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CLASSBOOK OF
OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

CLASSBOOK OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

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THE HERESY OF CAIN

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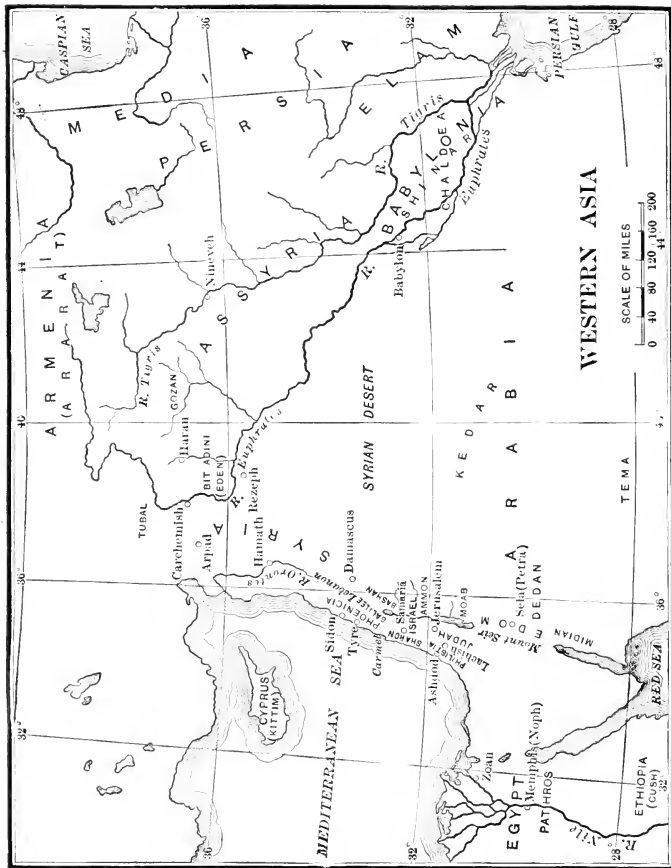
THE PATH OF LIFE

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THE CROSS AND PASSION

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CLASSBOOK OF
OLD TESTAMENT
HISTORY

BY

GEORGE HODGES

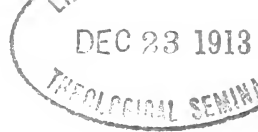
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PREFACE

THIS book is intended for the general reader, and for use in classes in schools and churches. The purpose is to make the course of Old Testament history clear. Continual references are given to the passages of which the paragraphs of the book are a summary and an interpretation. It is expected that the student will read these passages. Constant use has been made of recent discoveries, and of the conservative results of scholarship.

Easily accessible helps to further study are Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*; Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*; Moore, *Literature of the Old Testament*; H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*; Kent, *Historical Bible*, and *Students' Old Testament*; G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*; Kent, *Biblical Geography and History*; and the Old Testament volumes of the *International Critical Commentary*.

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CLASSBOOK OF OLD TESTA- MENT HISTORY

I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The Geographical Background. — The events which are recorded in the Old Testament took place in Asia and Africa.

The ruling nations of the ancient world lived in the valleys of great rivers: in Asia, by the Tigris and Euphrates; in Africa, by the Nile. Along the lower courses of the Asiatic rivers were the Babylonians and, conquering and succeeding them, the Chaldeans. The capital city was Babylon. Along the upper courses were the Assyrians, having their capital at Nineveh. On the banks of the Nile were the Egyptians.

The empires of Asia were separated from the empire of Africa by the Arabian desert. They were connected by a narrow strip of habitable land, lying between the desert and the Mediterranean Sea. This isthmus between the two continents is the country which was first called Canaan, and afterwards Palestine. All communication between the Babylonians, the Chaldeans and the Assyrians on the one hand, and the Egyptians on the other, was by the way of Palestine. Thus the Holy Land was at the very centre of the ancient world.

This country, the chief scene of Old Testament history,

is bounded on the east by the desert, and on the west by the sea. It ascends in the north to the snow-capped mountains of Lebanon, and descends in the south to the wilderness which extends toward Arabia and Egypt. It is divided east and west into two unequal parts by the river Jordan, which rises among the northern mountains, and comes down through the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea. It is divided north and south into two unequal parts by the plain of Esdraelon, which extends from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. The country is for the most part a high plateau, broken into hills and valleys, green in the north with farms and forests, gray in the south with limestone rock. It is between the orient and the occident, and between the temperate zone and the tropics, a place of olives and of apples.

2. The Historical Background. — The people who lived beside the rivers in Asia and Africa, and in the connecting land of Canaan, belonged to the same human stock, and are called Semites. The primitive home of the Semites seems to have been northern Arabia. Thence they made their way by conquest or settlement into Egypt, into Babylonia and Assyria, and mingling with the native races became Egyptians, Babylonians and Assyrians.

Before the year 2000 B.C. a wave of such emigration out of Arabia turned east, and laid the foundations of the might of Babylon. The code of Hammurabi, king of Babylon about that time, has been discovered in the ruins of Susa. It contained two hundred and eighty laws for the establishment of peace and justice, which show that these people were already living under such regulations as appeared long after in the legislation of Moses.

It may have been the same emigration turning west which brought the Amorites and Canaanites into the land of Palestine. The frequent mention of the Amorites in Babylonian inscriptions suggests a close relationship. The fact that Joshua found among the spoils of Jericho a "goodly Babylonish garment" (Joshua 7: 21) indicates commercial intercourse between the Euphrates and the Jordan. The Amorites were highlanders, dwelling among the hills; the Canaanites were lowlanders, occupying the coast lands and the Jordan Valley. At the time of the Exodus, there were two Amorite kingdoms east of the Jordan: Og was king of Bashan; Sihon was king of the country between the Jabbok and the Arnon.

These were the people who inhabited Canaan before the Hebrews. In kinship and in customs they were under the influence of Babylon.

¶ About 1500, the Amorites and Canaanites were conquered by the Egyptians. The battle of Megiddo by which the conquest was decided took place in the plain of Esdraelon, and is described on the walls of the temple of Amon, at Karnak, in upper Egypt. The spoils of the victor show that the inhabitants were rich and civilized. Flocks and herds and harvests of grain, horses and chariots and armor, slaves, furniture inlaid with ivory, gold and silver dishes and embroidered garments, he carried away.

About 1400, the country of Canaan was still under the rule of Egypt, but the kings of many of its cities were writing letters to their sovereign imploring his assistance. The letters were found in the ruins of an Egyptian palace at Tell el-Amarna, between Thebes and Cairo. The king of Jerusalem said, "If troops can be sent before the end of the year, then the territory of my lord the king may yet

be retained; but if no troops arrive, it will assuredly be lost." The invaders are called Habiri. The name suggests the Hebrews.

Some such wave of invasion, or of colonization, brought the people of Ammon to the land east of the lower Jordan, and the people of Moab to the land east of the Dead Sea, and the people of Edom to the land south of that salt lake. Thus came Abraham, the Hebrew. The title is taken to mean the-man-who-crossed-over; that is, over the river Euphrates.

Having thus on the east the Amorites of Bashan, and south of them the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites, in that order, there lay on the west, along the Mediterranean shore, the lands of the Philistines. In the northwest, by the sea, having Tyre and Sidon for their chief cities, were the Phœnicians, famous for their trade by ships. In the northeast, along the road to Nineveh and Babylon, having Damascus as their chief city, were the Syrians, famous for their trade by caravan. On the outskirts of the civilized lands, especially in the deserts east and south, were roving bands like the Bedouin of to-day, who appear under the names of Amalekites and Ishmaelites and Midianites.

3. The Religious Background. — The religion of Canaan differed from the religion of Babylon as the primitive worship of people who live among the hills differs naturally from the worship of those who live on wide plains. The province of Babylon was ruled by one mighty king, who was the overlord of all the lesser kings, and this condition appeared in religion, where one great god was over all the lesser gods. The province of Canaan was governed by several hundred kings, each in his own city

on his own hill, and the religion of Canaan accordingly included several hundred gods, each having his own shrine in his own grove, on his own height. But each of these gods was called Baal, which means "lord."

A shrine of Baal consisted of an altar, having beside it a stone pillar, or obelisk, called a Mazzebah, and a sacred tree, or pole, called an Asherah. The prayers which were prayed there were for the most part for the fertility of the ground. The Baals were believed to control the harvest. Such sacred places the Hebrews found everywhere when they came into the country. And the fascination of them appears in all their history, even to the time of the exile. The contention between the religion of Jeborah and the religion of Baal was a persistent war.

4. **The Sources.** — The Old Testament history as it appears in the Old Testament needs to be rewritten for general reading, for two reasons.

One reason is because the history as it stands is in two editions. One edition includes the books from Genesis to Second Kings. It is an account of events from the creation of the world to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. It was compiled from ancient materials, but it is plain that it did not appear in its latest revision till after the last date in the series, which is 562 (II Kings 25:27). The other edition includes the books from First Chronicles to Nehemiah. It begins over again with Adam, and comes down over the same history till it includes the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It mentions the high priest Jaddua (Nehemiah 12:11) who met Alexander the Great when he took possession of Jerusalem in 332. In order to get the whole of the history, it is necessary to bring these two series of books together.

Moreover, during a period of two hundred years, from the division of the Hebrew kingdom about 937, to the fall of Samaria in 722, the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel existed side by side. The two books of Kings record what happened in Judah and then what happened in Israel, and then what happened next in Judah, and so on, in such a way that it is difficult to follow the progress of events. These reigns need to be disentangled.

Another reason for rewriting the history is because there are books of poetry, and especially books of prophecy, in the Old Testament, which were written in the midst of the events which the historians narrate, and bring light and new meaning into them; but they are placed by themselves. It is only by the work of scholars that we understand where they belong. For example, the reign of Jeroboam II in Israel is dismissed by the historian in a few short sentences. But the prophet Amos preached in Israel in that reign, and described the life which he saw about him. Also, the fall of Jerusalem is recorded with very little comment in the history, but the five poems which make the book of Lamentations were written by men who were in the midst of that tragedy, and who uttered the grief which filled their hearts. As for the anger which also filled their hearts, we find that in the book of Obadiah. There is need, therefore, for such rewriting, or at least rearrangement, as shall enable us to read the Old Testament history step by step, with all the knowledge which the historians, the poets and the prophets together can bring to our assistance.

Moreover, during years of study, and patience, and devotion, and increasing knowledge, and publication of books, scholars have been occupied with these writings.

Some have been busy with their pens, examining and recording the best possible meanings; some have been busy with their spades, digging in the dust of ancient palaces and libraries and tombs in Babylon and Nineveh and Egypt, finding inscriptions which illustrate the Old Testament history. Thus the third chapter of Second Kings describes a campaign of Israel and Judah against Mesha, king of Moab; but the Moabite Stone (discovered 1868) tells in the words of Mesha himself of the campaign in which he had his fierce revenge.

To recount the Old Testament history in order and with clearness, and to bring to its interpretation the words of contemporary inscription and poetry and prophecy, for the better understanding of the Bible, is the purpose of this book.

II

THE BEGINNING

THE first eleven chapters of Genesis tell what was commonly believed among the Hebrews concerning the creation of the world, the fall of man, the flood, and the origin of the nations.

1. The Creation of the World. *Genesis* 1-2:3; 2:4-25. — The Hebrews believed that in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth: first, light; then the over-arching sky and the land beneath, with the waters gathered into seas; then grass and herbs began to grow out of the ground, and living creatures appeared in the water, and in the air, and on the earth; and at last, as the crown of His creation, God made man, and gave him dominion over all living things. The Hebrews thought that this was done in six days. These “days” to us mean periods of progress. On the seventh day, God rested from His work, of which the weekly sabbath rest is a commemoration.

A different account, in the second chapter, puts first the creation of man, and then of plants and animals. God, having made man out of the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, placed him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. There was a river in the garden, out of which flowed four streams, one of them being the Euphrates. In the midst of the garden were two mysterious trees. One was the Tree of Life, whose

fruit would make the eater live forever; the other was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Out of a rib of the man, God made a woman to be his companion and a helpmeet for him.

2. **The Fall of Man.** *Genesis 3.*—The Hebrews believed that a serpent spoke to the woman, and persuaded her to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, in spite of the command of God forbidding it. She gave of it to her husband, and he also ate. Then they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid themselves, being afraid. The Lord God cursed the serpent, condemning it to crawl upon the ground and eat dust all the rest of its days. The woman He punished by sentencing her to bring forth children in pain and sorrow. The man He punished by making thorns and thistles to grow in the ground, thus causing him to labor for his living, in the sweat of his face. And lest the man and woman should take of the fruit of the Tree of Life and live forever, God thrust them out of the pleasant garden, and kept them from coming back by stationing angels at the gate with flaming swords.

The story of Cain and Abel (*Genesis 4: 1-17*) seems to have originally belonged to a later time, since it represents the earth as already populated. Cain having killed his brother Abel, fears the vengeance of his kinsfolk and neighbors; in the land to which he goes he finds a woman whom he marries, and finds men among whom he builds a city.

With the descendants of Cain began the occupations of society: Jabal was the first shepherd, Tubal the first blacksmith, Jubal the first to play on instruments of music. Lamech, their father, was the first poet, and a bit

of his verse is given, rude in form and bloodthirsty in spirit. With the descendants of Seth, a third son of Adam and Eve, began the service of religion (Genesis 4: 20-26).

3. **The Flood.** *Genesis* 6-9: 17. — There were giants in the earth in those days, and mighty heroes, men of renown whose mothers were descendants of Eve, but their fathers were sons of God. The wickedness of man was great, and grew greater, until every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. God was sorry that He had created such a race of beings.

So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." But He spared the family of Noah. He told Noah to build an ark, so many feet long and wide and high, and to pitch it within and without with pitch to make it water-tight. Into the ark he was to bring of all living creatures, one account says two (Genesis 7: 9), another account says seven (Genesis 7: 2), of every kind. This Noah did, and brought also his wife, and his three sons and their wives. Then it began to rain, till all the high hills were covered.

When the rain ceased, and the water began to go down, the ark grounded on the top of a mountain in Armenia, called Ararat. Noah sent out a raven and a dove, and when the dove came back she had in her mouth an olive branch plucked off. So Noah knew that the water had gone down below the tops of the trees. Then he and all that were in the ark came out, and he offered a sacrifice and thanked God. And God set a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of His promise that there should never be a flood again to destroy the earth.

4. **The Origin of the Nations.** *Genesis* 10, 11.—Thus the history of man began anew. Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, became the fathers of the nations. They resumed the arts and occupations of the old time. Especially, they began the building of cities. And in one of their cities they undertook to build a tower whose top should reach to heaven. It was like the endeavor of the Titans to pile mountain upon mountain, Pelion upon Ossa, in order to climb into the sky. But the Lord stopped them. "Let us go down," He said, "and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Thus the different languages began. The Tower of Babel stood at Babylon, huge and unfinished, and men were scattered upon the face of all the earth.

The sons of Japheth became the nations north and west of the Semitic world. They were the northern peoples, who as Cimmerians (Gomer) and Scythians (Magog) and Medes (Madai) menaced the empires of the east, as the Goths and Vandals afterwards menaced the empire of the west. They were the western peoples along the shores and on the islands of the Mediterranean Sea, who lived in Cyprus (Kittim) and Rhodes (Dodanim = Rodanim), in Greece (Javan = Ionian) and Italy (Elishah) and Spain (Tarshish).

The sons of Ham became the nations who oppressed the Hebrews. They were the Babylonians (10:7-10), builders of Babylon and other great cities in the land of Shinar, one of whose ancient heroes was Nimrod, a mighty hunter, such as one sees pictured on stone slabs, fighting lions. They were the Assyrians (10:11, 12), builders of Nineveh. They were the Egyptians (Mizraim, 10:13, 14) from whom the Hebrews believed the Philistines to have

descended. They were the Canaanites, whom the Hebrews found in Palestine, and with whom they fought for the possession of the land, among whom the Hebrews included the Phœnicians of Sidon, and the Jebusites of Jerusalem.

The sons of Shem were the ancestors of the Hebrews themselves. They were the Persians of Elam, whence came Cyrus the deliverer; and the Arabians, with whose land of Ophir Solomon traded for gold, and whose queen of Sheba visited Jerusalem (10: 22-29); and the dwellers in Mesopotamia (Aram), from whose city of Haran Abraham emigrated to the land of Canaan.

These names indicate the ideas of the Hebrews concerning the world in which they lived. They appear in the book of Genesis as the chapters on foreign nations appear in the books of the prophets (Isaiah 15-23, Jeremiah 46-51, Ezekiel 25-32). They reveal the Lord God as the king of all the earth, the father of all peoples, not of the Hebrews only. Their value is not so much in the field of ethnology as in the field of religion.

A like value appears in the Hebrew stories of the beginnings. They belonged, for the most part, to the common tradition of the east. The story of the flood, for example, was told in Babylonia centuries before the time of Abraham. King Ashur-bani-pal, who began to reign in Nineveh in 668 B.C., was so interested in antiquity that he caused to be copied for his library the oldest writings of the world. One of these was a narrative of the flood, brought from Babylon, so old that the god of Babylon is called by a name which had been disused for hundreds of years. The tablets on which this was inscribed are now preserved, with other treasures from that

royal library, in the British Museum. They describe the ark, made by divine command, and tightened with pitch. All living creatures of all kinds are brought into it. The door is shut, and the storm begins. Two great gods march at the front of the black cloud. All men are drowned. Finally, the ark grounds on the mountain Nisir. On the seventh day, a dove is let loose, then a swallow, then a raven. A sacrifice is offered. "The gods inhaled the sweet odor; the gods gathered like flies above the sacrifice." Then Ea, god of wisdom, rebuked Bel, god of war, and forbade him ever to bring a flood upon the earth again.

In Genesis, the place of the gods is taken by the one Lord God. If any suggestion of the old polytheism remains in the Bible stories it is in the words, "Let us make man," "Let us go down"; and these expressions may be only the plural of majesty. The ancient legends are purified from their follies and errors, and are filled with the light of a morality and a religion such as we believe in to-day. The world is God's world; man is made in His image; pain and loss are the results of disobedience.

III

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

1. The Call of Abraham. *Genesis* 11:27-13:4. — Whatever had been the connection between the family of Abraham and Ur of the Chaldees (*Genesis* 11:31), the story of his life begins at Haran in Mesopotamia. The word Mesopotamia means between-the-rivers; that is, between the Tigris and Euphrates. Haran was almost midway between the Tigris and the Mediterranean, on a caravan route from Nineveh to Damascus. It was thus a place of some importance. There was the home of the Hebrews before they came to Palestine. There they worshipped God under the form of the religion of the country (*Joshua* 24:14). Various inscriptions show that the chief deity was the moon-god Sin, whose name appears in "Sinai." They said their prayers to idols (*Genesis* 31:30-34).

There Abraham heard in his soul the voice of the Lord God calling him away. He took Sarah his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and men-servants and maid-servants, and sheep and oxen and asses and camels, a considerable caravan, and set out to find a new home in the west. The emigration is undated, and we have no help from inscriptions. Amraphel, king of Shinar (= Babylonia), who appears at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter, is taken by some to be the great Hammurabi, before 2000 B.C.,

but the identification is not certain. The el-Amarna letters, about 1400, indicate movements of eastern peoples into the west, but they were coming as armed invaders.

The patriarchs lived in that long past whose heroes and events were described by word of mouth, by the telling and retelling of their stories from generation to generation, hundreds of years before they were recorded in writing. It is true that Abraham when he journeyed from the Euphrates to the Nile left behind him a land where writing was a common art, and came to a land where that art was equally common. But writing, and especially the writing of history, is the natural occupation of a settled people. Wandering tribes, such as the Hebrews were both before and after their enslavement in Egypt, carry their tribal records in their memories. Driving their flocks from one pasture to another, and fighting with their wild neighbors for the right to use the springs, their history is for the most part in the form of songs and stories. It is colored by their experiences and their ideals. It is of value not so much for its statistics as for its moral meanings. It precedes the era of definite dates.

Starting from Haran, Abraham probably followed the caravan road west to Carchemish, where he found the great fords of the Euphrates; thence he went south to Damascus, from which city he obtained a faithful servant, named Eliezer (Genesis 15:2). From Damascus he may have followed the valley of the Jordan till he crossed by a ford which brought him into the midst of the land of Canaan.

At Shechem, thirty miles north of Jerusalem, in a fertile valley between two mountains, Abraham found a sacred tree (Genesis 12:6, Revised Version) called the Oak

of Direction (Moreh). We have another glimpse of it in Judges 9 : 37, where it is called the Oak of the Diviners. In this place, already consecrated, he heard the voice of God promising that all that country should belong to his descendants. There he built an altar. He did the same twenty miles farther south, near Bethel, and called upon the name of the Lord. Thus these shrines of Bethel and Shechem, places of prayer from time immemorial, became sacred in the religion of the Hebrews. From Bethel, by reason of a famine, Abraham went down for a time to Egypt, afterwards returning to Bethel.

The account of Abraham in Egypt illustrates the manner in which the history was written, and enables us to explain the meaning of many differences of statements. The story is that Abraham, fearing lest Pharaoh should kill him in order to take away his beautiful wife, said that Sarah was his sister. Pharaoh took Sarah, as Abraham had feared, but he not only spared but enriched Abraham as Sarah's brother. A plague coming upon the court of Pharaoh revealed the deception, and Abraham and Sarah were sent away in peace (Genesis 12). The same story is told a little later on (Genesis 20), except that now the place is the South Country, and the king is Abimelech. And again the story is repeated (Genesis 26 : 1-14), where the place is the South Country, and the king is Abimelech, but now the actors instead of being Abraham and Sarah are Isaac and Rebekah. It is of course possible that this falsehood was told three times. It is more probable, however, that the compiler of the history found the story in these three forms, and brought them all into his narrative. In one part of the country, the incident was remembered in one way; in another part of the country, in a different way.

Not being concerned with historical values, the differences and the likenesses presented no difficulty to his mind.

When the stories are compared it appears that Sarah, who in the twentieth chapter is so young and fair that Abimelech proposes to take her as one of his wives, was already described in the seventeenth chapter as ninety years of age. The two chapters were independent narratives, placed in their present order by the compiler.

2. **The Fortunes of Lot.** *Genesis* 13:5-14:24; 18; 19:1-29. — The land being well populated, and Abraham and Lot having many flocks and herds, they agreed to separate. From the heights near Bethel, they viewed the land. Lot chose the fertile valley of the Jordan by the Dead Sea, fair as the Garden of Eden; to Abraham were left the gray hills of Judah. Lot settled in Sodom; Abraham settled in Hebron, in the south, under the oaks of Mamre.

Then Lot, who had chosen what seemed to him the better place, and the easier life, encountered disaster.

First, there came kings from the east, from Shinar and Elam, by the lower waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, an allied army of invasion, marching west like the hosts of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar in after times. They conquered the giants who lived on the east of the Jordan, the Rephaim, the Zuzim, and the Emim (*im* is the Hebrew plural ending like our *s*). Then they fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah. They took the two cities and plundered them and carried away captives, Lot among them. Then appeared Abraham as a valiant warrior. He assembled his three hundred and eighteen stout servants, and surprised the victors by night as they were encamped by the sources of the Jordan. The story says that Abraham

not only routed the army of the eastern kings but that he chased them for a hundred miles, from Dan to Hobah. The main point, however, is that he rescued Lot and his neighbors, and regained their stolen property. Returning from this exploit, Abraham was met by Melchizedek, king of Jerusalem, who refreshed him with bread and wine, and blessed him (Hebrews 7: 1-17). Then the king of Sodom met him, saying, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." But Abraham declined to take for himself even so much as a thread.

The people of Sodom were wicked exceedingly. They lived shamefully, and were inhospitable to strangers. At last it happened to them as to the unfriendly city in the Greek story of Baucis and Philemon, which Hawthorne retold in the tale of the "Miraculous Pitcher." One day there came to Abraham's tent three heavenly visitants. One was the Lord God, the others were attendant angels. But they looked like three men. Abraham was very courteous to them, and Sarah made bread for them, and roasted the tender flesh of a calf, and put butter and milk upon the table, and they ate. And the man who was the Lord God told Abraham that he and Sarah in their old age would have a son; at which, Sarah, who was behind the tent door, laughed to herself, thinking it a foolish saying.

The man who was the Lord God said to Abraham, "I have heard that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is very grievous. I am going now to see for myself whether they are as wicked as they are reported to me to be, or not." But he promised Abraham that he would spare Sodom if fifty, or forty-five, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or even ten righteous men should be found therein. The two

angels discovered, however, that the place was even worse than they had expected. So the next day, the Lord rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah and they were consumed. Only Lot and his family escaped. Even Lot's wife, who tarried and looked back, was overtaken by the fearful storm, and became a pillar of salt.

3. The Covenant with Abraham. *Genesis* 15; 17; 22.—The supreme fact about Abraham, as he appears in the history, is the covenant which he made with God. It was promised to him by the Lord God that his descendants should become a great and mighty nation, and that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

One time (*Genesis* 15) this splendid vision of the future came to him as he offered a sacrifice of beasts and birds. It was in the night in the midst of a deep sleep and a horror of great darkness. The Lord told him that his children and his children's children should be in number like the stars of heaven. Abraham laid out the pieces of the slain beasts and birds in two rows, and between the rows, in the dark night, passed a smoking furnace and a flaming torch.

Another time (*Genesis* 22) the vision came to him in connection with a very different sacrifice. The son was born whom the Lord God promised when he dined with Abraham, and was named Isaac (= the laughter) because his mother laughed at the promise of his birth, in doubt (*Genesis* 18:12) or in joy (*Genesis* 21:6). All the hopes of Abraham were centred upon him. There was indeed a son named Ishmael, but his mother Hagar was an inferior wife. Those were the days when men had more wives than one. Hagar and her son had been sent away into the deserts, where he grew to be a hunter (*Genesis* 16; 21:1-21). Isaac was Sarah's only son. But it was borne

in upon the mind of Abraham that he ought to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Such an act was the supreme expression of faith or of prayer in primitive religion. The idea of it continued long among the Hebrews (Micah 6 : 7) and was fulfilled by Jephthah (Judges 11 : 34-40) and by Ahaz (II Kings 16 : 3), and tempted people as late as the reign of Josiah (II Kings 23 : 10). Abraham was in this very act of human sacrifice, when he heard the voice of God forbidding him. Then the covenant was renewed. "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

The promise was repeated (Genesis 17 : 1-10) in connection with the rite of circumcision, which the Hebrews shared with their Semitic neighbors. The Babylonians and Assyrians did not practise it; neither did the Philistines. But it was common among the Egyptians and the Arabs. It was accounted among the Hebrews as a token of the covenant.

IV

ISAAC AND JACOB

1. **The Wooing of Rebekah.** *Genesis* 23, 24. — Isaac plays but a passive part in these narratives. It is remembered of him that he was almost sacrificed by his father, and that he was deceived by his son. Even the wooing of Rebekah his wife was done for him by his father's servant; but that was the custom of the country.

The interesting and beautiful story of the mission of Abraham's servant to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac is told at length.

Sarah died and was buried at Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah. The ceremony of the transaction of the purchase of the field and the cave and the surrounding trees is described in detail, and may be compared with the similar courtesies which accompanied the purchase by David of the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (*II Samuel* 24: 18-25). This was the first permanent possession of the Hebrews. There Abraham was buried in his turn, and Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah, after him (*Genesis* 49: 30; 50: 13).

Abraham sent his servant to the old home of his family at Haran. There Rebekah met him at the well, the daughter of Bethuel, and granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother (*Genesis* 11: 27-29). The servant brought forth the jewels which his master had sent — gold and silver, and a nose ring (*Genesis* 24: 47, Revised Version)

and bracelets. And Rebekah returned with him, bringing her nurse. They found Isaac meditating in the field at eventide, and Isaac took Rebekah to the tent which had been his mother's. So they were married, and he loved her, and was comforted after his mother's death. The story is filled with the spirit of domestic affection.

2. Jacob and Esau. *Genesis 27, 28.*—The first-born of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah was named Esau, which means "red," and the other was named Jacob, meaning "heel-holder," because at his birth he had hold of his brother by the heel. Esau grew up a careless lad, fond of hunting in the woods; Jacob stayed quietly at home, and was the favorite of his mother.

One day the younger son, taking advantage of his brother's hunger, bought the birthright of him. "Give me something to eat," cried Esau. "I will sell it to you," said Jacob, "for your birthright." Thus the two are contrasted, Jacob the prudent with Esau the imprudent, Esau intent only on present and immediate satisfaction, Jacob thinking of the future. Then when the time came for Isaac in his old age to make what we should call his will, to give each son his blessing, Jacob came first to his blind father and pretended to be Esau, and received the better blessing. The narrative represents a process of selection. As Isaac had been chosen, and Ishmael sent into the wilderness to become the father of the roving Ishmaelites, so Jacob was chosen and Esau went away out of the land of Canaan to Mount Seir beyond the Dead Sea, and became the father of the Edomites (*Genesis 36: 6-8*).

The historian makes no comment upon the treachery of Jacob. He sets down side by side the good and bad

qualities of each of the brothers. The sympathy of the reader goes with the careless and generous Esau. It is plain, however, that with his faults Jacob had the more substantial virtues. It was therefore with Jacob that God confirmed the covenant which he had made with Abraham. The great vision of the future came to Jacob at the shrine of Bethel. Overtaken by night, he had lain down there to sleep, having a stone for his pillow. He dreamed that he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it, and he heard the voice of God saying to him as He had said to Abraham, "To thee will I give this land and to thy descendants. And thine offspring shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad throughout this country." When Jacob awoke, he marked the spot where he had dreamed this dream by setting up the stone on which his head had rested, and pouring oil upon it. This was the rude building of a shrine. Such a sacred stone (*Mazzebah*) anointed with oil or garlanded with flowers was already the indication in that country of the places where men had become aware of the divine presence.

3. **Jacob in Haran.** *Genesis* 29: 1-30; 30: 25-31: 55. — Coming into the neighborhood of Haran, Jacob found his cousin Rachel, as Abraham's servant had found Rebekah, by the well. She took him to her father Laban, his mother's brother (*Genesis* 24: 29), and he entered into Laban's service. When they came to make an agreement as to wages, Jacob asked for Rachel, whom he already loved. Laban said that he might have Rachel if he would serve him seven years. But when the seven years were over, Laban gave Jacob his older daughter Leah, and made him serve for Rachel seven years longer.

Jacob worked for Laban twenty years. He said afterwards, looking back over his labors, "in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night"; and he added that Laban had ten times changed his wages, making the work harder and the pay smaller. Still, he prospered. Twelve sons and a daughter were born to him, and, in spite of the injustice of Laban, he grew rich. One time it was agreed that his pay should be all the black sheep and all the speckled goats; and that year all the good sheep were black, and all the sturdy goats were speckled. Thus his flocks increased, but the dislike and suspicion of his father-in-law increased also.

At last, while Laban was away at the sheep-shearing, Jacob gathered together his wives and children and his cattle, and started for the land of Canaan. Rachel, without the knowledge of her husband, stole her father's sacred images. Idols, such as these, serving perhaps as household gods, are found later in the shrine at which Gershom, the grandson of Moses, served as priest for the tribe of Dan (Judges 18:5, 30, 31). David had such images in his house when Saul tried to kill him, and Michal, David's wife, laid one of these in David's bed, with its head on the pillow and the bedclothes tucked in about it, that the messengers whom Saul sent might think that it was David, sick (I Samuel 19:13-16). Laban came in angry pursuit, accusing Jacob of both cheating and stealing. But the gods could not be found, for Rachel, who had hidden them under the camel's saddle, sat upon the saddle. Finally, Jacob and Laban piled up a heap of stones and called it Mizpah, the watch tower, and made an agreement of peace. Then Laban returned, and Jacob continued on his way.

4. **The Wrestling of Jacob.** *Genesis* 32, 33. — The return of Jacob from Mesopotamia to Canaan, with the twelve sons who became the fathers of twelve tribes, represents an emigration of eastern people into the west such as had taken place under the leadership of Abraham. The interest of the historian, however, is not in these successive colonizations of Palestine, but in the successive revelations of the providence of God. The central person in the record is not Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, but the Lord God. Thus an account is given of what was taking place in the soul of Jacob. On his way, God met him.

Jacob was encamped beside the river Jabbok, ready on the morrow to cross the Jordan. He had been informed that his brother Esau was awaiting him across the river, and he was afraid. He seemed to have escaped the anger of his father-in-law only to encounter the anger of the brother whom he had defrauded. In the night, alone in the darkness beside the river, there came a man and wrestled with him till the break of day. No explanation of this mysterious struggle is given, but the victory of Jacob is recorded, and in commemoration of it he is given the name of Israel, meaning "he-who-perseveres-with-God." He had made his way all along in the face of difficulty. He had striven, as the mysterious wrestler said, with God and with men, and had prevailed. His life was to be an assurance to all who should come after him that obstacles do not prevent success. Abraham had seen the splendid vision of national greatness; he represents the ideal which the Hebrews never forgot, which made them different from all their contented neighbors. They were to be a mighty people, bringing blessing to all the nations of the earth. Jacob perceived that this ideal could be attained

only by the conquest of difficulty; he represents the hope which sustained the Hebrews in all times of their tribulation; that out of adversity, wrestling even with God, they should come forth triumphant.

Then on the morrow Esau met him and was generous and friendly and forgiving. Jacob settled for a time in Shechem, till his sons quarrelled with the men of that place. Here, as often elsewhere, that which is described as the action of individuals may be an account of the contention of tribes. Thus Jacob's daughter Dinah may represent a clan of Israel; her connection with Shechem may mean that the clan was intermarrying with the Canaanites of that district, and was in danger of being absorbed. The tribes of Simeon and Levi interfere to prevent this, and are defeated by the Canaanites with such effect that they lose their place among the tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:7).

Jacob journeyed south to Bethel, first taking the idols which had been brought from Haran, and burying them under the sacred oak (Genesis 35:4). At Bethlehem (Ephrath), as he journeyed to the south, Rachel died at the birth of Benjamin (Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:18). At last, the patriarch pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder (Genesis 35:21, 27) in the vicinity of Hebron.

V

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

1. **The Selling of Joseph.** *Genesis 37.* — The parable of the Wrestling of Jacob found fulfilment in the experience of Joseph. In the midst of difficulties which seemed to insure inevitable failure, he made his way to high position. The story is full of unfailing human interest.

Of the twelve sons, Jacob cared most for Joseph, whose mother was Rachel. He showed his preference by clothing him in a coat of many colors, or, according to another translation, in a long gown with sleeves. The dislike which was consequently felt for him by his brothers was increased by his own claims of superiority. He dreamed that as they were binding sheaves, his sheaf stood upright and all their sheaves came and bowed before it. He dreamed again that the sun and moon and eleven stars made obeisance to him; the sun meaning his father, and the moon his mother. At this point the historian is evidently using a version of the story different from the version which had already contained an account of his mother's death.

Then, one day, Joseph being sent by his father to find his brothers where they fed their flocks, and following them north to Shechem, and still farther north to Dothan, by the plain of Esdraelon, they saw him coming and plotted to get rid of him. Here again a difference of statement is

explained by the historian's use of the ancient accounts. As the story was told in the tribe of Judah, Joseph was saved from death by Judah, who proposed selling him instead of killing him; and he was sold to a company of Ishmaelites. As the story was told in the tribe of Ephraim, the saviour of Joseph was Reuben, at whose suggestion he was put in a pit, whence he was taken up and sold to a company of Midianites. The purchasers of Joseph carried him to Egypt. "Now," said the brothers, "we shall see what will become of his dreams." They took his coat, and dipped it in the blood of a goat, and brought it to their father. "See," they cried, "what we have found! Is it not Joseph's coat?" And Jacob said, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces."

2. **The Glory of Joseph.** *Genesis 39-41.* — So Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and sold to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. The young man found favor in his master's sight, and came presently to be overseer of his household. He found favor in the sight of his mistress also, who tempted him to be unfaithful to his master, and, when he refused, brought a false accusation against him. He was accordingly put out of his position, and cast into prison.

But the keeper of the prison trusted Joseph, and made him overseer of the prisoners. His appearance and his evident ability impressed the keeper as they had impressed the captain. Then two prisoners, the butler and the baker of the king, each dreamed a dream, and came to Joseph to have their dreams interpreted. According to his interpretation the butler would presently be pardoned, but the baker would be hanged. And thus it came to pass.

Then Pharaoh dreamed, and when the court interpreters failed to give an explanation the butler remembered Joseph. Joseph said that the dream meant that seven years of plenty were to be followed by seven years of famine in all the land of Egypt; and he ventured to suggest that grain be laid by in storehouses during the time of plenty to be ready for the time of want. Thereupon Pharaoh said, "Where can I find a wiser man than Joseph?" He put his ring upon the hand of Joseph, and clothed him in fine linen, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made him ride in his second chariot, and set him over all the kingdom. Joseph married Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On, and had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. And when the famine came he sold grain till the hungry people paid him first their cattle, and then their land, and then themselves: all became Pharaoh's (Genesis 47: 13-26).

The word "Pharaoh" is a title rather than a name, like the word "Emperor." The name of Joseph's Pharaoh is not given. The local references in the narrative do not indicate any particular reign. The first clear date in the Old Testament is in the statement (Exodus 1: 11) that the Hebrews in Egypt built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. These cities were erected, as the ruins show, in the time of Rameses II (1295-1225 B.C.). Even so, the length of time from Moses back to Joseph is so differently stated that we cannot be sure about it. Was it four generations, or four centuries? The longer time appears in some passages (Genesis 15: 13, Exodus 12: 40, followed in Galatians 3: 17); in other passages (Genesis 15: 16, Exodus 6: 16-20) the shorter. The shorter period, of four generations (= about 150 years), seems somewhat more likely, in view of the fact that the

Hebrews were able to maintain their racial identity. In that case, the Pharaoh of Joseph's day was probably Amenhotep IV, who died about 1350 B.C. He was the reforming Pharaoh who tried to substitute the sun god for all the gods of Egypt. He built the palace at Tell el-Amarna, and it was to him that the famous letters from Canaan were written. In his day a Semite named Yanhamu had control of the stores of grain in the Delta of the Nile, and was in authority over Palestine. So the inscriptions say. It shows the possibility in that age of the attainment of high position by a Hebrew such as Joseph.

3. **Joseph and his Brethren.** *Genesis* 42-45:15. — Among those whom the famine drove to the court of Pharaoh to buy grain were Joseph's brothers. He knew them, but in his glory they knew him not. At first he put them into prison on the charge of being spies. Then he kept Simeon only, and released the others with food for their families, on condition that they would come again and bring their youngest brother, Benjamin; he being Joseph's own brother, the son of Rachel. So they departed. When they opened their sacks they were surprised to find in each sack the money which they had paid.

The famine continued in the land of Canaan as in the land of Egypt, and the brothers went again to buy food, taking Benjamin with them. But this time, when they set out to return, Joseph caused his silver cup to be hidden in Benjamin's sack, and sent an officer after them to arrest the thief. Back they all came in deep distress, and Judah offered to take the place of Benjamin and suffer in his stead. Thus did Joseph test his brothers to see if they had improved as they grew older, or if they were still

as selfish as before. Then he told them who he was, to their great amazement.

4. **Israel in Egypt.** *Genesis* 45: 16-50: 26. — Immediately Joseph sent for his father and for all the family of Israel, providing Egyptian wagons to convey them. And Jacob saw again the son whom he had mourned as dead. Learning that Joseph's kindred were shepherds, Pharaoh gave them grazing lands in Goshen, a district between the Delta of the Nile and the isthmus of Suez. There they fed their flocks and prospered. There at the end of his long life Jacob blessed them: first Ephraim, then Manasseh, sons of Joseph; then the others. In the poem called the Blessing of Jacob the sons are described not as individuals but as tribes. The days of their slavery in Egypt and of their wanderings in the wilderness are over, and they are settled in the promised land. The strong tribe of Judah holds the sceptre in the south; the strong tribe of Joseph (= Ephraim) abides in might in the fertile places of the north.

When Jacob died they carried his body to Hebron, and buried him in the cave of Machpelah. Notice is taken of the fact that his body was embalmed in the Egyptian manner, after the fashion of the ancient mummies. And Joseph died, and his body was embalmed likewise, and put in a coffin, — in a decorated mummy-case such as one sees in Egyptian rooms of great museums, — until the sojourn in Egypt should be over, and the people should return, bearing the body of Joseph with them, to the land of Canaan.

VI

MOSES AND THE EXODUS

1. **The Oppression of the Israelites.** *Exodus* 1. — None of the Pharaohs of the books of Genesis and Exodus is called by his name. The record is like an account of English history which should speak of "the king," but never of King William, or King Henry, or King John. In such a case the natural inference would be that the writer lived so long after the event that the memories which had come down to him contained no distinction between one king and another. So it is with the history of the Hebrews. When we come to the books of the kings we read of Pharaoh Shishak (I Kings 14: 25) and Pharaoh Nechoh (II Kings 23: 29), but in Genesis and Exodus we are still dealing with the times before definite historical records began. The excavation of the store-city of Pithom which the men of Israel built (Exodus 1: 11) shows that it was erected in the reign of Rameses II (1295-1225 B.C.). It is therefore likely that he was the Pharaoh of the oppression. In that case, the exodus may have taken place about 1200 B.C. The number of the Israelites is variously stated. It is said in one place that they were six hundred thousand (Exodus 12: 37). On the other hand, it is said that two nurses were enough to assist the Hebrew mothers at the birth of their children (Exodus 1: 10). These differences indicate not only that the compiler of the ancient records used now one version and now another, but that all the

memories and traditions were like inscriptions which are so old that time and accident and change have marred them, blotting out words here and there, and making the reader uncertain of the meaning. They are marks of great age.

It is plain that the Hebrew people were sufficiently numerous to give the Egyptians cause for alarm. It was feared that on the occasion of the appearance of a foreign enemy, the Hebrews might rise up to assist them. Thus not only were their lives made bitter with hard service in brick and in mortar in the building operations for which the reign of Rameses II is famous, but an endeavor was made to stop their growth by putting their male children to death.

2. **The Call of Moses.** *Exodus 2-4.*—Under these hard conditions Moses was born, the son of Amram and Jochebed of the tribe of Levi (*Exodus 6: 20*). When he was three months old he was put into an ark of bulrushes among the reeds of the river, where he would be found by Pharaoh's daughter. The princess adopted him, and he was brought up and educated in the palace. As he came to manhood, however, it was perceived that his sympathies were with his own people. One day, finding an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he smote the Egyptian and killed him. Being thus disclosed as the possible leader of a slave rebellion, he was obliged to flee the country. Thus he came into the land of Midian.

East of Egypt, across the isthmus of Suez, is the peninsula of Sinai, between two arms of the Red Sea. The arm of the Red Sea on the west of the peninsula is the Gulf of Suez; the arm on the east is the Gulf of Akabah. The land of Goshen, where the Hebrews lived, is at the top of

the Gulf of Suez. The land of Midian, to which Moses fled, cannot be so definitely located, because the Midianites were roving people, driving their flocks from place to place. Some of them appear in the story of Joseph near the plain of Esdraelon, on their camels, carrying merchandise to Egypt. They who received Moses seem to have had their residence by the Gulf of Akabah, east or northeast. They are described as kinsfolk of the Hebrews, descendants of Abraham (Genesis 25: 1-4). A priest of Midian named Jethro (or Hobab, Judges 4: 11) gave Moses a place in his own family, and he married Zipporah his daughter.

Years passed, and Moses fed the flocks of his father-in-law. Then he came in search of pasture to the mountain which is sometimes called Horeb (Exodus 3: 1, Deuteronomy 4: 10-15), and sometimes Sinai. There he had a vision of God in the flame of a burning bush, and heard in his soul the voice of God telling him to go back and deliver his people out of bondage. He was to bring them into that free country to which he himself had come, and where he stood, into the land of Midian, into the neighborhood of Horeb-Sinai. Beside that mountain they should worship God. At the same time, there was revealed to him a sacred name. Every people had its own names for the gods. The Canaanites called God Baal; the Philistines, Dagon (I Samuel 5: 2); the Moabites, Chemosh; the Ammonites, Molech (I Kings 11: 7). Bel and Ishtar and Marduk were divine titles among the Babylonians, to which the Assyrians added Asshur; Amon, Isis and Osiris were worshipped in Egypt. Moses, and the Hebrews after him, called God Jehovah. Out of the burning bush Jehovah spoke. As Moses listened,

Aaron his brother came from Egypt, and was made his spokesman.

3. **Moses and Pharaoh.** *Exodus* 5-11. — Thus called to be the deliverer of his oppressed people, Moses returned to Egypt and demanded for them the privilege of keeping a religious festival in the wilderness. To this Pharaoh replied only by increasing their burdens. The men were needed in the erection of the public buildings. Pharaoh could not spare them. He reminded them that they were slaves under his absolute authority by compelling them not only to make as many bricks as before but to provide for themselves the straw which had previously been provided for them. When they failed to do this they were beaten.

Then followed a series of national calamities. The annual discoloration of the Nile was so great that year that the river was red as blood. Out of the defiled water came multitudes of frogs. The frogs dying and decaying brought swarms of flies. The flies carried plague germs to the cattle. And there were great storms, with thunder and lightning and heavy hail and thick darkness. An east wind blew the locusts into the land. At first, Pharaoh saw in these plagues only the common afflictions of the country, somewhat worse than usual. When, however, they continued, and came at last to a crisis in a pestilence which entered into every household, he was convinced for the moment that these were works of God on behalf of the Hebrews. At last, he consented to let the people go.

The fact that the Nile begins to rise in June, and that hail would fall in Egypt in January, being the rainy season, suggests that the contention between Moses and Pharaoh was extended over the greater part of a year. It was probably in the spring when the first request was made to

keep the festival in the wilderness, according to the common manner of primitive people worshipping the gods who restore life to the earth after the desolation of winter. It was in the spring again that the request was granted.

4. **The Passover.** *Exodus* 12, 13. — Taking advantage of the terror of the Egyptians, the Hebrews gathered together such of their goods as they could carry, and demanded of the Egyptians gold and silver, after their years of unpaid service. The sacrifice of a lamb in every Hebrew household had provided blood which they took to mark the posts of their doors, that the destroying angel might pass over them. The deliverance gave a name to that day forever. The bread which they took with them was made in such haste, in the urgency of their departure, that it had no yeast, or leaven. Afterwards, they kept the Feast of the Passover as an annual celebration of their escape, as it is kept to this day. A lamb is served with bitter herbs in remembrance of the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage, and the bread is unleavened. And this takes place at the time of the full moon which follows the vernal equinox, the twenty-first of March.

5. **The Red Sea.** *Exodus* 14, 15. — The destination of the Hebrews under the leadership of Moses was the land of Midian. Thither they had been summoned by the voice of God. There they had friends and kinsfolk. There they might hope to find a secure refuge from the Egyptians. There was indeed a road which led straight out of Egypt into Palestine, but Palestine could be entered only by an invading army, and the escaping multitudes of slaves, unacquainted with war, accustomed to the trade of the mason and of the carpenter, were not equipped to undertake it. Their only way led across the isthmus of

Suez, and thence by caravan routes over the peninsula to the mountains of Horeb.

Across this road they found a fortress and a wall, holding the isthmus against all comers and goers. And behind came the pursuing Egyptians. Pharaoh, who had hardly believed that the plagues were the work of Jehovah for His people, had recovered from the terror into which the pestilence had cast him. He came out with chariots and horsemen to overtake these workmen of his and drive them back to their tasks. There they were, then, with the road blocked before them, and the Egyptians approaching from behind.

In this peril, the Lord caused a strong east wind to blow, and a path appeared in the midst of the shallow waters of the sea. Over they went by land, and the Egyptians followed them. "The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. My desire shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.'" Thus it is written in the ancient Song of Deliverance. Then the wind changed, and the waters of the sea came back, and the eager pursuers were drowned. "Thou didst blow with thy wind, and the sea covered them. They sank as lead in the mighty waters." The circumstances of this deliverance made a profound impression upon the mind of the people. It was plain to them that they had escaped not by their own device or strength but by the hand of Jehovah. "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

VII

MOSES AND THE LAW

1. **Mount Sinai.** — Standing on the safe side of the Red Sea, the Israelites had a choice between the roads.

They might have gone south along the coast to the great mountains near the point of the peninsula. This route has the support of all tradition, but there are difficulties in the way of accepting it. One difficulty is in the fact that there were extensive Egyptian quarries beside this road, where slaves worked under the guard of soldiers: escaping slaves would hardly go that way. Another difficulty is in the fact that the road after passing the quarries leads only into the midst of bleak mountains.

They might have gone east across the desert to the head of the Gulf of Akabah, and so to Midian. This road, following the trail of the caravans, would have brought the host to Elath, which sounds a little like Elim (Exodus 15: 27), and would have conducted them thence to the country whence Moses had come, and to which he was intending to return. There they would find the mountain of God (Exodus 3: 1) where he had seen the burning bush. There among the Midianites, by the land of Edom, amidst the heights of the Mount Seir range (Deuteronomy 33: 2), we are probably to look for the eminence, sometimes called Sinai, and sometimes Horeb, into whose summit Moses ascended to converse with God.

2. **The Law by Commandments.** *Exodus* 19:16-20:21; 34:1-27. — The first thing to do with the multitude of escaped slaves was to establish discipline. They had obeyed their masters in Egypt under the rule of force; they were now to be taught to be their own masters obedient to God under the rule of conscience. To this end there must be laws, and the laws must be recognized as expressing the will of God.

The experiences of the people on the journey out of Egypt into the land of Midian had already assured them of the care of God. They said afterwards, recalling those days, that the Lord supplied them with bread from heaven, raining manna upon them (*Exodus* 16); and that Moses, smiting with his rod, brought forth water for them from the flinty rock (*Exodus* 17:1-7). They had been attacked by Amalekites, wild men of the desert, and Joshua had commanded their victorious defence, but the true cause of the victory was the prevailing prayer of Moses for the help of God (*Exodus* 17:8-16). The exodus had effected their social and political independence, but the whole movement had been conducted under conditions which made it a religious revolution. It had been made possible and successful by the power of God. Thus the people were ready to receive the initial laws of their new state not at the hands of any representative assembly of legislators, and not by the imposition of a king and his court, but by the word of God.

These laws were established at Mount Sinai. Moses went up into the cloudy peaks to commune with God, amidst thunderings and lightnings. The people saw with their eyes and heard with their ears that this legislation was not the will of Moses only but of God. Thus

Hammurabi of Babylon had been represented on the monuments, centuries before, as receiving laws like these from the hand of God.

Moses talked so long with God upon the mountain that the people despaired of his return. Under the leadership of Aaron they made a golden calf and worshipped it, singing and dancing about it, and crying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The story may have been colored in the retelling by the reprobation of the golden calves which Jeroboam set up to the scandal of the southern kingdom (I Kings 12:28). He is said to have repeated the formula of the heresy of Aaron. The incident, however, is true to human nature. The people easily reverted to the customs of their forefathers, who had worshipped idols in Haran; or followed the customs of their neighbors and former masters, the Egyptians. Every religion in the world made use of idols. The Hebrews came very slowly into their realization of the religion of the Spirit. Thus they set up the golden calf with the blessing of Aaron. Moses coming down, bringing the law written on the stone tablets, and finding the people thus engaged, broke the tablets in his indignation, and after destroying the idol returned into the mount to confer again with God. The history says that the laws were inscribed a second time upon the pages of stone.

A comparison of the thirty-fourth with the twentieth chapter of Exodus discloses the fact that they were different laws. The Ten Commandments in the twentieth chapter (see also Deuteronomy 5:6-21) are concerned with moral duties. The Ten Commandments in the thirty-fourth chapter (see also Exodus 23:15-19) are concerned

with religious institutions: 1. Thou shalt worship no other god (verse 14). 2. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods (17). 3. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep (18). 4. Every first-born is mine (19, 20). 5. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh thou shalt rest (21). 6. Thou shalt observe the feast of weeks (22). 7. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven (25). 8. Neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning (25). 9. The firstfruits of thy land shalt thou bring unto the Lord thy God (26). 10. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk (26). After this manner, in these ritual regulations, did the Lord speak to Moses (Exodus 34:27, 28), making His covenant with the people of Israel. And Moses "wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." This is plainly a kind of legislation other than that which appears in the laws, "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal."

The relation between these two versions of the ten commandments is one of the interesting problems of Old Testament study.

3. The Law by Cases. *Exodus* 18:1-27. — One way of making law is by the statement of fundamental principles, constitutions, commandments. Another way is by the application of the principles to particular cases.

Thus, day by day, Moses sat to judge the people. They brought him their disputes and difficulties, and he decided them. And these decisions became precedents. Presently, by the advice of his father-in-law, Moses appointed men from among the people, "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain," who should

decide the lesser cases, bringing only the more important ones to him. These cases they decided according to the laws which Moses had received from God. And this went on, year after year. In the wilderness, and on the march, and presently in the land of Canaan, after the death of Moses, the will of the great lawgiver was thus carried out, and all the laws were called the laws of Moses.

This long and gradual process makes it almost impossible to date the Old Testament laws. In this respect they are like the Psalms and the Proverbs. They are assembled under the great name of Moses, as the Psalms are ascribed to David, and the Proverbs to Solomon. It means that the foundation of the Hebrew state was laid by Moses. He made the constitution. It was due to him that the Israelites differed from their neighbors in that they were governed not by the caprice of kings nor by the ambition of priests but by the law, to whose obedience both priests and kings were bound. It was by him that the law was based upon the righteousness of God.

The laws which grew out of the Mosaic beginnings are collected in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The oldest legislation is perhaps that which is contained in the *Ten Commandments* of Exodus 34; on the ground that in the history of religion ritual laws commonly precede moral laws. Along with this appears the primitive code called the *Book of the Covenant* (Exodus 20: 23-23: 19), to which are prefixed the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20. A great part of the book of *Deuteronomy* (5-11; 12-26; 28) seems to have appeared in its present form in the seventh century B.C., in the time of King Josiah (II Kings 22). A great part of the book of *Leviticus* (17-26) seems to have appeared in its

present form in the fifth century B.C. and to be connected with the mission of Ezra the scribe (Nehemiah 8: 1-3).

Even the latest collections, however, contain laws which are far older than the date of the collection. And the earliest groups of statutes contain regulations concerning that agricultural life into which the Hebrews did not enter till long after the sojourn at Sinai. It shows that these were living laws, in constant use, changing as the conditions changed, kept close to the actual needs of the people. The law was like a tree which puts forth new branches year by year, all of them growing out of the parent stem. The parent stem was planted by Moses.

4. **The Ark of the Covenant.** *Exodus 25-28; 33: 7-11.* — The tables of stone were placed in a box of acacia wood, called the Ark of the Covenant, and the ark was kept in a tent of goat's hair. Into this tent Moses entered when he would commune with God. There the Lord spoke with Moses, "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Aaron and his sons were made priests to offer sacrifices to God before the tent, which was the symbol of the divine presence. At the door of this tabernacle, the people said their prayers. There Aaron ministered, dressed in a gown of blue, having on the hem of it pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and between the pomegranates little golden bells which tinkled as he walked.

VIII

THE MARCH OF THE INVADING ARMY

1. **The Invasion that Failed.** *Numbers* 13, 14. — West of Sinai and south of the land of Canaan lay the Wilderness of Paran, having in the midst of it a flowing spring called Kadesh (*Numbers* 13:26). To this place they marched. When they took up the ark to begin a day's journey Moses cried, "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered" (*Psalms* 68:1). When they rested he cried, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel" (*Numbers* 10:35, 36). North of the Wilderness of Paran was the South Country, the beginning of that land of hills and valleys where Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had fed their flocks, and toward which the hopes of these their descendants were directed.

From Kadesh, Moses sent spies to view the land. "See the land what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not."

So the men went up as far as Hebron, where their forefathers lay buried in the cave of Machpelah; and farther north to Eshcol, whence they brought a branch bearing a great cluster of grapes. They reported that the land was

fertile, "flowing with milk and honey," but they said that it was already populated, having Amalekites in the south, and Amorites in the mountains, and Canaanites by the sea and in the valley of the Jordan. These people dwelt, they said, in walled cities, and were of gigantic stature, so that we seemed like grasshoppers beside them.

The people, hearing this report, refused to go, though Joshua and Caleb, the leaders of the spies, joined Moses in urging them. Some of the people were disposed to stone Caleb and Joshua, and to desert the leadership of Moses. "Let us make a captain," they said, "and return into Egypt." Others, however, were so impressed by the good report that they determined to go into Canaan even after Moses had abandoned the expedition. They advanced, therefore, some way into the country, against the will of Moses. But the Amalekites and the Canaanites came out and chased them back.

2. The Wandering in the Wilderness. *Numbers* 11; 16; 20:1-13. — This failure made it plain that the people were not prepared for war. They needed the discipline of experience. They must be strengthened and toughened by hard living. Thus they were made to wander in the wilderness. They became acquainted with hunger and thirst, against which they cried bitterly, and reviled Moses, wishing that they had stayed in Egypt. Korah, a kinsman of Moses, and Dathan and Abiram, descendants of Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, led a rebellion of two hundred and fifty men, which was suppressed only by an earthquake and a plague. Even after many years, the people were still sorry that they had come out of Egypt. They looked back with regret to the days of

their slavery. They remembered the fish which they used to eat, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks and the garlic, and were weary of the monotony of the manna. "Wherefore," they cried, "have ye 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 of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." They hated it. Moses, strong and patient as he was, found himself tried by them beyond the limit of endurance. But in spite of their continual complaining, the muscles of the men grew strong, and there was a new courage in their hearts.

How many years were spent in this preparation we are not definitely told. The number forty, which occurs so often in the Bible, is what we call a "round number," meaning a good while. It was long enough, however, for a new generation to grow up, born in the wilderness, nomads like the Bedouin, strong and courageous.

3. By the Way of Edom and Moab. *Numbers* 20: 14-21: 11; 22-24.—At last, it was decided to undertake again the adventure of invasion. It was now proposed, instead of attacking the land of Canaan from the south, to attack it from the east. They would march up through Edom and Moab and enter the country by crossing the Jordan. Edom was the first region on this line of march, being south of the Dead Sea; to the north of Edom was Moab.

From Kadesh, therefore, they sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, "We are your kinsfolk, and are come out of Egypt; let us pass through your land. 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." But the king of Edom refused, and came

out with an army; so that they had to take a long, hard journey around the borders of that country.

There it was that Moses made the brazen serpent which Hezekiah, long after, broke in pieces as an idol (II Kings 18:4). Moses put the serpent on a pole, that they who were bitten by serpents might look at it and be healed (John 3:14, 15).

Then they journeyed, and came to Moab. And Balak, king of Moab, sent for Balaam, a prophet in the east, to curse these invaders of his land. Balaam came reluctantly. He told the king of Moab that even the ass on which he rode was stopped by an angel in the way. And having come, and building altars on the heights of the mountains overlooking the camp of Israel, Balaam could not pronounce the words of cursing, but blessed the enemies of Balak. A series of oracles in poetic form expresses the expectation of a victorious future. The people shall be great in number. "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" They shall conquer Moab and Edom. "The shout of a king is among them." "The people shall rise up as a great lion." "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." It describes the triumph of the Hebrews under the leadership of David (II Samuel 8:2, 14).

4. **On the Eve of the Invasion.** *Numbers* 21:12-35, *Deuteronomy* 2:1-3:17, *Numbers* 31, 34. — Then came fighting. Sihon, king of the Amorites, refused to let the host of Israel pass through his land. But the invaders

had now more confidence in their own might than when they had been driven away by the king of Edom. They attacked Sihon and defeated him and took possession of his country. They did the same with Og, the king of Bashan, whose vast bedstead of iron amazed them (Deuteronomy 3:11). Thus they did likewise with the Midianites. By these conquests the Hebrews made themselves masters of the east of the Jordan. At last they had a land of their own. And some of them — the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh — were contented, and began to settle in the fertile fields.

But across the Jordan lay the Land of Promise. Coming in from the desert, like other nomad tribes before and after them, they felt the call of the land beyond the river.

Meanwhile, Aaron had died, and Eleazar his son had become priest in his stead (Numbers 20:22-29). Moses perceived that the end of his own life was near. The book of Deuteronomy contains a long Farewell Address reviewing the years which had passed since the crossing of the Red Sea, and urging the people to keep their faith and obedience. The heart of all their life, he said, was their loyalty to Jehovah their God. After the Address follows the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-43); and the Blessing of Moses follows the Song (Deuteronomy 33). But the Blessing of Moses, like the Blessing of Jacob (Genesis 49), is a description of the tribes as settled in the land. The value of the chapters is not in the words but in the spirit of Moses. They are concerned not so much with his lips as with his soul. They reveal him as he was indeed, the man who delivered the people out of Egypt, and kept the tribes together, and taught them their law and their religion, and led them through the long discipline of the

desert, and brought them within sight of the Land of Canaan.

Moses appointed Joshua as his successor, laying his hands upon him and bidding him be strong and of a good courage. Then he climbed to the peak of Pisgah in the range of Nebo, and looked across the Jordan. The whole fair land lay at his feet: Judah's future country on his left, Ephraim's on his right, as far north as Dan and Naphtali; with the "utmost sea" beyond; beneath the mountain, the valley of the Jordan, and across the ford the palms of Jericho. The tradition that Moses had offended God (Numbers 20: 10-13) and was therefore excluded from the land of Canaan, probably arose from the common feeling that whoever missed the great rewards of life had somehow sinned. It expresses a sense of incompleteness in the life of him who brought the tribes to the bank of the Jordan, and saw the Land of Promise with his eyes, but went not over.

It is not likely that any such thought was in the mind of Moses. He had lived his life, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith, he had done the work which had been given him to do. There in the land of Moab he died. When the writer of Deuteronomy says that God buried him, he is expressing not only the mystery of his death, alone on the mountain, but the reverence of all Israel for him who had been to them prophet and priest and king.

IX

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

1. **The Crossing of the Jordan.** *Joshua* 3-5. — Joshua, the new leader, entered at once upon the work of invasion. Orders were given to march; priests went before, bearing the ark of the covenant; thus they advanced to the brink of the Jordan. The importance of the passage of the river is indicated by the fact that the narrative glorifies it with miracle such as attended the passage of the Red Sea. The Jordan was at flood that day, but when the feet of the priests touched the water the river was suddenly dammed, high up by the city of Adam. And thus a road was opened for the invaders, from shore to shore. Over they went, the priests with the ark standing in the midst of the channel till all had passed. Twelve stones from the middle of the river were piled on the west bank to commemorate the event.

There at Gilgal the sacrament of circumcision, already associated with Abraham (*Genesis* 17:9-14) and with Moses (*Exodus* 4:24-26), was renewed, as a sign of the consecration of the men of Israel to the service of God. There they ate the corn of the land, having come into the settled country where there were farms. There Joshua had a vision of an angel with a drawn sword, "the captain of the host of the Lord," and was assured that God was on his side.

2. **The Destruction of Jericho.** *Joshua 2, 6.* — The first thing to do was to attack the town of Jericho. It stood in the Jordan valley among palm trees, having a stout wall about it.

Into this place Joshua had already sent spies. They had made friends with the family of a woman named Rahab, who had hidden them under stalks of flax on the roof of her house. The house was by the city wall, and she helped them to escape when they were discovered, letting them down by a cord through a window over the wall. The spies promised in return that Rahab and her family should be spared in the destruction of the city, and she marked her house by binding a line of scarlet thread in the window by which she had let them down. The spies brought back word to Joshua that the people of Jericho were afraid.

Seven days the besiegers marched around the little town in silence, the ark borne before them, and when on the seventh day the priests blew their ram's horn trumpets and all the people shouted with a great shout, the walls fell down flat. Thus is described the completeness of the victory. In they rushed, every man straight before him, and took the town.

Being nomad people, fresh from the desert and unacquainted with cities, they destroyed the place. They killed the people, and broke or burned all of their possessions. It was like the invasion of the Roman Empire by the barbarians. The Israelites, men of the open air, wanderers in the wilderness, were superior both in strength and in character to the more civilized people of the land of Canaan. The cruelty of the victors is accounted for in part by the instincts of the desert, and in part by their belief that these killings and burnings were an offering

acceptable to God. Thus far had they come, and no farther, in that progress in the knowledge of God of which the whole history is a record. Jericho lies to-day, much as they left it, a heap of ruins. The Jericho of the New Testament was built beside it.

3. The Siege of Ai. *Joshua* 7, 8. — Leaving Jericho, and advancing into the midst of the country, they came to Ai, near the ancient shrine of Bethel (Genesis 12:8). This place they at first besieged in vain, being driven back with loss of life. In the defeat they saw the divine displeasure, and were able to account for it when they found that one of their company, a man named Achan, had disobeyed the order to destroy the wealth of Jericho for the glory of God. Out of the spoil he had saved for himself a wedge of gold, and two hundred pieces of silver, and a goodly Babylonish garment. Achan being taken out and stoned to death as a punishment and a warning, they again attacked Ai, setting an ambush behind the city, and pretending to run away in fright in front. The men of Ai pursued them, the men of the ambush came out and entered the town and set it on fire. Again the people were put to death and the place was destroyed.

4. The Battle of Beth-horon. *Joshua* 9, 10. — West of Ai was Gibeon, whose citizens made peace with the invaders by a stratagem. Messengers came to Joshua, with bread mouldy in their baskets, and shoes worn as by a long journey, and said that they came from a far country. They asked for a treaty of alliance. When this was made, it was discovered that the men came from Gibeon, the next town. Nevertheless, the Israelites kept their promise. Long after, in the time of David, when there was a three-years famine, it was believed to be a

sign of the displeasure of the Lord because Saul slew the Gibeonites (II Samuel 21: 1-6).

The march of the invaders over the ruins of Jericho and Ai, and the alliance made with Gibeon, aroused the people of the land. They were still living, as in the time of the el-Amarna letters, city by city, each by its own spring or on its own fortified hill, independent of its neighbors, under its own king. The overlordship of Egypt had now ceased. Rameses III had successfully met a great invasion of Syria and Palestine from Asia Minor; the Philistines, with their families and household goods following them in ox-carts, and their ships accompanying them along the shore, had been turned back from attacking Egypt itself. But after Rameses III came nine other Pharaohs of that name, during a period of eighty years, each one more incompetent than his predecessor. It was probably in the midst of this time of Egyptian weakness that the Hebrews came. The Palestinian kings could expect no help from Pharaoh. Under the king of Jerusalem they combined to meet the Israelites in a general battle.

The place was the Pass of Beth-horon. So long was the conflict and so decisive the victory that in the war-songs of the book of Joshua it was said that the sun and moon stood still to watch it.

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.

According to one account (Joshua 10: 17-27) the king of Jerusalem and his royal allies were shut up in a cave, whence they were brought after the battle, that the captains of Israel might set their feet upon their neck, and

then were hanged. According to what looks like another account (Judges 1: 5-8), Adonibezek, king of Jerusalem, being captured, they cut off his thumbs and great toes. This he acknowledged as an act of justice. "Threescore and ten kings," he said, "having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so hath God requited me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, where he died, and they smote the city with the sword and burned it.

5. The Progress of the Conquest. *Joshua 11, Judges 1, 2.* — The boast of Adonibezek may indicate a state of civil strife which had weakened the cities of Canaan, and made the progress of invasion possible. The fact, however, that Jerusalem continued in the possession of its own people (Judges 1: 21) and was not taken by the Israelites till the time of David (II Samuel 5: 6-9) shows that the conquest which began so brilliantly proceeded very slowly and imperfectly. In the book of Joshua the victorious army defeats the southern kings of Canaan at the battle of Beth-horon, and the northern kings at the battle of Merom (Joshua 11), and thus subdues the whole land, which they then divide among the tribes.

But the first two chapters of the book of Judges record not only the successes but the failures of the long campaign. "The Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountains; but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron." The tribe of Judah captured Hebron, and the tribe of Joseph captured Bethel: thus two of the ancient shrines fell into the hands of the invaders. But Manasseh could not take Taanach or Megiddo; "the Canaanite would dwell in that land." Neither did Ephraim take the strong-

hold of Gezer. Neither did Zebulum, nor Asher, nor Naphtali succeed in their endeavors. The Amorites forced the tribe of Dan into the mountain; they would not suffer them to come down to the valley.

The Israelites settled in the land as they were able. Some places they destroyed, from some they were driven away, in others they settled beside the people of the land. They entered into the experience of other like invaders who come among nations more civilized than themselves. They learned much from the ancient cities, some of it good, some of it bad. They ceased to be a desert people, wandering from place to place, and began to till the ground and to live in towns. They were attracted not only by the civilized manners and customs but by the religion of their neighbors. They turned out of the way which their fathers had walked in, and bowed down to the gods of the land.

Joshua died, and all that generation passed away, "and there arose another generation which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." "The Israelites dwelt among the Canaanites, and they took their daughters as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods."

X

THE HEROIC AGE

1. **The Land and the Tribes.** *Genesis* 49, *Deuteronomy* 33. — Two poems, the Blessing of Jacob (*Genesis* 49) and the Blessing of Moses (*Deuteronomy* 33), describe the settled tribes. In the Blessing of Jacob, the longest passages concern the fortunes of Joseph and of Judah. These two occupied the central and southern portions of the land, having the little tribe of Benjamin between them.

The tribe of Joseph, descended from his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, settled south of the plain of Esdraelon, in the district which included the holy places of Shechem and Bethel. The tribe of Judah settled west of the Dead Sea, in the district which included the holy place of Hebron. South of them was the tribe of Simeon, of which the Blessing of Jacob says, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel"; and of which the Blessing of Moses makes no mention. This tribe was absorbed in Judah, including the shrine of Beersheba, the southernmost place in the Promised Land. Dan, by the sources of the Jordan, was the northernmost.

An interesting account is given (*Judges* 17, 18) of the manner in which a part of the tribe of Dan took possession of their lands in the north. Six hundred men with weapons of war fell upon the unsuspecting Phœnician town of Laish and captured it. On their way through the territory of Ephraim, they had stolen from a man named Micah

his family priest Jonathan, of the tribe of Levi. Jonathan's father was Gershom. His grandfather, according to the King James Version, was Manasseh, but according to the Revised Version, Moses (Judges 18:30). This grandson of Moses (Exodus 2:22) was serving Micah's shrine, which was adorned with molten images. The tribe of Dan took the images with the priest and established the worship of God, in this form, in their new home.

In the neighborhood of Dan, north of the plain of Esdraelon, were Asher and Zebulun, and Naphtali and Issachar by the Lake of Galilee.

Reuben, Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh remained on the east of the Jordan.

The tribe of Levi, which is described in the Blessing of Jacob as scattered with Simeon, is exalted with praise in the Blessing of Moses. But they had no land. It was appointed to them to live in the cities of their brethren (Joshua 21).

2. Deborah and the Canaanites. *Judges 4, 5.* — The divided tribes were surrounded on every side by enemies. In the south were roving Amalekites and Ishmaelites. On the west in the fertile plains by the sea, were the Philistines over against Judah and Benjamin; and north of them the Phœnicians, up to Tyre and Sidon. On the east, in the desert, were Ammonites and Midianites; and south of them the old enemies of Israel, Moab and Edom. A great part of all the central portion of the country, especially including the plain of Esdraelon, continued in the strong hands of the Canaanites.

Among the first to attack their new neighbors were the men of Moab, who came across the fords at Jericho and levied tribute upon Benjamin. But Ehud, a left-handed

Benjamite, who brought the tribute, assassinated Eglon, king of Moab, and delivered his people (Judges 3: 12-30). Ephraim arose to the aid of Benjamin, at the sound of Ehud's trumpet, and they held the fords.

The strength of the Canaanites had successfully resisted the shock of the Israelite invasion. Holding Esdraelon, they separated the northern from the central tribes, and seemed likely to reduce the Hebrews in that part of the country to the slavery which their forefathers had endured in Egypt. The men of Israel did not dare to appear upon the highways; among their forty thousand warriors was neither sword nor shield. If the victory of the waters of Merom (Joshua 11: 1-14) had been fought already, all its advantages had been lost, but the description may be only another version of the triumphant uprising under Deborah and Barak.

These two, Deborah the prophetess and Barak the captain, rallied the scattered forces of the tribes. She was of Ephraim, he was of Naphtali. They were joined by men from Benjamin and Issachar and Zebulun. Two accounts are given of the battle, one in prose and one in poetry. The Song of Deborah is commonly believed by scholars to be contemporary with the event. The battlefield was the wide plain. Barak rushing down from Mount Tabor encountered Sisera and his nine hundred chariots of iron. A storm of wind and rain flooded the plain and made the chariots useless. The stars in their courses fought against Sisera. Barak was overwhelmingly victorious. Sisera seeking refuge in a tent of the clan of the Kenites was slain by Jael. This decisive battle made the Israelites masters of the land. It was the crisis of the conquest.

3. **Gideon and the Midianites.** *Judges* 6-9. — The Israelites were rulers of the central parts of Palestine, and held the fertile plain of Esdraelon, but they could not reap their harvests. Out of the eastern deserts came the Midianites and spoiled the farms. They were driven away at last by Gideon.

Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh. His brothers had been killed by these robbers and he arose to avenge their blood. His first act was to reassert the religion of Israel, by breaking down an altar of Baal. Men gathered about him, a great company, out of whom he chose three hundred. The sign of a fleece of wool, one night wet with dew, another night dry, assured him of the help of God. He equipped his men with trumpets and torches and pitchers, and they came upon the Midianites by night, as they slept after their successful plundering. The sudden crash of broken pitchers, the flare of flaming torches, the shout of men with trumpets, frightened the Midianites, and they fled in a panic. With the slaughter of their chiefs Gideon avenged his brothers, and with the spoils of the battle he made a molten image, which he set up in his native town of Ophrah, near Shechem.

There Gideon established a little kingdom, being succeeded by his son Abimelech (*Judges* 9). The son, however, was unworthy of his father. His bad end was predicted at the beginning of his career by his brother Jotham in the fable of the Trees and the Bramble. He succeeded in putting down an insurrection of the men of Shechem, but at a siege of the town of Thebez a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the tower, and killed him.

4. **Jephthah and the Ammonites.** *Judges* 10-12. — Meanwhile the tribes on the east of the Jordan were suffer-

ing from the incursions of the Ammonites. In desperation, they appointed a dictator, Jephthah, the chief of a band of outlaws. He lived in Gilead. Jephthah brought with him his band of fighting men, and demanded of the Ammonites that they should cease their attacks. The Ammonites replied that the land in which the Israelites had settled was their land, and that they intended to take it back again. Jephthah answered, "You have the land which Chemosh your God has given you, and we have the land which Jehovah our God has given us; and we propose to keep it." This was the beginning of a war. Jephthah, as he went to battle, made a vow that if God would give him victory, he would sacrifice the first living thing which should meet him on his return. He won the victory, but the first living thing which met him was his daughter.

Dissension had early appeared between the tribes on the east and the tribes on the west of the Jordan. The western tribes had protested against an altar which the eastern tribes had built (Joshua 22: 9-31), fearing that it was the symbol of a separation in religion. That difference had been fraternally settled, but the conquests of Jephthah aroused again the old suspicious jealousy. The tribe of Ephraim complained because Jephthah had not called them with him into battle. They feared the erection of a rival kingdom. By way of answer, Jephthah's Gileadites seized all the Ephraimites whom they could find, and slew them at the fords of the river. When they were in doubt they made the men pronounce the word "Shibboleth." If they said "Sibboleth," they knew that they belonged to Ephraim.

5. **Samson and the Philistines.** *Judges 13-16.*—Of all the foes of Israel in the days of their settlement in Canaan,

the Philistines were the most persistent. They had invaded the land from the west, coming out of Asia Minor, about the time when the Hebrews were invading from the east. A contention between the two peoples was inevitable. In the early stages of this strife Samson played his mischievous pranks. His adventures seem to have been undertaken more for his own amusement than for the good of his country, and he was probably as lacking in religion as he was in morals, but the stories of his exploits afforded unending merriment. The riddle of the Lion and the Bees, the tying of the firebrands in the foxes' tails, the slaughter with the jawbone of an ass, the carrying-off of the gates of Gaza, the betrayal of the giant by his mistress Delilah, and the pulling down of the Philistine temple on the heads of his enemies, were told by fathers to their children, and recited in the midst of loud laughter beside the campfires of Israel.

XI

THE SERVICE OF SAMUEL

1. **The Capture of the Ark.** *I Samuel* 4-7. — The territory of the Philistines extended along the Mediterranean coast from Phœnicia in the north to Egypt in the south, between the central uplands and the sea. They had five fortified cities: Ekron and Gath in the northeast by the hills; Askelon, Gaza and Ashdod in the southwest by the coast. From them the whole land came to be called Palestine, the country of the Philistines.

In the conflict between the Philistines of the plains and the Israelites of the hills the plains people had the advantage of being united; the hills people had the disadvantage of being divided. The valleys separated hill from hill, and town from town. Each individual tribe followed its own leader and attended to its own interests. The campaigns of the age of the judges were local wars. There was as yet no nation.

In a battle which was fought near Shechem the Israelites were beaten with much loss of life. They endeavored to save their fortunes by reinforcing themselves with supernatural strength. Not content to pray for help, they sent for the sacred ark that thereby they might bring the might of God into the midst of the battle. The ark of the covenant was kept at Shiloh, where Eli was its guardian. He was an old man, and could not go with the ark into the

battle. His two sons who carried it were unworthy persons whose conduct had long been a scandal. In spite of the presence of the ark, the Philistines were again victorious. Israel was defeated, the two sons of Eli were slain, and the ark itself was taken. When the bad news came to Eli he fell backward off the bench on which he sat, and died.

But the ark, as it was borne in triumph from one Philistine city to another, was accompanied by pestilence. At Ashdod the terror of the people was increased by the falling of the image of the god Dagon, in whose temple the ark was placed. From Ashdod the ark was carried to Gath, from Gath to Ekron. In every place there was a deadly destruction throughout the city.

At last the dangerous trophy was sent back. The five golden boils and the five golden mice, which were placed upon it as an offering from the Philistines, suggest that the disease was the bubonic plague. Even in Israel, at Bethshemesh, death seemed to come with the ark. From Bethshemesh it was sent to Kirjath-jearim. There it found an abiding place in the house of Abinadab in the hill, where Eleazar his son became its guardian.

2. The Leadership of Samuel. *I Samuel* 1-3. — The ark was returned, but the Philistines were supreme. They held the Israelites in subjection. It is significant of the situation that they shut up every blacksmith's shop in the land of Israel (*I Samuel* 13: 19, 20). The Hebrews, as in the days of Deborah, had neither sword nor spear. Even their ploughshares and their axes they must carry down to the Philistines to be sharpened. Not only the political but the religious existence of Israel was in peril, for Jehovah seemed to have abandoned His people. The

ark was hidden in the woods of Kirjath-jearim, and the gods of the Philistines seemed to have subdued the Lord who brought the tribes from Egypt.

In this crisis, the Israelites were saved by the leadership of Samuel. Samuel had been brought up from childhood under the instruction of Eli, beside the ark at Shiloh. Hannah his mother had dedicated him from his birth to the service of the Lord. As he grew up, it became plain to wise people that the Lord spoke to Samuel as He had spoken of old to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses and to Joshua.

Two accounts, following two ancient traditions, are given of the service which was rendered by Samuel in the guidance of the people. They agree that the need of the time in the face of Philistine oppression was such a union of the tribes as was possible only under the strong rule of a king. In one account (I Samuel 9: 15-17) this need was first seen by Samuel. In a later account (I Samuel 8; 10: 17-19; 12), written after the kings had disappointed the nation, and had proved to be oppressors themselves, the demand arose among the people, and was granted by Samuel reluctantly.

By whomsoever suggested, whether by the people or by the prophet, the necessity was imperative. The divided tribes must be brought together. The independence which was congenial with the free life of the wilderness, and was fostered by the scattering of the people among the hills, must give way to a central organization. In this movement, Samuel, whether summoned by the voice of God or by the voice of the people, was the divinely chosen leader. His mission was to find and appoint a king.

3. **Samuel and Saul.** *I Samuel* 9, 10. — One day a man of the tribe of Benjamin, seeking for a drove of asses which had strayed from his father's farm, came to Ramah, where Samuel lived. He sought out Samuel, his only thought being that the prophet could tell him where to look for his lost property. But Samuel, at the same time, was looking for Saul. When he came in sight the prophet perceived in this tall, sturdy person, standing head and shoulders above his neighbors, the man who should be king. He conferred with him, and solemnly consecrated him, declaring to him by the symbol of the anointing oil that he was called of God to undertake the salvation of the people.

This summons Saul received with mingled emotions. At first, in the enthusiasm of the vision of the great task, he visited the "sons of the prophets," companies of men filled with a fervor which was both patriotic and religious, who prayed night and day in an excitement of spirit which was stimulated by the sound of music. Such societies appear again in the time of Elijah (*I Kings* 18:4; *II Kings* 2:3, 5) when the religion of Israel was in peril before the religion of Baal. They represent a sense of crisis, an appeal to Jehovah to save His people out of unusual dangers which threaten either their faith or their existence. With these prophets, Saul allied himself.

But later, when Samuel came to Mizpah and called the people together to proclaim the king, Saul hid himself. And when he was brought forth and publicly declared to be leader of the tribes, and the people shouted "God Save the King," even then he assumed no royal state nor authority, and took no command over his neighbors. He did not summon an army against the Philis-

tines. He returned quietly to his usual occupation, and went on with the ploughing of his farm.

Indeed, it was plain that the people in general were not ready for united action. The northern tribes were not affected by the Philistine oppression; and even in Judah and Benjamin, while there went with Saul a band of men "whose hearts God had touched," there were others who said: "How shall this man save us? Shall Saul reign over us?" For Saul had as yet done no deed of valor. He was commended only by his good looks, and by the approval of Samuel. They despised him. But he held his peace.

XII

THE REIGN OF SAUL

1. **The Relief of Jabesh.** *I Samuel* 11. — Saul began to be the king of Israel in fact as well as in name by calling the tribes to a united fraternal action. Across the Jordan in Gilead, the town of Jabesh was attacked by the Ammonites. These enemies, driven away by Jephthah, had returned and were surrounding Jabesh with a siege so bitter and complete that the garrison was compelled to ask for terms of peace. The reply was that the lives of the besieged should be spared on one condition only: that the victors might thrust out the right eyes of all the vanquished.

Saul was coming home from the ploughing, driving his oxen before him, when he was met by messengers from Jabesh, crying that they had three days' respite before this fate should fall upon them. He took immediate action. Hewing a yoke of oxen in pieces, he sent the bloody fragments throughout the land of Israel, with this word: "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen." It is significant that no appeal was made to patriotism or to the spirit of brotherhood. The divided clans, each considering its own interest, could be touched only by the frank threat of personal injury. The names of the tribes who responded to the summons are not given, but an army was assembled,

a rapid march was made, the Ammonites, surprised in the midst of the morning watch, were attacked and scattered and the siege was raised.

At Gilgal by the fords of the Jordan, where Joshua had set up the twelve stones from the river in memory of the entrance of the people into the Promised Land (Joshua 4: 19-24), they made Saul king indeed. With the sacrifice of peace-offerings, and with great rejoicing, they entered into a new era of their history, the era of the kings.

2. The Battle of the Pass of Michmash. *I Samuel* 13: 1-14: 46. — In the strength of this victory, the king undertook the work to which he had been called. He attacked the Philistines.

The first blow was struck by Saul's son Jonathan. There was a garrison of the Philistines in Gibeah, where Saul lived. Jonathan attacked them. The history does not say whether the attack was successful or unsuccessful, but it records the fact that the Philistines took it as the beginning of a revolution. "The Hebrews," they said, "have revolted." The report was confirmed by the blare of trumpets, calling the Israelites together. The Philistines gathered a great army to put down the rebellion of the Hebrews, — chariots and horsemen, and people, like the sand on the seashore. As for the Israelites, they hid themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. Some of them fled over the Jordan to the land of Gilead. Saul had only six hundred men, and they followed him trembling.

A passage in the narrative (13: 8-14) seems to imply that in this crisis the young king was forsaken even by the prophet who appointed him. Samuel had agreed to come to Saul in seven days. The days passed, and he did not

come, and meanwhile the Philistines were advancing, while Saul's soldiers were deserting. There was no time to wait for the courtesies of precedence. Saul offered the customary sacrifices, preparing to go into battle. Then Samuel came and reproved him, and told him that on account of his disobedience his kingdom should not continue. Already, he said, the Lord has found a man after His own heart to be the captain over His people. But this incident belongs to a later chapter. The scene is Gilgal, not Gibeah where Saul was preparing for the battle, and the time is after the choice of David to be king instead of Saul. The narrative reads straight on, passing from the seventh to the sixteenth verse of the thirteenth chapter. The intervening passage may be a version of that rejection of Saul which took place after his war with Amalek (I Samuel 15).

The Philistines assembled over against Gibeah, at Michmash. Saul's six hundred trembling soldiers, across the deep ravine, were armed only with the mattocks, the forks and the axes with which they tilled the ground and felled the trees. Saul and Jonathan alone had swords and shields. But the Philistines were overconfident. They were so sure of easy victory that three portions of their army went off in different directions on plundering expeditions.

At this moment, Jonathan with his armor-bearer attacked the remaining garrison. The two men climbed the steep side of the pass, and fell upon the enemy with such boldness and fury that they seemed the vanguard of an army. The enemy were thrown into a panic, and began to flee. The Israelites arose from their hiding-places and pursued them. Saul with his little army came

hastening after. Jonathan's splendid adventure ended in a total rout of the oppressors.

An unhappy incident dimmed the glory of the great day. Saul had made the soldiers take a vow to taste no food till the enemy should be destroyed: whoever touched food was to be put to death. Jonathan, not knowing that such a vow was made, ate some wild honey. Then the sun went down, and the hungry people flew upon the spoil. But when Saul proposed to continue the pursuit of the Philistines by night, and asked counsel of God whether to go or stay, the oracle returned no answer. It was plain that some offence had been committed. Lots were drawn to discover the offender, and the lot fell on Jonathan. And Jonathan confessed that he had transgressed in ignorance of the king's command. "I did but taste a little honey," he said, "and lo, I must die." And Saul answered, "God do so and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." The whole incident — the vow, the silent oracle, the readiness to offer human sacrifice — shows that the conditions are those of primitive civilization. But the people prevented the sacrifice of Jonathan. "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." Thus they read the will of God not in the oracle but in the battle, in the actual facts of life.

3. **The Wars of Saul.** *I Samuel* 14:47, 48; 15. — Saul fought battles, which are mentioned but not described, against Moab and Ammon and Edom, the hostile neighbors across the Jordan, and against the Philistines. "Whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them." The

little kingdom knew no peace. On every side were enemies.

In the south were the Amalekites. "Go and smite Amalek," said Samuel, "and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." This he believed to be the will of God. The words are like a date showing how far the people of Israel had come in civilization and religion. It is one of the milestones which mark that moral progress of which the Bible is a record. Saul disobeyed the command of Samuel. He destroyed only the property which had no value. He took the sheep and oxen, and made Agag, king of the Amalekites, a prisoner. Samuel came out to meet him. "What meaneth," he said, "this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul said that he had brought them home for sacrifice. Samuel cried, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" He himself took Agag, and with his own hands hewed him in pieces. Then he turned away in deep anger, declaring that the Lord had rejected Saul from being king.

4. **The Battle of Mount Gilboa.** *I Samuel* 28, 31, *I Chronicles* 10. — The campaign against Amalek was but an incident in the wars of Saul; the continued contest was with the Philistines. "There was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul." Sometimes there was victory, especially after Saul, in his search for strong and valiant men, had found young David. Then the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tabrets, with joy and with instruments of music. But there were defeats also, and the

Philistines grew stronger and stronger. At last, they made ready a great army to bring the Israelites back into their old bondage. And Saul perceived that he was outnumbered by his enemies. The Philistines marched along the plain of Esdraelon, thus parting the tribes of the north from the tribes of the south, and making it impossible for Saul to assemble the united strength of the people. He took up his position in the southeastern part of the plain, on the slopes of Mount Gilboa.

On the night before the battle, as he waited with his trembling army for what seemed sure defeat, Saul disguised himself and sought out a woman of Endor, who still continued in the old pagan religion of the place, and was called a witch. He desired her to summon the spirit of Samuel from the regions of the dead. This she agreed to do. "I see him!" she cried in the darkness, "I see a god coming up out of the earth." Saul said, "What is his appearance?" The woman answered, "It is the form of an old man, covered with a mantle." And Saul said to Samuel, "God is departed from me. He answers me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams. What shall I do?" And Samuel answered (or was said by the woman to answer), "The Lord will deliver Israel into the hand of the Philistines. To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me."

Then the morrow came, and the battle was joined. The Philistines fought and the men of Israel fled, and Saul was wounded by the archers. According to one report (I Samuel 31: 1-6) he begged his armor-bearer to put him to death, and, when he refused, fell upon his own sword, and so escaped the tortures of the enemy. According to another report (II Samuel 1: 1-10) Saul called

to a passing Amalekite to slay him ; and this the Amalekite did, taking away with him the crown that was upon Saul's head and the bracelet that was upon his arm.

In one way or another the first king of Israel came to the end of his life. The Philistines finding him dead, and his three sons dead beside him, cut off his head, sent pieces of his armor to their five towns as trophies, and fastened his body and the bodies of his sons to the wall of Bethshan. But the men of Jabesh heard what had befallen the man who had saved their right eyes, and certain among them arose and went all night and took the bodies from the wall and gave them decent burial at Jabesh.

XIII

THE RISE OF DAVID

1. **David the Giant-Killer.** *I Samuel* 17-21. — When Samuel withdrew his approval from Saul, he sought for a man after the Lord's own heart whom he might make king in Saul's place, and found him in the person of David.

David lived at Bethlehem, where his ancestors had owned land for several generations. He was descended from Boaz, a rich farmer of that neighborhood, and Ruth his wife who had come from Moab to Bethlehem with Naomi her mother-in-law. The romantic story of their marriage is told in the book which bears her name (*Ruth* 1-4).

David's father was Jesse. There were older brothers, and three nephews, Joab and Asahel and Abishai, sons of an older sister. David grew up in this family of sturdy youths. His work was to tend the sheep, defending them from lions and bears. There he was found by Samuel, who came to Bethlehem, looked carefully at seven sons of Jesse and passed them by, and sent for the youngest son who sat among the sheep. So David came, a lad of a beautiful countenance, ruddy and goodly to look to, and on him the prophet poured the consecrated oil.

The historian has preserved two different accounts of the first appearance of David at the court of Saul. In one account (*I Samuel* 16: 14-23) he appears as a minstrel,

playing on a harp for the relief of the king in a sickness of his mind. Saul had begun to be afflicted with epilepsy, or insanity, and the music soothed him. David would take the harp and play with his hand, and the evil spirit would pass away from Saul. In another account (I Samuel 17: 55-58) David appears as a champion, coming from the farm with provision for his brothers in the army, and offering to fight the Philistine giant, Goliath. After the duel, Saul says to Abner, "Whose son is this youth?" and Abner answers, "As thy soul liveth, O King, I cannot tell." The explanation of this ignorance is that two independent and quite different traditions are recorded side by side.

Coming thus from the sheepfold to the court, and slaying the giant of whom all the men of Israel were afraid, David became a popular hero. The king gave him a command in the Philistine war, and there he so distinguished himself that presently the women were singing in their songs of victory, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." Under any circumstances, a king would have resented such an exalting of a captain over himself, but Saul in the disorder of his mind resented it exceedingly. He hated David. Saul had promised that whoever should kill the giant might marry his daughter, and this was very pleasing to the princess Michal, for the young hero had won her heart. But now Saul required that David should first go on a dangerous expedition against the Philistines, hoping that he might lose his life. Back he came, however, in safety and triumph, and they were married.

One time when the evil spirit was upon Saul, and David played upon the harp to soothe him, he threw his spear

at him, trying to kill him. Another time, he sent messengers to David's house to kill him, but Michal let him down through a window, and he escaped.

In the midst of the jealousy and hatred of the king, David had a steadfast friend in the king's son, Jonathan. Jonathan tried to make peace between his father and his friend, but to no purpose. For a moment Saul relented, but his sickness came upon him again, or new praises of David again aroused him, and when Jonathan took David's part, Saul threw his spear even at him. The two friends met in secret in a field, and exchanged vows of everlasting loyalty, and David betook himself to flight to save his life. Even the priests who fed the fugitive and gave him the sword of Goliath, Saul put to death.

2. David the Outlaw. *I Samuel 22-27; 29, 30.* — So David became an outlaw. At first he sought refuge among the Philistines, with Achish, king of Gath. But it was remembered against him how the women said "David hath slain his ten thousands," and David had to pretend to be a madman in order to escape. He scrambled upon the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Thus they did him no harm, for madmen were considered to be under the special protection of the gods. Thence he went to the cave of Adullam, where other men joined him, and he became a captain over them. They spent their days in fighting, sometimes with the Philistines, sometimes with the Amalekites. They lived on the spoil which they took, and also on the tribute which they collected from farmers and sheep-masters for protecting them from worse brigands than themselves.

One sheep-master, named Nabal, being drunk when

David's collectors came, and not knowing what he did, refused to pay. "Who is David?" he said, "and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master." Abigail his wife immediately sent what David had demanded, — loaves of bread, and bottles of wine, and sheep ready dressed, and parched corn, and figs and raisins, — and went herself to turn away the wrath of David. When Nabal came to his right mind and understood what he had done, he was so frightened that he fell sick and died: such was the fear of David and his mighty men in all the countryside.

Saul pursued David even into the wilderness. The history contains what seem to be two different accounts of how the outlaw had the king in his power and spared him. According to one account, Saul came into the very cave where David chanced to be hidden. The outlaw was so close to the king that he took his sharp sword and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. Saul went out of the cave not knowing what peril he was in, and David called him, and showed him the piece of the robe in his hand. "See," he said, "the skirt of thy robe in my hand, and I killed thee not; yet thou huntest my soul to take it." And Saul was touched, and gathered his men about him and went home.

According to the other account, the king and his men slept in their camp. Beside the king slept his captain Abner, and at the king's head was a cruse of water, and his spear stuck in the ground. David and his nephew Abishai went softly among the sleepers and brought away the cruse of water and the spear, and Abishai would have killed Saul where he slept, but David forbade

him. Then from the side of the hill David called and awoke Abner and the king. "Abner," he cried, "where is the king's spear, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster?" And Saul, perceiving that David had spared his life, repented of his hatred, and gathered his men about him, and went home.

At last, weary of this outlaw life and wishing to get beyond the reach of Saul, David obtained from Achish, king of Gath, the town of Ziklag. There he made his headquarters, going out on plundering forages against the Amalekites, while Achish believed that he was attacking the villages of his own people in Judah. Indeed, Achish would have taken David and his men with the Philistine army, which was being mustered for the battle of Mount Gilboa, had not other Philistine chiefs objected. Thus the army marched to the great battle, and David, much to his relief, was left behind.

3. David and the House of Saul. *II Samuel* 1-4; 9; 16:1-4; 19:24-30; 21:1-14. — When King Saul fell down slain on Mount Gilboa, a contention arose as to the succession to the throne. The men of Judah acclaimed David, and he was formally anointed king in Hebron. But the men of Ephraim, with Benjamin and the tribes of the north and east, accepted Saul's son Ishbaal as the rightful possessor of his father's plac. His true name was Ishbaal (*I Chronicles* 8:33), but in later days, when good men hated even the name of Baal, the historians wrote it Ishbosheth, — bosheth meaning "shame": and so it stands.

Thus the men of David, having Joab, David's nephew, for their captain, and the men of Ishbosheth, having his cousin Abner for their captain, fell to fighting. From the

first, the fortunes of war were on the side of David. There was a battle by the pool of Gibeon, beginning with a tournament in which twelve champions from the army of Abner fought with twelve champions from the army of Joab. The tournament was indecisive, and the fighting became general. Abner fled and Joab pursued him; and in the flight, Abner, much against his will, killed Joab's brother Asahel. Thus there came into the war the motive of blood revenge.

At last, Abner, having quarrelled with Ishbosheth, offered his sword and his soldiers to David; but Joab caught him and killed him for the death of Asahel. Thereupon, Ishbosheth having now neither captain nor army, assassins broke in upon him and put him to death, and brought his head to David. Thus ended the endeavor of the house of Saul to hold the throne of Israel.

David had no share in these tragedies. He disavowed and publicly lamented the killing of Abner; and when the assassins of Ishbosbeth brought him the king's head and expected a reward, he rewarded them with the edge of a sharp sword. But by these deeds of violence, David gained the crown. The elders of all the tribes met him at Hebron. "Thou wast our captain," they said, "even when Saul was king over us." And David made a league with them, and they anointed him to be their king.

XIV

THE REIGN OF DAVID

C. 1017-977

1. **The City of David.** *II Samuel* 5-7, *I Chronicles* 11-13; 15, 16. — One of the first acts of David on becoming king was to establish a capital city. Saul, like the judges before him, had lived in his native town, and his kingship had been closely connected with his own tribe. It is an indication of the genius of David that he chose to set his throne in a new place, which had never belonged to any tribe of Israel.

The ancient fortress of Jerusalem was still in possession of the Jebusites. So great was the natural strength of the citadel, so steep the walls of rock, so easy the defence, that the garrison defied David with derision. They said that even the blind and lame among them could hold the rock against an army. Joab turned this boast into defeat. He climbed up by the watercourse, and took the fortress by surprise.

Thus the new king had a strong city, won by the valor of his own soldiers, standing between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. The capture of this place, and the building of a city on this hill, is one of the determining facts of history, like the founding of Alexandria by Alexander, and of Constantinople by Constantine.

Into his new city David brought the ark of God. It was the one common possession of all the tribes, the symbol of their common history. They all knew how Moses had made the ark at Sinai, how the people had borne it through the wilderness, how they had followed it in their battles with Moabites and Amorites, in their passage of the Jordan, in their siege and capture of Jericho. They had lost it, indeed, to the Philistines, but the Philistines had been compelled to send it back. Guarded now in the house on the hill among the woods of Kirjath-jearim, it represented the ancient unity of Israel.

The ark represented also the religion of the nation. And religion, as they understood it was the condition of their national existence. They were surrounded by hostile kingdoms each of which had its tribal god, who gave prosperity and victory. The God of Israel was Jehovah; and of the presence of Jehovah among them the ark was an assurance. In no way could David have done more to make Jerusalem the centre of the united tribes than to bring into it the ark of the Lord. This, accordingly, he did, in the midst of a procession of singers and players upon instruments of music and with the offering of sacrifices. The sudden death of a man who put out his hand to keep the ark from falling was understood by the people to certify the mysterious sacredness of the ancient chest.

Thus Jerusalem became the central sanctuary of the nation, the City of God. There David built a palace, made of cedar, and would have built a temple for the ark, but that honor was kept for Solomon his son.

2. **The Wars of David.** *II Samuel* 8, 10, 12: 26-31, *I Chronicles* 14: 8-17; 18-20. — In addition to the ad-

vantage of the possession of a new capital, thus the central city and the central shrine of Israel, David had the strength of a small but loyal army. He had six hundred trained and valiant men on whom he could depend. Many of them had been his companions in the cave of Adullam, and served him because they loved him. They had had experience of adventures. Remembrances still remain in the history of the stories which were told about them: how they fought with giants, and met hosts of the Philistines single-handed and were not afraid; how they swam flooded rivers, and encountered lions in pits on snowy days; how three of them broke through the Philistine army to bring David a cup of water from the well by the gate of Bethlehem (II Samuel 21: 15-22; 23: 8-22).

This was the army which enabled David to conquer the forces of the house of Saul, and take the throne. It made him the victor in a series of foreign wars.

The first war was with the Philistines. The battle of Mount Gilboa had made them masters of the land of Israel. To the strife for the crown, they had paid no attention. Whoever won it must be their servant. They were content that David should be the victor, for he was already vassal to Achish, king of Gath. It soon appeared, however, that David was bent on independence, and the Philistines appeared with an army in the valley of Rephaim. The historian is so much more interested in persons than in events that little is said about the important fighting which ensued. It appears, however, that the Philistines saw so clearly that the battle would be a decisive one that they brought their gods with them. This help proved unavailing, and they fled, leaving the images behind them. The ground was strewn with

Baals. A second victory confirmed the first, and the Philistines ceased thereafter to be a menace to Israel. David did not venture, however, to carry his arms into the Philistine country. It was practically settled that the coast belonged to the Philistines, and the hills to Israel. The presence of Philistines in David's body-guard (II Samuel 15: 18) indicates the peace which prevailed.

A like understanding existed with the Phœnicians. Hiram, king of Tyre, became an ally of David, and supplied him with architects and carpenters and masons.

Thus the kingdom of Israel was bounded on the west by the Phœnicians and Philistines. The conquests of David were made on the east of the Jordan. The Ammonites, having wantonly insulted David's ambassadors, shaving off half their beards, he invaded their country. They called the Syrians to their assistance. David's generals, Joab and Abishai, divided the army. Joab and his soldiers encountered the Syrians, Abishai and his soldiers encountered the Ammonites; both of the commanders were successful.

When the Syrians assembled their armies and their allies to avenge this defeat, David met them with another victory, and brought back to Jerusalem the shields of gold which had been borne by the servants of the Syrian king.

David smote Moab, putting a great number of prisoners to death. He smote Edom, putting garrisons in all the cities of that land.

In a final campaign against Ammon, Joab besieged Rabbah the capital, and seized the fortress which protected the supply of water. David completed the capture of the city. He took from the head of an idol there a crown of gold weighing a hundred and forty pounds.

In the midst was a precious stone which he set in his own crown. He made the Ammonites work for him with saws and picks and axes, and at the brick moulds.

Thus all the lands east of the Jordan from Mount Hermon in the north to the eastern branch of the Red Sea in the south were subject to King David or paid him tribute.

3. The Troubles of David. *II Samuel* 11, 12; 15-19; 20. — In the midst of these victories, David suffered a lamentable defeat. Remaining in Jerusalem, while Joab was besieging the water-fortress of Rabbah, he saw one day a beautiful woman, named Bathsheba, whom he desired to add to the number of his wives. But Bathsheba had a husband. His name was Uriah, and he was a soldier in David's army. Thereupon David sent word to Joab to put Uriah in the place where the fighting was fiercest, where he would be likely to be killed. Uriah was killed, as the king intended, and Bathsheba was taken into the palace.

For these crimes of adultery and murder, the king was boldly reproved by the prophet Nathan. The parable of the Ewe Lamb touched his conscience. He had behaved himself like other kings of that old time when the world was only beginning to be civilized: as Hanun, king of Ammon, might have behaved, or Hadadezer, king of Syria. It was a brave and most important service which Nathan rendered when he declared that Jehovah hates such wickedness as that. Nathan put Hebrew religion and righteous living together. The one thing which may be said for David is that he perceived that Nathan was right. In humility, and with a penitent heart, he confessed that he had sinned.

Then troubles came by reason of Absalom, one of David's sons. Absalom killed his brother Amnon because of his brutal treatment of his sister. The history makes it plain that there was still in the veins of the people, even in the royal family, the fierce passions of the desert. Absalom fled from the anger of his father, but was recalled by the persuasions of Joab. Returning, he devoted himself to the undermining of his father's throne. He gathered restless and discontented people about him and made himself so strong that they crowned him king at Hebron, the old capital. The number of those who flocked to join the army of Absalom shows not only the unrest which always exists under a strong government, but also the existence of a feeling that David had taken the crown unlawfully from the house of Saul. So menacing was the advance of Absalom upon Jerusalem, and so uncertain was David whom to trust, that the king abandoned the city, and fled across the Jordan. And as he went an enemy named Shimei stoned him and cursed him, crying, "The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned."

The account of the conspiracy is given with such knowledge of men and events that we perceive that we are now reading history which was written by the men who were engaged in making it.

David sought refuge among the loyal tribes in Gilead. Joab was with him. Absalom had as commander in his place an Ishmaelite named Amasa; also he had about him certain false friends who disclosed his plans to David. The rebellion was short-lived. The prince pursued the king his father with an army, and the valor of Amasa was pitted against the veteran experience of Joab. Absalom

was defeated, and in his retreat became entangled in the thick forest. There Joab found and killed him.

It was only by the reproaches of Joab that David was recalled from his lamentations over the death of his son. "I perceive," said Joab, "that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well." Even then the king's return was made difficult by the confusion which the rebellion of Absalom had brought upon the land. David was obliged to appeal to his own kinsfolk, the tribe of Judah. In his endeavor to conciliate them, remembering also what hand had slain his son, he promised to make Amasa commander of the army in the place of Joab.

But when the king came back, brought by the tribe of Judah, all the other tribes were angry. "Why," they said, "have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away?" "We have ten parts in the king," they said to Judah. "We have more right in David than ye." And Sheba of the tribe of Benjamin put himself at the head of a rebellion. He blew a trumpet and cried, "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, O Israel!" In this crisis, Amasa proved himself incompetent. He moved slowly while the rebels grew steadily stronger. At last, David summoned Abishai, and Abishai brought Joab. Amasa encountered the fate which had befallen Abner: Joab met him with pretended friendship and killed him. Then Sheba's rebellion was speedily put down; and Sheba's head, flung over the wall of a city which Joab was besieging, was the price of peace.

4. **The Psalms of David.** — The fame of David as a king has been exceeded by his fame as a poet. Of the

hundred and fifty psalms collected in the Psalter, seventy-three are attributed to him. Many of these are connected with various events in his career: the fifty-first psalm, for example, is said to have been composed after his great sin. These references, however, appear not in the psalms, but in the titles which Jewish scholars prefixed to them for reasons which are unknown to us. It is known that David played upon the harp. It is known also that he composed and sang a song of lamentation over the defeat and death of Saul and Jonathan (II Samuel 1: 17-27), though in this song there is no note of religion. The history contains a long hymn ascribed to David (II Samuel 22), filled with the spirit of religion, which appears again as the eighteenth psalm. In the tradition of his people it was he who first in a great way used music and verse in the worship of God. The oldest collection of Hebrew lyrical poetry, added to through centuries to make the Psalter as we have it, bore his name (Psalms 72: 20).

XV

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

c. 977-937

1. **The Accession of Solomon.** *I Kings* 1, 2.— Bathsheba's son, Solomon, became king before the death of his father. This was in consequence of the conspiracy of Adonijah.

The death of Absalom left Adonijah the oldest of the sons of David. He resented the promise which David had made to Bathsheba that her son should be his successor. Accordingly, he gathered friends about him, as Absalom had done, and when he felt that all was ready he assembled them at a banquet and they acclaimed him king. But word of these proceedings came to the prophet Nathan, and he hurried with Bathsheba to the presence of David, now aged and infirm. David, aroused by these tidings, instructed Nathan and Zadok the priest to anoint and acclaim Solomon. This sudden action broke up the conspiracy, and the leaders, among whom were Joab and the priest Abiathar, fled for safety.

Then Solomon was made king, and David died in peace, in a good old age, full of days, having lived to the end of his desire.

The first act of Solomon was to secure his throne by putting to death the men who had conspired against him.

Finding an occasion against his brother Adonijah, he sent Benaiah, the captain of his body-guard, to slay him. By the same hand he struck down the aged Joab, who had made the reign of David possible: Joab, who by suppressing the house of Saul had put David on the throne, who by his own might had taken Jerusalem, and given David his capital, who had fought with success against all the enemies of Israel, who had put down the rebellion of Absalom and the rebellion of Sheba. He was killed at the altar where he had taken refuge. Abiathar the priest, who had stood by David since the days of the cave of Adullam, Solomon deposed and sent to his home at Anathoth. Opportunity was found to kill Shimei, who had stoned David at the time of his flight from Absalom. Thus after the manner of the age, he rid himself of his adversaries.

2. **The Splendor of Solomon.** *I Kings* 4-10, *II Chronicles* 1-8; 9: 13-31. — Solomon was contented with the extent of the dominions of his father. Undertaking no wars, he directed his energies toward increasing the wealth and luxury of his court. He divided the land into twelve provinces, disregarding the ancient boundaries of the tribes, and made each province responsible for the maintenance of his royal household for one month. Thirty measures of fine flour, and sixty measures of meal, ten oxen from the stalls and twenty from the pastures, a hundred sheep, besides deer and fatted fowl, was the provision for one day.

The king delighted in building. In the north, above the Sea of Galilee, he fortified Hazor. He strengthened the fortress of Megiddo, commanding the plain of Esdraelon, and the fortresses of Gezer and Beth-horon, commanding the passes from the west. He built Tadmor, or Tamar, in

the south below the Dead Sea. He made a wall around Jerusalem. On the height of the holy hill, he erected a palace and a temple, which were among the wonders of the world

A part of the palace was called the House of the Forest of Lebanon, because there were so many cedar pillars in it. On the walls were hung the golden shields and bucklers of the body-guard. Through a pillared court one came into the Hall of Judgment. There was the king's throne of ivory overlaid with gold. Beside the throne stood two lions, and twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. Beyond the Hall of Judgment was the residence of the king, and the residence of his favorite queen, the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Beyond and above these buildings, at the top of the hill, was the temple.

The temple was built of stone and lined with cedar. Against the two sides and the rear were rooms for the priests, in three stories, entered only from without. In front of the temple was a great altar cut in the solid rock of the summit of the hill. There it was, they said (II Samuel 24:16), that David saw an angel standing, on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, when Jerusalem was smitten with the plague. The angel stayed his hand, and the plague ceased, and David bought the place. Beside the altar was a vast bowl of brass, fifty feet in circumference, and holding sixteen thousand gallons of water. The water was carried to the priests for their sacrificial purifications in ten smaller brazen bowls on wheeled stands.

A flight of steps led into the temple. Two pillars of brass stood on either side of the entrance, their capitals

splendid with carved lily-work. The outer room of the temple contained a table on which twelve loaves of bread were daily placed representing the twelve tribes, and a golden candlestick, or lamp-stand, with seven branches. In the dark inner room, the holy of holies, whose length and breadth and height were equal, two figures of cherubs, sixteen feet tall, overspread with their wings the sacred ark, within which were the two tables of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments.

In the construction of these buildings Solomon employed the skill of his neighbors, the men of Tyre. They knew how to cut timber and engrave stone, and were wise in all the art of architecture. They were also the mariners of that time, sending their fleets into all the waters of the Mediterranean. They took the cedar logs which the Hebrews carried from the mountains to the coast, and loaded them upon floats to be brought by sea to Joppa, and thence to be carried overland to Jerusalem.

King Solomon had a navy of ships at the port of Ezion-geber in the eastern branch of the Red Sea. Hiram, king of Tyre, provided him with experienced seamen. Thus he brought gold from Ophir, and red sandalwood and precious stones. Once every three years his fleet came back from longer voyages, bringing gold and silver, and ivory and apes and peacocks. Looking back upon these days of glory, they said that Solomon made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar he made as plentiful as the sycamore trees that grow in the lowland.

3. **The Wisdom of Solomon.** *I Kings* 3: 5-28; 4: 29-34; 10: 1-9, *II Chronicles* 9: 1-12. — Solomon was famous for his wisdom. The renown of it appears not only in the Bible but in the Arabian Nights, where the

king by his knowledge of the secrets of the world could call the spirits to his service. The wisdom for which he is praised in the Bible was of a more homely and practical kind. At the beginning of his reign he prayed that God would give him an understanding heart to judge and rule his people. When two mothers came bringing two children, one living and one dead, and each claimed that the living child was hers, he knew how to settle the dispute. Even from Sheba in Arabia, the queen came to test him with hard questions, and he knew the answers to them all. Also, "he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." The reference is probably not to scientific knowledge, but to such shrewd sayings as are found in the Proverbs concerning eagles and ants and lions and spiders (Proverbs 30: 18-31). Thus the book of Proverbs is associated with Solomon, and the book of Psalms is associated with David: Solomon being the first notable master of that kind of wisdom.

4. **The Folly of Solomon.** *I Kings* 11. — The use which was made of the name of Solomon by the writers of Ecclesiastes and of Solomon's Song recalls the fact that the wise king fell into folly. He is represented in Ecclesiastes as looking back over his splendid life, and finding in it nothing that was of value (Ecclesiastes 2: 1-11). "I made me great works," he says; "I builded me houses. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and behold, all was vanity and vexa-

tion of spirit." In Solomon's Song he is represented as desiring to add to his harem a maiden from the village of Shunen. The meaning is obscure, but the reading of many scholars finds the maiden refusing him and continuing faithful to her peasant lover.

The history says that Solomon married many wives. But that was the fashion of the time. His offence was in the fact that the wives came from all the surrounding nations, with whom the king thus made alliance, and that the strange wives brought their strange gods with them, and that Solomon joined them in their worship. Thus did he who had built the temple build shrines also in Jerusalem for Chemosh of Moab, and Molech of Ammon, and for Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians.

Still more grievous to his people was the enforced labor which Solomon put upon them. Thirty thousand men of Israel toiled in the forest of Lebanon. Seventy thousand were made bearers of burdens. Eighty thousand hewed stone in the mountains. And their work was neither for their own good, nor for the good of the nation, but for the wealth and glory of the king. He chastised the people, as they said afterwards, with whips, driving them to their tasks, as they had been driven in Egypt.

XVI

THE REVOLUTION OF JEROBOAM

937

1. The Definite Dates. — The period of history into which we now enter covers almost a hundred years, beginning with the Revolution of Jeroboam about 937 B.C. and ending with the Revolution of Jehu in 842.

With this period we come into the time of definite dates. The chronological method of remote antiquity was to measure time by the length of the lives of patriarchs and founders, or from the accession of kings. But there was no fixed starting point. Thus we are told that Solomon reigned forty years (I Kings 11:42) beginning with the death of David, and that David reigned forty years (I Kings 2:11) beginning with the death of Saul. But we are not told when Saul died. We have no starting point. Moreover, the frequent use of forty in the Old Testament ("forty years," "forty days," many times) indicates a round number, meaning "a good while." It is plain that accurate chronology has not yet come into the records.

This indefiniteness was changed in the usage of Greek and Latin historians by the arbitrary adoption of a Year One. The Greeks selected as their Year One that which we now call 776 B.C., being the First Olympiad; that is, the time of the beginning of the Olympic games. The

Romans selected as their Year One that which we now call 753 B.C., being the year of the foundation of Rome.

The Assyrian Year One, so far as our purposes are concerned, was in the same century. The Assyrian plan was to call each year by the name of a magistrate, and to note the chief events. Lists of the years were kept in the library at Nineveh, and several copies are still in existence. They cover a period of nearly two hundred and fifty years. In one of these years there was a total eclipse of the sun in the month Sivan, which we call June. The date of this eclipse has been calculated by astronomers, and has been found to be in the year 763. By this means the events of all these two hundred and fifty years are accurately dated. The lists begin in 911 B.C. and come down to 666. Happily for us, this was the time when the kings of Assyria were extending their conquests into the west. They were invading Palestine. Thus we learn that Jehu, king of Israel, paid tribute to Shalmaneser II, king of Assyria, in 842. This establishes the date of the Revolution of Jehu. Then it is easy, taking the lengths of reigns in the Old Testament and calculating back, to find that Solomon's reign ended and the Revolution of Jeroboam occurred about 937. Another entry in the Assyrian list places the fall of Samaria and the end of the kingdom of Israel in 722. There are minor differences in some places between the Hebrew and the Assyrian dates; some scholars place the rise of Jeroboam in 931 instead of 937. But in the main the course of the years is clear, and the dates are definite.

2. **The Oppression of the People.** *I Samuel* 8: 10-18, *I Kings* 12: 4. — The kingdom which Saul had founded, and David had established, and Solomon had strengthened, was a mighty kingdom, but the might belonged to the

king. The people were miserable. He was rich, but they were poor. It is said, indeed, that "the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones"; but that was in the court, not in the street. It is said also (I Kings 9: 20-23) that the men of whom the king made slaves, to hew the cedars in the mountains and to cut the stones in the quarries, were those who were left of the ancient inhabitants of the land. On them did Solomon levy a tribute of bond service: not on the men of Israel. The men of Israel were "Men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen." It is recorded, however, in other passages that even the people of Israel complained bitterly. Out of them also did Solomon raise a levy (I Kings 5: 13). Their service, they said, was grievous, and their yoke was heavy (I Kings 12: 4). They remembered the hard lot of their forefathers in Egypt. They found a description of Solomon in the warnings of Samuel. "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 will set them to till his ground and to reap his harvest. He will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks and to be bakers. He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards. Ye shall cry out in that day because of your king."

3. **The Beginnings of Rebellion.** *I Kings 11: 14-40.* — Early in the reign of Solomon, adversaries had appeared in the south and in the north.

The Edomites of the south had been conquered by David (II Samuel 8: 14), and Joab the captain of the host had maintained for six months a reign of terror in that country in an attempt to put every man and boy to death. The

little prince Hadad, however, had been taken by some of the fleeing servants of the court and carried into Egypt. There he remained under the distinguished favor of Pharaoh until both David and Joab died. Then he returned, and became the leader of revolt.

About the same time, the Syrians of the north set themselves free. David had conquered them in the course of his campaign against the Ammonites (II Samuel 10: 6-19). But Rezon, who had fled from his king whom David had brought into subjection, and had become (like David himself in his youth) the captain of a band of outlaws, took possession of Damascus, and there reigned, hating and defying Israel.

The most serious insurrection appeared in Jerusalem. A young man named Jeroboam, of the tribe of Ephraim, a widow's son, had attracted the attention of Solomon by his ability and industry, and had been made overseer of the men of his tribe (I Kings 11: 28) whom the king had compelled to labor in strengthening the wall of Jerusalem. Jeroboam was moved by the sufferings of his brethren as Moses had been moved by the distresses of the Hebrews under the lash of the Egyptians. One day, on a highway outside of Jerusalem, he was met by a prophet named Abijah. The prophet called the overseer aside into a field where they two were alone. He had dressed himself in a new garment. On this he laid hold and tore it into twelve pieces, and ten of these he gave to Jeroboam. "Take these ten pieces," he said, "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, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.'" The reply of Jeroboam

to this call is not recorded, but that he accepted the patriotic mission, and immediately undertook to free his people, is indicated in the statement that Solomon sought to kill him. He fled to Egypt, where the Pharaoh Shishak received him hospitably, and there he remained until the death of Solomon.

4. **The Declaration of Independence.** *I Kings* 12: 1-24, *II Chronicles* 10. — The death of Solomon brought to the throne his son Rehoboam. It also recalled from Egypt Jeroboam the champion of the oppressed people. The two men met at Shechem, where the people were assembled to decide whether they would have Rehoboam for their king, or not. Thus the elders of Israel had met at Hebron (*II Samuel* 5: 3) and had anointed David to be their king. Solomon, indeed, had been crowned during his father's lifetime, and at his father's command, but the idea that the king should be chosen, or at least accepted, by the people, still continued. Jeroboam was the people's spokesman. "Thy father," he said, "made our yoke grievous. Now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

Rehoboam took three days for consideration. He consulted first the older men who had watched the working of the policy of Solomon, and then the younger men who had hardly begun to be acquainted with responsibility. They advised him according to their age. The older men told him to give heed to the popular complaint. The younger men told him to defy it. Rehoboam, confident in his strength, took the advice of his companions. "My little finger," he declared, "shall be thicker than my father's loins. My father laded you with a heavy yoke,

I will add to your yoke. He chastised you with whips, I will chastise you with scourges." /

Immediately under the leadership of Jeroboam, the people asserted themselves.

The tribe of Ephraim which Jeroboam represented, and the tribe of Judah which Rehoboam represented, had been rivals since the conquest. Ephraim had settled in the northern part of the kingdom, Judah in the southern. Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, whose land lay between Ephraim and Judah, had for the brief space of his reign united the north and the south. But after his death, the men of Ephraim maintained the claims of Saul's son, while the men of Judah supported the claims of their own tribesman, David. The civil war had been decided by the weakness of Ishbosheth and the overmastering strength of David, and the northern tribes had given way. Toward the end of David's reign, however, Ephraim had rebelled under the leadership of Sheba (II Samuel 20). They had raised the cry, "We have no part in David. To your tents, O Israel!" But the rebellion had been put down by the strong hand of Joab. During the reign of Solomon, Ephraim had seen the wealth and power of the nation centralized in Judah, and had been compelled to labor under Judean taskmasters in the building of Jerusalem. Only a pretext was needed for another uprising of the north against the south.

This pretext was afforded by the folly of Rehoboam. The old cry was raised again. "To your tents, O Israel! Now see to thine own house, David!" And the young king found himself accepted by his own tribe only.

Rehoboam could not believe it. He sent Adoniram, the officer in charge of the levies of forced laborers (I Kings

5: 13, 14), to speak to his rebellious subjects, perhaps to order them back to work; but they stoned him to death. Rehoboam himself escaped only by mounting his chariot and fleeing for his life to Jerusalem. The assembly of the people acclaimed Jeroboam king. None followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only.

XVII

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

JUDAH

Rehoboam 937-920
Abijam 920-917

Asa 917-876

ISRAEL

Jeroboam 937-915

Nadab 915-913

Baasha 913-889

Elah 889, Zimri 887

Omri 887-875

1. Israel and Judah. — It was as if the kingdom should be founded in a divided England, north and south, the southern kingdom consisting only of London and its neighborhood.

Rehoboam had the advantage of possessing the capital, and of inheriting the fame and wealth of David and Solomon. He had also certain advantages of situation: his little kingdom was exposed, indeed, to attack from Edom and from Egypt, but it was sheltered for a time from the invasion of two enemies, Syria and Assyria, who must first conquer the northern kingdom before they could approach the southern. Moreover, it was cut off in some measure from those foreign influences which, in the reign of Solomon, had begun to change the life and debase the religion of the Hebrews.

The history as we have it in Kings and Chronicles was written for the most part by southern men, from the southern point of view. Indeed, the Chronicler omits

the northern kingdom almost entirely. He regarded the northerners as rebels from the true state, and as dissenters from the true church. Even the great ministries of Elijah and Elisha had no interest for him. We have to take this natural prejudice into account in estimating the situation.

As a matter of fact, the northern kingdom included by far the greater part of the Hebrew people. It called itself by the name which had belonged to the kingdom of Saul, of David and of Solomon, the *Kingdom of Israel*. They who were loyal to Rehoboam had to choose a new name, calling themselves the *Kingdom of Judah*. The northern kingdom contained so large a portion of the Holy Land that its southern fortress of Ramah was only about six miles north of Jerusalem. Even when this fortress was taken and destroyed, the men of Judah did not venture to extend their boundary, but contented themselves with fortifying Geba and Mizpah, a mile nearer to their capital. Israel had the fertile land, with wide plains and rich valleys, and carried on a profitable commerce with the Phœnicians of Tyre, on the northwest, and with the Syrians of Damascus, on the northeast.

At the same time, the kingdom of Israel was subject to serious disadvantages.

Its wide territory was cut across by the plain of Esdraëlon, which parted its northern tribes from the southern, and by the valley of the Jordan, which parted its eastern tribes from the western. It lacked the compactness of Judah. It lacked also the centralized strength of such a commanding capital as Jerusalem. It was therefore much more difficult to govern. Instead of a single royal family, as in Judah, possessing the throne from generation to gen-

eration, its history was interrupted by a series of revolutions. Thus, although Jeroboam was able to hand down the sceptre to his son, his son was able to keep it only two years, when he was assassinated. And this kind of tragedy was repeated again and again.

Moreover, the wealth which was gained by tilling the fertile fields and by trading with Syrians and Phœnicians emphasized those contrasts between the rich and the poor, with selfishness on the one side and misery on the other, which are the shadows cast by all abounding prosperity. The familiar acquaintance with the pagan neighbors carried with it the rites and customs of paganism, and corrupted the purity of Hebrew religion. Also the wide lands, whose uncertain boundaries were defended with difficulty, exposed Israel to constant attack, and lay on the line of march of those ambitious nations, first Syria, and then Assyria, who were determined to extend their borders.

2.¹ **The Reign of Rehoboam.** *I Kings* 12: 21-24, 14: 1-31, *II Chronicles* 11, 12. — The first desire of the young king was to bring into subjection the people who had so unexpectedly refused to receive him. He assembled such warriors as were left to him in Judah, and in Benjamin which bordered on Judah, and proposed to fight to win his kingdom back. From this rash undertaking he was dissuaded by a prophet named Shemaiah, who declared boldly that the division of the kingdom was the Lord's doing. "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing," saith the Lord, "is from me." Rehoboam, accordingly, contented himself with strengthening such cities as remained, and the two kingdoms went

on each in its own way. The Chronicler, writing his history six or seven hundred years after these events, and describing what he felt sure must have taken place, says that all the priests and the Levites forsook Israel and came down to Judah, and that along with them came all the loyal and devout people, "such as set their hearts to seek the Lord." But of such an emigration the books of Kings say nothing.

The Old Testament historians agree, however, that a heavy calamity came upon Rehoboam in the form of an invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt. Every such disaster had its occasion, so men thought, in the sins of the people. The prophet Shemaiah declared this plainly. The only reason why Shishak did not entirely destroy the kingdom of Judah, he said, was because the people humbled themselves before the Lord. Even so, the Egyptians plundered Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the king's house and of the Lord's house, even all the shields of gold which hung upon the walls of the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon; and Rehoboam had to make shields of brass to hang in their places.

On the southern wall of the temple of Amon at Karnak, Shishak inscribed a long list of cities of Palestine which he captured in this campaign. It thus appears that not only Rehoboam but Jeroboam suffered in the invasion. The whole divided kingdom may have fallen for a time into the hands of Egypt. "They shall be Shishak's servants," said the Lord by Shemaiah, "that they may know [the difference between] my service, and the service of the kings of the countries."

Thus the inglorious reign of Rehoboam came to an end, and Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

3. **The Reign of Jeroboam.** *I Kings* 12:25-14:20, *II Chronicles* 13. — Abijam's reign lasted but three years, and the writer of Kings knew of no incident in it worth recording. Only he says there was war between him and Jeroboam. The Chronicler gives an account of one of the battles of this war. The king of Judah had a considerable army, but it was only half the size of the army of the king of Israel. In a speech before the fight, Abijam reviled Jeroboam as a rebellious and profane person who had cast off the religion of his fathers. "The Lord is our God," cried Abijam, "and we have not forsaken him." Then the Judeans marched into battle, the priests going before them blowing the trumpets of alarm, and although the Israelites led them into an ambush, still the southern army won a decisive victory: "there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men." This is, perhaps, what ought to have taken place, according to the Chronicler, rather than what actually happened.

Jeroboam established his capital at Shechem, where Abimelech (Judges 9) had undertaken to maintain the short-lived monarchy of the House of Gideon. In the place of the temple at Jerusalem, he adopted the ancient shrine of Bethel (Genesis 28, 35:9-15) in the south, and of Dan (Judges 18) in the north. These shrines he adorned with golden calves or bulls, such as Aaron is said to have made for the worship of the people in the wilderness. In this, Jeroboam had no wrong intention. In the temple of Solomon, even in the Most Holy Place, there were images of creatures whose wings overspread the ark. Many years were still to pass before the Hebrews had learned to worship God according to the second commandment.

Two stories illustrate the southern feeling against Jeroboam.

One story (I Kings 13) is that a man of God from Judah went to Bethel and, at the altar there, rebuked Jeroboam to his face. When Jeroboam put out his hand to seize him, his hand was withered, and the altar was broken. Afterward, the man of God, who had been forbidden to eat bread in Bethel, was deceived by an old prophet of that place and went in and ate bread with him, and was killed by a lion.

The other story (I Kings 14) is that Jeroboam's wife, in distress because of the sickness of their little son, went for comfort to the prophet Ahijah, then old and blind, and that the prophet not only told the poor mother that the child should die, but added the assurance of a bad end to the whole family of Jeroboam. /

4. **Asa and Five Kings of Israel.** *I Kings* 15: 9-16: 28, *II Chronicles* 14-16. — The tragedy predicted in the hard words of Ahijah came to pass in the case of Jeroboam's son and successor, Nadab. (He had reigned two years, and was in the midst of the siege of Gibbethon of the Philistines, when a man named Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar, made a conspiracy against him and killed him, and also killed with him every member of the house of Jeroboam.)

Asa was king of Israel at that time. / The Chronicler says that after ten years of peace, during which the king had taken away many strange altars and broken many images sacred to the sun, the land was invaded by Zerah the Ethiopian with an army of a thousand thousand men. And Asa prayed, and said, "Lord, there is none beside thee to help, between the mighty and the weak: help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude." Then the battle was joined, and the Ethiopians were defeated. And Asa, encouraged by

this victory, renewed the altar of the Lord which was before the porch of the temple, and even expelled his mother from his court because she had made an abominable idol.

Asa was not so successful in his war with Baasha. (Almost within sight of Jerusalem, Baasha had built the fortifications of Ramah. Asa could not prevent it. There was the new fort, proclaiming the power of Israel, both a threat and an insult, but Asa did not venture to attack it. Instead of that, he took the gold and silver that he had, and hired Benhadad, king of Syria, to invade Baasha from behind. Baasha, being set upon by this new enemy, was obliged to withdraw from Ramah and to stop his plans against Jerusalem. The Chronicler says that Asa was properly rebuked by the seer Hanani, whom he put in the stocks for his plain speaking.)

In the northern kingdom, Hanani's son Jehu rebuked King Baasha for evil-doing, of which the history gives no details, and the curse was fulfilled in his son and successor, Elah, who was killed in a drunken debauch by Zimri, captain of half his chariot force. News of this tragedy coming to the army, (which was still engaged in the siege of Gibbethon, they acclaimed Omri as king; others acclaimed Tibni. Within seven days Omri was besieging Tirzah, Zimri's capital, and Zimri, finding that the fortunes of war were against him, burned his palace over his head and perished in the ruins. Omri then overcame his rival Tibni, and became undisputed king of Israel.)

(Omri removed the capital from Tirzah, which was a few miles northeast of Shechem, to Samaria, a few miles northwest. There on a strong height he built a city which was thereafter to the northern kingdom what Jerusalem was to the southern, a fortress almost invincible, able to

stand the shock of great invading armies. An inscribed stone which was found in the land of Moab records Omri's conquest of Moab. Omri was king of Israel, and oppressed Moab a long time because Chemosh was angry with his land. References to the "statutes of Omri" (Micah 6: 16) and to the "princes of the provinces" (I Kings 20: 15) may indicate that the king applied himself to the organization of his kingdom. So deeply did he impress his neighbors in the east that Palestine was called "the land of the house of Omri" even in the inscriptions of Sargon of Assyria, who destroyed Samaria in 722.

XVIII

AHAB AND JEHOSHAPHAT

JUDAH

Jehoshaphat 876-851

ISRAEL

Ahab 875-853

1. **The First Syrian War.** *I Kings* 20.—The situation which Ahab found when he succeeded his father Omri shows that the Syrians had done very thoroughly the work which Asa had hired them to do. They had taken Israelite cities north of the plain of Esdraelon (*I Kings* 15:20) and east of the Jordan (*I Kings* 22:3). They had compelled Omri to set apart certain streets for them in his capital city, Samaria (*I Kings* 20:34), probably for purposes of trading. Benhadad, king of Syria, proceeded now to besiege Ahab in Samaria, intending to bring the whole kingdom of Israel into subjection. Ahab, at first, saw no way of escape.

Benhadad sent ambassadors from Damascus to Samaria to demand a tribute of gold and silver. And Ahab answered, "My lord, O King, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have." Emboldened by this submission, ambassadors were sent again to demand the giving over of the city to plunder. "I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes,

they shall put it in their hand and take it away." This demand Ahab refused.

So there was war. Benhadad said, "The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me." Ahab said, "Tell him, 'Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off.'"

In this modest defiance, Ahab was encouraged by a prophet who assured him of certain victory. So they went out to battle. Benhadad in the confidence of his might was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions when word was brought that the Israelites were coming. He gave a drunken order to take them alive, whether they came for peace or came for war. Immediately the Israelites fell upon the Syrians and threw the whole camp into disorder. Some of them they slew, others they put to flight, and Benhadad himself escaped only by the swiftness of his horse.

A year later, the Syrians returned. They had accounted for their defeat by the theory that the gods of Israel were gods of the hills while the gods of Syria were gods of the plain. "What we must do," they said, "is to fight them in the plain." They took the precaution, however, to remove the princes who had been in command on the occasion of the former battle, and to put captains in their places.

The armies met at Aphek, east of the Jordan, on a high plain overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The Syrians filled the country. The Israelites pitched their tents before them "like two little flocks of kids." For seven days the hosts encamped opposite each other, then the battle was joined, and again the Syrians were put to flight. Ben-

hadad hid himself in Aphek, and sent his servants, dressed in sackcloth and having ropes around their heads, to beg for mercy. Ahab received them graciously, called for Benhadad, took him into his chariot, and made a treaty of peace with him. The Syrians agreed to restore the cities which they had taken from the Israelites, and to give them streets in Damascus, as the Israelites had given the Syrians streets in Samaria.

2. **Ahab's Policy of Peace.** *I Kings* 20 : 35-43. — The peace thus made was a source of strength to the kingdom of Israel. It opened to the Israelites the markets of Damascus, and the caravan routes to the east.

It is possible that Ahab had also in mind the new peril which was appearing in the ambition of Assyria. Already, according to the inscriptions, Assur-nazir-pal had marched across the range of Lebanon, washed his sword in the Great Sea, and taken tribute of Tyre and Sidon. Also, according to the inscriptions, the next Assyrian king, Shalmaneser II, invaded the western provinces, and at the battle of Karkar, in 854, was met by Ahab and Benhadad, and their neighbors. Benhadad is said to have come to battle bringing twelve hundred chariots and horsemen and twenty thousand footmen. Ahab came with two thousand chariots and ten thousand footmen. The many chariots of Ahab may have been the spoil of the battle of Aphek. Thus Ahab may well have felt that the alliance with Syria was necessary for protection against the Assyrians.

The policy of the king met with the disapproval of the prophets. As Ahab was returning from the victory of Aphek, having spared Benhadad, a man met him whose face was bandaged. The man cried to the king and said,

“In the midst of the battle, I was given a prisoner to keep, my life for his life if he escaped, and while I was busy here and there, he was gone!” The king said, “Thy life shall be for his life; thou hast decided it.” Then the man took the bandage from his face, and the king saw that he was one of the prophets. And the prophet said, “Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thine hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life.” For the prophets were not interested in the politics but in the religion of the nation. They cared more for the national character than for the national prosperity. They wisely feared the moral influences of this alliance with the Syrians.

The prophets were of the same mind regarding the alliance which Ahab made with the Phœnicians. These people were the mariners and merchants of the ancient world (Ezekiel 27). Out of their harbors of Tyre and Sidon, their ships sailed into all seas. A priest of Baal, named Ethbaal, was king of these Phœnicians. He had gained the throne, according to an ancient historian, by the assassination of his predecessor. Ethbaal's daughter, Jezebel, Ahab had married (I Kings 16: 31). She brought her religion with her, and Ahab built for her a temple and an altar in Samaria. It was no more than Solomon had done for his foreign wives (I Kings 11: 7, 8), but it became a serious danger to the religion of Israel, because Jezebel was a strong and active person who gathered her priests about her, and opposed and persecuted the prophets of the Lord.

A third alliance of friendship or of supremacy was made with the kingdom of Judah. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, made peace with the king of Israel (I Kings 22: 44). In

order to make this peace permanent, Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, was married to Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram.

3. **The Second Syrian War.** *I Kings* 22: 1-50, *II Chronicles* 18. — Jehoshaphat, according to the Chronicler, continued the reforms of his father Asa, not only by breaking idols but by appointing teachers of true religion (*II Chronicles* 17: 7-9). They went about among the towns of Judah, having the book of the Law of the Lord with them. Jehoshaphat built castles and cities, and had a strong army.

With this army, Jehoshaphat was summoned by Ahab to join him in a second Syrian war. In spite of the treaty of peace, whereby the Syrians agreed to give back the cities which they had taken from Israel, Ramoth in Gilead was still in their possession. Now after three years, Ahab proposed to go over and take it, and Jehoshaphat agreed to help him.

The two kings with their armies met at the gate of Samaria, and consulted the prophets as to the result of their expedition. "Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead?" said Ahab, "or shall I forbear?" The prophets with one voice cried, "Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

But the king of Judah was not satisfied. The four hundred prophets seemed too ready with their confident approval. "Is there not here," he said, "another prophet of the Lord, that we might enquire of him?" So Ahab sent for the prophet Micaiah, whom, as he said, he hated, because he commonly prophesied evil rather than good.

The kings sat each on his throne, each in his royal robes, at the gate of Samaria. While the messengers were fetch-

ing Micaiah, one of the prophets named Zedekiah brought out horns of iron which he had made. "With these," he said, "shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou hast consumed them." Then Micaiah came, and Ahab said, "Shall we go, or not?" And Micaiah answered, "Go and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver Ramoth into the hands of the king." But it was plain by his voice and face that he did not mean what he said. "Come," said the king, "tell us the truth." And Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd." He said also, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, 'Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?' And there came forth a spirit and said, 'I will persuade him.' And the Lord said, 'Wherewith?' And he said, 'I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'"

Then Zedekiah struck Micaiah in the face, and Ahab took the prophet who had been brave enough to tell the truth and had him put in prison. "Feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction until I come in peace."

So the king of Israel and the king of Judah went up to battle. Ahab was enough impressed by the prophecy of evil to take the precaution of disguising himself. Jehoshaphat went in his royal robes. And in the battle, the captains of the king of Syria fell upon Jehoshaphat, mistaking him for Ahab, till he cried out and so escaped. But a man who drew his bow at a venture, not knowing what he did, smote the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. The wounded king was held up in his char-

iot till the sun began to set. Then he died. And there went a cry throughout the army. "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country, for the king is dead." Thus in defeat and tragedy the reign of Ahab came to an end, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

As for Jehoshaphat, he returned safely to Jerusalem, where Jehu the son of Hanani rebuked him for his alliance with Israel. He appointed judges in his cities, bidding them remember that they were in the service of the Lord and not of men. "Deal courageously," he said, "and the Lord be with the good" (II Chronicles 19: 4-11). The king lived long enough to have dealings with Ahaziah, and with Ahaziah's brother and successor Jehoram.

XIX

THE PROPHET ELIJAH

1. **Baal or Jehovah?** — More important than the war with Syria, was the contention between the religion of Jehovah and the religion of Baal. This contention had been going on since the time of the conquest. The Hebrews entering the land of Canaan had found the country filled with shrines. Every high place had its altar, every great tree was sacred to a local god. The common name of all these local gods was Baal, meaning Lord.

The Hebrews came but slowly to realize that there is one God over all the earth. Jehovah was, indeed, the one God of their race and religion, and they were forbidden to have any other. But they believed that there were other gods. Chemosh was the god of Moab (Judges 11:24), Molech was the god of Ammon (I Kings 11:7). Among these gods there was none like unto the Lord Jehovah (Psalms 86:8), but there they were, supernatural beings having a real existence. The wiser Hebrews, the leaders of the true religion, hated these gods, but they did not yet deny that they were gods. As for the people, they were continually in temptation to pray to the Baal of the nearest shrine, because the Baals (Baalim is the plural in Hebrew) were believed to be connected with the rain and the sun and the soil. They were the gods of agriculture. The Hebrews learned agriculture from the

native people of the land; they had no knowledge of farming till they came to Canaan. And as they learned to plough and sow and reap, they learned at the same time to pray to the proper Baal of fertility. Moreover, there were customs and ceremonies connected with these shrines, festivals of springtime and harvest, music and dancing, some of it good, but some of them morally bad. Thus not only the religion but the character of the Hebrews was in peril.

When Ahab married the daughter of a priest of Baal, and this religion was thus introduced even into the court of Israel, all these temptations were magnified. It was not the intention of Ahab to expel, or even to subordinate, the religion of Jehovah. So far as he was concerned, that was his own religion to the day of his death. The prophets whom he consulted on the eve of his last battle were prophets of Jehovah, not of Baal. He was content to permit his wife to keep her own religion, and to worship in her own temple. The stories of Elijah, however, make it plain that this was not the mind of Jezebel. Her strong will, and her devotion to the Baal of the Sidonians, whose priest her father had been, put the worship of Jehovah in grave peril. For this Baal was not, like the other Baals, the spirit of a local shrine, but the god of a national religion.

2. "The Lord, He is the God." *I Kings* 17-19. — A definite choice between Baal and Jehovah was forced upon the nation by the prophet Elijah.

In the midst of the historical records in the books of Kings appear the half-dozen chapters which contain the account of Elijah; as different from the others as poetry is different from prose, or as the lives of the saints are

different from the lives of the contemporary sovereigns and statesmen. The narrative suddenly takes on a new interest; it becomes dramatic; it is filled with mystery and marvel. A man appears in the court of Israel who is able to prevent the clouds from raining, and can call down fire from heaven. The point of view is changed: the history was concerned with Ahab's wars and foreign alliances, the stories deal with the religious and social situation within the kingdom. Ahab appears in a different light: the strong king, advancing the power and prosperity of the nation, the brave soldier whose death brings immediate defeat upon the army, is here seen under the influence of his pagan wife, permitting the persecution of the prophets of the Lord, and allowing one of his subjects to be put to death that he may take his land. Over against the king and queen stands the prophet Elijah.

Elijah came from the country across the Jordan, from Gilead, where the wild hills meet the desert. He is described (II Kings 1:8) as "an hairy man and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." This may mean that his hair and beard were long, or that he was dressed in a hairy garment, such as the skin of a camel. In either case, it was plain from his appearance that he was a man of the woods and mountains.

This strange-looking person suddenly confronted Ahab in his palace and announced a drought. "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." The meaning of this announcement was plain. The people were believing that it was Baal who gave or withheld the rain; they were now to be taught that the sky over the land of Israel belonged to Jehovah.

Elijah departed as mysteriously as he had come, and hid himself for a time in the valley of a brook which flowed into the Jordan, where the ravens fed him till the brook dried up. Then he made his way into Phœnicia, to a village in the neighborhood of Sidon, where a widow woman gave him a lodging. And all the time that he lived in her house, her barrel of meal did not waste, neither did her cruse of oil fail, no matter how much was taken out ; and when the widow's son fell sick, Elijah brought him back to life.

So three years passed, and there was neither dew nor rain. The contention between the two religions deepened into persecution. The altars of the Lord were thrown down, and the prophets of the Lord were slain with the sword or hid themselves in caves. The drought was so severe that even the king and Obadiah his steward went out to search for water. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. Suddenly, as Obadiah was in the way, Elijah met him, and the steward recognized the prophet, and bowed down before him to the earth. "Go," said the prophet, "tell thy lord, 'Behold, Elijah is here!'" "But," said the steward, "suppose I go, and as soon as I am gone the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not, and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me." Elijah answered, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him this day."

The result of this meeting was the Assembly of the Great Decision. To the heights of Mount Carmel, beside the Mediterranean Sea, Ahab gathered all the prophets of Baal, and all the people. Elijah alone stood for the Lord. It was agreed that an appeal should be made first to Baal,

then to Jehovah, for a reply by fire. Baal's prophets made an altar, and sacrificed a bullock on it, and prayed for fire. They prayed, and cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives after their manner, till midday was past, and the hour of the evening sacrifice came, but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. Then Elijah took twelve stones and repaired an ancient altar of the Lord that was broken down. He sacrificed a bullock, and had water poured over the sacrifice, and he prayed for fire. "Hear me, O Lord, hear me," he cried, "that this people may know that thou art the Lord God." And the fire of the Lord came down. And when the people saw it, they fell upon their faces and cried, "The Lord, he is the God! The Lord, he is the God."

Then was the long drought ended. Elijah, with his servant, went to the top of Carmel, and while he prayed he bade his servant watch the sky and the sea. And there arose, at last, a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. Then Elijah went to Ahab. "Prepare thy chariot," he said, "and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not." And in a little while, the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.

It seemed a complete victory for the religion of the Lord, but it was immediately turned into defeat. The truth makes its way, not by dramatic events, not even by calling fire from heaven, but by the slow change of the hearts of men. The very next day Jezebel was looking for Elijah to kill him, and Elijah was fleeing for his life, over the hills and plains to Sinai (= Horeb), defeated, disheartened, ready to die. There he sought the help of the God who had blessed Moses. As he hid in a cave, there came a strong wind, and then an earthquake, and then a fire; at

last in the soul of Elijah came a still, small voice; and God was in the voice. He comforted his prophet. He told him that things were not so bad as Elijah thought. He said that there were seven thousand faithful souls in Israel of whom Elijah knew nothing. He sent the prophet out to call to his assistance men who, after him, should carry on the great contention.

3. **Naboth's Vineyard.** *I Kings 21.* — The next appearance of Elijah was in defence of social justice.

In addition to his capital at Samaria, the king of Israel had another at Jezreel. This was on the northern slope of Mount Gilboa, having on the right the Vale of Jezreel open to the Jordan, and on the left the plain of Esdraelon sweeping to the Great Sea. There beside the palace of Ahab a man named Naboth had a vineyard; and Ahab wanted the vineyard to make it a garden of vegetables. But Naboth would not sell it. This refusal so vexed Ahab that, king and soldier though he was, he went home and lay down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would not eat. There Jezebel found him, and she said, "Arise, and let thy heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth."

Then Jezebel hired men to say that they had heard Naboth curse the king. And thus they said before the elders and the nobles of the city, and sentence was therefore passed on Naboth, and he was taken out and stoned to death. Then came Jezebel to Ahab, and said, "Now you may take possession of the vineyard, for Naboth is dead."

So Ahab went to take possession of the vineyard, and two of his captains, Bidkar and Jehu (*II Kings 9: 25*), rode behind him. And in the vineyard was Elijah. Ahab said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" And

Elijah answered, "I have found thee, because thou hast done evil. And now saith the Lord, 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine; and dogs shall eat the blood of Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel.'" And the king confessed that he had done evil. He rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth and fasted. It is one of the great scenes of history, like the repelling of the Emperor Theodosius by St. Ambrose from the church gate in Milan.

XX

THE TWO JEHORAMS

JUDAH

Jehoram 851-843

ISRAEL

Ahaziah 853-852

Jehoram 852-842

1. **Ahaziah of Israel.** *I Kings* 22:40, 49, 51-53, *II Kings* 1. — In the history of the next ten years, from Ahab and Jehoshaphat to Jehu and Athaliah, the dates are confused, and some of the most important events are connected with a king whose name is not given; nobody knows to what reign they belong. After a year or two of Ahaziah in Israel, there are two Jehorams side by side in the two kingdoms. The prophet of the period is Elisha.

Ahaziah proposed to Jehoshaphat to make a partnership and build a fleet in the eastern arm of the Red Sea to go to the gold-fields of Ophir. But Jehoshaphat, who had already lost one such venture, declined; his ships had been broken in pieces by a great wind before they had put out from port.

/ Nothing more is known of Ahaziah except that he fell down through a lattice in the upper story of his palace in Samaria, and was severely injured. In his distress, he sent messengers to the shrine of Baal-zebub. But on their way Elijah met them and turned them back. "Is there no God in Israel," he said, "that ye go to inquire

of Baal-zebul?" Angry at this interference, Ahaziah, who was evidently of his mother's temper, sent a captain with fifty men to seize the prophet. But Elijah called down fire from heaven and burned them up. And so with another fifty. A third company he spared, when the captain fell on his knees and prayed for the life of his men. /

This killing of a hundred men, whose only offence was their obedience to their orders, is in contrast with Elijah's indignation over the murder of Naboth. Even more strange is the idea that God would answer such a wicked prayer. When the apostles suggested that Jesus should do what Elijah was said to have done, he rebuked them sharply (Luke 9: 54, 55). It is not necessary, however, to read the account as history. It is based perhaps on fact, but colored by imagination, and it probably appealed to its early tellers and hearers on its amusing rather than on its tragic side. Another story, much more pleasant, tells how Elijah at the end of his life was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire (II Kings 2). The true splendor of Elijah is not in such tales as these, but in his defence of the religion of the Lord at Carmel, and in his defence of the rights of the people at Naboth's vineyard.

2. **The Two Jehorams.** — Ahaziah did not recover from his accident, and his brother Jehoram came to the throne of Israel. A few months later, his brother-in-law, Jehoram, came to the throne of Judah. The work of Elijah seemed to have been without effect. Jezebel, the king's mother, in the court of Israel, and her daughter Athaliah, the king's wife in the court of Judah (II Kings 8: 18), fostered the religion of Baal.

Jehoram of Judah (II Kings 8: 16-24, II Chronicles 21) began his reign in the worst manner of oriental kings,

by killing all his brothers. Their father had enriched them with treasures and castles, of which Jehoram thus gained possession. But the reign thus begun was one of disaster. Edom had been subject to Judah since the days of David (II Samuel 8: 14). Now the Edomites rose in rebellion, surrounded the array of chariots which Jehoram sent to subdue them and drove them out, and won their independence. The Chronicles say that the Philistines and the Arabians broke into Judah, robbed the king of all the wealth which he had got by the murder of his brothers, and carried away all his sons, except the youngest. The Chronicles add that they carried away all his wives (II Chronicles 21: 16, 17). It is only too plain, however, by the subsequent history, that they did not carry away Athaliah. A like confusion involves a letter which Elijah is said to have written to the king, declaring that the Lord would bring a plague upon him. The plague is said to have come in the form of a dreadful disease, of which he died (II Chronicles 21: 12-15). So evil and lamentable had been his reign that the people refused to give him honorable burial in the sepulchres of the kings.

Jehoram of Israel (II Kings 3) induced Jehoshaphat to join him in invading Moab. The Moabites, under their king, Mesha, had regained the independence which they lost at the hands of Omri. The Moabite stone describes how they slew the Hebrews who had taken possession of their cities. The allied armies attacked Moab from the south by the way of Edom, where they nearly died of thirst. Out of this strait they were delivered by the prophet Elisha, who had them dig ditches in the valley and by his prayers brought down water from the hills and filled them. The next day, the Moabites, seeing the

sun shining red upon the ditches, thought they saw the blood of the invaders who had fallen to fighting one another, and coming in disorder to the camp were easily overthrown by Israel and Judah. Then the invaders spoiled the land, cutting down the trees, stopping the wells, and casting stones on every good piece of ground, until the king of Moab in desperation, having failed with seven hundred men to break through to the king of Edom, took his eldest son, and offered him for a burnt offering to Chemosh on the wall of his besieged capital. At that sight, the allied armies withdrew, fearing lest the God thus tremendously invoked would destroy them. A different account of the war with Moab is given by the Chronicler (II Chronicles 20). In this account, Moab and Edom and Ammon attack Judah, and the invaders are driven back without the striking of a blow, by the power of prayer.

3. **The Prophet Elisha.** *I Kings* 19:19-21, *II Kings* 2-8:6. — The prophet Elisha, who saved the allies in the war against Moab, was the disciple and successor of Elijah. He had been chosen on the day when Elijah came down from Sinai, having heard the still, small voice. He was ploughing in his father's field that day, driving twelve yoke of oxen, and Elijah passing by cast his mantle upon him. He does not appear with his master in the story of Naboth's vineyard, or in the story of the captains and the fifties; but when Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, Elisha was beside him. He took up Elijah's mantle which had fallen from him, and became a prophet in his place.

Elisha was very different from Elijah. Coming from a prosperous farm, instead of appearing like Elijah from

the wild mountains, he ministered among the people, and was the friend of kings.

There was, indeed, a certain element of fierceness in him, as there was in Elijah. One of the many curious stories which they told about him is that one time, by the gate of Bethel, little children mocked him, crying, "Go up, thou bald head! Go up, thou bald head!" Whereupon he turned back and cursed them, and immediately forty-two she-bears came out of the woods and ate them up! It was he who suggested the spoiling of the land of Moab. The most important thing which he did was to stir up rebellion both in Syria and in Israel.

But for the most part, Elisha showed a kindly spirit. He went about, like the saints in the mediæval stories, working pleasant miracles. One time, they showed him a spring whose water made the ground barren instead of fruitful, and he put salt into it and changed it. Another time, as they were getting dinner, making pottage in a great pot, one of them put in with the herbs the gourds of a wild vine, and the gourds poisoned the pottage, till the prophet poured in meal and made it right. They were building a house, cutting the beams beside the river Jordan, and an axe-head fell into the water. "Alas, master!" cried the man who had lost it, "alas! for it was borrowed." And they showed Elisha where it fell, and he cut down a stick and put it in the river, and the iron came up. He fed a hundred men with twenty loaves of bread, so that each one had enough. A poor woman came to him, whose husband was dead and whose two sons were about to be sold to pay the family debts, and who had nothing left except a single pot of oil. Elisha said, "Go borrow all the empty vessels of the neighborhood, all the pots and

pans and pails and pitchers ”; and when she had done so, “ Now,” he said, “ pour oil into them.” And out of her one little cruse of oil she poured and poured until all were filled. Like Elijah, he restored to life the son of the woman with whom he lodged. The lad had fallen sick in the field among the reapers, crying “ My head! My head! ” and the life had gone out of him. Elisha prayed, and lay upon the child, and the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

Three of the stories of Elisha are connected with the Syrians.

One of the captives seized in a raid of the Syrians upon the land of Israel was a little maid. She was taken into the household of Naaman, commander of the Syrian army, and she waited on Naaman’s wife. Then Naaman was seized with leprosy, and the little maid said that Elisha could make him well. So Naaman came with his horses and his chariot to Elisha, and after some reluctance did as the prophet told him, and bathed in the Jordan seven times, and was cured. Being thus blessed by the prophet of the God of Israel, Naaman chose Jehovah for his god; but the god of Syria was Rimmon. “ What shall I do? ” he said; “ I must go with the king, my master, into the temple of Rimmon, and bow when the king bows.” Elisha answered, “ Go in peace.”

One time, in the midst of an undated war, the king of Syria was told that every ambush which he made was disclosed to the king of Israel by Elisha the prophet, and he sent to seize Elisha. The prophet was surrounded; horses and chariots of Syria were on every side. “ Alas, my master!” cried his servant, “ What shall we do? ” And Elisha gave his servant a new sight, and behold the

mountains round about were filled with the horses and chariots of God. Then Elisha smote the Syrians with blindness, and offered to be their guide, and when he opened their eyes they were in the midst of Israel, at the gate of Samaria. "Shall I smite them?" cried the king of Israel, "shall I smite them?" But Elisha forbade it. He prepared great provision for them, and sent them home in safety.

Again, in the midst of another war undated, the city of Samaria was so besieged by the Syrians that mothers ate their children. Even the life of Elisha was in danger from the great anger of the king of Israel, who held the prophet responsible for the loss of the favor of God. Elisha said that to-morrow there should be abundance. That night, four lepers went over to the camp of the Syrians, saying one to another, "We can but die; if we stay in the city we shall die of hunger. Possibly the Syrians will give us food." And they found the camp deserted. A panic had arisen among the Syrians and they had fled, leaving their gold and silver, and their food.

XXI

THE REVOLUTION OF JEHU

JUDAH

Ahaziah 843-842
Athaliah 842-836
Joash 836-796

ISRAEL

Jehoram 852-842
Jehu 842-814
Jehoahaz 814-797

1. **Jehu seizes the Crown of Israel.** *II Kings* 8: 7-15, 9-13: 9. — The word of God, as Elijah understood it (*I Kings* 19: 15-17), told him to make Hazael king of Syria, and Jehu king of Israel. These two revolutions were brought about by Elijah's successor, Elisha.

Elisha went to Damascus, where the king of Syria lay sick, and Hazael, one of the officers of the court, met the prophet with a present and a message from the king. "Ask him," said the king, "shall I recover of this disease?" Hazael asked Elisha, and received this curious answer: "You may tell *him*," said Elisha, "that he may recover; but let me tell *you* that he shall surely die." And the prophet wept. "Why weepeth my lord?" said Hazael. "Because," replied Elisha, "I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel." And Elisha said, "The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." Then Hazael returned to his master, and told him that Elisha had promised his recovery. And the next day he took a thick cloth, and

dipped it in water, and spread it on the king's face, and the king breathed no more. And Hazael was king.

A like thing Elisha did in Israel. There was war between Israel and Syria. Ramoth in Gilead, when Ahab had fallen in battle, was still besieged. The army was in command of a captain named Jehu, who had been with Ahab at Naboth's vineyard. Elisha called one of his disciples, and gave him a box of oil, and sent him to Ramoth. "Find Jehu," he said, "take him into an inner room, pour this oil upon his head, and say, 'Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.' Then open the door, and flee." This the disciple did, and immediately Jehu mounted his chariot and drove furiously across the plain toward Israel.

Jehoram of Israel had been wounded in the war with Syria, and had gone to his palace at Jezreel to be healed. There he was with Jezebel his mother. / Johoram of Judah had been succeeded by his son Ahaziah, and Ahaziah had come to visit his uncle Jehoram in his sickness (II Kings 8: 28, 29). So the king of Israel and the king of Judah were together in the palace.

Then from the watch tower horses and chariots were seen speeding along the Vale of Jezreel from the Jordan, and the watchman guessed from the furious driving that the foremost man was Jehu. The two kings went to meet him, each in his chariot. And Jehu as he came near drew a bow with his full strength and smote Jehoram between the arms, and the place where he fell was by the vineyard of Naboth. As for Ahaziah, he turned and fled, and Jehu pursued him, crying, "Smite him also in the chariot." This was done, and his body was carried to Jerusalem.

Thus came Jehu to the palace, and Jezebel looked out

at a window. Brave and proud to the end, she had dressed herself as for an occasion of state. She called the assassin "Zimri," remembering that other murderer who had killed a king. But the palace attendants, seeing how things stood, threw her down, and she died, and the street dogs ate her flesh.

The connection of Elisha with this revolution suggests that it was meant to be a revolt not only against the house of Ahab, but against the religion of Baal which the court of Ahab encouraged. It was the final campaign in the holy war which Elijah had begun.

The murder of Jehoram and Ahaziah was followed by a massacre of all the royal family of Israel, and of a number of the royal family of Judah who were met on their way to visit their relatives at the court. ¹ Seventy heads, sent up in baskets from Samaria, were piled in two heaps at the gate of Jezreel. But, even so, the great blow was not yet struck. Jehu set out in his chariot for Samaria, and meeting on his way Jehonadab the son of Rechab, a hater of Baal, he took him up into his chariot. "Come with me," he said, "and see my zeal for the Lord." So they came to Samaria. And Jehu pretended to be on the side of Baal. "Ahab," he said, "served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much." So he assembled all the worshippers of Baal as for a splendid sacrifice; the temple was filled from one end to another. Out of the vestry were brought forth vestments, and the men were dressed in the gorgeous cloaks of their religion. Jehu himself offered the sacrifice. Then rose up eighty appointed men with swords, the doors being secured, and fell upon the multitude of unarmed worshippers till they were all destroyed. And the image of Baal was broken down,

and the temple of Baal was laid in ruins. Thus with treachery and blood the old religion of the land was ended.

2. **Athaliah seizes the Crown of Judah.** *II Kings 11*; *II Chronicles 22: 10-23: 21.* — The uprising of Jehu, which destroyed the religion of Baal in the kingdom of Israel, served for a time to strengthen it in the kingdom of Judah. When the queen-mother, Athaliah, saw that her son was dead, she took the throne herself. She completed the destruction of the royal family, which Jehu had begun, that she might have no rival. Whoever had been spared when the Philistines and Arabians had invaded the land, she put to death, except her youngest grandson. The princess Jehosheba, a sister of the dead king Ahaziah, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, hid her little nephew when the king's sons were slain. Jehoash was only a year old.

So Athaliah was the queen, and the religion of Baal prospered in the kingdom of Judah beside the religion of Jehovah. This continued for six years. But in the seventh year, Jehoiada conferred with the faithful captains and showed them the king's son. And on a sabbath day, when all the plans were made, he brought the little king into the temple, set armed guards about him, showed him to all the people, and put the crown upon him. And they made him king, and anointed him, and they clapped their hands, and shouted, "God save the king!" And Athaliah heard the shouting and came to see what it was about, and there by the pillar, in the king's place, stood the little king with the crown upon his head, and the armed guards beside him, and the trumpeters were blowing with their trumpets. Then Athaliah cried, "Treason! Treason!" but there was none to help her. So she died and Jehoash

reigned. And the temple of Baal was torn down, and his altars and his images "broke they in pieces thoroughly."

Jehoash began his reign under the protection and guidance of the priest Jehoiada. It is remembered of him that he repaired the temple, which had been neglected while Athaliah worshipped Baal. Jehoiada took a chest and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it by the altar which was before the temple door, and into this the people put their offerings, and out of these offerings the masons and the carpenters were paid. The Chronicler says (II Chronicles 24: 17-22) that after Jehoiada's death Joash behaved badly, and when Zechariah, Jehoiada's son, reproved him he had him stoned to death in the court of the temple. Joash himself died at last at the hands of assassins.

3. **The War with Syria.** *II Kings* 10: 32-36; 11: 17, 18; 13: 1-9. — Hazael, king of Syria, was in the meantime justifying all the fears of Elisha.

It was against him that Jehu was fighting at Ramoth when he was anointed king of Israel. It may have been in defence against him that Jehu paid tribute to the king of Assyria, Shalmaneser II, to buy the help of the Assyrian arms. Assyrian inscriptions say that Jehu paid "silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden goblet, a golden ladle, golden pitchers, bars of lead, a sceptre for the hand of the king, and spear shafts." That was in 842, and in that same year Shalmaneser attacked Damascus. He defeated Hazael, who lost over a thousand chariots, and sixteen thousand men, but held his capital against the siege. Nothing daunted, Hazael came out again and took away from Israel all the lands which lay east of the Jordan. More than fifty years after, when the prophet Amos wrote (*Amos* 1: 3), it was remembered how the Syr-

ians threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron. Jehoahaz the son of Jehu had but ten thousand footmen left in his army, and fifty horsemen and ten chariots.

Hazael carried the arms of Syria even into Philistia, where he besieged Gath and took it. In the reign of Jehoash he appeared with his victorious host before the walls of Jerusalem. And Jehoash took all the treasures of the temple, and all the gold that he had, and gave it to Hazael that he might go away and spare the city.

Thus Hazael became the mightiest of the rulers of Damascus. Under his strong hand the whole country, north and south, was subject to Syria. He was master of Judah under Jehoash and of Israel under Jehoahaz.

XXII

THE LONG PEACE

JUDAH

Amaziah 796-782

Uzziah 782-735

ISRAEL

Jehoash 797-781

Jeroboam II 781-740

1. **Amaziah and Jehoash.** *II Kings* 13: 10-14: 20, *II Chronicles* 25. — In the midst of the sovereignty of Hazael over the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, “the Lord gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians.” This saviour was the king of Assyria.

The prophet Elisha was on his deathbed when he was visited by Jehoash of Israel, the son and successor of Jehoahaz. “My father, my father,” cried the king, “the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!” It seemed to him that in the passing of Elisha the last hope of the nation was disappearing. The prophet was like an army with banners; he was the chariot of Israel and its horsemen. Elisha said, “Take bow and arrows.” And when he took them the dying man put his hands on the king’s hands. “Shoot,” he said, “out of the window eastward.” So he shot, three times. He shot, as Elisha said, “the arrow of the Lord’s deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria.” It was a promise of three victories.

These victories were won, and the cities which Syria

had taken from Israel were recovered in the midst of the disorder of a great invasion. The inscriptions say that the Assyrians marched again (797) to the Great Sea. In Tyre and Sidon, in "the land of Omri" (= Israel), in Philistia, in Edom, they reduced the people to subjection and laid them under tribute. But the weight of the invasion fell most heavily upon Syria. The king was shut up in Damascus. Dread of Asshur (the god of Assyrians) struck him to the earth. "He clasped my feet," says the Assyrian king, "and gave himself up. His countless wealth and goods I seized in Damascus."

The immediate effect of this overthrow was to deliver the two kingdoms from the fear of Syria.

Thereupon Amaziah, king of Judah, successfully invaded Edom. It is remembered in praise of Amaziah that while he put to death the men who had killed his father, he spared their sons. Up to this time common opinion had regarded a man's family as a part of the man; if he offended, all must share his punishment. Now, for the moment, the rights of the individual were recognized. / Meanwhile, Jehoash, king of Israel, had been winning victories which Elisha had predicted against the enfeebled Syrians.

Then the kings, made bold by these successes, turned their arms against each other. Amaziah challenged Jehoash. Jehoash replied with the fable of the Thistle and the Cedar. "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give thy daughter to my son to wife': and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle." And he added a fair warning. "Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this,

and tarry at home; for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt?" But Amaziah did not heed the warning. He went to war with Jehoash, and was so seriously defeated that the men of Israel came and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures of the palace and the temple. Then a conspiracy was made against Amaziah, who had brought this disaster upon Judah, and he was put to death, like his father.

2. **Forty Prosperous Years.** *II Kings* 14:23-15:7, *II Chronicles* 26. — Amaziah of Judah was followed by his son Uzziah (= Azariah), and Jehoash of Israel was followed by his son Jeroboam II. These two kings reigned side by side in great prosperity for nearly forty years. There had been nothing like it in Hebrew history since the days of Solomon. Syria was broken by the Assyrian invasion, and Assyria was occupied with problems and troubles at home. There was no oppressor.

Uzziah restored to Judah the important port of Elath on the Red Sea, the gate of commerce with the far east. He conquered the Philistines and the Arabians who had overrun the country in the days of Jehoram. Ammon paid him tribute. He rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem which Jehoash of Israel had broken down, and made towers at the gates. He encouraged agriculture, having husbandmen and vine dressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields. He encouraged the raising of cattle, building towers in the wilderness for the protection of the herdsmen, and hewing out cisterns. He equipped his army with shields, and spears, and helmets, and coats of mail, and bows, and stones for slinging. In his time cunning men invented engines to shoot arrows and great stones from the battlements.

Jeroboam II is credited in the history with wars which added Hamath and Damascus to Israel. This wide domain was predicted by a Galilean prophet, Jonah of Gath-hepher near Nazareth. The records of this great reign are contained in a few sentences, but that Jeroboam was a strong and wealthy king, ruling a prosperous people, is emphasized in the sermons of the prophet Amos.

3. The Beginnings of the Old Testament. — Much more important than the conquests of Uzziah and of Jeroboam II is the quiet work, undated but probably proceeding in these days of peace, whereby progress was made in the compilation of the ancient materials which were used in the construction of the historical books of the Old Testament.

These materials consisted in great part of songs, stories and statutes. They had been brought down from the long past in the memory of the people.

The earliest public speech of primitive man seems to have been in the form of poetry. What he had to say, he sang in a rude chant. Thus he voiced the joys and sorrows of his tribe; thus he gloried over their victories, and lamented their defeats. A bit of such verse is in the Song of Lamech in Genesis (4: 23, 24), and in the Song of the Well, in Numbers (21: 17, 18). There is no doubt as to the contemporary character of the Song of Deborah (Judges 5).

Almost as early as the poet, appears the teller of stories. History in its primitive form is dramatic, and consists not only of record but of dialogue. The heroes speak. The purpose is to make the past real, vivid and alive. The historian is concerned not in the connected progress

of events, not in dates or national conditions, but in persons. He is interested, for example, not in Egypt but in Joseph; not in the wars of Jeroboam II but in the wonderful works of Elisha.

Meanwhile, in every advancing civilization, alongside of songs and stories, there will be statutes. Gradually, by the strength and ability of rulers and judges, and by the lessons of experience, a collection of laws will come into being. At first, they will be for the most part in memory only, in the form of tribal customs; sometimes in groups of ten, one for each finger of the two hands. Then they will be inscribed on stone. After a considerable time, during which new laws are added to old through many generations, they will be collected into a code. That this stage of progress may be a very ancient one, is shown by its appearance in the inscription which contains the Code of Hammurabi.

Such statutes, songs and stories were in the possession of the Hebrews. Some of them were connected with local shrines, such as Shechem and Bethel and Hebron and Beer-sheba. Some were the common treasure of all the people, such as were associated with Abraham and with Moses. Some belonged to the inheritance of the Semitic race, such as the traditions of the beginning of the world. Some were written in court chronicles, being accounts of men and events with which the writers were themselves acquainted. Thus in the court of Solomon were two "scribes" and a "recorder"; references begin to be made to contemporary accounts, — "the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the Acts of Solomon?" (I Kings 11:41.) Presently the reader is referred to the

“book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” (I Kings 14 : 29) and to the “book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” (I Kings 14 : 19). Such writings described the later heroes, Samuel, Saul, David and Solomon.

Then the kingdom was divided, and the statutes, songs and stories were recited by fathers to children in Israel and in Judah, with such minor differences as would naturally arise under the conditions of such a separation. Gradually, they were written down. First, in the kingdom of Judah, because its situation afforded more quiet time for such a work; perhaps in the middle of the ninth century (c. 850), in such a reign as that of Jehoshaphat, when teachers are said to have had the “book of the law” with them (II Chronicles 17 : 9). Then, in the kingdom of Israel, perhaps in the middle of the eighth century (c. 750), in such a reign as that of Jeroboam II.

The existence of two such collections was first discovered by the appearance of such duplicate narratives as we have already noticed in the accounts of the Creation, and the Flood, of the experiences of Abraham in Egypt, and in the story of Joseph. It was presently noticed that in such duplications one account would be found to call God Jehovah (= “Lord”) and the parallel account would be found to call Him Elohim (= “God”). It was found further that the Jehovah records, which scholars call *J*, were so interested in the southern tribes as to suggest their compilation in Judah, while the Elohim records, called *E.*, were so interested in the northern tribes as to suggest their compilation in Israel. Thus analysis finds a strand of narrative beginning with the story of the creation and extending perhaps to the death of David, and another

strand of narrative beginning with Abraham and extending perhaps to the ascension of Elijah.

Later, after the destruction of the northern kingdom, perhaps in such a reign as that of Manasseh, when the ancient religion was under persecution (c. 650), the two collections were combined in one. Thus J (c. 850) + E (c. 750) = JE (c. 650).

XXIII

AMOS AND HOSEA

JUDAH

Uzziah 782-735
Jotham *regent* to 735

ISRAEL

Jeroboam 781-740
Zechariah, Shallum
Menahem, Pekahiah, to 735
Amos
Hosea

(I. **The Decline of Israel.** *II Kings* 15:8-30, *II Chronicles* 26:16-27:9. — The prosperous reign of Uzziah of Judah was clouded toward the end by the king's illness. He became a leper, an affliction which the Chronicler attributed to his presumption in burning incense on the altar in the temple. Thereupon, his son Jotham acted as regent.)

/ Meanwhile, the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II of Israel was followed by immediate disaster. The kingdom suffered from the greed, the oppression and the folly of its rulers, and from repeated invasions of the Assyrians. Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, reigned six months, and was murdered by a man named Shallum, who became king in his place. Shallum continued only one month, when he was murdered by Menahem, who took the throne.

The obscure and scanty records of the reign of Menahem indicate that the usurper met with opposition. In

order that the kingdom might be confirmed in his hand, he hired the help of Tiglath-pileser (= Pul), paying him a thousand talents of silver. This money he extorted from all the "mighty men of wealth" in the land, making each man give fifty shekels. The date of this transaction in the Assyrian records is 738. When the Assyrians came again in 734, not only Menahem but Pekahiah his son had finished their troubled reigns. It is therefore necessary to subtract some years from the ten which are ascribed to Menahem in the history.

Thus in the space of five years, from the death of Jeroboam II in 740 to the murder of Pekahiah in 735, the land had four kings, three of whom were assassinated. The social and religious situation during this tragic time appears in the books of Amos and Hosea.

2. **The Prophet Amos.** — The sermons of Amos represent the situation in the midst of the reign of Jeroboam, and reveal the evils which caused the swift decline which followed.

The home of Amos was in the kingdom of Judah, in Tekoa, twelve miles south of Jerusalem, and twenty-two miles south of the shrine of Bethel where he preached his sermons. The village had already entered into the history as the residence of a wise woman whom Joab sent to David (II Samuel 14: 1-21). Amos was a herdsman, and a gatherer of the sycamore fruit out of which the poorer people made bread (Amos 1: 1, 7: 14). He had no connection with those religious societies called "prophets" and "sons of prophets," of which we read in the lives of Elijah and Elisha (II Kings 2: 3, 5; see also I Kings 22: 6, I Samuel 10: 10). Living though he did among his flocks, Amos knew how to write, at a time

when that was a somewhat rare accomplishment, and was master of a picturesque and vigorous style. He was acquainted also with the great world. He knew what was taking place in Damascus, in Gaza and in Tyre, and in the courts of Edom, of Moab and of Ammon (Amos 1-2:3). This he may have learned from passing caravans, or from his own journeys to sell the wool of his flock. He was especially concerned about the kind of life which he saw or heard of in Israel.

Amos was much impressed by the wealth and luxury of the kingdom of Jeroboam. He saw that the rich had summer houses as well as winter houses, built of hewn stone, adorned with ivory, surrounded by gardens. He observed their feasts, at which they reclined on soft cushions covered with silk, and ate lambs out of the flock and calves out of the midst of the stall, singing idle songs to the sound of the viol, and drinking wine in bowls (3:12, 15, 6:4-6).

Amos found the people devoted to the religion of Jehovah. Pilgrims brought their sacrifices to the shrines on the first day of their arrival, and on the third day paid their tithes. The sacred feasts and solemn assemblies were observed with singing and instrumental music (4:4; 5:21-23).

Amos perceived that along with this pleasant living, and these carefully attended services, went greed, and dishonesty and cruelty. The rich stored up violence and robbery in their palaces. Even the women crushed the needy. By trampling on the poor, and taking exactions of wheat, by afflicting the just and taking bribes, they had increased their fortunes. The merchants were impatient to have the Sabbath over that they might sell their corn and wheat, and in the selling they cheated their customers

with false balances, making the measure small and the weight great (3:10; 4:1; 5:11, 12; 8:4-6).

At last, in Bethel, in the face of the people who were doing these things, Amos publicly denounced them. He stood beside the palace and the shrine, a shepherd prophet, and declared that God had sent him to rebuke and warn the kingdom of Jeroboam. He reminded them how God had blessed them in the past (2:9, 10), and how He had endeavored to recall them from their evil ways by means of famine and pestilence (4:6-11). Because they had paid no heed, God, he said, hated and despised their feast days and all the ceremonies of their religion (5:21-24). Because they had gone on in their selfishness and injustice, God, he said, would bring sore punishment upon them. Amos did not speak the name of Assyria, but his meaning was plain. "Thus saith the Lord God, 'An adversary there shall be even round about thy land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled'" (3:11). "I will raise up against you a nation," saith the Lord the God of Hosts, "and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah," — over all that wide domain which the might of Jeroboam had subdued (6:14). "I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus," saith the Lord (5:27). "The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword" (7:9).

Then came the priest of Bethel, Amaziah, and stopped the prophet. "Get you away," he cried, "into the land of Judah and prophesy there. Speak these things no more in Bethel, for this is the place of the king's sanctuary and of the king's palace" (7:12, 13). It is one of the great

scenes of history. The man of the established order, in alliance with political power and private wealth, silenced the man who rebuked the sins of the great in the name of the Lord.

3. The Prophet Hosea. — Jeroboam was still upon the throne, and the prophecies of Amos were still unfulfilled, when the word of the Lord came to a man of the kingdom of Israel, named Hosea. This took place under singular circumstances. Hosea had been deserted by his wife. She had left him and her three children, and had gone away, at first with one man, then with another. This she had done expecting happiness, but she had found misery. Forsaken by her lovers, and falling from one distress to another, she was at last exposed in the market place to be sold into slavery. Here Hosea found her, and bought her. He paid fifteen pieces of silver, and several bushels of barley, and took her home (3 : 1-3).

Up to this moment, Hosea had preached in the stern manner of Amos. His first-born son he had named Jezreel, in memory of the place where Jehu, founder of the line of kings to which Jeroboam belonged, had begun his reign with blood. "The Lord said, 'A little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.'" He gave his daughter a name which means "not-loved," and his next son a name which means "not-my-people." Thus Hosea declared before the death of Jeroboam that God would have no pity on the nation, and would no longer regard them as his people (1 : 4-9).

But when his wife was taken back, and he found that in spite of all her desertion and her sin he loved her still, he came to realize that God was of that same mind toward

deserting and sinning Israel. Thus he added a new note to the message of Amos. Amos had preached the indignation of God. Hosea preached the constant love of God. He did not mean by this that God cared less about the wickedness of the people, or that there was any doubt about the misery into which that wickedness must bring them; but behind it all he saw the grief and love of God, and the divine longing for the repentance of his people.

Hosea changed the names which said that God had ceased to care for Israel. He still declared that God would punish all their sins. "I am unto thee as a lion, as a leopard will I watch by the way. It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help" (13: 7-9). "They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the castles thereof" (8: 6, 7, 14). But with this message of doom was a continually recurring note of divine sorrow and affection.

In Hosea's book, we are brought into the midst of the five years of assassination and disorder. He says, "there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing and stealing and committing adultery" (4: 1, 2). Even the priests are robbers and murderers (6: 9), and the princes spend their time in drunkenness. They devour their rulers, all their kings are fallen (7: 5, 7). We perceive more clearly than in the history that the nation, conscious of weakness, is uncertain whether to turn to Assyria or to Egypt. These two great powers are about to contend for the possession of the world. Israel lies between them. The counsels of the rulers, and the minds of the people,

are divided. There seems to be an Assyrian party and an Egyptian party in the court. "Ephraim is like a silly dove; they call unto Egypt, they go unto Assyria" (7 : 11). In either direction, Hosea says, they go away from their only hope, the hope which is founded upon obedience to God.

XXIV

THE ASSYRIAN INVASION

JUDAH

Ahaz 735-715

ISR..EL

Pekah 735-734

Hoshea 734-722

1. **Israel and Syria against Judah.** *II Kings* 15: 23-29; 16, *II Chronicles* 28, *Isaiah* 7. — In the great debate between the policy of submission and the policy of resistance to Assyria, Menahem and his son Pekahiah had been on the side of submission. But the Assyrians were now engaged in campaigns in the east. It was always possible that such campaigns might be unsuccessful or might seriously weaken the Assyrian power. Accordingly, the Palestinian provinces took the opportunity to rebel. The plan was to unite against Assyria.

For the success of such a plan it was necessary to have the coöperation of all the Palestinian kings. But Ahaz of Judah, and probably Pekahiah of Israel, refused to join the union. Thereupon Pekahiah was conspired against by Pekah, one of his captains, who came over from Gilead with fifty men and killed him. Then Pekah in alliance with Rezin of Syria marched against Ahaz.

The social and religious situation in Judah under Ahaz is revealed in the sermons of the prophet Isaiah. In the year when King Uzziah died, Isaiah, then a young courtier in Jerusalem, saw a vision of the Lord enthroned, and heard

a voice calling him to warn the people that for their sins the land should be made desolate (Isaiah 6). The long prosperity of Uzziah's reign had made the nation rich, but had brought also the temptations which accompany material success. The land was full of gold and silver, but it was also full of idols (Isaiah 2 : 7-22). "Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen," cried the prophet, "because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory." In Judah as in Israel, the rich were beating the people to pieces, and grinding the faces of the poor. The women were interested in their gowns and ornaments (Isaiah 3 : 18-23); the men were idle and drunken, sitting at feasts, listening to the music of the viol and the harp. Therefore, says the prophet, shall the Lord call to the nations, and they shall come with speed swiftly, whose arrows are sharp and all their bows are bent, whose roar is like the roar of the sea (Isaiah 5 : 26-30).

The peril of the threatened invasion of Judah by the allied armies of Israel and Syria moved the hearts of Ahaz and his people as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. Isaiah endeavored to encourage the king. Meeting him at the conduit of the upper pool, whither he had gone to inspect the water supply of the city in the event of a siege, the prophet told him not to be faint-hearted. Pekah and Rezin, he said, are not fire but smoke. They shall not hurt you; they shall be destroyed. Only wait in faith, and see their downfall (Isaiah 7 : 16). But Ahaz would not wait. At first, in his fear, he fell into a panic of superstition. Like the king of Moab (II Kings 3 : 27) he offered his son as a burnt offering to the Lord. Then, as the march of the invaders continued, he appealed to

Assyria. He took the treasures of the palace and the temple and sent them to Tiglath-pileser.

The Assyrian response was immediate. Within the space of a few months both Syria and Israel were conquered with a thoroughness from which they never recovered. Tiglath-pileser introduced into the history of conquest a new and effective policy. His plan was to remove a great part of the leading people of a conquered province, and to settle strangers in their places. Thus he not only changed the character of the subject kingdom, but destroyed its traditions, and made it over into a new nation. This he did with Damascus, transporting its population into northern Assyria. This he did with the kingdom of Israel. Out of Gilead, east of the Jordan, out of Galilee, north of the plain of Esdraelon, he carried away people captive. Only the city of Samaria and the surrounding country remained of the splendid domain of Jeroboam. Pekah was put to death, and Hoshea, who killed him, was made governor under the king of Assyria.

As for Ahaz, he hastened to do homage to Tiglath-pileser at Damascus, whence he brought away the pattern of an Assyrian altar which he caused to be set up in the temple at Jerusalem. Not only the altar but the defacement of the temple showed that the Assyrians were masters in Judah as in Israel. The brazen oxen which had supported the vast bowl called the "sea," Ahaz was obliged to give to the king of Assyria; the bowl was rested on a pedestal of stone.

2. **The Fall of Samaria.** *II Kings* 17: 1-23, *Isaiah* 17. — So much of the kingdom of Israel as remained after the Assyrian invasion and deportation of 734 continued under the governorship of Hoshea until 727. Then Tiglath-

pileser died, and Shalmaneser IV reigned in his stead. Such a change was commonly the signal for rebellion in the restless empire of Assyria, and the Egyptian party in the court of Samaria took the occasion to urge a declaration of independence. There was a new Pharaoh in Egypt from whom they hoped great things. To these rash counsellors Hoshea listened. He refused to pay the annual tribute. But before the Egyptians could assist him, down came the swift army of the Assyrians. Hoshea was seized and bound in prison and Samaria was besieged. Three years the city on its strong hill withstood the siege, and Shalmaneser died before its surrender. It was taken by his successor Sargon (722 B.C.).

Sargon destroyed the city. Some of the people he transported to the extreme north of his empire, to Habor, the river of Gozan; others he carried to the extreme east, to the cities of the Medes. There they settled, and mingled with the people of the land, and lost both their religion and their nationality, and were heard of no more. Only the peasants and the poorer people remained. And Sargon brought in men who had rebelled against him in Babylon and in Hamath, and made a new population out of this mixture of strange races and religions.

3. "The God of the Land." *II Kings* 17: 24-41. — One curious incident indicates the character of the new inhabitants. Being thus settled in the desolated country, in the midst of the devastation left by the three-years siege, the people from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Hamath found themselves attacked by lions. They accounted for this plague by ascribing it to the anger of the God of the Land, whom they did not know, and about whose proper worship they were ignorant. In this diffi-

culty, the king of Assyria sent back one of the priests of the Lord out of the land of exile to instruct them.

Thereafter, they had a mixed religion. Each group of newcomers had their own god, according to the religion of their native land, and Nergal and Ashima and Adramelech and other strange deities were worshipped at the ancient shrines, but they all agreed to say their prayers to Jehovah in addition. "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods." Thus the kingdom of Israel perished utterly, and in the place of the Hebrews the land was inhabited by this mixed race called Samaritans.

XXV

ISAAH AND THE PERIL OF JERUSALEM

JUDAH

Hezekiah 715-686

Micah

Isaiah

ASSYRIA

Sargon 722-705

Sennacherib 705-681

1. **The Prophet Micah.** *Micah* 1-3, *Jeremiah* 26: 17-19. — The fall of Samaria became a text for the sermons of Micah. The village of Moresheth, in which he lived, was southwest of Jerusalem, on the highlands which overlook the Philistine plain. Micah could see the Mediterranean in the distance. Between the water and the hills, along the plain, ran that famous warpath of the ancient world, along which marched the armies of the Tigris and Euphrates to meet the armies of the Nile.

They come! cried Micah, the fierce soldiers of Assyria, having destroyed Samaria. They ruin all our pleasant country-side. The villages of our neighborhood, — Saphir, and Maroth and Lachish, — they beat in pieces. Then shall they march upon Jerusalem. Destruction is come unto Judah; it is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem!

The cause of this calamity was found by Micah in the sins of the rich. They covet the fields of their poorer neighbors, and take them away by violence; women and children are cast out of their pleasant houses. They hate

the good and love the evil. They pluck off the skin of the people, and their flesh from off their bones. They abhor judgment and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

For this cause, said Micah, the holy city shall be utterly destroyed. "Zion for your sake shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

The immediate result of these bold words was a reformation. Hezekiah was now king of Judah. He endeavored to undo the evil of his father Ahaz. What he attempted in the amending of the moral wrongs against which Micah prophesied, we are not clearly told. The historian deals with the changes which he made in the ritual of religion.

He began that destruction of the local shrines which was afterwards completed by Josiah. At these ancient altars on high places, under sacred groves, the worship of images had continued; there the old idolatries had lingered. Also, he cleansed the temple after the desecrations of his father. Again the sacred lamps were lighted, and the sacrifices were offered upon the altar, with singing and harps and cymbals (II Chronicles 29). Moreover, the feast of the passover, which had not been celebrated for a long time, was observed in Jerusalem with great solemnity. There had not been the like since the days of Solomon (II Chronicles 30). In the midst of these reforms, Hezekiah took the brazen serpent which the people of Israel had brought with them from the desert, from the days of Moses, and of which they had made an idol, burning incense before it, and he broke it, saying, "It is nothing but a serpent of brass" (= *Nehushtan*).

2. **The Business of the Ambassadors of Babylon.** *II Kings 20, II Chronicles 32:24-31, Isaiah 38, 39.*— Nevertheless, the peril which Micah saw continued; and the particular sins which, according to Micah, invited the peril, continued also. It was only after tragic teaching that the nation learned the lesson of the prophets: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes." It is significant that Hezekiah made a pool and a conduit, and brought water into Jerusalem (*II Kings 20:20*). He stopped the watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city (*II Chronicles 32:30*). This was in preparation for the siege which was constantly possible.

In subjection to Assyria, under the hand of Sargon, and forced to pay a heavy tribute, Judah, together with the other provinces of Palestine, looked in every direction for relief. The fate of Israel had not destroyed the hope of relief from Egypt. Neither did Judah profit by the experience of Philistia. Gaza rebelled, and Sargon came and took the city, and drove its Egyptian allies back to Egypt. Ashdod rebelled, and Sargon came and took it. Still, the minds of the men of Judah were so turned toward Egypt that Isaiah walked in Jerusalem for three years in the dress of a captive, to remind all who saw him of his sure prediction that the Assyrians would conquer Egypt, and lead away the Egyptians prisoners (*Isaiah 20*).

Meanwhile, there arose a possibility of relief from Babylon. King Hezekiah had been very sick, but had been recovered by the prayers of Isaiah. He had been assured of longer life by the sign of the sundial of Ahaz, on which

the sun, at the word of the prophet, went backward ten degrees, perhaps by the shadow of an eclipse. In the midst of his recovery, he was visited by ambassadors from Babylon. They came with presents and a letter from the king of that country, congratulating him on his return to health. The incident appears in the history after the account of the great siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, but the reception of these ambassadors by Hezekiah shows that it preceded that devastating calamity. For Hezekiah had treasures to display. He showed his visitors the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armor. These houses were sadly empty after the visit of Sennacherib.

But the king of Babylon, like the king of Judah, was in subjection to the king of Assyria. He was preparing to rebel. His sending of ambassadors to Judah was probably part of a plan to secure an alliance of the Palestinian provinces. For this reason, Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah for his hospitality. In the far future these Babylonians would be deadly foes; even now their friendship was dangerous.

3. The Great Deliverance. *II Kings* 18:13-19:37, *II Chronicles* 32:1-23, *Isaiah* 10:5-34; 36, 37. — The death of Sargon was the signal for a general uprising. The Phœnicians rebelled under the lead of Sidon; the Philistines rebelled under the lead of Ekron. Isaiah, who in the time of Ahaz had set himself against any dealings with Assyria, now set himself with the same earnestness against rebellion. He was convinced that the safety of Judah consisted in keeping out of the contentions of the nations. Ahaz had involved the kingdom in these contentions by

becoming subject to Assyria; the wisdom of Hezekiah would be shown in quiet submission to that Assyrian power which he could not successfully resist.

This counsel all the leading men of Jerusalem resented. We know as much as Isaiah, they said, concerning these affairs of state. Shall he teach us? They mocked him, as one who was forever saying the same foolish thing; "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line." The Hebrew words are *sav la-sav, sav la-sav, quav la-quav, qavv la-quav*, like the refrain of an idle song. Their plan was to ally themselves with Egypt. Isaiah declared that Egypt could not help them. "The strength of Pharaoh," he said, "shall be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion" (Isaiah 30:3). Your true strength, he said, is in the Lord. Obey Him and trust in Him, and He will save you.

In spite of Isaiah, Judah entered into the general conspiracy. Then Sennacherib, who succeeded Sargon, came with his army. He subdued the Phœnicians; he attacked the Philistines. The army of Egypt, which had come to the aid of Ekron, he drove back. He turned his face toward Jerusalem. Isaiah pictured to the trembling people the successive steps of his invincible advance. Now he is come to Aiath (nine miles away), he is passed to Migron, he pitches his camp at Geba; from Gibeah (three miles away) the people flee before him; at last at Nob, within sight of Jerusalem, he shakes his fist against our holy hill. His army covers the country like a forest, like the vast woods of Lebanon.

In the presence of this tremendous peril, in the midst of the alarm of the city as it awaited the besieger, Isaiah kept his courage. He maintained that the city would be

saved. "Behold," he cried, "the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror." He shall come against this forest as the woodsman with his axe hews a great tree, and it falls mightily. The king of Assyria was exalted in his pride. He was saying, "I have removed the bounds of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and I have brought down as a valiant man them that sit on thrones; and as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth; there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth or chirped." The Assyrian inscriptions show how this pride was warranted by the events. "Hezekiah of Jerusalem, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong cities, fortresses and smaller towns round about their border without number, hewing about, and trampling down, I besieged, I took. Two hundred thousand people from the midst of them I brought out, and I counted them as spoil. Himself, as in a cage, in the midst of Jerusalem, his royal city, I shut up. Siegeworks against him I erected, and the exit of the great gate of his city I blocked up." The first chapter of the book of Isaiah may give a picture of this desolation. "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence." Still, Isaiah declared that not an Assyrian should enter Jerusalem.

Hezekiah paid a vast ransom for the preservation of the city: all the gold and silver from those treasuries of the palace and the temple which had already been emptied so many times. He cut off the gold from the doors and pillars of the temple to make up the price. And Sennacherib turned away. It seemed for the moment as if by the payment of this vast sum the city had been saved.

But the hope was vain. From Lachish, Sennacherib sent an embassy to demand the surrender of the city.

The messengers said, "If you trust in the help of Egypt, Egypt is but a broken reed: if you trust in the help of the Lord your God, have you not broken down his altars on all the high places? He is angry with you. What gods of any land have been able to resist the king of Assyria? He has destroyed the nations."

To this message, Hezekiah, advised by Isaiah, sent a refusal to surrender. This refusal came to Sennacherib at Libnah as he was setting out to fight the king of Egypt, who was reported to be advancing against him. He sent a letter repeating his demands, and Hezekiah, again in deep despair, spread the letter before the Lord, praying in the temple. Again he was encouraged by Isaiah. The Lord, he said, will put a hook in the nose of Sennacherib, and a bridle in his mouth, and turn him back by the way by which he came. I will defend this city, saith the Lord, and save it.

And so it came to pass. By attack, by panic, by pestilence — the history does not say — the angel of the Lord smote the camp of the Assyrians. The great king, who had come down (as in Byron's poem) "like the wolf on the fold," abandoned the campaign, went back to his own land, and was seen in Palestine no more.

XXVI

THE GREAT REFORMATION

JUDAH

Manasseh 686-641

Amon 641-639

Josiah 639-608

Zephaniah]

Nahum

ASSYRIA

Esar-haddon 680-668

Ashurbanipal 668-626

1. **Manasseh the Apostate.** *II Kings* 21, *II Chronicles* 33. — The tremendous experience through which the kingdom of Judah had passed must have assisted the moral reforms which were urged by Micah and Isaiah, and the ritual reforms which were urged by Hezekiah. But people hate to be reformed.

The destruction of the altars in the shrines on the high places must have given distress to many who had worshipped all their lives in the sacred groves on the consecrated hills. The breaking of the brazen serpent must have seemed to some an act of sacrilege. There may have been those to whom the invasion of Sennacherib and the misery of the land seemed a punishment sent by God in His anger at the desecration of His ancient temples. Even the religion of Baal, which had possessed the country long before the Hebrews had come in from the deserts bringing the religion of Jehovah, must have survived all the efforts of Jehu and Jehoiada to suppress it. It con-

tinued in concealment, as the religion of Greece and Rome continued in spite of the overthrow of the empire by the barbarians.

Accordingly, when Manasseh came to the throne, being only twelve years old, they who disliked the policy of Hezekiah asserted themselves. Under their influence, the young king abandoned the principles of his father. He built again the high places which his father had destroyed. He restored the worship of Baal. He brought in from Assyria the worship of the sun and moon and all the host of heaven. Altars to these gods were erected in the courts of the temple; an idol was set up in the holy place.

That these changes were not due to political considerations only, appears in the conduct of the king himself. His mind was filled with superstition. He practised soothsaying, and divination, and sorcery, and encouraged those who dealt with ghosts and familiar spirits. As the years went by he testified to the genuineness of his own convictions not only by shedding innocent blood in Jerusalem from one end to another, — probably in a persecution of the faithful, — but by offering his own son as a burnt sacrifice.

There were prophets who declared that for these evils the Lord would deliver the people into the hand of their enemies, and would wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. But nothing happened. Manasseh is said in the history to have had the longest reign of any king who ever sat on the throne of either Israel or Judah; and though the fifty-five years which are given him are difficult to fit with other dates, it is plain that his reign reached a perplexing length. The Chronicler found a tradition that Manasseh was carried

a prisoner to Assyria, and that he came back a better man. But even so, the theory that God punishes heresy and idolatry with defeat and failure and spoiling of goods was disconcerted by the prosperity of Manasseh. He died in peace, and his son succeeded him.

2. **The Beginning of Reaction.** *Zephaniah* 1-3, *Nahum* 1-3. — The assassination of Manasseh's son Amon, after a reign of two years, may mean that the people had begun to be weary of a debased religion. Other conditions also contributed towards reaction.

The little king, Josiah, being only eight years old when he began to reign, was open to the instruction of wise advisers, who must have guided the course of the kingdom till he came to years of discretion. The names of Hilkiah the priest, and Shaphan the scribe, and Huldah the prophetess, which appear presently in the records of Josiah's reign, may indicate some of the formative influences which made him so different from his father and his grandfather. The lad was naturally of a religious disposition. While he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David. The Chronicler says that even at the age of twelve he undertook a reformation. That zeal for religion, that willingness to follow conviction no matter where it leads, which Josiah had inherited from his grandfather, his teachers were able to direct away from superstition into the old faith. The king became a great factor in the religious change.

Josiah and his counsellors were much assisted in this matter by two events in the world outside, which took place when he was about twenty-one years old. One of these was the invasion of the Scythians, the other was the death of the last great king of Assyria.

The Scythian invasion, which is recorded by Herodotus, was probably the occasion of the sermons of Zephaniah. Out of the vast plains of Russia, through the passes of the Caucasus, over Armenia and Syria, these wild people came down along the warpath by the sea, past Palestine, towards Egypt. They were forerunners of the barbarians who in Christian times overturned the Roman Empire.

The Scythians filled the souls of men with terror. It seemed as if they were to verify at last the predictions of Micah, and to punish Judah for all the idolatries of Manasseh. Zephaniah saw in them the end of the world. Indeed, that mediæval day-of-judgment hymn, the *Dies Iræ*, found its inspiration in the first chapter of Zephaniah's book: "I will consume man and beast," says the Lord by Zephaniah. "I will cut off man from the land." The Baal worship of Manasseh's time is still continuing; people are saying their prayers to the stars from the housetops of Jerusalem. But they shall be destroyed. The great day of the Lord is near. Upon Philistia, upon Moab and Ammon, upon Egypt, even upon Assyria, shall fall a tempest of destruction. "I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

At the same time the death of Ashurbanipal, and the approach of the downfall of the empire of Assyria, called out the sermons of Nahum. He sees from afar the destruction of the Assyrian capital. Nineveh shall be overthrown. The great gods whom Manasseh had worshipped shall be proved powerless. Nahum hears the noise of the rattling wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots of the besiegers. Their shields are red, their soldiers are in scarlet, the torches are flaming, and the

chariots are justling one against another in the broad ways. Already, Nineveh of old is spoiled, and waste, and empty, and devoured with fire!

3. **The Book of the Law.** *II Kings* 22, 23:1-28, *II Chronicles* 34, 35:1-19, *Deuteronomy* 12-26; 28. — The Scythians did not invade Judah, as Zephaniah had expected. Neither did the death of Ashurbanipal realize at once the hopes of Nahum. But the very thought of these impending events discredited the idolatries which Manasseh had encouraged. The situation came to a crisis in the discovery of the Book of the Law (621 B.C.).

In the neglected temple, which Josiah was cleansing and repairing, Hilkiah found a book. He gave it to Shaphan to read, and Shaphan read it to the king. The king read the book with amazement and terror, and asked the advice of the prophetess Huldah. She declared that it was the very word of the Lord God. Thereupon the king assembled the people of Jerusalem, both small and great, and read the book to them. And the result was a great and thorough reformation.

It is inferred from the reforms which were thus undertaken that the book so mysteriously discovered was that which is now contained in the greater part of Deuteronomy. "These are the statutes and the judgments which ye shall observe to do in the land which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it." Thus the book began (*Deuteronomy* 12:1). "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; that thou mayest be a holy people with the Lord thy God." Thus the book ended (*Deuteronomy* 26:17, 19) with appended curses (28).

On the plains of Moab, looking across the Jordan towards

the Promised Land, Moses gave directions for the future. Some of the things which he said were preserved in memory, some may have been preserved in manuscript. As the years passed, they were collected and arranged and written down. We have already seen how this work was in progress during the Long Peace. In the nature of things, these ancient laws and counsels would be not only recorded but interpreted. They would be understood in the light of experience. They would be applied to present needs. Men would be interested in them not archæologically but practically. They would desire to know the mind of the great lawgiver regarding the problems of their own day.

One of the most pressing of these problems was that of the local shrines. These were plainly sanctioned in the old laws (Exodus 20 : 24). In any place where a man had heard the voice of God, he might set up an altar, and there offer sacrifices. And this had been so understood by Joshua (Joshua 24 : 26) and by Samuel (I Samuel 1 : 3, 11 : 15, 14 : 35) and by most of the kings of Israel and Judah. The land was filled with sanctuaries. It had been found, however, that these sanctuaries lent themselves to the purposes of superstition and idolatry. They were the refuges of paganism. Accordingly, Hezekiah had endeavored to destroy them. But Manasseh had rebuilt them. These two reigns made the contention plain between the sanctioning of the altars on the holy hilltops and in the sacred groves, and the centralizing of all worship at the altar in the temple of Jerusalem.

In this debate, what was the mind of Moses?

Now, in the reign of Manasseh, in the days of persecution, when no man could speak and keep his life, an unnamed teacher wrote in a book that which he could

not preach in the street. He wrote a summary of the laws of Moses, especially as they bore upon the evil days in which he lived. In the stern words of Moses against alliance with foreign religions (Numbers 25 : 5) he found him warning the people against such temptations as were presented by the local shrines. And in the summary of the law, in his account of the last counsels of Moses according to the best knowledge which his studies gave him, he set this in the forefront: "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the high hills, and under every green tree. And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire" (Deuteronomy 12 : 2, 3).

This book the prophet laid up in the house of God, and there Hilkiah found it.

King Josiah carried these laws into immediate effect. He brought out of the temple all the vessels that had been made for Baal and burned them. He broke down all the sacred trees or poles which stood beside the altars. He stopped the burning of incense to Baal, and to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the stars. He took away the horses and chariots which kings of Judah had consecrated to the sun. He destroyed the temples which Solomon had built in Jerusalem for Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and for Molech the god of the Ammonites. Even at Bethel, he broke down the altar which had been made by Jeroboam.

4. **The Battle of Megiddo.** *II Kings* 23 : 29, 30, *II Chronicles* 35 : 20-27. — In the midst of these reforms came the interruption of a sad disaster. The good king had

ruled his people well. He seems to have extended his kingdom, or at least his influence, over the old borders of Israel. In the decline of Assyria, such an extension would hardly be resisted. It may, indeed, have been arranged by Assyria, Josiah ruling the two provinces under the Assyrian king as overlord. Then the king of Egypt, Pharaoh Necho, seeing that the king of Assyria was weak, marched up along the Mediterranean warpath intending to take into his own possession the whole land west of the Euphrates. And Josiah, loyal to his Assyrian master, and trusting in the help of God, went out to attack him by the way. Thus was fought the battle of Megiddo. The king of Egypt is said to have sent Josiah a friendly warning, saying that he was upon another errand, and had no mind nor time to fight with Judah. But the warning was not heeded. Josiah disguised himself, as Ahab had done, but to no purpose. The battle went against him, the archers wounded him, he was carried in his chariot to Jerusalem, where he died.

To the faithful people, the tragedy seemed not only a national but a theological defeat. The wicked Manasseh had lived prosperously during a reign of nearly half a century, and had died in peace. The belief that God blesses the good with material rewards was again disconcerted. The Book of the Law said that He did; but the battle of Megiddo seemed to contradict it.

XXVII

JEREMIAH AT THE COURT OF JEHOIAKIM

JUDAH

Jehoahaz 608

Jehoiakim 608-597

Habakkuk

Jeremiah

CHALDEA

Nebuchadnezzar 604-562

I. The Battle of Carchemish. *Habakkuk* 1, 2, *Jeremiah* 46. — The people mourned for Josiah with a bitter lamentation. They had reason to weep not so much for him as for themselves; for with the death of Josiah the glory of Judah passed away.

Between two sons of the dead king, the nation chose the younger, Jehoahaz. He was not acceptable, however, to Pharaoh Necho, whose victory had made him ruler of the country. Jehoahaz was summoned to Hamath, where Pharaoh deposed him, bound him in chains, and sent him to Egypt, after a reign of three months. His elder brother, whom Necho named Jehoiakim, was appointed in his place, and a heavy tribute of gold and silver was exacted from the people.

Instead of taking this tribute out of the treasures which the prosperity of Josiah had brought to the king's house, Jehoiakim collected it from the people. He devoted his energies to the erection of a splendid palace, ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion (*Jeremiah* 22: 10-17). Thus he returned to the oppressive policy of Solomon.

He builded his house by unrighteousness; he compelled his subjects to labor without wages. His heart was bent only on his dishonest gain, for which he shed innocent blood and ruled by violence.

Meanwhile, in the great world without, two events were taking place which gave the provinces of Palestine a new master. One of these was the fall of Nineveh in 606; the other was the decisive battle of Carchemish in 605.

As the capital city of Assyria, Nineveh had ruled the empire of the Tigris and Euphrates. This included the ancient kingdom whose capital was Babylon, and whose rulers were the Chaldeans. After various unsuccessful rebellions, — in one of which they sent an embassy to Hezekiah, — the Chaldeans won their independence. Thereupon they made a combination with the Medes in the north, and the two armies of the Chaldeans and the Medes besieged Nineveh, and took it, and destroyed it.

Thus the city fell, as Nahum had predicted with exultation. The Chaldeans and the Medes divided the Assyrian empire, the Chaldeans taking the lands west of the Euphrates. These were the kingdoms which Pharaoh Necho was just then engaged in conquering. They met, therefore, — the Chaldeans and the Egyptians, — to fight for the mastery of that part of the world: the Egyptians under Necho, the Chaldeans under their king's son, Nebuchadnezzar (= Nebuchadrezzar). The battle was fought at Carchemish on the Euphrates. The Egyptians were defeated, and fled across the country and down the warpath by the sea towards Egypt, with the Chaldeans after them. The victors would have taken Egypt itself, had not the death of the king of Babylon called Nebuchadnezzar back to secure his father's throne.

This decisive battle, which made Babylon the capital of the Mediterranean world, profoundly perplexed the mind of the prophet Habakkuk. He had been greatly troubled over the situation in Judah under Jehoiakim. "O Lord," he said, "how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry to thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!" At first, he found satisfaction in the thought that the Chaldeans would probably come, and punish Jehoiakim and Jerusalem for all their sins. But then he reflected that in such a punishment the whole nation might be destroyed, the innocent with the guilty. He could not reconcile it with the divine justice. On the far horizon he saw the Chaldeans coming, that bitter and hasty nation which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. Their horses are swifter than the leopards, and more eager than the eagles. They come all for violence, scoffing at kings, and deriding every stronghold. Will God permit this devastation? Will He hold His peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he? The prophet waits to see what God will do, troubled and perplexed, yet confident that the just shall live by reason of their faithfulness.

The battle of Carchemish entered into the vision of another prophet in another way. Jeremiah had first been called into prophetic activity by that impending invasion of the Scythians which had stirred the hearts of Zephaniah and Nahum. The first six chapters of the book which bears his name seem to belong for the most part to that time. The reformation under Josiah was not yet begun. The land was filled with iniquity and idolatry. Even the reformation did not satisfy the prophet. It is uncertain

what part he had in it, but the chapters from the seventh to the twentieth show that the condition of the country gave him no satisfaction. There had been some change in ritual, but little change in conduct. The battle of Carchemish, however, brought Jeremiah at once into that activity which occupied the rest of his life. Immediately, he rejoiced in the spirit of a great triumph over the defeat of Egypt. "This is the day of the Lord God of Hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries; for the Lord of Hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates" (Jeremiah 46: 10).

2. **In the Reign of Jehoiakim.** *II Kings* 23: 31-24: 7, *II Chronicles* 36: 1-8, *Jeremiah* 7, 26, 19, 20, 36, 35. — Many of the chapters in the collection of Jeremiah's speeches are dated, and it is plain by comparison of dates that they are not arranged in the order of time. (Compare 34: 2 with 36: 1.) The dates show, however, that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was a time of great prophetic activity in the life of Jeremiah. In that year, which followed the battle of Carchemish, he became a very important and unpopular person in the kingdom of Judah.

One time (Jeremiah 7, 26) he spoke in the court of the temple, and denounced the wickedness of the land. He said that the men of Judah oppressed the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed innocent blood; they were stealing, murdering, committing adultery and burning incense to Baal; in the streets of Jerusalem, women were baking cakes to the queen of heaven; and all this they did without fear because they believed that no harm could happen to the Holy City. This was their inference from the saying of Isaiah that Jerusalem should not fall

into the hands of Sennacherib. They believed that it was safe forever. Jeremiah said that unless they changed their lives, the Lord would destroy the city utterly. Already, another prophet who said the same thing had been put to death. The priests and the prophets proposed to kill Jeremiah. It was only by the protection of influential friends that he escaped.

Another time (Jeremiah 19, 20), declaring that the Lord would bring such evil on Jerusalem that the ears of all who heard of it should tingle, he took a potter's earthen bottle and threw it down upon the stones. Thus should the city be destroyed. For this, they put him in the stocks. He felt that all men were against him.

By the hand of his friend Baruch (Jeremiah 36), Jeremiah wrote out the sermons which he had preached during the past twenty years, and Baruch read them to the people in the court of the temple. One who heard him, went and told the princes, and they sent for Baruch. "Sit down now," they said, "and read it in our ears." When they had heard the sermons, they carried the writing to the king. The king sat in his winter house, and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. He listened while three or four leaves were read, but it was plain that he disliked it greatly. Then he took the paper out of the reader's hand, cut it into pieces with his penknife and threw the pieces in the fire. And he did not change his ways.

It is likely that Jehoiakim, owing his throne to Egypt, came unwillingly under the rule of Chaldea. The battle of Carchemish had resulted, indeed, in the defeat of Egypt, but that ancient empire was still unconquered. Egypt was near at hand, Chaldea was far away, and Nebuchadnezzar was busy with the rebuilding of Babylon. It is

easy, at this distance, to see the folly of the rebellion of Jehoiakim, but at that time the might of Egypt was still a part of Hebrew tradition. The king of Judah may easily have trusted in the protection of Pharaoh. Accordingly Jehoiakim rebelled.

For the moment, Nebuchadnezzar was content to deal with this rebellion by sending against Judah such Chaldean regiments as were near at hand, together with companies of Syrians and Moabites and Ammonites, to plunder and distress the country. Among those who were thus driven for safety within the walls of Jerusalem were members of the clan of the Rechabites, descendants of the Jonadab whom Jehu took up into his chariot as he drove to Samaria to massacre the priests of Baal. These men, who had come down from Israel to Judah, represented an ancient protest against all that civilization which they felt had involved the people of God in idolatry and sin. They had been taught by their fathers to hate cities and all cultivated lands. They continued in that wandering life of the desert out of which the Hebrews had come to Canaan. They lived in tents. They were forbidden to build houses, or to plant fields, or to grow vines, or to drink the wine which represented the luxury which they despised. These rules they still kept even when the perils of the open country had driven them into the walled town. They maintained that simple life which their father had commanded.

Before these men (Jeremiah 35) Jeremiah set bowls of wine and bade them drink, and made their refusal the text of a sermon. See, he said, how the Rechabites keep the commandment of their father, while you men of Judah break the commandments of your God. "Therefore thus

saith the Lord God of hosts, Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil that I have pronounced against them.”

In the midst of his rebellion, while the land was ravaged by bands of spoilers, Jehoiakim died and his eighteen-year-old son Jehoiachin came to the throne.

XXVIII

THE CHALDEAN INVASION

JUDAH

Jehoiachin 579
Zedekiah 597-586
Gedaliah 586
Jeremiah
Obadiah
Lamentations

CHALDEA

Nebuchadnezzar 604-562

1. **The First Captivity.** *II Kings* 24 : 8-16, 25 : 27-30, *II Chronicles* 36 : 9, 10, *Jeremiah* 24, 29 : 1-14. — Hardly had the young Jehoiachin come to the throne when Nebuchadnezzar invaded the rebellious land in earnest. He besieged Jerusalem, and the city immediately surrendered. He carried to Babylon the king and his mother, and his princes and the officers of his court, and all the men of might, even seven thousand, and a thousand craftsmen and goldsmiths and blacksmiths. The land was robbed of its most valiant warriors and of its most skilful workmen. Also he took away the treasures of the Lord's house and of the king's house; the temple and the palace he left bare. The vessels of gold which Solomon had made, and which had survived so many sieges, he cut in pieces. A remaining son of Josiah, to whom the conqueror gave the name of Zedekiah, was placed upon the broken throne.

Such a calamity should have convinced the people that Jeremiah, whose predictions it fulfilled, was a true prophet

of God. It should have brought those who remained in Judah to repent them of their sins and change their ways. But it had none of these effects. Jeremiah, they said, prophesied the destruction of the city, and it was not destroyed, it was only plundered. And they hated him as before. As for the carrying away of so many into exile, the men who were left felt this to be a benefit to them. The exile vacated a thousand offices, and opened a thousand positions. Into these moved the inferior men, who proceeded at once to take the empty places.

The difference between those who had been taken to Babylon and those who remained in Jerusalem was compared by Jeremiah to the contrast between two baskets of figs (Jeremiah 24). One basket was filled with very good figs, the other with very bad figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. The comparison did not increase the liking of the survivors for Jeremiah. Still less were they pleased with his word from the Lord. "I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them."

At the same time, Jeremiah wrote a letter (Jeremiah 29: 1-14) to the exiles in Babylon, advising them to build houses and plant gardens and make ready for a long stay, for seventy years must be accomplished before the Lord would bring them back. And this displeased them, for they were looking every day for a divine release from their captivity.

2. **In the Reign of Zedekiah.** *II Kings* 24: 17-20, *II Chronicles* 36: 11-16, *Jeremiah* 27, 28. — Zedekiah was the creature of the king of Chaldea, as Jehoiakim had been the creature of the king of Egypt. He had

sworn a great oath of allegiance (Ezekiel 17:11-21). But he broke the oath. The bitter experience through which Jerusalem had passed had taught him nothing. His mind and the minds of his court were still possessed with the idea of the might of Egypt. To Jeremiah, as to Isaiah before him, this idea was utter folly. It was plain to the prophet that the king of Babylon held the Palestinian provinces in his hand, and that it was impossible for Egypt to take them out.

But Jeremiah stood alone. Even the prophets were against him. In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, at a time when messengers were present in the court from Edom and Moab and Ammon and Tyre, Jeremiah made wooden yokes and gave one to each of them, saying that any nation which would not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon should be punished with the sword. Only by submission could they escape death. He declared that the prophets who were promising a speedy return from Babylon were speaking lies. One of the prophets took off the yoke which Jeremiah had on his own neck, and broke it, declaring that within two years the yoke of Babylon should be broken, and all the exiles should return. For the moment Jeremiah went away in silence. But he came back and changed the yokes of wood for yokes of iron.

Nevertheless, Zedekiah put his trust in Egypt. Thither he sent ambassadors (Ezekiel 17:15). He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. He thereby invited the destruction of Jerusalem which followed.

3. The Fall of Jerusalem. *II Kings* 25, *II Chronicles* 36:17-21, *Jeremiah* 34, 37, 38. — When the siege began, Zedekiah sent to consult Jeremiah, hoping perhaps for such

an answer as Isaiah had given in his time. But Jeremiah replied that the only hope for safety was in surrender. "I myself will fight against you," saith the Lord, "with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath" (Jeremiah 21: 1-7). "He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live." Thus he said, day after day, till they put him in prison to silence him.

The Egyptians came to help their allies, and the siege was raised while the Chaldeans went to meet them. It seemed like the siege of Sennacherib over again, and the people were full of joy and confidence. In one matter, they had obeyed Jeremiah: they had freed such of their own countrymen as had been made slaves to them for debt (Jeremiah 34). But when the Chaldeans went away, they took them back. Jeremiah declared that the Chaldeans would return. "They shall come again, and fight against this city and take it, and burn it with fire."

In the interval, the prophet attempted to leave the city. He was arrested at the gate, on the charge of deserting to the Chaldeans, and was put into a worse prison than before. There the king secretly consulted him again. "Is there any word from the Lord?" said Zedekiah. "There is," replied the prophet: "Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." The king released him from the dungeon, but kept him in the prison court. Daily, in the famine which was then beginning, he had a piece of bread out of the bakers' street.

Again he was put in strict confinement. They said that he was telling the people to desert to the enemy. He was

let down into a deep dry cistern under the prison. But out of this, one of the king's servants, a man from Ethiopia, saved him. He threw down rags to Jeremiah to put under his arms, and drew him up with a rope. And still the siege went on.

At last, the wall was broken, and the king of Babylon came in, and all his princes with him, and Zedekiah and the garrison went out by the gate of the king's garden. They went by night and fled across the plain. And the Chaldeans followed and overtook them in the neighborhood of Jericho. The sons of Zedekiah and all his nobles were slain before his eyes. The Chaldeans burned the palace and the houses and broke down the walls. They put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon. And with him they carried all but the poorest of the people. These they left to till the fields. The brazen pillars of the Lord's house, and the "brazen sea," they broke in pieces; and all the gold and silver things, they took away. The chief priest, and the second priest, and the commander of the garrison, and the principal scribe, and some others, they killed by the way at Riblah. The rest they brought to Babylon.

Two little books remain to express the grief and indignation of the exiles. One is the prophecy of Obadiah against Edom, the other is the Lamentations.

The soul of Obadiah was filled with the memory of those men of Edom who looked on with exultation at the fall of Jerusalem. "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. Thou shouldest not have rejoiced over thy brethren the children

of Judah in the day of their destruction." "Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway to cut off those that did escape." "Thy reward shall return on thine own head."

The five poems which compose the book of Lamentations bewail the fate of the holy city. "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! Judah is gone into captivity. For these things I weep. Mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water. The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary. Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? The mountain of Zion, foxes walk upon it!"

4. **Gedaliah the Governor.** *II Kings 25: 22-26, Jeremiah 39-44.* — Over the farmers and vinedressers, and the others who were left in the land, Nebuchadnezzar appointed as governor one of their own countrymen, Gedaliah, grandson of Josiah's old chancellor, Shaphan. To Jeremiah the choice was courteously given whether to go to Babylon or to remain. He preferred to remain. Jerusalem being in ruins, the governor established himself near by, at Mizpah. The captains of the forces which were in the fields came in; and Jews returned who had found refuge in Edom, in Moab and in Ammon; and were sent out to gather fruit and wine and oil, and to dwell in their cities.

But the captains came to Gedaliah and reported that one of their number, named Ishmael, had been hired by the king of Ammon to kill him. The governor would not believe it. Captain Johanan offered to slay Ishmael before he could carry out his plot, but Gedaliah would not permit it. Then came Ishmael and ten men with

him to Gedaliah, and dined with him with all show of friendship, and after dinner they rose up and smote him so that he died. They put to death all whom they found in the place, and beside them eighty men who came down from Samaria to burn incense on the altar of the ruined temple; and the bodies were cast into the ditch which King Asa had dug in the old time to protect the wall of Jerusalem from the attack of Baasha. Those who remained they seized to carry them to Ammon.

Then Johanan gathered men and waylaid Ishmael by the pool of Gideon, and released the captives. Ishmael escaped to Ammon. Thus Johanan was the head of the people. He proposed to flee to Egypt for fear of the Chaldeans, and this was done in spite of the protests of Jeremiah. Down they went into Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them.

And there in Egypt, the prophet continued to reprove the people for their sins. They began to worship other gods. They declared that they were prosperous, and had good luck and plenty to eat in the days when their wives made cakes to the queen of heaven; and they vowed that they would do it again. Everything, they said, has gone wrong since we stopped it. Jeremiah explained in vain that the wrong had come by reason of their sins; that it was their idolatries which had made their land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant. They would not listen. With this characteristic scene, the like of which had been enacted a hundred times in Jeremiah's faithful life, his voice, stern but tender, falls into silence, and he appears no more.

XXIX

EZEKIEL AND THE EXILE IN BABYLON

597-538

1. **Between the Two Captivities.** *Ezekiel* 1-24. — Concerning the condition of the Jews who were carried to Babylon in 597, the Old Testament historians are silent. The only fact which they record is that after some years King Jehoiachin was released from prison and given an honorable place in the Babylonian court (II Kings 25 : 27-30). But this was after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. Our information regarding the ten years between the two captivities comes from one of the captives themselves, the prophet Ezekiel.

In the midst of this time, five years after Nebuchadnezzar had brought to Babylon the leaders of the Jewish state and church and the chief citizens of Jerusalem, Ezekiel saw visions of God.

We learn from his writings that the colony of exiles were living beside the river Chebar, one of the canals which carried water from the Euphrates to irrigate the rich plains of Babylonia. The ten thousand men of the first captivity (II Kings 24 : 14), with their wives and families, seem not to have been scattered like the exiles from Samaria (II Kings 17 : 6), but to have been settled in a single district. This was in accordance with the constructive

policy of Nebuchadnezzar, whose inscriptions are filled with records not of fighting, but of building. He needed honest and industrious colonists, some to be masons and carpenters, and some to be market gardeners to supply the great and increasing population of the capital. The exiles were a sad and homesick people; by the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept (Psalm 137). But they were well treated; they had their liberty; they lived under their own laws, which were administered by their elders (Ezekiel 14: 1).

For ten years the exiles persisted in the expectation of return. Against that expectation, Ezekiel protested. He declared that Jerusalem should be destroyed.

One time he took a tile, — a large flat brick of clay, such as they used in Babylon to write on, — and drew upon it the outline of a city, with tents about it to indicate a siege, and pictures of battering rams; and between the city and himself, he held up a sheet of iron. Thus he showed not only that Jerusalem should be besieged, but that in that time of distress the city should have no help from God (Ezekiel 4: 1-3).

Another time he cut off his hair, and burned three parts of it in a fire which he made on the tile city. Three parts he struck with a knife; the remaining three parts he scattered in the mud; a few hairs he saved. Thus he declared that of the people of Jerusalem, a third should die of plague and famine, a third should fall by the sword, and a third — except a few — should be scattered to the wind (Ezekiel 5: 1-4).

He told of a vision which he saw. He was in the temple in Jerusalem, and there was an idol there of some strange god; and there was a pictured chamber, all of whose

walls were painted with the likenesses of beasts and creeping things, and seventy men of Israel were burning incense before them; and there was a gate where women sat weeping for Tammuz, a god of the Phœnicians; and there was a court where twenty-five men, with their backs to the altar of the Lord, worshipped the rising sun. And there came a man with a writer's inkhorn by his side, and five men after him with swords; and the man with the inkhorn went through the city and made a mark on the foreheads of all who were sorry for these things, and the men with the swords followed him and slew all who were not marked. And in the temple was the appearance of the likeness of a throne, blue as sapphire, blue as the clear sky, and the throne had wheels, and about it were living creatures with wings, and between the wheels were coals of fire. The man with the inkhorn scattered the coals of fire over the city. And the wheeled throne began to move, first to the threshold of the temple, then outside, then up from the midst of the city, and out to the mountain on the east. The vision meant that God had forsaken the city which the people had polluted by their idolatries (Ezekiel 10, 11).

And that which Ezekiel thus declared in symbols and visions, he said also with plainness. He knew very well what would follow when King Zedekiah rebelled and sought the aid of Egypt (Ezekiel 17: 11-21). It came to pass, even as he had predicted. Nebuchadnezzar sent again, and punished the rebellious city with complete destruction. And one came running (Ezekiel 33: 21) and cried "the city is smitten!" The second company of exiles followed, nearly five thousand men, with women and children (Jeremiah 52: 28-30).

2. Facing the Future. *Ezekiel* 36-48, *Leviticus* 17-26.

—The departure of the people from Palestine affected their history and character as deeply as their entrance into it.

The Conquest had made the tribes of Israel a nation. Leaving the wilderness behind them, where they had wandered like Bedouin, they settled in the land, and began to till the ground. They had vineyards and olive yards, and lived in villages and towns.

The Exile destroyed the nation. The people were scattered over the face of the earth; they settled not only in Egypt with Jeremiah and in Chaldea with Ezekiel, but wherever else they could find hospitality and occupation. And that condition continues to this day. It is true that some of them returned, and the city and the temple were rebuilt; but those who returned were but a fraction of the people, and they lived under foreign rulers, having no longer any kings of their own, till the final destruction of the temple by the Romans (70 A.D.). The description of the Jews who were attending the feast of Pentecost at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles indicates the wideness of their dispersion. They came from the lands of the Parthians and Medes and Elamites, from Mesopotamia and Cappadocia, from Pontus and Asia, from Phrygia and Pamphylia, from Egypt and the part of Libya about Cyrene, from Rome, from Crete, from Arabia. Ceasing to be farmers, they became traders. Ceasing to be bound together by a common government, they were united, no matter how far apart they lived, by a common religion. The Exile, which was the end of the Hebrew state, was the beginning of the Jewish Church.

The first necessity was to comfort the exiles in their despair by turning their faces toward the future. This was done by the prophet Ezekiel. The great blow having now fallen, the kingdom of Judah having met the fate of the kingdom of Israel, the predictions of the prophet having been fulfilled, Ezekiel changed his message of destruction for a message of restoration. He declared that the people should return to their own land, and rebuild their desolated city and their ruined temple (Ezekiel 36: 1-12). He described another invasion, like that of Sennacherib and of Nebuchadnezzar. On came the vast army, out of Asia and Africa and Europe, with Gog of the land of Magog leading them, to destroy the restored people. And the Lord fought against the invaders, and the slaughter was so great that it was seven months before they could bury all the slain; and their shields and bucklers, their bows and arrows, served the people for seven years for firewood (Ezekiel 38, 39). In the midst of the land thus defended by the Lord, Ezekiel pictured a new temple in a new Jerusalem. There was no king, and the main duty of the princes was to provide material for the sacrifices; the leaders and rulers were the priests.

A second necessity was to keep the people separate from their neighbors. As the years went by and they prospered in their new home, they were in danger of forgetting their own land, and of adopting not only the customs but the religion of Babylon. Having no longer any temple, they could not offer the sacrifices nor perform the services to which they had been accustomed; even the memory of these might perish. The wise men who saw these perils called Moses to their assistance. They re-

vived and rewrote the counsels which Moses had given in the old time regarding the behavior of the Chosen People in strange lands. Thus came into its present form a great part of the book of Leviticus, especially the Code of Holiness, which is contained in the chapters from the seventeenth to the twenty-sixth. The word holiness in this sense means separation. The purpose of the renewal of the ancient laws was to keep the people apart from all influences which might cause them to cease to be Jews and become Gentiles. The fact that there were certain kinds of food which they were forbidden to eat prevented them from dining with their neighbors, and thus protected them from the social life which might break down the barriers of distinction.

In order that the people might be taught these laws, the synagogue came into existence. In the place of the temple, these houses of prayer and preaching were built in the midst of every little community. They there read not only the book of Deuteronomy, which taught them their duty towards their neighbors, and the book of Leviticus, which taught them their duty towards God, but those histories of their forefathers which had been collected in the kingdom of Israel, and in the kingdom of Judah, and brought together after the kingdom of Israel had been destroyed. The day appointed for these meetings in the synagogue was the Sabbath, upon which they now laid new emphasis, and which was devoted not only, as at the beginning, to rest, but to religion. Thus the need of keeping the people from Babylonian influences brought into prominence the institutions which have distinguished the Jews from that day to this — the Sabbath, the Synagogue and the Law.

3. **The Fall of Babylon.** *Isaiah* 45:1-4; 13, 14. — The successors of Nebuchadnezzar on the throne of Babylon were inferior to him both in wisdom and in strength. His son Evil-Merodach, who freed Jehoiachin from prison (II Kings 25:27), was assassinated by Nergilissar, who may have been the Nergal-Sharezer of the siege of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 39:3). He was followed by Narbonidus, who occupied himself in studies of ancient history and in the rebuilding of old temples, and left the ruling of the kingdom to his son Belshazzar (Daniel 5).

Meanwhile, in the north, the Medes, who had divided the ancient empire of Assyria with the Chaldeans after their united armies had destroyed Nineveh, had come under the rule of a new king, Cyrus. This vigorous sovereign, who took the title of king of Persia, conquered Mesopotamia, and marching to the west defeated Cræsus, the rich king of Sardis, and took possession of all Asia Minor. Then he moved his victorious forces to the south, carrying everything before him, and made himself master of Babylon. This was in 538. Thus the sceptre of the world changed hands again. As the Chaldeans had dethroned the Assyrians by the fall of Nineveh, so now the Persians by the fall of Babylon dethroned the Chaldeans.

Two chapters in the book of *Isaiah* (13, 14) express the exultation of the Jews over the conquest of their Chaldean masters. The prophet rejoices in the taking of Babylon, as Nahum had rejoiced in the taking of Nineveh.

The policy of Cyrus the Persian in his dealings with subject nations was altogether different from the policy of Sennacherib who deported the people of Israel, and of Nebuchadnezzar who deported the people of Judah. His

inscriptions represent him as saying, "The gods whose sanctuaries from of old had lain in ruins I brought back again to their dwelling-places and caused them to reside there forever. All the citizens of these lands I assembled and I restored them to their homes." Thus with the accession of Cyrus, the long exile of the Jews in Babylon was ended.

XXX

THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM

JUDAH	PERSIA
Sheshbazzar 538	Cyrus 538-529
Zerubbabel and Joshua 520	Cambyses 529-522
<i>Haggai</i>	Darius 521-485
<i>Zechariah</i>	
Ezra	Xerxes 485-465
Nehemiah 444-432	Artaxerxes 465-425
<i>Malachi</i>	

1. The Rebuilding of the Temple. *Ezra* 1-6, *Haggai*, *Zechariah* 1-8. — The family lists of returned exiles in *Ezra* (ch. 2) and *Nehemiah* (ch. 7), with the total number of forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, appear at the first reading to represent a triumphal procession. They came with men servants and women servants, on horses and mules and asses and camels, accompanied by priests and singers, bearing the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple.

This account, however, was written so long after the event that we are left in uncertainty as to the leader of the expedition, whether he was Sheshbazzar (*Ezra* 1: 11) or Zerubbabel (*Ezra* 2: 2). And the names on examination are found to include *Nehemiah* and *Ezra* (*Azariah*) (*Nehemiah* 7: 7), who did not come till nearly a hundred years after the fall of Babylon. It is significant that

Haggai and Zechariah make no mention of any return. Even Nehemiah, referring to the people of Palestine, speaks of them as "the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity," "the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province."

The exiles were comfortable and prosperous in their homes in the east. The stories of Daniel and his friends in the court of Nebuchadnezzar and of Belshazzar (Daniel 1-6), and of Esther and Mordecai (Esther 1-10) in the court of Ahasuerus (= Xerxes), and the record of Nehemiah in the court of Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 1:2), indicate that Jews had access to high places of trust and honor. And the journey across the plains to Palestine was difficult and dangerous; and the conditions in the ruined city of their fathers were uninviting. So many years had passed since the beginning of the exile that most of those who were freed by the decree of Cyrus had been born in Babylon. They were disposed to stay there. Companies of them from time to time, under Sheshbazzar, under Zerubbabel, with Ezra, with Nehemiah, returned to Jerusalem. But the majority of those who heard the urgent sermons of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, and with whom Ezra and Nehemiah dealt, were probably the descendants of the people who had fled from the Chaldean captors, and had returned from their refuges in Moab, and Edom, and Ammon, and Egypt (Jeremiah 40:11).

The temple had indeed been destroyed, but the altar at the gate of the temple could not be destroyed, being cut in the native rock of the hill. There, from the first, the faithful had come, even from Samaria (Jeremiah 41:5), bringing their offerings, and praying their prayers. The temple lay in ruins. Exiles returned after the fall of

Babylon, but the Lord's house still lay waste. They built their own houses, but they were too poor, or discouraged, or indifferent, to undertake the rebuilding of the temple.

It is significant that the definite beginning of the work occurred in 520, when a new young king of Persia, Darius, was contending against rebellion in many parts of his empire. It looked like the breaking up of the Persian power. Zechariah, in the vision with which his book opens, saw four horns which had scattered Israel, Judah and Jerusalem, and four carpenters come to cut them down. Haggai heard the voice of the Lord saying, "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations." It seemed as if the Jews might assert their independence. In order to make such an assertion possible there must be a revival of the national spirit; and to that end there must be a restoration of the central shrine.

At such a time, the prophets stirred up Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the governor, and "the remnant of the people," and they set about the rebuilding of the temple.

The progress of the work was threatened by the interference of Tattenai, the Persian governor of the provinces west of the Euphrates, who informed Darius that the house of the great god was being builded with great stones, and evidently suspected that this was another in the series of revolts against the throne of Persia. But Darius found the decree in which Cyrus had permitted the restoration, and not only allowed the work to go on, but ordered that materials for the daily sacrifices should be provided at government expense (Ezra 5, 6). Thus,

after four years, the temple was completed, and was dedicated with great joy.

2. **The Expectation of the Messiah.** — To those who remembered the former temple, the new one seemed as nothing in comparison to it; but they hoped that in one important respect it would be far better. In the new temple might appear at last the long-expected redeemer of the people, the Messiah. The name, which is familiar to us in its Greek form, the Christ, means the Anointed One, from the ceremony with which kings were consecrated. “The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, said the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2 : 7).

The Messiah was thought of as the ideal king, who should bring the people out of their subjection and distress, and restore again the ancient splendor of the days of David. He was called the Branch, meaning that he would grow out of the family of David as a branch grows from the trunk of a tree (Isaiah 11 : 1). “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth” (Jeremiah 23 : 5, 6 compare Ezekiel 17 : 22-24, Zechariah 6 : 12, 13). Micah looked for him from Bethlehem to save the people from the Assyrians (Micah 5 : 2, 5). Zechariah hoped that he had come at last in the person of Zerubbabel, the prince of the house of David, the restorer of the temple. “He shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon his throne.” “In that day,” said the Lord by Haggai, “I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, and I will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.”

The Messiah represented the Golden Age. In him was personified the faith of the Jews that they were indeed the Chosen People, and that God would make that choice evident to all the earth. As their afflictions continued, and they were in subjection under foreign rulers, their confidence continued also that the time of their redemption must be drawing near. The Messiah was Immanuel, God-with-us. He was "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 8: 8-10; 9: 6).

They hoped that the new temple would be glorified by the coming of this saviour, who would deliver them out of their distress, and make Jerusalem a city of truth and righteousness for all the nations of the earth.

3. The Golden Century. — With the completion of the temple in 516 all records cease for half a century. Between the sixth and seventh chapters of the book of Ezra there is a long silence. Nobody knows what events were taking place. But meanwhile, outside in the great world, important events were happening, and remarkable men were beginning to exert influences which continue strong to this day.

In 515, Darius bridged the Hellespont and invaded Europe. In 490, he was successfully resisted at Marathon. In 480, the Greeks met Xerxes at Thermopylæ, and defeated him at Salamis. Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were producing their plays at Athens, where Socrates was teaching philosophy. In China, Confucius (551-478) was founding the religious system which bears his name. In India, Gotama (568-488) was beginning to preach the creed and conduct which resulted in Buddhism.

It is possible that this was the time of the writing of the book of Job. The problem of the book is one which the situation in Judea may well have forced upon the attention of reflective minds. That situation contradicted the doctrine that God would give the good the reward of prosperity, and the bad the punishment of adversity. For the people, in spite of their endeavors to be good, in spite of the prayers and praises of the restored temple, were still oppressed and poor and miserable. Job is presented in the poem which bears his name as a man ideally righteous, yet suffering the loss of all his property, and being in bitter pain of body. In this situation, he maintains his integrity and his faith in God, crying "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

4. **The Rebuilding of the Walls.** *Malachi, Ezra 4, Nehemiah 1-7: 4.* — The temple was rebuilt, but the enthusiasm of the people waned. The times were hard, the harvests were small, the Persian taxes must be paid, the expected Messiah did not come. The example of the patience of Job was hard to follow. Many felt that God had forsaken them. They said, "It is vain to serve God"; they said, "What profit is it that we have kept his law?" They neglected the services in the temple, and for sacrifices they offered animals which were blind, or lame, or sick. The priests were as bad as the people (*Malachi 1: 8, 13; 2: 1, 2*). The prophet Malachi rebuked these offenders. The Messiah, he said, shall surely come, but who may abide the day of his coming? for he shall come in swift judgment against the wicked.

Meanwhile the walls of Jerusalem were still in ruins. To the rebuilding of the temple, the Persians made no objection, that was a renewal of the local religion. But

the rebuilding of the walls, thus fortifying again the strong citadel of Jerusalem, was a different matter. This was accomplished at last by the influence and energy of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was the cup-bearer of Artaxerxes, in his palace at Susa. The report of the affliction and reproach of the holy city, how its walls were broken and its gates burned with fire, came to the ears of Nehemiah, and his distress attracted the sympathetic interest of the king. Artaxerxes made him governor of the province, and gave him authority to rebuild the walls. He went with letters from the king which assured him safe-conduct to the land of Judah, and gave him the right to call on the keeper of the king's forest for timber to make beams; and captains and horsemen went with him.

Having come to Jerusalem, he first examined the situation privately, riding by night around the ruined walls till he came to a place where the broken stones were piled so high that he could go no farther. Then he called the leaders of the people together, showed them his warrant from the king, and called upon them to join with him in the work of rebuilding. Thus the work began. Nehemiah assigned the wall in sections, here to this family, there to that, men being especially charged to rebuild the parts which were nearest to their own houses.

The work proceeded in the face of difficulty. The ancient hostility between the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel reappeared in connection with this strengthening of Jerusalem. The Jews who were descended from the survivors of the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom seem to have desired to join with their brethren who were descended from the survivors of the

Chaldean invasion of the southern kingdom. But their proposals were refused, and the refusal made them enemies.

The fourth chapter of the book of Ezra, being dated in the reign of Artaxerxes, refers to the building of the walls, and to a letter which these enemies sent to the Persian court calling attention to the fact that the Jews were rebuilding "the rebellious and bad city." This hindrance being of no avail, they threatened to stop the work by force. Under the leadership of Sanballat and Tobiah they came to fight against Jerusalem. Even so, Nehemiah did not pause. He armed the workmen, and set watchmen with trumpets to give alarm if the enemy appeared. Sanballat and Tobiah then tried treachery. They proposed a conference with Nehemiah in a neighboring village, to which he replied, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." They hired a man to warn him of a conspiracy to kill him, and to urge him to hide in the temple; to which he replied, "Should such a man as I flee?"

Thus all the devices of the enemy came to naught, and, by working day and night, in fifty-two days the walls were completed.

XXXI

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE LAW

1. **The Reforms of Nehemiah.** *Nehemiah* 5, 13. — In the midst of the account of the rebuilding of the walls appears an incident which shows that reconstruction was needed not only by the city but by the citizens.

A bitter complaint was made by the poor against the rich. Under the burden of taxation to pay the king's tribute, and under the stress of dearth caused by failure of the crops, many had been obliged to mortgage their lands and vineyards and houses to buy food. And as the necessity continued they had been compelled to sell their children into slavery. The holders of the mortgages and the purchasers of the children were their own rich brethren. It was a repetition of the situation against which Amos had protested (Amos 2 : 6). A great cry was made, especially by the poor women, mothers weeping for their sons and daughters. And the cry came to the ears of Nehemiah.

He called an assembly, and publicly rebuked the greed and cruelty of the nobles. "We," he said, meaning himself and his friends, "have been giving our money to redeem our brethren out of bondage to the heathen, and you, in order to make money, are bringing them into bondage. Moreover, I am here at my own expense. Your former governors have required you to furnish them with bread and wine, and have taxed you for their support.

Not only have I asked nothing, but I have daily entertained a hundred and fifty of you at my own table, besides such as come from neighboring countries; so many that every day I have had to provide an ox and six sheep, beside bread and wine, to feed them. And here are you, thinking only of your gain. Come now, cease these exactions. Give back to the people their lands and their vineyards and their houses, and their children."

And this the nobles did, for very shame. But the fact that they needed such a rebuke for their behavior is evidence that the social situation in Jerusalem was bad. The temple had been rebuilt, the walls were being rebuilt, it was now necessary to rebuild the people.

Nehemiah perceived, like Malachi, that the services of the restored temple were neglected. The Levites and the singers, being no longer supported by the offerings, had gone to the fields to earn their living. The house of God was forsaken. He gathered them again, and made the people pay the proper tithes.

Nehemiah found that the Sabbath, to whose observance so much importance had come to be attached in the land of the exile, was not kept with strictness in Judea. Men were treading wine presses and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses, and carrying their produce to the market in Jerusalem, and selling it on the Sabbath as on other days. The governor commanded that the gates should be shut on the afternoon of the day before the Sabbath, and not opened till the morning after. Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of ware lodged outside, on the Sabbath, by the wall, hoping for opportunities of trade. "If ye do so again," said the governor, "I will lay hands on you." So that was stopped.

Nehemiah saw that little attention was paid to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. That separation which had been so strictly observed in Babylon for the preservation of their race and religion had not seemed so necessary in Judea. The matter first arose in connection with Tobiah, who with Sanballat had led the opposition against the rebuilding of the walls. Tobiah had ridiculed the work, saying that if a fox ran over the wall it would fall down. Now the priest Eliashib had prepared for Tobiah a great chamber in the temple. The chamber was intended originally for the offerings of corn and wine and oil, and was empty because the offerings were not made. Nehemiah turned Tobiah out, with all his household stuff, and had the place cleaned and restored to its former uses.

The same treatment he gave to a grandson of Eliashib the priest, who had married a daughter of Sanballat. He says, "I chased him from me."

These alliances of the high priest represented a general situation. Jews had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon and of Moab. Their children could not speak the Jewish language. "I contended with them," says Nehemiah, "and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair." The situation seemed to him to call for vigorous action.

2. **The Reforms of Ezra.** *Ezra* 7-10, *Nehemiah* 8-10. — The same reformation was undertaken by Ezra the scribe. The narrative is confused, and it is difficult to make out the order of events. Very curious is the fact that Nehemiah never mentions Ezra, and that the record of the work of Ezra, except in one doubtful place, makes no reference to the work of Nehemiah.

Ezra appeared upon the scene with a great company of returning exiles, provided with a letter from Artaxerxes which was written in such a manner, and granted such privileges, and promised the bearer such an amazing amount of money from the Persian government, that some scholars have transferred the whole matter, and Ezra himself with it, from the world of fact to the world of imagination.

Learning upon his arrival that the Jews had intermarried with the Gentiles, he sat down on the ground in a public place, tore his clothes and his hair as men did who were in great distress, and continued in silence until the time of the evening sacrifice, surrounded by crowds of astonished and troubled people. Then he fell upon his knees, and confessed to God the sins of the people. And the people joined their tears with his. Thereupon a proclamation was made calling a general assembly on the third day. The day came, and the people stood in the street trembling, in a heavy rain. "You must put away your foreign wives," cried Ezra. And the people answered with a loud voice, "As thou hast said, so must we do." But the matter could not be settled by shouting. Divorce courts were opened in Jerusalem and in the towns about, and cases were heard for the space of two months.

Thus by the strong hand of Nehemiah, or by the courts of Ezra, or by both together, the separation was completed. Families were broken up; women and children were turned out of doors. The little book of Ruth may serve to show that there were some who disapproved, for it tells how David himself was descended from the marriage of a man of Bethlehem with a woman of Moab. But the distinction was made which to this day preserves the separate existence of the Jewish people.

This, however, was only a part of the mission of Ezra. The title of scribe which is given to him suggests the office of one whose business is to record, copy and compile the writings of the past. It was a natural and necessary occupation of the days of the exile, to preserve the history and institutions of the people. Ezra brought with him the results of those long labors.

On a day in October, standing on a high pulpit of wood, in the street before the water gate, he opened the Book of the Law. And as he opened it all the people stood up, and Ezra blessed God, and all the people answered "Amen, Amen," and the book was read aloud. "They read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the meaning." This was done day by day for a whole week. Finding in the book that the Lord desired them to keep a feast that month, they proceeded to do it, going out into the neighboring hills and woods and fetching branches of olive, and pine, and myrtle, and palm, and making booths or tents for themselves in the streets, and in the gardens, and on the flat roofs of houses: a festivity which had not been observed since the days of Joshua.

And they made a covenant and signed it, promising to keep the law of the Lord.

The Jews had carried with them into exile two codes of ancient laws. One was the Code of Exodus, called the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20-23, 34); the other was the Code of Deuteronomy, called the Book of Instruction (Deuteronomy 5-11; 12-26; 28). Along with these laws went two collections of materials of history, one made in the kingdom of Judah, the other in the kingdom of Israel.

The Jews seem to have brought out of exile, from Babylon to Jerusalem, a third body of law, and a third collection of materials of history. The law was the Code of Leviticus (Exodus 25-40, Leviticus, Numbers), the heart of which (Leviticus 17-26) is called the Code of Holiness. The history was an account of the origin of religious institutions, especially such as were connected with the priesthood and ritual of the temple, beginning with the consecration of the Sabbath (Genesis 1-2:4). It was probably some part of the Code of Leviticus which was read from the pulpit of Ezra.

Afterwards the history which was made by combining the collections of Israel with the collections of Judah was united with the history which was collected in Babylon. Thus the Babylon history appears in the account of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis, and the Judah-Israel history in the other account in the second chapter. The codes of laws were inserted in the history, and the result was the five books from Genesis to Deuteronomy, called the Pentateuch; and the book of Joshua, making six.

3. **After Ezra and Nehemiah.** *Jonah, Esther, Daniel.* — Old Testament history ends with the last words of the book of Nehemiah: "Remember me, O my God, for good." But other books give us glimpses of the people in later days.

The scenes of Jonah and of Esther are laid in the lands beyond the Euphrates. The mission of Jonah is to the Nineveh with whose fall the Assyrians had ceased to be a power in Asia. Esther is queen in the court of the Xerxes who fought at Thermopylæ and Salamis. The value of the books, however, is moral rather than historical. They

reveal two quite different conceptions of the right relation of the Jews to the Gentiles. Taking the distinction which separated the Chosen People from their neighbors, the question which is under discussion concerns the duty of the Jews under such conditions.

The hero of the book of Jonah and the heroine of the book of Esther agree in holding that the Jews should have no dealings with the Gentiles, except to hate them. Jonah at first refuses to go to Nineveh, and then, being compelled, goes reluctantly, not because he is afraid that the Ninevites will do him harm, but because he is afraid that he may do the Ninevites good. And when his fears are realized, and they are converted and escape the doom which he denounced upon them, he is angry with the merciful God. The story is a gentle satire upon the Jews who have no sense of mission.

As for Esther, when the plot against her people has been foiled, and the pagan Persians are meeting the punishment which they devised against the Jews, "the king said to Esther the queen, 'The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what is thy desire further?' Then said Esther, 'If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow according to this day's decree [let them kill five hundred more] and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows.'" It is a revelation of the hatred which had been produced in the Jewish heart by several centuries of pagan oppression.

In the book of Daniel the scene is the court of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, but the writer's purpose in the retelling of these old tales of faith and courage is to make a contribution not to the annals of history, but to the

confidence and patience of his countrymen who, long after, are suffering under the like afflictions. Out of dens of lions, out of burning fiery furnaces, shall the Lord deliver His people.

The prophet beholds four great beasts coming from the sea (Daniel 7): the four powers of the world, the Chaldeans, and the Medes, and the Persians, and then the Greeks. The fourth beast is dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; such was Alexander the Great. His ten horns are ten generals, Seleucids in Syria and Ptolemies in Egypt, among whom his domains were divided. And a little horn appears, speaking great words, making war against the saints; such was Antiochus Epiphanes, who about the year 170 was trying to destroy the religion of the Jews. He tore down the altar of the Lord, and in its place erected one to the Greek god Zeus. On this altar, the "abomination of desolation," he sacrificed the flesh of swine. He endeavored to poison the Jewish religion at its source.

In the face of this tremendous calamity, the writer of the book of Daniel came to the aid of faith. The horn made war against the saints and prevailed against them. But the Ancient of days did sit, whose throne was like the fiery flame, and the wheels of his throne as burning fire. The judgment was set and the books were opened, and the beast was slain.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall

not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Thus in the midst of the fresh persecution shone the ancient vision of the Golden Age. Still, the kingdom of heaven seemed at hand. "Blessed is he that waiteth." The latest book of the Old Testament closes with these brave words (Daniel 12:12, 13): "Blessed is he that waiteth. Thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

TABLES OF DATES

I. THE HEBREWS AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

1. Before 1000 B.C.

- 2000** Egyptians by the Nile have founded Memphis and Thebes
to and built the pyramids.
- 1500** Sumerians by the Tigris and Euphrates are writing in
cuneiform.
Semites from Arabia are settling Babylonia and Assyria.
Hammurabi builds Babylon and garrisons Assyria
(some say 2250). Other Semites turning west are
settling Canaan (Canaanites and Amorites). If
Amraphel (Genesis 14: 1) is Hammurabi, this is the
period of Abraham.
- 1500** Hindus are descending into India (some say 1600), singing
to the Vedic hymns, sacred in Brahmanism.
- 1400** Hyksos, "Shepherd Kings," have invaded and ruled Egypt,
and after their expulsion, Thothmes III (about 1500) is
extending sway of Egypt over Canaan to Euphrates.
- 1400** Amenhotep IV (about 1400) is receiving letters at Tel
to el-Amarna from Jerusalem and other cities of Canaan
- 1300** in peril of "Habiri" (perhaps Moabites, Ammonites,
Edomites).
- 1300** Shalmaneser I builds Nineveh early in this century;
to Babylon becomes tributary.
- 1200** Semites from Arabia found Damascus.
Achæans are descending into Greece, and building Athens.
Rameses II builds Pithom by Hebrew labor. Merenptah,
his son, describing campaign in Caanan, mentions
"Israel" (1260), perhaps indicating that not all the
Israelites went to Egypt with Jacob.

- 1200** Rameses III repels northern raiders who settle along to coast of Canaan (Philistines).
- 1100** Trojan War (1194-1184).
Moses and the Exodus; Joshua and the Conquest of Canaan (1150).
In northern Canaan, Tiglath-pileser I (1150-1100) is carrying Assyrian armies to Mediterranean.
- 1100** The Heroic Age of the Hebrews: the "Judges."
to
1000

2. From Saul (1000) to Alexander the Great (332)

- 1000** Hebrew monarchy begins with Saul, followed by David to and Solomon; but the kingdom is divided (937).
- 900** Greek minstrels begin to sing the stories of the Iliad.
David takes Jerusalem.
Shishak of Egypt invades Canaan (932).
- 900** Assyrians invade Canaan under Shalmaneser II, who meets to Ahab at battle of Karkar (854) and receives tribute
800 from Jehu (842).
Elijah (875), Elisha (850).
The Odyssey is being composed.
- 800** Greek history begins with the First Olympiad (776).
to Roman history begins with founding of Rome (753).
- 700** Assyria the world power invades Palestine under Tiglath-pileser II, who takes Damascus (732), Sargon, who destroys Samaria (722), and Sennacherib, who besieges Jerusalem (701).
Amos (750), Hosea (740), Micah, Isaiah (737-701).
Zarathustra (Zoroaster) begins the Avesta, sacred book of the Persians.
- 700** In first half of century, Assyria under Ashurbanipal to takes Thebes and conquers Egypt (660).
- 600** In second half (626) Scythians terrorize the nations, impelling prophecies of Zephaniah and Jeremiah.
Draco reforms Athenian law, Thales begins Greek philosophy.
At end of century, Pharaoh Necho defeats Josiah (608),

612

Nebuchadnezzar (606) destroys Nineveh, and defeats Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish (605).

Babylonia is the world power.

600 Babylonians (Chaldeans) invade Judah (597). Ezekiel is to among those carried captive to Babylon.

500 Again they invade (586) and Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem.

Persians under Cyrus take Babylon (538). Persia is the world power. Persians under Cambyses conquer Egypt. The temple is rebuilt at Jerusalem (520-516).

Gotama Buddha is beginning Buddhism; Confucius is beginning Confucianism.

500 Greeks repel Persian invasion of Europe. Marathon (490), to Thermopylæ, Salamis (480).

400 Æschylus (525-456), Sophocles (496-406), Euripides (480-406), Age of Pericles (461-431), Pantheon built (438), Socrates (469-399), Plato (427-347).

The walls are rebuilt at Jerusalem (445).

400 Under Alexander, Greece is the world power. Alexander to conquers Syria and Palestine (332).

300

II. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

JUDAH

Rehoboam 937

Abijam 920-917

Asa 917-876

Jehoshaphat 876-851

Jehoram 851-843

Ahaziah 843-842

Athaliah 842-836

Jehoash 836-796

ISRAEL

Jeroboam 937-915

Nadab 915-913

Baasha 913-889

Elah 889, Zimri 887

Omri 887-875

Ahab 875-853

Ahaziah 853-852

Jehoram 852-842

Jehu 842-814

Jehoahaz 814-797

Amaziah 796-782	Jehoash 797-781
Uzziah 782-735	Jeroboam II 781-740
Jotham <i>regent</i> to 735	Zechariah, Shallum
	Menahem 738
	Pekahiah 735
Ahaz 735-715	Pekah 735-734
	Hoshea 734-722

III. HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Materials of history (Genesis to Ruth).
 - (1) Before Deuteronomy (621).
 - 850 collection of materials in Judah (J).
 - 750 collection of materials in Israel (E).
 - 650 collections combined (JE).
 - (2) After Deuteronomy.
 - Code of Deuteronomy added (D).
 - Code of Leviticus ("Holiness") added perhaps in exile, 550 (H).
 - Priestly narrative, history of institutions, added perhaps after exile, 350 (P).
2. National history of Israel and Judah (Samuel, Kings).
 - From beginning of monarchy with Saul (1000) to fall of Jerusalem (586). Court chronicles and contemporary narratives edited.
3. Ecclesiastical history of Judah (Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah).
 - To the reëstablishment of the Jewish people after the Exile; from priestly point of view; perhaps 250.

IV. THE PROPHETS

1. In the eighth century (second half).
 - Amos: doom of Israel, divine justice.
 - Hosea: doom of Israel, divine love.
 - Micah: peasant, Judah in peril of Assyria.
 - Isaiah: courtier, Judah in peril of Syria and Assyria (chapters 40-66 are of the sixth century).

2. In the seventh century (second half).
 - Zephaniah: in peril of Scythians.
 - Nahum: before fall of Nineveh.
 - Habakkuk: after fall of Nineveh.

3. In the sixth century.
 - Jeremiah: destruction of Jerusalem.
 - Obadiah: after destruction of Jerusalem (Edom).
 - Ezekiel: in exile in Babylon.

 - Haggai: rebuilding of temple.
 - Zechariah: rebuilding of temple.
 - Malachi: neglect of temple worship.

4. Later books.
 - Joel: undated, plague of locusts.
 - Jonah: undated, mission to Nineveh.
 - Daniel: apocalypse, Greek persecution; about 170.

V. OTHER OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

- Lamentations: five poems on destruction of Jerusalem.
- Psalms: collection of religious lyrics, beginning in time of David, perhaps completed about 100 B.C.
- Proverbs: collection of moral counsels, beginning in time of Solomon, completed before 250.
- Job: the wise man in adversity; after the Exile.
- Ecclesiastes: the wise man in prosperity; about 200.
- Esther: a story of the Persian period.
- Song of Solomon: a dramatic poem of the Greek period.

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