

History

of the Church of God

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Chapter IV

FROM THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

THE ancient Canaan was about 170 miles in length, and 40 in average breadth, covering some 7,000 square miles, about the size of Wales. The length of the country under Solomon's dominion was about 200 miles, with a breadth of 60 miles, and an area of some 12,000 square miles.

Canaan, or Palestine, "was designed and arranged by God when He laid the foundations of the earth and divided to the nations their inheritance, to be a natural fortress for the preservation of religious truth and purity; a home in which a covenant people might be trained and educated in the household of God and directly under His eye, to be zealous of good works themselves, and to be a royal priesthood to mankind; to carry out in their history God's promise to the founder of their race, that in Him should all the families of the earth be blessed. And therefore God surrounded it with natural fortifications, which kept it separate and secluded—even although placed in the very midst of the most concentrated populations of the world, in the very focus toward which their intercourse with one another radiated—until the objects of the hermit-training and discipline of its inhabitants were accomplished. God hedged round the vineyard in which He planted His own noble vine with tower and trench, with sea and desert, against the boar of the wood and the beast of the field. From the foul Baal and Astarte worship of Syria in the north, it was defended by the lofty mountains of Lebanon;

from the degrading brute and plant idolatry of Egypt it was guarded, in the south, by a long stretch of pathless wilderness; from the Assyrian deification of lawless force, and the monstrous incarnations of the east, the deep depression of the Jordan valley, the swift, deep current of the river, and the intricate fastnesses of the arid hills and valleys beyond, formed a sufficient protection; while between the people and the baneful effects of the beautiful and captivating human apotheoses of Greece and Rome, the Great Sea rolled its wide waste of waters. This remarkable isolation of the country prevented the inhabitants from having any commercial intercourse with the outlying nation (Num. 23:9). With the single and very doubtful exception of Joppa, there was no suitable harbor in which ships could be sheltered; all the havens along the western coast being unsafe. Not a single navigable river flowed from the interior to the sea; the principal stream, the Jordan, flowing parallel with the coast, and being very rapid, crooked and broken, and so deep below the surface of the adjacent country as to be invisible and difficult of approach, and finally losing itself in an inland gulf which is as far below the level of the ocean as the mountains around it are above. Not a single one of the many cities that at different times held the rank of capital was situated on the seashore, Jerusalem being built in the wildest and most inaccessible part of the interior. All these circumstances favored the design of God, and acted in harmony with the spirit of the Jewish law, which discountenanced commerce as much as it encouraged agriculture. The Jews could not help being a nation of farmers. As a new seed of Adam, subjected to a new trial of obedience, they were placed in this new garden on Eden, to dress and keep it, in order that through their tilling of the ground the wilderness and solitary place might be made glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. Very rich and varied were the natural resources of Canaan. No other country in the world presented, within a limited area, such diversities of soil and climate. On the one side it rose ten thousand feet above the level of the sea; on the other it sank one thousand three hundred feet below it; and between these two extremes there was the utmost variety of scenery, temperature and productions. All the seasons had their perpetual abode in this favored country. Perpetual Spring smiled on the green slopes of Galilee; Summer that knew no blight glowed on the tree-covered hills of Carmel; Autumn lingered around the corn-fields of Bethlehem and the purple vineyards of Hebron; while grim Winter sat forever on his icy throne on the

brow of Lebanon, and sent his cooling breath over but dared not lift his destroying arm upon the land. Going from the north to the south was like passing through the circle of the year and the zones of the earth. In the deep trench of the Jordan there was the sweltering heat of the tropics; in the hill country of Judea the mild dews and soft air of the temperate zone; and far up the sides of Lebanon the icy rigor of the Arctic regions. Almost every species of the vegetable kingdom—forest-tree, fruit and flower, field and garden product—is found in Palestine. Containing, in ancient times, from three to six million inhabitants, it was the most fertile and highly cultivated country in the world, and amply sufficed to sustain its population without any extraneous support, without any need of commerce or merchandise. The whole landed property of the country was divided inalienably among the inhabitants in such a way as that the possession of each family was capable of yielding, in years of ordinary productiveness, not merely a comfortable, but even a luxurious maintenance. Each Israelite sat under his own vine and fig-tree, without fear of famine. The whole land was self-contained and independent, and thus its isolation from surrounding nations was still further secured. By the necessity of a careful cultivation of every inch of the soil, the Jews became distinguished above other nations for habits of industry, intelligence and economy; while their world-wide variety of soil and climate fitted them for their universal destiny."—*H. Macmillan's Sabbath of the Fields.*

Moses gives a fine description of the "pleasant," "goodly," "glorious land of promise" in Deuteronomy 8:7-10. And the Lord asks by the mouth of Isaiah (5:4), "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

The peculiar situation and boundaries, and the wonderful and unrivalled excellences of ancient Palestine—the proofs of which excellences are even now plainly visible after eighteen centuries of war and ruin and plunder and neglect—demonstrate the eternal foreknowledge, predestination, omnipotence and special covenant love of God to Israel. They prove that the God of Israel is the God of the universe.

All types are imperfect. Canaan is a type not only of the gospel church, but also of Heaven (Heb. 3 and 4).

The descendants of Abraham are in possession of the promised land—by conquest and actual possession of a part of it, and by virtue of God's promise claiming the whole of it, and have already divided it by lot. They are in covenant relation to God, and as such typify the church under the gospel dispensation; yet among the natural descendants of Abraham there are to be found, at all times, wicked and impenitent persons who, being only children after the flesh, persecute children of the promise and of the Spirit. It is these spiritual Israelites, therefore, who constitute the true worshipers of God, and who suffer persecution at the hands of their fleshly brethren; and also have to suffer for their brethren, who so often provoke the Most High to punish the whole people for the sins of a part. These two classes also typify the fleshly and spiritual natures in all Christians. The Israelites, notwithstanding their professions before Joshua of great faithfulness, soon forgot the God of their fathers and turned to the worship of idols; for which the Lord punished them in various ways, and especially by giving their enemies the mastery over them, and causing them often to groan under the rigid oppression of the nations around them.

During the history of the judges—about 320 years—they were much afflicted by reason of their transgressions, and had often to cry to God for mercy, who delivered them out of their distress. God raised up judges for their deliverance, but they would soon forget God and relapse into idolatry again. This sin beset them more or less until after the Babylonish captivity. The preface to the history of the judges represents the different tribes moving to acquire the possessions allotted them. Judah took the lead in this movement, accompanied by Simeon. These gained a signal victory over the Canaanites and Perizzites in Bezek, and took prisoner Adoni-bezek, a great tyrant, who was justly punished for his cruelty to others.

Judah then aided Simeon in recovering his lot. They took several cities, but could not entirely drive out the inhabitants; and the various tribes made but small headway in gaining entire possession of their inheritances. God told them, indeed, that as they had failed to keep His covenant, He would

not drive out the people before them. They apparently repented, in a public demonstration, at a place which was afterward called Bochim (the weepers), which was thus named on account of their sacrifices and cries of repentance (Judg. 2:1-6).

“After this introduction we have the general summary of the vicissitudes of idolatry and repentance, servitude and deliverance, which we have already noticed. It ends with the enumeration of the heathen nations which were still left, ‘to prove Israel by them;’ a trial in which they failed, intermarrying with them, worshiping their gods, doing evil in the sight of Jehovah, forgetting their own God and serving ‘Baalim and the groves’ (Judg. 3:6, 7). These statements are illustrated by the dark records of idolatry, vice and cruelty which occupy the closing chapters of the book, and which seem to belong to the earlier part of the period of the judges. They are expressly mentioned as examples of the disorder of those days, when ‘there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes’” (Judg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

The affecting and interesting history of Ruthi[1] the Moabitess occurred during the period of the judges. She became the wife of Boaz, and bore a son to him named Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David, from whom sprang Christ, the Savior of sinners; Boaz also being the son of a sinful Canaanitish woman, named Rahab, of the city of Jericho. Among the other wonderful things connected with the salvation of men is that of the condescension of our Lord to be born of such progenitors. Surely He is the friend of sinners; and His grace is able to cleanse and save the vilest, Gentile as well as Jew.

The judges in Israel were an extraordinary order of rulers, raised up in emergencies, and not contemplated or provided for in the constitution of the state.

They did not succeed each other immediately or in regular order, but were indicated by inspiration and signs, on great emergencies, which the people readily recognized, as a divine arrangement in their behalf. There were fifteen of them in all (including Abimelech, the usurper) from Othniel,

Caleb's brother, to Samuel, who was both judge and prophet, viz.: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah,ii[2] Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Sampson, Eli,iii[3] and Samuel.

The period of the judges was a very chequered one, in which, down to the time of Samuel, God taught the Israelites His hatred of sin, not by prophets, but by events. When the nation fell into idolatry and immorality, He allowed their enemies to defeat and oppress them; and then, when they cried unto Him for mercy, He raised up judges to deliver them from their enemies. Thus were the people taught that the way of the transgressor is hard, but that the Divine blessing rests upon those who fear and serve the Lord.

Among the eminent saints in private life, during the ruling of the judges, we might name Manoah and his wife, Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, Elkanah, and Hannah.

During the government of the judges, a change took place in the succession of the high-priesthood. It descended from Aaron to his oldest son Eleazar, and from him down to Uzzi. After Uzzi it was transferred to the house of Aaron's younger son Ithamar, and Eli is chosen high priest. This order remained until about eighty years after, when Solomon changed it back again to the house of Eleazar by deposing Abiathar and appointing Zadok in his stead.

The ark during the time of the judges remained at different places—a long time at Shiloh, a still longer time at Kirjath-Jearim, then at Jerusalem, and finally was deposited by Solomon in the magnificent temple which he had erected. When thus deposited, it contained nothing but the two tables of stone; the golden pot of manna and Aaron's Rod that budded, having been lost during its capture or frequent removals. With little exception it remained in the Holy of Holies, in the temple, from its dedication B.C. 1003, to its destruction B.C. 588—a period of four hundred and fifteen years. Moses made it B.C. 1490, and it perished in Solomon's temple B.C. 588, having been in existence nine hundred and two years! What a miraculous preservation! The second temple had no ark.

The sacred history of the four centuries from the passage of the Jordan to the reign of Saul is comprised in three short books, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and a few pages in the book of Samuel- all of which might be read in half a day! We naturally inquire, Why so short? The answer is ready. The Holy Ghost who inspired the record preserves only such incidents as will be of spiritual profit to the people of God in after times.

At the close of the period of the judges the kingly and the prophetic office was set up in Israel in regular succession. The priestly office was already established. There was a succession of prophets from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, to Moses, the great lawgiver and prophet, who died before the conquest. Among these might be named Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. During the period of the judges, about three hundred and sixty years (including Joshua's leadership), there was an almost entire absence of the spirit of prophecy. But when Samuel, the child of faith and prayer, was called a lively interest was manifested in him by the people. All recognized him as a prophet of God, and honored him as such from Dan to Beersheba (1 Sam. 1-3). From him there was kept up a constant line of prophets, men inspired of God and called to the work, during the kingly reigns over Israel to their termination, and those over Judah down to the close of Malachi's prophecy, about four hundred years B.C. These men spake as with authority from the Most High, and, as a general thing, kings, priests and people were subject to them (Jer. 1); and from Enoch to Moses, and from Samuel to Malachi, they were pious men and eminent servants of God. The chief vacancies appear to be from Moses to Samuel, and from Malachi to the coming of Christ. Some of the prophets under the kingly reigns appear on the stage, deliver their messages and retire, without any record of their names even; others chiefly in the courts of kings; others mostly intermingling with the people.

Some leave no record of their predictions or admonitions, while others, sixteen in all, have done so, and their books may be found in the canon of Scripture, viz.: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, called the four greater; and Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, called the twelve lesser prophets. They spoke the truth fearlessly, whether it offended or pleased

others. This was the spirit that characterized them, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (1 Kings 22:14; Jer. 33:20-40). False prophets sometimes arose and occasioned great trouble. When fairly detected they were to be put to death according to law (Deut. 13), and this was the reason why Elijah had so little opposition in having four hundred of them put to death, on the memorable occasion of the sacrifice at Carmel. The people, however, were so idolatrous themselves that they would often let the false prophet escape and punish the true one.

There were "companies" or "sons" of the prophets (1 Sam. 19:19, 20; 2 Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38-41; 6:1-7), but the object and end of their associations are little known to us. They are mentioned only in the days of Samuel, David, Elijah and Elisha. They appear to have been young men who admired the prophets—sought their society—waited on them and received instruction from them in sacred music (1 Sam. 10:5; 2 Kings 3:15; 1 Chron. 25:1-7), but could not be made prophets of by their teachers. God chose whom he would and raised them to the prophetic office, without any regard to their former human training (Amos 7:14, 15; 1 Kings 19:15-21). The collections of these young men were located at different places, such as Ramah, Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal (1 Sam. 19:18-24; 2 Kings 2:1-5; 4:38; 22:14). Nothing of the kind appears in the New Testament.

From Samuel to Malachi were six hundred and fifty years, a long time for the continuation of the prophetic line set up in Samuel. What a vast volume of warnings, predictions and commands must have been poured forth by them in that period of time! Well might the apostle have said, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1).

The God of Israel communicated with these ancient men of God in various ways, just as it pleased the sovereign of the universe—by inward revelations, in dreams, visions, voices and by angels. And the effects upon the bodies and spirits of the prophets were sometimes remarkable (Gen. 15:12; Dan. 8:10-18; 10:1-21; Hab. 3:16; Ezek. 1:18).

“The priests were at first Israel’s teachers in God’s statutes by types, acts and words (Lev. 10:11). But when under the judges the nation repeatedly apostatized, and no longer regarded the dumb acted lessons of the ceremonial law, God sent a new order—the prophets—to witness for Him in plainer warnings.” “They were bold reformers, and reprovers of idolatry, iniquity, and hypocrisy; they called the attention of the people to the moral law, the standard of true holiness; they showed the inefficacy of ceremonial observances, without the obedience of faith and love; and they kept up and encouraged the expectation of the promised Messiah, and more fully declared the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow. Their claims to be considered as God’s appointed servants were demonstrated by the unimpeachable integrity of their characters, by the intrinsic excellence and tendency of their instructions, and by the disinterested zeal and undaunted fortitude with which they persevered in their great design. These were still further confirmed by the miraculous proofs which they gave of Divine support, and by the immediate completion of many smaller predictions which they uttered.” Their grandest object was to declare the spirituality of God’s religion, the necessity of repentance, and the fullness and freeness of the Divine salvation which was to be wrought out by the coming Messiah; we see the truth of this remark especially in Isaiah and in the last and greatest of the prophets before Christ, John the Baptists. The ancient Jews always acknowledged that the chief design of the prophets was to foretell the times of the Messiah. “The dress of the prophets was a hairy garment with a leathern girdle (Isa. 20:2; Zech. 13:4; Matthew 3:4); and their diet was the simplest (2 Kings 4:10, 38; 1 Kings 19:6), a virtual protest against abounding luxury.” “The absence of greater clearness in their predictions is due to God’s purpose to give light enough to guide the spiritual, to leave darkness enough to confound the carnal mind. Many of the prophecies have a temporary and local, foreshadowing their final Messianic, fulfillment. The prophets were the poets and historians of their people.”

“While it is certain that, for some two thousand or seventeen hundred years, the prophecies of the Old and New Testament Scriptures have been read in public assemblies, dispersed into several countries, translated into several languages, and quoted and commented upon by different nations, so that there is no room to suspect so much as a possibility of forgery or

illusion, it is certain that we see many of these prophecies fulfilled and fulfilling at the present day. We see the descendants of Shem and Japheth ruling and enlarged in Asia, Europe and America, and the curse of servitude still attending the wretched descendants of Ham in Africa. We see the posterity of Ishmael multiplied exceedingly, and become a great nation in the Arabians; yet living like wild men, and shifting from place to place in the wilderness; their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them; and still dwelling a free people in the presence of all their brethren and of all their enemies. We see the family of Esau totally extinct, and that of Jacob subsisting at this day; the sceptre departed from Judah, the people living nowhere in authority, everywhere in subjection, the Jews still dwelling alone among the nations. We see the Jews severely punished for their infidelity and disobedience to their great prophet like unto Moses; plucked from off their own land, and removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, oppressed and spoiled evermore, and make a proverb and a by-word among all nations; still by a constant miracle preserved everywhere as a distinct people for the demonstration among the Gentiles of the truth of the Scriptures and for the completion of other prophecies relation to them; while their great conquerors are everywhere destroyed—the Assyrian Nineveh devoured by fire and barely able to be exhumed from the rubbish of its ruins—Babylon made a desolation for ever, a possession for the bittern, and pools of water—Tyre become like the top of a rock, a place for fishers to spread their nets upon—and Egypt a base kingdom, the basest of the kingdoms, still tributary and subject to strangers. We see, of the four great empires of the world (the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Græco-Macedonian, and the Roman) represented by the great image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the fourth and last, which was greater and more powerful than any of the former, first divided into the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, and then subdivided into many smaller and weaker nations, and among them the great idolatrous apostasy of the Christian Church, in a city seated upon seven mountains, wearing out the saints of the Most High, and thinking to change times and laws, his temporal dominion now taken from him (Dan. 12:26), but still asserting his spiritual power, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, enjoining the worship of Mary and other departed saints, and opposing and exalting himself above all laws, human and divine, and sitting as God in the Church of God,

proclaiming himself the infallible vicegerent of God on earth, the last Supreme Judge of the human race."—*Fausset, Scott, Gray and Newton*.

Our remarks upon the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, shown to be fulfilled in the New, are reserved for the close of the Old Testament period.

The fulfilled and fulfilling prophecies of the Scriptures peremptorily demonstrate the Divine inspiration of the Bible, and God's absolute foreknowledge and control of all things for the salvation of His people.

Toward the close of Samuel's life the kingly power was set up in Saul. Samuel's sons, like those of Eli, were too unworthy to become his successors. The people demanded a king in order to be like other nations; and although forewarned of the evil consequences of a monarchy by Samuel, they disregarded all, and urged him to select a king for them. This displeased Samuel; yet God said unto him, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." "Hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." Samuel did so, but they disregarded his warnings and demanded a king; which God gave them in His anger, and yet did not forsake them. He directed Samuel to anoint Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, to be a king over them, and to go forth as their captain to deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines, because their cry under oppression had come unto Him (1 Sam. 9:15, 16). In making up the army of Israel cavalry was forbidden, lest the kings and people should trust in horses and chariots, and exhaust their resources too rapidly by keeping up such an expensive show of formidable array, and be tempted to engage in demoralizing foreign wars. They were rather to trust in the living God, while they went forth in person to combat. The kingly power, thus set up, did not overturn the previously existing theocracy; for the king was only the servant still, or vicegerent, of God, to enforce His commands, and to be established in his authority or dethroned, as seemed good in His sight. The king's authority extended to all temporal and spiritual affairs, and in this respect church and state were united, God, however, being admitted to be the righteous Ruler and Governor over all.

Saul, for unfaithfulness and presumptuous sins in office, was rejected from the throne, as was all his house. David, the youngest son of Jesse, was anointed and appointed to succeed Saul, and in his family it pleased God to make the kingly power hereditary. Saul came to the throne B.C. 1095, and reigned over all Israel forty years. In the battle of Gilboa he was defeated by the Philistines, and took his own life. Saul was aware of David's having been anointed by God's prophet to be king over Israel, yet sought often to kill David so as to defeat God's purpose in this respect. Quite similar was the conduct of Herod about one thousand years afterwards, when, after having been specially informed that the king of the Jews was born in Bethlehem, who was to reign over the house of Jacob forever, he sent forth executioners, who slew all the male children in that vicinity from two years old and under, in order to frustrate the declared purpose of God! How unreasonable, impious and inconsistent is the unrenewed mind of man!

David was the first proclaimed king over the tribes of Judah and Benjamin at Hebron, B.C. 1055, and reigned there seven years. Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was proclaimed king over the ten tribes at Mahanaim, and a seven years' war ensued between him and David. David finally prevailed, and was anointed king over all Israel, B.C. 1048. This was his third anointing. The year following he made Jerusalem the capital, and reigned there thirty and three years, making forty years in all. He shortly after removed the ark from Kirjath-Jearim to Jerusalem, and purposed building a house in which to worship God; but, although this purpose was approved of God, yet he did not suffer David to carry it into execution, because he had been a man of war and had shed much blood. The work was reserved for his successor. For fifteen years after he began to reign in Jerusalem (1048 to 1033) he was almost continually engaged in war with the old enemies of Israel, such as the Edomites, the Moabites, the Amalekites, and Ammonites, the Philistines and the Assyrians; and, conquering and subduing all these nations, he pushed forward his dominion until it had included all that had been originally promised to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 15:18-21; Deut. 11:23, 24; Josh. 1:4, compared with 1 Kings 4:21-24; 2 Chron. 9:26). Of all the kings that reigned over Israel, David and Solomon only extended their jurisdiction to the utmost borders of the vast country promised originally to the Hebrews,

viz.: from Egypt to the Euphrates, about fifty thousand square miles— Palestine only occupying twelve thousand square miles; and their joint reigns lasted but eighty years. Nevertheless, these two reigns constituted the golden age of the temporal grandeur and spiritual enjoyment of the chosen people.

David was said to have been a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14); his name signifies beloved; he was a type of Christ and of the church, and his experience is that of every child of grace, more or less. Even after his regeneration he committed great sins; but God gave him great grace, superabounding over his sins (Rom. 5:20), and enabling him truly to repent (like Peter—Ps. 51; Luke 22:61, 62); God forgave him, but, to vindicate His own holiness (Lev. 10:3), and to give His servant the needed discipline (Heb. 12:5-11), He declared that the sword should never depart from his house, and he afforded him recompense in kind for his transgression (2 Sam. 12:7-14). His nature was exceedingly devotional—sometimes enthusiastic. The Psalms written by him reveal his character as a humble, penitent and devout worshiper of the Most High.

“The three most eminent men in the Hebrew annals—Moses, David and Solomon—were three of their most distinguished poets. The hymns of David excel no less in sublimity and tenderness of expression than in holiness and purity of religious sentiment. In comparison with them the sacred poetry of all other nations sinks into mediocrity. They have embodied so exquisitely the universal language of religious emotion, that (a few very fierce and vindictive passages excepted, natural in the warrior poet of a sterner age) they have entered with unquestioned propriety into the ritual of the holier and more perfect religion of Christ. The songs which cheered the solitude of the desert caves of Engedi, or resounded from the voice of the Hebrew people as they wound along the glens or the hillsides of Judea, have been repeated for ages in almost every part of the habitable world, in the remotest island of the ocean, among the forests of America and the sands of Africa. How many human hearts have they (under the application of the Spirit of God) softened, purified, exalted! of how many wretched beings have they been the secret consolation! on how many communities have they

drawn down the blessings of Divine Providence, by bringing the affections into union with their devotional fervor."—*Milman*.

And notwithstanding all that may be said in favor of this eminent servant of God, we should not forget that he was a man—a depraved mortal—a man of like passions with ourselves—at best a sinner saved by grace, and liable to err through the temptations of Satan, the seductions of the world, and the deceitfulness of his own heart. He did err greatly; the Lord punished him for it severely; he repented deeply, and God in mercy forgave him freely. All these things are carefully set down for warning, admonition and encouragement to spiritual Israel thenceforward to the end of time.

Solomon, the son of David, succeeded his father, and was crowned king B.C. 1014, in a time of profound peace, and equaled him in the length of his reign—forty years. He was much devoted to God in the first part of his reign. He built the temple, iv[4] placed the ark within it, and dedicated it.

He was seven years and a half in building it, and completed it B.C. 1004. Immense sacrifices were offered to God upon its dedication; the glory of God filled the house after the ark was carried into it, so that the priests could not minister because of the cloud; Solomon, kneeling, spread forth his hands towards Heaven, and offered the prayer of dedication; after which he dismissed the people, who returned to their homes joyful and with glad hearts (1 Kings 8: 1-66). This, no doubt, was the greatest and happiest day the Hebrew nation ever witnessed. The hundreds of thousands who could not be present at the dedication considered themselves equally interested and alike participating in the joyful festivities of the occasion. Wisdom was specially given to Solomon. God asked him, before this time, what he would have, and he asked for wisdom to govern Israel well. They were God's people—they were then a great people—and he desired wisdom to govern them well for their good and God's glory. He did not ask for long life, or for riches or honor, but for wisdom. The Lord granted his request, and, in addition to wisdom, conferred on him riches and honor exceeding that of all other men. The temple was a small structure in comparison to many others, both ancient and modern; but it was the most costly of all, chiefly on account of the quantity of gold and silver used in its construction. In this

respect it was a forcible type of the true church in all ages of the world, which, though so much smaller than the false church, is yet the most costly of all—having cost the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and being clothed with His imputed righteousness, which outshines by far all the righteousness of man.

After the dedication the Lord appeared unto Solomon again, assuring him that He had heard his prayer and had blessed the temple, and would establish his (Solomon's) throne over Israel forever if he proved faithful; but, should he turn from the Lord and serve other gods, He would cut off Israel out of the land, and cast the house which He had hallowed out of His sight! (1 Kings 9:2-7.)

Now was the zenith of Hebrew greatness. The sun of national Israel had pierced the horizon when Abram was first called from "Ur of the Chaldees," and had been gradually rising higher and higher—higher and higher still—for nearly a thousand years, until, at this auspicious period, he stood forth in his meridian splendor, shedding his benign rays over the beautiful land of Palestine, the garden-spot of the world, with all the tributary nations around it. Added to this was the religious character of the people; who were loud in their praises of, and faithful in adoring, the only true God. Israel in spirit was but little annoyed by Israel after the flesh: the sons of Belial shrunk back from persecuting the sons of God, and all seemed united in love, peace and prosperity—from Dan to Beersheba, and from the great river to the sea. Spiritual Israel here had rest, v[5] indicative of that which remains for the people of God in Heaven, and indicative of that rest which all experience when changed from the legal to the Christian dispensation, or translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. But these halcyon days under the reign of Solomon were of short duration—God's people must not expect a long continuance either of temporal or spiritual happiness in this poor, sinful world—both are fleeting in their character and soon pass away; but, while spiritual enjoyments are renewed from time to time until they are perfected by the transcendent glories of eternity, temporal enjoyments terminate at the grave.

Solomon transgressed the law of his God. He did not prove faithful to the end. He gave himself up to carnal pleasures. He made an affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, by marrying his daughter, and took many wives from the heathen nations around him, all of which was expressly forbidden. His strange wives were idolaters, and he indulged them in idolatry. He built them high places for the worship of their deities, and joined some of them in their infamous worship. With the decline of his zeal for God and the honor of his name came a decline of his earthly greatness. God made known to him His displeasure, and notified him of the downfall of his kingdom and the rending off the ten tribes in the days of his successors. He appeared not then to repent of his sins, but no doubt did before his death, which took place B.C. 975, when he was succeeded by his son Rehoboam (1 Kings 12).

During the reigns of both David and Solomon, as at all other past times since the fall of Adam, while there were a few spiritual worshipers of God, the mass of the people either worshiped idols, or only outwardly worshiped God in accordance with the will, the example or the command of their rulers. "But the constant tendency was to idolatry; and the intercourse with foreign nations which Solomon maintained, as well as his own example, greatly increased the tendency. Under Solomon, indeed, idolatry struck its roots so deep that all the zeal of the reforming kings that followed him failed to eradicate it. It was not till the seventy years' captivity of Babylon that the soil of Palestine was thoroughly purged of the roots of that noxious weed."—*W.G. Blaikie.*

The question is sometimes asked, Was Solomon a spiritual Israelite, a child of grace, an heir of God, and has he gone to Heaven? We answer, Yes. All the writers of the books both in the Old and in the New Testaments were Heaven-born and Heaven-bound. God would not permit an unregenerate man, a heathen, a barbarian, to write a book for Him, and then place it in the sacred canon of Scripture. This would be a most preposterous thing. Besides, it is said that he "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father" (1 Kings 3:3). And again, the Lord said of him, "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of

men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee" (2 Sam. 7:13-15). The Lord made two special revelations to him, and gave him more wisdom than any other man; and this wisdom was spiritual as well as natural. And, in addition to all this, Solomon wrote three books that are preserved and handed down to us in the Old Testament, viz., the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes and Proverbs; in all of which there are evidences of a spiritual mind, and the unction of the Holy Spirit is clearly manifest.

During the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon there was almost an entire absence of miracles, being a period of about 120 years; yet the Lord revealed himself to His people by Urim and Thummim, through his prophets; also in visions, as in the case of Solomon and others; also by visible manifestations, as at the dedication of the temple, when the cloud and the glory descended and filled it.

We have said that during the reign of Solomon the sun of Israel's greatness was at his height; and from his reign that sun began to decline, sinking lower and lower, until it finally set amidst the darkness and desolation that followed the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army under Titus (A.D. 70). The nationality was then overthrown, and the remnant of Israel scattered among the nations.

King Solomon was succeeded by his son Rehoboam; and very soon thereafter the ten tribes revolted, and set up Jeroboam to reign over them. This separation continued until the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, when what was left to return, both of Jews and Israelites, united as one nation again, and were thenceforward called Jews. The ten tribes had revolted twice before this against the throne of David; first, under Abner and Ish-bosheth, after the death of Saul, for seven years; second, under Absalom, and at his death under Sheba, for a short continuance. This last revolt (under Rehoboam) was about the year B.C. 975. The ten tribes were captured and carried away into Assyria by Shalmaneser, B.C. 721, which gave them an independence of the throne of David for 254 years. The kingdom of Judah, composed of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the most of Levi, continued from the setting up of Rehoboam to the first taking

of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (a period of 369 years), B.C. 606, from which the date of the seventy years' captivity commences. According to this, the two kingdoms, that of Judah and Israel, were separated 439 years, say from 975 to 536 B.C., when the seventy years were ended. During all this period of separation, however, they were one people still, in feeling, in origin, in religion and destiny, and had more or less intercourse with each other. Besides this, many from the ten tribes, during the wicked reigns of Jeroboam and his impious successors, found their way to Jerusalem and the jurisdiction of Rehoboam and his successors, before Israel was carried off into Assyria.

It is deplorable to notice the sad declension of the ten tribes after this third revolt until carried away. They had not a righteous prince to rule over them during the whole period from Jeroboam the first to Hoshea the last. All were wicked, all idolatrous, and caused Israel to sin. What must have been the mortification and suffering of God's spiritual worshipers among them for that long 254 years! They had nineteen kings to rule over them in nine distinct dynasties. Of these nineteen, seven were murdered by conspirators, namely, Nadab, Elah, Jehoram, Zachariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah; one, Zimri, after a brief reign, to avoid falling into the hands of his competitor to the throne, burnt himself up in his palace; another, Ahab, died ingloriously in battle, "whose blood the dogs licked;" another, Ahaziah, died in consequence of a fall through a lattice in his house; and the last, Hoshea, was dethroned and carried a captive into Syria; eight only died quietly in their beds, namely, Jeroboam, Baasha, Omri, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jeroboam II., and Menahem.

The kingdom of Israel was scourged with wars, and these were mostly with the kingdom of Judah. Their armies or populations were nearly the same, Judah having, as is supposed, two-thirds the number of Israel, some of the tribes having run down very low, and many persons uniting their fortunes to Judah, a powerful and the most religious tribe. The advantages gained on either side were about equal in the end.

"The separate history of the idolatrous kingdom of Israel may be well divided into four periods: 1st. Idolatry taking root—about fifty years, during

the reigns of Jeroboam I., Nadab, Baasha, Elah and Zimri, and during the prophecies of Ahijah and Jehu. 2nd. Idolatry rampant—about forty-eight years, during the reigns of Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram, and during the prophecies of Elijah, Micaiah and Elisha. 3d. Idolatry slightly checked—about one hundred and two years, during the reigns of Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II., and Zachariah, and during the prophecies of Jonah, Hosea, and Amos. 4th. Idolatry terminating in ruin—about fifty-four years, during the reigns of Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea, and during the prophecy of Oded.”—*W.G. Blaikie*.

The enemies most to be dreaded by Israel were the Assyrians, who finally conquered and swept them away. Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, in the reign of Pekah, B.C. 740, conquered and carried into captivity the two tribes, Reuben and Gad, the half tribe of Manasseh, east of Jordan, Naphtali, and portions of Galilee on the west (1 Kings 15:20; 1 Chron. 5; 2 Kings 15). The others of the tribes in the reign of Hoshea, B.C. 721, were carried away captive by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria.

The captivity of the ten tribes was a punishment from God, “because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and would not hear them nor do them” (2 Kings 17, 18) This captivity was a terrible punishment to idolaters, but not more than they deserved and not more than God had already threatened. He was faithful to carry out His long-declared purpose, known to these wicked rulers and these wicked people, from generation to generation, by His holy prophets (2 Kings 17:20-23; 1 Kings 14:7-16). This is the last account we have of these tribes as an independent and separate body of people. History is silent concerning them afterwards. Many of their descendants returned to Jerusalem, no doubt, upon the cessation of the Babylonish captivity, when Israel and Judah became one stick again (Ezek. 37:16, 17). The Babylonians conquered the Assyrians and carried many Israelites to that country, probably before the Jews were taken there from Jerusalem. When they met, they fraternized, and felt to be one people.

The land of Israel was not left desolate when the king of Assyria depopulated the country. He brought in others to fill their places, men,

women and children, from different provinces of his empire, to secure the country which he had conquered; and in this way Samaria was settled. Here originated a most remarkable people, both in regard to their religion and their perpetuity. The zealous king of Judah, Josiah, undertook to destroy the idols in the lands once occupied by the ten tribes, ninety-three years after their captivity. He met with resistance else-where, but not in Samaria. There he killed the idolatrous priests, which they were willing to, and had no objection to the worship set up by Josiah. Ninety-two years afterwards, viz., in the year B.C. 536, when Ezra under the decree of Cyrus was laying the foundation of the second temple, these people desired to assist him in the work on the ground of a common religion. Said they: "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do: and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Asshur, who brought us up hither." But the Jews replied: "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God: but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel as Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us" (Ezra 4) Upon this refusal of their assistance they became much displeased, and did what they could ever afterwards to hinder the work, and actually prevailed with the king of Persia to put a stop to it for awhile. The bitterness engendered on that occasion has never passed away. It continued between the two people all the time during the existence of the second temple. In the days of our Savior "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans," and we presume the prejudice remains to this day, whenever they come in contact. The Jewish nation has been broken up for eighteen hundred years, and their descendants are now dispersed abroad among the nations of the earth without the least sign of nationality; while the Samaritans occupy their old ground still, hold fast to their old religion, and are full of their old prejudices. They worship on Mount Gerizim, and hold to the five books of Moses, with the books of Joshua and Judges in a corrupted form. The Pentateuch, however, is their Bible, and they still look for a Savior to come.

Their copy of the Pentateuch is very ancient, and written in the ancient Hebrew or Phoenician character. When they received it or what is the date of it is unknown—perhaps a little before the Babylonian captivity.

What are we to expect by the preservation of these people through twenty-five centuries? There is mystery involved. Conquering nations have swept over them for many long centuries like waves of the sea, but they have not been washed away; there they are yet, on their same old Mount Gerizim, with Pentateuch in hand, affiliating with neither Jew nor Christian, Mohammedan nor Pagan, Romanist nor Protestant, nor with the church of God, yet looking for the Messiah to come!

They are reduced in number, it is said, to about one hundred and fifty souls, the oldest, the smallest and the extremist sect in the world, and yet, for aught we know to the contrary, it may please the Divine Mind to allow them to remain until they shall behold from their same old mountain the true Messiah, coming in the clouds of Heaven with His holy angels, to gather His ransomed people home, and take vengeance on them that know not God—not the first, but the second time, without sin unto salvation.

During the reign of nineteen kings in Israel, till their being carried away, there were only twelve who reigned in Judah, and nineteen in all down to the Babylonian captivity- and all these in a direct line from David.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, did well for a few years of his reign. He ruled wisely, and walked in the way of the better days of his father and grandfather. His reign was honored and revered, and so devotional was he that numbers of priests, Levites and people of Israel, moved into Judea away from the idolatry and oppression of their own rulers. But a sudden change came over the mind of Rehoboam. So soon as he felt established on his throne and everything seemed prosperous around him, he forsook the law of the Lord and plunged into idolatry and almost every vice, and drew most of his subjects with him. God brought down his high looks and defiant attitude by sending Shishak, king of Egypt, to look after him. He invaded Judah, took the fenced cities, and approached Jerusalem. He and his princes came down at once, at the preaching of the prophet Shemaiah and the approach of Shishak's army, confessed their faults and pleaded for mercy, as did the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah. The Lord hearkened and saved them from destruction by causing the invading forces to turn away after they

had taken the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house and Solomon's shields of gold.

There was strong opposition by God's spiritual children in Judea all the time to the wicked devices of the king; but they were in a minority, as usual, and could not prevail. Rehoboam did better after this, but never altogether reformed (2 Chron. 11:5-23; 12:1-16; 1 Kings 14:22-24).

Abijah, son of Rehoboam, succeeded to the throne. He did not entirely reform abuses, but professed to be jealous for the honor of God, and reproached Jeroboam, king of Israel, with forsaking Him. He made war with Jeroboam, under this plea, among others, and relying upon the Lord, he went into battle with an odds of two to one against him, and defeated Jeroboam, slaying five hundred thousand of his men—being one hundred thousand more than was numbered in his own army. He strengthened his kingdom greatly, and died after a short reign (2 Chron. 13; 1 Kings 15)

Abijah's son, Asa, succeeded him, and proved to be one of the best kings that ever reigned over Judea. He earnestly sought to extirpate idolatry and immorality from the land, and repaired the fortified places of Judea; and, in the strength of a covenant-keeping God (see his remarkable prayer in 2 Chron. 14:11), he met the mighty invading Ethiopian host of a million men, under Zerah, and utterly routed them. Encouraged by the prophet Azariah, he now became still more zealous in the destruction of idolatry. But Baasha, king of Israel, moving against him, his faith in God seemed for a time to fail him, and he, with the treasures of his palace and the temple, hired Benhadad, king of Syria, to invade Baasha's northern frontier; and, being rebuked for this by the faithful prophet of the Lord, Hanani, he cast the latter into prison. Asa was attacked with a disease in his feet; and seeking not to the Lord, but to physicians (probably foreign idolaters), he died.

His son Jehoshaphat succeeded him, and he proved another worthy son of the house of David. One of his first acts was to conclude a peace with Israel, which had been broken for sixty years. There had been trouble and war, more or less, existing between the two kingdoms from B.C. 975 to 915. This wise and virtuous king suppressed it altogether. He was zealous for the

cause of God. He did more than others before him—he became a preacher—a public instructor in the law of the Lord. He went to the extent of his dominion exhorting the people to obey God, keep his law inviolate, and worship the God of their fathers exclusively. And as he established judges throughout his territories, from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim, in the various fenced cities, he exhorted them to discharge their duties in the fear of the Lord. He not only went himself, but he commissioned others to go and teach the people in the knowledge of the Lord and remove ignorance from their minds. “He sent five princes, accompanied by nine Levites and two priests, to teach in the cities of Judah: and they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about all the cities of Judah and taught the people.” This was in advance of anything ever before done in Judea, and seemed pointing to the spread of the gospel under the Christian dispensation. Our blessed Saviour both preached His own gospel in the cities and villages of Palestine, and called and qualified His disciples to do the same thing.

Jehoshaphat was unfortunate in agreeing to make an alliance with Ahab, king of Israel, and with Ahab’s son and grandson—Ahaziah and Joram. It was of no advantage to Israel and great disadvantage to Judah. He was greatly blessed of the Lord, however: he strengthened his kingdom, and had an army, prepared for war, numbering one million, one hundred and sixty thousand men—seven hundred and eighty thousand of Judah and three hundred and eighty thousand of Benjamin.

The two prosperous reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat were soon shorn of their excellency by the wicked reign of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat. He married the daughter of Ahab, and engaged in the wickedness and idolatries of that abominable house. He murdered in cold blood his brothers who were better than he, restored the idolatrous high places on the mountains of Judah, and endeavored to compel all the people to forsake the worship of the true God and go with him in all his impurities of idolatrous worship. In the full tide of his apostasy he received a letter, written to him by the prophet Elijah, who died in the reign of his father, but who saw what the future course of this young prince would be when he came to the throne, and therefore wrote this letter, to be handed to him in proper time. He had

fulfilled the prophecy to the letter. "He had not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat, his father, nor in the ways of Asa, king of Judah: but had walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab; and had slain his brethren of his father's house which were better than he." All this he had done! And what was to follow? Heavy and miserable judgments, unless he should repent, and Judah with him. "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast so done, behold with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and they children, and thy wives, and all thy goods; and thou shalt have great sickness, by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day." This letter of Elijah was despised both by king and people. The judgments followed rapidly. The Edomites revolted from under his hand. The Philistines and Arabians invaded his territories, entered Jerusalem, sacked his palace, carried away his wives and all his sons save one. "And after all this the Lord smote him in his bowels, with an incurable disease; and after the end of two years his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases, without being desired, after a reign of eight years; his people made no burning for him, and gave him no burial in the sepulchre of the kings" (2 Kings 8; 2 Chron. 21).

What a remarkable letter was this! Was such a one ever written or received before that day? God is a being of infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, and He inspired His prophet to write a letter to this man before he came to the throne, telling him what he should do to others, what others would do to him, and with what disease he should die. He died, leaving a weak and wicked nation behind him.

His son Ahaziah, sometimes called Azariah and Jehoahaz, succeeded him and walked in his footsteps. He also married in the wicked family of Ahab. He went to war against Hazael, king of Assyria, with Joram, king of Israel; they were defeated, and returned, and both were slain by Jehu, king of Israel, who was raised up to take vengeance on the house of Ahab. Ahaziah was slain in the first year of his reign (2 Chron. 22; 2 Kings 9).

Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, upon learning the death of her son (and who had counseled him for evil during his life), caused all the seed royal of the house of Judah to be put to death, except one that escaped, and then usurped the throne herself. Wickedness appeared to be triumphant at this juncture, and Baal's worshipers were in the ascendant. The valuable and sacred things of the temple were taken and bestowed upon the worship of Baal, and this idol was set up in Judah as it had been in Israel, with its altars, images and priests.

"But Jehoiada the priest resolutely held the temple during the six years of Athaliah's usurpation, and conducted the services in the prescribed forms" (2 Kings 11:1-16; 2 Chron. 22, 23) He was one of the most remarkable men of the times, and seemed to stand superior to any other in his day for wisdom, prudence, and devotion to God, from first to last, without any defection or abatement of zeal for the law of the Lord. He had great influence with the people; they revered him as Israel did Samuel of old. He was contemporary with Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah—seven kings. He secreted the escaped son of Ahaziah, Joash or Jehoash, his wife's nephew, in the temple until he could succeed in deposing Athaliah, which was done in the sixth year of her reign; and he had Joash, a child of seven years, proclaimed king of Judah, who for twenty-seven years did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, because his uncle counseled him. He brought the people generally back to the worship of God, and the bright and peaceful days of Asa and Jehoshaphat seemed to be returning again. But Jehoiada died at the advanced age of one hundred and thirty years; being kingly in life, he was honored with a kingly burial at his death.

"And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and toward his house."

So soon as Jehoiada died, the young king fell into the hands of wicked men, who soon led him astray. "They left the house of the Lord God of their fathers and served groves idols." "Yet the Lord sent prophets to bring them again unto the Lord, and they testified against them, but they would not give ear."

Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, became high priest, and used his utmost exertions to stay the tide of the wide-spreading idolatry; but a conspiracy was raised against him, and at the king's command he was stoned to death in the house of the Lord! Our Saviour tells exactly where—"between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23: 35). Here was a priest of the Most High God slain in His sacred temple (while performing sacred rites), by order of a king whom his father secreted, protected, raised, had crowned king of Judah, and counseled for good all his life, and he a relative at that! How could it be otherwise than that this blood should cry aloud to heaven for vengeance? It did cry aloud for vengeance, as well as that of Abel and of the Son of God; and that divine wrath, which had been slumbering so long, fell upon an after-generation of this people, with untold misery and woe, and the remnant have been scattered to the four winds of heaven—the despised and persecuted people among the nations of the earth.

The death of Zechariah is the first recorded martyrdom of a priest of the Most High God; martyred while officiating in the holy temple service and by the professing people of the Lord! How awful and gloomy the scene, and yet how frequently has it been re-enacted since the introduction of Christianity into the world! Ministers of the gospel, pastors and elders, have been torn from their flocks and from their ministrations in holy things, hundreds and thousands of them, and cruelly slain for their faithfulness to God by those who professed to be Christians, the people of God, and the servants of Christ!

God punished Joash by the hand of Hazael, king of Assyria, and afterwards his servants slew him in his bed (2 Kings 11, 12; 2 Chron. 23, 24).

Amaziah his son succeeded him, and his reign was an improvement upon that of his father, though it was far from being good. He made a successful war against the Edomites, but publicly introduced the gods of Edom into Jerusalem as his own, for which God punished him by the hand of Joash, king of Israel. Joash made war on him, defeated and took him prisoner, destroyed part of the wall of Jerusalem, seized and carried off to Samaria part of the treasures of the temple and the king's house, after which he was

conspired against and murdered (2 Kings 14; 2 Chron. 25). While Amaziah reigned, Jonah, the first of the sixteen prophets whose writings appear in the sacred canon of Scripture, was prophesying in Israel (2 Kings 14:25).

Uzziah, also called Azariah, succeeded to the throne of his father Amaziah, and had a long and somewhat prosperous reign. He reigned fifty-two years. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, another of the sixteen prophets whose writings are in the sacred canon. He fortified Jerusalem, increased his army, and became famous abroad. He permitted idolatry among the people, though he did not practice it himself. Prosperity ruined him at last. He became so self-important that he attempted to officiate as priest in the temple, but Azariah, the chief priest, and eighty other priests, withstood him and thrust him out. And while he was wroth with them for so doing, leprosy rose up in his forehead, in the house of the Lord, beside the incense-altar, and he himself hastened to go out, because the Lord had smitten him. He was a leper to the day of his death (2 Chron. 26). Joel prophesied during a part of his reign, and Isaiah the last year of it, while Hosea and Amos prophesied in Israel (2 Chron. 26; 2 Kings 15).

Jotham was son and successor to his father Uzziah. Sacrifice and burning of incense were yet tolerated in high places, though Jotham was a moderately good king, and followed the general policy of his father. He did not attempt to usurp the priesthood.

In his latter days the Lord began more seriously to press Judah with her old enemies, Syria and Israel (2 Chron. 17; 2 Kings 15; Micah 1, 2). The next king in Judah was Ahaz, son of Jotham, who excelled all of his predecessors in idolatry. He openly espoused it, "sacrificing and burning incense, in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree;" and was the first of all the kings of Judah or Israel that sacrificed human sacrifices- even his own son—to the dumb idols! He revolutionized the whole system of religious worship in Judea, completely ignored the worship of the true God, cut in pieces the vessels of the house of the Lord, caused the sacrifices of the temple to cease, turned the priests out of doors, and closed the doors of the temple, so that the worshipers of God found no entrance. Those doors which had remained open for 267 years (B.C. 1005 to 738)

were now closed, and remained so for twelve years. God punished him for all this. He set the king of Assyria on him, who defeated him in battle, and carried many of his people away as captives to Damascus. Pekah, king of Israel, also slew 120,000 of his subjects, and carried away 200,000 women and children captives to Samaria. The captives and spoil were returned, but none of the dead came back. The Edomites of the south rose up, smote Judah, and carried away captives; and the Philistines overran and retained possession of the south of Judah. Nothing seemed to touch the heart of this wicked king. He became more and more hardened, and deaf to all the appeals for reform that could be made to him. How the ways of Zion mourned during this long season of cruelty and idolatry, and how deep must have been the sorrow and mortification of all spiritual worshipers of the true God during this long night of abomination!

Hezekiah, the son of the wicked Ahaz, in the royal household, was fully alive to the wickedness of his father's course, and mourned in secret with other devout souls over the desolations of Zion. Expecting to occupy the throne at his father's death, he had already made up his mind to abolish these terrible abuses. Accordingly, in the first month of the first year of his reign, and on the first day of the month, he re-opened and cleansed the house of the Lord. And he revived the celebration of the feast of the Passover, sending messengers all through the land of Israel as well as of Judah to invite the faithful to the sacred and solemn festival, which was kept with greater joy than any since the days of Solomon.

Indeed, the whole course of the priests and the observance of the law appear in every particular to have been reconstructed and established by Hezekiah, and the reformation extended throughout Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh also. The groves were cut down, the high places thrown down, and the images broken to pieces. Hezekiah was honest and sincere in what he did; his heart entered into the work; and the worship of the true God was beautiful to behold in all quarters of his kingdom. Not so exactly with all the people; for, in respect to many of them, Isaiah said: "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me; but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men;

therefore will I proceed to do a marvelous work among the people," etc. (Isa. 19:1-14, etc.). Hezekiah engaged in successful wars with both the Assyrians and Philistines (2 Kings 18:1-16); but Sennacherib invaded his country in the fourteenth year of his reign, and forced him to tribute. Before the arrival of the Assyrian king, Hezekiah was miraculously healed of his sickness by the prophet Isaiah, and assured of the lengthening out of his life fifteen years by the sign of the going back ten degrees of the shadow of his dial.vi[6] And he was delivered out of the hand of Sennacherib, the Lord miraculously destroying his army.

These favorable circumstances exalted Hezekiah, and he became vain; they were a snare unto him. He was thought highly of and honored by the nations around him. The king of Babylon, Berodach-baladan, among others, had to send him ambassadors to congratulate him on the recovery from his sickness, and Hezekiah, in a fit of vanity and pride, showed them all his wealth and magnificence.

The prophet Isaiah reproved him for this, and pronounced the judgment of the captivity against him, his family, and his kingdom. Upon this, "Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah" (2 Kings 20). So much for this worthy, patriotic, conscientious and devout king, Hezekiah. His son was a perfect contrast to him, and excelled in wickedness all who had preceded him.

Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, succeeded his father, and was crowned at the age of twelve years. Those who ruled him were sons of Belial,vii[7] and plunged him into the commission of almost every crime. If the exact opposite of every good thing his father did was set down to his account it would reveal in part, but not in whole, the carnal and Satanic course of Manasseh. "He shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another!" and finally succeeded in seducing and carrying the people along with him "to do more evils than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel!" He reigned in all fifty-five years. But in the twentieth year of his wicked career he was taken captive by Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria, and carried in chains to Babylon, then his

capital. Manasseh was humbled by the Spirit of God, repented, and begged for mercy, and the Lord pardoned his sins and restored him to his kingdom again. He might have quoted Paul's experience, wherein he says, "That in me, the chiefest of sinners, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1:15, 16). He devoted the remainder of his life to the service of God, and exhorted all the people to be zealous of the law.

Amon succeeded Manasseh, and imitated his father's idolatry; but his life was suddenly terminated, in two years, by his assassination, in his palace, by conspirators, and he thus gave way to Josiah, the last of the pious kings of Judah. Josiah was crowned at the age of eight years, and at sixteen converted to God by His Spirit. He followed in the footsteps of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Manasseh, and in personal piety excelled them all. Saith the Holy Spirit: "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him" (2 Kings 23:25).

He made a thorough purification of the temple and city of Jerusalem, of all the cities and high places in his own kingdom; and pushed his reformation into other cities and places where he might be allowed. Israel had been carried away, but there was a people substituted in their place, called Samaritans, who offered no resistance, and Josiah purged the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon and a portion of Naphtali; destroying the houses of the high places in the cities of Samaria which the kings of Israel had made, and slaying the priests who sacrificed thereon. He made thorough work of it; and during his reign the people had rest, and departed not from following the Lord God of their fathers. Near the close of his reign he opposed the march of the king of Egypt through his territories towards the Euphrates. He made battle against him and was wounded. He was brought to Jerusalem and died in peace. All Judah and Jerusalem, especially the prophet Jeremiah, mourned for him. During his pious reign he enjoyed the ministry of the prophets Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk (2 Chron. 34, 35; 2 Kings 20, 21; Lam. 4:20).

God's threatened wrath and captivity against Judah and Jerusalem were delayed during Josiah's reign, but, as soon as he was gathered to his fathers, the vials were poured out.

His wicked son, Jehoahaz, succeeded him, and was deposed and carried away captive into Egypt by Pharaoh-necho, in three months after his coronation, and died there. Pharaoh-necho made Eliakim, another son of Josiah, king in his stead, changed his name to Jehoiakim, and laid him and his people under tribute. Urijah prophesied against the city and the land, for which Jehoiakim had him slain with the sword, and his body cast contemptuously into the grave of the common people.

Nineteen years before the accession of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth, three miles north of Jerusalem, in the territory of Benjamin, having before his birth been ordained of the Lord a prophet, had been called when a mere child to the sacred office. Naturally gentle, sensitive and timid, he was made, by the indwelling Spirit of God, strong, and bold, and fearless—a defended city, an iron pillar and a brazen wall—against the wicked king, and princes, and priests, and false prophets, and people of the land, to declare to them their religious superficiality and hypocrisy, to denounce their idolatries and corruptions, and to predict that God would, for their abominations, carry them into seventy years' captivity^{viii}[8] in Babylon; but that, though he would make a full end of their Babylonian oppressors, He would not make a full end of them, but in covenant faithfulness would visit them again and restore them to their own land. Jeremiah was accused of being a traitor to his own people and a friend of the Babylonians: he was mocked and persecuted more than any other prophet—hated, taunted, derided, put in stocks and in a miry prison-pit, and sought to be killed. Both literally and spiritually, more than any other servant of God in the Old Testament dispensation, he experienced the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ—his whole life being one long martyrdom in the cause of truth. At times, when left to himself, he became bitterly despondent, and bewailed, like Job in his extremist agony, the day on which he was born—feeling that his whole life was a failure (as the people did not heed his warnings), and doubting whether his very mission was not a delusion, and thinking that he would afterwards keep silent; but the word of

the Lord was like burning fire in his bones, and he continued to deliver his solemn prophetic messages, and his eyes became fountains of tears for the sins and coming calamities of his people. Yet, "in that stormy sunset of prophecy, he beholds, in spirit, the dawn of a brighter and eternal day. He sees that, if there is any hope of salvation for his people, it cannot be by a return to the old system and the old ordinances, divine though they once had been (31:31). There must be a new (and spiritual) covenant. The relations between man and God must rest, not on an outward law with its requirements of obedience, but on that of an inward fellowship with Him, and the consciousness of entire dependence. For all this he saw clearly there must be a personal center"—the Messiah, the righteous and royal branch of David, the Lord our Righteousness, bringing salvation to Israel, writing His law in their minds and hearts, making a personal and inward revelation of Himself to them as their God, and forgiving their iniquities (23:5, 6; 31:31-34). Of this Messiah, in His persecution by and His suffering for His people, there was no more striking human type than Jeremiah, who is believed to have been finally carried to Tahpanhes in Egypt, and there stoned by the Jews, irritated by his rebukes.

The godless and reckless Jehoiakim, in the fourth year of his reign, rebelling against Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, and carried off to Babylon the vessels of the temple, and a number of royal and noble, handsome and gifted Hebrew youths, including Daniel, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abednego), to be trained in Chaldaean learning for his service. Jehoiakim, after reigning three years as a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar, rebelled again, and was conquered and put to death, as Jeremiah had prophesied. His son Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah, or Coniah—Jah or Jehovah having abandoned him) was placed on the throne of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar because of rebellion; and the conqueror carried off to Babylon the king and all his officers, and all the chief men and soldiers and artisans, including Ezekiel and Shimei, the grandfather of Mordecai, and the remaining treasures of the temple and palace—leaving none but the very poorest people in Judea. Mattaniah, the uncle of Jehoiachin, under the name of Zedekiah, was made king over the miserable remnant.

Zedekiah rebelled in the eight year of his reign, and, upon the approach of the Babylonian army, professed penitence; but, as soon as the army turned away, he again broke his covenant with Babylon. Having defeated the king of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar resumed the siege of Jerusalem, and took the city for the third and last time, fulfilling the word of the Lord which he spake by the mouths of His prophets, "I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down" (2 Kings 21:10-13). Nebuchadnezzar took Zedekiah, slew his sons before his eyes, then put out his eyes, bound him in fetters and carried him to Babylon, and kept him a close prisoner till he died. He made a public example of seventy-four distinguished men of Jerusalem, who had been engaged in the rebellion, by putting them to death. He sacked the temple completely. "He burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house he burnt with fire." He demolished the walls of the city, rooted and burnt out the population, leaving the city a heap of rubbish and smoldering ruins. With the exception of a few poor people, who were left in the fields and vineyards, he carried all away to Babylon as prisoners. "So Judah was carried away out of their land" (2 Kings 24:17; 25:1-21; Jer. 39:1-19; 53:1-23).

"In the kingdom of Judah, as in that of the ten tribes, the captives had been carried off in three detachments: In B.C. 606, Daniel and his three comrades and other princes; in B.C., 598, about 10,000 chief people, including Ezekiel, 7,000 soldiers, 1,000 craftsmen, and about 2,000 nobles; and in B.C. 587, nearly all the people. A small remnant was still left in the land, under Gedaliah, most of whom were massacred by Ishmael; of the remnant, the greater part went to Egypt with Johanan, while a very small fragment continued to hover about their ancient seats."—*W.G. Blaikie*.

The threatenings of God had been fulfilled. The kings and priests and people would not take heed, but kept on their rebellious road to ruin. "The Lord God of their fathers sent 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 rose against His

people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:11-21). The land at last lay at rest and kept Sabbath for seventy years.

Israel existed as an independent kingdom 254 years; Judah 133 years longer, making 388 years to the captivity. During these 388 years Judah had seventeen kings and one queen—a usurper; and two more kings after she became tributary to Babylon, making nineteen kings in all, and every one of the house of David, according to the promise of God.

"The separate history of the kingdom of Judah may be divided into four periods: 1st. First religious decline and first religious revival—about 86 years, during the reigns of Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah, and during the prophecies of Shemaiah, Iddo, Azariah, Hanani, Jehu, and Jahaziel. 2nd. Second decline and second revival—about 207 years, during the reigns of Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and during the prophecies of Zechariah (son of Jehoiada), Joel, Zechariah (son of Berechiah), Isaiah, Micah, and Nahum. 3rd. Third decline and third revival—about 88 years, during the reigns of Manasseh, Amon and Josiah, and during the prophecies of Zephaniah and Jeremiah. 4th. Final decline—about 23 years, during the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, and during the prophecies of Habakkuk and Obadiah. After the return from the Babylonian captivity there was a revival under Zerubbabel, and this was followed by the Pharisaic decline, which has now lasted for more than 2,000 years, but is destined, according to the sure word of prophecy, to be succeeded by the most glorious revival of any (Rom. 11:15)."—*W.G. Blaikie*.

Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah ruler over the land of Judah at the time he left a few people there. He had Jeremiah taken out of prison, and his fetters loosened, and gave him leave to go wherever he pleased. He offered to take him to Babylon and provide well for him, or allow him to remain with Gedaliah. The prophet, like a patriotic and true man, resolved to remain with Gedaliah and the remnant, and share their destiny. So the king's officer gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go to Gedaliah, who was at Mizpah, the seat of government after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Baalis, king of the Ammonites, for some cause unknown, sent an assassin, in the person of one Ishmael, to slay the good governor Gedaliah, and he did so while feasting at his hospitable table; and, with the assistance of ten men at his side, slew the Jews, the men of war, and the Chaldeans found there with him. He also slew eight more unsuspecting men who came up from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria for religious purposes. Then gathering the people together, he departed to go over to the Ammonites, but was speedily pursued by Johanan and the captains of the forces, and overtaken in Gibeon. The captives were recovered, but Ishmael made his escape to the Ammonites with eight men.

Johanan and the leaders of the people, though having acted bravely and wisely, seemed to fear that the Chaldeans would come up and punish them for Gedaliah's assassination. They loved idolatry still, and feignedly sought the advice of Jeremiah in regard to hiding down in Egypt. He forbade it, and warned them of the danger of going there, saying that the sword, pestilence and famine would overtake them if they did. They heeded not his warnings, but went down to Tahpanhes in Egypt, carrying the prophet with them. There they could indulge in idolatry to their hearts' content. Both men and women justified themselves, saying "When we worshiped the queen of Heaven we saw no evil; and when we ceased to worship her we were consumed with sword and famine." One of the most remarkable features of character in the Hebrew nation and people was their proneness to idolatry from the conquest of Jericho to the Babylonian captivity, in the face of everything that God had done for them and was continually doing for them through so many centuries—continually blessing them in their allegiance to Him and cursing them in their worship of idols.

Jeremiah's predictions in regard to those who slid off to Egypt came to pass. Sixteen years after they went down there (B.C. 570), Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt, and the Jews perished under his hand, except a mere remnant who had settled there previously, or who had been compelled to go there like Jeremiah, against their will (Jer. 44:11-14, 28).

All shadow of civil government had now passed away in Judah, and the government of the Hebrews in the land of Canaan had entirely ceased.

What proportion of those carried away by Nebuchadnezzar were truly pious—were of the remnant of believers, though small, that were at all times reserved according to the election of grace—we cannot say; nor the number of such who were forced down into Egypt along with Jeremiah; yet we feel assured there was a remnant at that day as well as there had been at all times during the 864 years of their existence in Canaan. God never has left Himself without a witness on earth.

With slight intermissions, the people of Judah, like those of Israel, became more and more corrupt—more wealthy, cultured, extravagant, luxurious, licentious, covetous, dishonest, venal, deceitful and oppressive to the poor; and God sent upon them just punishment for their sins. They were now scattered in five different countries—Egypt, Palestine, Chaldea, Media and Assyria; the prophecy of Moses (Lev. 26 and Deut. 28), uttered nearly 900 years before, had received its first but not its last and greatest fulfillment.

A notable feature of Hebrew history during the kingly period is the readiness with which the people followed their kings in matters both secular and sacred. Their government was a theocracy, even when their kings reigned; because the king was considered the agent or vicegerent of God to carry out His designs; and, in cases of doubt, the last appeal was made to God. When the king did evil, so did the people; and when he did well, so did the people—proving the correctness of Solomon when he said: “Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?” (Eccl. 8:4).

Down to the captivity the books of the Old Testament had been completed to the second book of Chronicles, and the works of these prophets in chronological order, viz.: Jonah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Jeremiah, together with his Lamentations—eleven in all.

ENDNOTES:

ix[1] "We have nothing so lovely as the book of Ruth in the whole range of epic and idyllic poetry." says Goethe. It has been beautifully called a "Garden of Roses at the Gate of the Gospel." It affords touching illustrations of God's providence and grace, the afflictions, poverty and sorrows of God's people, and the nature and results of true faith, piety, virtue, humility and unselfish love. Naomi is a type of the church; Ruth a type of every child of grace; and Boaz a type of Christ. Naomi finds nothing but sorrow in the land of Moab; Ruth cleaves to her poor, despised mother-in-law with intense and undying love; and her near, wealthy, powerful kinsman, furnishing himself all the dowry, espouses her to himself. There is no more affecting passage in all literature than the language of Ruth to Naomi, "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."—Ruth 1:16,17. Every one who has this feeling toward the true church is a child of God.

x[2] Jephthah vowed that, if the Lord would give him victory over the Ammonites, whatsoever should come forth of the doors of his house to meet him on his return in peace, should surely be the Lord's, and (or *or*) he would offer it up for a burnt offering. The margin states truly that the "*and*" may be rendered "*or*." If a person met him, he would renounce all claim to such person, and wholly dedicate him or her to the service of the Lord's sanctuary; of an inferior animal met him, he would offer it up on the altar. His only child, a daughter, first met him: and with a broken heart, because it meant lifelong separation from her, he dedicated her life to Jehovah as a spiritual burnt offering in a lifelong virginity. Volumes have been written upon this mysterious subject; but this seems to be the view held by those who have investigated the matter most profoundly, especially by taking into consideration the following passages of Scripture; Deut. 12:29-31; Lev. 27:1-5; Num. 18:15, 16; 1 Sam. 1:11, 20, 22, 28; Heb. 11:17-19, 32.

xi[3] Let it never be forgotten that Eli and his house were cut off by God, because, though Eli was himself a pious man, yet when he knew his sons

made themselves vile he simply reprov'd, but did not exercise his parental authority to punish and restrain them (1 Sam. 3:13, 14)—a most solemn warning to all over-indulgent parents, pastors and rulers who fail to exercise proper discipline within their peculiar spheres.

xii[4] *Solomon's Temple Spiritualized; or, Gospel Light Brought Out of the Temple at Jerusalem*, by John Bunyan, is probably the most wonderful piece of spiritual interpretation of Scripture in the world. A few of Bunyan's seventy points we must give. Mount Moriah, on which Solomon's temple was built, was a type of Christ, the mountain of the Lord's house, the rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. The foundation stones of the temple were types of the prophets and Apostles. Christ is the foundation of His church personally and meritoriously; but the prophets and Apostles, doctrinally and ministerially. Solomon, the wise and wealthy and peaceable king, as the builder of the temple, was a type of Christ. The trees and stones of which the temple was built were first selected out of the forest and quarry where there were others equally good by nature, and were thoroughly hewed and squared and fitted for their proper place, and then brought to the temple and properly adjusted without noise or confusion; so with God's people, who are chosen by Him in the wild field of nature, then hewed and squared by His word and doctrine applied by His Spirit, and afterwards brought in and added quietly by Him to His Zion. The temple, with its chambers, was narrowest downwards, and largest upwards- different from all other buildings; so the hearts of God's people should be narrow in their desires for earthly things, but wide in their desires for spiritual and eternal things; those in the church who are nearest or most concerned with earth are the most narrow-spirited as to the things of God. The pinnacles of the temple were types of those lofty, airy, heady notions with which some men delight themselves while they hover like birds above the solid and godly truths of Christ; these are dangerous places- Satan tried to destroy Christ on one of them. Christians, to be safe, should be low and little in their own eyes. The porters had charge of the treasure-chambers, and had to keep diligent watch lest any not duly qualified should enter the house of the Lord; these were types of God's ministers. The door of the temple represented Christ. The wall of the temple was His divinely sustained humanity, and the fine gold on the wall a type of His righteousness. The windows were narrow

without, but wide within; types of the written word, through which as through a glass we now darkly see something of the glory of the Sun of Righteousness; by the light of the written word, the church can see the dismal state of the world and how to avoid it, but by that light the world sees but little of the beauty of the church. The chambers represented rest, safety, treasure, solace, and continuance. The two winding stairs from the first to the second story, and from the second to the third, were types of the two-fold repentance of the child of God, that by which he turns from nature to grace, and that by which he turns from the imperfections which attend a state of grace to glory. The molten sea was a figure of the pure word of the gospel, without men's inventions, mingled with the fire of the Holy Ghost. The twelve oxen upon whose backs the sea stood were types of the Apostles and ministers of Christ, who should keep their uncomely parts covered with gospel grace, and should proclaim the gospel in all the world. A golden censer is a gracious heart, heavenly fire is the Holy Ghost, and sweet incense the effectual, fervent prayer of faith. The Holy Place was a type of the church militant; and the Most Holy Place a type of the church triumphant. Both parts of the house have the same foundation, and the same family of occupants. The way into Heaven is through the true church of Christ on earth. Things in the Most Holy Place could not be seen by even the highest light of this world, but only by the light of the fire of the altar, a type of the shinings of the Holy Ghost. The floor of the temple was overlaid with gold, like the pure golden streets of the New Jerusalem. The walk of God's people should be beautiful and clean; and, when we happily reach the Celestial City, we shall no more step into the mire or stumble upon blocks and stones, or fall into holes and snares, but all our steps will be in pure gold. Oh what speaking things, says Bunyan, are types, shadows and parables, had we but eyes to see, had we but ears to hear!

xiii[5] The word Solomon means peace.

xiv[6] This effect may have been produced by a cloud or a modification of the laws of refraction; some eminent astronomers suppose that it may have been produced by an eclipse of the sun. But by whatever method produced, we know that the retreat of the shadow ten degrees on the dial was not the work of man, but of Almighty God.

xv[7] Belial means worthlessness; it is not strictly a proper name, but used so by personification.

xvi[8] "The exact number of years of Sabbaths in 490 years, the period from Saul to the Babylonian captivity; righteous retribution for their violation of the Sabbath (Lev. 26:33-35; 2 Chron. 36:20, 21). The seventy years probably began from the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Jerusalem was first captured, and many captives, as well as the treasure of the temple, were carried away; they end with the first year of Cyrus, who, on taking Babylon, issued an edict for the restoration of the Jews (Ezra 1:1). Daniel's *seventy prophetic weeks* are based on the 70 years of the captivity (Dan. 9:2, 24)."—A. R. Fausset.
