joined together, amounted to an army of forty thousand infantry and seven thousand horse. They met with no obstacle to their march until they came near to Jerusalem, where they encamped at a village called Emmaus. To this place also resorted merchants to the number of one thousand, who came to purchase slaves. For, Nicanor having it in view to raise two thousand talents to pay the tribute due to the Romans, had made proclamation in all the neighbouring countries, that ninety Jews would be sold for a single talent. The plan was to kill all the full grown people and sell the rest for slaves.

Judas, finding his country threatened with utter destruction, for the orders of the king in relation to the extirpation of the Jewish nation were known, resolved, with his associates, to stand on their defence, and bravely fight for their laws, their lives, and their liberties. Having about six thousand men, he divided them into four bands of fifteen hundred each. Of one of these Judas himself took the command, and committed the others to three of his brothers; he then led his little army to Mizpah, there to supplicate God for his divine aid, in this time of imminent danger. This place was chosen for this solemn purpose, because it had formerly been one of the places chosen of God for his worship, and Jerusalem was now in the hands of the enemy. When they arrived at Mizpah, a day was spent

in prayer and fasting before the Lord, immediately after which they marched to meet the Syrian host.

Judas, who was fighting for the law of his God, was very careful to observe all the precepts of that law himself. He, therefore, made proclamation, that all who had recently married wives, built houses, or planted vineyards, were at liberty to return home: for he knew that the battle was not to the strong, and that God could save by few as well as by many. In consequence of this permission, his army was reduced from six to three thousand, with which diminished force he valiantly resolved to encounter an enemy of fifty thousand veterans. He, therefore, went and pitched his camp very near to the Syrian host, informing his men that it was his purpose early the next morning to attack the enemy; for which they prepared accordingly. During the night he received intelligence that Gorgias, by the guidance of certain apostate Jews acquainted with the country, was leading five thousand selected men by unfrequented paths, to attack him by surprise. He immediately determined on a counter-march, and on an enterprise of the boldest kind. For instead of waiting for the attack of Gorgias, he marched his force directly on the camp of the enemy, now weakened by having its best soldiers detached on this secret expedition. This bold and well-planned manœuvre was attended with complete success, for the Syrians left in the camp were taken by surprise, and were thrown into confusion, so that they made scarcely any resistance, but fled in all directions, leaving three thousand of their men dead on the ground.

Judas, finding himself master of the Syrian camp, would not permit his men to lay their hands on the spoil, because the corps of Gorgias, superior in numbers to his force, and chosen men, were untouched; but as soon as his soldiers heard of the total defeat of their main army, they threw down their arms and fled also. Judas, on being informed of this fact, engaged in the pursuit of the fugitives, nine thousand of whom he slew, and wounded many more. When he and his men returned to the Syrian camp, they found it full of riches, and there got possession of the large sums of money which had been brought to purchase their wives and children as slaves. Judas and his associates, flushed with this great victory, and their number being increased by the addition of many who now were encouraged by their success, to join them, resolved to march over Jordan, and attack Timotheus and Bacchides, who were collecting forces in that country. Accordingly, they met the army of the enemy and overthrew them in a great battle, killing twenty thousand of their men, and enriching themselves with abundance of spoil. On this occasion the vengeance of Heaven overtook two men who had distinguished themselves by acts of

impiety and cruelty. The one was Philarches, the author of many evils to the Jews, who was slain in battle; the other, Callisthenes, the man who set fire to the gates of the temple and burnt them down; he was pursued into a small house, which being set on fire, he perished in the flames.

Nicanor, the Syrian general, escaped home with his life, but was ever after held in the utmost contempt, on account of his total failure in this expedition. To excuse himself, he was constrained to acknowledge the great power of the God of Israel, who, he said, fought for his people. As to Ptolemy Macron, he seems not to have been present, for although he came to Emmaus, it is probable that he returned before the battle. When Lysias heard of the total defeat of all his armies by Judas with his small band of associates, he was utterly confounded: but knowing how much the king had the execution of his orders at heart in relation to the Jews, he set himself about collecting another army. Having mustered sixty-four thousand men, and five thousand horse, he put himself at their head, and marched into Judea, aiming at nothing less than the utter destruction of the country. On entering Judea, he pitched his camp at a place called Bethsura, not far to the south of Jerusalem. Here Judas met him with ten thousand men, and having unshaken confidence in God, he did not hesitate to engage with the whole Syrian army of seventy thousand chosen men. And God, in whom he trusted, did not disappoint his expectations; for he completely defeated the army of the Syrians, slaying five thousand men, and putting the rest to flight. Lysias, being greatly dismayed, returned home to Antioch with the scattered remains of his forces, intending to return with a more numerous army the next year. This extraordinary success of Judas took place in the year 165 B. C.

By the retreat of Lysias, the whole country being left under the power of Judas, he proposed to his brethren, that they should march to Jerusalem, and after cleansing the place, restore the worship of Jehovah. When they arrived, and beheld the destruction of the city, which was a heap of rubbish, and the defilement of the sanctuary of the Lord, they were all affected with the deepest grief, and were urgent, that the work of cleaning and rebuilding the place should immediately commence. But as Antiochus had carried away the altar of incense, the table of shew-bread, and the golden candlestick, Judas caused to be made out of the gold taken from the Syrians, other holy furniture for the sanctuary, exactly according to the pattern of those which they had lost. By his care, too, all other vessels and utensils, necessary for the service of God, were provided. The ensigns of idolatry being thus removed, and the house of God cleansed, it was determined to

dedicate it anew, in a solemn manner. For this celebration, the twenty-fifth of the month Cisleu was appointed, which was about the time of the winter solstice, and the very day on which, three years and a half before, the temple had been profaned and desolated by Apollonius.

This feast of dedication was celebrated for eight days together, with great joy and thanksgiving, for the deliverance which God had wrought for his people. They commenced the solemnities by offering sacrifices according to the law, upon the new altar which they had erected. The fire was obtained by striking two flints together; and from the same fire they lighted the seven lamps of the golden candlestick, which stood in the holy place. All other parts of the divine service were now restored, according to the prescriptions of the law, and the usage of former times. This feast continued to be observed by the Jews on the same day of the year, the twenty-fifth of Cisleu, as long as the temple stood. It is once mentioned in the New Testament, and our Saviour was at Jerusalem at the time of its celebration. (John x. 22.) That it was the anniversary of this dedication, and not of that of Solomon, or of Zerubbabel, is manifest, from the season of the year in which it occurred, which is expressly stated to have been the winter; whereas, both the other dedications occurred at other seasons. This was sometimes denominated *the feast of lights*, because, during its celebration the Jews were accustomed to set up candles at every door. Although the temple was now recovered and purified, and the worship of God restored, the fortress or castle, which overlooked and commanded the temple, remained in the hands of the enemy, and was strongly garrisoned by them, partly with heathen soldiers, and partly with apostate Jews. The people who came up to the temple to worship, were, therefore, greatly annoyed by the soldiers of the garrison; who often sallied out upon them, and sometimes slew those who were bringing their sacrifices to the temple. This castle stood on a mount which received the name of *Acra*, on account of the fortress on the top. Judas, at first, stationed some of his men, so as to prevent these sallies from the garrison; but that plan not succeeding, he built high walls around the mountain of the temple, and so fortified the place, as to secure those who were coming to the temple to worship. As a barrier against the Idumeans, who were now troublesome to the Jews, Judas fortified Bethsura which was on their borders. But it should be remarked, that what is here called Idumea, is not the same country as the land of Edom, so often mentioned in the Old Testament. This lay between the Dead Sea and Red Sea, and was afterwards known by the name of Arabia-Petrea: but while the Jews were in captivity, the Edomites took posses-

sion of the south part of the land which had been assigned to the tribe of Judah, in the original distribution; and also, that part of the land of Simeon which was included in the general survey of the lot of Judah. There they dwelt ever afterwards, and in process of time, all went over to the Jewish religion.

Antiochus, while in Persia, heard the news of the repeated defeats of the Syrians in Judea, at which he was so much enraged, that he immediately turned his face towards that country in haste, to inflict vengeance on the Jews; for his whole soul seemed to be fired with wrath against this people, especially when he heard that Judas had pulled down all his heathen altars, and restored the worship of God. But while on his march to Babylonia, which lay in his way, he was seized with a painful and incurable disease in his bowels, for which no remedy could be found; and yet so ardent was his desire of vengeance on the Jews, that he could not be persuaded to stop, nor to slacken his march. While pressing on, however, with redoubled speed, the chariot in which he rode was overturned, and he was bruised in a fearful manner. He was now obliged to stop in a small village, where he lay suffering excruciating pains. A loathsome ulcer began to discharge fetid matter, and was soon filled with vermin; in which distressing condition he continued until his death. And the hand of God seemed to be heavy upon him, in spirit as well as body; for his conscience was agonized with a sense of his crimes, and especially of his sacrilegious conduct in regard to the temple at Jerusalem. Polybius relates the fact of his agony of mind on account of this crime, but ascribes it to the attempt to rob the temple of Diana, in Elymais. Josephus, however, and the author of the book of Maccabees, refer it all to his actual and horrid profanation of the temple of God, at Jerusalem.

Antiochus being the greatest enemy of the church and people of God, who ever arose, the prophecies have been very particular in describing him. The eleventh chapter of Daniel, from the twenty-fifth verse to the forty-fifth, seems to be entirely occupied with predicting the character and deeds of this enemy to all righteousness.

The revolt of Ptolemy Macron from Ptolemy Philometor, is referred to in the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses. The twenty-seventh verse relates to the free and apparently friendly intercourse, which took place between the two kings at Memphis, when Antiochus and Ptolemy often eat at the same table; but *they spoke lies* to one another, while they pretended friendship. In the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses, there is a prediction of the last visit of Antiochus to Egypt, after he had taken off the mask, for then "*he returned again towards the south*, that is, to Egypt; but *he did not then pre-*

vail, as in the former and latter attempts;" that is, in the two former expeditions; because of the *ships that come from Chittim*; that is, the Grecian ships that brought Poplius and the other Roman ambassadors into Egypt, to Alexandria, whose arrival put an end to all his expectations of conquering that country; for they made him, "to his great grief, return out of Egypt." What is said in verses forty-third and forty-fourth of his stretching forth his hand upon the land of Egypt, "and his having power over the treasures of gold and silver, and all other precious things of that country," was fulfilled exactly, in the frequent expeditions to that country, from which he carried off great spoils.

The prophet in this chapter (xi.) also predicts, in strong language, the disappointment of Antiochus, upon his being prevented by the Romans from seizing on Egypt, which was just ready to fall into his hands: and, also, how he turned his vengeance against the holy city, and desecrated the sanctuary of God. "*For the ships of Chittim shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the covenant: so shall he do; and he shall have intelligence with them that forsake the covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.*"

These prophecies respecting Antiochus Epiphanes, so exactly correspond with the events related of him by all the historians, that Porphyry, who wrote largely against the Scriptures, acknowledged the exact coincidence, but pretended that these predictions were never penned by Daniel, but by some writer who lived after the time of Antiochus. And to make this the more probable, he compared what is contained in this eleventh chapter of Daniel, with the accounts of all the historians extant in his time, most of which are now lost, and proved that the agreement was most exact; from which he drew the inference, that this chapter must have been written after the events took place. This work of Porphyry is now lost, and also several answers to it by learned Christians. All we now have of it is found in Jerome's Commentary on Daniel.

SECTION XV.

HISTORY OF JUDAS CONTINUED—DISTRESSING CONDITION OF THE JEWS—DEATH OF ELEAZAR, BROTHER OF JUDAS—DEATH OF ANTIOCHUS—MISERABLE END OF MENE-LAUS—CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE TWO BROTHERS IN EGYPT—INTERPOSITION OF THE ROMANS—DEMETRIUS SUCCEEDS ANTIOCHUS—ALCIMUS APPOINTED HIGH-PRIEST—THE QUARREL OF THE TWO BROTHERS, PTOLEMY PHILOMETOR AND PTOLEMY PHYSCON, BROUGHT BEFORE THE ROMAN SENATE AND DECIDED.

JUDAS MACCABÆUS was not permitted to be idle; for although the Syrians were driven from Judea, the neighbouring nations seemed to have entered into a general conspiracy against the Jews. Judas, therefore, turned his arms against the Edomites, who had been foremost in forming this confederation. Of them he slew twenty thousand men. He next passed over Jordan to the land of the Ammonites, where he fought many battles, and having vanquished the enemies of the Jews in that quarter, and taken Jazar, returned to Judea.

The heathen about Gilead, hearing of the discomfiture of so many of their friends, rose against the Jews, and having slain a thousand of them in the land of Tob, forced the rest to take refuge in a castle. The people of Phenicia also rose against the Jews of Galilee; and Judas, receiving urgent calls for help from both these places, was at a loss which way he should march. He, therefore, consulted the Sanhedrim, who advised him to divide his forces. Accordingly, he and Jonathan passed over Jordan, and arrived just in time to relieve the Jews who were besieged in Dathema.

Simon took another division of the army and marched to Galilee, where also he met with great success; for in many conflicts with the enemy, he came off uniformly victorious. But finding that the Jews in those parts could not be protected from the heathen round about, he took measures to have them transplanted into Judea. While these two divisions of the army had been completely successful, a third which had been left at Jerusalem, under Joseph and Azarias, having undertaken an expedition against Jamnia, on the seacoast, where Gorgias commanded, were by him repulsed with great loss.

Lysias, who, after the death of Antiochus, had seized upon the chief authority, as he had the young king in his power, now resolved to march with a great army against Judas. He collected sixty thousand infantry, as many cavalry as he could find, and eighty elephants, and with this force marched towards Judea. This great army commenced the war by laying siege to Bethsura; but Judas, coming upon them, slew eleven thousand of his infantry, and sixteen hundred of his cavalry, and put the rest to flight. Lysias, growing weary of this unsuc-

cessful war, now made peace with Judas and his people. Quintillus Memmius, and Torquatus Manlius, who were then ambassadors from the Romans, in Syria, were very helpful to the Jews on this occasion. The edict of Antiochus, requiring the people to conform to the heathen worship, was entirely rescinded; and liberty was given them to live according to their own laws. But this law was not of long continuance. The nations by whom the Jews were surrounded, began to raise disturbances as soon as Lysias was gone. Judas was soon called to inflict punishment on Joppa, where two hundred Jews had been drowned. He burned their shipping, and then turning to Jamnia treated them in the same manner, and for a similar offence.

He was next called into Gilead, where Timotheus continued to raise disturbances. He had now collected a more numerous army, which was entirely overthrown by Judas, and thirty thousand of his men slain. Timotheus himself was in his flight taken prisoner; but on the promise that he would release many Jews whom he had in his power, he was permitted to go free. Judas, finding that the Jews beyond Jordan would be perpetually molested, treated them as Simon had the Galileans, and transplanted them into the land of Judea. As the garrison, however, in the fortress at Jerusalem was a perpetual thorn in the sides of the Jews, Judas collected a great force, and prepared all sorts of engines of war used in sieges, and pressed with all his might to take it; but the apostate Jews who were in the garrison, knowing that they should receive no mercy if the castle were taken, several of them made their escape, and going to the king at Antioch, urged their suit so earnestly, that he was persuaded to collect a great army of a hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, and thirty-two elephants, at the head of which he marched himself, accompanied by Lysias his guardian. When they arrived in Judea, they laid siege to Bethsura, when Judas making an attack upon them in the night, slew about five thousand men, and returned without suffering any loss. The next day Judas encountered the whole Syrian army with his small force; but finding that he must be overwhelmed by the multitude, withdrew to Jerusalem.

In this battle, Eleazar, one of Judas' brothers, lost his life by a very daring act. Observing that one of the elephants was much larger than the rest, he imagined that the king was carried on the back of this large animal, and that by destroying him he should deliver his country, and obtain everlasting renown; he ran under the elephant and pierced his belly with his sword; but before he could make his escape, the wounded beast fell upon him, and crushed him to death.

Bethsura, now, after a brave defence by its garrison, fell into

the hands of the Syrians. Antiochus marched immediately to Jerusalem, and laid siege to the sanctuary: and when they were reduced to great straits, deliverance was obtained in an unexpected manner. When Antiochus Epiphanes was near his end, he had called one of his generals named Philip, and in a formal manner appointed him the guardian of his young son; and committed to him his signet and his crown. But before Philip arrived at Antioch, Lysias, who had been left governor of Syria and guardian of the young king, had taken the supreme power into his own hands, and retained possession of the king's person, refusing to resign either the one or the other to Philip. But now, while Lysias and all the best troops were absent, he watched his opportunity for seizing Antioch, and endeavouring to make himself master of the Syrian empire. Lysias, hearing of this event, found it necessary to return back, and thereupon, again made peace with the Jews.

Menelaus, the wicked high-priest of the Jews, had a great hand in instigating the king to engage in this war, and accompanied the Syrian army into Jerusalem, with the hope that he would be restored to his office; and also that the government of the whole country would be put into his hands. But when the issue of the war proved to be unfortunate, Lysias was so much exasperated against this wretch, that he accused him to the king as the author of all the mischief: on which he was condemned to death, and carried to Berhœa, a city of Syria, where he was cast headlong into a tower of ashes which was in that place. This punishment was inflicted for treason, sacrilege, and such other crimes as were considered more than commonly enormous; and was well adapted to the shocking crimes of which this man had been so long and signally guilty.

On the death of Menelaus, the office of high-priest should have descended to Onias, the son of that Onias whom Menelaus caused to be put to death at Antioch; but it was conferred on one Alcimus, or Jacimus, as he is sometimes called; a man not less wicked than Menelaus himself. Onias being much dissatisfied that he was thus deprived of his right, escaped from Antioch, where he had resided from the time of his father's death, and fled into Egypt, where he succeeded in insinuating himself into the favour of Ptolemy Philometor and his queen Cleopatra.

On the return of the king and Lysias with the Syrian army, Antioch was without difficulty recovered, and Philip, seeking safety in flight, soon after perished.

It has been seen that there were two brothers in Egypt, Ptolemy Philometor and Ptolemy Physeon, both of whom had been crowned; and although for a while there was a compromise between them, their rival pretensions soon involved them

in a fresh quarrel. In this contest Ptolemy Physcon had prevailed against his brother, and driven him out of the kingdom.

The Roman senate, hearing of this civil war in Egypt, sent orders to their ambassadors in Syria, Cneius Octavius, Spurius Lucretius, and Lucius Aurelius, to go to Egypt and settle the dispute between the two brothers. But while they were on their journey, Philometor had fled, and was on his way to Rome, on foot, and in a sordid habit. Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, late king of Syria, who was then a hostage at Rome, being informed of the fact, provided a royal equipage and robes for Philometor, and met him before he reached the city. He not only refused, however, to accept them, but would not even permit Demetrius to accompany him. He did this, that the senate, seeing his miserable condition, might be the more disposed to compassionate his cause, and grant him the assistance which he asked. As soon as the senate heard of his arrival, they sent for him, and immediately directed that he should be furnished with everything answerable to his royal dignity; and having heard his complaint, decreed that the kingdom should be restored to him, appointing Quintus and Canuleius, two of their own body, to see that their decree was executed. These ambassadors, on their arrival in Egypt, made a compromise between the two brothers, assigning Egypt and Cyprus to Philometor, and Lybia and Cyrene to Physcon.

The Roman ambassadors who were sent to Syria, finding that the Syrian fleet contained more ships, and the Syrian army more elephants, than were allowed by the treaty made with Antiochus the Great, proceeded to burn the supernumerary ships, and slay the supernumerary elephants. Many of the Syrians were exceedingly indignant at this arbitrary proceeding of the ambassadors, and one Leptines was so transported with rage, that he fell upon Cneius Octavius while he was anointing himself at Laodicea and slew him in the gymnasium. This Octavius had recently been consul at Rome, and was the first of his family who had attained that high honour. From him was descended Octavius Cesar, (commonly called Augustus,) who was so long emperor of Rome. It was supposed that Lysias had secretly instigated the man to commit this violation of the law of nations; but he immediately dispatched ambassadors to Rome to disclaim this act, on the part of the government. The Senate heard them, but returned no answer, saying that they would reserve their judgment of the true authors of the murder, until future inquiry.

Demetrius, having made another unsuccessful attempt to obtain permission to return to his own country, by the advice of his friends, (among whom was Polybius the historian,) made his

escape from Rome. As soon as he arrived at Tripoli, he gave out that he was sent by the Roman Senate to take possession of the kingdom. The cause of Eupator being now considered desperate, most of the people joined themselves to Demetrius; and Lysias was put to death by his own soldiers.

The first act of Demetrius, after his accession to the throne, was the punishment of two tyranical governors, whom Antiochus had set over the province of Babylonia. This act of prompt and salutary justice rendered him so exceedingly popular in that region, that they gave him the surname of *Soter*, which he ever afterwards retained. Alcimus, who, as was before said, received the appointment of high-priest from the king of Syria, when he came to Jerusalem to enter on the office, was rejected by the people, because he was one of those who had conformed to the religious customs of the Greeks, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Upon this he collected all the apostate Jews, then living at Antioch, and went with them in a body to Demetrius, to petition for relief against Judas and his brethren; accusing them of slaying many of the king's friends, and expelling others from the country.

Demetrius was so exasperated against Judas, in consequence of these misrepresentations, that he forthwith sent Bacchides, governor of Mesopotamia, with an army into Judea, and renewed the appointment of Alcimus to be high-priest, joining him also with Bacchides in authority over the country. On their first arrival, they attempted to circumvent Judas, by offering conditions of peace; but he was aware of their designs, and escaped the snare. Others, however, were deceived by them, and among the rest a company of Assideans, and some of the rulers; who relying on the pacific professions of Bacchides and Alcimus, committed themselves to them. No sooner however, had they got them in their power than they put them all to death.

Bacchides now returned home, leaving Alcimus part of his forces to secure him in the possession of the country, who had influence to draw over many deserters, and in no small degree to disturb the state of Israel. But no sooner was Bacchides gone, than Judas came forth with his forces, and took vengeance on those who had revolted from him, Alcimus being unable to stand before him. This wicked disturber of the public peace, now resorted again to the king, and renewed his complaints against Judas and his brethren; declaring that as long as Judas lived, the king's authority could never be established in that country. This being confirmed by other enemies of the Jews about the king's person, Demetrius, more incensed than ever, sent another army against them under the command of their old enemy, Nicanor, with peremptory orders, to cut off

Judas, disperse his followers, and so reinstate Alcimus in the office of high-priest. Nicanor knowing the power of Judas, as having been already defeated by him, was afraid to encounter him in battle. He, therefore, endeavoured to enter into negotiation for peace, and accordingly a treaty was made between them; after which Judas and Nicanor communed together in a friendly manner. But Alcimus not liking the treaty, as thinking that his own interest had not been sufficiently provided for, went a third time to the king, and so prepossessed him against the peace, that he refused to ratify it; and sent positive orders to Nicanor to renew the war, and not to cease until Judas was slain, or sent prisoner to Antioch. Nicanor was then, though reluctantly, obliged to engage in new hostilities with Judas.

When the agreement made between the two Ptolemies was laid before the Senate, they were not satisfied with the division which the ambassadors had made, thinking that too much had been allotted to Philometor, and too little to Physcon. They, therefore, determined that Cyprus should be taken from Philometor and given to his brother. This was brought about very much by the presence of Physcon at Rome, where, in person, he had the opportunity of urging his suit with the senators. Ambassadors were now sent back with him, to obtain the consent of Philometor to this new arrangement. While they went forward to Alexandria, to carry on the negotiation, Physcon waited on the borders of the kingdom for the result. Philometor treated the ambassadors with great respect, but contrived to spin out the negotiation for forty days, and then peremptorily refused to comply with the last arrangement; but professed his willingness to abide by the allotment first agreed on.

At the same time the affairs of Physcon became more involved in difficulty, on account of the conduct of the Cyrenians; who having heard an ill report of him, were unwilling to come under his government, and raised the standard of rebellion against him. This event prevented his return to Rome, but Merula, the Roman ambassador, who had been employed in the negotiation, spread before the Senate a full account of the whole transaction: on which it was decreed, that all friendship and alliance with Philometor should be broken off; and his ambassador was ordered to leave Rome forthwith.

SECTION XVI.

THE WAR RENEWED—SUICIDE OF RAZIS—VICTORY OF JUDAS AND DEATH OF NICANOR—BACCHIDES IS SENT TO SUCCEED NICANOR—DEATH OF JUDAS—DREADFUL STATE OF THE JEWS—JONATHAN AND SIMON, BROTHERS OF JUDAS, MAKE A SUCCESSFUL STAND—DEATH OF ALCIMUS—THE JEWS ENJOY REST FOR TWO YEARS—WAR BETWEEN THE TWO PTOLEMIES RENEWED—DEMETRIUS ABANDONS HIMSELF TO DISSIPATION—AN IMPOSTOR ARISES TO CLAIM HIS CROWN—BOTH COURT THE AID OF JONATHAN—JONATHAN ASSUMES THE OFFICE OF HIGH-PRIEST—ALEXANDER BALAS OBTAINS THE THRONE OF SYRIA.

NICANOR, having received his orders to renew the war, came to Jerusalem with his army, and endeavoured, by craft, to get Judas into his power. For, in the first place, he invited him to a conference, with which Judas complied, relying on the peace which had been agreed upon; but soon finding that there was an ambush laid for him, he made his escape; after which all confidence was at an end, and the war again commenced. In the first action, Nicanor lost five thousand men, and was forced to retreat; and being greatly chagrined and mortified at his defeat, he vented his rage on Razis, a venerable senator of the Jewish Sanhedrim, who was held in the highest esteem by the people for his pious and benevolent acts. Nicanor therefore judged that it would be felt as a sore calamity to the Jews, if he were cut off; he therefore sent a body of men to take him, intending to put him to death. This man, however, was in a castle, where he defended himself for some time with great bravery; but finding that the place could not hold out any longer, he rashly put a termination to his own life, by falling on his sword. This act is spoken of with approbation by the writer of the Maccabees, which is a clear proof that he was not an inspired man. No countenance is given to such acts of bravery any where in the Holy Scriptures. The idea that suicide in such cases, was not only lawful, but noble and heroic, was derived from intercourse with the Greeks and Romans. It is, moreover, related, that when he found that the wound did not produce immediate death, he thrust his hand into it, and pulled out his own bowels. For this act, he has been reckoned a martyr by the Jews; but St. Augustine, in his Epistle to Dulcilius, has given unanswerable reasons to prove that it was unjustifiable.

Nicanor then went up into the fortress, situated on the mountain of the temple, and demanded that Judas and his associates should be delivered up; threatening, in case of refusal, that he would pull down the altar and burn the temple, and in their place erect a temple to Bacchus. At the same time he uttered many blasphemous words against the temple, and against the God who was there worshipped. But he soon experienced the

power and vengeance of Him whose name and worship he dared to blaspheme. For coming out with all his forces to encounter Judas, Nicanor was slain on the very first onset, on which the whole of his army took to flight; and all the country rising up against them, scarcely a man of them was able to effect his escape. When Judas and his men returned from the pursuit, to the field of battle, and found Nicanor among the slain, they cut off his head and his right hand, and hanged them up in the temple, as a memorial of the vengeance of Jehovah. This victory was gained on the 13th of the month Adar; and on account of the wonderful deliverance obtained on that day, it was resolved that, ever afterwards, it should be observed as an anniversary of thanksgiving: accordingly, it is so commemorated by the Jews until this day.

Judas was not only a valiant and skilful general, but a wise politician. Finding that there was likely to be no end to the Syrian invasions, and having heard of the power and magnanimity of the Romans, he sent ambassadors to Rome, to obtain their protection against the Syrians. These ambassadors, Jason and Eupolemus, were kindly received, and a decree was made that the Jews should be acknowledged as the friends and allies of the Romans. A letter was at the same time written to Demetrius, ordering him to desist from vexing them, and threatening him with war if he persisted. But before this favourable intelligence reached Judea, Judas was no longer in the land of the living.

Demetrius, upon hearing of the defeat and death of Nicanor, collected another army of chosen troops, and again sent Bacchides and Alcimus into Judea. When this army arrived, Judas had with him no more than three thousand men; and most of these were so terrified at the mighty force which they had to oppose, that they deserted his standard; so that he was left with only eight hundred men. But such was the undaunted spirit and unshaken confidence of the man, that with this handful of soldiers he dared to engage the host of the Syrians. In this instance his courage seems to have degenerated into rashness; or, at least, the event naturally suggests this idea; for in this unequal battle, Judas himself was slain. I do not believe, that in all the annals of the world, there is exhibited to our view a character more distinguished for bravery and extraordinary success; taking into view the small number of his soldiers, and the numerous and well appointed armies, headed by experienced generals, to which he was opposed. But he evidently was actuated by a spirit superior to mere human courage. His confidence was firmly fixed on God, in whose aid he relied in all difficulties, and in all times of danger.

After the death of Judas, the Syrians overran the land; the

apostate Jews came forward in multitudes, and Alcimus was put in possession of the object of his ambition. Now a time of great distress was experienced by all the faithful Jews; not surpassed even by the persecutions in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Bacchides used great diligence in finding out, and punishing, all the Maccabæans, wherever they could be found; putting them to death with every species of indignity and cruelty. At length, Jonathan and Simon, the brothers of Judas, collected a small force of those who were disposed to resist the tyranny and cruelties of Bacchides and Alcimus, and retreated into the wilderness of Tekoa; where, being defended by the river Jordan on the one hand, and a morass on the other, they could not with advantage be attacked.

To secure their goods in these dangerous times, Jonathan and Simon sent their brother John with all their carriages and baggage, to their friends, the Nabatheans, to be kept for them until they should be in a condition to reclaim their property: but while he was on his journey, he was attacked by the Jambrians, a tribe of Arabians, who slew him, and seized all the goods which he had under his care. To revenge this unprovoked violence, Jonathan and Simon having learned that a great marriage was to be solemnized on a certain day, at Medaba, the chief town of the Jambrians, placed an ambush by the road along which the bridegroom and bride with their numerous attendants were to pass, in meeting each other, who killed most of the party, and took from them much rich spoil.

Bacchides, learning that Jonathan and his adherents were encamped on the bank of the Jordan, made an assault on them, on the Sabbath day, calculating upon no resistance; but Jonathan, agreeably to the decision made in the days of Mattathias his father, exhorted his brethren to resist the enemy, which they did so manfully, that they killed a thousand men: but not being able to withstand so great a multitude, they swam the Jordan and escaped.

The next year died Alcimus, the great troubler of Israel. As soon as he was established in the priesthood, he set himself to corrupt and change the Jewish religion, endeavouring to bring it to a nearer conformity with the religious institutions of the Greeks. When the temple was rebuilt after the return from captivity, there was erected around the sanctuary, a low wall, it is said, by order of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, beyond which, no uncircumcised person was permitted to pass. This wall, commonly called *Hil*, Alcimus directed to be removed, that the Gentiles might be put on a level with the Jews. But during the progress of this work, he was struck with the palsy, and suddenly expired.

After the death of Alcimus, Bacchides was recalled to Anti-

och, and for two years the land had rest. This was probably owing to the letter which Demetrius received from the Roman Senate; for he was solicitous not to provoke the displeasure of that formidable power; and, indeed, they had never recognized him as the lawful king of Syria. For, as has been related, he fled from Rome, when residing there as a hostage, and coming into Syria, usurped the throne, and slew Antiochus Eupator, the reigning king. He, therefore, took every opportunity of gratifying the Romans, and so earnestly and repeatedly urged his petition for reconciliation, with their ambassadors, that at length he accomplished his wish, and was acknowledged king of Syria, by the Roman Senate, and all the treaties made with the former kings of Syria were renewed with him. The death of Alcimus occurred in the year 160 B. C.

The Jews having now, as was before said, two years of uninterrupted quiet, Jonathan exerted himself to restore every thing to its proper state: but the Jews who were ill affected to him and his cause, sent again to Antioch, and procured an order for Bacchides to return with his army into Judea. A conspiracy was also formed to seize Jonathan and his brothers, and deliver them up; but he, receiving intelligence of it, seized about fifty of the conspirators and put them to death. He and Simon then retreated to the strong fortress called Bethbasi, where one of them remained to defend the place, while the other hung upon the skirts of the Syrian army, until Bacchides grew weary of the war, and turned his wrath against some of those who induced him to undertake the expedition. At which time Jonathan and Simon made to him offers of peace, which he gladly accepted, and solemnly swore that he would never any more carry on war with the Jews, with which he complied; for he never after this returned in a hostile manner to Judea.

In the year 166 B. C. another war broke out between the two Ptolemies. Physcon became so odious to his subjects, that some of them way-laid him, and in attempting to assassinate him, wounded him severely. He attributed it to his brother, who, he supposed, had hired these assassins to kill him; on which, he repaired again to Rome, where he showed his scars, and entered grievous complaints against his brother. The Romans, without much inquiry, directed an army to accompany him, and put him in possession of Cyprus, which Philometor refused to give up. Being met, however, on the island, by Philometor, he was vanquished and taken prisoner; but his mild and affectionate brother, instead of putting him to death, according to his deserts, restored him to his kingdom in Lybia and Cyrene, and added some other territories, to render the possession more valuable.

Demetrius now gave himself up entirely to drinking and dis-

sipation. He relinquished all care of the public administration, and shut himself up in a castle, near Antioch, from which he seldom came out. But while he was thus indulging himself in indolence and pleasure, an unexpected enemy arose. Heracles, a favourite of Antiochus Epiphanes, whom Demetrius had banished from Babylonia, on account of his maladministration, found an obscure young man, called Balas, who was willing to subserve his views, by acting the part of an impostor, and pretending that he was the son of Antiochus Epiphanes. This imposture could have had little effect, had not several of the crowned heads of the neighbouring countries favoured it; but Ptolemy, Attalus, and Ariarthes, having all received great provocation from Demetrius, were disposed to lend their countenance to any scheme which would have a tendency to annoy, or ruin him.

The three kings, above mentioned, having acknowledged the impostor, under the name of Alexander son of Antiochus, Heracles took him to Rome; and to give colour to the deception, carried with him Laodice, the real daughter of Antiochus. There, by craft and false pretences, he got him acknowledged, and obtained a decree, not only permitting him to return to Syria, for the recovery of his kingdom, but granting him aid in accomplishing this object.

These events roused Demetrius from his inactivity; and as he had a high opinion of the powers and fidelity of Jonathan, and thought it would be important to secure his services, he appointed him his general, in Judea, with authority to raise forces. As soon as Jonathan received this letter, he caused it to be read in the hearing of the officers of the garrison, in Jerusalem; by which they were induced to give up the hostages which they had in the fortress.

Alexander, hearing what Demetrius had done to gain Jonathan, sent proposals to him also. He offered to make him high-priest, with the title of the *king's friend*. He also sent him a purple robe, such as princes only wear, and a crown of gold. On this, Demetrius sent new offers to Jonathan, promising him all that had been offered by Alexander, together with extraordinary privileges to the Jewish people. But the Jews, remembering the long and bitter enmity of Demetrius to their nation, and how much injury he had done them, could place no confidence in him, and therefore resolved to take sides with Alexander.

Jonathan now entered on the office of high-priest, which had been vacant for seven years; and from this time the office became settled in the family of the Asmoneans, and so continued until the days of Herod. From the Babylonish captivity, the office descended on the family of Jozadak, until the time of

Onias the third. After his expulsion, it was occupied by Jason his brother, then by Menelaus an older brother; and then by Alcimus. Whether the Asmoneans were of the family of Jozadak, is nowhere said; but they were of the course of Joarib, which was the first class of the sons of Aaron.

Alexander, backed by the three kings already mentioned, and his title being acknowledged by the Romans, was in a condition to cope with Demetrius, on equal footing. Demetrius, on the other hand, was not inactive in preparing for a contest, in which his kingdom was at stake. The hostile armies met, and a decisive battle took place, in which, although the wing commanded by Demetrius himself gained some advantage, the left wing was put to flight, and Demetrius slain in the pursuit.

Alexander, having now obtained the throne of Syria, sent to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, requesting his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. To this Ptolemy consented, and carried her to Ptolemais, where the nuptials were celebrated. To this wedding Jonathan the high-priest of the Jews was invited, and was received with signal favour by both the kings; especially by Alexander, who had him clothed in purple, and enrolled among the chief of his friends. And although his enemies presented accusations against him, the king would listen to none of them, but sent him back with honour to Judea.

SECTION XVII.

ONIAS OBTAINS THE FAVOUR OF THE KING AND QUEEN OF EGYPT—BUILDS THERE A TEMPLE SIMILAR TO THAT AT JERUSALEM—CONTENTIONS BETWEEN THE JEWS AND SAMARITANS ABOUT THE PLACE OF WORSHIP—HIPPARCHUS THE ASTRONOMER—WAR BETWEEN ALEXANDER THE IMPOSTOR AND DEMETRIUS—THE FORMER FORSAKEN BY HIS FATHER-IN-LAW IS OVERTHROWN AND SLAIN.

ONIAS, who on being disappointed of the high-priest's office had fled into Egypt, became a favourite both with the king and queen; for he was a great soldier and a great politician. By degrees he was advanced to the highest station in the army, and also at court; and had influence to introduce another Jew of talents into the royal favour, whose name was Dositheus: these two, in fact, managed all the affairs of the kingdom. Onias made use of his influence to induce the king to permit him to erect, in Egypt, a temple similar to that at Jerusalem, with the grant that the office of high-priest should for ever be continued in his family. He did not find it difficult to persuade the king that this would be good policy, since it would induce many of the Jews to settle in Egypt. But the difficulty was, to reconcile the minds of the Jews to the idea of worshipping any where else but at Jerusalem, which had been selected by

God himself as the site of his temple. To satisfy their minds, he referred to the prophecy of Isaiah, (Isa. xix. 18, 19,) where it is said, "In that day, shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts: one shall be called the city of Destruction. In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord, in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof, to the Lord." The place selected for this temple was Heliopolis, only twenty-four miles from Memphis, where formerly a temple had stood, which was now in ruins. Onias made it exactly according to the pattern of that at Jerusalem, although not so high, nor so costly; and furnished it with all the apparatus for worship; an altar of burnt-offerings, an altar of incense, a table of shew-bread, and other utensils and vessels, such as were used in the temple at Jerusalem; except, that instead of a candlestick with seven lamps, one large lamp was suspended in the holy place. In this temple daily sacrifices were offered, and the whole ritual service of the law performed by priests, just as it was at Jerusalem; and continued so to be, until after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, when it was shut up, and soon afterwards utterly demolished. The building of this temple took place about the year 150 B. C.

There is pretty strong internal evidence that the prophecy of Isaiah was translated into Greek, by Jews who worshipped at this temple, and consequently, that the version was made after its erection, for the text cited above, is here rendered, not *the city of destruction*, as in the Hebrew, but (Πολις Ασεδευκ κληθησεται η μια πολις,) *one of the cities shall be called the city of righteousness*.

About this time there arose a great commotion in Alexandria between the Jews and Samaritans, respecting the place appointed by God for his worship. Ptolemy, in order to quell it, appointed a day to hear both parties, before himself and council. On this trial, the Samaritans failed entirely in their proof, and their leaders were condemned to death, for exciting so great a disturbance without cause.

As soon as Alexander found himself in quiet possession of a rich kingdom, he gave himself up to luxury and vice. He surrounded himself with lewd women, and relinquished all attention to the government. The principal management of affairs was left to one Ammonius, who acted in a very cruel manner towards the people. By such a course of life, Alexander soon became odious to his subjects, and Demetrius, the son of the late king, now grown to manhood, thought this a fit opportunity to recover his crown. Accordingly, he landed in Syria, with some mercenaries from Crete, and soon gathered a considerable army, which was greatly strengthened by the revolt of Apol-

lonius, the governor of Cœlo-Syria, who declared in favour of Demetrius.

Jonathan, who had entered into a treaty with Alexander, adhered to his interest. Apollonius, therefore, turned his forces, in the first place, against him; and drawing together a large army at Jamnia, sent a challenge to Jonathan to meet him in battle. Jonathan marching out of Jerusalem with ten thousand men, took Joppa, in the presence of Apollonius and his army; and then joining battle with him, vanquished him in the open field, and pursued his broken forces to Azotus. Having taken the place, he set it on fire and burnt it down, together with the temple of Dagon, which was in it. In consequence of this victory, Alexander sent Jonathan a buckle of gold, such as was used only by the royal family, and gave him the city of Ekron.

About the year 147 B. C. flourished the celebrated philosopher Hipparchus of Nice, in Bithynia. He spent thirty-four years in studying the motions and relative positions of the heavenly bodies. The Jews call him Abrachus, and his name is deservedly great among them; for their rabbis received from him that form of the year which has been in use among them ever since.

The war between Alexander and Demetrius, for the crown of Syria, still continued; and Ptolemy Philometor, being desirous of assisting Alexander his son-in-law, marched with a great army into Palestine; where he was met by Jonathan the high-priest of the Jews, whom he received with great honour and friendship, and took him with him to his camp at Ptolemais. But here he found that snares were laid for his life by Ammonius, the general of Alexander; and when he demanded of this prince that Ammonius should be delivered up to him, for punishment, he met with a refusal. Ptolemy was, on this account, so much displeas'd with Alexander, that he not only ceased to aid him, but even took away his daughter from him, and gave her to Demetrius, his competitor for the crown.

The people of Antioch had Ammonius in such hatred, that they rose up tumultuously against him, and slew him; and at the same time revolted from Alexander, and opened their gates to Ptolemy, whom they invited to be their king. This offer he declined, and recommended to them Demetrius, the legitimate heir of the kingdom, whom accordingly they received into Antioch, and placed on the throne of his ancestors.

Alexander, who was then in Cilicia, hearing of these events, hastened towards Antioch, where he laid waste the surrounding country; until, being met by the army of Demetrius, he was overthrown in a decisive battle, and made his escape with only five hundred horse, to Zabdiel, an Arabian prince, to

whom he had privately sent his children for security. But here, in a few days, he was murdered by those in whom he most confided. Such was the end of this successful impostor, after a reign of five years.

The head of Alexander was brought by his murderers to Ptolemy, who was greatly delighted at the sight of it; but his joy was short-lived, for in a few days afterwards, he himself received a wound which caused his death, after a reign of thirty-five years.

SECTION XVIII.

CARTHAGE AND CORINTH DESTROYED IN THE SAME YEAR—HISTORY OF POLYBIUS—CLEOPATRA MARRIES PHYSCON, WHO MURDERS HER SON BY HER FORMER HUSBAND—SYRIA IN A DISTURBED STATE—TYRANNICAL CONDUCT OF DEMETRIUS—TRYPHON CONSPIRES AGAINST HIM AND OVERCOMES HIM—THEOS IS MADE KING, WHO GRANTS GREAT PRIVILEGES TO JONATHAN AND SIMON.

THE year 147 B. C. was not only famous for the death of the kings of Egypt and Syria, within a few days of each other, but also for the destruction of the two famous cities, Carthage and Corinth. The former by Scipio Africanus, the latter by L. Mummius. In the burning of Corinth, all the brass was melted down, and mingled with other metals, which formed the famous Corinthian brass of the ancients. With this year ends the history of Polybius, which he wrote in forty books; extending from the beginning of the second Punic war to the end of the third. Of these, only five are now extant; which are written with so much spirit and correctness, that they serve to increase our regret for the loss of all the rest. Polybius was a native of Megapolis in Arcadia, the son of Lycortas, the famous supporter of the Achæan league. Being overcome by the Romans, a thousand of the principal youth were carried to Rome as hostages, of whom Polybius was one. It was here that he wrote his history.

Ptolemy Philometor being dead, his wife, Cleopatra—who was also his sister—wished to secure the succession to her son, then an infant; but Ptolemy Physcon, king of Cyrene, the brother of Philometor, now laid in his claim. On this occasion, Onias and Dositheus surrounded the queen with an army of Jews; but the Romans interposing, to prevent a civil war, proposed that Physcon should marry his brother's widow, and that after his death, the son of Cleopatra should succeed to the throne. This was agreed to; but on the very day of the nuptials, this unprincipled and unfeeling wretch murdered the son of his brother, in his mother's arms. The affairs of Syria were

also in a disturbed state, under Demetrius, who was a young and inexperienced man, and of an unhappy disposition.

Jonathan, finding all quiet in Judea, resolved to reduce the fortress of Jerusalem. But as soon as he commenced the siege, complaints were made against him to Demetrius, who coming to Ptolemais, summoned Jonathan to appear before him. He accordingly came down, attended by some of the priests and chief people of Jerusalem, and bringing with him valuable presents for the king. And he so managed, as to obtain the favour of Demetrius, who not only confirmed him in his priesthood, but admitted him to a chief place among his friends, and bestowed on him several cities which had formerly belonged to the Samaritans.

Demetrius conducted himself in a very tyrannical manner at Antioch, so that the inhabitants became greatly disaffected towards him; and on one occasion rose in arms, and would have destroyed him, had it not been for a body of Jewish soldiers, whom Jonathan sent to his aid, in consideration of a promise, that the garrison should be removed from the fortress in Jerusalem, which he was unable to reduce, either by violence or stratagem. These Jewish soldiers fell upon the inhabitants of Antioch; and, it is said, slew no less than a hundred thousand of them. Thus retaliating the massacres of the Syrians in the streets of Jerusalem, in former days.

A man called Tryphon, observing how odious Demetrius had become to his subjects by his tyranny, formed the design of placing one of Alexander's sons on the throne; or rather, as is commonly supposed, of availing himself of his name and claims, to ascend the throne. With this view, he went to Zabdiel the guardian of Alexander's children, and prevailed on him to commit Antiochus the son of Alexander into his hands, and brought the boy immediately to Syria, and proclaimed him king. On this, the soldiers who had been disbanded by Demetrius, and many others, flocked to his standard. He was soon in a condition to march against Demetrius, whom he vanquished in battle, driving him into Seleucia, and taking all his elephants. The result of this victory was, that Antioch fell into his hands; and he was placed on the throne. The people gave him the name of *Theos*, or *divine*.

The new king, anxious to secure Jonathan in his interest, immediately sent an embassy to him, with a confirmation of all the grants which he had received from former sovereigns, with the privilege of wearing purple, and the golden buckle. Simon was at the same time made commander of all the king's forces from the border of Syria to Egypt, on condition that the two brothers should declare for him; which they were very ready

to do, on account of the perfidious conduct of Demetrius, who had neither withdrawn the garrison from Jerusalem, nor released the country from tribute, according to his promise. The brothers, therefore, raised a large army in Palestine and Cœlo-Syria, and Jonathan, leaving Simon in Judea, went to Galilee, where he was very near being taken prisoner, by being drawn into an ambush: but his men rallying, after being put to flight, rescued their leader, and gained the victory. Bethsura, which had a strong garrison, was reduced, to the great comfort of the surrounding inhabitants, who had been long annoyed by the heathen soldiers.

SECTION XIX.

JONATHAN RENEWS HIS LEAGUE WITH THE ROMANS AND LACEDEMONIANS—HE AND SIMON CALL A GREAT COUNCIL OF THE NATION—TRYPHON TREACHEROUSLY MURDERS JONATHAN—SIMON SUCCEEDS HIM—ERECTS A FAMOUS MONUMENT FOR HIS BROTHERS—DEMOLISHES THE STRONG FORTRESS AT JERUSALEM—DEMETRIUS GOES AGAINST THE PARTHIANS, AND FALLS INTO THEIR HANDS—HIS LIFE IS SPARED BY MITHRIDATES, WHO GIVES HIM HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE—CLEOPATRA MARRIES ANTIOCHUS SIDETES, WHO INVADES SYRIA, AND OVERCOMES AND SLAYS TRYPHON—SIMON SENDS AN EMBASSY TO ROME TO OBTAIN THEIR CONFIRMATION OF HIS AUTHORITY—ANTIOCHUS SEEKS THE DESTRUCTION OF SIMON—BEASTLY CHARACTER OF PTOLEMY PHYSCON AND ATTALUS—SIMON TREACHEROUSLY MURDERED AT JERICHO.

JONATHAN being now relieved from all disquietude at home, sent ambassadors to Rome to renew the treaty which had been concluded with Judas. They were kindly and honourably received, and obtained all that they wished. The ambassadors, agreeably to their orders, on their return renewed the former league with the Lacedemonians, and other allies of the Jews in Greece. The general of Demetrius, who had been defeated in Galilee by Jonathan, returned with a greater force, but was again obliged to fly; and the two brothers brought the whole country under subjection to Antiochus.

When the country was freed from invading foes, Jonathan and Simon convened the great council of the nation to consult about repairing and fortifying Jerusalem, and other strong places in Judea. At this meeting it was agreed that the walls of the city should be repaired, and a new wall erected between the town and the castle, so as to prevent all intercourse between the garrison and the inhabitants; by which means it was hoped, that for want of supplies, they would before long be under the necessity of surrendering.

Tryphon, who had brought back the young king, supposed that the time was now come to execute his nefarious scheme of putting him to death, and seizing the crown for himself. But foreseeing that Jonathan would never countenance such villany,

he resolved to remove him out of the way, in the first place. He therefore marched into Judea with a strong force, but found Jonathan prepared to meet him at the head of forty thousand men. He therefore assumed the appearance of friendship, and informed Jonathan that the purpose of his coming was to put Ptolemais into his hands; and so deceived him by his specious pretexts, that he was induced to send away all his men except one thousand. With these he went to Ptolemais, to receive the city, which Tryphon had sworn to surrender to him; but no sooner was he within the walls, than he ordered the gates to be shut, and resolved to put Jonathan and his all men to the sword.

The Jews, greatly intimidated and distressed by the loss of their leader, appointed Simon to be their captain; who soon collected a formidable force, and marched to meet Tryphon, then on his way to besiege Jerusalem, and relieve the garrison. To Simon he pretended that his only reason for seizing Jonathan was because he owed the king a debt, which, if he would pay, his brother should be released. Simon saw through the deception, but lest any censure should light upon himself for not ransoming his brother, he raised the money and sent it to him. But this wicked wretch, instead of complying with his promise, put Jonathan to death. Thinking that the only obstacle to the accomplishment of his ambitious purpose was now removed, he finished by making way with Antiochus.

As soon as Simon heard of his brother's death, he sent and brought away his bones from Bascama, and buried them at Modin, in the sepulchre of his father; over which he built a splendid monument of marble. Near this monument he erected seven pyramids, one for his father, another for his mother, four for his brothers, and the seventh for himself. The architecture of this monument is said to have been very excellent, and as it was erected on an eminence near the seacoast, it served as a light-house to mariners. Josephus says that it was entire in his time, and considered an admirable piece of architecture. Eusebius, who lived two hundred years later, informs us that it was still standing when he wrote.

Tryphon, now very anxious to conciliate the Romans, sent them as a present, a golden image of victory, valued at ten thousand pieces of gold; hoping to be recognized as king of Syria. The Roman Senate accepted the present; but ordered the name of Antiochus, whom Tryphon had murdered, to be inscribed on the image, as if it had been received from him. Simon, also, sent ambassadors to Rome, after his brother's death, who were received with distinguished honour; and had all their former grants and promises renewed. The same ambassadors renewed their leagues with the other allies of the Jews, who lay in their way home.

The Jews who had joined the young king, in opposition to Demetrius, now felt disposed to return to his aid against Tryphon the usurper, who had perfidiously inflicted on them so deep an injury. Simon, therefore, sent an embassy to Demetrius, with a crown of gold. This aid was so much needed by Demetrius and so seasonable, that he not only confirmed Simon in the priesthood, and renewed all former grants, with an amnesty for all acts done against his government; but actually conferred the sovereignty of the country on Simon, by which means the land was freed from a foreign yoke. The Jews, therefore, from this time, instead of dating their contracts by the years of the Syrian kings, dated them by the years of Simon and his successors. Simon now made a progress through the land, reducing such fortresses as were garrisoned by the heathens, and fortifying those places which served for the defence of the country. He made Bethsura a depository of the munitions of war; and Joppa, the seaport of Jerusalem, it being the nearest place on the Mediterranean. Gazara, which had revolted on the death of Jonathan, he reduced, driving off the heathen garrison, and building a house there for himself.

In the year 142 B. C. the strong fortress at Jerusalem which overlooked the temple, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering for the want of provisions and other necessaries, by which means the inhabitants were delivered from a great and long continued grievance. That they might never again be subjected to a similar annoyance, Simon not only demolished the fortress, but proposed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to take away the hill itself on which it had been built. This proposal met with universal acceptance; and for three years they were engaged in this herculean labour. Simon, also, renewed and strengthened the fortifications of the temple; and built for himself and his attendants, a house within the circuit of the outer wall, which probably occupied the site where the tower called Antonia was afterwards erected. John, the son of Simon, afterwards called Hyrcanus, being a valiant man, and skilled in military matters, his father made him general of all the forces of Judea, and sent him to live at Gazara, as being a frontier town; and also, that he might be near Joppa, to superintend the works, which he was erecting there to render it a commodious place for commerce.

Demetrius found, this year, 141 B. C., a new enemy rising up against him in the east. The Parthians had extended their conquests from the Euphrates to the Indus; his friends in the eastern provinces therefore invited him to come over and secure his territory from the grasp of usurpers. In compliance with this invitation, Demetrius passed the Euphrates, leaving

Tryphon in possession of a considerable part of Syria, behind him. At first, he defeated the Parthians in many battles; but at length being drawn into a snare, he was taken prisoner by Mithridates, king of Parthia, and his whole army cut to pieces. By this event, the Parthian power was established in the east, and became a formidable enemy to all, even to the Romans. Mithridates was the fourth in descent from Arsaces, who, by his revolt, laid the foundation of this empire. He extended his conquests far into India, and to the west as far as the Euphrates. Having got Demetrius into his power, he carried him about, through all the provinces which formerly belonged to him, to let the people see the man in whom they had confided for deliverance from his power. But he treated him in a manner suitable to his dignity; and after a while, gave him his own daughter in marriage, though he still retained him as a captive.

Simon having received from the king of Syria the sovereignty of the nation, all that was necessary to make him a lawful king was the free and explicit consent of the people; and this was given in a general congregation of the priests, elders, and people. Here it was agreed that the office of high-priest, and the supreme power of the nation, should be settled on Simon, and his family, for ever. A copy of this act they caused to be engraved on tablets of brass, and hung up in the sanctuary; and the original writing was laid up among the archives belonging to the treasury of the temple. From this time Simon assumed the state, style, and authority of a royal prince; and all public acts were in his name.

Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius, when she heard of his captivity, and of his marriage to the daughter of Mithridates, sent to his brother Antiochus Sidetes, and offered him her hand and the crown of Syria, if he would come and assist her against Tryphon: which offer he gladly accepted.

In the year 139 B. C., Antiochus Sidetes wrote a letter to Simon, king of Judea, complaining of the usurpation of Tryphon; and to gain him over to his interests, made him many promises. (Mac. xv. 2—9.) Having landed in Syria with a large body of mercenaries, he marched against Tryphon, whose soldiers having become much disaffected towards him, deserted in great numbers, and joined the standard of Antiochus. The forces of the latter, by the accessions which he received in Syria, soon amounted to more than a hundred thousand men. Tryphon, not being able to withstand such a force, fled from place to place, until he came to Apamia, where he was taken and put to death.

Simon thought it would add much to the stability of his government if he could get the Romans to confirm him in his

authority. He therefore sent an embassy to Rome, which was received very favourably, as all former embassies from the Jews had been. In compliance with their request, letters were written to all the kings whose territories lay near Judea, informing them that the Jews were the allies and friends of the Romans, and forbidding all persons to molest or injure them. But the letters to the king of Syria, being addressed to Demetrius, who was then in captivity, they were of no service to the Jews, for as soon as Antiochus was settled on the throne, he sought an opportunity to quarrel with Simon. In pursuance of this design, he sent an ambassador to Simon, to demand the restoration of Gazara, Joppa, and the fortress of Jerusalem—or five hundred talents in lieu of them—and five hundred more for injuries done in other parts of his dominions. Simon answered that he was willing to pay one hundred talents for Joppa and Gazara, but as for his other demands, the places belonged to the inheritance of his forefathers, which had for a while been unjustly taken from them, but which he was now resolved to keep.

Antiochus, on hearing this answer, immediately sent Cœndebus into Judea with an army to enforce his demands. Simon, now too old to take the field himself, sent his two sons, John and Judas, with twenty thousand men, to meet the Syrian army. A battle was fought not far from Modin, in which the Syrians were defeated, and two thousand of them slain. They were pursued as far as Azotus, where John took their towers of defence and burned them, and then returned to Jerusalem in triumph with his brother.

Two greater brutes in human shape, perhaps, never appeared in the world at one time, than Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt, and Attalus Philometor, king of Pergamus. Folly and madness were never more completely exemplified, than in the conduct of them both. The former either killed or banished all the friends of his late brother, and so oppressed and terrified the inhabitants of Alexandria, that most of them fled to other countries, leaving the city almost destitute. To supply their places, he invited strangers of all sorts to come and occupy the vacant habitations. By the dispersion of men of letters, and of artizans, the countries of Greece and Asia Minor were filled with learning of various kinds; for after the conquests of Alexander, literature flourished nowhere so much as in Egypt, under the fostering patronage of the Ptolemies.

About this time, the Romans sent ambassadors to visit all the countries in alliance with them; a prudent measure, frequently adopted. Of this embassy was Publius Scipio Africanus, Sp. Mummius, and L. Metellus, who made Egypt the first object of their attention. At Alexandria they were received with great honour, and every luxury was provided for

them; but their simple republican manners formed a complete contrast with the luxurious effeminacy of the Egyptians. Scipio, then the greatest man at Rome, had in his train only one friend and five servants. In the midst of the most sumptuous entertainments provided expressly for them, they refused to take more than what was necessary for sustenance and refreshment.

Physson the king was at this time one of the most disgusting sights that could be seen. He was naturally deformed, very short of stature, and very thick, with a belly so prominent, that from this circumstance his name was derived. But to render himself still more odious, he wore a dress entirely transparent, by which means the turpitude of his deformed body was rendered altogether visible.

In the year 135 B. C., Simon, making a progress through Judea, to settle every thing on a proper footing, came to Jericho with his two sons, Mattathias and Judas, where he was invited to an entertainment by Ptolemy, son of Abubus, who had married one of his daughters. But this perfidious wretch, aiming to make himself master of all Judea, and having, it is supposed, concerted the plan with Antiochus Sidetes, had concealed assassins in his house, who at a concerted signal rushed into the room, and slew the venerable old man and his two sons. It was also a part of the design to murder John, who was governor of Gazara; but he had received early intelligence of what was done at Jericho, so that when the persons commissioned to murder him arrived, he fell on them and cut them off. Then, hastening to Jerusalem, he secured the city and the mountain of the temple against those sent by Ptolemy to take possession of them. John was now declared high-priest and prince of the Jews, who took measures immediately to provide for the security of the country. Ptolemy, the traitor, fled, but what became of him afterwards, is not recorded in history.

SECTION XX.

ANTIOCHUS INVADES JUDEA—BESIEGES HYRCANUS IN JERUSALEM—TERMS OF PEACE—FAMILY OF JOSEPHUS—BOOK OF ECCLESIASTICUS—ANTIOCHUS SIDETES MARCHES AN ARMY INTO THE EAST, WHERE HE IS ATTACKED AND SLAIN BY PIRATES—HYRCANUS SEIZES THE OPPORTUNITY OF DELIVERING HIS COUNTRY FROM SUBJECTION TO THE SYRIAN YOKE—DEMETRIUS RESTORED TO HIS THRONE—INVADES EGYPT—IS CALLED BACK BY A REVOLT AT ANTIOCH—PTOLEMY RAISES UP A YOUTH WHO PRETENDS TO BE THE SON OF ALEXANDER BALAS—HE RAISES AN ARMY AND DEFEATS DEMETRIUS, WHO IS SLAIN AT TYRE—ALEXANDER ZEBINA REIGNS OVER SYRIA—VAST SWARM OF LOCUSTS—ZEBINA DEFEATED AND PUT TO DEATH.

ANTIOCHUS, the king, on hearing of the death of Simon and his sons, immediately marched with a powerful army into Judea, and overran the country. Hyrcanus being driven from the field by a superior force, shut himself up in Jerusalem, where

he was besieged by the whole Syrian army, which Antiochus divided into seven camps, that the city might be entirely surrounded. But the besieged defended themselves valiantly, and often sallied out to burn the engines and works of the assailants. To render it more difficult for those within the walls to hold communication with the country, Antiochus caused two large and deep ditches to be drawn round the city. Hyrcanus, to lessen the pressure of famine, put without the gates, all such persons as were unable to be of any service within the walls; but by means of the ditches they could not make their escape, and he was obliged to take them in again.

When the time for celebrating the feast of tabernacles approached, Hyrcanus sent to Antiochus requesting that there might be a truce, during the festival; which he not only granted, but himself sent into the city beasts for sacrifice; which act of generosity gave Hyrcanus such an opinion of the character of the king, that he sent again to sue for terms of peace. A treaty was accordingly concluded. The conditions were, that Jerusalem should be dismantled; and that for Joppa and other towns held out of Judea, five hundred talents should be paid. Antiochus wished to have the fortress in Jerusalem rebuilt and garrisoned again; but with this Hyrcanus would not comply.

When this treaty was made, the Jews were reduced to the last extremity, and could not have held out much longer. Their enemies were urgent with Antiochus, not to make peace with them; but utterly to destroy the hated nation. And it is admitted, not only by Josephus, but Diodorus Siculus, that it was entirely owing to the generosity and clemency of this prince that the whole nation of the Jews was not extirpated.

Three hundred talents of the sum laid upon Hyrcanus was paid upon the spot; for the remainder time was given. Josephus tells a very improbable story, respecting the manner in which the money was obtained by Hyrcanus. He says he robbed the sepulchre of David, and took from thence three thousand talents. If there is any truth in this account, it must have been, that many rich men, in the times of trouble which the nation had experienced, hid their treasures in this sepulchre, to preserve them from the rapacity of their enemies; for certainly these treasures could not have remained there untouched, from the time of David, and especially during the captivity. About this time, Mattathias, a priest of the course of Joarib, married a daughter of Jonathan, the late high-priest and prince of the Jews; of whom was born Mattathias Curtis; and from him another Mattathias, whose son, Josephus, was the father of a third Mattathias; of whom was born Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, in the first year of the emperor

Caligula, which answers to the thirty-seventh of the Christian era.

In the year 133 B. C. died Attalos Philometor, the mad king of Pergamus, who left all his dominions, by his will, to the Romans, which they did not hesitate to take possession of without delay.

In the year 132 B. C., Jesus the son of Sirach, a Jew of Jerusalem, came into Egypt, and translated out of Hebrew into Greek, for the use of the Jews, who spoke that language, the book of Jesus his grandfather; the same which we now have in the Apocrypha, by the name of *Ecclesiasticus*.

In the year 131 B. C., Antiochus Sidetes marched a vast army over the Euphrates, under pretence of delivering his brother from captivity, but in reality to recover the eastern provinces of the Syrian empire, which had been wrested from its princes. The Parthian king, Phraates, was overthrown by him in many battles. On this expedition he was accompanied by John Hyrcanus, prince of the Jews, who returned home at the end of the year with much glory.

In the year 130 B. C., Antiochus having remained in the east with his army, was obliged to disperse them in places remote from each other, for the sake of subsistence. Phraates, having ascertained how the Syrians were scattered, formed a plan of a simultaneous attack upon their several encampments. Antiochus hastened to the help of those who lay nearest to him, but was overpowered and slain; and of that vast multitude, said to have been three hundred thousand, who crossed the Euphrates with him, not one returned to Syria to tell the doleful tidings. Of this army, however, more than one-half were butlers, bakers, cooks, confectioners, and others who only ministered to the luxury of the soldiers. As soon as Antiochus had crossed the Euphrates, the king of Parthia released Demetrius, his brother, and sent him back to claim the kingdom in Syria, hoping thus to withdraw him from the east: but upon obtaining this complete victory over the Syrian army, he sent messengers after him, to arrest him and bring him back. Demetrius, however, had made so much haste, that he had passed the Euphrates before they arrived. Phraates took up the body of Antiochus from among the slain, and enclosing it in a silver coffin, sent it into Syria, to be honourably buried among his friends: and finding among the captives a daughter of the king, he was so smitten with her beauty, that he took her for his wife.

After the death of Antiochus, Hyrcanus seized the favourable opportunity of rendering his country entirely independent of Syria. He also took possession of several strong places

beyond his own borders, as Medaba, Samega, and several others. From this time, Judea was no more subject to the kings of Syria. Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple, which was built by Sanballat, on mount Gerizim. The Samaritans, however, still offered sacrifices on an altar there, as they have continued to do unto this day.

In the year 129 B. C., Hyrcanus, having conquered the Idumeans, gave them their choice, to leave the country, or to embrace the Jewish religion; they chose the latter, and became incorporated with the Jewish church and nation.

The Parthians, in the war with the Syrians, having called in the aid of the Scythians, these were so much pleased with the country, that as soon as the war was over, they began to seize upon it for themselves. And now Phraates was guilty of a second folly; for having taken, in the late victory, a multitude of Grecian mercenaries, he put arms into their hands and employed them against the Scythians. But these veteran soldiers, resenting the cruel treatment received from the Parthians, went generally over to the Scythians; and having with them ravaged the country, then returned home.

Hyrcanus next sent an embassy to Rome, to renew the treaty made with his father Simon, to which the Roman Senate readily consented. And as Antiochus Sidetes had made war upon the Jews, contrary to the provisions of that treaty, and had exacted from them a heavy tribute for Gazara and Joppa, and by besieging Jerusalem, had forced them to a disadvantageous peace, it was now resolved, that those cities should be restored to them, free from all tribute: and that the Syrians should be accountable for all damages which they might have incurred, while in their possession. And, moreover, it was ordered, that the expenses of the Jewish ambassadors should be paid out of the public treasury.

A war having broken out in Egypt, between Cleopatra the wife of Philometor, and Physcon, the latter was, for a while, driven from Egypt, and took refuge in Cyprus; but collecting an army, he afterwards defeated the forces of Cleopatra; on which she sent to Demetrius, now restored to the throne of Syria, to come to her aid, promising him the possession of the kingdom.

Demetrius readily complied with this invitation, and invaded Egypt; but while he was absent, a revolt was raised against him at Antioch, on account of his tyrannical behaviour. Cleopatra, being now disappointed in her expectation of aid from Demetrius, whose affairs required his presence at home, took all her treasures, and putting them into a ship, sailed to Ptolemais, where her daughter Cleopatra resided. This daughter had first married Alexander Balas, the king of Syria, and afterwards

Demetrius, in her father's life-time; but when Demetrius was taken prisoner, in Parthia, she was married to his brother Antiochus; and after his death returned again to the bed of Demetrius.

Ptolemy now returned to the throne of Egypt, and out of resentment for the hostile conduct of Demetrius, raised up a youth called Alexander Zebina, who he pretended was the son of Alexander Balas; and sent him into Syria, where his pretensions were countenanced by many, out of hatred to Demetrius. In a short time he was strong enough to meet Demetrius in the field. A battle was fought near Damascus, in which Demetrius being defeated, fled to Cleopatra, at Ptolemais. But she being not fully reconciled to him for marrying Rhodoguna, the Parthian, refused to admit him into the city; on which he was obliged to fly to Tyre, where he was slain. Zebina now reigned over the greater part of Syria; Cleopatra being permitted to hold in her possession a certain part. John Hyrcanus, who was a politic man, formed a close alliance with Zebina, by which means he enlarged and strengthened his territory.

In the year 125 B. C., a vast swarm of locusts came into Africa, and destroyed all the verdure, and fruits of the earth, wherever they came; and being driven into the sea by the wind, on the coasts of Lybia and Cyrene, and carried on shore by the tide, they occasioned such a plague in those regions, as carried off, according to report, above eight hundred thousand persons.

Seleucus, the son of Cleopatra queen of Syria, being now twenty years of age, aspired to the crown of Persia, with which his mother was so much displeased that she murdered him with her own hands; but finding that she needed some one to bear the royal title, whose claim would be respected, she sent to Athens for Antiochus, her other son, who was then pursuing his education, intending that his power should be merely nominal, as she was ambitious to rule the country herself. This young man, who was not more than twenty years of age, was declared, on his arrival, king of Syria. To distinguish him from others of the same name, he has been called Grypus; though Josephus calls him Philometor; and the name Epiphanes is on his coins.

Zebina, not discovering a disposition to hold Syria as a dependent of the crown of Egypt, according to the wishes of Physcon, who had set him up, he was not permitted by the latter to retain the quiet possession of his power; for he, entering into an agreement with Cleopatra, married his daughter Tryphœna to Grypus her son, and sent an army into Syria. Zebina being overthrown in battle, fled to Antioch, where, being detected in an attempt to rob the temple of Jupiter, he

was expelled from the city; and wandering about for a while, was at length put to death.

SECTION XXI.

REMARKABLE SEASON—CLEOPATRA DIES BY A POTION PREPARED FOR HER SON—DISTURBANCES IN SYRIA—JOHN HYRCANUS GOES ON PROSPEROUSLY—IS OPOSED BY THE PHARISEES—ORIGIN OF THIS SECT—HYRCANUS JOINS THE SADDUCEES—HIS DEATH—THE CASTLE OF BARIS.

THE year 121 B. C., (L. Opimius and I. Fab. Maximus being consuls at Rome,) was distinguished for the excellency of its seasons, and value of its productions. The wine made this year was so excellent, that some of it was kept for two hundred years, and is celebrated by the poets under the name of the Opimian wine. The next year, 120 B. C., Grypus having attained to manhood, began to exercise the power of a king, as he had before assumed the name; on which, Cleopatra was so much displeased, that she resolved to dispatch him, as she had done his brother; and, accordingly, prepared a poisonous potion, which he made her drink herself. Nor did it fail of its effect; for in a little time, this ambitious and wicked woman was a corpse, by the draught which she had prepared for her own son.

In the year 117 B. C., Ptolemy Physcon having reigned twenty-nine years after the death of his brother, died at Alexandria. His vile character has already been given. He was succeeded by his son Lathyrus, as he is commonly called in history; though the name assumed by himself, was Soter.

Grypus had been married to Cleopatra, but he was forced to put her away and take Tryphœna her sister; on which the former married Cyczenus, the half brother of Grypus. This young man was brought up in private, to preserve him from death, because an object of jealousy to Grypus; so that he was under the necessity of fighting for the crown as his only means of safety. But being defeated at Antioch, he fled, leaving Cleopatra in an asylum. Her sister, however, would not be satisfied until she was destroyed, although her husband entreated for her life. But her death, which took place in the temple whither she had fled, was not unavenged; for her husband, collecting another army, was more successful in a second battle, in which he obtained the victory, and got Tryphœna into his hands, whom he sacrificed to the ghost of his departed wife, putting her to a cruel death. Grypus and Cyczenus at length divided the Syrian empire between them, the former residing at Antioch, the latter at Damascus.

John Hyrcanus, while these disturbances existed in Syria,

was increasing in power and wealth. He found that he had little to fear from either of the kings of Syria, and therefore sent two of his sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, to besiege Samaria. The inhabitants sent for Antiochus Cycizenus to bring them assistance; who, coming with a great army, was vanquished by them, and with difficulty escaped alive.

The two brothers, after the gaining of this victory, returned to the siege of Samaria, and pressed it so hard, that the besieged sent a second time to Cycizenus; but he, not having force enough of his own, sent to Lathyrus, king of Egypt, and obtained from him six thousand auxiliaries, much to the dissatisfaction of Cleopatra, his mother; for she had then at court Chelcias and Ananias, the sons of Onias, prime favourites, and she did not wish to disoblige them. These auxiliaries being joined by the Syrians from Damascus, wasted the open country; but at length they were obliged to withdraw, and several Syrian towns fell into the hands of the Jews; and Samaria, after a siege of one year, was obliged to surrender. The city was utterly demolished by Hyrcanus, not out of hatred to the Samaritans, as some have said, for as we have before seen, they were all gone from the place, and its present inhabitants were of Macedonian descent. The siege of Samaria occurred 109 B. C.

John Hyrcanus now became master of all Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, and being freed from all foreign enemies, enjoyed a high degree of prosperity; but in the latter part of his life, met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a sect which had recently sprung up, and were distinguished for their pride, authority, and ostentatious display of strictness in religion. They are now first heard of in history, but they must have been in existence some time before, as they were at this time so numerous and powerful as to be formidable even to a prince of so decisive a character as John Hyrcanus. They were probably a branch of the people called *Chasidim*, or *Assideans*, who rigidly followed the traditions of the fathers, and received their name, *Pharisees*, from a Hebrew word, which signifies, *to separate*; on account of their separating themselves from the rest of the people, on pretence of their not being holy enough for their society. As this sect was always held in veneration by the people, on account of their sanctity, Hyrcanus wished to gain them over to his own interests; for he himself had been brought up in their discipline, and professing himself to be of their number, had always patronized them to the utmost of his power. He, therefore, invited all the leaders of the sect to a feast, and then addressing them, said, that his purpose ever had been to serve God, and do justly towards man, according to the doctrine of the Pharisees; but knowing the frailty of men, he wished now to hear from them, whether they had observed any

thing defective in his conduct, that he might amend it. All united in giving him unqualified praise, except an old austere man, by the name of Eleazar, who sternly said, "If you would approve yourself a just man, quit the high-priesthood, and content yourself with the civil government." Upon being asked why he gave this advice, he said, "Because, we have it from good authority, that your mother was a captive, in consequence of which you are incompetent to hold the office, by the law of Moses."

Hyrcanus was much displeased, but receiving it as the ill saying of an individual, he intended to take no further notice of it. But Jonathan, a Sadducee, and an intimate friend, insisted that Eleazar merely expressed the sentiment of the whole sect; and suggested that this could be put to the test by convening them again, and requiring them to declare what punishment this man deserved, for reviling God's high-priest. Hyrcanus pursued this method, and to his astonishment, he heard from them that defamation was not a capital crime, and could only be punished by scourging, or some inferior penalty. Hyrcanus was so much offended with the whole sect, especially as his mother's fame was called in question, that from that day he forsook them, and went and joined the Sadducees. Hyrcanus did not long survive this change of sect; for the next year he died, having held the supreme power of Jerusalem twenty-nine years after the death of Simon. This event occurred in the year 107 B. C. He built the castle called Baris, on a steep rock, where afterwards all the members of the Asmonean family resided, and where the robes of the high-priest were laid up—the same spot on which the castle of Antonia was afterwards erected by Herod, cased with polished marble, so that it was impossible for any one to climb to the top.

SECTION XXII.

HYRCANUS SUCCEEDED BY ARISTOBULUS, HIS SON, WHO FORCES THE ITUREANS TO EMBRACE THE JEWISH RELIGION, AS HIS FATHER HAD THE IDUMEANS—SLAYS HIS BROTHER ANTIGONUS, BUT REPENTS AND DIES IN GREAT AGONY—STORY OF JUDAS THE ESSENE—ORIGIN OF THIS SECT—ALEXANDER SUCCEEDS HIS BROTHER, ARISTOBULUS—SIEGE OF PTOLEMAIS—DEFEAT OF ALEXANDER BY LATHYRUS—CIVIL WAR—ANNA THE PROPHETESS—DEATH OF ALEXANDER JANNEUS.

JOHN HYRCANUS, at his death, left five sons; Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander, and Absalom: the name of one of them, the fourth in order, is nowhere mentioned. Aristobulus, being the oldest, succeeded his father, both as high-priest and civil ruler; and as soon as he found himself settled in authority, he put a diadem on his head, and assumed the title of king; being the first elevated to this honour after the Babylonish captivity.

His mother by the will of Hyrcanus, claimed the sovereignty while she lived; but Aristobulus cast her into prison, and there caused her to be starved to death. His brother Antigonus, was, for a while, his favourite; but his other brothers he shut up in prison, and kept them there as long as he lived.

Cleopatra being much displeased with her son Lathyrus, found means to expel him from the throne, and from Egypt; and calling from Cyprus her youngest son, Alexander, placed him on the throne; forcing Lathyrus to take Cyprus in place of the kingdom of Egypt.

Aristobulus, when settled in his authority at home, made war on the Itureans, and compelled them to embrace the Jewish religion, as Hyrcanus had the Idumeans before. For he required them, either to forsake their country, and seek new habitations, or to become proselytes; and in this manner the Asmonean princes dealt with all the countries which they conquered. Iturea lay to the north-east of Judea, and was originally a part of Cœlo-Syria. It seems to have received its name from Hur, one of the sons of Ishmael; who, in our English version, is called Jetur; (Gen. xxv. 15.) Aristobulus, returning home sick from Iturea, left his brother Antigonus with the army, to finish the war which he had begun. This country is the same which is sometimes called Auranitis.

While Aristobulus lay sick, his queen, and some of his courtiers, were continually insinuating things to the disadvantage of Antigonus, his favourite brother. When Antigonus had completed the war, he returned in triumph to Jerusalem, and went immediately to the temple, to pay his devotions there, without putting off his armour or changing his dress. This was represented to Aristobulus, now sick in bed, as a very suspicious circumstance. On which he sent word to Antigonus to come to him unarmed; and having stationed soldiers along a subterranean gallery, through which he must pass, he gave them orders, if Antigonus came unarmed, not to interrupt him, but if he came with his armour on, to fall upon him and put him to death. The queen having heard these orders, bribed the messenger to tell him, that the king wished him to come to him completely armed, that the queen might see his new suit of armour, of which she had heard so much. Accordingly, Antigonus presented himself armed, when the guards, agreeably to their orders, fell upon him and slew him. No sooner was this murder perpetrated, than Aristobulus repented it grievously. His murder of his own mother now also rushing upon his conscience, occasioned such perturbation, that it brought on a vomiting of blood. The servant in attendance, in carrying out the basin of blood, stumbled and spilled it on the very spot where Antigonus had been slain; which accident affected him so

exceedingly, that he could no longer restrain his feelings, but bitterly accused himself of both these unnatural murders. So great was his agony, that, in conjunction with the disease, it soon brought him to a dreadful and premature death, after having reigned no more than one year.

Josephus relates a remarkable story respecting one Judas, an Essene, which, though it has not a little of the marvellous in its composition, it may not be improper briefly to state. This man, it seems, pretended to be a prophet, and had predicted that Antigonus should die at the tower of Straton, on that very day on which he returned to Jerusalem; but on seeing him come into the temple he was filled with indignation, thinking that his prophecy would fail of its accomplishment; for Straton's tower was two days journey from Jerusalem, on the seacoast. After the murder of Antigonus, however, he found upon inquiry, that the tower immediately over the spot where he was killed, was called by the same name. This, I believe, is the first mention of the sect of the Essenes, by Josephus. They were devoted to an ascetic life, and inhabited remote and desert places, far from the bustle of worldly commerce, and from the promiscuous intercourse of men. Their origin and history is buried, even in more obscurity than those of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and though largely treated of by Philo, and Josephus in other parts of his work, are not once mentioned in the New Testament. The most probable occasion of this sect was, the long and severe persecutions of the Jews, in consequence of which, many, for the sake of a good conscience, fled far into the recesses of the wilderness, where they devoted themselves to acts of piety and contemplation. Being shut out from the service of the temple and the synagogue, they formed a rule of life, according to which external ceremonies were little depended on; which mode of religious life they were so much delighted with, that they continued to pursue the same, after the necessity which first drove them into the wilderness had ceased to exist. Immediately upon the death of Aristobulus, his wife Salome released his three brothers, who had been kept in prison while he lived; and Alexander surnamed Jannæus, the eldest, took the kingdom. His next brother, having made some attempt to supplant him, was put to death; but Absalom being contented to live a private life, enjoyed his favour and protection, and lived for forty years after this; and when Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, he was made a prisoner.

The wars between Grypus who reigned at Antioch, and Cycizenus who had Damascus as the seat of his kingdom, were incessant. This furnished an opportunity for many towns belonging to the Syrian empire to declare themselves indepen-

dent. Others was seized upon by tyrants, who reigned without responsibility to either of the kings of Syria. This occurred in regard to Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, Gaza, Gadara, Straton's Tower, &c.

The year 106 B. C. was famous for the birth of two noble Romans, whose names fill a large space in the history of after time. The one was Cn. Pompey, the other Marcus Tullius Cicero.

Alexander, as soon as he found himself firmly established in authority, besieged Ptolemais. The inhabitants sent for aid to Lathyrus, now king of Cyprus; but on his arrival, they were as much afraid of him as of the Jews, and refused him admittance into their city; on which, he accepted the invitation of Zoilus the petty tyrant of Gaza, to join him in laying waste the country of Judea. Alexander now offered Lathyrus a large sum, if he would deliver up Zoilus; to which he consented; but before the treaty was executed, he found that Alexander was not acting with good faith, for he was at the same time treating with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, about driving him out of Palestine. He, therefore, broke off the negotiation, and having now determined to do him all the harm he could, left a part of his army to besiege Ptolemais, while with the rest, he invaded the territories of this prince, and took several towns in Galilee, with many captives. Alexander now marched to meet Lathyrus, with an army of fifty thousand men. A great battle was fought between them, near the banks of Jordan; in which Alexander was completely defeated, and lost thirty thousand of his men. Lathyrus pursued the victory to the uttermost; and after the battle, finding the villages full of women and children, he slaughtered them as sheep, and put their limbs into great cauldrons, as if preparing for a feast.

The affairs of Alexander, after this defeat, must have been in a ruined condition, had not Cleopatra come to his aid against her own son; for she feared if he conquered Phenicia and Judea, he would become strong enough to recover Egypt. She, therefore, sent an army into Phenicia, under Chilcias and Ananias, the two favourite Jews already mentioned.

Ananias expected to be received into Ptolemais, and being refused, laid siege to the town; while Chilcias pursued Lathyrus into Cælo-Syria, where he lost his life. Lathyrus now marched his army directly into Egypt, expecting that in the absence of his mother and the best troops, there would be little resistance made. But he was repulsed and driven back to Phenicia, where he took up his winter quarters at Gaza.

Cleopatra continued the siege of Ptolemais until it fell into her hands, after which she would have seized on Alexandria, and

brought the country under the Egyptian yoke, had it not been for the sage advice of Ananias; who alleged, that this would prejudice the world against her, and unite all the Jews in the world in opposition to her. Alexander was, therefore, permitted to return to Jerusalem in safety.

Ptolemy Lathyrus finding it in vain to continue any longer in Palestine, as his mother thwarted all his schemes, returned to Cyprus; but he carried on a negotiation with Cycizenus to aid in recovering Egypt, which becoming known to Cleopatra, she negotiated with his rival Grypus; and to engage him to declare war, she gave him her daughter Selene, whom she had taken away from Lathyrus. A new war therefore broke out between the two kings, which prevented the invasion of Egypt.

Ptolemy Alexander, observing how his mother acted towards his brothers, and that nothing could stand before her ambition, fled from Egypt. Nor was it without great solicitation, that he consented to return; for the Egyptians would not permit Cleopatra to exercise the sovereignty in her own name.

Alexander, 102 B. C., marched an army beyond Jordan, where he took Gadara and Amathus; but Theodorus, prince of Philadelphia, collecting a large force, fell suddenly on him, overthrew him with the slaughter of ten thousand men, and not only recovered his own treasure, but took all Alexander's baggage. The Pharisees, who had become enemies to all the family of Hyrcanus, were especially inimical to Alexander; and having great influence with the people, soon rendered them disaffected to his government.

In the year 97 B. C., Alexander, after a long and destructive siege, took Gaza, which was delivered up to him by treachery. At first he showed clemency to the vanquished; but when he found the place completely in his power, he let loose his soldiers to plunder and kill at their own pleasure. This was in resentment for the injury which he had sustained in consequence of the Gazeans calling in Lathyrus to their aid, against him. In this same year, 97 B. C., died Grypus king of Syria, by the treachery of one of his dependents, named Heracleon. He left five sons—Seleucus, Antiochus, Philip, Demetrius Euchurus, and Antiochus Dionysius.

Ptolemy Apion died 96 B. C., and willed his kingdom of Cyrene to the Romans, which they would not receive; but gave freedom to the people, which, however, only served to bring them under the power of petty tyrants, who seized on particular cities, and subjected them to a more cruel bondage than they had endured before. Cycizenus, on the death of Grypus, seized on Antioch, and endeavoured to make himself sovereign of the whole empire; but Seleucus took possession of many

cities, and drew together great forces, to assert his right to his father's dominions.

In the year 95 B. C., Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser, of whom mention is made, Luke ii. 36, was married to her husband, and from this time, lived with him seven years; when, on his death, she became a widow, in which state she continued fourscore years. Alexander, while officiating this year, 95 B. C., at the feast of tabernacles, was openly insulted by the people, who publicly reproached him, calling him slave, and pelting him with citrons, which so enraged him, that he fell upon them with his soldiers, and slew six thousand men. The disaffection of the people and the insult publicly offered, were owing to the instigation of the Pharisees, who could lead the people as they would.

In the year 94 B. C., Alexander marched against the Arabians, and brought the inhabitants of Moab and Gilead under his dominions. Seleucus having collected a large force about him, Cyczenus went out to attack him, but was overthrown in battle, taken prisoner, and put to death. By this event, Seleucus became master of the whole Persian empire, but could not long retain it; for Antiochus Eusebes, the son of Cyczenus, having collected an army of his father's old soldiers, overthrew Seleucus, who being forced to flee to Mopsuesta, in Cilicia, was there burnt to death by the inhabitants. The brothers of Seleucus endeavoured to avenge his death on the inhabitants of Mopsuesta, but on their return were met by Eusebes; and Antiochus, in attempting to swim the Orontes, was drowned. Philip having escaped, and collected large forces, the contest for the Syrian empire now lay between him and Eusebes.

Eusebes, to strengthen himself in the kingdom, married Selene, the widow of Grypus, at which Lathyrus, whose wife she first was, being offended, sent for Demetrius the fourth son of Grypus, and made him king of Damascus. The contest between Philip and Eusebes prevented either of them from interposing. When the forces of these rivals came to an engagement, Eusebes was defeated, and was obliged to flee to Parthia.

Alexander, ever fond of military expeditions, marched into Gaulonitis, a district of country on the east of the lake Gennesareth, and there engaged in battle with Obedas an Arabian king; by whom he was led into an ambush and lost most of his men. The Jews, when he returned to Jerusalem, were in rebellion against him. A civil war now ensued which lasted for six years, by which the country was exceedingly wasted.

In the year 89 B. C., Cleopatra was plotting to put her son Alexander to death, but he being aware of her designs, pre-

vented it by putting her to death. The Egyptians understanding that she fell by her own son, could not endure his presence among them; and banishing him from the country, recalled Lathyrus, and replaced him on the throne of Egypt. Alexander soon after perished near Cyprus, in a battle at sea. The civil war continued to rage between Alexander and the Jews; and the latter not having command of soldiers and treasures, sent for aid to Demetrius Eucherus; but when he approached, the very people who sent for him turned against him.

In the year 88 B. C., Anna, the prophetess, being left a widow, went into the temple, where she remained day and night, serving God with fasting and prayers, for eighty-four years. The civil war between Alexander and the Jews still raged; and although he was generally successful, he could bring them to no terms.

During the year 87 B. C., the civil war raged more violently than ever. In a decisive battle, Alexander inflicted a terrible blow upon his enemies, and shut up those who remained, in Bethsura. In the year 86 B. C. the place was taken. He then carried eight hundred of the principal persons to Jerusalem, where he caused them all to be crucified in one day, and their wives and children to be slain before their eyes, while hanging on the cross. To enjoy this scene the more, he had a feast prepared for himself, his wives, and his concubines, near the place of execution, whence the whole scene was visible. This shocking cruelty obtained for him the name of *Thracian*. Thus ended this rebellion, which cost the Jews about fifty thousand lives.

In the year 84 B. C., Pella and Dia, beyond Jordan, were taken by Alexander.

The Syrians, worn out with the continual wars between the princes of the east and Seleucus, resolved to call in some foreign prince, and place him over them. Accordingly, they sent for Tigranes, king of Armenia, who reigned over Syria eighteen years.

In the years 83 and 82 B. C., Alexander Janneus extended his conquests in the country beyond Jordan, taking Gaulana, Seleucia, and the strong fortress of Gamala. After this, he gave himself up to luxury and drunkenness.

In the year 81 B. C., Thebes, in Upper Egypt, was taken by Lathyrus, and so ruined and demolished that it never afterwards made any figure; soon after which he died, having reigned in all, thirty-six years. He was succeeded by Berenice, his only legitimate child. She was also called Cleopatra, as were all the queens of Egypt; just as all their kings were called Ptolemy.

In the year 80 B. C., Alexander, son of him who murdered his mother, came to Egypt to claim the kingdom, and a compromise was made, by giving him Cleopatra to wife. But in a few days he put her to death, and reigned alone, forty years.

In the year 79 B. C., Alexander Janneus, being affected with a quartan ague which had hung upon him for a long time, thought he would try the effect of exercise and exertion. He, therefore, marched over Jordan, and besieged Razaba, a castle in the country of Gerasans, where, labouring too hard, he brought on a paroxysm of his disorder, of which he died in the camp.

PART VI.

FROM THE CONQUEST OF JUDEA BY THE ROMANS UNTIL THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

SECTION I.

ALEXANDER BEQUEATHS THE KINGDOM OF JUDEA TO ALEXANDRA HIS WIFE—COUNSELS HER TO CONCILIATE THE PHARISEES—ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY OF THE HERODS—DISPUTES ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD—POMPEY COMES INTO THE EAST—HIS HEAD QUARTERS AT DAMASCUS—THE QUARREL BETWEEN ARISTOBULUS AND HYRCANUS BROUGHT BEFORE HIM—IMPRUDENT CONDUCT OF ARISTOBULUS—POMPEY IS RECEIVED INTO JERUSALEM—ENTERS THE SANCTUARY—PLACES HYRCANUS IN THE OFFICE OF HIGH-PRIEST—ORDERS THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM TO BE DEMOLISHED—LEAVES A GARRISON IN THE CITY, AND DEPARTS.

ALEXANDER left two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but bequeathed the government to his wife Alexandra, with the power to appoint whichever of his sons she pleased, to succeed her. She being with him on this expedition, when she found that he was near his end, was full of apprehensions of the dangers which surrounded her. But he called her to him, and advised her to conceal his death until the castle was taken; then to march back to Jerusalem, in triumph, and to call together the leaders of the sect of the Pharisees, whose enmity had embittered his life, and to lay his corpse before them, that they might cast it out with indignity, or treat it as they pleased; and to promise them, that she would undertake nothing without their advice. All this she exactly followed, and the effect was what he foresaw. Their hatred for Alexander was turned into veneration, and they became the warm friends of Alexandra. When she had settled herself firmly on the throne, she made her eldest son Hyrcanus, high-priest; and to gratify her new friends, the Pharisees, she repealed the edict of John Hyrcanus, in which he forbade their attention to traditions; restored them to all their former privileges, and released all that her husband had confined in prison. The Pharisees, however, insisted on having condign punishment

inflicted on all who advised Alexander to crucify the eight hundred persons, already mentioned; and on such pretexts, they caused her to gratify their revenge on all their enemies, but often sorely against her will.

In the year 76 B. C. Bithynia became a Roman province, by the bequest of its king Nicomedes. Cyrene was also reduced to the form of a province, which had been before left to them, in the same manner. The progress of the Romans in the east became more and more rapid. The only king who gave them much serious opposition, was Mithridates, king of Pontus; but it does not lie in our way to give a history of these wars.

Alexandra having given herself up to the counsels and government of the Pharisees, all that were known or suspected of advising or aiding the late king in his measures hostile to their sect, were now persecuted with unrelenting severity. They, of the adverse party, seeing no end of this oppression, collected in a body, and with Aristobulus at their head, went to the queen to remonstrate against these proceedings. If they could not be protected at home, they begged that they might be permitted to leave the country, or might be distributed among the garrisons, where they might be exempt from these cruel persecutions, which they endured for no other reason but because they were the devoted friends and servants of the late king. The queen pitied them from her heart, but knew not how to relieve them without bringing on herself the vengeance of the Pharisees, who had the people on their side. She however, agreed to place them in the garrisons of the fortresses.

This year, 72 B. C., was born Herod the Great, who was afterwards king of Judea. His father Antipas was a noble Idumean, and his mother of an illustrious family among the Arabians. The name Antipas was changed to Antipater, to make it more conformable to the usage of the Greeks. This man was governor of Idumea under Alexander Jannæus. As he was an Idumean, he was, of course, brought up in the Jewish religion; for all the Idumeans had embraced Judaism.

In the year 70 B. C. died Alexandra, queen of the Jews, in the seventy-third year of her age. She was a woman of great wisdom and clemency; but unhappily was under the necessity of yielding to the Pharisees—a faction which she had no power to withstand. As soon as Antiochus saw that his mother was past recovery, having resolved to seize the kingdom, he privately withdrew and repaired to the castles, where his father's friends had sought an asylum; and by means of these, all the strong places in the country were soon in his hands.

The Pharisees were much disturbed at these proceedings, and as Alexandra was yet alive, though very low, they went to her to get her to say, that Hyrcanus should possess the supreme

power; but she told them that she was not in a condition to decide on such weighty affairs; and having submitted every thing to their management, soon afterwards expired. By the advice and aid of the Pharisees, Hyrcanus raised an army against his brother; when a decisive battle was fought, in which most of the soldiers of Hyrcanus going over to Aristobulus, he was obliged to flee to Jerusalem; but soon, almost all his adherents declaring for his brother, he agreed to resign the priesthood and the supreme power, and to lead a private life. Thus ended the tyranny of the Pharisees, which had been exercised over the nation from the death of Alexander Janneus. Aristobulus now exercised the office of high-priest, and of supreme ruler of the nation, for six years and six months; Hyrcanus having been in authority only three months after the death of his mother.

In the year 66 B. C., Pompey the Great succeeded Lucullus in the chief command of the Roman army in Syria. Pompey drew into alliance with him, Phraates king of Parthia, and made an offer of peace to Mithridates; but he, calculating on the aid and friendship of the Parthian king, declined the overture. But when he understood that Pompey had been beforehand with him, then of his own accord, he proposed to come to terms. Pompey, however, would listen to nothing but the unconditional surrender of all deserters, and a cessation of all hostilities.

Pompey soon conquered both Tigranes and Mithridates, and marched against the Iberians, a northern people, who had never been subdued. After his return, all the Syrian empire on this side of the Euphrates was reduced into Roman provinces.

In the year 65 B. C. a disturbance arose in Judea, through the ambition of Antipater, the father of Herod. He having had his education in the court of Alexander Janneus, ingratiated himself into the favour of Hyrcanus; but when Aristobulus succeeded to the office and power of his brother, all this man's schemes of advancement were broken. He now saw no way of retrieving his fortune, but by attempting to raise a party in favour of the deposed Hyrcanus. His first step was to negotiate with Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea, to aid him with troops; and he gathered together many of the scattered Jews, who were ready for an enterprise of this kind. But the greatest difficulty was to excite Hyrcanus himself, who was a man of a weak and quiet spirit. At length, however, he persuaded him, that his life was in danger in Judea, and induced him to flee to the court of Aretas, who in a little time came back with him, accompanied with fifty thousand men. In a battle with Aristobulus, the latter was completely defeated, and was forced to take refuge in the mountain of the temple, where they

besieged him. This occurred during the passover, on which occasion, there not being lambs enough within the wall, Aristobulus bargained with the besiegers for a sufficient number, and let down the money outside the wall; on receiving it, however, they refused to send in the sacrifices.

Another impious act of which they were guilty, was their treatment of Onias, a holy man, held in great veneration, because it was believed, that by his intercessions rain had once been obtained in time of drought; him they brought out, and insisted that he should curse Aristobulus; supposing that his curses would be as efficacious as his blessing. Upon which he lifted up his hands, and said, "O Lord God, since they who are besieged, are thy priests, and these without are thy people, hear the prayers of neither against the other!" On which, they were so enraged, that they stoned him to death. Aristobulus now sent to Scaurus, the Roman general, who was at Damascus, and promised him four hundred talents for his aid; Gabinius, also, was offered three hundred talents. Both then wrote to Aretas to withdraw from Jerusalem; which he immediately did, and Aristobulus pursued after him, and coming on him unawares, slew a great part of his men, and among the rest, a brother of Antipater whose name was Cephaleon. About this time, 65 B. C., Pompey came to Damascus, and received rich presents from most of the kings of the neighbouring countries. The ambassadors of Egypt presented him with a crown of gold of the value of five thousand pieces of gold, and those from Judea with a golden vine of the value of four hundred talents, which was afterwards deposited in the temple of Jupiter at Rome, and was there inscribed as the gift of Alexander. It is said, that no fewer than twelve kings came in person to pay their respects to Pompey, while he resided at Damascus.

Pompey had a great ambition to extend his conquests as far as the Red Sea. He had, while in Africa and Spain, extended them to the western ocean on both sides of the Mediterranean; and had lately subdued the country to the borders of the Caspian Sea; and he felt a vain ambition to extend his victories as far as the Red Sea. Having returned to Damascus again, from Pontus, he was waited on by Antipater, from Hyrcanus, and by one Nicodemus, from Aristobulus, each of them soliciting his patronage. Pompey gave them both fair words, and ordered that the two brothers should appear before him. There is reason to believe, however, that Antipater managed his cause with much more address than the ambassador of Aristobulus.

In the year 64 B. C. died Mithridates, king of Pontus, and long the implacable enemy of the Romans. His last effort

against them, was an attempt, in imitation of Hannibal, to march an army by land into Italy; and for this purpose he collected a great multitude of soldiers, and actually set out on his expedition. But his army finding out his purpose, and that a march of more than two thousand miles lay before them, over deserts, mountains, rivers, and through hostile countries, revolted against him, and placed his son Pharnaces in his stead. Upon this, Mithridates put an end to his life. At first he attempted it by poison, but not succeeding in this, he fell on his sword. Mithridates was one of the most extraordinary men who has appeared in any age. His natural endowments were very great, and he added all manner of acquired improvements. No learning of these times escaped his attention. Although he had under him nations who spoke twenty-two different languages, he was able to address them each in their own tongues. He was also a man of great spirit; capable of forming and executing enterprises of the utmost magnitude and difficulty. And although he was fortunate in his wars with the Romans, yet if he had lived to execute his last project, he might have proved the most formidable enemy they ever had. Cicero, in speaking of him, says that he was the greatest king next to Alexander the Great. He was, however, ambitious, voluptuous, and often cruel, even to his own children, wives and concubines.

The cause of the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, was now brought before Pompey, at Damascus, where they both appeared in person, according to his order. Ptolemy being solicitous to prosecute his Arabian war, gave no decision at present; but Aristobulus clearly perceived from what he said, that his cause was not viewed in a favourable light. He, therefore, left the place unceremoniously, and returning into Judea, collected an army for his defence; by which proceeding, Pompey was much incensed. He marched, however, agreeably to his purpose, into Arabia; took Petrea, and made Aretas the king prisoner, but afterwards released him, on his agreeing to all his terms. On his way back, being informed of the hostile movements of Aristobulus, in Judea, he marched into that country. Aristobulus had shut himself up in a strong fortress, built by his father on the top of a mountain, and called after him, Alexandrion. Pompey surrounded the place, and obliged him to come down; when he agreed to give up all the fortified places in his hands. But no sooner was he free from restraint, than he fled to Jerusalem, whither he was followed by Pompey. When Pompey arrived at Jerusalem, this unsteady man again came out to meet him, and promised full submission, and a sum of money. Gabinius was sent to receive the money, but he found the gates shut against him, and no money to be had. Pompey, not enduring to be thus mocked, cast Aristobulus,

whom he had retained with him, into chains, and marched with his whole army directly to Jerusalem. Within the city there were two factions; that of Hyrcanus, and that of Aristobulus. The former were disposed to open the gates to the Romans, and they were the more numerous; but the other party retired into the mountain of the temple; and having cut off all communication with the city, resolved there to maintain themselves.

Pompey having been received into the city by the other party, immediately laid siege to the mount of the temple. Most of the sacerdotal tribe were shut up within the temple; but the greatest part of the people were without. Battering engines were brought from Tyre, and an assault was made on the north side of the temple; and, although the siege was pressed vigorously by the Romans, the garrison held out for three months; and might have held out much longer, but for the unwillingness of the Jews to work on the Sabbath, which gave a great advantage to the assailants; for, on that day, the Romans would fill up the ditches drawn round the temple for defence, and bring forward their batteries, and place them to the best advantage. During the whole of the siege, the service of the temple was never interrupted; the priests being deterred neither by the death of their friends or rage of their enemies; and many of them, while officiating at the altar, had their own blood mingled with that of the sacrifices. This unshaken constancy was greatly admired by Pompey himself, and indeed is scarcely to be paralleled in history. After three months the temple was taken; that is, in the first year of the 179th Olympiad; and on the very day observed as a fast on account of the capture of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. All those who were considered the prime leaders of this revolt were put to death.

Pompey, not contented with viewing the exterior of this sacred edifice, impiously penetrated the interior, not only entering the sanctuary, but into the holy of holies, examined all the *arcana* of that sacred place; thus inflicting the deepest wound on the feelings of the Jews, who considered this intrusion as the highest possible profanation. But although he found two thousand talents laid up in the temple, he neither took them away, nor disturbed any thing else belonging to the furniture of the place. And, as if to make amends for what he had done, in entering the temple, he now ordered it to be cleansed, and the divine service to be resumed. But it has been observed, that although successful in all the previous acts of his public life, from this time no success ever attended him. Having concluded the war, he reinstated Hyrcanus in the office of high-priest, and made him also prince of the commonwealth. But the walls of Jerusalem he ordered to be demolished.

SECTION II.

OCTAVIUS CESAR BORN—DIODORUS SICULUS—ALEXANDER, SON OF ARISTOBULUS, ESCAPES FROM ROME—SEIZES SEVERAL STRONG PLACES—GABINIUS, GOVERNOR OF SYRIA—ARISTOBULUS HIMSELF ESCAPES FROM ROME, AND RAISES NEW DISTURBANCES IN JUDEA—CRASSUS VISITS JERUSALEM AND ROBS THE TEMPLE OF ITS TREASURES—THE JUDGMENT OF GOD OVERTAKES HIM—BATTLE OF PHARSALIA—CESAR CONFIRMS HYRCANUS IN THE PRIESTHOOD—ANTIPATER ACCOMPANIES CESAR IN ALL HIS EXPEDITIONS—HIS FOUR SONS—HEROD ARRAIGNED FOR ILLEGALLY PUTTING CERTAIN THIEVES TO DEATH—MEDITATES THE DESTRUCTION OF HYRCANUS AND THE WHOLE SANHEDRIM—RECEIVES FROM SIXTUS THE GOVERNMENT OF CÆLO-SYRIA.

IN this same eventful year, 61 B. C., was born Octavius Cesar, afterwards emperor under the name of Augustus, whose mother was the sister of Julius Cesar. About this same time, 60 B. C., flourished Diodorus Siculus, the famous Greek historian. He was born in Sicily, from which he derives his name. He was thirty years in collecting materials for his history, and in composing the work; and that he might obtain accurate information, he travelled over most of the countries of whose affairs his history treats. In this very year he went to Egypt. His *Bibliotheca* contained forty books, of which only fifteen are now extant. Those which remain are the five first—and from the tenth to the twentieth; all the rest are lost, except fragments preserved by other authors.

In the year 57 B. C., Alexander, the oldest son of Aristobulus, who had been carried to Rome by Pompey, having made his escape, came into Judea, and collected an army of ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, and seized Alexandrion, Macherus, and several other strong castles, which he garrisoned and fortified; and from thence ravaged all the surrounding country. Hyrcanus being able to oppose no effectual resistance, sent for aid to Gabinius, governor of Syria, the general of the horse under him being the famous Mark Antony. Here also, the Roman army was joined by Antipater, and other adherents of Hyrcanus. They came to a battle with Alexander, who was completely overthrown; three thousand of his men being slain in battle, and as many taken prisoner. He himself took refuge in the castle called Alexandrion, where he was besieged by Gabinius. While this siege was carried on, the Roman general took a progress through the country, and found many of its once famous cities lying in ruins, which he ordered to be rebuilt or repaired. While Gabinius was thus occupied, he met with the mother of Alexander, a woman remarkable for her discretion. She being very solicitous about the safety of her husband, Aristobulus, who had been carried to Rome, endeavoured, by acts of kindness, to ingratiate herself into the favour of Gabinius, and suc-

ceeded to her wishes; for upon her representations, he made peace with Alexander, who surrendered all his castles; which, by her advice, were dismantled or demolished. Gabinius now went up to Jerusalem, and having settled Hyrcanus in the priesthood, made great alterations in the form of the Jewish commonwealth; and from a monarchy transformed it to an aristocracy. Hitherto, the government had been managed by a prince, with the aid of the grand council or Sanhedrim, consisting of seventy-two persons, with an inferior court of twenty-three in every considerable town. Instead of this, Gabinius established five independent courts; the first, at Jerusalem; the second, at Jericho; the third, at Gadara; the fourth, at Amathus; and the fifth, at Sephoris. The tyranny of Alexander Janneus had made the Jews weary of monarchy; and they petitioned Pompey for its abolition, when the trial of the two brothers took place before him at Damascus; and he so far complied as to take away the diadem and the name, but left the supreme power in the hands of Hyrcanus. But now, they renewed their petition to Gabinius, and obtained the change which has been mentioned. But when Julius Cesar afterwards passed through the country, he restored things to their former condition. Towards the close of this year, Aristobulus, who had been led in triumph by Pompey with his son Antigonus, made his escape from Rome, and came into Judea, where he excited new troubles, for many resorted to his standard, and he seized several fortresses, which he began to fortify; but Gabinius came upon him and subdued him. He and his son Antigonus were sent back again to Rome. Gabinius, however, in compliance with a promise given to his wife, obtained the release of the latter.

In the year 55 B. C., Gabinius having been called into Egypt to settle the disturbances of that kingdom, Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, excited new troubles in Judea. Having collected a great army, he ravaged the whole country, killing all the Romans he could meet with, and driving the rest to take refuge in mount Gerizim, where he besieged them closely. Gabinius seeing what a force he had collected, thought it best to deal with him by fair means, and sent Antipater with conditions of peace, promising an oblivion of all that was past. But Alexander, confiding in his strength, encountered Gabinius in battle, but was overthrown, with the slaughter of ten thousand of his men. After this victory Gabinius went to Jerusalem and regulated every thing according to the wishes of Antipater; and then marched against the Nabatheans, whom he subdued.

In the year 54 B. C., Pompey and Crassus being consuls, the latter had Syria and the East assigned to him. Whereupon, coming into Syria, with an eager desire to amass as much wealth

as possible, and hearing of the riches of the temple at Jerusalem, he marched directly thither. At that time, Eleazer a priest, was the treasurer of the temple. Among other precious things under his charge, was a bar of solid gold of immense value, which to conceal he enclosed in a wooden beam, and then placed the beam over the entrance, from the holy into the most holy place, and suspended the veil upon it. But when he found Crassus very intent on finding treasure, Eleazer told him that he would discover it to him if he would spare the temple and its other treasures. This Crassus swore he would religiously perform; but the perfidious and sacrilegious wretch, no sooner had the beam in possession, than he entered into the temple, and took away the two thousand talents which Pompey had left untouched, and robbed it of other valuable treasures, to the amount of ten thousand talents; by which he thought himself well provided for the Parthian war. But speedy vengeance pursued the rapacious and sacrilegious Crassus; for, being decoyed by the enemy into an unfavourable situation, the Parthians fell upon him, defeated his army, and slew his son and twenty thousand of his men. Crassus himself, while endeavouring to escape, fell under the conduct of a treacherous guide, and being led by him to Sarinas, the general of the Parthians, was immediately put to death. The Parthians, supposing that there would be nothing to oppose their progress, crossed the Euphrates and invaded Syria; but here they were met by Cassius, defeated, and driven back to their own country.

In the year 49 B. C., Cesar released Aristobulus from prison, and sent him into Judea with two legions, to promote his interest there, and in the neighbouring countries of Phenicia, Syria, and Arabia. But some of Pompey's friends found means to give him poison on the way, of which he died. Alexander, his son, having been informed of the expected arrival of his father, began to raise forces to join him as soon as he came. Pompey sent orders to Scipio to put him to death; who, causing him to be apprehended and brought to Antioch, he was there subjected to a formal trial, in which, being condemned, his head was cut off.

In the year 48 B. C., the contest between Cesar and Pompey was brought to a decision, by the famous battle of Pharsalia in Thessaly; in which Pompey was defeated, and obliged to flee to Africa, where he was beheaded. Cesar, having conquered Egypt, passed into Syria, where Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus the late king of the Jews, came to him, and lamenting the death of his father and brother, begged Cesar to have compassion on him; and at the same time, made heavy complaints against Hyrcanus and Antipater. But Antipater being then with Cesar, defended himself and Hyrcanus so much

to his satisfaction, that he rejected the accusations of Antigonus as of a turbulent and seditious person, and decreed, that Hyrcanus should possess not only the priesthood, but the sovereign power, as formerly, and his descendants after him.

Antipater accompanied Cesar in all his expeditions through Syria, and greatly conciliated his favour. When Cesar left this province, Antipater returned to Judea, and regulated every thing to the best advantage for Hyrcanus. He was a man of consummate policy, and by his skilful management had acquired an unbounded influence, not only in Judea, but in Phenicia, Syria, Arabia, &c.

Antipater had married a noble Arabian lady, whose name was Cyprus, by whom he had four sons now grown to mature age. The oldest was called Phaselus; the second, Herod; the third, Joseph; and the youngest, Pheroras. He had, also, one daughter by the same wife, named Salome, who, as well as her brother Herod, is famous in the history of the following years. Antipater, having acquired such influence in Judea and the neighbouring countries, and being so much in favour with Cesar, was now able to make provision for his own sons. Accordingly, he appointed Phaselus to be governor of Jerusalem, and Herod, his second son, to be governor of Galilee; he being then no more than twenty-five years of age. In the printed text of Josephus, it is only *fifteen*, but this, by a collation of other passages, appears to be a mistake of the copyists.

Herod being a young man of an active disposition, and wishing to signalize himself, made an attack on a horde of thieves who infested the country; and having taken their leader Hezekias, with several of his associates, he put them all to death. By this action he gained much applause, even from Sixtus, the governor of the province; but those who were enemies of Antipater, represented to Hyrcanus that Herod had put these men to death without legal trial, and obtained from him an order that Herod should be cited to appear before the Sanhedrim, to answer for his conduct. Herod appeared before this august tribunal clothed in purple, and surrounded by his guard, by which the judges were so intimidated, that not one of them had courage to open his mouth, except an old councillor, by the name of Samias. He first accused Herod of audacity, in appearing as he did, before that court, and then turned his accusation against Hyrcanus the president, and the members of the council, for their want of firmness and dignity; predicting that this same Herod would be the means of executing wrath upon the Sanhedrim; which was actually fulfilled, for Herod put every member of the Sanhedrim, afterwards, to death, except this same Samias, and one other individual.

Hyrceanus did all he could to get Herod cleared, as he had a great partiality for the young man, whose father had been the chief cause of all his power and prosperity. But finding that he could not procure his acquittal, he got the cause adjourned until the next day; and, in the mean time, advised Herod to leave Jerusalem, which he did; and went to Damascus, where putting himself under the protection of Sixtus Cesar, he set the Sanhedrim at defiance, and refused again to appear before them.

While Herod was with Sixtus, he so ingratiated himself, that he obtained from him the government of Cœlo-Syria. He now raised an army and marched into Judea, to be revenged on the Sanhedrim for the indignity offered him, by bringing him to a trial before them. His purpose was to depose Hyrceanus from the priesthood, and cut off the whole Sanhedrim. But his father, and brother Phasaël, interposed, and made him desist from his design.

SECTION III.

THE JULIAN YEAR—DEATH OF CESAR—MALICHUS, HIS INFLUENCE AND CHARACTER—
DEATH OF ANTIPATER—BATTLE OF PHILIPPI—ANTIGONUS, YOUNGEST SON OF ARISTOBULUS,
CLAIMS THE KINGDOM—THE PARTHIANS AGAIN CROSS THE EUPHRATES—ARE HIRED
TO INVADE JUDEA TO MAKE ANTIGONUS, SON OF ARISTOBULUS, KING—HIS ADHERENTS
ARE RESISTED BY HEROD AND PHASAËL—CIVIL WAR WITHIN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM—
FLIGHT OF HEROD AND DEATH OF PHASAËL.

IN the year 46 B. C., Cesar having returned from his African expedition, undertook, in virtue of his office as Pontifex maximus, to reform the calendar; which he happily effected, by establishing the Julian year, of three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours; or, in actual computation, three years of three hundred and sixty-five days, and the fourth, of three hundred and sixty-six: which is in use at this time.

In the following year, 45 B. C., Julius Cesar was murdered in the Senate house, by a band of conspirators whose leaders were Brutus and Cassius. Their professed object was to destroy the tyrant, and restore liberty to the Senate and people. Cesar was a man of very extraordinary abilities and learning. He was, also, naturally humane and generous; but he was ambitious, voluptuous, and irreligious. Upon the death of Cesar, the greatest confusion ensued, not only in Rome, but in all the provinces. Of these events, it would be here out of place to give a particular account, except so far as they may be intimately connected with Jewish history. Next to Antipater, Malichus had the chief authority in Judea. They had been long associated in the support of Hyrceanus; but this man now began to act a very wicked and ungrateful part toward his patron, Anti-

pater. He was not contented to be the second man in the country, but was ambitious to be the first; especially, as he was a native Jew, and Antipater an Idumean. He, therefore, plotted against the life of Antipater; and when the latter obtaining some intelligence of his design was preparing to oppose him, he came to him with so fair a face, and so played the hypocrite, that he removed all suspicion from his mind. Nay, when Murcus would have put Malichus to death, he was spared at the intercession of Antipater. But, notwithstanding all this, when he was dining one day with Hyrcanus, Malichus bribed the butler to administer poison to him, of which he died. Malichus now took possession of the power which had been exercised by Antipater; but the sons of the latter were not easily to be deceived, and not disposed to leave their father's death unavenged. Although Malichus denied having had any hand in the death of Antipater, they were convinced of the contrary. Herod was in favour of openly attacking the murderer at once; but Phasaël recommended a more crafty proceeding, as one less likely to bring on a civil war. In the meantime, the brothers acquainted Cassius, who then had possession of Syria, with the circumstances of Antipater's death, and obtained from him the liberty of putting the murderer to death; of which order, notice was given to the commanders of the garrison at Tyre. When Cassius had taken Laodicea, all the princes and chief lords of Syria and Palestine came to Tyre to congratulate him. Hyrcanus and Malichus, were on the road for the same purpose. Herod made a great supper, and on pretence of sending invitations to his guests, informed them of Cassius' orders, and the approach of Malichus; on which, men were sent to meet him, who, according to their orders, fell on Malichus and slew him. It was ascertained that he had formed a plot, after getting his son who was at Tyre into his possession, to return to Judea, and excite the Jews to revolt; and while the Romans were busy with their civil wars, to make himself king. But the plot of Herod against him was better laid, and took complete effect.

In the year 42 B. C. was fought the decisive battle at Philippi, in Macedonia, between Octavianus and Antony on the one side, and Brutus and Cassius, the slayers of Cesar, on the other. In this battle, the latter were overthrown, and their cause ruined; and both Brutus and Cassius were driven to such desperation, that they put an end to their own lives. After Cassius had left Syria, the friends of Malichus raised a great tumult, to revenge his death on the sons of Antipater; and had influence to gain over to their party Hyrcanus, and also Felix the commander of the Roman forces, at Jerusalem. At the same time, a brother of Malichus seized the castle of Massada, and several other strong places in Judea. Herod

was at this time confined with sickness at Damascus, whither he had gone to see Fabius the Roman governor. The whole of this storm, therefore, fell on Phasaël, who withstood it successfully; for he drove Felix and all his party out of Jerusalem. When Herod returned, the brothers were soon able to put down the opposite faction, and recover the strong fortresses. About this time a marriage took place between Herod and Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus, which seemed to reconcile all differences. But this peace was of a short duration. Antigonus, the youngest son of Aristobulus the late king, was made the instrument of the discontented faction at Jerusalem; for his father and older brother being dead, as related above, he claimed the kingdom as his right. In these pretensions, he was supported by Marion king of Tyre, Fabius governor of Damascus, and Ptolemy prince of Chalcis. The last of these had married the sister of Antigonus. Coming with a large army, Antigonus invaded Judea, but he had scarcely entered its borders, when Herod encountered and overthrew him, and returned to Jerusalem in great triumph.

In the year 41 B. C. the Parthians again crossed the Euphrates, instigated and led on by some of the adherents of Pompey, who had fled for refuge to the Parthian court. This army was under the conduct of Labianus and Pacorus, who ravaged a large part of Asia Minor, and took Sidon and Ptolemais. By these generals, a large party was sent to invade Judea, for the purpose of making Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, king of that country. They were prevailed on to pursue this course, by Lysanias king of Chalcis, who promised them as a reward, one thousand talents, and five hundred Jewish women, if they would restore Antigonus to his father's kingdom. Antigonus himself, having collected an army of Jews from about Mount Carmel, marched with them into Judea; and having vanquished those who first came against him, pursued them to Jérusalem, where having got within the city, he had many skirmishes with the brothers, Phasaël and Herod; in which, the followers of Antigonus being worsted, retreated within the mount of the temple, and the other party into the palace; which two places became the head-quarters of the two parties. Their conflicts continued until the time of the feast of Pentecost, when, numbers of people coming to the city from all parts, some took part with one, and some with the other, until the confusion was so great, that the leaders began to think of some means of putting an end to these troubles. Proposals of peace being made to Antigonus, he received them hypocritically, offering to refer the dispute to the Parthian general, whom Pacorus, according to agreement, had sent after him. By this stratagem, the Parthian who was the cup-bearer

of Pacorus, was introduced into the city, and lodged with five hundred of his horse within the walls. Here he played his game so artfully, that he persuaded Phasaël to take Hyrcanus with him, and go to Barzapharnes, who then governed Syria, under Pacorus. Herod had no confidence in the Parthians, and remonstrated against the course which his brother had determined to pursue.

When Phasaël and Hyrcanus came to Galilee, they were met by a guard from Barzapharnes, and the cup-bearer returned to Jerusalem. They were, at first, treated with a show of kindness, until it was supposed that the Parthian general had time to reach Jerusalem and seize Herod, when they were both put in chains. But Herod, aware of the danger, fled from Jerusalem with his family and treasures, and seized the fortress of Masada, on the west side of the Dead Sea, where he left his family, and went to Arabia to solicit assistance of Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas. But Malchus, though under great obligations to Herod for services performed, ungratefully refused to receive or entertain him. He then directed his course towards Egypt, but before he arrived he heard of the death of his brother Phasaël. For the Parthians, when they found Herod gone, made Antigonus king, and delivered up Phasaël and Hyrcanus into his hands. The former, knowing that his death was determined, beat out his own brains against the wall. The life of Hyrcanus was spared, but to render him incapable of officiating as high-priest, they cut off both his ears; and then delivered him to the Parthians, who carried him with them into the east.



SECTION IV.

HEROD OBTAINS THE FAVOUR OF ANTONY, AND IS SOLEMNLY APPOINTED KING OF JUDEA—IS SUCCESSFUL AGAINST HIS ENEMIES—ANTONY SENDS HIM TWO LEGIONS TO REDUCE JERUSALEM, STILL IN THE POSSESSION OF ANTIGONUS—HEROD GOES TO SAMOSATA TO MEET ANTONY—RETURNS TO JUDEA WITH FRESH FORCES—HIS BROTHER JOSEPH SLAIN IN AN EXPEDITION AGAINST JERICHO—HEROD LAYS SIEGE TO JERUSALEM—MARIAMNE THE WIFE OF HEROD—JERUSALEM TAKEN AND GIVEN UP TO PILLAGE—ABJECT SPIRIT OF ANTIGONUS.

HEROD, upon hearing of the death of his brother, did not return, but went on to Pelusium, and thence to Alexandria. Not meeting with any promise of effectual succour in Egypt, he sailed by way of Rhodes to Rome, where he made his complaint and application to Antony, beseeching him, by the friendship which subsisted between him and his father, to pity the distracted and miserable condition of Judea. Antony, in consideration of the promise of a very large sum of money, entered with much zeal into the interests of Herod, and obtained for him much more than he expected. For he thought of nothing more

than succeeding to the power which his father exercised under Hyrcanus. But Antony, first securing the influence of Octavianus in favour of the measure, had Herod introduced to the senate, with a full exhibition of the merits of his family towards the Roman people; on which he was recognized as king of Judea by the unanimous vote of the Senate, and Antigonus was declared to be an enemy to the Roman people. Herod was then conducted to the capitol, with Antony on one side, and Octavianus on the other, where he was solemnly inaugurated into his new office, according to the Roman usage: and this act of the Senate was laid up among the archives of the State.

Herod, having met with such success at Rome, hastened back to Judea. This whole transaction, by which he was solemnly advanced to the royal dignity, occupied no more than seven days. Indeed, his whole journey, both by sea and land, from the time he left Judea until his return to Ptolemais, occupied only three months. His first object after his return was to relieve his wife, mother, sister, and other friends, who were shut up in the castle of Massada, and had been besieged by Antigonus ever since his departure. They were now reduced to such distress for want of water, that his brother Joseph, who had been left in command of the place, had formed the purpose of breaking through the besiegers, and escaping to Malchus, king of Arabia, who, he heard, was now much better disposed to lend them aid than when applied to by Herod. But the night before he had designed to carry his purpose into effect, there fell such plentiful showers of rain as filled all their cisterns; so that they were able to hold out until Herod came to their relief.

Herod had no small difficulty in collecting a sufficient force to meet the besieging army. He received all into his service whom he could enlist, whether Jews or foreigners; but his principal reliance was on Ventidius and Silo, Roman generals, who were then in Palestine with a considerable force. These, however, did him as much harm as good; for having come into Judea to obtain money, they were ready to help him who would pay them best. And, indeed, they received money from both parties, and so managed as to give little real assistance to either. Herod, however, finally succeeded in reducing Galilee, and after a siege of considerable length took Joppa. Having delivered his family and friends from their unpleasant situation in Massada, he placed them in Samaria, and sent his brother Joseph into Idumea, to secure that region in his interests. At this time, Galilee was infested with multitudes of robbers, to suppress whom Herod now adopted measures. With some difficulty he succeeded in vanquishing a large body of them who

advanced to meet his army, and compelled them to cross the Jordan. It was some time, however, before the country was entirely freed from these banditti.

Jerusalem, and many other places, still continued in the possession of Antigonus; and the war between him and Herod still went on. To aid the latter, Antony sent Macheras with two legions and one thousand horse, who, approaching the walls of Jerusalem for the purpose of conferring with Antigonus, was beaten back by the archers and slingers on the rampart; by which he was so enraged, that on his retreat from the place he killed all the Jews he could lay hands on. Among them, many of Herod's friends were cut off; on account of which, he went directly to make complaint to Antony, but Macheras overtook him and so explained and apologized, that Herod agreed to think no more of the affair. Still, however, he prosecuted his journey, to visit Antony, who was then at Samosata, who received him with distinguished honour. While there Herod rendered signal service in carrying on the siege of the place. While Herod was absent, his brother Joseph, neglecting the orders which he had received, made an expedition against Jericho with such forces as he was able to bring together. Being circumvented by the enemy, he was there slain, and most of his men cut to pieces. In consequence of this disaster, many in Idumea and Galilee revolted from Herod. The intelligence of these unfortunate events reached Herod at Daphne, on his way home, and hastened his return. Coming to mount Libanus, he there raised eight hundred men, and with these and one Roman cohort, marched to Ptolemais, and proceeded to subdue those who had revolted in Galilee. Then marching to Jerusalem to avenge his brother's death, he was encountered by the friends of Antigonus and defeated, being himself wounded in the conflict. But soon rallying, he collected more soldiers, and fought another battle with the flower of the troops of Antigonus, under the command of Pappus, and entirely overthrew them, Pappus himself being among the slain. Had it not been winter, he might have marched directly to Jerusalem, and taken that place.

Early the next year, 38 B. C., Herod took the field with a great army, and proceeded directly to Jerusalem, where he commenced a regular siege of the place. While the necessary works were carrying on, he went to Samaria, and consummated his marriage with Mariamne, who had been betrothed to him four years before. Mariamne was the daughter of Alexander, the son of king Aristobulus, by Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus the second. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and great virtue, and accomplished above any woman of her time. Herod, in selecting her for a wife, was influenced not

merely by affection, but by political motives; for he thought, that by an alliance with the Asmonean family, so highly venerated by the Jews, he would gain a great influence over that people. After the return of Herod from Samaria, the siege was prosecuted with uncommon vigour; for the governor of Syria came to his assistance with a large number of soldiers. The whole force engaged in the siege was no less than eleven legions and six thousand horse, besides the Syrian auxiliaries. But the city held out until the next year, which was 37 B. C., when many breaches being made in the walls, the assailants entered, and exasperated by the length of the siege, and the hardships which they had endured, filled the whole town with blood and devastation. Herod did all he could to prevent this, but without effect, as Sosius, the governor of Syria, encouraged the soldiers in these lawless and cruel proceedings. At length, when remonstrance failed to put a stop to the utter devastation of the city, Herod deemed it from further spoliation, by the promise of a large sum of money.

Antigonus seeing that all was lost, surrendered himself to Sosius, and in a very abject manner cast himself at his feet; which, instead of moving the compassion of this stern Roman, only provoked his contempt; for he ever afterwards called him *Antigona*. It was, at first, designed to preserve him to grace the triumph of Antony; but Herod wishing to remove all danger of new disturbances from the claims of this last male of the Asmonean family, never ceased to petition Antony to have him put to death; which was accordingly done, by the hands of the common executioner, without the least regard to his royal dignity.



SECTION V.

HEROD ESTABLISHED ON THE THRONE OF JUDEA—DESTROYS THE WHOLE SANHEDRIM EXCEPT TWO—HILLEL AND SHAMMAI—THEIR DISTINGUISHED DESCENDANTS—SIMON—GAMALIEL—JUDAH HAKKADOSH—SCHOLARS OF HILLEL—CHALDEE PARAPHRASES—THEIR HIGH ESTIMATION AMONG THE JEWS—JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL AND ONKELOS.

HEROD was now in full possession of the kingdom of Judea. But as he had made his way to the throne through much blood, so now, when seated on it, he found it necessary to resort to the sword, to subdue the obstinacy of the leaders of the opposite faction, who would not consent to submit to his authority. Of this number was the whole Sanhedrim, the grand council of the nation, every one of whom he put to death, as was before mentioned, except Sameas and Pollio. During the whole siege, these two had declared in favour of receiving Herod as their king, alleging, that God in displeasure for their sins, had

decreed to give them up to the government of this man, as a punishment. The others, on the contrary, went about the city encouraging the people, and assuring them that God would certainly protect his temple. On which account, Herod put them all to death; remembering also, the affront which they had put upon him, when they cited him before them as a criminal. It is remarkable, however, that he spared Sameas, who had so boldly denounced him on that occasion; and who was of all the most vehement in requiring its condemnation.

These two men are very famous among the Mishnical doctors of the Jews, and in the rabbinical writings are known by the names of *Hillel* and *Shammai*. Of the Sanhedrim, which was now formed, Hillel was made the president, and Shammai the vice-president. The former is called *Pollio* by Josephus, and was one of the most eminent men for learning and authority, who ever appeared in the Jewish nation. The Jewish writers, with one consent, concede to him the highest place, in the knowledge of the Jewish law and traditions. For forty years he was president of the Sanhedrim, and acquired higher reputation for the justice and wisdom of his decisions, than any one who had occupied that high seat of judgment since the days of Simon the Just. The posterity of this eminent doctor were also famous for a long time. It is said, that his descendants occupied the same high office for ten generations. Simeon, his son, is supposed to have been the very person, who in the temple took our blessed Saviour in his arms. (Luke ii. 25—35.) The third in descent was Gamaliel, who presided in the Sanhedrim when Peter and the other apostles were called before that council; (Acts v. 34;) and was the distinguished master at whose feet the apostle Paul was brought up. (Acts xxii. 3.) In the Jewish writings he is called Gamaliel the Old, because he lived to extreme old age; his death occurring only eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Next to Gamaliel, was Simon, the second of that name. He perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. The fifth in descent was Gamaliel the second. To him succeeded Simon the third. Then we come to Judah Hakkadosh, or Judah the Holy, who composed the Mishna, the great body of Jewish Traditionary Law, which forms the text of the Talmud.

After Judah Hakkadosh, we have, in regular succession, the names of Gamaliel the third, Hillel, and Gemaricus, all lineal descendants of the Hillel of whom we are now speaking. Hillel was born and brought up in Babylonia, where he resided until the fortieth year of his life. After that, he came to Jerusalem and betook himself to the study of the law, in which he became so eminent, that when eighty years of age, he was made president of the Sanhedrim, in which office he continued

for forty years more, so that he lived to the great age of one hundred and twenty years. When Hillel was first made president of the Sanhedrim, one Menahem was the vice-president; a leading man among the Essenes. Josephus says, that he had the spirit of prophecy, of which he gives the following instance. One day, meeting with Herod among his school-fellows, he saluted him by saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" and laying his hand on his shoulder, foretold, that one day he should be advanced to that dignity. When Herod was actually made king, remembering this prediction, he sent for Menahem and asked him whether he should reign as many as ten years. He is said to have answered, "Yea ten, twenty, thirty years," and then paused, because Herod did not wish to inquire further.

Shammai, who is called Sameas by Josephus, was next to Hillel in reputation as a Mishnical doctor. He had been the disciple of Hillel; but when appointed vice-president of the Sanhedrim he did not always concur with his old master in opinion. These differences of opinion between the masters, caused great disputes and dissensions among their scholars, which sometimes arose to such a height, as to cause the shedding of blood. But, finally, the school of Hillel prevailed over that of Shammai. The tempers of these eminent men were diverse; for while Hillel was of a mild and peaceable disposition, Shammai was of an irascible and fiery spirit.

Hillel, it is said, bred up no less than one thousand scholars in the knowledge of the law, of whom eighty were of the first distinction. Of these the Jewish writers say, that thirty were so eminent, as to be worthy that the divine glory should rest on them, as it did on Moses; and thirty, for whom the sun might have stood still, as it did for Joshua.

The most eminent of them all, however, was *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on the Prophets, who was contemporary with *Onkelos*, the author of the Chaldee Paraphrase on the Law. Whether Onkelos was also a scholar of Hillel, we are nowhere informed. These paraphrases are translations of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, from the Hebrew into the language of the Chaldeans, which was used through Assyria, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. They were called *Targums*, which means *versions* or *translations*. As was before mentioned, they had their origin after the return of the Jews from captivity, when the common people, and especially the youth, not being familiar with the Hebrew, needed a version in the vulgar tongue, which was Chaldee. These versions were at first made by learned men, verbally; but in process of time, when Synagogues multiplied, it became expedient to have them in writing, that they might be used

when there were none sufficiently learned to render the Hebrew, with correctness, into the vernacular dialect.

There are now extant a number of paraphrases, by different hands, and composed in different ages. The principal are, The Paraphrase of Onkelos on the Law—that of Jonathan on the Prophets—another on the Law ascribed also to Jonathan—The Jerusalem Targum on the Law—The Targum on the Megilloth; that is, on the five small books, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and the Lamentations. There are, moreover, two other paraphrases on the book of Esther. Next, we have the Targum of one-eyed Joseph on the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, and an anonymous Targum on the books of Chronicles. These versions are of little value, except the paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, which are very important; especially in teaching us how the ancient Jews interpreted the Scriptures which relate to the Messiah. That the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan were composed a short time before the birth of Christ, is the opinion of both Jewish and Christian writers, and is strongly confirmed by internal evidence. The only reason for supposing that they were of a later date, is the fact, that they seem to have been entirely unknown to Origen, Jerome, and the other Christian fathers. But if these men did not understand the Chaldee language, they, of course, could not be acquainted with these paraphrases; and they might have been composed and principally used in Babylonia; which supposition well corresponds with the language in which they were written; which is rather the eastern than the western Aramean. These versions are held in the highest esteem by the Jews, and, therefore, furnish the best weapons for carrying on the controversy with them. They are, undoubtedly, the oldest Jewish writings extant, with the exception of the Scriptures; unless we reckon the Greek version of the Old Testament as a Jewish composition.

SECTION VI.

ANANELUS MADE HIGH-PRIEST—HYRCANUS A CAPTIVE AMONG THE PARTHIANS—HIS DESIRE TO RETURN—ALEXANDRA, THE MOTHER OF ARISTOBULUS AND MARIAMNE HIS SISTER, DISSATISFIED THAT HE WAS PASSED OVER WHEN ANANELUS WAS EXALTED TO BE HIGH-PRIEST—HEROD CAUSES ARISTOBULUS TO BE DROWNED—CLEOPATRA VISITS JERUSALEM—HER MANNERS SO LICENTIOUS THAT EVEN HEROD IS DISGUSTED—GREAT EARTHQUAKE IN JUDEA—ANTONY ENTIRELY DEFEATED AT ACTIUM—HEROD NOW SEEKS TO CONCILIATE THE FAVOUR OF THE CONQUEROR, AND SUCCEEDS—MARIAMNE MANIFESTS THE UTMOST HATRED OF HEROD—HEROD BECAME FURIOUS WITH JEALOUSY, AND PUT BOTH HIS UNCLE JOSEPH AND MARIAMNE TO DEATH—IMMEDIATELY HE WAS SEIZED WITH INTOLERABLE REMORSE, AND FELL SICK—BECOMES MORE SEVERE—IS INSTIGATED TO ACTS OF CRUELTY BY ALEXANDRA AND OTHERS—CONSPIRACY AGAINST HIS LIFE.

HEROD, on the death of Antigonus, made Ananelus high-priest in his stead. He was an obscure priest, residing in Babylonia; but being well known to Herod, and of the pontifical family, he sent for him, and put him into this office. He seems to have chosen an obscure man, that there might be no collision between the sacerdotal and royal dignity. Hyrcanus, who had been carried away by the Parthians, still lived, and was treated with much kindness by Phraates the king, who, when he understood his former dignity, released him from his chains, and allowed him full liberty to live among the Jews who resided in that country. For, at this time, there were more Jews in Babylonia and other countries beyond the Euphrates, than in Judea. Hyrcanus, on hearing that Herod was made king of the Jews, expressed a strong desire to return; for as he had, in one instance saved Herod's life, he expected to be treated kindly. Herod was no less solicitous for the return of Hyrcanus, but for a very different reason. He wished to get the old man into his power, that he might make away with the only survivor of the Asmonean family, who could have any claim to the throne of Judea. He therefore sent a special embassy to Seleucia, with the double object of getting Phraates to give him up, and of persuading Hyrcanus to come. In both, they were successful, and the aged man, contrary to the advice of his best friends, returned again to the land of his nativity.

In making Ananelus high-priest, Herod had passed by Aristobulus, the son of Alexander, to whom by right of succession it belonged. This produced no small disturbance in his own family; for Alexandra, the mother of Aristobulus, and Mariamne his sister, could not bear to see an obscure stranger exalted to that office, while the rightful heir was overlooked. These two ladies not only teased Herod continually respecting the matter, but began to intrigue with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, for the advancement of Aristobulus. The king, therefore, to make peace at home, resolved to gratify them; so, deposing Ananelus, he put Aristobulus in his room, a youth

only seventeen years old. But Alexandra, the mother of Aristobulus, being an ambitious woman, knew that her son had just as much right to the kingdom as he had to the priesthood, and therefore, began to intrigue further with Cleopatra, for this end also. Herod confined her to the palace, and set spies over her; but she contrived a method of escape, and set off with her son to the court of Cleopatra. Herod, after letting her proceed some distance, sent and brought her back. Aristobulus now became more and more the object of the king's jealousy. At one of the great festivals, when he officiated at the altar in his pontifical robes, the people were struck with admiration at the beauty and gracefulness of the young high-priest, and their mouths were full of his praises. Herod could endure this no longer; he determined, therefore, to put an end to one who gave him so much uneasiness. He invited him, with this view, to a feast at Jericho, where the young man was enticed to go out to bathe, with a number of others. They, by the direction of Herod, held him under the water until he was drowned; and then it was pretended that his death was accidental. Herod himself put on mourning, and affected the deepest grief for the loss of the high-priest. But his hypocrisy was not concealed, and he was abhorred by the people on account of this cruel act. As to Alexandra, she was inconsolable, and probably would not have survived her beloved son, had it not been for the desire of revenge which now took full possession of her breast.

This murder of Aristobulus took place in the year 34 B. C. Alexandra acquainted Cleopatra, by letter, with the circumstances of her son's death, and fully engaged her interest in opposition to Herod. Antony being then very much under the influence of Cleopatra, was easily induced to cite Herod to answer for his conduct in relation to this matter. But when Antony came into Syria, Herod so mollified him that he dropped the proceedings altogether. While Herod was gone to wait on Antony, he left Mariamne in the care of his uncle Joseph, who had married his sister Salome. Fearing lest, if anything should happen to him, Mariamne would fall into the power of Antony, who already seemed to be in love with her from the report of her beauty, he ordered Joseph, as soon as he was dead, immediately to kill his wife also. This secret Joseph inadvertently let out, one day, when exulting on the greatness of Herod's love to her. On Herod's return, she reproached him with it, which threw him into a transport of passion; being persuaded, that nothing but an illicit connexion with Joseph, (of which she had been accused by Salome,) could have extorted such a secret, he drew his dagger, and was about to plunge it in her bosom, but his love for her unnerved his

arm; then, immediately turning his vengeance on Joseph and Alexandra, he put the first to death without allowing him even a hearing, and throwing the latter into chains, shut her up in prison.

Cleopatra, having accompanied her paramour Antony as far as the Euphrates, visited Jerusalem on her way home, where she was splendidly entertained by Herod; but her manners were so voluptuous, and even licentious, that Herod himself was exceedingly disgusted with her. While she was in his power, he once thought of making away with her, both on account of her former machinations against his kingdom, and out of fear of what she might still continue to effect against him; but he was restrained by a fear of Antony's displeasure.

Herod, being of a suspicious and jealous temper, resolved to select some strong place, and fortify it to the utmost. The tower of Massada seemed to suit his purpose best. He therefore furnished it with arms for ten thousand men, that in all events, he might have a place of refuge for himself. As Antony had promised several kingdoms to Cleopatra, among which was that of Malchus, in Arabia, Herod was directed to make war with him. In this expedition he at first gained a complete victory; but in a second engagement, he was defeated, and scarcely escaped with the fragments of his army.

In the year 31 B. C. there occurred an earthquake, which shook the whole land of Judea in a more terrible manner than was ever experienced before. No less than thirty thousand persons were killed by this convulsion of nature. Herod was so much affected with this heavy disaster, that he sent to solicit peace with the Arabians; but they, having heard that the ruin from the earthquake was much greater than it really was, put the ambassadors to death, and invaded Judea, expecting to meet with no resistance. But Herod's soldiers happened to be abroad when the earthquake occurred, so that they remained uninjured, and now collecting them together, he fell upon the Arabian army, and having killed five thousand men, besieged the rest in their camp. Being there distressed for want of water, they ventured another battle, in which he slew seven thousand of them, and took the rest prisoners. The Arabians, in their turn, were now forced to sue for peace, and were glad to accept whatever terms Herod chose to prescribe.

Antony, having been entirely defeated by Octavianus in the battle at Actium, fled to Egypt, where he again gave himself up to the charms of Cleopatra. Herod perceiving that he could depend no longer on his protection, began to think of conciliating Octavianus. But still indulging his suspicions of the aged Hyrcanus, who was now resident at Jerusalem, he pretended to discover a plot to render assistance to Malchus king

of Arabia, on which he immediately had the old man put to death, though now in his eightieth year.

Herod, intent on securing the favour of Octavianus, if possible, shut up Mariamne and Alexandra her mother, in the fortress of Alexandrion, under a strong guard, and having placed his own mother and sister in the strong fortress of Massada, set off to pay his respects to Octavianus. Herod, in his address to Cesar, spoke with such ingenuousness, in acknowledging every thing which he had done in opposition to him from friendship to Antony, that he won him over to his interests: Cesar, therefore, confirmed him in his kingdom, and caused him to resume the diadem which he had laid down at his feet. Herod, upon this, made him very rich presents, which he had brought with him for the purpose. Herod was now in high spirits on account of his unexpected success, in obtaining all he wished from Octavianus, and returned to Judea to communicate his good fortune to his family and friends. But his beloved wife, Mariamne, received him with the utmost aversion, and gave herself up to sighs and groans. The reason of this strange behaviour was, that she had by some means learned that he had again given orders, that in case of his death she should immediately be put to death. He had also given orders that Alexandra her mother should also be put to death; and that his brother Pheroras should inherit the kingdom.

Octavianus having conquered Antony at Actium, pursued him into Egypt. On his way, he stopped at Ptolemais, where Herod met him, and gave him and his army a most splendid entertainment; and besides which, he presented Octavianus with eight hundred talents, by which munificent hospitality he greatly conciliated the friendship of the conqueror. Antony having been defeated on all sides, and all his attempts to obtain peace proving ineffectual, in despair of ever retrieving his affairs, he fell upon his sword, and left the world to his rival. As soon as Herod heard of his death, he hastened to Egypt to pay his respects to the conqueror, by whom he was received with signal kindness and honour. He accompanied him on his return as far as Antioch, and received from him several grants, by which his power and kingdom were enlarged considerably.

On the return of Herod from this visit to Egypt, he found his domestic troubles increased rather than diminished. Mariamne still expressed for him the utmost abhorrence, and upbraided him on account of her father, grandfather, brother, and uncle, all of whom he had put to death; but she concealed the true reason of her excessive displeasure, out of regard to the life of Sohemus, from whom she had received the secret. At length, Herod losing all patience, endeavoured to extort from her attendants, by the rack, the secret cause of her grief and

anger, but he could only learn that it was owing to something communicated by Sohemus, that she was so exceedingly disturbed. The king then suspected that his secret orders, in case of his own death, had been betrayed; and, as before, in the case of Joseph, that this never would have been done unless there had existed an illicit intercourse between them. He was now so fired with jealousy, that he immediately put this man to death, and then forming a court of his own dependents for the trial of Mariamne, she was, as a matter of course, condemned to die. It was not, at first, intended to carry the sentence into execution, but merely to shut her up in one of the strong fortresses. The jealous tyrant, however, fearing some insurrection of the people, was induced to precipitate the execution. Mariamne suffered death with unshaken fortitude. She was a truly magnanimous and virtuous woman—of greater beauty and accomplishments than any other of the age in which she lived. As she was led to the execution, her mother Alexandra, reproached her in the most cruel manner, for treating an excellent husband with so much unkindness; but all this was hypocrisy, to save her own life, for she had reason to fear that her time would come next. No sooner was Mariamne executed, than the grief and remorse of Herod became intolerable. He found no rest day nor night. Wherever he went, the image of Mariamne haunted him and filled him with the bitterest reflections, until, at length, he became subject to fits of temporary madness. Immediately after the execution of the queen, a grievous pestilence occurred, which carried off great numbers, both of the common people and the nobility. This, all considered as a just judgment of God upon the wicked king. Herod's disorder of mind was increased by this calamity; so that not knowing what to do with himself, he gave up all care of the public business, and retired to Samaria, where he fell into a grievous sickness. When, with much difficulty he was recovered, and had returned to Jerusalem, he was observed to be more disposed to acts of cruelty than before, which continued to be his disposition to the end of life. While Herod lay sick at Samaria, Alexandra, expecting that he would die, began to intrigue for the supreme power. To accomplish her purpose, she negotiated with the governors of the strong fortresses in Jerusalem. The pretext which she used in these negotiations was, that she wished to secure the government for Herod's children by Mariamne. These officers, however, immediately communicated the whole matter to Herod, who sent orders to have her put to death. This happened in the year 28 B. C.

In the year 26 B. C., Salome, Herod's sister, whose first husband was Joseph, and who afterwards married Costobarus, an Idumean, having become weary of her husband, gave him a

bill of divorcement, contrary to the usage of the Jews, which permits a husband to divorce his wife, but not a wife her husband. But by the authority of Herod the transaction was sanctioned.

Salome having now returned to her brother, to render herself agreeable to him, pretended to reveal a conspiracy which had been entered into by her late husband with several other distinguished men of Idumea, against his government. To gain the more credit to her story, she informed him where Costobarus had concealed the sons of Babas, whom Herod had directed him to put to death. On sending to the place, this account was verified, which induced Herod to believe all that she said respecting the conspiracy. He, therefore, gave orders that all who were accused by Salome should be put to death. Having now cut off all the branches of the Asmoncan family, and all that favoured their pretensions, Herod thought that he might, without danger, make some innovations on the usages of the Jews. He, therefore, erected at Jerusalem a theatre and an amphitheatre; and in honour of Octavianus, (now the Emperor Augustus,) celebrated games and exhibited shows. These things, however, were exceedingly offensive to the Jews. This led ten persons among them to form a conspiracy against the king, who by his spies obtained some knowledge of the plot; so that when these men came to the theatre, with daggers under their garments, they were seized, and put to death with the most exquisite torments. Nor did he cease to make inquiry until he had discovered every one of the conspirators, and put them all to death.

SECTION VII.

DIVINE JUDGMENTS ON THE LAND—HEROD ERECTS A STATELY PALACE ON MOUNT ZION
—ERECTS ANOTHER PALACE ON A BEAUTIFUL HILL SEVEN MILES FROM JERUSALEM—ARISTOBULUS AND ALEXANDER, SONS OF MARIAMNE, SENT TO ROME FOR EDUCATION—HEROD REPAIRS TO MITYLENE, TO VISIT AGRIPPA—AUGUSTUS HIMSELF VISITS THE EAST—IS WAITED ON BY HEROD—ALL ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM TURN OUT TO HIS BENEFIT—UNDERTAKES TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE—THE WORK COMMENCED JUST FORTY-SIX YEARS BEFORE CHRIST'S FIRST PASSOVER.

HEROD was moved by his dread of conspiracies, to fortify other strong places besides those in Jerusalem, and selected Samaria as a suitable site for one. The place was now reduced very low, having been destroyed by John Hyrcanus, as before related. It was, indeed, no more than a small village when Herod undertook its restoration. When it was rebuilt, he named it *Sebaste*, in honour of Augustus; *Sebastos* in Greek, being of the same import as *Augustus* in Latin. In this place he colonized six thousand people, collected from all parts;

among whom he divided the circumjacent country, which being fertile, the town soon became rich and populous.

In the thirteenth year of the reign of Herod, great calamities fell on the people of Judea; for a long drought produced a famine, and the famine a pestilence, which swept away multitudes of people. On this occasion, Herod did a very popular and praiseworthy action. He melted down the plate of his palace—his treasury being empty—and turning it into money, sent to Egypt for corn; by which means so great an abundance was brought into Judea, that they were able to send a supply to the Syrians, who were suffering under the same calamity. The flocks of Judea having also been cut off by the drought, and there being a want of wool for the clothing of the inhabitants, Herod took care to have a sufficient supply imported from foreign countries. By these acts of generosity and sound policy, he greatly won upon the affections of the people; and among the surrounding nations acquired the reputation of a wise and generous prince. But he could not long refrain from acts of cruelty, which sullied the fame of all his good deeds.

Herod being now at peace with all the surrounding nations, and the country being in a prosperous state, he resolved to build a stately palace on mount Zion, the highest part of Jerusalem. This edifice he made of such size and magnificence, that in appearance it rivalled the temple. Within, he prepared two apartments very large and sumptuous; one of which he named *Cesareum*, in honour of Augustus, and the other *Agrippeum*, in honour of Cesar's chief favourite.

There was at this time in Jerusalem a young lady of exceeding great beauty, named Mariamne, the daughter of one Simon, a common priest. Her, Herod married, and to exalt her family, made her father high-priest, turning out Jesus the son of Phebes, to make room for him.

Herod having a passion for building, or finding in this occupation some relief to the troubles of his mind, engaged in another expensive work. He erected a palace about seven miles from Jerusalem, where he had obtained a victory over the Parthians, when his affairs were in a very critical situation. This palace was built on the summit of a beautiful hill, which had a regular declivity on all sides, and commanded an extensive and delightful prospect of the surrounding country. This palace he called *Herodium*, after his own name. When this work was finished, Herod went on to build a city at the place on the seacoast, called Straton's Tower. This city he named *Cesarea*, after the emperor; and on it he spent much time and expense. Before this time, the harbour was very dangerous, so that no ship could ride safely in it when the wind was from the south-west; but by running a mole, or breakwater, in a cir-

cular form around the harbour, to the south-west, he made it safe and commodious, and sufficiently capacious for a large fleet. The expense of this work alone was immense; for the stones used in its construction were brought from a great distance, and were of almost incredible dimensions; some of them being fifty feet long and eighteen broad, and nine in thickness. The foundation of this mole was laid in the sea, at the depth of twenty fathoms. Herod was occupied twelve years, before he completed all his works at Cesarea.

Alexander and Aristobulus, the sons of Herod by Mariamne, being now of sufficient age, were sent to Rome to be educated. They were committed to the particular care of Pollio, an intimate friend; but Augustus, as a special mark of his friendship for the father, took the sons into his own palace, where apartments were prepared for them. To give further evidence of his attachment to Herod, he gave him the privilege of choosing his own successor, from among his sons; and added to his kingdom, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batania. When Agrippa was sent by Augustus to the east, he made Mitylene, on the island of Lesbos, his chief residence. As soon as Herod heard of his arrival in the east, he set off to pay him a visit, and renew their former friendship. Soon after his departure, the Gadarenes, at the instigation of one Zenodorus, a farmer of the revenues, came to Agrippa with complaints against Herod; but he would not listen to them, and to gratify his friend, threw the accusers into chains, and sent them to Herod, who, in order to conciliate them, set them free.

In the year 21 B. C., Augustus himself made a progress through the east. When he arrived at Antioch, Herod visited him, and was, as usual, received with great kindness. But his old enemy Zenodorus, hoping to be more successful with Augustus than he had been with Agrippa, brought new charges against Herod in the name of the Gadarenes, accusing him of rapine, tyranny, and sacrilege. These accusations so far influenced the emperor, that he appointed a day for Herod to appear and vindicate himself; but when his accusers observed the tenderness and partiality with which he was treated, they gave up their cause as desperate; and the following night, several of them put an end to their lives; among whom was Zenodorus. This was construed by Augustus as very favourable to the character of Herod. He, therefore, added to his dominions the tetrarchy, which had been possessed by Zenodorus, and joined him in commission with the governor of Syria, as his procurator, in that province. He also gave Herod's brother Pheroras, a tetrarchy in those parts. As an acknowledgment of all these favours, Herod built near the mountain Panias, from which the Jordan issues, an elegant

palace of white marble. On his return to Jerusalem, Herod found the people much dissatisfied on account of his various innovations on their religion and laws, in compliance with the customs of the Greeks and Romans. To prevent the evils which seemed to threaten him, he in the first place forbade all clubs and meetings where many persons convened, and had spies in all parts to bring him intelligence of all that was said and done. He also purposed to require an oath of fidelity from all his subjects; but Hillel and Shammai, with all their followers, and all who belonged to the sects of the Pharisees and Essenes, refusing to take it, he was obliged to relinquish the design.

In the year 19 B. C., Herod formed the project of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, by which he promised himself that he should not only conciliate the Jewish nation, but raise for himself a lasting and honourable monument. The second temple was, originally, greatly inferior to that of Solomon; and, in the course of five hundred years, had suffered exceedingly, not only from slow decay by the lapse of time, but more especially from the almost perpetual wars which had been carried on, in which it was always the last refuge of those pressed by a superior force. His purpose was, to take down the whole edifice, and build it anew with the best materials. He, therefore, convened a general assembly of the people, and laid before them his plan; but they were alarmed at his proposal, fearing lest when he had pulled down the old edifice, something might occur to prevent the erection of another. To quiet their fears, therefore, he promised that he would not begin to take down the old temple, until all the materials for the new were prepared, and on the ground. Accordingly, he set himself to work to make all manner of preparations for this great work; employing for the purpose a thousand wagons for carrying the stones and timber, ten thousand artificers to fit and prepare these materials, and a thousand priests, skilled in architecture, to take the supervision of the whole work. By these exertions, in two years, having got all things ready for the building, he began to pull down the old edifice, to the very foundations. The proposal of Herod to rebuild the temple, was made in the latter part of the eighteenth year of Herod's reign, 18 B. C.

In the year 17 B. C., all the preparations being completed, the erection of the new edifice was begun, just forty and six years before the first passover of Christ's personal ministry, to which reference is had in John ii. 20, "Forty and six years was this temple in building;" for, although in nine years and a half it was so far finished as to be fit for the public service, the work was carried on until some time after the public ministry

of our Saviour, when eighteen thousand workmen were dismissed at one time.

SECTION VIII.

HEROD VISITS HIS SONS AT ROME—ATTENDS THE OLYMPIC GAMES ON HIS WAY—IS RECEIVED WITH HONOUR BY AUGUSTUS—BRINGS HIS SONS BACK TO JERUSALEM—THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IS DRIVEN ON—IMPRUDENT SPEECHES OF HEROD'S SONS, ALEXANDER AND ARISTOBULUS—DOMESTIC TROUBLES OF HEROD INCREASE—BECOMES MORE SUSPICIOUS—THE YOUNG MEN, HIS SONS, CONTINUE TO INDULGE IN RASH SPEECHES—ARCHELAUS, KING OF CAPPADOCIA AND FATHER-IN-LAW TO ALEXANDER, COMES TO JERUSALEM—HEROD'S EXPEDITION TO ARABIA—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND HIS SONS INCREASES—AUGUSTUS RECOMMENDS A COUNCIL—HEROD ACCUSES HIS SONS, AND THE JUDGES PRONOUNCE SENTENCE OF CONDEMNATION AGAINST THEM—HEROD CAUSES THIS SENTENCE TO BE CARRIED INTO EXECUTION AT SEBASTE, BY STRANGULATION.

THE next year, 16 B. C., Herod made a visit to Rome to pay his respects to Augustus, and to see his two sons, who were there pursuing their education. On his way he attended the Olympic games, on the 191st Olympiad, at which he presided; when finding that these games had much declined in their reputation, in consequence of the poverty of the Elians, which prevented them from keeping them up in their former splendour, he settled a permanent revenue upon them; in honour of which munificence they appointed him perpetual president of the games, as long as he should live. On his arrival at Rome he was received with great honour and kindness by Augustus; and having received his sons, whose education was now completed in the best manner, he returned with them into Judea; soon after which he provided suitable wives for both of them; marrying Alexander to Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia; and Aristobulus to Berenice, the daughter of his own sister, Salome. These young men, by the comeliness of their persons, the agreeableness of their manners, and their other amiable qualities, were the admiration of the Jews. But the intriguing Salome pursued them with the envy and jealousy which she had always entertained towards their mother Mariamne.

In the rebuilding of the temple, those parts where divine service was celebrated were first finished. The sanctuary and holy of holies, together with the porch, were completed in one year and a half after the work was commenced; that there might be as little interruption in the public service as possible. But even during this period, the daily service was constantly performed in the court where the altar of burnt-offerings was situated.

In the year 13 B. C., Alexander and Aristobulus, having resided with their father three years after their return from Rome, fell under his grievous displeasurc. The cause was this. The

young men let fall many rash words, expressing strong resentments against those who had occasioned the death of their mother. Salome and Pheroras, having been the chief advisers of this measure, began to be alarmed; and in their own defence, laid plots for the ruin of the young princes. All these rash speeches of Alexander and Aristobulus were carried to Herod, by his brother and sister, and represented in the strongest colours, with insinuations that they were all directed against his life. And to facilitate the design, these crafty courtiers engaged persons to draw them into free discussion, and provoke them to say what otherwise would never have been uttered. Herod was so much affected by these representations, that to humble the princes, he sent for his oldest son Antipater, by his first wife Doris; but as she was divorced when Mariamne was espoused, her son was educated in private. But now his father placed him over these two brothers, which had no other effect than to exasperate them the more.

The Jews of Asia Minor and Cyrene having suffered much oppression from the heathen inhabitants of the countries where they resided, who would not permit them to live according to their own laws and religion, and deprived them of the privileges formerly enjoyed, sent an embassy to Augustus, to make their complaint and pray for redress. Accordingly, an edict was made in their favour, by which all that they desired was granted to them.

Domestic troubles continued to increase in the family of Herod. Salome, Pheroras, and Antipater, were unwearied in their efforts to fill the king's mind with suspicions and prejudices against his two young sons; until, at length, they so far accomplished their purpose, that an open breach took place between them and their father. By their malicious artifices, these enemies so filled the old man's mind with suspicion and fear, that he was unable to sleep, or obtain rest of any kind. To make discoveries, he put all their confidants to the rack; and some, to obtain relief, would say any thing which they supposed would have that effect. Some of their extorted confessions bearing hard on Alexander, the eldest son, he was cast into prison. On which, becoming desperate, he determined to create as much vexation as possible to his father, and sent him papers in which he confessed a plot which never had any existence; in which he named Salome and Pheroras, and two of the confidential ministers of Herod, as being his accomplices. This had the effect of driving the old tyrant almost to distraction. He now suspected everybody and knew not whom to trust. He raged like a madman against all around him; tortured some upon the rack, and put others to death; so that his palace was little better than a slaughter-house.

Just at this crisis, 8 B. C., Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, and father-in-law of Alexander, came on a visit to Jerusalem. Hearing the accusations against his son-in-law, he affected to be even more violent in his rage against him than Herod himself; and threatened to take away his daughter from him, which after a while had the effect of making Herod his advocate. Upon observing this temper in the old man, he was soon able to bring about a reconciliation between him and his son. Herod was very sensible of the kindness conferred on him by Archelaus, and in acknowledgment of the favour he gave him very valuable presents; and when he returned, accompanied him as far as Antioch, where he reconciled him to Titus Volumnius, the Roman governor of Syria, with whom Archelaus had had a difference.

A reconciliation having taken place between Herod and his sons, he thought it necessary to pay another visit to Rome, to inform Augustus of the improved state of his domestic affairs; he having before informed him, by letter, of the breach between him and his sons; and having accused them to the emperor of many high crimes and treasonable practices against him. While he was absent, the thieves of Trachonitis returned to their old trade, and ravaged all the country of Cœlo-Syria and Judea, which was accessible to them. When, as before related, Herod had driven these banditti out of his territories, about forty of the ringleaders fled into Arabia Petrea, when Sylleus, the governor of that country, not only received them, but granted them a strong fortress called Repta. When Herod went on his last journey to Rome, they invaded Judea and Cœlo-Syria, and ravaged the country in a distressing manner. Sylleus, the governor, felt no disposition to discourage these depredations, for he cherished a mortal hatred to Herod, because he had refused to let him have his sister Salome as a wife, unless he would consent to be circumcised and become a Jew. Herod, on his return, finding the country much injured by the incursion of this band of robbers, and not having it in his power to punish the perpetrators of the mischief, determined to wreak his vengeance upon their friends and relatives in Trachonitis. This exasperated them so much that they made new inroads into his territory, and wasted the country more than ever. When the principal buildings connected with the temple were finished, after nine years and a half from the commencement of the work, Herod appointed a day for its solemn dedication, which falling on the anniversary of his being made king, augmented the pomp and solemnity of the celebration. To put a stop to the incursion of the robbers who infested the country, Herod applied to Saturninus and Volumnius, the Roman governors of Syria, and lodged a complaint against Sylleus for

harbouring them. He also sued him for a debt of sixty talents which he had borrowed from himself. To answer to these charges, Sylleus was obliged to appear at Berytus, before the governors; and Herod having made good his allegations, Sylleus, to get clear, bound himself by oath, within thirty days to pay the money and deliver up all fugitives. But when the day came he performed neither of these engagements, but went to Rome to complain to Cesar. Herod now obtained permission from Saturninus and Volumnius to do himself justice. He, therefore, marched into Arabia, destroyed Repta, and slew as many of the robbers as fell into his hands; then returned without injuring the country, but not without leaving three thousand men in Idumea, to prevent the further incursion of the thieves.

Sylleus, now at Rome, having received an account of these transactions, went to Augustus with a doleful account of the injustice of this invasion, and greatly exaggerating every thing, he so represented the affair that the emperor was much displeased, and wrote to Herod a sharp letter of reproof, and for some time he was actually out of favour with the emperor. Nor was he restored to favour soon.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus began this year, 7 B. C., to write his Roman history, which he finished in twenty books, continued to the time of the first Punic war, at which point the history of Polybius commences. But of these twenty books, only eleven are extant. The work is written in Greek, and is the fullest and most accurate history of the Roman affairs in existence. He was twenty-two years collecting materials at Rome.

The next year, 6 B. C., the quarrel between Herod and his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, was revived. This, combined with the defeat of his Idumean guards by the Arabians, and the loss of the favour of Augustus, fell heavily on the old man. To conciliate the emperor, he sent two embassies to Rome, neither of which was admitted to an audience. He, therefore, sent a third, and employed in it Nicolas Damascus. Augustus now wrote him a kind letter, and condoling with him on account of his domestic troubles, gave him leave to proceed against his sons as he should judge best. And as to Sylleus, Augustus ordered him to return to Arabia, and pay his debt to Herod, after which he commanded that he should be put to death. To adjust the difference between Herod and his sons, Augustus directed that a council should meet at Berytus, consisting of the governors of the neighbouring provinces, together with Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, and other friends of distinction, who should have power to hear and determine the whole matter. Herod immediately summoned this council to meet at the place appointed, calling thither Saturninus and Volumnius, governors of Syria, and all others mentioned by Augustus,

except Archelaus, whom he considered too nearly related to one of the parties to be an impartial umpire. Before this tribunal Herod personally appeared as the accuser of his two unfortunate sons, and laid so many things to their charge, and urged his suit with so much vehemence, that the majority of the court were influenced to pass a judgment of condemnation against the princes, leaving the execution of the sentence to their father.

Herod, in pursuance of this sentence, sent Alexander and Aristobulus to Sebaste, and caused them to be strangled. Thus did these two promising young men come to a premature end, through the envy and malice of an intriguing woman. No doubt they acted imprudently, and in resentment for their mother's death, uttered many rash speeches. Nay, when exasperated by persecution and false accusations, it is probable, that they were precipitated into crimes of deeper dye. But no one can read the history of their tragical end, without lamenting their unfortunate connexion with a court, in which deceit and craft had such a predominant influence.



SECTION IX.

ANTIPATER CONSPIRES AGAINST THE LIFE OF HIS FATHER—PHERORAS DISPLEASES HIS BROTHER BY REFUSING ONE OF HIS DAUGHTERS AND MARRYING A MAID-SERANT—HE JOINS THE PLOT OF ANTIPATER—THE TEMPLE OF JANUS AT ROME CLOSED—THE ANGEL GABRIEL SENT TO MARY AT NAZARETH—BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST AT BETHLEHEM—THE REGISTRATION WHICH CALLED THEM THITHER—LUKE AND JOSEPHUS RECONCILED—VISIT OF THE MAGIANS—MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS—HEROD CAUSES HIS SON ANTIPATER TO BE PUT TO DEATH—GIVES ORDERS TO SLAY ALL THE EMINENT MEN OF THE COUNTRY, THAT THERE MIGHT BE MOURNING AT HIS OWN DEATH, WHICH HE PERCEIVED WAS NEAR—DEATH OF HEROD—HIS FAMILY AND DESCENDANTS—DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM AMONG HIS SONS.

ABOUT this time Zacharias beheld the vision in the temple, as he there officiated in his course, which is recorded in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Antipater, the oldest son of Herod, who was of a cruel, crafty, and ambitious temper, seeing nothing now in the way of his ascending the throne but his father's life, conspired with Pheroras to put the old man out of the way, by poison.

Herod, it is true, had always acted the part of an affectionate brother to Pheroras; but of late, circumstances had occurred to alienate them from each other. Herod wished his brother to marry one of his daughters by Mariamne: but he having fallen in love with a maid-servant, for her sake rejected the offer of the king's daughter, which gave great offence. Herod then gave his daughter in marriage to a son of his older brother Phasaël. But having another daughter, he offered her

to Pheroras, if he would divorce his ignoble wife, which he promised with an oath, that he would do; but when the time arrived, he again refused. There was another thing which widened the breach between the two brothers. The whole nation of the Jews were required to take an oath of allegiance to Augustus, and to the king. This the Pharisees, as before, to the number of seven thousand, absolutely refused, from conscientious motives; believing it unlawful to swear allegiance to any foreign prince. To punish their contumacy, Herod imposed a pecuniary mulct on the whole body; which sum the wife of Pheroras, on account of her attachment to this sect, paid down for them. The Pharisees were so much delighted with this act of generosity, that they willingly received, and gave circulation to a pretended prophecy, which some visionary had uttered, that the kingdom would be transferred from the family of Herod to the descendants of Pheroras by this woman. This report having reached the ears of Herod, he was so exasperated that he put several of the Pharisees to death. Then, convening a council, he laid open before them the whole affair, and peremptorily required that Pheroras should immediately put away this woman, or never expect to be treated by him as a brother any more. To which Pheroras replied, that nothing should induce him to part with his beloved wife; that he would rather die than be separated from her. Herod, greatly resenting this obstinacy, forbade Pheroras to enter his house, and commanded Antipater and all the other members of his family to have no manner of intercourse with him or his wife. This rough treatment prepared Pheroras to listen to the plot of Antipater, to take off the old king by poison.

Antipater, to avoid all suspicion, managed to have himself called to Rome, to wait upon Augustus; and Pheroras gladly complied with the king's commands to leave Jerusalem, and go to his tetrarchy; swearing that he would never return as long as Herod lived. This resolution he kept; for although he was sent for by his brother when he was sick, he would not come; yet, when he was taken ill, Herod visited him and treated him very kindly. After the death of Pheroras, some of his servants accused his wife to Herod, of poisoning him. This led to a strict inquiry, which resulted in the discovery of the plot, in which he and Antipater had been engaged against the king's life. It appeared, that Antipater had got a friend in Alexandria, to prepare the poison, whence it was brought to Jerusalem to Pheroras, who had agreed to administer it to his brother.

The wife of Pheroras, on being questioned by the king, con-

firmed the whole matter; but said, that after his kind visit to Pheroras, he changed his mind, and commanded her to throw the poison in the fire, which she did in his presence, except a small quantity, which she reserved for her own use, if she should need it. The whole testimony went to show, that Antipater, after procuring the death of his two brothers, had now laid a most wicked plot for the poisoning of his father.

The temple of Janus, at Rome, was closed this year. The custom was, to keep the gates open in time of war, and to shut them in time of peace. They had been closed before only four times since the building of the city. The first time was in the reign of Numa; the second after the end of the first Punic war; the third after Augustus had vanquished Antony; the fourth, when Augustus returned to Rome from the conquest of the Cantabrians. In the same year, the most memorable in the annals of man, the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to Zacharias in the temple, was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to Mary, a virgin of the house of David, lately espoused to Joseph, of the same lineage, to declare to her the good tidings, that of her should be born **THE SON OF GOD**; and, accordingly, being overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, she conceived and brought forth a son who was, **CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD**.

Joseph and Mary, having their residence at Nazareth, were providentially called to Bethlehem of Judea, by the following circumstances. It was customary in the Roman empire, to take a survey or assessment of all persons and estates every fifth year. In taking this account, a register was made of all sorts of persons women and children, as well as men; with the ages, occupations, and estates of each. Augustus was the first who extended this survey, or registration, to the provinces. During his long reign, he caused it to be executed in all the provinces three times. Such a registration was at this time going on throughout the Roman empire. The decree requiring it was issued in the year 8 B. C.; but, as our present era begins four years later than the birth of Christ, the date of this decree was only three or four years before he was actually born. During these years, it had been going forward in Cœlo-Syria, Phenicia, and Judea, until this year, when it extended to Bethlehem.

Joseph and Mary, belonging to the family of David, whose city was Bethlehem, were required to attend there, to be registered with the other branches of that family. While they were there on this occasion, **JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD** was born in that place, according to the prophecy of Micah, v. 2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth

unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

It need excite no surprise that we have allowed three years for the execution of this decree, since it is known that it was always committed to the governors of the provinces, and they were not always expeditious. To perform such a work, in the whole province of Syria, when the survey was required to be so particular, both as to persons and estates, would take much time. Joab was nine months and twenty days in taking a census of ten tribes of Israel, and only reckoned the men fit for war. When William the Conqueror had a survey made of England—that recorded in Dooms-day book—it occupied six years. But, although the object of this registration was for the purpose of laying taxes, no taxes were collected at the time, nor until twelve years afterwards, when Archelaus was banished, and a Roman procurator put in his place. The procurator under whom this taxing actually took place, was P. S. Quirinius, called by the Evangelist, Cyrenius, who was at that time governor of Syria. A correct understanding of this matter will easily reconcile Luke with Josephus. Thus, in the first verse of the second chapter of Luke, it is said, "that in those days there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed," or rather, should be assessed or registered, in order to be taxed. Then, in the second verse, it is said, "and this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." That is, the decree took effect, and the taxing was first actually made several years afterwards, when Cyrenius was first governor of Syria; for when Christ was born, Cyrenius never had been governor of Syria.

In this same year, the fourth before the vulgar Christian era, certain wise men of the Magian sect, came from the east, under the guidance of a star, and worshipped the infant Messiah at Bethlehem. Soon after this, Herod put all the children at Bethlehem to death, who were under two years of age. Macrobius, a writer of the fifth century, says that one of Herod's own children was of this number, and that Augustus when he heard it, said "that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son;" but the story is not probable. The sarcasm of Augustus was probably uttered, upon hearing of his having put to death his three sons, Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater. For Antipater, having returned from Rome without knowing that his wicked plot was discovered, was immediately arrested, and being brought before Q. Varus, the new governor of Syria, was convicted of the crime of treasonably designing the death of his father; on which he was condemned, and the sentence being approved by Augustus, was put to death.

Herod lived only five days after the execution of his son. He died in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign. Knowing that he was detested by the Jews, and that the report of his death would be a matter of rejoicing to the people, he formed a project, perhaps the wickedest that ever entered into the mind of man. Having summoned all the most eminent men in his kingdom to attend him at Jericho, where he then lay in the pangs of death, as soon as they arrived, he ordered them to be shut up in the circus; and then sending for Salome his sister, and her husband Alexas, he gave command that as soon as he was dead they should send the soldiers to put them all to death; for this, said he, will provide mourners for my funeral throughout Judea. But wicked as Salome and her husband were, they would not fulfil their promises, in executing an order of such unprecedented cruelty; though, perhaps, they were restrained by a fear of the people, rather than by any aversion to the commission of such a crime.

After the death of Herod, therefore, all these men were set free. The enormous wickedness of this last act of the tyrant's life, seems to remove all objection that might arise in the minds of any, against the account of the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, on the ground that no one could be guilty of such cruelty. The disease with which this wicked tyrant was carried out of the world, was attended with such circumstances as led all the people to believe that the just vengeance of Heaven was pursuing him. Josephus, and after him Eusebius, give the following account: "Herod's disease grew yet more and more grievously violent; God exacting this vengeance on him as the punishment of the many great enormities of which he had been guilty. He had a slow fever, which inwardly consumed him. His appetite was voracious and insatiable. His bowels were ulcerated, especially the *colon*, which occasioned grievous pains. His feet were swollen, and oozed out a fetid humor. An ulcer broke out in the lower part of his belly, which bred worms and lice abundantly. His breath was short and the smell fetid. He had also a troublesome flux of rheum, with asthmatic difficulty of breathing; and the termination of life was at length produced by convulsions of the whole body." His pains were terrible to the very last moment.

Herod married nine wives, by whom he had several children. Three of his sons, as we have seen, he put to death. Of his other children, it will only be necessary to mention those who are noticed in Scripture. By his wife Malthace, he had Archelaus and Herod Antipas; by Cleopatra, Philip; and by Mariamne, Herod Philip. His son Aristobulus, whom he put to death, was married to Berenice, by whom he had Agrippa, commonly called Herod Agrippa, the same who put James the

apostle to death, and was smitten of God at Cesarea for his impious pride. Herodias was also the daughter of the same parents. She was first married to her uncle, Herod Philip, but eloped from him and became the wife of Herod Antipas. By her first husband she had Salome, who went with her, and was the damsel whose dancing pleased Herod so exceedingly, and occasioned the death of John the Baptist.

To Agrippa, mentioned above, there was born a son, also named Agrippa, and two daughters, Drusilla and Berenice. Before these Paul pleaded his cause. (Acts xxv. 26.) Drusilla was married to Felix, the procurator or governor of Judea.

Herod distributed his dominions among his sons, above mentioned, as follows: Archelaus was left heir to the kingdom of Judea; Herod Antipas had the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea; and Philip, Auranitis, Trachonitis, Paneas, and Batanea.

SECTION X.

JOSEPH RETURNS FROM EGYPT—VULGAR ERA—ARCHELAUS GOES TO ROME AND IS DEPOSED—CYRENIUS GOVERNOR OF SYRIA—THE JEWS RESIST THE TAXATION BY THE ROMANS—ANNAS APPOINTED HIGH-PRIEST BY THE ROMANS—DEATH OF AUGUSTUS.

AFTER the death of Herod, Joseph being warned by an angel in a dream, arose and took the young child and his mother, and returned from Egypt into the land of Israel; but when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father, he went to Galilee, and again resided at Nazareth, with Mary his wife. There Jesus abode until he entered on his public ministry.

The Christian era, which is now in common use, by the mistake of Dionysius Exiguus, who introduced it in the sixth century, commences four years later than the real time of the birth of Christ. If Christians had from the beginning used this era, there could have been no mistake in the case; but as the birth of our Saviour was not used as an era for chronological purposes, for more than five hundred years, it is not strange that a mistake of a few years should have occurred. Some, indeed, make the difference only two years, but most of the learned follow Usher, who makes it four.

Archelaus, who succeeded his father in the kingdom, conducted himself in a manner so tyrannical, that ambassadors were sent to Rome, both from the Jews and Samaritans, to complain of his mal-administration. In consequence of these accusations he was cited by Augustus to appear before him and answer for his conduct. When Archelaus went to Rome, Herod Antipas did the same; and also Salome, Herod's sister. The object of Herod was to solicit the kingdom for himself, in

which he had the interest of the rest of the family on his side; for Archelaus was held in detestation by all. After Archelaus had left Judea, with the leave of Varus the procurator, an embassy of fifty of the chief men of Jerusalem went to Rome to petition Augustus to permit them to live according to their own laws, under a Roman governor. When he arrived, not being able to justify himself before the emperor, but being found guilty of all that was charged against him, he was deposed from his kingdom, had all his goods confiscated, and was himself banished to Vienne in Gaul. The duration of his reign in Judea was only ten years. After the deposition of Archelaus, Augustus appointed Cyrenius (Quirinius) to be governor of Syria, and sent with him Coponius a Roman knight, to be procurator of Judea, under the authority of Cyrenius, Judea being a part of the province of Syria. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they seized on the goods of Archelaus and changed the civil government of the Jews. The power of life and death was now taken from the Jews and assumed by the officers of the emperor; and taxes were paid directly into the treasury of the Romans, which was never done before.

The raising of these taxes caused great disturbances among the Jews. Some thought that they were under obligations to serve no king but God; most believed that it was wrong for the Jews to be subject to any foreign power. Those who made opposition on the first ground, were fanatical and seditious men, who were led on by one Judas of Galilee, a very turbulent man, of whom mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, (v. 37,) but he was soon cut off, and all his followers dispersed. They who resisted on the latter ground, were a more formidable body, and included the whole sect of the Pharisees. Their opinions were received by the mass of the people. And hence we may learn the reason why the Publicans, or tax-gatherers, were so odious to the Pharisees.

While Cyrenius was at Jerusalem, among other important changes, he removed Jaazar from being high-priest, and appointed Annas, the son of Seth, as his successor. In the same year, our Lord and Saviour being now twelve years of age, came up to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary, and entered the temple, where the doctors of the law were convened, heard their discourses, and engaged in the discussion of important points with them, so that all who heard him were astonished.

In the year ten of the vulgar era, Coponius was recalled from being procurator of Judea, and Marcus Ambivius was put in his place. In this year also died Salome, the sister of Herod, whose crafty and malicious intrigues had been the occasion of unspeakable evil to her brother's family.

A. D. 12. Augustus, now old, associated Tiberius with him

in the empire. From this date, his reign is reckoned by Luke, where he speaks of the "fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar;" Luke iii. 1. Judea was now destined to a very frequent change of masters, for in A. D. 13, Ambivius was succeeded in his office of procurator by Annus Rufus.

A. D. 14. Augustus Cesar departed this life, after he had nearly attained the age of seventy-six years. The length of his reign was fifty-six years, reckoning from the time of the first consulship; but if we reckon from the victory of Actium, it was forty-four years. He ended his days at Nola, in Campania, not far from Rome. The whole power of the empire now devolved on Tiberius, who had been made a partner with his father before his death. He was at this time fifty-five years of age, and reigned twenty-two years and a half.

SECTION XI.

PROCURATORSHIP OF VALERIUS GRATUS—ANNAS REMOVED FROM THE OFFICE OF HIGH-PRIEST AND ISMAEL SUBSTITUTED—ELEAZAR, SON OF ANNAS IS PUT IN HIS PLACE, AND THE NEXT YEAR GRATUS REMOVES HIM AND SUBSTITUTES SIMON SON OF CANNITH—CAIAPHAS—GRATUS RECALLED AND SUCCEEDED BY PONTIUS PILATE—PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—BAPTISM OF CHRIST—DEATH OF JOHN—PUBLIC MINISTRY OF CHRIST—DEATH OF CHRIST—HIS RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION—PILATE'S ACCOUNT OF CHRIST, SENT TO THE EMPEROR—PILATE REMOVED BY VITELLIUS, GOVERNOR OF SYRIA, AND SENT TO ROME, WHENCE HE WAS BANISHED TO GAUL—TIBERIUS DIES, AND IS SUCCEEDED BY CAIUS CALIGULA.

A. D. 15, VALERIUS GRATUS was sent into Judea by Tiberius, to be procurator, in which office he continued eleven years.

A. D. 23, Valerius Gratus removed Annas from the office of high-priest, and substituted in his place Ismael the son of Fabus. Annas held the office fifteen years. But the very next year, A. D. 24, becoming dissatisfied with Ismael, he deposed him, and put in his place Eleazar, the son of Annas, whom he had deprived of the office. The year following, A. D. 25, the capricious Gratus removed Eleazar, and put Simon the son of Cannith in the office. A. D. 26, Simon was displaced to make way for Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, who had been deposed. These are the persons spoken of in the Gospels, who had the chief concern in the prosecution of our Saviour. And the facts mentioned above, will serve to explain several things in the sacred history. Caiaphas is said to have been the high-priest for that year, as if the office had been an annual one; whereas, it was for life, by the law, if the person did not become disqualified; but we see from the preceding history, that for a number of years no one person had, in fact, filled the place for more than a year.

A. D. 26, Valerius Gratus was recalled, and Pontius Pilate sent to be procurator of Judea; a man ready for every evil

work. Philo Judeus charges him with selling justice, and giving any sentence for money; also of cruelty, rapine, murder, and injuries of every sort.

In this year, A. D. 26, according to the vulgar era, John the Baptist began to preach in the wilderness of Judea. This was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. He continued his ministry for about three years and a half. When John was engaged in his public ministry, preaching repentance and baptising the people, and announcing that the Messiah's reign was near at hand, Jesus Christ came forth from his retirement at Nazareth, and presented himself to John for baptism. At first this good man scrupled to perform the rite, but immediately complied, when he heard the reason assigned by Jesus for desiring it.

When Jesus was baptized in Jordan, the heavens were opened, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON;" and the Holy Ghost descended as a dove, and rested on him. John knew the divine character of Jesus, and was therefore willing to see all men flocking after him, though his own popularity was thereby diminished. He pointed him out to his own disciples as the Messiah, and corrected their wrong feelings flowing from attachment to himself. Jesus now entered on the public exercise of his ministry, in which he laboured incessantly, until the day of his death.

John, while preaching in Galilee, fell under the notice of Herod the tetrarch, who was pleased to hear his discourses, and so much influenced by them as to make a partial reformation in his conduct. But on John's faithfully reproving him for taking his brother's wife, he was so much offended that he cast him into prison. Herodias was urgent to have him put to death, which Herod declined, more for fear of the people than from any higher motives. But on Herod's birth-day, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, so delighted him by her dancing, that he made her a promise, confirmed with an oath, to give her what she should ask. The girl, instructed by her mother, demanded the head of John, which the king, though reluctantly, commanded to be brought to her in a dish.

The history of the Evangelist respecting Herod Antipas is corroborated by Josephus, who says: "About this time there happened to be a difference between Aretas king of Petræa and Herod, upon this occasion: Herod the tetrarch, had married the daughter of Aretas; but in a journey which he took to Rome, he made a visit to his brother Herod (Philip). Here falling in love with Herodias, his brother's wife, he ventured to make her proposals of marriage. She consented, and agreed that when he was returned from Rome she would go and live with him; and he promised to put away the daughter of Aretas."

Josephus also informs us, that Herodias had a daughter by her first husband, whose name was Salome. Josephus, moreover, represents Herodias to have been a woman of great ambition, and one who had much influence over Herod; for by her persuasions he was induced to go to Rome to solicit his brother's crown. The defeat which Herod met with in his war with Aretas, the father of his former wife, is represented by Josephus as a judgment of God upon him for what he had done to John, called the Baptist; for, says he, "Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both towards one and another and towards God, and so to come to baptism." Josephus, indeed, while he states the fact, seems not to have been informed of the true cause of John's death, but supposes that it was owing to Herod's jealousy of John's popularity, and influence with the people, which might put it in his power to excite them to revolt.

The only mention which the Jewish historian makes of Jesus Christ, is in the following remarkable passage. "Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him, both many of the Jews and of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again, the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and many other things, concerning him. And the sect of Christians, so named from him, is not extinct at this day." Most modern critics, it is true, have pronounced this passage an interpolation, and contend that it was never written by Josephus; but no convincing arguments have been adduced to prove that it is spurious.

Jesus Christ having spent about three years and a half in his public ministry, during which time he performed innumerable miracles, was apprehended by the malice of his enemies; and after being subjected to much injustice, reproach, and cruel treatment, was condemned to be crucified; which painful punishment, he accordingly endured, in circumstances of great ignominy. At his death, many prodigies occurred, a particular account of which is given in the Gospels. On the third day he arose again, and appeared unto his disciples; and for forty days conversed frequently with them, and permitted them, by their sense of feeling, as well as of sight and hearing, to be fully satisfied of the reality of his resurrection. Having finished giving his disciples those instructions which he deemed it necessary to communicate in person, he ascended to heaven, in their sight, from Mount Olivet, while in the act of blessing

them. Before he left them, he promised to send the HOLY GHOST, or PARACLETE, to teach and comfort them; which promise was fulfilled at the feast of Pentecost, about ten days after his ascension; when this divine Instructor came upon them, and furnished them with all the wisdom, strength, and miraculous endowment, necessary for the accomplishment of the great and arduous work for which they were commissioned.

Pilate sent to the emperor, according to the usage in such cases, an account of the character and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, which was extant and appealed to in the second century. But this document is now lost.

Vitellius being now governor of Syria, the Samaritans, who had been treated with severity by Pilate on account of an impostor who arose among them, sent an embassy to the governor complaining of his tyrannical conduct. The consequence was, that Vitellius removed him from his office, and ordered him to Rome to answer for his conduct, appointing Marcellus to be procurator in his place. This was about the year A. D. 37. In the following year, A. D. 38, Tiberius died, and was succeeded in the government by Caius Caligula, before whom the cause of Pilate came; and who banished him to Vienne in Gaul, where it is said he put an end to his life.

SECTION XII.

PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES—MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN AND ENSUING PERSECUTION
—CONVERSION OF PAUL—CAIAPHAS REMOVED FROM THE HIGH-PRIESTHOOD BY VITELLIIUS, AND ANANAS SUBSTITUTED—AGRIPPA ACQUIRES THE SUPREME POWER OF JUDEA—HEROD ANTIPAS BANISHED TO GAUL—EMBASSY FROM ALEXANDRIA TO ROME
—PHILO JUDEUS—CAIUS SUCCEEDED BY CLAUDIUS—THEOPHILUS REMOVED FROM THE PRIESTHOOD AND SIMON PUT IN HIS PLACE—PETRONIUS, GOVERNOR OF SYRIA, SUCCEEDED BY MARSUS—AGRIPPA ZEALOUS FOR THE JEWISH RELIGION, BUT SEVERE TOWARDS THE CHRISTIANS—REMARKABLE DEATH OF AGRIPPA—HIS CHARACTER AND SUCCESSORS.

AFTER the apostles of Jesus began to preach his resurrection, an attempt was made to suppress them by force, but this proved ineffectual. A violent persecution, however, was carried on against the disciples, in which Stephen was condemned to death by the Sanhedrim, and stoned. It would seem, from this fact, that when this event occurred there was no Roman governor or procurator at Jerusalem; or the Sanhedrim would not, in contempt of his authority, have dared to inflict capital punishment on any one. It is probable, therefore, that the martyrdom of Stephen took place after Pilate was removed, and before another had succeeded him.

The persecution after the death of Stephen, became very hot, chiefly through the zeal of a young Pharisee, whose name

was Saul. He was one of the Sanhedrim who gave his vote for the death of the proto-martyr, and superintended his execution. Being determined to extirpate the rising sect, he went from place to place apprehending men and women and committing them to prison. But finding that many fled, and that Damascus was a place of refuge for them, he obtained a commission from the high-priest, and a guard to proceed to that place, to bring bound to Jerusalem all that he should find who were followers of Jesus of Nazareth. But before he reached the place, while journeying, about noon, he was overwhelmed with a blaze of light, surpassing the light of mid-day, and by terror, or some irresistible power, being struck to the ground, he heard a person speaking to him, and in the midst of the light saw near to him the very Jesus whom he was persecuting. The young man when he arose was blind, and was led into Damascus, where he remained blind, neither eating nor drinking for three days; when a disciple, being divinely directed, came to him and instructed him in the doctrines of Christ, and then baptized him. From this time to the close of life, Saul, afterwards called Paul, was a most zealous, able, and successful propagator of the faith of Jesus.

About A. D. 39, Vitellius, the governor of Syria, paid a visit to Jerusalem, and bestowed on the Jews many favours and immunities. One method which Herod had devised of governing that turbulent people, was to keep in his possession the costly robes which were worn on solemn occasions by the high-priest. They were preserved in the castle of Antonia, which he had built, and continued in the possession of his successors in power until this visit of Vitellius, at the passover, when they were given into the possession of the Jews.

Vitellius, on some complaint against Caiaphas, deprived him of his office, and made Jonathan the son of Annas, or Ananas, high-priest in his stead, and then returned home. For some time after this the Christian churches seem to have been undisturbed by persecution, and to have increased in numbers very rapidly. Soon after the events above related, we find Judea under the power of Herod Agrippa. He was the son of Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod by Mariamne, whom his father put to death. Few men ever experienced greater vicissitudes of fortune than this Herod. Josephus gives a detailed account of his adventures, which our limits do not permit us to repeat. Suffice it to say, that after suffering innumerable disappointments and disasters, and being for two years imprisoned by Tiberius, he was not only released by Caligula, but received from him the gift of a golden chain, and a diadem. He was first made king of Lysanias, Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, and Batanea.

The success of Agrippa in obtaining the title of king, so excited the envy and inflamed the ambition of Herodias, that she would not suffer Herod Antipas, her husband, to rest until he should also go to Rome to seek for himself a kingdom. But the event was very different from their wishes and expectations, for as soon as Herod Agrippa heard of their visit to Rome, he wrote to Caius Caligula, that Antipas had held secret communications with the Parthians, and had collected vast military stores. Upon this the emperor instead of making him a king, banished him to Lyons, whither Herodias went with him. His tetrarchy was now added to the dominions of Herod Agrippa.

About this time, A. D. 41, the famous embassy from Alexandria to Rome, composed both of Jews and Greeks, took place. The celebrated Philo went as the principal of the Jewish ambassadors, and one Apion, at the head of the Greeks; of all which, Philo and Josephus have given a detailed account. The dissension between them principally related to the refusal of the Jews to worship the image of the emperor.

Caligula now recalled Vitellius from the government of Syria, and appointed Petronius to succeed him. At the same time he sent express orders that the emperor's image should be set up in the temple at Jerusalem. To enforce this order, Petronius came to Ptolemais with an army, where he was met by many thousand Jews, who expressed their determination never to submit to such a profanation. But by the intercession of king Agrippa, who was then at Rome, the order was countermanded. When he heard of the resistance of the Jews, however, he was greatly enraged, and wrote an angry letter to Petronius, whom he suspected of acting in concert with the Jews. This year, A. D. 41, Caligula was assassinated.

Claudius Drusus succeeded Caius Caligula as emperor of Rome. By his advancement, Herod Agrippa was promoted to be king of Samaria and Judea, in addition to his former dominions; and, moreover, he manifested his particular friendship for him by having him appointed one of the consuls of Rome. To Herod, the brother of Agrippa, Claudius also gave the little kingdom of Chalcis.

The Jews, who had been much oppressed under the government of the cruel Caligula, were greatly favoured by Claudius, who permitted them everywhere to live agreeably to their own law, and put the Jews of Alexandria in possession of their former privileges.

A. D. 42, Agrippa returned to Jerusalem to take possession of his newly acquired dominion, on which occasion he offered many sacrifices of thanksgiving, and as a memorial, suspended in the temple the golden chain which he had received from Caligula, when released from prison. At this time, Theophilus

officiated as high-priest of the Jews; but soon after, Agrippa removed him from office, and substituted in his place Simon Cantharus, the son of Simon Boethus. The year following, however, he offered the place to Jonathan, who declined it, but recommended his brother Matthias, on whom the office was conferred. About this time, A. D. 42 or 43, Petronius was recalled from the government of Syria, and was succeeded by Marsus. He was far less favourable to the Jews than his predecessor, and when Agrippa undertook to raise and strengthen the walls around a part of the city, which had been recently built, Marsus interposed, represented the undertaking to the emperor as dangerous to the Roman empire, and obtained an edict forbidding the further progress of the work.

Agrippa was much attached to the Jewish nation, and strict in his observance of all religious ceremonies of the law. Josephus says of him, "That he was of a mild and gentle disposition, and good to all men; beneficent to strangers, but especially kind to the Jews, with whom he sympathized in all their troubles." His residence, after he became king of Judea, was almost constantly at Jerusalem, where he practised the Jewish ceremonies, and did not let a day pass without worshipping God, according to the law of Moses.

It may seem to be inconsistent with the character here given of Agrippa, that he should carry on a cruel persecution against the inoffensive Christians, of which Luke gives the following account: "Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands, to vex certain of the church; and he killed James the brother of John with the sword, and because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also." (Acts xii. 1, 2, 3.) But we have seen that this prince was superstitiously attached to all the Jewish ceremonies, and that he made it a primary object to please the nation in his whole administration; and as they could not be more gratified by any thing than the death of the leading teachers in the Christian church, he was induced to pursue a course in regard to this matter, not altogether consonant with his general character. Luke, in the passage quoted, adverts to the true motive of his conduct, when he says, "because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also." But his design against the life of Peter was frustrated by a miraculous interposition. An angel was sent to release him from his confinement.

Whatever the character of Herod Agrippa might have been in other respects, he seems to have been a very vainglorious person. There is a remarkable coincidence between the narratives of Luke and Josephus, in regard to the circumstances of the death of this prince. Luke says, "And he went down from Judea to Cesarea and there abode. And upon a set day,

Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne and made an oration to them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god and not of a man; and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

The words of Josephus are these: "Having now reigned three whole years over Judea, he went to the city Cesarea, formerly called Straton's Tower. Here he celebrated shows in honour of Cesar. On this occasion, there was a vast resort of persons of rank and distinction from all parts of the country. On the second day of the shows, early in the morning, he came into the theatre, dressed in a robe of silver, of most curious workmanship. The rays of the rising sun, reflected from so splendid a garb, gave him a majestic and awful appearance. In a short time they began, in several parts of the theatre, flattering acclamations, which proved pernicious to him. They called him a god, and entreated him to be propitious to them; saying, 'Hitherto we have respected you as a man, but now we acknowledge you to be more than mortal.' The king neither reproved these persons nor rejected the impious flattery. Soon after this, casting his eyes upwards, he saw an owl, sitting on a cord over his head. He perceived it to be a messenger of evil to him, as it had been before of his prosperity, and was struck with the deepest concern. Immediately after this, he was seized with pains in his bowels, extremely violent from the first. Then turning himself to his friends, he spoke to them in this manner: 'I, your god, am required to leave this world; fate instantly refuting these false applauses bestowed upon me. I, who have been called immortal, am hurried away to death. But God's appointment must be submitted to.' While he was speaking, his pains became more violent; he was carried, therefore, with all haste to his palace. His pains continuing to increase, he expired in five days time, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, &c."

Agrippa left behind him one son, also named Agrippa, about seventeen years of age, and three daughters. One of these, Berenice, was married to Herod, king of Chalcis, her father's brother; the other two, Mariamne and Drusilla, were unmarried at the time of their father's death. Of the youngest of these, Drusilla, some notice will be taken in this history hereafter, as she is particularly noticed in the Acts of the Apostles.

SECTION XIII.

FADUS MADE PROCURATOR OF JUDEA—DEARTH IN THE REIGN OF CLAUDIUS—PROSELYTES TO JUDAISM—FALSE MESSIAH—FADUS RECALLED, AND SUCCEEDED BY TIBERIUS ALEXANDER—HEROD KING OF CHALCIS DISPLACED JOSEPH THE SON OF CAMUS FROM THE HIGH-PRIESTHOOD, AND SUBSTITUTED ANANIAS THE SON OF NEBEDEUS—TIBERIUS ALEXANDER RECALLED, AND CUMANUS APPOINTED TO SUCCEED HIM—COMMOTIONS AT JERUSALEM—DISPUTE BETWEEN THE GALILEANS AND SAMARITANS—CUMANUS RECALLED AND FELIX APPOINTED PROCURATOR—TUMULTUOUS CONDUCT OF THE JEWS—DEATH OF CLAUDIUS—SUCCEEDED BY NERO—ANARCHICAL STATE OF JUDEA DURING THE PROCURATORSHIP OF FELIX—IS SUCCEEDED BY FESTUS—BOTH RESIDE AT CESAREA—FESTUS DIES—IS SUCCEEDED BY ALBINUS—STATE OF SOCIETY MORE AND MORE DISORDERED—ANANUS MADE HIGH-PRIEST—CESTIUS GALLUS VISITS JERUSALEM.

AFTER the death of Agrippa, A. D. 45, Fadus was appointed procurator of Judea. Claudius would have given the kingdom to the son of his friend, but was dissuaded from it on account of his youth. A contention soon arose between this officer and the Jews, respecting the pontifical vestments which he ordered to be deposited, as formerly, in the castle of Antonia. This was by direction of the emperor. And when the Jews proved refractory, Cassius Longinus, who had been sent to Syria in the place of Marsus, came with an army to enforce the emperor's edict; but the Jews prevailed on him to wait until they could petition the emperor, who was induced by the intercession of Herod king of Chalcis, to relinquish his purpose. Claudius then appointed this Herod to preside over the temple, and select the high-priests. He removed Cantharus from office, and appointed Joseph, son of Camus, to succeed him.

In the Acts we read, that "a prophet, named Agabus, stood up, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world, which, says Luke, came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar." Now, during the reign of Claudius, there were no less than four times of famine. The one referred to above, occurred while Fadus was procurator at Judea, and was the last of the four; for it extended to the reign of Tiberius. About this time, the Jews received some proselytes to their religion, of rather an extraordinary character for rank, who proved themselves to be very sincere converts, by their munificence to the Jewish nation; especially in the time of the forementioned famine. The persons to whom I refer, were Helena, queen of Adiabene, in Mesopotamia, and her son Izates. At the time when this dearth occurred, Helena, was at Jerusalem, and supplied the people with large quantities of provisions; and Izates sent them, at the same time, large sums of money. These royal personages had built, near Jerusalem, a sepulchre of magnificent workmanship, in which after their death they were interred.

While Fadus was procurator of Judea, a false Messiah made his appearance, who deluded great multitudes of people, and persuaded them to follow him to Jordan, where he promised that he would divide the waters, and lead them over on dry ground. But while this multitude was on their way, they were overtaken by a troop of Roman cavalry, sent after them by Fadus. The impostor was brought back and beheaded, and all his followers were dispersed. Josephus calls this impostor Theudas, but from what Gamaliel said in the Jewish Sanhedrim, (Acts v. 36,) it appears that Theudas was before Judas the Gaulonite, and was accompanied by only four hundred men, who all forsook him. Probably, therefore, Josephus was mistaken about the name; unless, which is not improbable, there were two of the same name.

A. D. 46, Fadus was recalled, and a man of Jewish origin, by the name of Tiberius Alexander, was made procurator of Judea.

A. D. 47, Herod, king of Chalcis, having received authority from the emperor to appoint the high-priest at Jerusalem, displaced Joseph, the son of Camus, and gave the office to Ananias, the son of Nebedeus. This was among his last acts; for he died shortly after, and his kingdom was given to Claudius Agrippa, the son of king Agrippa, with the same authority over the temple and priesthood which had been possessed by Herod, king of Chalcis. In the same year, A. D. 47, Claudius recalled Tiberius Alexander, and appointed V. Cumanus to be procurator in his stead.

The following year, A. D. 48, during the celebration of the passover, a cohort of Roman soldiers were stationed before the gates of the temple to preserve order. But one of the soldiers, by an indecent action, so provoked the Jews, who were going up to the temple to worship, that some rash young men assaulted the soldiers with stones. Cumanus, at first, endeavoured to allay the irritation of the populace; but failing in this, he summoned the soldiers into the castle of Antonia, by which the Jews understood that he was about to make an attack on the temple. So great a panic seized the multitude who were within the walls, that when a violent rush took place to escape through the gates, more than a thousand of them were crushed to death. Another tumult took place in consequence of the impious conduct of a Roman soldier, who, having seized a copy of the law, tore it in pieces, with insulting and blasphemous language. A complaint was made to Cumanus, who, seeing no other method of appeasing the people, ordered the offending soldier to be beheaded. The commotions among the people increased every day. A dispute now arose between the Galileans and the Samaritans, on account of a murder committed on a Jew in one

of the Samaritan villages. The Roman officer refusing to do them justice, the Jews undertook to revenge themselves, by invading and plundering the Samaritan territory; but Cumanus coming on them with his cavalry, soon dispersed them. Many, however, about this time, joined themselves to troops of robbers, and by their predatory incursions, greatly disturbed the peace of the country.

H. Quadratus had been made governor of Syria, in the place of Longinus; and he being now at Tyre, complaints were made to him, both by the Jews and Samaritans. He determined, therefore, to come to Judea, and examine into the affair for himself. At first, he felt disposed to condemn the Samaritans, but on learning that the Jews had acted in a rebellious manner, in defiance of the Roman authority, he ordered such of them as Ananus had taken, to be crucified. He, moreover, put to death a leading man whose name was Doras, and several others; and sent the high-priests Jonathan and Ananus the president of the temple, in chains to Rome. Finally, he ordered all parties, and the procurator himself, to go to Italy, and submit their cause to the emperor; and then returned to Antioch. When the cause came before the emperor, the Jews had justice done them, through the influence of Agrippa, who was then at Rome. The Samaritans were condemned, and three of their leaders ordered to be executed. The Roman tribune, who had been guilty of exciting the disturbance, was ordered to be sent back to Jerusalem, and to be dragged through the streets, and then beheaded. Cumanus himself, also was recalled.

A. D. 53, Felix a freed-man, was appointed procurator of Judea, and continued in office a number of years. Agrippa seems to have been as much a favourite of Augustus as his father; for in place of his little kingdom of Chalcis, he gave him the tetrarchy which had belonged to Philip, the son of Herod the Great.

Drusilla, the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa, was given by her brother in marriage to Azizus, king of Emesa, who to obtain her, had submitted to circumcision. But Felix, who had already two wives, became enamoured of her; and by means of one Simon a sorcerer, made her offers of marriage, and gained her consent.

Although Claudius showed himself favourable to the Jews, so many tumults were raised by them in the city of Rome, that he published an edict that they should all leave the city, which however was never fully executed. He, however, strictly forbade all public meetings among them. During all this period, the Romans made no distinction between Jews and Christians; for the latter were considered as merely a new sect among the Jews. They, therefore, fell under the operation of

all edicts which related to the Jews. Accordingly, we read in the Acts (xviii) that "a certain Jew, named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately had come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome."

Claudius the emperor died A. D. 55 or 56, and was succeeded by Nero, the son of his wife Agrippina, by her former husband. Nero was a cruel tyrant when in power, although he appeared to be mild and amiable in private life. Soon after his accession to the throne, he put several persons to death, to gratify his own malignant temper; and among the rest, Agrippina his own mother, to whom he owed the possession of the empire. Agrippa, however, shared the favour of Nero as he had done that of his predecessor; for he increased his dominions, by the addition of the cities of Tarichœa, Tiberias, Abila, and Julias, with the territories which appertained to them.

At the time when Felix arrived in Judea, the country was almost in a state of anarchy. The curse of God seemed evidently to be brooding over that ill-fated nation. The whole land was infested with robbers, and swarmed with impostors. About this time, also, arose the *Sicarii*, a desperate set of assassins, who received their name from a short sword or dagger which they carried under their outward garment. These men, by mingling with the crowd, would suddenly strike their victim, and then concealing their weapon, hide themselves among the multitude.

Felix employed these men to put Jonathan the high-priest out of the way; for by his intrusion as an adviser, he had become troublesome to the procurator. Jonathan, having had a chief influence in getting Felix appointed to this office, thought he had a right to exercise a good deal of freedom in advising and admonishing him. But he dearly paid for his officiousness, for Felix was not a man that could endure reproof.

Among the many sorcerers, jugglers, and other impostors, who appeared about this time, there was an Egyptian Jew, who drew after him thirty thousand persons, whom he led to the mount of Olives, promising that he would cause the walls of Jerusalem to fall down at his word; but Felix fell upon the deluded multitude, and slew about four hundred of them, and took two thousand prisoners. The impostor himself made his escape. Many other impostors led their followers out into the wilderness, where they promised that they would show great signs and miracles; but Felix showed no mercy to such men, and caused many of them to be put to death. The Jew above mentioned, is probably the man to whom Lysias, the captain of the temple, had reference, when he said to Paul, (Acts xxi.

37,) "Art thou not that Egyptian which before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men, that were murderers."

Felix, as well as his successors, resided at Cesarea. We find, therefore, (Acts xxiii. 23—35,) that the captain of the temple, Claudius Lysias, when he had learned that a conspiracy was formed by about forty Jews to kill Paul, sent him off by night, escorted by a strong guard, to Felix the governor, at Cesarea. Here he was kept in confinement during the remaining time of Felix's administration, which was two whole years; but liberty was given for his friends to visit him.

On a certain occasion, Felix, and his wife Drusilla, already mentioned, heard Paul preach; and the effect of his discourse, "while he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment," was such that Felix trembled, and he seems to have interrupted the apostle, not wishing to hear any more about these matters at that time; but promising that when he should have a convenient season he would call for him. And he did frequently send for Paul, and converse with him; but his object was to obtain money for his release; thinking, probably, that some of his friends would be willing to pay a large sum for his ransom.

This history of Luke is corroborated fully by Josephus, and in some important particulars, by Tacitus. The marriage of Felix to Drusilla, a Jewess, is particularly mentioned by the Jewish historian, who relates that she was the most beautiful woman of her time, and had been married to Azizus, the king of Emesa, but was seduced by means of one Simon, a Jew of Cyprus, to forsake her husband, and become the wife of Felix. Tacitus says, "That, while Felix was procurator of Judea, he acted in a very arbitrary manner, and scrupled no kind of injustice." When Felix returned to Rome, the Jews forwarded complaints against him to Nero, on account of his cruelty and injustice while procurator of Judea.

The conduct of Felix towards Paul was very reprehensible. When he vacated his office, he left him a prisoner, for no other reason but because he wished to gratify the Jews. The words of Luke are, "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix's room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."

The exact year in which Festus came into office, is not easily ascertained; but it must have been between A. D. 57 and A. D. 60. That he was the successor of Felix as procurator, is often asserted by Josephus. Soon after his arrival in Judea, he visited Jerusalem, where the Jews renewed their accusations against Paul, and requested that he might be brought up to Jerusalem for his trial. But Paul, knowing the malice and treachery of the Jews, in order to avoid this, made use of his

privilege as a Roman citizen, to appeal to Cesar; on which, Festus, after consultation with his council, resolved to send him to Rome.

Soon after this, Festus received a visit from king Agrippa and his sister Berenice. These being Jews, Festus, sensible of his ignorance of Jewish customs, was desirous that they should hear Paul, and then advise him what he should write to the emperor respecting him. Agrippa expressed a strong desire to have an opportunity of hearing the defence of a man who had become so famous by his preaching and his sufferings. Accordingly, on a day appointed, Festus, Agrippa, Berenice, and the chief captains and principal men of Cesarea, came with great pomp into the hall of audience, where Paul was brought before them, chained; and on receiving permission from Agrippa, entered on his defence, in which he gave a succinct account of his life, and especially of his miraculous conversion. At the close of his oration he made a solemn appeal to the conscience of Agrippa, as a Jew who believed in the prophecies, and extorted from him that remarkable expression of his feelings, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

During the administration of Festus, the state of society among the Jews rather grew worse than better. Agrippa having, as was before mentioned, the presidency of the temple, produced a great excitement, by adding to the palace of Herod a high building which overlooked the whole city, and gave him the opportunity of seeing what was going on within the enclosure of the temple. To prevent this, the Jews built a high wall between that and the temple, which entirely intercepted the view from Agrippa's tower. Agrippa, backed by the authority of Festus, gave orders that this wall should be taken down: but the chief men of Jerusalem urged that they might be permitted to lay the whole matter before the emperor. Nero, influenced, it is said, by his wife Poppea, who is thought to have been a secret proselyte, gave permission for the wall to stand. But for some reason he detained all the members of the embassy sent to him on this occasion, among whom was Ismael the high-priest. That office being then left vacant, Agrippa, by the authority vested in him, appointed Joseph Cabis, the son of Simon, to fill the place. After the death of Festus, which occurred about A. D. 63, Albinus was appointed procurator of Judea. He was no better a man than his predecessors, for he was in the habit of compromising with the robbers seized by public authority, for a sum of money. The number of robbers and sicarii, was greatly increased about this time by the dismissal of eighteen thousand labourers from the temple; that work being now entirely finished. These men thus turned adrift and having no regular occupation, betook themselves very generally to unlawful means of procuring a subsistence. Every

day, therefore, the state of society became more disorderly and miserable. In fact nearly all the bonds of civil society seemed to be severed. Albinus was not wanting in severity against the disturbers of the peace; except when they could gratify his avarice by a round sum of money; so that many of the ring-leaders escaped punishment, and no salutary purpose was answered by the executions which took place. Just before the arrival of Albinus in Judea, Agrippa had given the office of high-priest to Ananus, the son of the former priest of that name. He was a zealous Sadducee, and according to the spirit of his sect, was severe in executing punishment upon delinquents. When he first entered on his office Festus was dead, but his successor was not yet arrived. In this interregnum, Josephus informs us, "that he assembled the Sanhedrim and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ, and whose name was James, and some others; and having accused them before this tribunal, as violators of the law, he delivered them to be stoned." Of this proceeding most of the Jews disapproved, and begged of Agrippa to write to the high-priest, and forbid his acting in so unjustifiable a manner. And some of them went to meet Albinus, who was on his way to Judea, and by their representations induced him to send a threatening letter to Ananus. Agrippa found it necessary to dismiss him from office a few months after he had been made high-priest, and appointed Jesus, son of Damneus, his successor.

Gessius Florus succeeded Albinus, as procurator of Judea, A. D. 65. This man was of a more detestable character than any of his predecessors. The Jews thought Albinus a very bad man; but in comparison with Florus, they called him good. Florus was rapacious and cruel, and his avarice insatiable. He was openly the patron of the bands of robbers, in whose wicked gains he shared. No wonder then that robbers increased, until their oppression became so intolerable, that many Jews emigrated from their own country and went to reside in foreign lands. The revolt of the Jews is less wonderful, when we reflect on the distracted and desperate condition of the nation. They were now ripening fast for those dreadful calamities which were preparing to burst upon them.

Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, visited Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; and to form some estimate of the number of persons collected at Jerusalem, on this festival, he ordered the number of lambs used on the occasion to be counted. They were found to be two hundred and fifty-six thousand; but this number, Josephus thinks falls short of the truth, which he supposes was not less than three hundred thousand. Now, if we reckon ten persons to every lamb—for small households united in this festival—the number of Jews at Jerusalem, during that passover, will be three millions.

SECTION XIV.

ROME SET ON FIRE BY NERO—DISTURBANCES AT CESAREA—FLORUS, THE PROCURATOR, EXCITES INSURRECTION—HIS CRUELTY—THE JEWS COMPLAIN TO AGRIPPA—ELEAZAR SON OF THE HIGH-PRIEST, AND MASTER OF THE TEMPLE, PERSUADES THE PRIESTS TO REJECT ALL PAGAN SACRIFICES—DREADFUL COMMOTIONS IN JUDEA, AND MASSACRES IN THE TEMPLE—CESTIUS GALLUS MARCHES AN ARMY TOWARDS JERUSALEM—THE JEWS ASSEMBLED AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, FURIOUSLY RUSH ON THE HOSTILE ARMY, AND SLAY FIVE HUNDRED MEN—AGRIPPA INTERPOSES—PERSUADES THE JEWS TO MAKE PEACE, BUT IN VAIN—GALLUS BRINGS BACK HIS ARMY TO THE GATES OF JERUSALEM—RETIRES AGAIN TO SCOPAS—IS ATTACKED IN THE DEFILE OF AN AMBUSCADE, AND FLIES WITH A FEW HUNDRED MEN—JOSEPHUS, THE HISTORIAN, APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND OF GALILEE AND GAMALA—NERO SENDS VESPASIAN TO JUDEA—HE FIRST SUBDUES GALILEE—BANDS OF ROBBERS INFEST THE COUNTRY—THE ZEALOTS—PARTIES IN JERUSALEM—CRUELITIES PERPETRATED.

IN the year A. D. 65, the city of Rome was burnt; set on fire by Nero himself, as all believed, but laid to the charge of the hated and persecuted Christians; who were subjected to the most horrid cruelties, and torturing deaths, as if they had indeed been the perpetrators of this enormous crime.

A. D. 66, disturbances took place at Cesarea in consequence of an imperial edict, which gave to the Syrian and Greek inhabitants of the place a rank above the Jewish citizens. The spirit of hostility between the parties began to grow hot. Occasions of dispute were not wanting. A Greek, in building his house, nearly closed the entrance into the Jewish synagogue; and on the Sabbath, to insult the Jewish worship, began to sacrifice birds on an earthen vessel, near the door of the synagogue. The parties became exceedingly exasperated against each other, and were just ready to break out into acts of hostility. The master of horse came forward to quell the tumult, but was driven back by the Greeks. The Jews now carried away their sacred books from the synagogue, and made their complaint to the procurator, who was then at Sebaste; but Florus put the embassy, consisting of twelve distinguished men, in prison; alleging as a reason, the removal of their sacred books from Cesarea.

It seems evidently to have been the wish of Florus to excite insurrection, by goading the Jews to desperation. He demanded a large sum of money to be paid to him out of the treasury at Jerusalem, and when this produced a tumult, and called forth bitter reproaches against the rapacity of the procurator, he came in person, accompanied by a body of soldiers, horse and foot. The people came out to receive him with the usual marks of external respect, but he drove them back. He now demanded that all who had joined in the tumult and reproaches against him should be given up, and would hear no apology, but gave

orders to his soldiers to plunder the upper market. In the execution of these orders, they were guilty of great disorders, and some massacres. Peaceable citizens were dragged before Florus, and among the rest, some of the chiefs of the publicans, who held the rank of Roman knights, and who, after being scourged, were crucified. The next day Florus ordered the Jews to go out of the city and meet with the usual shout of joy and respect, two cohorts of soldiers who had been ordered from Cesarea; but he sent secret orders to these soldiers to receive them with insult, and if they showed any dissatisfaction, to fall upon them. The result was, that many were wounded, and others crushed to death in the crowd. His next attempt was to press into the temple with his soldiers, but the Jews offered so determined a resistance that the Romans were repulsed, and forced to take refuge in the castle. The Jews now the more effectually to prevent the Romans from entering into the temple, broke down the covered way which led from the castle Antonia to the temple.

Florus, after these commotions, returned to Cesarea, leaving only one company of soldiers at Jerusalem. But he sent an account of these disturbances to Cestius Gallus; and the principal Jews, with Berenice, forwarded their account, in which they complained grievously of the unreasonable and cruel conduct of the procurator.

Cestius, while he ordered an army to be in readiness, sent a confidential messenger to see what the existing state of affairs was. This man met Agrippa on his return from Egypt, at Jamnia, and both together went to Jerusalem, where they were met by the people with loud complaints against Florus. But they received Agrippa with joy, and treated the message of Gallus with respect. Nay, when Agrippa, in an oration, urged them to obedience, they promised acquiescence, and paid up their arrears of taxes to the Romans, and built up the portico which they had recently demolished. But, afterwards, when Agrippa exhorted them to remain obedient to Florus until another should be sent, they were so enraged that they drove him with stones out of the city.

Eleazar the son of the high-priest Ananus, being now the president of the temple, rashly persuaded the priests to reject all sacrifices which came from Pagans; so that the sacrifices offered by the emperor were henceforth discontinued. The orderly part of the inhabitants now sent to Florus and Agrippa for a body of soldiers, to preserve order. The former gave them no answer, but Agrippa, who now resided at Cesarea, sent them a force of three thousand horse. With these, the party in favour of obedience took possession of the upper city, while the temple and lower town remained under the power of the fac-

tions. These men were actuated by an insane and fiery zeal, and would not so much as suffer the other party to enter the temple for worship. Skirmishes daily took place between them; and the revolters, aided by the Sicarii, actually broke into the upper city, and set fire to the palace of king Agrippa; and the next day made an attack on the castle of Antonia, which they took, and put the Roman garrison to the sword.

The strong fortress of Masada had been, some time before this, surprised by a band of robbers, and the Roman garrison put to the sword. At this time, many Jews of distinction had fled for refuge to the castle of Herod, where they defended themselves bravely against the revolters. Among these was Menahem, the son of the notorious Judas of Galilee; who, going to Masada, broke open the armory and obtained arms for a set of robbers and desperadoes, with whom, returning to the castle at Jerusalem, he proclaimed himself king, and took the command of its defence. The besieged at length begged permission to depart, which was granted to all except the Romans. The next day, Ananus was found dead in the palace; and his brother Hezekiah was also put to death by the robbers. Soon after this, Menahem was slain in the temple, with most of his followers, by Eleazar and his party.

During this year, A. D. 66, the whole Jewish nation was in a state of terrible commotion. At Jerusalem, the factious Jews who continued to besiege the Romans in the castle were guilty of a horrible act of treachery and cruelty; for having promised safety to the besieged, if they would lay down their arms, they, nevertheless, massacred every one of them. On the same day, all the Jewish inhabitants of Cesarea were massacred by the Greeks; and this served as a signal for an insurrection of the two parties, in opposition to each other. In all the cities, where there was a mixed population, there was no safety for any man, but in the strength of his own party. At the same time, the Jews of Alexandria were attacked, and all who could not make their escape were put to death. Fifty thousand Jews, are said to have been slain there in one day.

Cestius Gallus, to quell the spirit of insurrection which had made its appearance in Palestine, marched an army thither, and invaded Galilee, sacked many cities and slew thousands of Jews. Having apparently reduced the rebellious to subjection, near the close of the year, he marched his army towards Jerusalem, and encamped within a few miles of the city. The Jews were at this time assembled from all parts at Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. When the multitude heard of the approach of the hostile army, they seized such arms as they could get, and rushed forth with incredible fury on the Sabbath, and killed above five hundred of the enemy,

while they suffered the loss of only a few men. And the Romans were again attacked on their retreat by Simon Gioras, and suffered considerable loss.

Agrippa now interposed, and sent two ambassadors to persuade the Jews to peace, and to offer them an amnesty for the past; but such was their inconsiderate fury, that they fell upon these messengers of peace and murdered them.

Cestius Gallus now came back with his army to Jerusalem, and having waited in vain for three days to receive proposals of peace, proceeded to obtain possession of two of the northern districts of the city, and drive the rebels into the inner city. He then attacked the upper city, and for five days the most strenuous efforts were used to gain possession of the wall, but they were unsuccessful.

Cestius then formed a *testudo*,* and was about setting the gates on fire, under the cover of this defence, on which many of the rebels fled from the city, and the peaceable inhabitants invited him to enter. But distrusting the apparent friendship of the inhabitants, he marched his army back to Scopas, which encouraged the rebels to attack him on his way, so that it was with difficulty he reached his entrenchments that night, and made his way the next day to Gabao. After remaining at this place a few days, Cestius endeavoured to draw off his army to Antipatris, but the robbers and rebels increasing in number and confidence, not only pursued him, but way-laid him in the defiles of the mountains, and so obstructed his course, that he left the main body and the military engines, and fled by night with a few hundred men.

The state of things became now so distracted and desperate at Jerusalem, as Josephus informs us, that the more prudent citizens left the city. No doubt he has reference to the departure of the whole body of Christians, who agreeably to the warning of their Master, (Matt. xxiv. 15—20,) fled from the city, and went over Jordan, wherever they could find a secure abode; but the largest body took up their residence at Pella.

The rebels, after the defeat of Cestius, were so elated that they thought of nothing but resistance, and constrained all the peaceable inhabitants to join with them. Ananus the high-priest, and Joseph the son of Gorian, were appointed commanders. Eleazar, on account of his rash and arbitrary disposition, had no office in the new arrangement of government; but having appropriated to himself a large part of the spoils taken from Cestius, he was able by his largesses to gain over the populace to his interest. As resistance was fully deter-

* The Romans, when attacking a walled town, disposed their troops in a peculiar manner, which, from the appearance of their shields, held up and joined together, they called *testudo* or *tortoise*.

mined on, generals, or prefects were appointed for every district of the country. Among these we recognise Flavius Josephus, the historian, who has handed down to us an account of these events. To him was assigned for his command, Galilee and Gamala. Having repaired to Galilee, he began by appointing a council of seventy, to manage all important civil affairs; and in every city, seven judges, to attend to matters of less importance. He took care to fortify all the towns which were capable of standing a siege; and by his industry and address, soon collected an army of one hundred thousand men. But notwithstanding this formidable force, which he took care to have organized and disciplined after the Roman manner, such was the spirit of turbulence and revolt among his soldiers, that his own life was often in jeopardy. It was with much difficulty that he escaped the machinations of John of Gischalus, a very crafty leader of banditti.

Ananus the high-priest, finding that all prospect of peace was gone, endeavoured to put Jerusalem into a state of defence. As Simon of Gioras was committing great devastation with his band of lawless followers, he sent an army against him. But Simon fled to Masada, which had now become a mere den of thieves.

Nero, on hearing of these commotions in Judea, was greatly displeased with the governor of Syria, to whose negligence he attributed all these misfortunes. To put a stop to the growing evil, he commissioned Vespasian, who had just returned from a victorious campaign against the Germans and Britons, to take the command in Syria. He also sent Titus, the son of Vespasian, to Alexandria, with orders to transport into Judea two Roman legions which were stationed there.

The Jews, in the meantime, made an attempt to take the strong city of Askelon, but were repulsed with the loss of ten thousand men. A second attempt was not more successful; for falling into an ambush, they lost eight thousand men, and the remainder took refuge in the town of Bezedel, which the Romans set on fire, and they perished in the flames.

A. D. 67, Vespasian arrived at Ptolemais accompanied by Agrippa, and having collected troops from all the Roman stations in the surrounding country, and being joined by his son Titus, with the two legions from Egypt, he found himself at the head of an army of sixty thousand effective men.

Vespasian first turned his course to Galilee, where Josephus commanded. The inhabitants were at once filled with consternation, and most of the soldiers of Josephus forsook him and fled. As many Jews had taken refuge in Jotapata, one of the strongest places in Galilee, Josephus threw himself, with the few men whom he had left, into that city. Vespasian soon ap-

peared before the place with his army, and commenced a regular siege. Josephus and the garrison made a brave defence, but after enduring a siege of forty-seven days, the place was taken. Forty-thousand Jews were slain during the siege, and the city was utterly demolished. Josephus, with forty other Jews, concealed himself in a cave; but they were betrayed by a woman, who knew their place of refuge. The Romans entreated him to yield, and promised to spare his life, but his companions would not permit him to surrender. At the suggestion of Josephus, it was agreed that they should by lot destroy one another; but after all were slain except Josephus and one other, they surrendered themselves to the Romans. At first Josephus was put in chains, but after he had predicted that Vespasian would be exalted to the imperial throne, he was treated with kindness and respect.

While the siege of Jotapata was in progress, Trajan and Titus assailed the town of Joppa, in the vicinity, where twenty-thousand men were slain, and none left but women and children. The winter having now commenced, Vespasian marched back to Ptolemais, and sent two legions to Cesarea, and two to Scythopolis. Having visited Cesarea Philippi, in the kingdom of Agrippa, he and his army were splendidly entertained by that prince, for twenty days.

The remaining cities of Galilee were next reduced. The only place which made much resistance was Gamala, on the sea of Gennesareth, and situated on the top of a precipitous mountain, accessible only on one side. After Agrippa had besieged this place for seven months, Vespasian sat down before it, and pitched his camp on the accessible side. Agrippa, while summoning the town to surrender, was wounded by a sling, and repulsed. When a breach was at length made in the walls, and the Romans attempted to enter, most of the assailants were slain; and Vespasian himself was once so surrounded by the enemy, that he escaped with much difficulty. At last many made their escape by clambering down the rocks or creeping through the sewers. But one of the towers having been undermined, fell, and a way was opened for the entrance of the Romans. The Jews now fled to the citadel, but this was scaled, and all the inhabitants put to the sword, women and children not excepted.

The fortress on mount Tabor was soon reduced, but the town of Gischala, held by John, the leader of a band of robbers, was among the last in Galilee which yielded. John at length left it, after which the people willingly admitted Titus.

John of Gischala, being now obliged to relinquish his strong hold, went directly to Jerusalem, and though he concealed as much as he could, the disastrous state of affairs in Galilee, enough was known to produce deep depression in the inhabitants of that place. At this time the companies of robbers

spread alarm and devastation through the country. Many of these freebooters having taken refuge in the city of Jerusalem, began to carry on the same trade there. For a while, by their violence and their numbers, they carried all before them, and meeting with no resistance, proceeded with still increasing audacity, until they set aside the most sacred rights and institutions. They made one Phannias high-priest, who, although of the sacerdotal race, had been bred to labour in the field, and knew nothing of the duties of his office. These men gave themselves the name of Zealots, and to secure themselves from any attack, withdrew to the temple and occupied it as their citadel. At length Ananus Gorion the son of Joseph, and Simon the son of Gamaliel, succeeded in persuading the people to resist. But before they could arm themselves completely, they were attacked by the Zealots, and an obstinate battle was fought, in which many were killed and wounded on both sides. These conflicts afterwards became matters of almost daily occurrence, and generally the Zealots had the advantage. On one occasion, however, Ananus succeeded in driving them in, and followed so closely that he entered the outer gates of the temple with his men. On this, the Zealots retreated to the inner temple, whither Ananus, through reverence, would not follow them. But he introduced within the outer wall of the temple a guard of six thousand men, who were periodically relieved by others.

John of Gischala was secretly in league with the Zealots, but openly professed himself on the side of Ananus. Some suspicion of his fidelity having arisen he purged himself by a solemn oath, by which Ananus was so completely deceived, that he sent him with proposals of peace to the Zealots, when he took the opportunity of advising them to call to their aid the Idumeans. In a short time several thousands of these people presented themselves at the gates of Jerusalem, but were refused admittance, on which they encamped without the walls. While things were in this posture, a very stormy night occurred, in which there was much wind and thunder as well as rain. In the middle of the night the Zealots passed the guard in the temple, without being noticed, and found means to open the gates of the temple. Then proceeding to the gates of the city, they let in the Idumeans, and conducted them to the court of the temple, where they fell on the guard, who were totally unprepared for such an attack. The noise soon awakened the inhabitants of the city, but as no timely assistance could be afforded to the men shut up in the temple, they were nearly all cut off. The Idumeans and Zealots then attacked the inhabitants, and slew many of them, among whom was Ananus the high-priest, whose body was found in the morning.

The loss of this man at this time was irreparable, for he

was a friend of peace, and by degrees was gaining an influence over the minds of the people favourable to peace; so that Josephus expresses it as his opinion, that if he had lived, a reconciliation with the Romans would have been brought about. But Providence had other things in view for this devoted people.

Great cruelties were now exercised by the Zealots and their auxiliaries on the citizens. They endeavoured first to make them join their party, and those who refused were massacred, scourged, or imprisoned in the temple. Many now sought refuge among the Romans, who looked on with pleasure, to see their enemies destroying one another. But all who were taken in an attempt to fly were immediately put to death by the Jews. In the midst of this confusion, John of Gischala, a brave and sagacious, but wicked man, watched his opportunity for making himself master of the city, but met with determined opposition. His adherents and opposers, however, divided the citizens into two factions, between whom there were many bloody conflicts. While these things were transacted within the city, the state of affairs in the country was very little better; for, the Sicarii increased daily, and laid the country waste, sometimes even massacring the people of whole villages. One thing which proved that the protection of God was departed from the nation, was that now, when the males went up to Jerusalem to the solemn feasts, these robbers and murderers attacked the towns, killed the women and children, and carried off the property, a thing unknown in all the former history of this people; for God had promised to restrain their enemies at such times.

When Vespasian heard of the wretched condition of Jerusalem, he wished to march his army immediately to the place; but not thinking it proper to leave towns unsubdued in his rear, he set himself with vigour to reduce the country to subjection. Placidius was sent against Perea, where the Jews made an obstinate resistance. At Jericho, a battle was fought on the banks of the Jordan, when multitudes of the wretched Jews were driven into the river and drowned; twelve thousand were slain in the field, and several thousand taken prisoners. The other towns then submitted. This was A. D. 68.

A. D. 69, Vespasian had subdued all the region of Judea round about Jerusalem, so that the communication between the city and country was cut off, and the Zealots prevented those within, who desired it, from joining the Romans. It was now the intention of the Roman general to invest the city of Jerusalem and bring the war to a conclusion; but the intelligence from Italy perplexed him. First, he heard that Vindex had rebelled in Gaul; next, that Nero was dead, and that Galba was proclaimed emperor by the army in Spain; then, that Galba, after a reign of seven months, had been murdered; and that Otho

had been declared emperor. Being greatly interested in these revolutions, he deferred the siege of Jerusalem, and waited at Cesarea for further intelligence. This short respite given by the Romans, only rendered the situation of the Jews more wretched; for without and within the walls, all was disorder and mutual conflict.

Simon, son of Gioras, a man of desperate courage, had joined himself to the robbers of Masada, and by his bold exploits became so famous, that multitudes flocked to his standard. He had now at his command an army of forty thousand men. This daring robber extended his depredations far and wide, until he came into Judea. The Zealots sent out an army against him, but they were defeated and driven back to Jerusalem, while Simon himself came up to the very walls, and by his violence and threats, filled the Zealots with dismay. Simon now returned to Idumea, and carried on his work of murder and robbery. The Idumeans fled to Jerusalem, and he pursued them to the very walls. Within the city, the Zealots, and especially John the Gischalite and his party, were guilty of unheard of wickedness. All laws, human and divine, were trampled under foot. To plunder and murder the rich, and to ravish the women, were occurrences of every day. Josephus says that "the whole city was one great brothel, a horrid den of thieves, and a hateful cave of murderers."

The Idumeans, after entering the city this second time, attached themselves to the party opposed to John and the Zealots, and by them many of the latter were slain. They plundered the palace which John had made the depository of his treasures. Upon this, the Zealots scattered through the different parts of the city, united their forces to make an attack on the Idumeans and the people. These, doubting their own strength to resist the force of their enemies, now opened their gates to Simon and his men, who, coming in, closely besieged John in the temple.

SECTION XV.

VESPASIAN'S PREPARATIONS FOR CARRYING ON THE WAR—STATE OF PARTIES IN JERUSALEM—TITUS MARCHES HIS ARMY TO JERUSALEM AND COMMENCES THE SIEGE—GREAT MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE WALLS—EXTERNAL PART OF THE CITY TAKEN BY TITUS—GREAT EFFORTS MADE TO BRING THE JEWS TO TERMS, BUT IN VAIN—CASTLE OF ANTONIA DEMOLISHED—A LADY EATS HER OWN CHILD IN THE FAMINE—THE TEMPLE IS SET ON FIRE AND DESTROYED, CONTRARY TO THE WISHES AND ORDERS OF TITUS—THE WALLS THROWN DOWN, AND THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE PLOUGHED OVER—DREADFUL INFATUATION OF THE JEWISH NATION—THEIR RESTORATION CLEARLY PREDICTED.

BEFORE the close of this year, A. D. 69, Vespasian received intelligence that the German legions had raised Vitellius to the throne of the empire. At this, he and his whole army were much dissatisfied. After some consultation, therefore, they

proclaimed Vespasian emperor of Rome, and entreated him to uphold the sinking empire. From entreaties they proceeded to threats, declaring that they would put him to death if he refused to accept the honour.

Vespasian first wrote to Tiberius Alexander, in Egypt, continuing him in his office, and engaging him to secure the fidelity of the two legions stationed there. The news of his advancement spread rapidly, and before he left Berytus, many ambassadors waited on him, to congratulate him. In the meantime Vitellius was defeated at Cremona, by Priscus, and Sabinus had taken possession of the capitol at Rome, in the name of Vespasian. Vitellius was murdered in the streets of Rome, and Mucianus, sent with an army by Vespasian, having arrived at Rome, Vespasian was universally acknowledged emperor. Vespasian was at Alexandria when this pleasing intelligence reached him. He, therefore, sent his son Titus back to Judea, to finish the war, and set sail himself for Rome, immediately, although it was in the midst of winter.

A. D. 70. At the commencement of this year a third party arose in Jerusalem, under the conduct of Eleazar, the son of Simon, of whom some account has been already given. He, being jealous of John's power, formed a party and took possession of the inner temple. Thus John had to contend with Simon, who had possession of a large part of the city, and at the same time with Eleazar, who had shut himself up in the inner temple. By the continual conflicts between John and Simon, the whole of that part of the city which was adjacent to the temple, was laid waste, and the houses burnt, by which vast quantities of provisions were consumed. And often the streets were covered with the dead bodies of the slain, which lay there unburied. Nor could any one escape, for the gates were carefully watched, and even the appearance of discontent exposed a man to death, as a friend to the Romans.

A. D. 71. Titus now marched his army from Cesarea towards Jerusalem, and encamped about thirty furlongs from the city. He then rode, with a few hundred horse, to reconnoitre the situation of the town, and to see whether the Jews within were at all disposed to yield. But when he came near, the rebels rushed out and separated him from the main body of his party, so that he had no way of escape, but to break through his enemies, which, at great risk, he accomplished. He now moved forward two legions within seven furlongs of the city, and formed a line of intrenchments behind them. The legion from Jericho he stationed on the mount of Olives, six furlongs from Jerusalem, and began a line of circumvallation. But now the three parties in Jerusalem, seeing the enemy at the door, united their forces and sallied out against the legion on the mount of Olives. These sallies were made very frequently,

and in one of them Titus was again in imminent danger of his life. But this union of parties in the city did not last long. As Eleazar opened the gates of the temple to all who came to worship, John sent in some of his party, with their weapons concealed under their garments. These fell upon the Zealots of Eleazar's party, and a bloody massacre ensued. Thus John made himself master of the whole temple; and there remained now but the two parties of John and Simon.

Titus now summoned the city to surrender, but on receiving no favourable answer, he levelled the land from Scopas, where his camp was, up near to the city, cutting down all the trees and removing the gardens. The Jews now made a sally on the Romans with considerable success; but Titus advanced his army within two furlongs of the city, and stationed some of his best soldiers near the walls. It was now the season of the pass-over, and vast multitudes of the Jews were collected within the walls of the city. As to the forces within the city, Simon had two thousand men, and five thousand Idumeans, and held possession of the upper and lower city. John had six thousand men, with twenty-five hundred Zealots, and had also possession of the temple, and such parts as were fully commanded by it. Titus was now prepared to make an assault on the outer wall. But before the attack commenced, Flavius Josephus was sent to make peace, but the only answer returned, was a shower of arrows, which wounded a Roman officer who accompanied him. Mounts were now raised near the walls, in erecting which, the soldiers were protected by their military engines. On these mounts three moveable towers were erected, and the battering rams were brought to bear on the walls in three several places. These tremendous engines produced such terror in the city, that the two parties again united and made a desperate sally, to set the machines on fire, but many of the Jews were taken and crucified before the city. One of the moveable towers fell, but it caused no obstruction to the progress of the siege. The battering rams soon made a breach in the wall, through which the Romans rushed into the new city, and took possession of it on the fourteenth day of the siege. They then demolished a great part of the outer wall, and the Jews retired within the second wall. The Roman camp was now removed within the outer wall, and an assault made on the second wall; and in five days a practicable breach was effected. The Jews made a brave resistance, so that for three days the Romans were unable to enter the breach; or, as often as they entered were repulsed. The Romans, therefore, did what Titus had at first resolved not to do; they demolished almost the whole of the second wall.

Titus, having now obtained possession of the interior part of the city, gave his soldiers a respite of four days, suspending operations, in hopes that the Jews would surrender; for he

knew that they began to be sorely pressed with famine. But finding no desire of peace among them, he prepared to make an assault on the castle of Antonia, and pressed on the siege with vigour. Being very solicitous to preserve the city from total destruction, he sent Josephus again to persuade the Jews to make peace; but they treated the offer with scorn. Some found means of escaping from the city, whom Titus permitted to pass through his camp, and go wherever they would. The famine, within the city, now increased every day, and the robbers began, in search of food, to break into the houses of the citizens, exercising horrid cruelties on those who were unable to supply them, supposing that they had concealed their provisions in some secret place. The rich were often prosecuted on false accusations, merely for the purpose of getting possession of their wealth; for there was no difficulty in finding false witnesses to swear to any charge. The state of morals was probably never worse among any people on earth than it was at this time in Jerusalem. It is the remark of Josephus, that "a race of men so abandoned as those who then had possession of the city, never appeared on earth; and that Titus was compelled, by their abominable excesses, to destroy the city."

Multitudes of unhappy wretches, pressed with hunger, ventured out of the city in search of food, most of whom fell into the hands of the Romans, by whom they were commonly crucified in some conspicuous place. Five hundred were often thus executed in one day; but the leaders within the city persuaded the people that those numerous executions were of the deserters who left the city to join the Roman camp. Titus cut off the hands of some of the prisoners, to inform the people that no deserters would be punished, but only such as were made prisoners of war. At the same time, he sent a message to Simon and John, exhorting them not to destroy the city by their obstinacy, but to preserve their own lives, and those of their fellow citizens. To which, from the walls, they returned a taunting answer, saying that they cared not for their own lives, nor for their country.

Preparations being now made for an assault on the tower of Antonia, by three mounts reared in the most convenient points, John, the leader of the Zealots, dug a mine under one of these towers, and overthrew it; and Simon sallied out and set fire to the towers and machines on the other two. Nay, these daring men pursued the Romans into their very camp. Titus now built a wall round the whole circumference of the city, that those within, being more completely blocked up, might be compelled by famine, to surrender. This wall, thirty-nine furlongs in the extent of its circuit, was supplied with thirteen towers, and was finished in ten days.

The distresses of the famine now became dreadful beyond

conception. At first, the dead were buried at the public expense; but after a while the dead bodies were thrown over the wall, as it was found impossible to bury them all. And all parties within were so much weakened by the famine, that they could make no more sallies to obstruct the besiegers.

Titus pitying the wretched condition of those pent up in the inner city, determined once more to renew his attack on the castle of Antonia; and for that purpose brought wood, which could no longer be had near the city, from a distance of ninety furlongs. But the distress of the famine produced no effect on the tyranny of Simon. He now put to death Matthias the high-priest, who had let him in the city; and also his three sons, besides the high-priest Ananias, and fifteen others of the first distinction.

Judas, an officer who had the command of a tower, with ten other men of distinction, had, on account of the intolerable cruelty of Simon, resolved to surrender the city to the Romans; but while they delayed through distrust of the enemy's sincerity, Simon came upon the conspirators and cut them all off.

Titus being still unwilling to abandon the hope of preserving the city, and especially the temple, sent Josephus a third time, to endeavour to persuade his countrymen to make peace. But he was now more roughly handled than on any former occasion; for as he was going round the walls, he was wounded in the head with a stone, by which he was knocked down senseless to the ground; nor was it without great difficulty that the Romans could rescue him from the Jews, who made a great effort to seize, and drag him into the city. As it was found that some of the Jews, to conceal their gold, had swallowed it, the Syrians and Arabs cut open in one night two thousand living deserters, to search for money in their bowels. This cruel practice Titus prohibited on pain of death, as its continuance would have stopped entirely all desertions from the city.

The number of dead bodies carried through a single gate, in one month, was declared by Manneus, who fled to the Romans, to be one hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight; besides those buried by their relatives. The whole number of dead bodies carried out during the siege, was stated by some deserters to be six hundred thousand. The number buried elsewhere could not be ascertained. After the famine came to the worst, however, they were not carried out at all, but were heaped up in ditches and corners, which produced an intolerable stench.

On the third day of July, a part of the wall of the town of Antonia was thrown down by the battering rams; but the Jews had constructed an interior wall, in an attempt to scale which, the Romans were repulsed. About three o'clock in the night, however, the guards marched up to the town in silence, slew

the Jewish sentinels, and immediately blew their trumpets; on which, the Jewish guard fled, supposing that the whole Roman army was upon them.

Titus brought up his army as soon as possible, and entered into the court of the temple, when an obstinate battle was fought, which continued from three o'clock till noon next day. But the Romans were at length compelled to withdraw from the temple, and be contented, for the present, with the conquest of Antonia. Orders were now given by the Roman general for the complete demolition of this castle, that he might have the more room to station his army, in their assault upon the temple. When Titus heard that the daily service of the altar had ceased, he sent Josephus again to hold a conference with John, and ascertain whether he would be willing to agree to some terms which might preserve the temple from destruction, offering to permit the daily service to be continued by men of his own selection. But John declared that the temple could never be taken, and would enter into no accommodation. Titus, himself, now most earnestly addressed the Jews, entreating them to preserve their beautiful temple—Josephus acting as interpreter—but it was all ineffectual. The Zealots attributed this moderation to mere cowardice. Titus, therefore, brought up his army, and at three o'clock in the morning the temple was attacked. The Jewish guards were found at their posts, and soon sounded an alarm; but the night was so dark that the Jews were unable to distinguish friends from foes, and actually slew many of their own men. This the Romans avoided by their watchword. The battle, thus commenced, lasted till noon, without any decisive advantage on either side. In seven days the castle of Antonia was demolished, and on the space where it had stood, four mounts were reared before the temple. These mounts were designed to bring the battering rams to bear upon the buildings on the northern side of the temple, to which buildings the Jews themselves set fire. The sufferings, by the famine, were extreme. The people devoured any thing which they could lay hold of; even their girdles, shoes, and the leather of their shields.

A woman, whose name was Mary, of a respectable family in the country, having been often plundered by the robbers, had taken refuge in Jerusalem. Being destitute of food, and without means of obtaining any, she roasted her own infant child, and having eaten part of it, reserved the remainder for another occasion, when the soldiers, allured by the smell, rushed into the house and demanded food. She boldly declared what she had done, and showed them the half of the child which was left. This horrid transaction was soon known through the city and in the camp of Titus, who protested that these miseries were not owing to him.

Early in August the battering rams were brought to bear upon the temple, and were plied for several days, *without making* any sensible impression. Next an attempt was made to undermine the northern gate of the temple, but it was unsuccessful, as was also the attempt to scale the cloisters with ladders; for the Jews fought so bravely that they repulsed the Romans, and got possession of one of their standards. Titus, having relinquished the hope of preserving the temple, now gave orders to set the gates on fire. By this means the flames spread into some of the contiguous buildings. The fire continued to rage the whole day, for the Jews made no effort to extinguish it. On the next day, however, it was extinguished by the order of Titus.

A counsel was now called to deliberate whether the temple should be destroyed. Some were in favour of its destruction, in order to guard against future rebellions of the Jews; but Titus persisted in his resolution to preserve this splendid edifice. He accordingly issued an order that the sanctuary should not be injured. Titus now resolved to storm the temple with his whole army; but while he was preparing for the assault, the Jews made several sallies from the eastern gate. The Romans, in driving them back on one of these occasions, penetrated, after them, into the interior of the temple, when a Roman soldier seized a fire-brand and threw it through a window or small door into a passage, which led to the apartments on the north side of the sanctuary. From this place the flames soon burst out. When Titus heard of it, he hastened to arrest the progress of the flames, but could not command the attention of his men, who were engaged in conflict with the Jews; and even the soldiers who followed him disregarded his commands, and instead of extinguishing, did what they could to increase the conflagration. The battle now raged around the altar, streams of blood flowed into the outer court, and the surrounding space was covered with dead bodies. Titus now went, with his chief officers, into the sanctuary, and into the most holy place, and then made one more attempt to have the fire extinguished, but with as small success as before. The soldiers appeared to be actuated by a sort of fury, and applied firebrands to every combustible part. Finding it impossible to save the temple, Titus retired from the scene. The chambers of the inner court were now consumed, and all the rest of the edifice, except the buildings on the east and south, which were afterwards destroyed.

About six thousand persons, mostly women and children, were burnt in the temple, who, trusting to the predictions of a false prophet, that God would work a miracle for their deliverance, went into the temple, and there remained until it was destroyed. According to the testimony of Josephus, there

were then many false prophets employed by the leaders, to deceive the people.

The gold taken by the Roman soldiers, in and about the temple, was in such abundance, that its value, for a time, was not more than one-half of what it had previously been. The lower city was now fully in possession of the Romans, by whom it was burnt as far as the pool of Siloam. The Zealots, therefore, were compelled to retreat to the upper city, where they were closely besieged, and whence they had no opportunity of making their escape. New mounts were now raised, and the machines of war were brought into play; and early in the month of September, the upper city, after a feeble but desperate resistance, fell into the hands of the Romans. Very little mercy was shown to the vanquished. They were slaughtered in heaps in every street and house, and multitudes of dead bodies were found in the houses of those who had died with famine, as well as in the vaults and common sewers. When Titus surveyed the city, he expressed great astonishment at the strength of its fortifications, and exclaimed, that it was surely God himself who expelled the Jews from fortifications from which they never could have been driven by man. The captives were very numerous. The handsomest were selected for the triumph. A large number were presented by Titus to the theatres of the provinces, but the majority were sent into Egypt, to be sold as slaves. John, the leader of the Zealots, was found almost dead with hunger, in one of the vaults. He begged for his life, which was granted, but he was kept in chains until his death.

The Romans now set themselves to destroy the walls, and all that remained of the city. Josephus says, expressly, that the ground was levelled, as though no buildings had ever stood upon it. Three of the highest of the towers and a part of the western wall were kept standing, as a monument to future ages of the ancient splendour of the city. The tenth legion was left as a garrison, and the other soldiers were all sent away.

The obstinacy of the resistance of the Jews has been sometimes attributed to an expectation of assistance from their brethren in Babylonia, but was really owing to fanatical infatuation. During the siege, ninety-seven thousand became captives, and eleven hundred thousand perished. For the siege took place at a time when the city was full of strangers, in attendance on the passover, and of refugees from the surrounding country.

Titus proceeded from Jerusalem to Cesarea, on the coast, where he left part of his army. He then visited Cesarea Philippi, where he celebrated games; and, for the amusement of the people, caused many of the Jewish captives to be cast to the wild beasts, and many more to kill one another, in the

show of gladiators. He exhibited the same cruel spectacle at Cesarea, on the sea-coast, and at Berytus; at the former of which places he celebrated the birth-day of his brother, and at the latter, that of his father.

The fate of John, the leader of the Zealots, has been mentioned. At the close of the siege Simon was not found, but after the removal of the Roman army, he came forth like a spectre from one of the vaults, where he had concealed himself until his provisions were exhausted. Having surrendered himself to the governor of the place, he was sent in chains to Titus, at Cesarea, who directed him to be reserved to grace his triumph.

The same infatuation which brought destruction on the Jews of Palestine, seems to have infatuated those who dwelt in other countries. In Egypt and Cyrene, particularly, they exposed themselves, by their madness, to the same destruction which had so awfully overtaken their brethren in Judea. Their temple in Egypt was destroyed, by order of Vespasian, after it had stood three hundred and forty-three years.

The same reckless fury seems to have actuated the relics of this nation for several ages. In the reign of Trajan, and of Adrian, they were guilty of great disorders, and rose in insurrection against the Roman government, which occasioned the destruction of multitudes of this devoted people. Nor was this all. To this very day, they have been driven from country to country, everywhere oppressed and persecuted—no where finding rest, and never able to collect into a body, or to gain any permanent residence of their own—yet preserved in existence as a distinct people, retaining their national characteristics and their own religious customs, without mingling with the people among whom they dwell.

Thus do they stand, a monument of God's displeasure against their nation's sin, in rejecting and crucifying the SON OF GOD, the promised Messiah, and of the truth of divine revelation, by the fulfilment of numerous prophecies, which foretold their future condition. Still, however, they are preserved in mercy, as well as judgment. For it is clear from prophecy, that, as a nation, they will be restored to the privileges of the Church from which for so long a time they have been cut off by unbelief. For a season, until the time appointed, God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that in the day of visitation, he may have mercy on all. "SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED."

THE END.



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