

Old Testament History

FOR SCHOOLS

BY

THE REV. T. H. STOKOE, D.D.

*Late Head Master of King's College School, London, and late Preacher
to the Hon. Society of Gray's Inn*

PART II

FROM THE SETTLEMENT
TO THE DISRUPTION OF THE KINGDOM

WITH MAPS

OXFORD: AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY
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STOKOE

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INTRODUCTION



THE title of this little work has been altered, since the first issue of Part I, from *Old Testament History for Junior Classes* to *Old Testament History for Schools*. This change has been made in deference to assurances given me, that it may be useful for higher classes, as well as for those originally contemplated. It has already been adopted by some schools, as a book for the upper and middle as well as the lower forms.

I have, therefore, not felt it necessary to study so carefully throughout these later 'Parts' simplicity either of subject-matter or of language; and have introduced into those notes, which are designed to be used or omitted at discretion, more of such references to 'classical' or other literature, as may supply helpful and interesting illustrations. According to the plan recommended (see Part I, p. vii), those who have begun to use the book in 'Junior Classes' will be one or two years older, when they take up Part II and Part III respectively.

I have thought it best to take the selections and

abstracts for the period of the Monarchy from the Books of Samuel and Kings only; adding references, where necessary, to the parallel accounts in the Books of Chronicles; and giving at the end of Part II a 'Supplemental Note' on the special design and character of the latter Books. Supplemental notes on the Book of Psalms, and on the other 'Poetical Books,' are also added.

I wish to express my best thanks to the Regius Professor of Divinity, Dr. Ince, who has been good enough to revise Part II, as the late Archdeacon Palmer so kindly revised Part I. Also to Mr. Courtier, who has again given me much valuable help with the geographical portions of the book.

Suitable maps and a full Index are given, as in the case of Part I.

(References to the pages of Part I are to the second edition. They are available for the first edition by subtracting 4 from the number given in each case: e. g., for Part I, p. 100, see Part I, p: 96.)

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OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

1. INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

ON the death of Joshua, there is no one to succeed him in the leadership of the whole people.

Partly as a consequence of this, and partly from the unsettled state of the country, in which the conquered inhabitants are still struggling for independence, the period which follows is one of turbulence and disorder. Attacks are made on the Israelites, first in one quarter, and then in another; and a leader is raised up from time to time, usually from the people of the threatened district, to resist these invasions.

These deliverers are called *Shóphetim*, or 'judges'; the word being the same as that afterwards used for the chief officers (*Súffetes*) of the Carthaginians. But their duties are those of generals, rather than of judges; and their appearance in each emergency reminds us of the extraordinary office of dictator among the Romans^a. As soon as the deliverance is effected, their rule, which does not generally extend further than the disturbed district, is over. Six of these judges are briefly mentioned; Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. Of the exploits of the others a fuller account is given. These are Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson^b.

^a In Neh. ix. 27 they are described as 'saviours,' raised up, in answer to the prayers of the people, in times of trouble, to 'save them out of the hand of their enemies.' So Othniel is called, in Judges iii. 9, a 'deliverer' or 'saviour' (R. V.).

^b Abimelech, who usurped the power at Shechem after Gideon's death, is called a 'king' (Judges ix. 6, 16). He was hardly a judge in the same sense as the others named.

Eli, who was both priest and judge (1 Sam. i. 9; iv. 18), and Samuel, who was prophet and judge (1 Sam. iii. 20; vii. 15), belong to a later period. In 1 Sam. viii. 1, 2, Samuel is said to have made his sons, Joel and Abiah, 'judges.'

The period is thus a time of anarchy and lawlessness. We are told that 'there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes' (Judges xvii. 6; xxi. 25)^c. This state of things is illustrated by two stories; which, though placed at the end of the book, clearly belong to the beginning of the period.

The first is the story of Micah and the Danites. The latter, pressed for room, migrate northwards to Leshem (Joshua xix. 47) or Laish (Judges xviii. 7). Spies, sent before to find a new settlement, have reported that a man of Mount Ephraim, called Micah, has a graven and a molten image: also an ephod or priestly dress, and a Levite to minister for him. The idol had been set up out of money which Micah had stolen from, and then restored, to his mother. Six hundred Danites carry off the sacred furniture, and persuade the Levite to go with them, and thus found their sanctuary at Dan.

This story shows both the spread of false worship, and the lawless spirit of the age.

The other narrative is commonly known as the war of the Benjamites, or the Tribal War. Its cause is an outrage by the inhabitants of Gibeah on the concubine of a roving Levite. The bones of the murdered woman are sent round to all parts of Israel as a summons to a war of vengeance. There assemble at Mizpeh 400,000 warriors, 'knit together as one man.' They are twice defeated by the Benjamites, whose force is only 26,000, besides 700 men of Gibeah. Then Phinehas inquires of the Lord, and is told that a third attack will be successful. The Benjamites are surprised by an ambuscade, and put to the sword. Six hundred escape: and, that a tribe may not be lost from Israel, 400 virgins are given to these, saved from the destruction of Jabesh-gilead, which has been sacked for not having helped in the war. To

^c The first part of this statement is also found in Judges xviii. 1; xix. 1.

supply wives for the remainder, the women of Shiloh are carried off by the Benjamites, while they are dancing in the vineyards at a festival.

The whole of this story shows the utter lawlessness which prevails. It is, moreover, the first instance of a civil war among the Israelites.

2. HISTORY TO THE TIME OF DEBORAH
AND BARAK.

JUDGES i—iv.

The Book of Judges opens with an account of certain conquests by tribes or individuals. Two of these, the capture of Hebron by Caleb, and of Debir by Othniel, have been already noticed (Part I, p. 234).

Judah and Simeon attack Bezek, and kill the cruel tyrant, Adoni-bezek¹. They also smite and set fire to Jerusalem: destroy Zephath, and capture Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron². 'The house of Joseph' smite Luz, or Beth-el.

Several places are mentioned as still retained by the old inhabitants³. An angel is sent to reproach the people with their disobedience in making a league with these idolaters, and the place is called from their sorrow 'Bochim,' or 'the weepers.' Punishments are also denounced against them for intermarrying with the native tribes and worshipping their gods.

The first important attack comes from the distant country of Mesopotamia. Chushan-rishathaim⁴, its king, invades Palestine, and 'the children of Israel serve him' for eight years. The south being the portion thus oppressed, a deliverer is raised up from Judah in Othniel, the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb, who is thus the first of the judges. After this 'the land of Judah has rest forty years.'

The next attack comes from the neighbouring tribes of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites, under Eglon, king of Moab. They take 'the city of palm-trees,' Jericho, and oppress the surrounding country for eighteen years. Ehud, a Benjamite, delivers them; not by open warfare, like Othniel, but by assassination. Obtaining a private interview with Eglon, he stabs him, and then escaping summons his countrymen to Mount Ephraim. They seize the fords of

2. HISTORY TO THE TIME OF DEBORAH
AND BARAK.

JUDGES i—iv.

¹ Adoni-bezek is a title, meaning 'lord of Bezek.' Cp. Adonizedec in Joshua x. 1.

This Bezek seems to have been in Judah (ver. 3), and so a different place from that at which Saul numbered his troops before attacking the Ammonites (1 Sam. xi. 8).

² These, however, were recovered by the Philistines. They were three of the great Philistine strongholds.

³ The most important of these are given in the supplemental note on the Settlement (Part I, p. 248).

⁴ Chushan-rishathaim means 'Chushan of the double wrong,' that is, 'very wicked'; or, as some explain it, 'of the double victory,' that is, 'a mighty conqueror'; or possibly he was so called after some city.

Habakkuk (iii. 7) speaks of seeing 'the tents of Cushan in affliction.' We learn from Gen. x. 8-12 that this district was the kingdom of Nimrod, the son of Cush.

This invasion may recall that under Chedorlaomer, in the time of Abraham (Gen. xiv). It is the only other invasion from the far east before the decline of the monarchy.

⁵ For this seizing of the fords to intercept fugitives, we may compare the plans of Gideon (Judges vii. 24), and of Jephthah (Judges xii. 5).

⁶ This need not mean that he slew them single-handed, as the performances of the whole force are often spoken of as the work of the leader. So in 1 Sam. xviii. 7 Saul is described as having 'slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.' Shamgar may have led a force of peasants armed with ox-goads. This was a formidable weapon, about 8 feet long, with an iron spike. 'Goads' are mentioned among the weapons of the Israelites in

Jordan⁵, and there slay 10,000 of the panic-stricken Moabites. This part of the land now 'has rest' eighty years.

A third deliverance is mentioned under Shamgar, who is described as slaying 600 Philistines with an ox-goad⁶.

Then comes the great struggle against Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in the far north at Hazor⁷, who has 'mightily oppressed' the people for twenty years.

'Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time⁸.' She orders a warrior, called Barak, to meet her with 10,000 men at Mount Tabor. He will only consent on condition of her accompanying him. For this want of faith he is told the journey shall not be 'for his honour'; as Sisera, the general of Jabin's troops, shall be slain by a woman.

Barak summons Zebulon and Naphtali. We learn from ch. v. that men from other tribes join them. In the battle which follows, 'the Lord discomfits Sisera⁹,' whose forces are pursued to a place called Harósheth, and utterly destroyed. He himself, fleeing on foot, takes refuge in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite¹⁰. She receives him hospitably; but, while he is asleep, treacherously drives a nail or tent-peg through his temples, and kills him. So Jabin, king of Canaan, is subdued, and 'the land has rest forty years.'

(Other particulars of this deliverance are given in the notes on the poem, which is the next selected passage.)

1 Sam. xiii. 21. This is the implement referred to in the story of St. Paul's conversion, where it is used for the sting of conscience or conviction: 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks' (Acts ix. 5).

Shamgar thus anticipates the work of Samson in the same district. The distress and terror in his days are referred to in the song of Deborah and Barak (Judges v. 6).

⁷ Hazor was a city of Naphtali, near Lake Merom, where Joshua had subdued the northern chieftains, who were headed by the Jabin of that day (Joshua xi). But they seem now to have recovered from this defeat. Jabin has '900 chariots of iron.'

⁸ Deborah herself lived in Mount Ephraim, far south of the oppressed district. But Barak lived at Kedesh-naphtali, on the waters of Merom. His name, which means 'lightning,' is the same as the Carthaginian Barca, the family name of Hamilcar, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, &c.

⁹ It was fought on the plain of Esdraelon, the great battle-field of Jewish history.

¹⁰ These Kenites, a branch of the Midianites, the race with which Moses was connected by his marriage, had migrated from the south to the far north, and were on friendly terms with the Canaanites.

I. DEBORAH AND BARAK.

JUDGES V.

V. 1. Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

2. Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

3. Hear, O ye kings ; give ear, O ye princes ; I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD ; I will sing *praise* to the LORD God of Israel.

4. LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

5. The mountains melted from before the LORD, *even* that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

6. In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.

7. *The inhabitants of* the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.

8. They chose new gods ; then *was* war in the gates ; was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel ?

9. My heart *is* toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD.

10. Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

11. *They that are delivered* from the noise of archers

I. DEBORAH AND BARAK.

JUDGES V.

V. 2-5. Deborah now chants a song of victory, Barak probably responding ^a. It is one of the grandest of Hebrew poems, and throws much light on the whole of this period. The prophetess begins by expressing her thankfulness for the loyalty of the people who 'willingly offered themselves'; and recalls, as a parallel to the Divine help just rendered, the victorious entrance of the Israelites into Palestine.

6-9. It would seem that the oppression in the south-west, which Shamgar relieved, was at the same time as this. Some have supposed that Jael here is the same as Jair (Judges x. 3), or that this is the name of an unknown judge. But it is quite natural that the time should be marked by the name of the great heroine.

These verses give a striking picture of terror and desolation. The people dare not show themselves on the high-roads, and slink along by-lanes. Villages are deserted ^b; their inhabitants, who have chosen idols to worship, are driven from the very gates. Their weapons are taken from the soldiers, or at any rate they are afraid to wear them. The prophetess is all the more grateful to those who have volunteered to lead the troops in the struggle for freedom.

10. She appeals to the nobles, who 'ride on white (or dappled) asses,' and sit on 'rich carpets' (R. V.) or divans; and to the common people, who travel on foot, to join in the song of thanksgiving.

11. The meaning of this verse is very doubtful. Probably it tells of the end of struggles which took place by the wells

^a This singing in turns is called 'antiphonal,' of which our word 'anthem' is really a contraction. The parallel, however, now is rather the chanting of the Psalms and Canticles. We may compare the song so sung by Moses and Miriam, after the passage of the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 1-21).

^b Some, however, translate this, 'the rulers' or judges 'ceased' (R. V.). In the next verse some render the word translated 'gods' by 'judges.'

in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, *even* the righteous acts *toward the inhabitants* of his villages in Israel : then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

12. Awake, awake, Deborah : awake, awake, utter a song : arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.

13. Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people : the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.

14. Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them against Amalek ; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people ; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.

15. And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah ; even Issachar, and also Barak : he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart.

16. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks ? For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings of heart.

17. Gilead abode beyond Jordan : and why did Dan remain in ships ? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.

18. Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people *that* jeopardated their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.

19. The kings came *and* fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo ; they took no gain of money.

or watering-places; and the return of the people to their 'gates' or homes, singing the praises of God.

12. 'Lead captivity captive' means 'lead the vanquished captive.' A similar expression is used in Ps. lxxviii. 18, and applied by St. Paul to our Lord's Ascension; 'When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men' (Eph. iv. 8).

13. This should probably be: 'There came down a remnant of the nobles; the people of the Lord came down for me against the mighty'; meaning that only some of the tribes took part in the war.

14-18. A list follows of those who volunteered, and of those who refused. Ephraim, now 'rooted' or firmly settled among the Amalekites (ch. xii. 15), with the Benjamites mingled in their ranks, and chiefs of western Manasseh^c, and Zebulun and Issachar, came down to the battle.

The Reubenites, after 'great searchings of heart' or debates, remained at home^d; as did their neighbours the Gileadites, who belonged partly to Gad and partly to eastern Manasseh. Dan too remained by the 'ships' or coast^e, and Asher abode in his 'breaches' or 'creeks.' Zebulun and Naphtali were conspicuous for their courage.

19-22. Josephus tells us that, as the battle commenced, there came a violent storm of rain and hail, driven by the wind full in the faces of the Canaanites^f. The river Kishon

^c Machir was the son of Manasseh (Gen. l. 23). 'The pen of the writer' should probably be 'the marshal's staff' (R. V.).

^d 'The divisions' (ver. 15) means the clans or the factions. But it should perhaps be translated, 'by the water-courses' (R. V.).

^e This would seem to imply that the war was before the Danites migrated. The seaport of Japho (Joshua xix. 46) or Joppa was in the portion assigned to them.

^f Dean Stanley compares with this the storm of rain which disabled the slingers and archers of the French army at the battle of Cressy (*Jewish Church*, i. 322).

It has also been compared with the battle in A.D. 655, in which Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, was overthrown by the Christians, under Oswy, king of Northumbria, on the banks of the Winwæd near Loidis (probably the Aire near Leeds). In this

20. They fought from heaven ; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

21. The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

22. Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

23. Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.

24. Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.

25. He asked water, *and* she gave *him* milk ; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.

26. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer ; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.

27. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down : at her feet he bowed, he fell : where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

28. The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot *so* long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

29. Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself,

30. Have they not sped? have they *not* divided

was swollen into a torrent, which 'swept them away.' The plain was flooded and became a marsh, in which the horses floundered, and the war chariots were useless. Thus 'the stars in their courses' (that is, the elements) 'fought against Sisera.' The Canaanitish princes 'took no gain,' or booty, but had to fight for their lives.

23. Meroz was somewhere in the heart of the oppressed district. Its inhabitants probably could have cut off the enemy's retreat.

24-27. The blessing on Jael is placed in immediate contrast with the curse on the people of Meroz. We must remember here, as in the case of the wars of extermination, the very different ideas of that age (see foot-note, Part I, p. 217). Sisera, like the people of the cities which were destroyed, was slain as the enemy of the Lord. Jael was the champion of good against evil, of true against false worship. And God, as it has been said, 'allows largely for ignorance, where He finds sincerity.'

'Smote off' should rather be 'smote *through* his head' (R. V.).

28-31. The poem ends with a touching picture of the mother of Sisera watching for his victorious return; and a prayer for the continued destruction of the enemies of God, and the triumph of His true servants. With the latter we may compare Ps. lxxviii. 1, 2: 'Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered . . . like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God &.'

battle, as Bede relates, the river, swollen by rains, 'swept away many more in their flight than the sword had destroyed while fighting' (Bright, *Early English Church History*, pp. 183, 184).

A still closer parallel is found in the story, told by Plutarch, of the victory gained by Timoleon, a Greek general of Syracuse, over the Carthaginian forces under Hasdrubal and Hamilcar (B.C. 399). The battle was fought on the banks of a river in Sicily. A terrible storm of lightning, rain, and hail threw the large force of the Carthaginians into disorder. The swollen river overflowed its banks, and numbers of them were slain or drowned.

§ The figure of the sun, which concludes the poem, is used again in Dan. xii. 3: 'And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.' Also by our Lord in Matt. xiii. 43: 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.'

the prey ; to every man a damsel *or* two ; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, *meet* for the necks of *them that take* the spoil ?

31. So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD : but *let* them that love him *be* as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

3. HISTORY TO THE DELIVERANCE UNDER GIDEON.

JUDGES vi. 1—vii. 18.

The next oppression is that of the Midianites¹, who are joined in their invasion by the Amalekites. It lasts for seven years. They overrun the country like ‘grasshoppers’ or locusts, and the people are obliged to hide in ‘dens and caves and strongholds².’

A prophet is sent to reproach the Israelites for their idolatry, which is the cause of all this suffering. Then an angel appears to the destined deliverer, Gideon, the son of Joash, living at Ophrah in western Manasseh. When told that he is to save Israel, he cannot understand that such a mission is for one so humble ; and asks for some ‘sign’ that he is chosen of God for this work. The sign is given by the angel touching with his rod the offering of flesh and cakes which Gideon has brought, on which they are consumed by fire. The strange visitor disappears, but a voice reassures Gideon, in his terror at having seen an angel of

This deliverance is referred to in Ps. lxxxiii. 9, 10, 'Do thou to them as unto the Madianites, unto Sisera, and unto Jabin at the brook of Kison; who perished at Endor, and became as the dung of the earth.'

Barak is also mentioned, with Gideon, Samson, and Jephthah, in Heb. xi. 32^h.

^h Samuel also speaks of God 'selling' the Israelites 'into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor' (1 Sam. xii. 9). He speaks of Jerubbaal (or Gideon), Bedan, Jephthah, and himself as great deliverers (1 Sam. xii. 11). As no Bedan is mentioned among the judges, it is commonly supposed that this means Barak (see pp. 104, 105).

3. HISTORY TO THE DELIVERANCE UNDER GIDEON.

JUDGES VI. 1—VII. 18.

¹ The Midianites proper dwelt to the south of Palestine. They were the descendants of Abraham by his last wife, Keturah (Gen. xxv. 2; 1 Chron. i. 32). The name probably includes here their allies on the east of Jordan.

² The limestone hills of Palestine are full of caves. We read again of the people thus hiding from the Philistines in the time of Saul (1 Sam. xiii. 6). David too hid in the cave of Adullam, where the distressed and discontented joined him (1 Sam. xxii. 1). In Heb. xi. 38 those heroes and martyrs, 'of whom the world was not worthy,' are described as hiding 'in dens and caves of the earth.'

the Lord face to face. He calls the place 'Jehovah-shalom,' or 'the Lord is peace.'

The same night he is ordered to throw down his father's altar of Baal, and cut down the grove³, and build an altar there to Jehovah. The men of the city, when they find this has been done, clamour for his death; but Joash defends him, and reproaches them as presumptuous in taking up the cause of Baal, who can plead for himself. From this Gideon receives the name of 'Jerubbaal,' or 'let Baal strive' or 'plead'⁴.

Gideon now summons the men of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. He once more asks for a sign, and the sign he asks is given. A fleece of wool, placed on the ground, is first wet, when all around is dry; and, when he begs for this further proof, is found to be dry, when all around is wet⁵.

He then sets out for the war, and encamps opposite the Midianites at the well of Harod, or 'trembling.' His force of 32,000 seems small beside the enemy's, who number 135,000 (Judges viii. 10). But he is told it must be reduced, that victory may be known to be from the Lord. He is ordered first to send away all that are scared by the sight of the host opposed to them, and this brings the number down to 10,000. Then the rash, who throw themselves on the ground to drink, are dismissed; while those only, 300 in number, who lap the water from their hands, are retained⁶. With this small force Gideon is told he shall vanquish the Midianites.

Another assurance of success is given him. He is bidden to go that night, with his armour-bearer Phurah, into the camp of the Midianites. There he hears one soldier tell another of a dream he has had, in which he saw a cake of barley bread roll into the Midianitish camp and throw down 'the tent'⁷ (R.V.). The other answers that this must be 'the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash,' into whose hand 'the Lord has delivered Midian.'

He now prepares for the attack, dividing his 300 into three companies to surround the camp, and arming every man with a trumpet, a pitcher, and a 'lamp,' or torch within the pitcher.

³ Or rather 'the Asherah' or wooden idol (R.V.). It was a symbol of the goddess of fertility.

⁴ He is spoken of by this name in 1 Sam. xii. 11. In 2 Sam. xi. 21 he is called Jerubbesheth; 'besheth' or 'bosheth,' which means 'shame,' being contemptuously used for Baal. So, for some reason, the names of Esh-baal and Merib-baal (1 Chron. viii. 33, 34) were changed to Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth.

⁵ Some have supposed that the fleece was a figure of Israel, wet with the dew of God's grace (see Ps. lxxii. 6), while the nations around are dry; dry, as forsaken of God, while other nations are strong and flourishing.

Others regard it as a figure of Gideon himself, 'cool amid heat of passion, dry amid damp of fear.'

⁶ Others have explained this as the selection of the most ardent warriors; the men who would not delay to kneel, but quenched their thirst hastily.

Josephus says the 300 chosen were the most faint-hearted, in order that the victory might not be ascribed to their prowess.

There is a Jewish tradition that the kneeling to drink marked those who 'bowed the knee to' or served Baal (1 Kings xix. 18).

⁷ This coarse common food was a figure of the impoverished and despised Israelites. Josephus describes it as a barley cake, 'such a one as could hardly be eaten by men.' Gideon and his band were probably called in contempt 'eaters of barley bread.' 'Nothing is more common for the poor of Canaan at this day than to complain that their oppressors have left them nothing but barley bread to eat' (Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 447).

'The tent' was no doubt the tent or head-quarters of the leaders.

II. GIDEON.

JUDGES vii. 19—viii. 21.

VII. 19. So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands.

20. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

21. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

22. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath.

23. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

24. And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.

25. And they took two princes of the Midianites,

II. GIDEON.

JUDGES vii. 19—viii. 21.

VII. 19-22. When Gideon gives the signal, the 300 horns are blown, the 300 pitchers crash, and 300 torches flare in the darkness. Then follows the terrible war-cry, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.' The Midianites, startled from sleep, suppose themselves to be surrounded by an enormous host, and are seized with panic^a. They suspect treachery among their own forces, and attack and slay one another. The survivors rush out in disorderly flight, some northwards towards Beth-shittah, or 'the house of acacias^b'; others to the fords of the Jordan.

With this panic in the camp we may compare the account in 2 Chron. xx. 22 of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, who had combined against Jehoshaphat, attacking each other.

In Ps. lxxxiii. 11-13 the slaughter of the Midianites is made the example of utter destruction; 'Make them and their princes like Oreb and Zeb, yea, make all their princes like

^a There have been many parallels to this successful stratagem. Tacitus (*Annals*, i. 68) tells how the Roman forces under Caecina drove back and routed the German troops of Arminius; letting them get within their fortifications, and then suddenly dashing upon them with loud shouts, and sound of horns and trumpets, and gleam of arms. He also relates how, when the Romans attacked Mona (or Anglesea), the women at first scared them by dashing about, like Furies, waving firebrands; though the invaders soon recovered, and carrying all before them, 'wrapped the foe in the flames of his own brand.'

The best known story of the kind is that of the trick by which Hannibal made his escape, when shut in by the Romans under Fabius Maximus; diverting their attention by having 2,000 oxen, with lighted faggots tied to their horns, driven about the surrounding hills (*Livy*, xxii. 16).

^b This was perhaps another name of Bethshan. Tabbath, not mentioned elsewhere, was in the Jordan valley, near Abelmeholah, Elisha's birthplace (1 Kings xix. 16).

Oreb and Zeeb ; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.

VIII. 1. And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites ? And they did chide with him sharply.

2. And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you ? *Is* not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer ?

3. God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb : and what was I able to do in comparison of you ? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

4. And Gideon came to Jordan, *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred men that *were* with him, faint, yet pursuing *them*.

5. And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me ; for they *be* faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

6. And the princes of Succoth said, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army ?

7. And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

8. And he went up thence to Penuef, and spake

as Zeba and Salmana.' Their flight is compared to 'the stubble' or chaff driven 'before the wind,' rolling 'like a wheel' over the plains.

Isaiah (ix. 4, 5) recalls this battle 'with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood'; and speaks of breaking 'the rod of the oppressor, as in the day of Midian.' He also (x. 26) compares the punishment of the Assyrians (referring probably to the invasion of Sennacherib) to 'the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb,' and to the destruction of the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

23-25. While Gideon's forces pursue the fugitives, messengers are sent to the Ephraimites, bidding them seize the fords and cut off their retreat. They plant themselves at the 'waters' (the streams or marshes), which the Midianites must cross to reach the Jordan valley. They are too late to cut off all, but intercept the main body, and capture and slay Oreb and Zeeb^c.

VIII. 1-3. The haughty spirit of the Ephraimites, which afterwards led to so much trouble, shows itself here. They are jealous of successes gained by any other tribe.

Gideon cannot risk a civil war, while the Midianites are not yet utterly crushed. He tells the Ephraimites their success in the slaughter at the fords and the capture of the princes, though it might seem like the mere 'gleaning,' was worth more than all he himself, a man of the family of Abi-ezer, had done^d.

^c The most important entrances into Canaan from the east were by the southern fords of Jordan. These 'waters' appear to have been further north, between Succoth (ch. vii. 5) and Abel-meholah (ch. vii. 22).

^d The figures of a nation are commonly taken from their occupations and habits. This was a natural expression to be used by those living in 'a land of vineyards.' For another proverb of the kind, we may compare Ezek. xviii. 2: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge' (cf. Jer. xxxi. 29). So Israel is described as 'a vine brought out of Egypt' (Ps. lxxx. 8), and as a vineyard, which brought forth not grapes, but wild grapes (Isa. v. 4; cp. Hosea x. 1). We have another instance of this figure in our Lord's allegory of the Vine (John xv).

unto them likewise : and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered *him*.

9. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

10. Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand *men*, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east : for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.

11. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host : for the host was secure.

12. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.

13. And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun *was up*,

14. And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him : and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threescore and seventeen men.

15. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men *that are* weary ?

16. And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.

17. And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

It is perhaps to this slaughter at the fords that Ps. lxxxiii. 11-13 and Isa. ix. 4, 5, refer.

Thus Gideon's 'soft answer turned away their wrath'^e (Prov. xv. 1).

4-7. Succoth, or 'the booths,' was on the east of the Jordan. It was so named by Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 17).

The princes of the town refuse Gideon's request, because his victory is not complete, so long as the chief leaders, Zebah and Zalmunna, are not captured, and may return to take vengeance on any who help him^f.

8-9. Penuel was where Jacob wrestled with the angel (see Part I, p. 83).

10-12. Gideon overtakes the fugitives in Karkor, perhaps the name of a district, in the far east. Here another engagement takes place. The remaining 15,000 are slain or dispersed, and the two leaders taken.

13-17. The men of Succoth are 'taught' (or thrashed) with thorns and briars, as Gideon had threatened. This probably means that they were put under harrows, covered with thorns, and so killed. David afterwards treated the Ammonites in this way (2 Sam. xii. 31).

Penuel was fortified again by Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 25).

18-21. We know nothing about the massacre of Gideon's brothers here referred to; whether it was before or in the course of this war. From the flattering answer of the Midianite princes we learn that Gideon, like Saul, was of commanding presence. Gideon was the natural avenger of his brothers' death. Wishing to train his son Jether to the duty of slaying his country's enemies, he calls upon him to

^e For a similar outbreak of the Ephraimites, and their very different treatment by Jephthah, see Judges xii. 1-6.

^f The account here of Gideon's troops, as 'faint yet pursuing,' describing 'the union of exhaustion and energy,' has given the words a place in the religious feelings of mankind (see Stanley, *J. C.* i. 344).

18. Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men *were they* whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou *art*, so *were* they; each one resembled the children of a king.

19. And he said, They *were* my brethren, *even* the sons of my mother: *as* the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.

20. And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, *and* slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he *was* yet a youth.

21. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, *so is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks.

III. ABIMELECH AND JOTHAM.

JUDGES IX. 1-21.

IX. 1. And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,

2. Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether *is* better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, *which are* threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I *am* your bone and your flesh.

be the executioner. Jether is afraid, and, at their own request, Gideon himself slays them.

The effect of this great deliverance, which was followed by 'quietness' for forty years, was that the people wished to make Gideon king^g. This he refused, telling them that Jehovah should reign over them.

But he fell into sin in other ways. With the ornaments taken from the Midianites, for which he had asked, he made himself a gorgeous ephod, and set up a sanctuary at Ophrah. He also took many wives, as Eastern kings commonly did.

He is mentioned in Heb. xi. 32, with Barak, Samson, and Jephthah.

^g This is the first indication of the desire for monarchy, which reappears in the time of Samuel, and leads to the setting up of Saul as king. The word here, however, is not the same as that afterwards used for king.

III. ABIMELECH AND JOTHAM.

JUDGES ix. 1-21.

IX. 1-3. Gideon has seventy sons, who, after his death, rule over this part of the country. One of them, Abimelech, persuades his brothers to urge the people of Shechem to make him king, on the ground that it is better to have one master than many^a.

The Shechemites agree, as Abimelech is their 'brother,' his mother having been a woman of Shechem. Probably these Ephraimites are jealous of the rise of Ophrah, Gideon's

^a So Darius is described as maintaining that monarchy is better than oligarchy, since in the latter each wishes to be first and to carry out his own plans, from which jealous rivalries and strife arise (Herodotus, iii. 82).

3. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words : and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech ; for they said, He *is* our brother.

4. And they gave him threescore and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him.

5. And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, *being* threescore and ten persons, upon one stone : notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left ; for he hid himself.

6. And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

7. And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

8. The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them ; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.

9. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees ?

10. And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

home, in Manasseh, which seems likely to throw their own city into the shade.

4-6. They give Abimelech a sum of money from the treasury in their temple of Baal, with which to hire a body of mercenaries. These are described as 'vain and light persons,' ready to follow any one for pay; what are sometimes called 'free-lances' (Ellicott). With this force Abimelech ungratefully attacks his brothers, who have helped him to power, and kills all the seventy, except the youngest, Jotham, who hides himself^b.'

The men of Shechem and the house of Millo now formally proclaim Abimelech king 'by the plain (or oak) of the pillar that was in Shechem^c.'

7. Shechem has generally been supposed to have been on the same site as the modern town of Nablous. This was too far from the top of Mount Gerizim for any one speaking there to be heard. Some suppose the name of the mountain to be here given to a rock nearer the town; others think that Shechem was really on the slope of Gerizim, where some ruins have been found. But sound travels a long way in the clear air of that country. It was here that the law was publicly recited, the people responding with blessings and cursings (Deut. xxvii, xxviii; Joshua viii).

^b We shall meet with several later instances of such ruthless massacre of all who might put in any claim to power. (See p. 149.)

^c It is doubtful whether 'the house of Millo' means the rampart or tower of Shechem, or a separate place. The 'pillar' was probably the great stone set up there by Joshua as a witness of the covenant (Joshua xxiv. 26). The title now given to Abimelech was a title of Canaanitish chieftains, hitherto unused in Israel.

11. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees ?

12. Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

13. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees ?

14. Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

15. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my shadow : and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

16. Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands ;

17. (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian :

18. And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because he *is* your brother ;)

19. If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely

8-15. This is the first fable found in the Bible^d. The olive with its fatness, the fig-tree with its sweetness, and the vine which 'cheereth,' represent Gideon and his noble sons, who have refused royalty. The bramble is the low and worthless Abimelech, who accepts it, and who goes on to threaten destruction to all who refuse to recognize him as king.

Jotham's words about 'fire coming out of the bramble' may refer to the idea that the bramble would catch fire, when the wind rubbed the branches together. These dry thorns ignited and burned quickly, and are used as a figure of that which rages furiously, or is rapidly destroyed (Ps. lviii. 8, cxviii. 12; 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7, &c.)^e.

16-20. Jotham now gives the meaning of his story. He rebukes the ungrateful people, who have slain the true sons of their deliverer, Gideon, and selfishly set up Abimelech, because he was their 'brother' or kinsman. Using the

^d Archbishop Trench thus distinguishes the various forms of figurative teaching:

1. The fable presents some truth in the form of a story, often containing, as here, what is unnatural.
2. The 'mythus' or myth blends together the truth taught, and the figure under which it is taught.
3. The proverb is always briefer and not always figurative.
4. The parable compares things earthly and spiritual, but keeps them distinct.
5. The allegory transfers to spiritual things the properties and relations of earthly things (Trench, *On Parables*, pp. 2-10).

The differences between 1 and 2 and between 4 and 5 are much the same as that between 'simile' and 'metaphor.'

^e 'In the fables of India and Greece, beasts and birds are supposed to speak and act; but in Palestine the vegetable world is introduced; and in no spot in the land was there such a luxuriance of verdure as at his (Jotham's) feet' (Geikie, *Bible by Modern Light*, ii. 569).

The only other fable in the Old Testament, the message of Jehoash to Amaziah, given in 2 Kings xiv. 9, is also taken from the vegetable world. Fables are very common among Eastern nations. But that which is perhaps the most famous of all fables comes to us as a Western one. It is the rebuke of Menenius Agrippa to the discontented Roman commons, given in the story of the belly and the members (Livy, ii. 32; Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act i, scene 1).

with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you :

20. But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.

21. And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

4. HISTORY TO THE DELIVERANCE BY JEPHTHAH.

JUDGES ix. 22—xi. 28.

The retribution foretold by Jotham soon comes upon Abimelech. After three years the people of Shechem rise against the usurper. Bands of freebooters first waylay him and his followers. Then an officer called Gaal urges the people, when excited with wine at a festival, to try to dethrone him¹. Zebul, the ruler of the city, sends information of this to Abimelech, who is living at the neighbouring town of Arumah; and coming at once with a large force, he defeats Gaal and his supporters, who are then driven by Zebul out of Shechem. On the next day Abimelech makes a cowardly attack upon the people, while they are working in the fields; and, after slaying all he encounters, destroys the city, and sows the site with salt². The men of 'the tower of Shechem' take refuge in the temple of Baal at Beerith. Abimelech, making every man in his force cut down and carry a bough from the mount of Zalmon³, piles

figure, which in his story he has put into the mouth of Abimelech, he foretells their mutual destruction.

21. Beer, which means 'a well' (cp. Beer-sheba, Gen. xxi. 31, &c.), was a name given to many places in or near Palestine. Probably this was the Beer, or Beeroth, in Benjamin, some nine miles north of Jerusalem, mentioned in Joshua ix. 17 as one of the cities of the Gibeonites.

It has been suggested that Jotham fled to the Beer spoken of in Num. xxi. 16, on the borders of Moab. But he could find a safe shelter nearer home.

He seems to have made his escape through the caverns in the mountain-side, before the people had recovered from their amazement.

4. HISTORY TO THE DELIVERANCE BY JEPHTHAH.

JUDGES ix. 22—xi. 28.

¹ The meaning of Gaal's words, 'Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him?' is very obscure. They may mean 'this man of Shechem'; 'this man, that is, who is one of ourselves.'

In a like spirit the people of Nazareth asked, 'Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, . . . and his sisters, are they not all with us?' so that our Lord declared, 'A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country' (Matt. xiii. 56, 57; Mark vi. 3, 4).

Others think 'Shechem' means king of Shechem. The LXX reads 'son of Shechem.' Abimelech was the son of a maidservant, a native of Shechem (ch. ix. 18).

The words which follow, 'Is not he the son of Jerubbaal? . . . Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem,' seem to be an appeal to serve the native Canaanitish princes, rather than the son of Gideon, the great opponent of the worship of Baal.

² This was to make the ground barren and desolate, like the

these round the temple, and sets them on fire. About a thousand refugees are thus destroyed.

Abimelech now marches on Thebez, a town some ten miles north-east of Shechem, the people of which have apparently aided the Shechemites in their rebellion. They take refuge on the top of their tower. Abimelech, intending to burn this too, rashly comes close up to it; and a woman throws down upon him from the roof a piece of a millstone, 'and all to brake (that is, and utterly breaks) his skull⁴.' Thus God 'renders' or punishes the wickedness of this cruel tyrant.

Two other judges are briefly mentioned: Tola, a man of Issachar, who judges twenty-three years; and Jair, a Gileadite, who judges twenty-two years. The latter has thirty sons, who 'rode on thirty ass colts⁵.' They have thirty cities in Gilead, called Havoth-jair⁶.

A fresh outburst of wholesale idolatry, including the worship of Baalim and of Ashtaroth, and of the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines⁷, is followed by a new invasion as a punishment. The Ammonites oppress the tribes east of Jordan for eighteen years, and even cross the river and attack Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. The people, appealing to God, are reminded of previous deliverances, and rebuked for their apostasy. They repent and 'put away strange gods.'

The Israelites now take up a position at Mizpeh, opposite the Ammonites, but are without a leader. The post is offered to Jephthah, an illegitimate son of Gilead, who has been driven from home by his brethren, and is now probably at the head of a band of freebooters in the north of the country. He accepts it on condition of being made 'head' of, or permanent ruler over Gilead. After some fruitless attempts at negotiations with the king of Ammon, he commences the war.

site of Sodom (Deut. xxix. 23). It symbolized pronouncing a curse upon the city. The site of the city of Milan was sown with salt after its capture by Frederick Barbarossa, duke of Swabia, in A. D. 1162 (Wordsworth).

³ The scene was thus like that when 'Birnam Wood came to Dunsinane' (*Macbeth*, Act v, scene 5). But there the object was to hide the number of the force; here it was simply to provide fuel for destroying the temple.

⁴ The fate of Abimelech is referred to by Joab in 2 Sam. xi. 21: 'Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez?' David is there pictured by Joab as rebuking with such words the rashness of those who should draw too near the Ammonite city of Rabbah, in the attack in which Uriah the Hittite was to be treacherously deserted.

Abimelech called on his armour-bearer to kill him, that it might not be said he was slain by a woman. So Saul urged his armour-bearer to kill him, that he might not be slain by 'the uncircumcised'; and, when this man refused to do so, fell on his own sword (1 Sam. xxxi. 4).

⁵ This was then a sign of wealth and power. There were few horses used in Palestine, till Solomon introduced them in large numbers (1 Kings iv. 26).

⁶ Havoth-jair means 'villages' or 'circuits of Jair.' We read in Num. xxxii. 41, and Deut. iii. 14, of towns in Gilead taken by a Jair, and called by the same name. Perhaps these were now recovered or renamed.

⁷ Baal and Ashtaroth were worshipped by the Zidonians. The chief god of the Syrians was Thammuz or Tammuz, the same as Adonis (Ezek. viii. 14). The chief god of the Moabites was Chemosh; of the Ammonites, Moloch or Milcom (1 Kings xi. 5-7); of the Philistines, Dagon (Judges xvi. 23, &c.).

Milton mentions all these gods in *Paradise Lost*, i. 391-466.

IV. JEPHTHAH.

JUDGES xi. 29—xii. 7.

XI. 29. Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over *unto* the children of Ammon.

30. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

31. Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

32. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands.

33. And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34. And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house,

IV. JEPHTHAH.

JUDGES xi. 29—xii. 7.

XI. 29. Similar phrases are used, to describe their having a Divine commission for their work, of Othniel (ch. iii. 10), Gideon (ch. vi. 34), and Samson (ch. xiii. 25).

‘Mizpeh of Gilead’ is the place so named of Jacob, when he made his treaty with Laban (Gen. xxxi. 47-49).

31. ‘Whatsoever cometh forth’ ought to be ‘whosoever.’ The practice of making such vows, and of thus offering human victims, was very common among the heathen nations in and around Palestine, especially among the Phoenicians. Such sacrifices were also made to Chemosh and Moloch; and Jephthah in his ignorance adopted the practice of those among whom he had lived^a. He had led a wild and lawless life, far away from the tabernacle at Shiloh, and probably knew little of higher teaching and worship. ‘The Spirit of the Lord,’ spoken of in ver. 29, was only to give him courage and strength for the war; not to enlighten him as one really ‘inspired.’

33. The Aroer here appears to be that described as ‘before Rabbah’ (Joshua xiii. 25). The latter city was the capital of the Ammonites (pp. 210, 211). Minnith, to which Jephthah pursued the enemy, was some ten miles south of Rabbah.

The other Aroer on the Arnon, much further south, was ‘the Beer-sheba (or southern frontier) of the East’ (G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.*, p. 559).

34. The coming ‘with timbrels and dances,’ in honour of Jephthah’s victory, may remind us of Miriam’s rejoicing after the passage of the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 20). So too the women came to meet Saul, after David had slain Goliath (1 Sam. xviii. 6).

35. Jephthah may well be ‘brought low,’ or crushed and troubled, to find that his rash vow will involve the sacrifice

^a See notes on Gen. xxii. 7 (Part I, p. 57).

and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his* only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.

35. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back.

36. And she said unto him, My father, *if* thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon.

37. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows.

38. And he said, Go. And he sent her away *for* two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.

39. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her *according* to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel,

40. *That* the daughters of Israel went yearly to

of his only child. But he has 'opened his mouth (or made a promise) unto the Lord,' and cannot 'go back' from his word^b.

36. The daughter is a noble instance of self-sacrifice. She does not care for her own fate, so long as the victory has been won. It has been beautifully said that the heroism of the father and daughter play across the fierce superstitions of the age, 'like a sunbeam on a stormy sea'^c.

37. She asks only for two months' reprieve, to bewail in the mountain solitudes her sad fate, as one destined to die unmarried and childless. Such fate was a cause of great sorrow to women in those days, especially among the Hebrews^d.

^b The Jews considered that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the fulfilment of a vow. It is said in Eccles. v. 4, 5, 'When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it. . . . Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.'

We find other instances of such resolve to carry out a curse or vow, whatever this may involve, in the account of Saul's determination to kill Jonathan for taking food, had not the people rescued him (1 Sam. xv.); and also in the story of Herod and the daughter of Herodias (Matt. xiv. 9, &c.).

^c Stanley, *J. C.* i. 357, who quotes from Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* the lines describing her loyalty:

'Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent;
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my father and country are free.'

Tennyson also speaks of her in his *Dream of Fair Women*, as feeling 'how beautiful a thing it was to die for God and for her sire!'

^d So Sophocles describes Antigone as mourning her premature death:

'Cut off from marriage bed and marriage song,
Untasting wife's true joy, or mother's bliss.'
(*Ant.* 917, 918, Plumptre's Transl.)

Two other explanations have been given of Jephthah's vow:

- (i.) That he did not really sacrifice his daughter, but simply dedicated her to the Lord by perpetual virginity.
- (ii.) That he so dedicated her, and *also* vowed a burnt offering.

But these are mere attempts to adapt the story to modern

lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

XII. 1. And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire.

2. And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands.

3. And when I saw that ye delivered *me* not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?

4. Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, *and* among the Manassites.

5. And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was *so*, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me

40. R. V. gives to 'celebrate' for to 'lament,' which is probably the true meaning.

XII. 1-3. This is another instance of the pride and jealousy of the Ephraimites, like that recorded in ch. viii. But the wild and fierce freebooter, Jephthah, treats them in a very different way from Gideon's gentle expostulation. He boldly charges them with having failed in their duty, in leaving him and his countrymen to encounter the formidable Ammonites at the risk of their lives; and then he attacks and defeats them.

4. This may mean that the Ephraimites taunted the Gileadites with being a mere race of runaways, who had taken refuge in the district between the portions of Ephraim and Eastern Manasseh; or with having fled from the Ammonites into the territories of these two tribes.

Others, however, suppose that the Gileadites used these words to the Ephraimites who escaped from the battle, whom they slew at the fords of Jordan.

6. Differences of pronunciation arise everywhere, after lapse of time, between those professing to speak the same language; especially when there is not much communication, as was the case with those living on opposite sides of the Jordan^e.

There were such differences afterwards between those in the north and south of Palestine. St. Peter was known to be a Galilean, because his 'speech bewrayed' him (Matt. xxvi. 73).

ideas, and nearly all writers are now agreed that this was really an instance of human sacrifice.

It is like the Greek story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon, told by Euripides; and there are other parallels to it.

^e We may compare the different dialects of Greek; the 'patois' in rural districts of France; and the varieties in different parts, especially the northern and western counties, of England, in some of which there is a difficulty about pronouncing the letters 'r' or 's,' &c.

go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art thou an Ephraimite?* If he said, *Nay;*

6. Then said they unto him, *Say now Shibboleth:* and he said *Sibboleth:* for he could not frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

7. And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of the cities of Gilead.*

5. HISTORY TO THE TIME OF SAMSON.

JUDGES xii. 8—xiii.

Three judges, who come after Jephthah, are briefly mentioned: Ibzan of Beth-lehem¹, who judges for seven years; Elon, a Zebulonite, for ten years; and Abdon, an Ephraimite, for eight years².

We have no account of further enterprises, till we come to the history of the oppression under the formidable Philistines or 'strangers'³. These have been briefly referred to in the story of Shamgar (ch. iii. 31), and again in the records of the interval between Abimelech and Jephthah (ch. x. 7-11). They are destined now to be the bitterest foes of the Israelites. They are the chief oppressors till the time of David, and are never completely subdued till the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 8).

The champion, Samson, comes, like most of the judges, from the district specially exposed to attack, the tribe of Dan. He is in some respects unlike the other heroes of the

Shibboleth means 'a flood' or 'a ford^f.' The 42,000 probably include those who fell in the battle itself.

^f It sometimes means an ear of corn.

This treatment of the Ephraimites—

'Adjudged to death

For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth'

(Milton, *Samson Agon.* 288'),

has been commonly used as a figure of the petty and bitter quarrels of religious parties. To 'pronounce their Shibboleth' means to agree in every particular to the doctrines and practices of this or that party.

This proverbial use of the story is, however, not quite correct. The fugitives were slain, not *because* they could not or would not pronounce 'sh,' but because they were discovered by this defect to be Ephraimites.

5. HISTORY TO THE TIME OF SAMSON.

JUDGES xii. 8—xiii.

¹ It is doubtful whether this was Beth-lehem in Judah, or Beth-lehem in Zebulun. The former is commonly called 'Beth-lehem-judah,' and afterwards Beth-lehem Ephratah (Micah v. 2).

² Abdon appears to have maintained, like Jair, royal dignity. His forty sons and thirty nephews or grandsons rode on 'ass colts.' The number, too, both of his and of Ibzan's children shows that they, like Eastern monarchs, had several wives.

³ They are called in LXX ἀλλόφυλοι, 'those of an alien race.' In Jer. xlvii. 4 they are described as 'the remnant of the country of Caphtor,' or Crete (see Part I, p. 53). Thence they probably migrated to Egypt, and spread northwards, settling on the shores of the Mediterranean. They are mentioned as having land in the south of Palestine in the time of Abraham (Gen. xxi. 32, 34).

age. He is not 'raised up,' like others, in answer to the prayers of the suffering people, when they repent of their sins and cry for help. And he opposes the enemy, not as the leader of an army of one or more tribes, but by his own strength and courage⁴. He never effects any lasting deliverance.

It is announced by an angel to the childless wife of a Danite, called Manoah, that she shall have a son, who must be 'separated unto the Lord' (Num. vi. 1) by the vow of a Nazarite. The chief requirements of this vow were that the man should 'drink no wine or strong drink,' and that 'no razor should come upon his head⁵.' In answer to Manoah's prayer, the angel reappears and repeats his instructions. He refuses to disclose his name, which is 'secret' (or rather 'wonderful'); and then, when Manoah offers a kid in sacrifice, he ascends up to heaven in the flame, like the angel who appeared to Gideon⁶ (ch. vi. 21).

The child is born, and is called Samson, which means 'the strong' or 'the sunny'; or, according to others, 'the destroyer.' As he grows up, 'the spirit of the Lord moves' him, rousing his indignation at the sufferings of his countrymen.

V. SAMSON.

JUDGES xiv.

XIV. 1. And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

2. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.

They had five cities in the lowlands, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza, which formed a confederacy (see Part I, p. 248). Their strength, like that of the Canaanites, lay 'in chariots and horses.'

⁴ The only possible parallel is that of Shamgar, who, however, perhaps led a band of men armed like himself.

⁵ This vow might either be binding for life, or, as in St. Paul's case, for a time (Acts xviii. 18). Other instances of Nazarites are Samuel (1 Sam. i. 11) and John the Baptist (Luke i. 15).

⁶ Milton (*Samson Agonistes*, 23-26) makes Samson thus describe the circumstances of his birth :

'O, wherefore was my birth from heaven foretold
Twice by an angel, who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burn'd.'

V. SAMSON.

JUDGES XIV.

XIV. 1, 2. Marriage was a sort of business transaction, in which a dower had to be paid by the parents of the bridegroom to those of the bride.

Timnath was on the border of Dan ^a.

^a It must be distinguished from Timnath in Judah (Gen. xxxviii. 12), Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim (Joshua xxiv. 30), and other places of the same name.

3. Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

4: But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5. Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

6. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

7. And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

8. And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

9. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

10. So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.

3. Intermarriage with the native tribes was forbidden by God (Deut. vii. 3; Joshua xxiii. 12, &c.). We have instances of the abhorrence felt for such marriages in Isaac and Rebekah's disgust at Esau's taking a wife 'of the daughters of Heth' (Gen. xxvii. 46, xxviii. 8), and in the indignation of Simeon and Levi against the people of Shechem (Gen. xxxiv).

4. God can make the folly and misconduct of men further His own wise and good counsels. There are other cases, in which that which is evil in itself is thus described as coming from the Lord; notably the folly of Rehoboam, which led to the destined disruption of the kingdom (1 Kings xii. 15; 2 Chron. x. 15).

It is doubtful whether the words which follow mean that the Lord 'sought an occasion,' or that Samson did. 'Occasion' means a ground or opportunity of hostility (2 Kings v. 7). The word used here in the LXX means 'vengeance' or 'retribution^b.'

6. Samson has been called 'the Jewish Hercules.' This is the first instance of his wonderful strength. We may compare with it the strength and courage of David, who slew both a lion and a bear (1 Sam. xvii. 36).

8. Some time was always allowed to pass between the betrothal and the marriage, or removal of the bride from her own to her future husband's home.

The word 'carcase' in this verse should rather be 'skeleton.' Bees are said to dislike anything that is rotten or putrid. But they would not dislike the dry skeleton. There is more than one story of bees swarming in a skull and filling it with honey^c.

^b Milton represents Manoah, Samson's father, as saying:

'I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son,
Rather approved them not; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou mightst
Find some occasion to infest our foes' (*S. A.* 420).

^c Some of the ancients believed that bees sprang from the bodies or blood of dead oxen. Virgil (*Georgics*, iv. 281-314 and

11. And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12. And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you : if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments :

13. But if ye cannot declare *it* me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

14. And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

15. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire : have ye called us to take that we have ? *is it* not *so* ?

16. And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not : thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told *it* me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee ?

17. And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted : and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him : and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

18. And the men of the city said unto him on the

10, 11. These marriage-feasts usually lasted, as on this occasion, for some days. It is doubtful whether the 'thirty companions' were brought by the Philistines simply as a mark of honour, or partly for safety. Such companions were commonly called 'the children of the bridechamber' (Matt. ix. 15); and one of them was chosen to be 'the friend of the bridegroom' (John iii. 29), or, as he is here called, in ver. 20, his special 'companion, whom he had used as his friend.'

12. Propounding riddles, or 'hard questions,' was a very common amusement at such entertainments. The power to solve these was looked upon as one of the surest proofs of wisdom. The Queen of Sheba, when she heard of Solomon's fame, came 'to prove him' with such 'hard questions' (pp. 290, 291).

The prize of the winner of the wager was to be 'thirty linen garments and thirty changes of raiment' (R. V.).

15-17. These Philistines complain that they have been invited to the marriage only to be plundered, and threaten to take vengeance on the bride, as a party to this design, if she does not solve the riddle for them. She 'presses' Samson so sore (R. V.), that at last on the seventh day he tells her the meaning.

18. Samson's indignant answer means that they could not have found out the riddle without the help of his wife. Such a figure was a suitable one to use to the Philistines, whose territory was a great corn-growing country.

19. Samson fulfils his bond, but in doing so wreaks his vengeance on the Philistines. His story is full of proofs of the wild, rough, cruel spirit of the age. Probably he surprised these men of Ashkelon at some festival, when they

528-558) relates how Aristaeus thus procured a swarm of bees.

Herodotus tells how the people of Amathus, a town in Cyprus, placed over their gateway the head of Onesilus, the leader of a revolt against the Persians, whom they had slain; and how the skull was occupied by a swarm of bees and filled with honeycomb (Herod. v. 114).

seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

19. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

20. But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

6. HISTORY OF SAMSON (*continued*).

JUDGES XV. I—XVI. 14.

After a time Samson returns to his wife, with a present of a kid, and finds that she has been given to his 'companion.' He refuses her father's proposal that he should receive her younger sister, and determines to take summary vengeance on her countrymen. Having caught 300 foxes or jackals, he fastens them 'tail to tail,' tying firebrands to them, and turns them loose among the standing corn of the Philistines¹. Great injury is done to the crops, and to the vineyards and olive-yards. The Philistines, on discovering the author of this outrage, burn Samson's wife and her father². Samson retaliates by attacking the Philistines, smiting them with great slaughter; and then retires for safety to a cleft or cave of the rock of Etam in Judah.

The people of Judah are afraid of the vengeance of the Philistines, and 3,000 of them come to Samson, to bind him and deliver him up. He consents to be bound with two new

were unarmed, and wearing their holiday dress or 'linen garments.'

Samson then retires in disgust to his father's house, though not intending, as we see from ch. xv. 1, to desert his wife altogether.

20. This taking his wife from Samson shows the treachery of these Philistines, and their secret dislike of him^d.

^d Samson meets cunning with cunning, violence with violence. Though he is mentioned as one of the heroes of the faith (Heb. xi. 32), there is much in his character and conduct which simply reflects the lawlessness of the age. It has been said that 'as Gideon is the highest pitch of greatness to which the period reaches, Jephthah and Samson are the lowest points to which it descends' (Stanley, *J. C.* i. 353).

6. HISTORY OF SAMSON (*continued*).

JUDGES XV. 1—XVI. 14.

¹ Ovid (*Fasti*, iv. 701, &c.) tells a story of a young countryman having wrapped a fox, that had robbed his poultry-yard, in straw and hay, which he set on fire; and of the fox escaping and doing great mischief among the corn-fields. This, he says, was the origin of the curious custom of turning foxes loose in the circus, with torches tied to their tails, at the Cerealia, or festival of Ceres.

² Different views are taken as to the motive of the Philistines in this. Some suppose it was to propitiate Samson, by punishing those who had treated him so badly. It seems more natural to understand by it that, in their fury against any one connected with Samson, they now carried out the threat which some of them had before used to his wife, in case she should not discover his riddle for them (ch. xiv. 15).

³ 'A thousand' is often used to mean simply a great number. So in Joshua xxiii. 10: 'One man of you shall chase a thousand'; and in 1 Sam. xviii. 7: 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.'

cords, but on approaching the Philistines he breaks loose, and seizing the first weapon he finds, the jawbone of an ass, he attacks them. They are panic-stricken at his appearance, and 'a thousand' are slain³. The place is called Ramath-lehi, which means either 'the hill of Lehi,' or 'the lifting of the jawbone.' Weary and thirsty after the struggle, he is refreshed by a spring of water, which bursts from the rock in answer to his prayer⁴.

We next find him in the Philistine town of Gaza, from which he escapes by carrying off the heavy gates of the city⁵. At last, after 'judging' for twenty years, he falls into the snares of a woman called Delilah⁶, to whom 'the lords of the Philistines' offer a very large bribe, to worm out of him the secret of his strength. He thrice deceives her, telling her first to bind him with seven 'green withs' or 'new bow-strings,' which he breaks as 'a thread of tow' before the fire; then to bind him with new ropes, which he again breaks like a thread; and lastly to weave his seven locks into her web. This she does while he is asleep, and fastens the loom with a pin. But on waking, he tears away both pin and web⁷.

VI. SAMSON (*continued*).

JUDGES XVI. 15-31.

XVI. 15. And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*.

16. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto death;

Milton describes this escape and slaughter as follows (*S. A.* 261, &c.) :—

‘Cords to me were threads
Touch’d with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarm’d, and with a trivial weapon fell’d
Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.’

⁴ ‘In the jaw’ should be ‘in Lehi’ (*R. V.*). Milton speaks of a fountain springing ‘from the dry ground’ (*S. A.* 582).

⁵ He is described as carrying them ‘to the top of the hill that is before Hebron.’ Some suppose this to mean to the commencement of the chain of hills, which extended to Hebron. Hebron itself was some thirty-eight miles distant; Milton describes it as ‘no journey of a sabbath-day’ (*S. A.* 149).

⁶ Delilah means ‘the delicate’; or, as others explain it, ‘the traitress.’ It is doubtful whether she was a Philistine or Hebrew woman.

⁷ Milton has more than once made use of this story in his prose works. In his *Arcopagitica* he speaks of the nation as ‘rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.’ In his *Reasons of Church Government* he compares the laws to Samson’s illustrious and ‘sunny locks, waving and curling about his god-like shoulders.’ But this description is hardly correct, as we are told here that all his long hair was woven or plaited into seven locks.

VI. SAMSON (*continued*).

JUDGES XVI. 15-31.

XVI. 15-17. Samson might have learned wisdom from the treachery of his former wife. But he weakly reveals the secret of his Nazarite vow.

19. Probably Samson had been drugged. ‘To afflict’ means rather ‘to humble’; but it is not clear how she did this.

20. His vow was broken, and so he had forfeited the Divine favour and protection. The Spirit of the Lord, which had given him courage and strength (*ch. xiv. 6, xv. 14*),

17. That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head ; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb : if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

18. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

19. And she made him sleep upon her knees ; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head ; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

20. And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

21. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass ; and he did grind in the prison house.

22. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

23. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered

was gone from him. So in 1 Sam. xvi. 14 we are told that 'the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.'

21. The blinding a man was a cruel punishment often inflicted. When Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, his eyes were put out, and he was carried off blinded to Babylon (2 Kings xxv. 7).

Grinding was the work of slaves. Isaiah, speaking of the humiliation of Babylon, tells the 'daughter of the Chaldeans' to 'take the millstones, and grind meal' (Isa. xlvii. 2). So Jeremiah describes the degradation of the Hebrew prisoners in grinding and carrying timber: 'They took the young men to grind, and the children fell under the wood' (Lam. v. 13)^a.

23. Dagon is a diminutive of Dag, which means 'a fish.' The idol was probably a figure with the upper part like a man, and the lower part like a fish. The fish was the emblem of life-giving power^b.

The chief temples of Dagon were at Gaza and at Ashdod (or Azotus). The idol at the latter place was broken in pieces, when the Philistines profaned the ark of God by

^a Milton makes Samson thus describe the contrast between his earlier victories and his fall:

'Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke' (*S. A.* 40-42).

The poet's own blindness made him sympathize deeply with the hero's fate, 'living a life half dead, a living death.' The lament which he represents Samson as uttering is very pathetic. It begins with the words:

'O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!' (*S. A.* 80-82).

^b A similar figure has been discovered at more than one place in Assyria. This figure is also called Dagon, but it is doubtful whether there was any connexion between this and the Phœnician or Philistine god. At Ascalon there is said to have been an idol, called Derceto, with the head of a woman and the body of a fish.

them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24. And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

25. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

26. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28. And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

29. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which

placing it in Dagon's temple (1 Sam. v. 4)^c. In 1 Chron. x. 10 we are told that the Philistines, when they had found the body of Saul, 'fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.' There were towns called Beth-dagon, or house of Dagon, in Judah (1 Joshua xv. 41), and in Asher (Joshua xix. 27).

We read in 2 Kings i. 2 of another Philistine god, 'Baalzebub, the god of Ekron,' of whom King Ahaziah sent to inquire whether he should 'recover of his disease.'

26, 27. 'The building was a spacious theatre
Half-round, on two main pillars vaulted high.'
(Milton, *S. A.* 1609.)

The Philistine nobles probably sat under the flat roof, on which the common people were crowded, while Samson was placed in a courtyard facing them. Samson, pretending to be weary, clasps the two central pillars, which are the main support of the building.

28. Samson prays for vengeance, which 'belongeth to God.' But this last wish is quite in keeping with his character and with the spirit of the age.

30. Samson's slaying 'at his death more than he slew in his life' has been made by some writers a figure of our Lord's sacrifice of Himself, by which He drew all men unto Him (John xii. 32). But Samson's was a work of death, Jesus Christ's of life; Samson effected no lasting deliverance, but Christ has delivered us for ever from the curse of the law.

Samson is mentioned among the heroes of the faith in Heb. xi. 32. 'Bedan,' named in 1 Sam. xii. 11 as one of the champions raised up by God, may stand for Samson, this name being said to mean a Danite (but see pp. 17, 105). Some suppose that the cunning of Samson and his successes against the Philistines were foretold by Jacob under

^c We read in 1 Macc. x. 84, that Jonathan, the brother of Judas Maccabaeus, 'set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire.'

it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

31. Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

VII. RUTH.

RUTH i.

I. 1. Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2. And the name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

3. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

the figure of the serpent, in his prophecy about the tribe of Dan (Gen. xlix. 16, 17).

31. The Philistines were too terror-stricken by the catastrophe to offer any resistance to the rescue of Samson's body^d.

^d This verse would seem to imply that Manoah was dead. Milton, however, represents him as still alive, and as thus describing his son's end:

' Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroically hath finished
A life heroic ' (S. A. 1713-1715).

But Milton seems to have ascribed to Samson a faith or repentance to which he had no claim. 'His Samson is rather Milton himself than the Jewish hero' (Ellicott). It is 'the record of an heroic soul, not baffled by temporary adversity, but totally defeated by an irreversible fate, and unflinchingly accepting the situation, in the firm conviction of the righteousness of the cause' (Pattison's *Milton*, p. 195).

VII. RUTH.

RUTH I.

I. 1. The story of Ruth belongs to the time of the Judges, but it has a short book to itself. From ch. iv. 7 it would seem to have been written some time afterwards. It is a great contrast to the stormy scenes recorded in the Book of Judges^a. Some suppose the famine to have been caused

^a The Book of Ruth is very valuable for the light which it throws on the domestic life and manners of the age. But there are other and higher reasons for the preservation of this interesting story, and its inclusion among the Books of the Bible.

One of these is the deep religious spirit which pervades the whole narrative, the more remarkable on account of the general lawlessness and frequent apostasies of the period. 'Despite centuries of oppression, division, and religious decay, it breathes a lofty spirit of loyalty to Jehovah, which appears at every turn'

4. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

5. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

6. Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

7. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9. The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each *of you* in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters:

by one of the hostile invasions. We read of such a famine at the time of the Midianite invasion in the days of Gideon (Judges vi. 3, 4).

2. Ephrath or Ephratah (ch. iv. 11) was the old name of Beth-lehem (Gen. xxxv. 19). The two names are combined in the well-known prophecy of Micah (v. 2). Beth-lehem means 'house of bread'; and Ephrath means 'fruitfulness'; names probably given from the rich cornfields there, which appear in this story.

3. Elimelech means 'God is my king.' El ('God') is found in many proper names, as Elijah, Elisha, &c. (see Part I, p. 73). So also is Melchi or Melech, meaning 'king,' as in Melchizedek, Abimelech, &c.

5. The names of the two sons, Mahlon or 'sickly,' and Chilion or 'pining,' seem to have foretold their early death.

6-10. Naomi, whose name means 'lovable,' has won the affection of her daughters-in-law. When, on hearing the famine is over, she resolves to return to her own land, they apparently wish to go there with her; though it may be that they only propose at first to escort her part of the way.

11-14. She tries to persuade them to go back, and holds

(Geikie, iii. 27). It anticipates much of the higher teaching of the Book of Psalms, and even of the Gospels.

But still more important is its connexion with the genealogy of our Lord, as shown in the concluding verses (ch. iv. 21, 22), from which we learn that Boaz was the ancestor of David. This is confirmed by the genealogy given by St. Matthew, where we are told, 'Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse' (Matt. i. 5).

So we find that among the ancestors of Jesus Christ there were two Gentile women: 'Rachab' or Rahab, the Canaanitess (Joshua ii. 1, &c.), and Ruth, the Moabitess. Thus the privilege, so eagerly coveted by the Hebrews, of being among the progenitors of the Messiah, was granted to two of alien race, foreshadowing the extension 'in the fulness of the time' of God's favours to all mankind.

The story of Ruth is thus an essential part of the Old Testament, the great purpose of which is to trace the promise of and preparation for the future Saviour.

why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12. Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13. Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

14. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15. And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

16. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

17. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

18. When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

out to them the hope of marrying again in their own country, of which there is little chance, if they come with her ^b.

15-18. Naomi and Ruth both display the spirit of self-sacrifice. The first wishes to be left in her loneliness, rather than interfere with her daughters' chances of happiness. Ruth gives up home and kindred, rather than let the aged mother go back childless and solitary. She is ready to 'forget her own people and her father's house' (Ps. xlv. 11). There is no more beautiful expression of devotion to be found than her words here ^c.

Naomi afterwards shows her gratitude by her efforts to find for Ruth a lasting home in her new country.

19. The arrival of Naomi after ten years' absence (ver. 4), and of her foreign daughter-in-law, naturally causes much excitement in the quiet village of Beth-lehem. Her old friends can hardly recognize Naomi, now aged and broken down with sorrow, and worn out with her long journey.

The expression 'all the city was moved' may recall the account of the excitement in Jerusalem at our Lord's triumphal entry (Matt. xxi. 10). But the description here probably means rather 'rang with cries.'

20. Her name Naomi had told of what was pleasing; now a name telling of bitterness or sorrow would be more suitable.

Marah was the name given to the bitter waters in the

^b Naomi's words seem to refer to what is called the 'levirate' law, by which, if a man died childless, his brother was required to marry the widow (Deut. xxv. 5). This was the law, by referring to which the Sadducees tried to 'entangle' our Lord about the doctrine of a resurrection (Matt. xxii. 23). We learn from the story of Boaz in ch. iii and iv that 'brother' meant really 'nearest kinsman.' The same custom prevailed among other Eastern nations; perhaps among the Moabites themselves.

^c These words of Naomi (ver. 15) seem to imply that Ruth still worshipped the gods of her own country. But, with the resolve to change her home, comes also that of changing her religion; and she solemnly appeals to Jehovah to witness that she will never forsake her mother.

19. So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, *Is this Naomi?*

20. And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22. So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

7. THE STORY OF RUTH (*continued*).

RUTH ii-iv.

Naomi and Ruth reach Beth-lehem at the beginning of barley harvest, and Ruth, resolved to be no idler, no burden to her mother-in-law, goes out into the fields to glean. We are told that 'her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.' But, as we see from the result, her steps were divinely directed there with a special object.

The beautiful stranger attracts the attention of Boaz, and

wilderness, of which the Israelites could not drink (Exod. xv. 23).

A change of name was often thus used to denote change of condition or fortunes. So Isaiah (lxii. 4) describes the restored Zion by saying, 'Thou shalt no longer be called Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah (or my delight)^d, and thy land Beulah (or married).'

21. Naomi says that God has turned against her, and punished her for her sins. So Job (x. 17) says, 'Thou renewest Thy witnesses against me'; and Malachi (iii. 5) describes the Lord as saying, 'I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers,' &c.

Some suppose that Naomi's affliction, in the death of her husband and two sons, was a punishment for leaving Palestine, and going to the idolatrous land of Moab. But Abraham, in like time of distress, went into Egypt; and Jacob migrated to the same country under Divine direction.

^d The word for 'Desolate' is Azubah. Both this and Hephzi-bah are found as proper names.

7. THE STORY OF RUTH (*continued*).

RUTH ii-iv.

¹ The character of Boaz, as presented in this story, seems to combine many virtues. He gives proof of his faith in God. He is kind to his dependants, liberal to the poor, diligent in business, careful of the rights of others, and anxious to fulfil all his duties as a citizen.

² The gate is the common place of meeting in Eastern cities. There business is transacted, and there justice is administered. We find several instances of this in the Bible. Absalom, for example, when he wished to 'steal the hearts of the people' from David, 'stood beside the way of the gate,' and gave judgment there (2 Sam. xv. 2).

he inquires who she is. Learning that she is the daughter of Naomi, and probably knowing something of the story of her return, he shows her special favour; allowing her to glean not only behind but among the reapers, and to share the provisions supplied for the labourers¹.

This kindness suggests to Naomi a hope of finding 'rest,' or a settled home for Ruth; and, when the harvest is over, she urges her to claim from Boaz her right as a widowed kinswoman, whom, according to the Jewish law, he is bound to marry. Ruth therefore goes to him, attired as a bride, and makes her claim. Boaz tells her that there is a nearer kinsman, who must first be asked; but promises, if this man refuses, to do as she desires. Next day Boaz stops this kinsman near the city gate², and the question is discussed in the presence of ten elders. The kinsman consents to 'redeem'³ or buy the property of Elimelech, but declines to fulfil the other part of his duty by marrying Ruth, lest he should 'mar his inheritance⁴.' He then 'plucks off his shoe⁵,' and gives it to Boaz, as a sign that he passes on the right to him. Boaz appeals to the elders to be formal witnesses to this proceeding; and, on their consenting, prays for a blessing on his marriage with the Moabitess.

A son is born of this marriage, over whose birth there are special rejoicings. This is Obed, the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David.

8. ELI AND SAMUEL.

I SAMUEL i, ii.

The First Book of Samuel opens with an account of the family of Elkanah¹, who lives at Ramathaim-zophim², in

In Deut. xvi. 18 it is said, 'Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates.' This is the explanation of the Psalmist's description of those who have sons to defend them against an unjust judge, or against false accusers, or false witnesses: 'They shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate' (Ps. cxxvii. 6).

³ The man who did this was called the 'goel' or 'redeemer.' He was to pay the value of the number of years left until the year of the jubilee, when the property would revert to the original owner.

The word 'goel' is used in the well-known passage of Job (xix. 25): 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

⁴ The meaning of this is uncertain. It may mean that he will have to spend his money in supporting Ruth and Naomi, or that he will introduce jealousy and strife into his family, or supplant his other children by the offspring of this new marriage.

⁵ According to the rule given in Deut. xxv. 9, if a man refused to take his 'brother's' or 'next kinsman's' widow, she might in the presence of the elders 'loose his shoe' and 'spit in his face,' as a mark of contempt. Josephus says that Ruth did this. But the kinsman seems to have been allowed to pluck off his own shoe, in token of renouncing his right. The words 'Now this was the manner in former times in Israel' imply that this 'testimony' or 'manner of attestation' (R. V.) was no longer used when the Book of Ruth was written.

Some think that the words in Ps. lx. 8, 'Over Edom will I cast out My shoe,' refer to this ceremony being used in taking possession of disputed territory. Others say they describe the treatment of Edom as a mere slave, to whom the sandal is thrown before washing the feet; the words which immediately precede these being, 'Moab is My washpot.'

8. ELI AND SAMUEL.

I SAMUEL i, ii.

¹ From 1 Chron. vi. 22 it appears that Elkanah was a Levite, descended from Kohath. 'Ephrathite,' commonly used of an

Mount Ephraim. He has two wives³, called Hannah⁴ and Peninnah, the former of whom has no children. Being 'provoked sore' (or taunted) by her rival, she earnestly prays to the Lord in the sanctuary at Shiloh⁵, to which the family go up yearly⁶, that He will give her a son. She vows that, if her prayer is granted, she will dedicate the son to the Lord 'all the days of his life,' by the vow of the Nazarite.

Eli, the high priest⁷, seeing her praying silently in the sanctuary, supposes her to be 'drunken,' and rebukes her. But, finding he is mistaken, he blesses her, and expresses a hope that her prayer may be granted.

In due time a boy is born, to whom she gives the name of Samuel, or 'asked of God.' As soon as he is weaned, she takes him to Shiloh, and places him under Eli's charge. She pours forth her gratitude and joy in a hymn, which may be called the 'Magnificat' of the Old Testament, resembling closely the song of Mary, the mother of our Lord (Luke i. 46-55).

Elkanah then returns home with Hannah, who afterwards has three other sons and two daughters. But 'the child Samuel grew before the Lord,' being left to 'minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest.' His mother brings him 'a little coat' year by year, when she comes to offer sacrifice.

The lawlessness of the age has extended even to the sanctuary at Shiloh. Eli himself is a good and kind and God-fearing man; but in his old age he has grown weak, and does not restrain his wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas. These, who help him in his duties, are grasping, and take for themselves parts of the sacrifice, to which they have no right. Worse than this, they profane the sanctuary by gross misconduct. Eli's feeble expostulations have no effect; and a prophet, or 'man of God,' is sent to warn him of the terrible punishment in store for all this iniquity. He is told that the priesthood shall be taken from his race, and 'a faithful priest' raised up in his stead; that no old man shall be

inhabitant of Ephratah or Beth-lehem, seems here to mean one living in the portion of Ephraim (R. V. has 'Ephraimite'). It is so used again of Jeroboam (1 Kings xi. 26).

² Ramathaim means 'the two Ramahs' or 'high places,' the town being built on two hills. Zophim may mean 'the watchers.' Some suppose it to mean 'of the Zophites,' the family to which Elkanah belonged.

³ Polygamy, or having more than one wife, was not uncommon with rulers or persons of position and wealth; but seldom found, as here, in the case of poor people.

⁴ Hannah, or Anna, which means 'grace' or 'favour,' was a Phoenician name. We find it in the name of Dido's sister (Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 146, 523, &c.). It was adopted by the Jews from these neighbours. We have Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, mentioned in St. Luke ii. 36.

⁵ Shiloh, where Joshua 'set up the tabernacle of the congregation' (Joshua xviii. 1), seems to have been recognized as the usual centre of worship, though we sometimes find the tabernacle at other places, as Mizpeh and Beth-el. In Ps. lxxviii. 61 the Lord is described as 'forsaking the tabernacle in Silo.'

⁶ Probably they went up to keep the Passover. Others suppose the festival to have been the Feast of Tabernacles, or some feast different from the three great feasts. These greater festivals had perhaps been neglected during the period of disorder. A yearly feast at Shiloh is referred to in Judges xxi. 19.

⁷ The high priesthood had for some reason been transferred

left in his house ; that Hophni and Phinehas shall die in one day, and that his other descendants shall be reduced to poverty, and beg for the lowest of the sacred offices, that they may 'eat a morsel of bread.'

VIII. SAMUEL'S VISION AND CALL.

I SAMUEL iii.

III. 1. And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days ; *there was* no open vision.

2. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see ;

3. And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep* ;

4. That the LORD called Samuel : and he answered, Here *am* I.

5. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I ; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not ; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I ; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son ; lie down again.

from the family of Eleazar, Aaron's eldest son, to that of his younger son, Ithamar. It returned to the elder house, when Zadok succeeded to the office, and was retained by that family up to the destruction of Jerusalem.

VIII. SAMUEL'S VISION AND CALL.

I SAMUEL iii.

III. 1. The word of the Lord was seldom announced by a prophet. There is no instance of this between the 'man of God' mentioned in ch. ii. 27, and the time of Deborah. And there was no 'open' or published vision, such as those manifestations of God granted to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, &c. Owing to the present corrupt state of the nation, these revelations had been suspended.

3, 4. The 'temple' is of course the tabernacle (cp. ch. i. 9). The 'lamp of God' is the seven-branched candlestick, which stood in the Holy Place. The vision to Samuel was in the early morning.

Josephus tells us that Samuel was now twelve years old; the same age as that at which our Lord was found disputing with the doctors in the Temple (Luke ii. 42, 46)^a. This is the only story of Samuel's boyhood, as the visit to Jerusalem is the only record of the boyhood of our Lord.

9, 10. Samuel's answer was the motto of his whole life of unquestioning obedience to God's will^b.

^a Twelve years was also, according to Jewish tradition, the age at which Moses left Pharaoh's daughter. It was a critical age for a boy among the Jews. After twelve he was less completely under the authority of his parents, and was regarded as having some responsibility of his own; he was advanced to higher education, and obliged to learn a trade. As a crisis in his character, it corresponded in some respects to our Confirmation.

^b 'In that first child-like response, "Speak, for Thy servant

7. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11. And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12. In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14. And therefore I have sworn unto the house

11. This refers to the capture of the ark, and the destruction of Shiloh. The same expression about 'making the ears tingle' is used in 2 Kings xxi. 12, after the 'abominations' of Manasseh; and also in Jer. xix. 3, of the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

13. 'Made themselves vile' is more correctly rendered in R. V. 'did bring a curse upon themselves.'

Eli is a signal instance of the mischief resulting from weakness of character. Knowing the iniquities of his sons, he shrank from dealing sternly with them, and deposing them from their sacred office. This corrupt priesthood had of course a most injurious influence on the whole nation.

14. The ordinary sacrifices for sin could not expiate such flagrant offences as these of Eli's house. Nothing could avert the punishment predicted.

15. The tabernacle at first was closed only by curtains. It would seem, from the expression used in this chapter, that there was now something of a more permanent building. The tabernacle was originally intended to be movable, carried from place to place during the wanderings in the wilderness. Probably, when its home was regarded as fixed at Shiloh, it was enclosed within a more solid building.

We learn something here of Samuel's duties in the sanctuary, where he 'ministered before,' or assisted Eli^e.

16-18. 'Here was Samuel's first experience of the prophet's

heareth," was contained the secret of his strength. When, in each successive stage of his growth, the call waxed louder and louder to duties more and more arduous, he could still look back without interruption to the first time when it broke his midnight slumbers; when, under the fatherly counsel of Eli, he had obeyed its summons, and found its judgements fulfilled' (Stanley. *J. C.* i. 406).

^e Some of the Korhites, or sons of Korah, afterwards acted as porters at the sacred gates of the Temple (1 Chron. xxvi. 13-19). Though apparently one of the humbler functions of the Levites, it was regarded as 'an office of considerable dignity' (Smith's *Dict. Bible*, ii. 50). We may compare Ps. lxxxiv. 11: 'I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.'

of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15. And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

16. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I.

17. And he said, What *is* the thing that *the* LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

19. And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

21. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

cross ; the having unwelcome truths to divulge to those he loved, honoured, and feared' (*Speaker's Commentary*).

The bright side of Eli's character is seen in his expression of resignation. His words resemble those of our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane: 'Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done' (Luke xxii. 42).

19. This is the brief account of the time, probably about twenty years, between Samuel's early vision and his entrance on his prophetic work. We may compare the short summary of the Baptist's early life in Luke i. 80: 'And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.' Also that of our Lord's in Luke ii. 52: 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'

20, 21. Samuel's fame spreads throughout the whole country, and when he is grown up he is universally recognized as a prophet such as there had not been since Moses. The blight upon the nation for its wickedness is now removed; and the Lord continues to appear in Shiloh, and to communicate His will through this new prophet^d.

^d The word 'prophet' means one who declares or expounds the will of God. The Hebrew word, which expresses the idea of flowing forth, or bubbling over, is explained as meaning either 'an inspired person,' on whom the Spirit of God has been poured, or 'one who pours forth' to others the messages of God. In the Nicene Creed we say of the Holy Ghost, 'who spake by the prophets.'

The Greek word *προφήτης* means one who speaks instead of another. So Apollo is called the *προφήτης* of Zeus, as the god of oracles; and the Pythia the *προφήτις* of Apollo.

The English word 'prophesying' meant originally 'preaching' or 'expounding.' This is its meaning in the New Testament. Later usage has restricted it to predicting. But the prophet was 'the forth-teller' rather than the 'foreteller.' His work related to past, present, and future. He was the historian, who explained the true meaning of the past, and the spiritual teacher, who directed the religious life of the age in which he lived, as well as the predictor of future events.

Samuel is specially called 'the prophet,' as he was the founder of 'the schools of the prophets'; the man who established what is called the 'prophetic order.'

IX. ELI.

I SAMUEL iv.

IV. 1. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this

IX. ELI.

I SAMUEL IV.

IV. 1, 2. Some connect the opening words of this chapter with the last words of ch. iii, meaning that Samuel, as a prophet, declared to all Israel 'the word of the Lord' revealed to him (R. V.). Others regard them as meaning that Samuel summoned the Israelites to do battle against the Philistines.

Aphek was probably in the north of Judah, near Mizpeh of Benjamin. The name Eben-ezer was given afterwards by Samuel (ch. vii. 12).

The last mention we had of the Philistines was in the story of Samson (Judges xiv-xvi), who was probably still living at the time of the events related in the earlier chapters of I Samuel. Perhaps the Philistines now renewed their oppression on his death. Or his exploits may have encouraged the Israelites to resist their oppression^a.

3. No doubt they knew the old 'battle hymn,' used by Moses, when the ark was 'set forward' in the wilderness (Num. x. 35); and recalled the use of the ark in the capture of Jericho (Joshua vi). But on that occasion there had been a special order from God that the ark should be used^b.

We learn from 2 Sam. v. 21 that the Philistines brought the images of their gods into the battle-field.

^a The chronology of the time of the judges is full of difficulties. It is probable that in some cases different judges were ruling at the same time in different parts of the country.

We are told in Judges xiii. 1 that the Philistine oppression lasted for forty years. It had commenced before Samson's birth, who judged twenty years (Judges xv. 20). We read in 1 Sam. vii. 13, 14 of the oppression ending; and Samuel had then been in office for some twenty years (ch. vii. 2) (*Speaker's Commentary*).

^b We find it stated in 2 Sam. xi. 11 that, when Joab was leading the campaign against the Ammonites, the ark was with the army.

David, however, refused to take the ark with him in his retreat before Absalom, and ordered Zadok to carry it back to the city (2 Sam. xv. 25). Bishop Wordsworth suggests that he did so, because he recalled this disaster.

great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

7. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out.

8. 'In the wilderness' may refer specially to the destruction of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. But the Philistines probably had only an imperfect knowledge of the history of that time, and regarded what happened in Egypt as having taken place in the wilderness. They are described as referring to the Egyptians again in ch. vi. 6.

The arrival of the ark in the Israelitish camp only inspires the Philistines with desperate courage.

11. Thus the words of the 'man of God,' who came to Eli, were fulfilled; the death in one day of his two sons being the 'sign' of the lasting judgement upon his house.

12. Rending the clothes and throwing earth or dust upon the head were signs of mourning for some great disaster. We read of Joshua and the elders doing this after the defeat at Ai (Joshua vii. 6). The messenger, who brought to David the news of the rout of the Israelites at Gilboa, and the death of Saul and Jonathan, arrived in a like condition (2 Sam. i. 2). Job's three friends expressed their grief in the same way, when they saw his miserable state (Job ii. 13). The three envoys, who were sent to confer with the leaders of Sennacherib's army, returned to Hezekiah 'with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh' (2 Kings xviii. 37).

These were also the outward signs of repentance. After the public reading of the law to the people, when they returned from the Captivity, they held a solemn fast, 'with sackclothes, and earth upon them' (Neh. ix. 1)^c.

^c The prophet Joel thus contrasts the outward signs of penance with true repentance: 'Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God' (Joel ii. 13). These words, as 'the true keynote of spiritual worship,' are one of the sentences prefixed to the services of Morning and Evening Prayer.

The custom of sprinkling dust upon the head was common among other nations. Homer describes Achilles as thus showing his grief at the death of his friend Patroclus (*Iliad*, xviii. 24):

'With both his hands he seized
And poured upon his head the grimy dust,
Marring his graceful visage' (Lord Derby's translation).

So Virgil says of Mezentius, when he hears that his son Lausus

14. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

16. And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17. And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

19. And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou

13-18. 'A loud wail, like that which, on the announcement of any great calamity, runs through all Eastern towns, rang through the streets of the expectant city. The aged high priest was sitting in his usual place beside the gateway of the sanctuary. He caught the cry; he asked the tidings. . . . It was the last tidings, "when mention was made of the ark of God," that broke the old man's heart. He fell from his seat, and died in the fall' (Stanley's *Jewish Church*, i. 378)^d.

21. Ichabod means 'no glory,' or 'where is the glory?' or 'alas for the glory!' By the capture of the ark, the Shechinah, or visible presence of God (called 'the glory' in Rom. ix. 4), was lost to the Israelites (see Part I, p. 45).

22. We are only told here of the capture of the ark of God. But from other passages of the Old Testament we gather that the Philistines, after their victory, must have marched upon Shiloh, sacked and burned the city, and massacred the inhabitants.

Thus in Ps. lxxviii. 61-65 we read how 'the Lord forsook the tabernacle in Silo, . . . delivered their power into captivity^e,

is dead, 'Canitiem multo deformat pulvere' (*Aen.* x. 844); and he thus depicts the grief of Latinus, when he hears of the death of his queen: 'It scissa veste Latinus . . . Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans' (*ibid.* xii. 609).

The name Ash-Wednesday (*Dies cinerum*) is said to be derived from the custom in the primitive Church of covering the heads of the penitents with sackcloth and throwing ashes upon them, before they were turned out of the Church; this penance being inflicted on the first day in Lent.

^d Eli combined the functions of priest and judge. Two explanations have been suggested:

(i) Local—that, Ephraim being the least exposed to invasion of all the tribes, Shiloh had become the civil as well as the religious capital (Milman, *Hist. of Jews*, i. 261).

(ii) Personal—that Eli in his youth had performed some brave exploit against the Philistines, for which the powers of judge were given him (Stanley's *Jewish Church*, i. 373).

^e The name of 'the captivity' seems to have been given to this disaster, until it was applied to the carrying away to Babylon. Thus the idolatrous worship of the Danites is said to have lasted 'until the day of the captivity of the land, . . . all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh' (Judges xviii. 30, 31).

hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*.

21. And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

22. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

9. HISTORY TO PLACING OF THE ARK AT KIRJATH-JEARIM.

I SAMUEL V. I—vii. I.

The captured ark is taken first to Ashdod¹, and placed in the house of the Philistine god, Dagon. Next day the idol is found prostrate on the ground. It is replaced; but the following morning it has not only fallen again, but the head and hands are broken off and are lying on the threshold². The people, too, are smitten with a plague of 'emerods' or 'tumours' (R. V.); and we may gather from ch. vi. 5, which speaks of 'the mice that mar the land,' that their crops are consumed by field-mice³.

A conference of the Philistine lords is held, and the ark is carried to Gath. The people of that city are smitten with the same plague, and send it on to Ekron, but the Ekronites refuse to receive it within their walls.

The ark has now been seven months in the country of the Philistines. They resolve, by the advice of their 'priests and diviners,' to restore it to the Israelites, with a 'trespass offering' (or 'guilt offering,' R.V.) of five golden emerods, and five golden mice⁴. It is placed in a new cart, drawn

. . . gave His people also unto the sword;’ how ‘the fire consumed their young men, and their maidens were not given to marriage: their priests were slain with the sword, and there were no widows to make lamentation.’

Shiloh was afterwards a desolation. The prophet Jeremiah makes it a type of utter destruction: ‘Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel’ (Jer. vii. 12); and again, ‘This house shall be as Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant’ (Jer. xxvi. 9).

9. HISTORY TO PLACING OF THE ARK AT KIRJATH-JEARIM.

I SAMUEL V. I—VII. I.

¹ The Greek name for Ashdod, as found in the LXX, is Azotus. It is mentioned by this name in the story of Philip the deacon (Acts viii. 40).

² This gave rise to a superstition, that no one must tread on the threshold of Dagon’s temple. Some suppose that this is referred to by the prophet Zephaniah (i. 9), where he says that the Lord will ‘punish all those that leap on the threshold.’ But there was a similar superstitious practice in Persia, on entering a great man’s house; and the prophet seems here to be denouncing the introduction of foreign customs generally.

³ The LXX adds here that mice were produced in their land. But there is another possible explanation of the offering of golden mice (ch. vi. 4). In the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the mouse is the symbol of pestilence or destruction. This is supposed to be the origin of the curious story in Herodotus (ii. 141), that Sennacherib’s army, (destroyed by pestilence, 2 Kings xix. 35), was rendered useless by a multitude of mice eating through their quivers and bowstrings, and the thongs of their shields.

⁴ The custom of making offerings, which would recall the special affliction or deliverance, was very common among ancient nations. Thus, slaves or captives offered their chains; gladiators

by two 'milch kine' never before yoked⁵. These are left to take their own course. If they take the road to Beth-shemesh⁶, the nearest Israelitish town, this will be regarded as a sign that the plagues are from the Lord; if not, they may be ascribed to chance⁷.

The cattle take the ark straight to Beth-shemesh, which is one of the cities belonging to the priestly tribe of Levi. The people, who are busy with wheat harvest, rejoice to see it; and the Levites or priests, having placed the ark and the jewels on a great stone, break up the cart for fire-wood, and offer the kine as a sacrifice. The lords of the Philistines, who have followed the ark to Beth-shemesh, return to Ekron.

But the rejoicing of the people of Beth-shemesh is short-lived. Excited, and moved by curiosity, they look into the ark; and for this irreverence they are smitten with great slaughter. Filled now with terror, they send a request to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim to take charge of the ark. These come and fetch it. It is placed in the house of a Levite called Abinadab, whose son Eleazar is 'sanctified' or 'consecrated' as its guardian. There it seems to have remained till the time of David (2 Sam. vi. 3)⁸.

X. SAMUEL'S REFORMATION AND JUDGESHIP.

I SAMUEL vii. 2—viii. 9.

VII. 2. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your

their swords ; sailors the clothes in which they had been shipwrecked. We have a reference to the last in Horace, *Odes*, i. 5. 13-16 :

‘ Me tabula sacer
Votiva paries indicat uvida
Suspendisse potenti
Vestimenta maris deo.’

A similar practice prevailed among the early Christians of offering figures of the parts cured, made of gold or silver. It is still common in some Roman Catholic countries.

⁵ This was a mark of reverence. So the ark was brought up by David in a new cart (2 Sam. vi. 3). We may compare also the ass on which our Lord rode (Mark xi. 2), and the new tomb in which His body was laid (Matt. xxvii. 60 ; Luke xxiii. 53 ; see *Speaker's Commentary*).

⁶ Beth-shemesh means, like Heliopolis, ‘the house of the sun’ (see Part i. p. 99).

⁷ They would naturally have gone straight back to their calves, if not guided by some higher power.

⁸ The ark was thus separated from the tabernacle. The history of the latter at this time is obscure. In the reign of Saul, it seems to have been at Nob (1 Sam. xxi) till the murder of the priests and destruction of this city. We next hear of it at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi. 39 ; xxi. 29). Solomon went to sacrifice there (1 Kings iii. 4). After the building of the Temple, it vanishes from history (see pp. 281, 283).

X. SAMUEL'S REFORMATION AND JUDGESHIP.

I SAMUEL vii. 2—viii. 9.

VII. 2. The last mention of Samuel was in ch. iv. 1. He probably spent the interval of twenty years as ‘a missionary,’ going about from place to place, preaching repentance and preparing for the great reformation which was at hand^a.

^a He had before been ‘established to be a prophet of the Lord’ (ch. iii. 20) ; but, as we are told nothing of his movements, he would appear to have so far done his work secretly ; partly perhaps

hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it for* a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

10. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

At last his efforts were successful. The people ‘lamented unto the Lord’; grieving for their estrangement from Him, and longing to return to Him^b.

3, 4. Samuel declares to them the one condition of their release from the Philistines. They must first put away the idolatry for which these oppressions are a chastisement (see Judges ii. 11–15). This is the only hope of a lasting deliverance. The successes of the various judges had only brought relief for a time.

5, 6. The Mizpeh here is probably the Mizpeh in Benjamin, not far from Shiloh. We may infer that this gathering of the whole people there was just after the recovery of the ark. It has a double purpose. It is a muster of the nation for war. But it has also a religious object. The people are to dedicate themselves anew to Jehovah.

The hour for which Samuel has been waiting and working has come at last, and he appears as the first great reformer, whose work is afterwards copied by Hezekiah, Josiah, and others.

The repentance of the people and renewal of the covenant with Jehovah are symbolized in two ways: by the ceremony of drawing and pouring out water, and by a general fast. Pouring out water is sometimes made a figure of weakness or of sorrow, as in Ps. xxii. 14, ‘I am poured out like water’ (cp. 2 Sam. xiv. 14); or of contrition for sin, as, ‘Pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord’ (Lam. ii. 19)^c. Fasting, only enjoined by the Mosaic law on

through fear of capture by the Philistines; partly that he might not provoke the opposition of his countrymen by coming forward too soon. It has been suggested that he may have had his home for a time (like David and others) in the limestone caverns of Southern Palestine; thus being one of those referred to in Heb. xi. 38.

^b This is rendered by some, ‘were assembled together unto the Lord.’

^c Other explanations have been given. Some suppose that this was like the heathen custom of pouring out libations in making a treaty, from which the word *σπονδαί*, (from *σπένδω*, to

11. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Beth-car.

12. Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16. And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17. And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

VIII. 1. And it came to pass, when ⁵Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-sheba.

3. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned

the Day of Atonement, was now, as often afterwards, used as a sign of national humiliation.

Samuel's position as the national leader is now publicly acknowledged. But he is very different from the other judges. He is not a warrior. His weapons are 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' (Eph. vi. 17), and prayer.

7, 8. The Philistines recognize that this is a crisis, and make a last effort. The changed spirit of the Israelites is seen in their trusting to Samuel's prayers. For a like use of intercessory prayer we may compare the prayer of Moses, when the people fought with the Amalekites (Exod. xvii. 8-13). Both these instances are referred to in Ps. xcix. 6: 'Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among such as call upon His Name; these called upon the Lord, and He heard them' (see pp. 105, 107).

9. Samuel thus appears to have performed priestly duties, offering the 'typical' lamb. While the ark and tabernacle were separated, the strict regulations as to the discharge of such duties by priests alone were probably suspended.

10. With this storm we may compare that in the battle against Sisera (Judges v. 20, 21; pp. 13-15). Josephus says there was also an earthquake.

11-13. Eben-ezer means 'the stone of help^d.' We learn

pour a drink offering), came to be used for a truce. Jacob 'poured a drink offering' when on his return he reconsecrated Beth-el (Gen. xxxv. 14). So David poured out unto the Lord the water from the well at Beth-lehem, for which the three warriors had risked their lives (2 Sam. xxiii. 16).

Some suppose that this ceremony was the origin of the drawing and pouring out water from the Pool of Siloam on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the occasion of our Lord's prediction of the Spirit under this figure (John vii. 37-39). It is probably referred to also in Isa. xii. 3: 'Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.'

^d Sacred stones were very common among ancient nations (Part I, pp. 71, 73). They were of various kinds. A stone set up erect like this is called a 'menhir'; a stone table used as an altar, a 'dolmen'; a heap of stones, a 'cairn'; a circle of stones, a 'cromlech' (Geikie, *Bible by Modern Light*, iii. 91).

aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5. And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways : now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee : for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9. Now therefore hearken unto their voice : howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10. PREPARATIONS FOR THE MONARCHY.

I SAMUEL viii. 10—x. 16.

Samuel, as he has been directed, now explains to the people 'the manner of the king that shall reign over them.' He draws the picture of an Oriental despot, who shall make

from this that the Philistines were now defeated on the same battle-field on which they had gained their great victory twenty years before (ch. iv. 1, v. 1). Beth-car was probably a neighbouring Philistine fortress.

After this battle, the Philistines never recovered their supremacy, though they continued to give trouble until the reign of David.

14. The 'peace' perhaps means that the Amorites helped the Israelites, or that they gave up their league with the Philistines.

15-17. Samuel made Ramah his head-quarters, but went on an annual circuit. The towns named being all in the portion of Benjamin, it would seem that his duties were performed chiefly, if not entirely, in this district. As there is now no national centre of worship, he builds an altar at Ramah, thus making it both a civil and religious capital, as Shiloh had been in Eli's time.

VIII. 1-3. The narrative now passes abruptly to Samuel's old age. The lawlessness, which had crept into family life, has reached even his house. We are not told that his sons are profligate, like Eli's, but they are avaricious and unjust.

5-9. Samuel's displeasure at the apparent slight to himself is only natural. But he is told that the proposed change is directed not against him, but against the Lord, and that after making a solemn protest, he is to comply with their request.

10. PREPARATIONS FOR THE MONARCHY.

I SAMUEL viii. 10—x. 16.

¹ To the two arguments they had used before, Samuel's old age and the misconduct of his sons, they now add another, their desire to be 'like all the nations.'

their sons and daughters his slaves, and rob them of their lands, or exact tithes of all produce. But the people only repeat their demand¹; and Samuel, seeing that his protest is useless, dismisses them.

Saul is destined to be the first king. He is the son of Kish, a Benjamite, and is described as 'a mighty man of power (or (wealth),' and as 'a choice young man and a goodly.' He is of gigantic stature².

The story which follows shows how Saul was brought under the notice of Samuel. He has been seeking unsuccessfully for his father's asses, which have strayed. He is about to give up the search, when his servant³ tells him there is 'a man of God' in the city they have reached, who may help them. They go up the hill to Ramah, and are directed by some maidens to the 'high place,' where 'the seer'⁴ is to offer sacrifice on that day.

At the city gate they meet with Samuel, who, instructed beforehand of the Lord, recognizes the man who is to be king. He tells Saul the asses are found; and then announces to him that 'all the desire of Israel'⁵ is on *him*. He invites Saul to stay for the sacrificial banquet, where special honour is shown to the stranger. On the next day Samuel escorts him to the outskirts of the city, and there solemnly anoints him for his high office.

Saul is told that three 'signs' shall be given him, as intimations that he is divinely chosen. By Rachel's sepulchre, two men shall tell him that the asses are found. At the plain (or oak) of Tabor, three men shall give him two loaves out of the offering they are carrying to Beth-el. At 'the hill of God,' or Gibeah, a band of prophets, singing and playing, shall meet him. The 'Spirit of the Lord' shall move him to prophesy with them. This inspiration causes an expression

This wish for monarchy had been shown before. The people wanted to make Gideon a king (Judges viii. 22), and perhaps Jephthah also (Judges xi. 6). The change had been foretold from the first. It was said to Abraham that kings should come of his seed (Gen. xvii. 6, 16); and Jacob's prophecy about 'the sceptre not departing from Judah' (Gen. xlix. 10), and Balaam's prediction (Num. xxiv. 17, 19), implied that the nation should one day have such rulers. Regulations to restrict the power of the kings, when this change should have come, are expressly laid down in Deut. xvii. 14-20.

² We may be surprised to find that the first king did not belong to either of the two powerful tribes of Judah or Ephraim. But, Benjamin was famous as a warlike tribe, and was in a central position, and Saul's personal appearance marked him as the man to be chosen. Physical strength and beauty are regarded as claims to distinction among Eastern nations. Herodotus says the Aethiopians always elected the tallest and finest man as king (Herod. iii. 27), and describes Xerxes, the Persian king, as unsurpassed in height and beauty (vii. 187). We may compare also Homer's account of Ajax (*Iliad*, iii. 226) as

'brave and strong,

Towering o'er all with head and shoulders broad';

and Virgil's description of Turnus (*Aen.* vii. 783):

'Ipse inter primos praestanti corpore Turnus

Vertitur arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est.'

In Mussulman traditions Saul is known as 'Thalût, or the tall one' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 10).

³ According to tradition, this servant was Doeg the Edomite, who afterwards, by Saul's order, massacred the priests at Nob (ch. xxii. 18).

⁴ We are told in ch. ix. 9 that 'he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.' But the name of prophet was used long before this; and the name of seer was revived afterwards (e.g. 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 10). This verse was probably added later, when 'seer' was no longer used only of 'a man of God.'

⁵ This should probably be (as in R. V.) 'all that is desirable in Israel' (cp. Hag. ii. 7).

⁶ 'God,' we are told, 'gave Saul another heart.' This was 'the crisis of his spiritual life.' He was, as had been foretold by

of amazement, which afterwards becomes a proverb : 'Is Saul also among the prophets⁶?'

Saul tells his uncle⁷ how Samuel informed him the asses were found. But he keeps to himself 'the matter of the kingdom.'

XI. SAUL PROCLAIMED KING—HIS FIRST EXPLOIT.

I SAMUEL X. 17—XI. 15.

X. 17. And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh ;

18. And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you :

19. And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations ; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

20. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken : and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22. Therefore they enquired of the LORD further,

Samuel (ch. x. 6), 'turned into another man.' But his religion, as we find, was only superficial, and 'left his deeper nature essentially unchanged' (Geikie, iii. 101).

⁷ Josephus says that this uncle was Abner, afterwards the commander of Saul's army (1 Sam. xiv. 50). Others suggest Ner.

XI. SAUL PROCLAIMED KING—HIS FIRST EXPLOIT.

I SAMUEL X. 17—XI. 15.

X. 17. This takes up from ch. viii the narrative of public proceedings connected with the appointment of a king.

This Mizpeh, not far from Shiloh and Gibeah, is the place where the Philistines had recently been defeated (ch. vii. 7-12), and so is an auspicious place for this ceremony.

20, 21. With the manner of selection here we may compare the story of Achan (Joshua vii. 16-18)^a.

22-24. Saul, shrinking from the responsible position before him, and afraid of tribal jealousies, has hidden himself among 'the stuff,' or baggage of the assembly. When he is brought forth, his size and strength at once win the people^b.

25. 'The manner of the kingdom' was probably a repetition and enlargement of the instructions given in Deut. xvii. 14-20, which limited the powers of the future kings. This was now committed to writing, and laid up as a 'charter' by the side of the ark of the covenant.

^a 'The family of Matri' is not mentioned elsewhere. Matri is probably the same as Becher (1 Chron. vii. 8), or Bichri (2 Sam. xx. 1).

^b In ver. 22 'if the man,' &c., should be, as in R. V., 'Is there yet a man to come hither?' or, 'Is the man yet come hither?' They ask whether Saul has as yet obeyed the summons, convening all at Mizpeh.

if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23. And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

XI. 1. Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make *a covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.

3. And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers

27. 'Children of Belial' or 'sons of Belial' means worthless persons. The expression is used twice in the Book of Judges (xix. 22, xx. 13) of those who have committed a gross and cowardly outrage, and is applied in 1 Sam. ii. 12 to the wicked sons of Eli. In 2 Sam. xx. 1 Sheba, who rebels against David, is called 'a man of Belial'^c.

These men, who refused to acknowledge Saul, probably belonged to the powerful tribes of Judah and Ephraim.

XI. 1. Recent attacks seem to have come entirely from the Philistines on the west. This renewed attack from the tribes on the east would naturally cause great alarm, lest the Israelites should be crushed between these two powerful enemies. The Ammonites seem to have left them unmolested since the time of Jephthah (Judges xi).

We read in 2 Sam. xvii. 27 of one Shobi, the son of Nahash, showing kindness to David, when he was a fugitive from Absalom^d. This Nahash was probably a son or grandson of the Nahash named here, who, according to Josephus, was slain in this battle.

2. The cruel condition thus required would render them useless for war. The left eye was covered in battle by the shield, and the right eye alone was used in aiming the spear.

4. There was a long-standing friendship between the

^c St. Paul, in 2 Cor. vi. 15, uses 'Belial,' as opposed to 'Christ,' for the unbelieving and unrighteous. It has been suggested that this has led to Belial being written in our Bibles as if the name of a person. Milton has represented him as the demon of profligacy,

'Than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself' (*P. L.* i. 490);

and he speaks of

'The sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine' (*ibid.* 502).

^d The family of Nahash seems to have been in some way related to that of David. In 2 Sam. xvii. 25 Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, is spoken of as sister to Zeruiah, the mother of Joab, who was David's own sister.

unto all the coasts of Israel : and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people : and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5. And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field ; and Saul said, What *aieth* the people that they weep ? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6. And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8. And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9. And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed *it* to the men of Jabesh ; and they were glad.

10. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11. And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies ; and they came into

Benjamites and the men of Jabesh-gilead. We read in Judges xxi that, when all the Israelites were convened at Mizpeh, to punish the Benjamites for the crime of the men of Gibeah, the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead alone disregarded the summons. For this all the men and married women were slain. The maidens were afterwards given to the survivors of the Benjamites (pp. 4, 5).

For this reason probably, as well as because they had heard of Saul's appointment to be king, the men of Jabesh send at once to Gibeah in their distress.

5. Saul appears, after his proclamation, to have gone back to his old life. We have seen that he was of a shy and retiring disposition. But besides this, it would seem that the duties of a king were hitherto regarded both by him and by the people as like those of the judges, who only came forward in some emergency^e. The same expression is used of some of these rulers, as that given in ver. 6; meaning that they were inspired with resolution and energy for their work of deliverance.

7. We may compare with this mode of summoning the forces of the whole nation the story in Judges xix. 29, 30, when a portion of the body of the outraged woman was sent to each tribe^f.

11. The neighbouring tribes appear to have known nothing of the changes of government among the Israelites. Nahash probably relied on Samuel's powers having failed through old age, and so this vigorous attack by the new leader took his army by surprise. With the plan of dividing the forces

^e Saul's sudden passage from following 'after the herd' to the duties of a military leader has been compared to the call of Gideon from the threshing-floor (Judges vi. 11), and to the Roman story of Cincinnatus, who was so summoned when ploughing (Livy, iii. 26).

^f It may also remind us of the fiery cross sent round to the Highland clans to summon every man capable of bearing arms. It was burned and dipped in blood, to show that fire and sword awaited every one who should not obey the summons (see Scott, *Lady of the Lake*, Canto iii. st. 8-11). So, in Norway, the 'war-arrow' used to be sent round as a signal.

the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12. And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14. Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

XII. SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

I SAMUEL xii.

XII. 1. And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2. And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

3. Behold, here I *am*: witness against me before

into three companies, we may compare the story of Gideon (Judges vii. 16–19).

The Jews appear to have divided the night into three watches of four hours each. We read of 'the middle watch' in Judges vii. 19. In the time of the Gospels the Roman division into four watches had been adopted.

12–15. This successful enterprise has won for the new king the enthusiastic loyalty of the people, and Samuel seizes the opportunity of establishing him securely in his royal office. In 1 Sam. xii. 10 the resolve to have a king is spoken of as prompted by the attack of Nahash. Probably the permanent authority of the new ruler, as contrasted with the temporary power of the judges^g, is now for the first time publicly recognized.

Saul's refusal to put to death those who had opposed his promotion is an instance of his generous disposition, which must have still further won the hearts of the people.

^g Bishop Wordsworth conceives that this fresh ceremony was a summons to Saul to leave his life of privacy, and assume the state and functions of a king. The LXX describes Samuel as now anointing Saul afresh.

XII. SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

I SAMUEL xii.

XII. 1–5. Samuel now delivers to the people assembled at Gilgal a solemn farewell address, on resigning his office as judge.

The first part of his speech is personal. He reminds them that he has grown old and grey in their service. He refers in terms of natural regret to his sons, who have been deposed, because they did not 'walk in his ways' (1 Sam. viii. 5). He challenges the people to produce a single case, in which he himself has acted with cruelty or injustice. This

the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

4. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

5. And he said unto them, The LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.

6. And Samuel said unto the people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

8. When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

9. And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

10. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

appeal is solemnly made 'before the Lord and before His anointed^a,' the newly appointed king.

Samuel puts 'the ox' and 'the ass' here for property generally, as they are used in the tenth commandment; these, before horses were introduced, being the most important possessions of an agricultural people. He asks, too, whether any can convict him of having taken 'a bribe' (or 'ransom,' R. V.)^b, to blind his eyes to justice^c.

6-10. The second part of Samuel's speech is national, recalling to the people God's mercies to their forefathers; the rescue from Egypt, the settlement in Palestine, the deliverers raised up again and again, when they had repented of their idolatries.

Hazor was the capital of the Canaanites. The story of the deliverance from Jabin, king of Hazor, by Deborah and Barak, and of the defeat and death of his captain Sisera, is told in Judges iv. v.

The deliverances from the Philistines were wrought by Shamgar (Judges iii. 31), and by Samson (Judges xiv-xvi). But these deliverances were not lasting.

Eglon, king of Moab, was assassinated by Ehud (Judges iii. 12-30).

11. Jerubbaal was the other name of Gideon (Judges vi. 32).

^a This is the first instance of any one being formally described by this title; though in Lev. iv. 3, 5, 16 the priest is spoken of as 'anointed,' and this use of the word for the king is anticipated in the song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 10), and in the message of the man of God to Eli (1 Sam. ii. 35). 'The Lord's anointed' was afterwards the most solemn title of the monarch; and then of the Messiah, 'the Christ.'

^b A bribe or ransom given to the judge to get a criminal acquitted is very common in the East. We are told of Samuel's sons that they 'took bribes and perverted judgement' (1 Sam. viii. 3). Jehoshaphat reminded the judges whom he appointed, that they 'judged not for man, but for the Lord,' with whom is no 'respect of persons, nor taking of gifts' (2 Chron. xix. 6, 7).

^c Samuel has been called the 'Aristides the Just' of Jewish history.

11. And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

12. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king.

13. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

14. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

15. But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

16. Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17. *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

18. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die

There is no judge called Bedan mentioned elsewhere. The name only occurs again in I Chron. vii. 17. Some have supposed that it is for Ben-dan, or son of Dan, meaning Samson. But the judge referred to is more probably Barak, whose name is substituted here in the LXX, and who is coupled with Gideon and Jephthah in Heb. xi. 32^d (see pp. 17, 57).

It has been suggested that we should read Samson here for Samuel, as the prophet would hardly introduce his own exploits in this way. But he is telling of what the Lord did through himself and through others.

12-15. Samuel, having shown the people their ingratitude in asking for a king, goes on to assure them that the Lord will still be their protector, so long as they and their king are obedient to His laws.

The meaning of ver. 14 is obscured in A. V. It should be, as in R. V., 'If ye will fear the Lord,' &c., and 'both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of the Lord your God, *well*;' that is, it will be well with you.

16-18. Thunder and rain in the hottest months are very rare in Palestine. In the account of this scene in Eccclus. xlv. 13-20 it is said that 'the Lord thundered from heaven, and with a great noise made His voice to be heard.'

19-22. The words in which Samuel reassures the alarmed people anticipate the highest teaching of the prophets, of which order he is the founder; and the still higher teaching of the gospel of peace.

23. Jeremiah (xv. 1) speaks of Moses and Samuel as the great examples of 'intercessory prayer,' or prayer on behalf of

^d Bishop Wordsworth supposes Bedan to be the name of a judge, whose performances are not recorded in the Book of Judges; this book, like the Acts of the Apostles, not being intended as a complete history. He considers the Jael of Judges v. 6 to be another instance of a judge only mentioned by name.

not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

21. And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain.

22. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

23. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

24. Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you.

25. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

11. THE WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES—SAUL'S FIRST SIN.

I SAMUEL xiii.

Saul's first success, as the king who should deliver the people from their enemies, was gained, as we have seen, against the Ammonites on the east. He has now to encounter those obstinate enemies on the west, the Philistines, who have recovered from the defeat they sustained at Eben-ezer in the judgeship of Samuel¹.

others (see p. 89). The first recorded instance of such prayer is Abraham's intercession for Sodom (Gen. xviii. 23-33).

St. Paul urges the duty of such prayers in 1 Tim. ii. 1: 'I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men ^e.' They are of course an essential feature of public worship, when the whole congregation unite in prayer for themselves, for each other, and for all men. And in our private prayers these 'intercessions' for those dearest to us often inspire an earnestness and reality, which are wanting in petitions offered for ourselves ^f.

24, 25. Samuel concludes with a renewed exhortation to the service of God, and with words which forecast not only the tragic end of Saul, but the punishment long afterwards of the disobedient people and their rulers.

^e See the opening of the Prayer for the Church Militant in the Communion Service.

^f Our Lord's prayer for His disciples, given in John xvii, is often called His intercessory prayer. In Heb. vii. 25 we are told that 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' Isaiah (liii. 12) describes Him as 'making intercession for the transgressors.' In Rom. viii. 26 we read that 'the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.'

11. THE WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES—SAUL'S FIRST SIN.

I SAMUEL xiii.

¹ There is some doubt as to the meaning of the first verse of this chapter. In R. V., instead of 'Saul reigned one year,' we have 'Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign.'

The events now recorded seem to have taken place some time after Saul's accession, in the account of which he is described as a young man (1 Sam. ix. 2). His son Jonathan is now grown up.

Saul has raised a force of 3,000 men, of whom 1,000 are stationed under Jonathan at Gibeah², while Saul himself with the remainder occupies the other strong position of Michmash. The first exploit is performed by Jonathan, who smites the garrison of the Philistines in Geba. This success is announced by heralds blowing trumpets throughout the land, as a summons to the war, for which this attack is the signal. The Philistines are infuriated; Israel is 'had' in abomination with them.' They overrun the country with their formidable chariots and horsemen, and on the plains they are irresistible³. Saul convenes the people to Gilgal, but many of them, panic-stricken, seek refuge in caves and thickets and other hiding-places; and some flee to the other side of the Jordan⁴.

At Gilgal Saul awaits the coming of Samuel. The appointed seven days have passed, and the prophet has not arrived. The people keep deserting, and Saul, growing impatient, himself offers the sacrifices prepared for Samuel. The prophet, on his arrival, rebukes Saul for his folly and disobedience, and predicts that for this, his first sin, his kingdom shall not be 'established upon Israel.'

Samuel now removes to the hill country of Gibeah, and is followed thither by Saul and Jonathan with the army, which by this time is reduced to six hundred men. The Philistines have in turn occupied Michmash, and send out thence 'spoilers' or marauding bands in three directions—northward to Ophrah near Beth-el, westward to Beth-horon, and eastward to the valley of Zeboim toward the Jordan.

A general disarmament is enforced by the victorious Philistines. The Israelites are only allowed to have agricultural implements, and even these they can only sharpen at the enemies' smithies⁵. The garrison of the Philistines now throws out an advanced guard to the 'passage' or pass of Michmash, posting it on one of the bluffs or scars at the edge of the valley⁶.

² The names Gibeah and Geba seem to be sometimes interchanged. Michmash was probably on the north side of the pass; Geba opposite to it; and Gibeah a short distance further south.

³ The 30,000 chariots should probably be 3,000 or 1,000 or 300. The larger number is out of all proportion to the 6,000 horsemen, and we never read elsewhere of such an enormous force of this kind. Pharaoh had 600 chariots (Exod. xiv. 7); Jabin 900 (Judges iv. 3); the Syrians 700 (2 Sam. x. 18); Solomon 1,400 (1 Kings x. 26); Zerah the Ethiopian 300 (2 Chron. xiv. 9).

⁴ Dean Stanley (*Jewish Church*, ii. 13) suggests that this is the reason of their being called by the Philistines 'Hebrews' (*περάται*, 'crossers over,' cp. Gen. xiv. 13), as in 1 Sam. xiii. 19, xiv. 11, &c. But Saul himself calls them by this name in ch. xiii. 3.

With the hiding in caves we may compare the account of the fugitives in the Midianite invasion (Judges vi. 2).

⁵ There appears to have been a similar disarmament during the oppression under Jabin, king of Hazor (Judges v. 8).

According to the LXX version they had to make a money payment for sharpening, three shekels for each tool.

Some translate ver. 21, 'when the edges of the mattocks . . . and of the axes were blunt' (R.V. margin).

⁶ We read of Michmash again in the promise of deliverance from Assyria in Isa. x. 28. Sennacherib is there described as 'laying up his carriages' or 'baggage' at Michmash, and 'taking up his lodging at Geba.'

12. THE PHILISTINE WAR (*continued*).

SAUL AND JONATHAN.

I SAMUEL xiv.

Deliverance from the Philistine oppression comes at last through the exploit of Jonathan, the son of Saul. Unknown to his father and to the rest of the army, he and his armour-bearer¹ make their way across the ravine which separates the two camps, and climb up the slope on the opposite side². An omen is to be taken from the conduct of the Philistine outpost. If these come down to attack them, the two will retire; if they dare them to advance, this will be accepted as a sign that the Lord has 'delivered the enemy into their hand.'

The Philistines, on perceiving the two warriors, taunt them with having crept out of their hiding-places, and challenge them to come up, and they will 'show them a thing'³. Jonathan, afterwards described as 'swifter than an eagle, stronger than a lion' (2 Sam. i. 23), scales the cliff, his attendant following. Then they furiously attack the enemy, probably using their bows and slings, for skill in which the men of Benjamin were famous⁴; and the Philistines, misled by the shower of missiles, and supposing that the two have a larger force of followers, fall back in dismay. The panic, increased by an earthquake⁵, quickly spreads to the main army.

Saul's watchmen see and report the confusion in the Philistine camp, and the absence of Jonathan and his companions is now discovered. The king, having first ordered the high-priest, Ahiah the grandson of Phinehas, to 'bring the ark of God', that he may ascertain the Divine will; and then, on seeing that the confusion among the Philistines is increasing, having in his excitement stopped this inquiry; hurries across to Michmash. The Hebrew prisoners and

12. THE PHILISTINE WAR (*continued*).

SAUL AND JONATHAN.

I SAMUEL xiv.

¹ So Gideon and his 'servant' Phurah went out together to the Midianitish camp (Judges vii. 10).

² The way ran between two craggy cliffs, called Bozez, or 'shining,' and Seneh, 'tooth' or 'thorn.' These probably screened them from observation.

³ That is, 'teach them a lesson.' Some, however, explain these words as, 'We should like to make your acquaintance' (Geikie, iii. 122).

⁴ The LXX says, 'The first slaughter was with darts, and slings, and stones of the field.' The 'bow of Jonathan' is mentioned with 'the sword of Saul' in David's lament (2 Sam. i. 22).

⁵ Thus, as in the battle against Sisera (Judges v. 20, 21), and in the battle at Eben-ezer (1 Sam. vii. 10), the powers of nature aided in the defeat of the enemies of God's people.

⁶ The LXX gives 'Bring hither the ephod'; and this, and not the ark, was commonly used as an oracle, the answer being given by the 'Urim and Thummim,' probably stones in the breast-plate, which was attached to the ephod, or priestly robe. We have no reference elsewhere to the ark ever having been moved from Kirjath-jearim, till it was taken to Jerusalem by David (2 Sam. vii).

⁷ This is another instance of rash oaths, like that of Jephthah (Judges xi. 30, 31), and of Herod in the New Testament (Matt. xiv. 7, &c.).

those who are in hiding join Saul, and the Philistine rout is completed. They are driven out of their stronghold, and pursued westward to Beth-aven.

Saul, eager to follow up the victory, has forbidden his weary troops to taste food that day⁷. Jonathan, unaware of this order, as he and his men hurry through the woods, tastes the wild honey, and so incurs the curse rashly invoked by his father. At last, on reaching Aijalon⁸, the people, faint with hunger, 'fly upon the spoil'; and in their greed transgress the command, which is as old as the time of Noah, that they must not eat the blood⁹. Saul rebukes them, and requires them to slay all the animals upon 'a great stone,' that the blood may run off, and there builds his first altar to the Lord.

Ahiah having counselled further inquiry as to the Divine will, no answer is vouchsafed. This is taken as a proof of Divine displeasure, and Saul is bent on discovering the offender¹⁰. The lot reveals Jonathan as the man who has broken the vow, and he is only rescued from death by the protest of the people, who are full of enthusiasm at his deed of daring.

By this success Saul's kingdom is firmly established¹¹. He gains further victories over the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Amalekites, and the king of Zobah. A list of his family is now given; his sons, Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchi-shua¹²; and his daughters, Merab and Michal. His wife's name is Ahinoam, and Abner, the captain of his host, is his uncle.

XIII. SAMUEL AND SAUL—SAUL'S SECOND SIN.

I SAMUEL XV. 1-23.

XV. 1. Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people,

In the East, especially in India, streams of honey often pour from the trees. We are told that 'wild honey' was part of John Baptist's food in the desert.

⁸ Aijalon was some sixteen miles from the scene of battle. Here the Philistines would regain their own country. It is the place mentioned in the account of the battle of Beth-horon (Joshua x. 12).

⁹ This prohibition was renewed in the law of Moses (Lev. xvii. 10-14). It was one of the restrictions placed by the Council at Jerusalem on the early Christians (Acts xv. 20).

¹⁰ The lot is taken, as in the case of Achan (Joshua vii). The words 'Give a perfect lot' may mean 'Show the innocent,' as given in the margin; or 'Show the right,' as in R. V.

¹¹ Some suppose the words 'Saul took the kingdom' to mean that it was not till this success that he was recognized as king over all Israel. But they seem to be merely an introduction to the list of wars throughout his reign which follows. The Ammonite war was before this time. In R. V. we read, 'Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel.'

¹² Ishui is probably the same as the Abinadab of 1 Sam. xxxi. 2 and 1 Chron. x. 2. A fourth son, Ish-bosheth (2 Sam. ii. 8, 12, &c.) or Esh-baal (1 Chron. viii. 33, ix. 39), is mentioned afterwards.

XIII. SAMUEL AND SAUL—SAUL'S SECOND SIN.

I SAMUEL XV. 1-23.

XV. 2. Saul's next war is one not of defence, but of vengeance. It is against the Amalekites, a wild tribe descended from Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 12, 16), who dwell to the south or

over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

3. Now go and smite Amalek, 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.

4. And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

5. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

6. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

7. And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt.

8. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10. Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

south-west of Palestine. Against these there is an old grievance, for having attacked the Israelites at Rephidim on their march to Sinai (Part I, pp. 166, 167). For this it was predicted that the Lord would have perpetual war with them (Exod. xvii. 16). Balaam also had foretold their destruction (Num. xxiv. 20): and an express order had been given that, when the people were settled in the land of inheritance, they should 'blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven' (Deut. xxv. 19) ^a.

Saul is now ordered to 'smite them, and utterly destroy all that they have.' It is to be another war of extermination, like those in the time of Joshua (see Part I, p. 217).

4. Telaim is probably the same as Telem (Joshua xv. 24) in the south of Judah. Judah would naturally be the first district to suffer from the Amalekite attack.

6. The Kenites, a branch of the Midianites living in the wilderness of Judah (Judges i. 16), were always friendly to the Israelites. The origin of this friendship may be traced to the fact that Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses (Part I, p. 133), belonged to this tribe.

We have an instance of this friendliness in the story of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite (Judges iv. 17, &c.), who belonged to a branch of this nomadic tribe that had migrated northwards (pp. 8, 9).

7. Havilah probably represents the eastern frontier of the Amalekites, on the border of Mount Seir, extending southwards to Ezion-geber, on the eastern arm of the Red Sea; Shur, the western frontier, being on the border of Egypt (Part I, p. 161). In Gen. xxv. 18 the Ishmaelites are said to have dwelt 'from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt.'

8. Agag was apparently a title, not a name. We read of an Agag in Num. xxiv. 7. Josephus says that Agag was preserved to grace Saul's triumph on account of his stature and beauty.

^a These implacable foes seem to have taken every opportunity of injuring the Israelites. They joined the Canaanites (Num. xiv. 45), the Moabites (Judges iii. 13), and the Midianites (Judges vi. 3, vii. 12) in attacking them. Perhaps they had lately aided the Philistines.

11. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

12. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14. And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15. And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17. And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

18. And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice

11. All the Amalekites and their possessions had been devoted to destruction; and, for disobeying this command, the sentence against Saul, that he has lost the kingdom, is confirmed. Samuel is grieved at this decision; for, apart from his personal affection for Saul, he probably is afraid that to depose him, or to shut Jonathan out from succeeding to the throne, after they have so won the hearts of the people by their exploits, may provoke a revolution.

12. Saul had set up a 'place^b' or 'monument' (R. V.) of his victory at Carmel^c. The erection of this trophy was probably a proof of his self-reliant pride. The LXX describes him as riding to Carmel in a chariot.

He then goes on to Gilgal. There, where his accession had been solemnly confirmed, the sentence is to be pronounced that he has finally forfeited the kingdom.

13-15. Saul's profession that he has executed the Divine command is hypocrisy. When convicted by Samuel, he turns to excuses, trying first to shift the blame from himself to the people, and then seeking to cloke his disobedience under the pretext of religious observances^d.

17. Samuel reminds Saul of his unlooked-for promotion, and reproaches him with ingratitude in disobeying the express command of God.

22. The great truth here proclaimed is often afterwards repeated. The most remarkable of these passages are the following:—

Ps. xl. 8-10: 'Sacrifice and meat offering Thou wouldst

^b The word, which means 'hand,' is used again of Absalom's pillar in 2 Sam. xviii. 18. A hand was probably often engraved on such trophies as a symbol of strength.

Saul's memorial has been supposed by some to have resembled the famous Moabite stone. According to Jewish tradition, however, it was an arch made of olives myrtles, and palms.

^c This Carmel was a city of Judah, to the south-east of Hebron, and must be distinguished from Mount Carmel in Asher. It is mentioned again during David's exile in the story of Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 2).

^d 'When a man boasts of holiness, it is a sure sign that he is unholy' (Wordsworth).

of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

20. And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

22. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

23. For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

13. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID—THE PHILISTINE'S CHALLENGE.

I SAMUEL XV. 24—XVII. 31.

After this rebuke of Samuel's, Saul confesses his sin, and asks the prophet to turn with him, and worship the Lord¹. At first Samuel refuses, and Saul, seeking to detain him, tears his robe. The prophet sees in this a figure of rending the kingdom from him². When they have worshipped together, Samuel himself, acting as executioner, 'hews Agag in pieces

not, but mine ears hast Thou opened,' &c. (quoted in Heb. x. 8; see Part I, p. 17).

Ps. li. 16, 17: 'Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee. . . . The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit,' &c.

Isa. i. 11-15: 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord,' &c.

Hos. vi. 6: 'I desired mercy, and not sacrifice' (cp. Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7).

Amos v. 22-24: 'Though ye offer Me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them,' &c.

Mic. vi. 7, 8: 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

23. Such rebellion is said to be as bad as divining by evil spirits, or in any of the other ways employed by heathen nations. We are told in 1 Sam. xxviii. 3 that Saul tried during his reign to suppress such practices. Probably he had already commenced this work of reform, which would make the reproof more telling. R. V. has, 'Stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim^e.'

^e The one may refer to worship of public or national idols; the other to that of household gods.

13. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID—THE PHILISTINE'S CHALLENGE.

I SAMUEL xv. 24—xvii. 31.

¹ Saul's, however, is no true repentance. His real motive in making this request is that he may be 'honoured before the elders of the people.' He is moved by fear of losing popularity, rather than by sorrow for having disobeyed God's command.

² We may compare with this the story of Jeroboam and Ahijah (1 Kings xi. 30, 31), when the prophet rends Jeroboam's garment

before the Lord in Gilgal³. He then leaves Saul, and comes no more to see him⁴.

The sentence against Saul is quickly followed by the selection of his destined successor. Samuel is reproached for mourning so long for the disobedient king, and is bidden to go to Beth-lehem, where the future monarch is to be found in the family of Jesse⁵. He is afraid of Saul's vengeance, but is told that the ostensible purpose of his visit will be to offer sacrifice, and that the further object is to be kept private. The villagers of Beth-lehem are alarmed at the prophet's appearance, but are soon reassured.

When the sacrificial feast is ended, Jesse's sons are summoned to the prophet's presence. Samuel is struck by the stately appearance of the eldest, Eliab; but learns that the choice is no longer to be made as it was in Saul's case, 'for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' The other sons who are at home are brought before him, but he is told that none of these is the man chosen. Then David, the youngest, is brought from the sheepfolds, and Samuel is bidden to anoint him⁶. 'And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.'

Samuel now returns to Ramah. Saul, from whom 'the Spirit of the Lord has departed,' is 'troubled' with an evil spirit. Music is suggested as the remedy for these attacks, and David is summoned from time to time to soothe his fits of frenzy by playing on the harp. Saul loves him, and makes him his armour-bearer⁷.

The narrative now returns to the Philistine wars. These enemies have recovered from their defeat at Michmash⁸, and have encamped at a place called Ephes-dammim, between Shochoh and Azekah, some sixteen miles south-west of Jerusalem. Every day for forty days a gigantic Philistine comes out into the valley between the two armies, and challenges any Israelite to single combat⁹.

David, who has returned to his occupation as a shepherd, is sent by Jesse with a present of provisions for his three

in twelve pieces, and gives him ten of these, to signify that ten out of the twelve tribes are to be under his rule.

Symbolism of this kind was often used by the later prophets. See, for instance, Ezek. xxxvii. 15-17.

³ Agag is described as coming to Samuel 'delicately.' Some explain this as 'cheerfully.' The LXX has 'trembling.'

⁴ They appear only to have met once again, when Saul came to Samuel (1 Sam. xix. 24).

⁵ Jesse was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth iv. 21, 22). He appears to have had eight sons; three of whom are mentioned here besides David; Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah. He had two daughters; Zeruah, the mother of Abishai, Joab, and Asahel; and Abigail, the mother of Amasa. Little or nothing is known about David's mother.

Jesse's name is recalled afterwards as the ancestor of the Messiah: 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots' (Isa. xi. 1).

By the selection of David, the kingdom is to be transferred to a new tribe, from Benjamin to Judah.

⁶ David is described as 'ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to.' David means 'the darling,' or 'the beloved.'

⁷ There is some difficulty as to the order of events here. In the account of the combat with Goliath in ch. xvii David appears to be a stranger to Saul; but in ch. xvi he is spoken of as frequently visiting the court to soothe Saul in his madness, and ch. xvii, ver. 15 implies the same. Various explanations have been suggested. Perhaps the most probable of these is that the events are here grouped together, instead of being given in chronological order; a plan which is not without parallel both in the Old and New Testaments. Or possibly the accounts are compiled from different sources. The LXX omits parts of ch. xvii.

⁸ With the rapid recovery of the Philistines after defeat, we may compare the accounts of the Aequi and Volsci in early Roman history (Livy, iii. 8, 10, 31, 38, &c.).

⁹ We are told in Joshua xi. 22 that some of the old giants, the Anakims, remained in Gath, and we read again of giants there in 2 Sam. xxi. 16-22, where another Goliath is mentioned.

Six cubits and a span would be about 9 feet 9 inches. Pliny,

eldest brothers, who are with the army, and for their captain. Leaving his 'carriage' (or baggage) with the baggage wagon, he goes on to see the battle, and hears the insolent challenge of the Philistine. He learns also the rewards promised for any one who shall slay the braggart : great riches, the king's daughter in marriage, and freedom¹⁰ for his father's house. In spite of the taunts of his eldest brother Eliab, he goes about among the soldiers, talking of the matter. His readiness to accept the challenge is at last reported to Saul, who summons the youth to his presence.

XIV. DAVID AND GOLIATH.

I SAMUEL xvii. 32-58.

XVII. 32. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him ; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him : for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock :

35. And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth : and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear : and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

in his *Hist. Nat.* (vii. 16), mentions other instances of persons of this enormous height.

It was a common belief in former times that the race of men was diminishing in size. Virgil, describing the husbandman ploughing up a battlefield, says of him :

‘Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.’

(*Georgic* i. 497.)

There was a tradition that Goliath was the warrior who slew Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli.

¹⁰ This freedom may mean exemption from service or taxation, or that the family were to be made freeholders or nobles.

XIV. DAVID AND GOLIATH.

I SAMUEL xvii. 32-58.

XVII. 34-36. A shepherd’s life in the East is one of much danger. Our Lord refers to these perils in his allegory of the Good Shepherd, when He speaks of the wolves which ‘scatter the sheep,’ and of the ‘good shepherd giving his life for them’ (John x. 11, 12). In David’s time great part of Palestine was still covered with forests, which were the lairs of wild beasts. ‘From the Lebanon descended the bears. From the Jordan ascended the lion, at that time infesting the whole of Western Asia’ (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 52). The prophet Jeremiah (xlix. 19, l. 44) speaks of the lion coming up ‘from the swelling (or overflowing) of Jordan.’ Amos (iii. 12) describes the shepherd as rescuing the mangled carcase of the sheep ‘from the mouth of the lion,’ taking out ‘two legs, or a piece of an ear ^a.’

^a In this same shepherd-life David learned that love of nature which we find displayed in such psalms as viii, xix, xxix. In the first of these the shepherd-boy, who, in his lonely night-watches on the downs, ‘considers the heavens, the moon and the stars, which God hath ordained,’ is filled with a wonder

37. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

38. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.

40. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

42. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43. And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and

38-40. David refuses to take the cumbrous and heavy armour, to which he is unaccustomed, and goes out to battle with the weapons familiar to him, the shepherd's staff or switch, and the sling, in the use of which he has gained deadly skill^b. As he crosses the valley, he picks five stones out of the rivulet which runs through it, and puts these into his wallet. He goes forth thus, 'in the name of the Lord of hosts,' against the Philistine armed with sword and spear and shield^c.

43. The dog, which is such a favourite animal with us for its intelligence and faithfulness, was then the type of that which was unclean and contemptible. Dogs are the scavengers of the East. Hence 'the general term dog in the Bible is never used, except as expressive of disgust' (*Helps to Study of Bible*, § xlvi, art. 'Dog'). So in Isa. lvi. 11 the watchmen are compared to 'greedy dogs, which can never have enough^d.'

which breaks forth in the words, 'Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?' In Ps. xix he tells how 'the heavens declare the glory of God,' and compares the wonders of the natural world to the perfect law of the Lord. This latter psalm describes what we should call the analogy between natural and revealed religion. Ps. xxix again is an account of one of the terrible storms which at times burst over Palestine, when 'the voice of the Lord' is heard in the thunder.

It was then too that he pondered on the Divine care and guidance, of which his humble work was a figure, as he describes it in Ps. xxiii: 'The Lord is my Shepherd.'

^b Like the 700 Benjamites, of whom we read in Judges xx. 15, 16, who could 'sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss.'

^c 'Never Puritan went into battle with a loftier inspiration. It was a touch of the same spirit that Cromwell caught, when he chose "the Lord of hosts" for his battle-cry at Dunbar, and greeted the rout of his foes with the words of the psalm (lxviii. 1), "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered"' (Geikie, iii. 162).

^d So in 2 Kings viii. 13 (R. V.) Hazeael contemptuously describes himself as a dog: 'But what is thy servant, which is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?'

with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

48. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David.

51. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

52. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou

Our Lord says, 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs' (Matt. vii. 6), and, in His reply to the Canaanitish woman, uses the term by which the Jews often described the impure Gentiles, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs' (Matt. xv. 26). St. Paul says, 'Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers' (Phil. iii. 2); and St. Peter speaks of the dog 'turning to his vomit again' (2 Pet. ii. 22; cp. Prov. xxvi. 11). In Rev. xxii. 15 we are told that 'without (shut out from the holy city) are dogs, and sorcerers,' &c.

49. The Philistine, in his disdain, does not seem to have tried to cover himself with the shield, which his attendant was carrying. The helmets of those days appear to have had no 'visors,' to shelter the face^e.

51, 52. The Philistines were seized with a panic, and fled down the pass. 'The valley' should probably be 'Gai,' as in R. V.; or Gath, as in LXX. Shaaraim was a town in the lowlands of Judah (Joshua xv. 36).

It was understood that the contest between the two nations was to be decided by the result of this single combat^f.

^e The LXX, however, describes David as smiting him 'through the helm.'

^f For other instances in which the fate of nations was to be decided by picked combatants, we may compare the story told by Herodotus (i. 82) of the contest of 300 champions on either side, in the war of the Spartans and Argives for the border territory of Thyrea. Also the legend of the battle between the three Horatii and the three Curiatii, in the war of the Romans and Albans (Livy, i. 24).

A fight of twelve picked champions on either side, during the hostilities between David and Ish-bosheth, which was followed by a pitched battle, is recorded in 2 Sam. ii. 15-17.

come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

54. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

55. And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.*

56. And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling *is*.

57. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

58. And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

14. HISTORY OF DAVID (*continued*).

SAUL'S JEALOUSY.

I SAMUEL xviii. I—xx. I7.

One result of David's victory is the admiration and affection felt for him by Jonathan, and the commencement of their life-long friendship¹. He now comes to live altogether at the court, and, being appointed to command the king's

54. Some have supposed this to mean that David took the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, when the city was finally captured (2 Sam. v), and made his capital. But the lower part of Jerusalem probably belonged already to the Israelites, the fortress alone remaining in the hands of the Jebusites.

We find that the sword of Goliath was afterwards placed in the sanctuary at Nob, where it was given to David by Ahimelech (1 Sam. xxi. 9).

55. It has been suggested, to account for this inquiry, that David had now outgrown Saul's recollection ; or that, as the king's daughter had been promised to the conqueror of Goliath, he was naturally anxious to know about David's family. (But see notes on last abstract ^f.)

^f In the LXX there is a psalm (not numbered) placed at the end of the Psalter, which is said to have been written by David after this combat. It tells how he, the youngest of his father's house, was preferred to his tall and beautiful brethren, and anointed ; how he met and slew the Philistine, who cursed him by his idols ; and so 'took away the reproach from the children of Israel.'

14. HISTORY OF DAVID (*continued*). SAUL'S JEALOUSY.

I SAMUEL xviii. 1-xx. 17.

¹ As a token of this affection, Jonathan gives David his own robe and armour. Such a present from an Eastern prince was a rare mark of favour. Thus we read in Esther vi. 8, 9, that Mordecai, on his promotion, was arrayed in the robe 'which the king useth to wear' (see Geikie, iii. 164).

'men of war,' gains further renown by leading successful raids against the Philistines².

As he returns from one of these expeditions, a crowd of women come out to meet the army, chanting a hymn of triumph, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.' Saul cannot bear the thought of David's fame eclipsing his own; his jealousy is aroused, and he suspects the young leader of aiming at the sovereignty. Next day, in a fit of frenzy, he 'casts³' his javelin at David, who, as before, is seeking to soothe him with music. As David's popularity goes on increasing, the king, more and more alarmed, devises a treacherous plan to get rid of him. He sets him over a band of 1,000 men, who are to make hazardous expeditions against the Philistines; and, as a reward for success in these, promises him his daughter Merab in marriage⁴. Merab is after all given to another husband, and David is then promised Michal, the younger princess, for his wife, who has for some time been in love with him. The condition required is that he shall slay one hundred Philistines; and, having slain double this number, he now becomes Saul's son-in-law.

Saul's hatred, however, continues, and he even urges his servants to kill David. Jonathan pleads with his father, and the order is for a time withdrawn; but soon after this the king makes another attempt to take David's life by hurling his javelin at him. He then sends men to capture David in his own house⁵; but Michal helps her husband to escape by the window, and deceives Saul's messengers, when they arrive, by pretending that he is ill, and placing an image in the bed to represent him⁶.

David now joins Samuel at Ramah, and the two go together to Naioth. Thither Saul's messengers follow, but three bands, who are dispatched one after another, instead of taking the man of whom they are in pursuit⁷, are inspired by the music and song of the company of prophets, and join in their exercises. Saul now goes in person; but 'the Spirit of the

Bishop Ellicott compares the interchange of 'armour of very different value' (one of gold, the other of brass), between Glaucus and Diomedes, described in Homer, *Iliad*, vi. 234-236.

It is said here (ver. 1) that 'the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David. and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.' David, after Jonathan's death, describes his love as 'wonderful, passing the love of women' (2 Sam. i. 26).

Other instances of such close friendship, recorded in ancient history, are Orestes and Pylades (Eurip. *Orest.* 804-806, &c.); Damon and Pythias (or Phintias) (Cic. *De Off.* iii. 10; *Tusc. Disp.* v. 22); and Laelius and Scipio Africanus (Cic. *De Amicitia*).

² 'From the Philistines' (see margin), not 'Philistine.' This does not refer to the return after killing Goliath, but to one of the later expeditions.

³ But the word may only mean 'brandished,' threatening to hurl it (cp. ch. xx. 33).

⁴ So 'the king's daughter' had been before promised to whoever should slay Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 25).

⁵ From the title of Psalm vii, which is commonly referred to this persecution, the leader of this company would seem to have been Cush the Benjamite. The title of Psalm lix speaks of it as composed 'when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill David.' In this (ver. 15) the assassins are described as prowling about the city of Gibeah 'like a dog.'

⁶ For the manner of David's escape we may compare that of the spies at Jericho (Joshua ii. 15), and that of St. Paul from Damascus (Acts ix. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33).

For the meaning of 'teraphim,' see Part I, p. 77. The image here seems to have been the full size of a man.

⁷ So, when the chief priests and Pharisees sent 'officers' to take our Lord, they returned, unable to execute the order, saying, 'Never man spake like this man' (John vii. 45, 46). And when the band of men came with Judas to arrest Him, they were overawed, and 'went backward, and fell to the ground' (John xviii. 6).

Lord' comes upon him also, and, tearing off his mantle, he falls down before Samuel and prophesies ⁸.

David now escapes from Naioth, and has a secret conference with Jonathan. A plan is devised by which the latter is to discover whether his father still entertains the same designs against David's life ⁹.

XV. DAVID'S EXILE—DAVID AND JONATHAN.

I SAMUEL XX. 18-42.

XX. 18. Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon : and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

19. And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

20. And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark.

21. And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them ; then come thou : for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt ; *as* the LORD liveth.

22. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee ; go thy way : for the LORD hath sent thee away.

23. And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

24. So David hid himself in the field : and when

⁸ The question, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' is therefore renewed (I Sam. x. 11, 12).

⁹ This is the occasion of a solemn covenant between David and Jonathan, by which the former undertakes that he will not 'cut off his kindness' from Jonathan's house. Jonathan thus secures his children from the cruel fate common in the East after a revolution and change of dynasty (see p. 149).

XV. DAVID'S EXILE—DAVID AND JONATHAN.

I SAMUEL XX. 18—42.

XX. 18. The beginning of each month was a time for solemn sacrifices to be offered, which were accompanied by blowing of trumpets (Num. xxviii. 11—15; x. 10). So in Ps. lxxxii. 3, we read: 'Blow up the trumpet in the new moon; even in the time appointed, and upon our solemn feast-day.' In several passages of the Old Testament 'new moons and sabbaths' are mentioned together as times to be kept holy ^a.

19. 'The stone Ezel,' where David was to hide, was probably a cairn or heap of stones, or possibly a cavernous rock or ruin.

23. This was a solemn appeal to be faithful to the covenant they had made. So Laban said to Jacob, 'The Lord watch between me and thee' (Gen. xxxi. 49).

25, 26. On the first day Saul made no inquiry about David's absence, supposing that he had done something which, according to the Levitical law, required that he

^a St. Paul, cautioning the Colossians against 'the Judaizers,' as they were called, who tried to force all the old observances on the Christian converts, says, 'Let no man judge you . . . in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath day' (Col. ii. 16).

the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

25. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

26. Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean.

27. And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

28. And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Beth-lehem:

29. And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31. For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

32. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and

should purify himself, before he could take part in such a ceremony ^b (Lev. vii. 20, 21).

Some suppose that the words about Jonathan and Abner mean that Jonathan arranged that Abner should sit next to Saul, where David, as the king's son-in-law, would naturally have sat; so that the absence of the latter might not be noticed.

27. On the second day Saul becomes suspicious, and on Jonathan making the excuse for David's absence, which he and David had agreed upon, the king is furious ^c.

30. To cast a slur upon a man's parents was and is regarded among Eastern nations as the greatest outrage. The insult to his mother might well excite Jonathan's 'fierce anger'; but we are told (ver. 34) that his indignation was rather on David's account.

^b The laws about purification among the Jews were very stringent. 'The distinctive idea attached to ceremonial observances among the Hebrews was that "uncleanness" cut a person off for the time from social privileges, and left his citizenship among God's people for a time in abeyance' (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, iii. 1502).

Special regulations were made for cases in which pollution had been contracted by contact with a dead body. Certain diseases made the victims unclean, the gravest of these cases being leprosy. There were also strict rules as to 'unclean meats,' forbidding the use of many animals for food.

We read in St. Luke (ii. 22) of the purification of the Virgin Mary after the birth of our Lord, when the child Jesus was also presented in the Temple. These events are commemorated in our festival of 'the Purification' (Feb. 2).

As instances of the dread of pollution in the New Testament, we may notice the conduct of the Jews, who would not enter Pilate's judgement-hall at our Lord's trial, 'lest they should be defiled' by entering a house from which all leaven had not been removed (John xviii. 28; Bp. Westcott's note); and their anxiety that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the sabbath day, 'which was a high day' (John xix. 31).

^c According to the law all such annual sacrifices were to be offered at the tabernacle. But, since the destruction of Shiloh, these local feasts seem to have taken the place of the early festivals there (Judg. xxi. 19).

said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33. And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35. And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36. And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee?

38. And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41. *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace,

31. Saul accuses David of plotting to get possession of the kingdom, and Jonathan, remembering their covenant, indignantly repudiates this charge of disloyalty.

33. This may mean only that Saul threatened Jonathan by brandishing his javelin (see p. 131).

35-38. This had been agreed upon as the sign that David was to flee from Saul. The words which were used to the attendant, 'Make speed, haste, stay not,' might also be designed to explain at once to David his extreme peril.

40. His 'artillery' means his bow and quiver and arrows. The word was originally applied to weapons of various kinds^d.

41. Instead of 'toward the south,' the LXX has 'from behind the mound,' or heap of stones.

Josephus says that David thus did obeisance to Jonathan for having saved his life. So Jacob 'bowed himself to the ground seven times' before Esau; and Joseph's brethren 'did obeisance' to him on their visits to Egypt (Gen. xlii. 6, xliii. 26), thus fulfilling his dreams (Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9).

Great though his danger is, David cannot go without a tender farewell of Jonathan. David, we are told, 'exceeded'; that is, was quite overcome, apparently rendered speechless with grief.

^d This is the only passage in which the word is found in the Bible. It is coupled in old writers with other words denoting armour generally. Shakespeare (*Taming of the Shrew*, Act i, sc. 2) uses it figuratively of thunder—

'Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?'

Milton (*P. L.* ii. 714, 715) does the same—

'As when two black clouds,
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on,' &c.

forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

XVI. DAVID'S EXILE (*continued*). AT NOB AND
AT ADULLAM.

I SAMUEL XXI—XXII. 4.

XXI. 1. Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?

2. And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

3. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

4. And the priest answered David, and said, *There* is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

42. Jonathan briefly recalls the covenant, and appeals to the Lord to be a witness to it. He at least will be at peace with David, however bitter Saul may be against him^e.

^e So far as we know, David and Jonathan met only once after this, when Jonathan visited David in the wilderness of Ziph, and their covenant was then renewed (I Sam. xxiii. 16-18).

XVI. DAVID'S EXILE (*continued*). AT NOB AND
AT ADULLAM.

I SAMUEL XXI-XXII. 4.

XXI. 1. David's strange life as an outlaw, which now commences, is full of adventures.

Not daring to return to Samuel, for fear of discovery, he hurries to the city of Nob, a short distance north of Jerusalem. The tabernacle seems to have been removed there after the fall of Shiloh, and a colony of eighty-five priests had gathered round it, 'who wore a linen ephod' (I Sam. xxii. 18). The high priest is Ahimelech; perhaps the same as 'Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas' (I Sam. xiv. 3), and so the great-grandson of Eli.

2. Ahimelech gives David a cold and cautious greeting. No doubt he knows of Saul's jealousy of David, and, when he sees the latter come unattended, suspects some serious breach between them. To remove this alarm, David pretends that he is engaged in a secret mission for the king^a, and says that he has 'appointed' his attendants to meet him at a certain place. Our Lord's words in Mark ii. 25, 26 imply that he had such attendants.

^a This is another instance of the truthfulness of the Scriptural narrative. This false statement of the man after God's own heart is not suppressed. We have already had an instance of deception on the part of David, in the excuse he told Jonathan to make for his absence (I Sam. xx. 6).

5. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

6. So the priest gave him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.

8. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

9. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

10. And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

3-5. The 'hallowed bread' is the shewbread (Lev. xxiv. 5-9). These twelve loaves were changed every sabbath day, the old loaves being eaten by the priests^b.

6. When the Pharisees found fault with our Lord's disciples for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day, He answered them by referring to David eating the shewbread, 'when he had need, and was an hungered,' 'which is not lawful to eat but for the priests,' and giving 'to them which were with him' (Mark ii. 25, 26; cp. Matt. xii. 3; Luke vi. 3, 4)^c.

7. Doeg may have been there for purposes of purification, or perhaps was in 'sanctuary' there, after committing some crime^d.

8, 9. The sword of Goliath had been placed there by David as a votive offering. Perhaps Doeg mistook Ahimelech's object in going into the sanctuary to fetch this, and therefore told Saul that he had 'inquired of the Lord' for David, that is, had consulted the Urim and Thummim for him.

10, 11. David has failed to find a retreat with prophet or priest. There is no place among his countrymen where he may be safe from the fury of Saul. He therefore seeks refuge among their old enemies, the Philistines.

^b The word for 'vessels' here may mean 'bodies,' that is, the men themselves (Wordsworth). Others explain it of their baggage. Some consider the last word of ver. 5 to mean that the gift would not be illegal, because it would be 'sanctified by the instrument'; these words being thus either a compliment to Ahimelech, whose position would justify the act; or implying that the bread might be given to David, the ambassador, as he alleged, of the Lord's anointed.

^c This story has been described as setting forth 'the great evangelical truth, that the ceremonial law, however rigid, must give way before the claims of suffering humanity' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 62).

The name of Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, is probably coupled with this story because he was the only survivor of the massacre which followed (Mark ii. 26).

^d According to tradition, Doeg was the attendant of Saul mentioned in 1 Sam. ix, and also the man who recommended David to Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 16).

11. And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is* not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

12. And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13. And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

14. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me?

15. Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the mad man in my presence? shall this *fellow* come into my house?

XXII. 1. David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him.

2. And every one *that was* in distress, and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he

13. David appears foaming at the mouth, and ‘scrabbles’ or scrapes marks on the doors of the king’s palace^e.

Among Eastern nations madness is regarded with a sort of superstitious awe, the man so affected being supposed to be under the influence of some supernatural power.

14, 15. The heading of Ps. xxxiv refers it to this period. It is called ‘A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour (ver. 13) before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.’ Abimelech, which was a title meaning ‘father of the king,’ or ‘father-king,’ is there put for Achish (see Part I, p. 53).

XXII. 1, 2. Adullam was a town in the lowland of Judah, some thirteen miles from Bethlehem (Joshua xv. 35). David now hides in one of the natural caves, which are found in this district.

Here he is joined by ‘his father’s house,’ who are afraid of the jealous fury of Saul. Many others flock to him; ‘every one that is in distress’ and ‘in debt^f,’ or ‘discontented^g.’ It

^e The LXX describes him as ‘drumming’ on the door. It is suggested that David copied the conduct of Saul, whom he had seen in his fits of frenzy; or assumed the excited demeanour of those ‘prophesying.’

^f Lending money at heavy interest was common among the Jews. They showed even then that greed of gain, with which passion they have always been credited, and of which Shakespeare has given us a type in Shylock of Venice, and Sir Walter Scott in Isaac of York. In Ps. xv. 5, which describes the man who is fitted to dwell in God’s tabernacle, it is said that he must be one ‘who hath not given his money upon usury.’ The laws provided in the Mosaic code for the relief of debtors had probably now fallen into neglect.

The miseries of debtors, however, were great in other ancient nations also. One of Solon’s measures of reform at Athens, called the *σεισάχθεια*, or ‘shaking off of burdens,’ was designed to relieve this grievance (Plutarch, *Solon*, 15). The laws about debt at Rome were very severe in early times, and were one of the chief causes of disaffection and secession (Livy, ii. 27, viii. 28).

^g It is from this that the ‘cave of Adullam’ has come to be used, as a political term, for those who are satisfied with neither political party.

became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3. And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me.

4. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

15. DAVID'S EXILE (*continued*). HARETH—
ZIPH—MAON.

I SAMUEL xxii. 5—xxiii. 29.

David is now joined by the prophet Gad¹, who advises him to move to the 'forest of Hareth.' Here he learns the disastrous results of his visit to Nob. Saul, filled with jealousy and fear, had one day broken out into abuse of David and Jonathan, when Doeg the Edomite took the opportunity of telling him of that visit, and of the help David had there received. Saul had at once summoned all the priests from Nob to Gibeah. There he accused Ahimelech of conspiring with David against him, and on the high priest maintaining David's loyalty, the king in his fury ordered a massacre of all the eighty-five priests². His 'footmen' or guards shrinking from this sacrilegious act, Doeg with his attendants had carried out Saul's commands. The city of Nob itself had been destroyed, and all the inhabitants and live-stock slain³. One of the priests alone had escaped, Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, who now brings the terrible news to David⁴.

is probably here, too, that the eleven stalwart Gadites from the east of Jordan join him (1 Chron. xii. 8-15), and a body of men from Judah and Benjamin under Amasa (1 Chron. xii. 16-18). He soon has a following of 400, which we find afterwards increased at Keilah to 600 (1 Sam. xxiii. 13)^h.

3, 4. 'Mizpeh of Moab' is not mentioned elsewhere. It has been suggested that it is the same as Zophim, on the top of Pisgah, both words meaning 'watch-tower.' David's friendly relations with the Moabites were probably due to his descent from Ruth.

^h To this period belongs the romantic story told in 2 Sam. xxiii. 13-17, and 1 Chron. xi. 15-19 (see p. 201).

15. DAVID'S EXILE (*continued*). HARETH— ZIPH—MAON.

I SAMUEL xxii. 5—xxiii. 29.

¹ This is the first mention of Gad, who was afterwards one of David's seers (2 Sam. xxiv. 11), and is said to have been one of the compilers, with Samuel and Nathan, of the history of David's life (1 Chron. xxix. 29). He also, in conjunction with Nathan, composed the Temple services (2 Chron. xxix. 25).

² 'Unfortunately for himself Ahimelech consulted the Urim and Thummim on David's behalf.' It would seem that the high priest might only do this for the king himself. Hence this act was 'easily strained into a charge of treason' (Geikie, iii. 172). It is uncertain whether Ahimelech now denies this accusation, as a malicious invention or mistake of Doeg's; or whether his words mean that he had often inquired for David before; or that this was the first time he had done so.

The title of Ps. lii, 'Why boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant, that thou canst do mischief?' refers it to this malicious conduct of Doeg's.

Hearing of a Philistine attack on Keilah⁵, a city of Judah, David, after 'inquiring of the Lord,' resolves to rescue it. The Philistines are 'smitten with a great slaughter,' and David thinks he has found a safe refuge in this fortified town. Saul, however, hearing of this change of quarters, conceives that he has caught David in a trap, and gathers his forces to besiege Keilah. David now 'inquires of the Lord' again by Abiathar, and learning that Saul is really coming, and that the ungrateful people of Keilah will 'deliver him up,' makes a hasty retreat to the 'wilderness of Ziph⁶.'

Here the last interview with Jonathan takes place, and the covenant between them is once more renewed. Here, too, Saul at first seeks David in vain, till the Ziphites tell him that the fugitive is concealed 'in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon⁷.' By this treachery David is once more compelled to remove further south to the wilderness of Maon⁸, whither Saul follows him. At one time the pursuit is so close that, while David is going round one side of the mountain, Saul has reached the other. But at this point the king is opportunely recalled to repel a raid of the Philistines. The place is called the 'rock of divisions,' or 'of escape.' David now retreats to the 'strongholds of En-gedi.'

16. DAVID'S EXILE (*continued*). EN-GEDI— PARAN—STORY OF NABAL.

I SAMUEL XXIV, XXV.

It is at En-gedi¹ that the first of the two occasions occurs, on which David spares Saul's life. The latter, arriving there with a band of 3,000 men, unwittingly enters the very cave in which David and some of his followers are hiding. David

³ The famine in David's reign (2 Sam. xxi. 1) is said to have been 'for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.' As we have no other mention of this slaughter, some have supposed that the people of Gibeon, who were employed in the service of the tabernacle (Joshua ix. 21-27), were involved in the present massacre (see p. 241).

⁴ Abiathar was afterwards David's high priest and faithful friend, till he took part in the conspiracy of Adonijah. For this he was deposed by Solomon; but his life was spared, in recognition of his services to David (1 Kings ii. 26).

⁵ Keilah was a town in the lowland of Judah (Joshua xv. 44), near the Philistine border.

Ps. xxxi, which Dean Stanley calls 'the fortress hymn,' commencing 'In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust,' is supposed by some to refer to this treachery and danger; though others assign it to the period of David's flight from Absalom.

⁶ Ziph was on high ground, 2,882 feet above the sea, nearly four miles south of Hebron.

The title of Ps. liv, 'Save me, O God, for Thy name's sake,' assigns it to the period of David's exile.

⁷ Jeshimon means 'the waste.' It was 'a plateau of white chalk,' with cliffs rising almost perpendicularly from the Salt Sea.

⁸ Maon was a desert plain, a little further south. A hill and valley near Hebron are still called Main.

16. DAVID'S EXILE (*continued*). EN-GEDI— PARAN—STORY OF NABAL.

I SAMUEL XXIV, XXV.

¹ En-ge-di, 'the fountain of the kid,' was 'so called from the beautiful spring, frequented by the wild goats, which leap from rock to rock along the precipices immediately above the Dead Sea' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 66). It was an oasis in that desert region, well watered, with shelter of palm trees, and with numerous

is urged by his men to take this opportunity of ridding himself of his enemy, but he will not 'stretch forth his hand against the anointed of the Lord,' and contents himself with cutting off the 'skirt' or fringe of Saul's robe.

When Saul has left the cave, David cries after him, declaring his loyalty and affection, and upbraiding the king for his relentless pursuit of him. Saul is much moved by this appeal; 'he lifted up his voice and wept.' He acknowledges that David is more righteous than he; and, expressing his conviction that the exile will one day be king, makes him take an oath not to 'destroy his name out of his father's house².'

A short notice is inserted here of Samuel's death and burial³, and of the national mourning for him.

David is now described as moving further south to Paran⁴. The scene, however, of the story which follows is the district of Maon. A wealthy chieftain, called Nabal, a descendant of Caleb, who is living at Carmel⁵, churlishly refuses the request made by David's messengers at the festival of the sheep-shearing, for a present for them and their master. David's followers, who might have made raids on Nabal's large flocks, have, on the contrary, protected them from marauders, having been, as the shepherds afterwards describe it, 'a wall unto them both by day and by night.' For this ingratitude, and for Nabal's insulting words, describing him as a renegade and outlaw, David resolves to take vengeance. As he is preparing to set out with 400 men, Abigail, Nabal's wife, having heard of her husband's conduct, sends him a liberal present, and follows it up in person. Prostrating herself before David, she entreats him to overlook her husband's 'folly⁶.' She says that God has sent her to prevent David committing a crime, and foretells his safety and success⁷. He bids her go in peace. On her return she finds her husband has been drinking to excess; and on her telling him next morning of his narrow escape, he is suddenly stricken; 'his heart died within him, and he became as

caverns in the cliffs; so that it was in every way adapted to be a retreat for David and his followers.

² Such wholesale slaughter of the relations of the late king was the common result of a change of dynasty. So Baasha slew all the family of Jeroboam (1 Kings xv. 29); Zimri in turn slew all the house of Baasha (1 Kings xvi. 11); and Jehu slew all of the house of Ahab (2 Kings x) (Ellicott).

³ Samuel is buried 'in his house at Ramah'; that is, probably, in the court or garden attached to his house. So King Manasseh was buried 'in the garden of his house' (2 Kings xxi. 18; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 20). We hear of no one else in Jewish history, save kings, being buried within the city walls, with the single exception of the high priest Jehoiada (2 Chron. xxiv. 16). Such privilege was very rare among ancient nations (Geikie, iii. 196).

⁴ The name Paran properly belonged to a region on the borders of the wilderness of Sinai. It seems, however, to have been also used for the vast tract of desert reaching up to the territory of Judah. The LXX here has Maon for Paran.

⁵ This is of course the Southern Carmel, the place where Saul set up his trophy after the defeat of the Amalekites (1 Sam. xv. 12).

⁶ Nabal means 'folly.' In David's lament over Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33), 'Died Abner as a fool dieth?' the LXX has 'Died Abner like Nabal?'

⁷ 'She poured forth her petition in language, which both in form and substance almost assumes the tone of poetry' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii 69). She speaks of the soul of David being 'bound in the bundle of life,' referring to the custom of placing money and other valuables in a bag for safety while travelling; and of David 'slinging out the souls of his enemies, as out of the middle of

a stone.⁷ He only survives for some ten days⁸; after which David sends to request Abigail to be his wife. She, while confessing her unworthiness of the honour, at once comes to him.

David has already, we are here told, taken another wife, Ahinoam of Jezreel in Judah. Michal, his former wife, had before this been given to Phalti or Phaltiel of Gallim, a town between Gibeah and Jerusalem⁹.

XVII. SAUL AND DAVID.

I SAMUEL XXVI.

XXVI. 1. And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is before Jeshimon*?

2. Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

3. And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, *which is before Jeshimon*, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

4. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

5. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

6. Then answered David and said to Ahimelech

a sling,' with reference, perhaps, to his famous victory over Goliath.

⁸ Nabal was probably struck with apoplexy or paralysis, and the second attack proved fatal.

⁹ We read in 2 Sam. iii. 13-16 that David required Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, to restore Michal, and that he commissioned Abner to take her from Phaltiel.

XVII. SAUL AND DAVID.

I SAMUEL XXVI.

XXVI. 2. Saul sets out again with his standing army of 3,000, as he had done before, when he tried to capture David at En-gedi. The people of Ziph are again the informers ^a.

5. 'In the trench' should be rather 'in the midst of his carriages' (margin), or 'within the place of the wagons' (R. V.). The baggage wagons were probably placed round the encampment as a barricade.

6. This is the first mention of Abishai. Joab, Abishai,

^a Commentators are divided as to whether this is a second instance of David's generosity, or another version of the story given in ch. xxiv. There are many points of resemblance, such as the information by the Ziphites, the number of Saul's force, and the counsel given to David; but there are also important differences of detail, especially the account of David's secret invasion of Saul's camp, which is totally different from anything in the previous story.

the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

7. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time.

9. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?

10. David said furthermore, *As* the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

11. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13. Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space *being* between them:

and Asahel were the three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister. 'Between them and Abner a blood feud seems to have existed' (Ellicott).

This is the only mention of Ahimelech the Hittite. We may compare, for another of this race among David's followers, Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. xi. 3, &c.).

7. David and Abishai creep through the brushwood to Saul's camp. They soon discover Saul by the spear placed 'at his bolster^b,' or rather 'at his head' (R. V.). The spear is usually so planted in Arab encampments, to mark the place where the chief is resting, and the 'cruse' or vessel of water is placed by his head, ready for use^c.

8, 9. So David's men had urged him to take Saul's life, and so David had refused to stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. xxiv. 4, 6).

^b The same word is rendered 'pillows' in the account of Jacob's dream (Gen. xxviii. 11).

^c 'I noticed,' says a modern traveller, 'at all the encampments which we passed, that the sheikh's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the ground in front of it. . . . So Saul, when he lay sleeping, had his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster, and Abner and the people lay round about him. . . . The cruse of water at Saul's head is in exact accordance with the customs of the people at this day. No one ventures to travel over these deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place one at the "bolster," so that the owner can reach it during the night. The Arabs eat their dinner in the evening, and it is generally of such a nature as to create thirst; and the quantity of water which they drink is enormous' (Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 367).

Others explain the cruse of the costly ewer carried by an attendant for the king's ablutions, when on a journey.

14. And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king?

15. And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16. This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster.

17. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

18. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

19. Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

20. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

21. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my

Abishai's meaning is that one thrust will be enough; there will be no need of a second stroke.

11. The spear and the cruse were the symbols of royalty. To lose these was a disgrace, and might seem to portend the loss of sovereign power.

15, 16. When David has recrossed the ravine, he calls aloud to Abner, taunting him with his carelessness. So before he had cried after Saul (1 Sam. xxiv. 8). In that still clear air the voice may be heard for some distance^d.

19. Two explanations have been given of the words 'accept an offering.'

i. If this persecution of David were the result of the 'evil spirit from God' (1 Sam. xvi. 23), then Saul should seek for pardon and release by offering sacrifice.

ii. If it were from the Lord, as the punishment for any offence of David's, he himself was ready to make such offering.

If, however, his exile were due to the false charges made against him by men, then he prays that these informers may be punished, for driving him away from the country where Jehovah was worshipped, to live among the heathen.

20. The same figure of the flea was used by David on the former occasion at En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 14). With that of

^d We may compare the story of Jotham calling out to Abimelech from Mount Gerizim (Judges ix. 7).

son David : for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day : behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear ! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23. The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness : for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed.

24. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25. Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David : thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

17. CONCLUSION OF DAVID'S LIFE AS AN EXILE.

I SAMUEL XXVII. 1—XXVIII. 2, XXIX, XXX.

David, now despairing of reconciliation with Saul, or of safety in his own country, goes for refuge to Achish, king of Gath. He takes with him his two wives, Abinoam and Abigail, and his 600 followers. Saul, hearing of this, 'seeks no more for him.' The exile 'finds grace in the eyes of Achish,' who allows him Ziklag¹ as a home. He lives there for a year and four months.

While there David attacks the neighbouring tribes of the

the partridge we may compare Ps. xi. 1 : ' How say ye then to my soul that she should flee as a bird unto the hill?'

23. With this may be compared Ps. xviii. 20-24 : ' The Lord reward me after my righteous dealing,' &c.

25. This seems to have been the last interview between Saul and David. David mistrusts Saul's invitation to return to the court, and continues his wanderings. Saul goes back to Gibeah^e.

^e 'The crisis was now passed. The earliest stage of David's life was drawing to its close. Samuel was dead, and with him the house of Ramah was extinct. Saul had ceased to be dangerous, and the end of that troubled reign was rapidly approaching. David is now to return to a greater than his former position, by the same door through which he left it, as an ally of the Philistine kings' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 67).

The words of Saul, however, forecast, in a higher and wider sense, the future greatness of David.

17. CONCLUSION OF DAVID'S LIFE AS AN EXILE.

I SAMUEL xxvii. 1—xxviii. 2, xxix, xxx.

¹ The site of Ziklag is uncertain. It was probably a town on the Philistine border ; which, having originally belonged to Simeon (Joshua xix. 5), had been taken by the Philistines, and was now in the kingdom of Gath. In Neh. xi. 28, 30 it is mentioned as one of the towns between Beer-sheba and the valley of Hinnom.

² The Geshuri or Geshurites are mentioned with the Philistines among the tribes of the south in Joshua xiii. 2. It is not known who the Gezrites (or Girzites, R. V.) were. The town of Gezer is much further north.

Geshurites, Gezrites², and Amalekites, and utterly destroys them. On his return, Achish asks him whither he has made a 'road³,' and David deceives him by saying that the spoil he has brought back is from his own countrymen of Judah, and from the Kenites. Achish therefore rejoices, thinking that David, having made Israel 'utterly to abhor him,' will be 'his servant for ever.'

The Philistines now resolve to make a fresh attack on the Israelites, and Achish invites David to accompany them. He dare not openly refuse; but the other Philistine lords, regarding him with suspicion, and recalling the song which spoke of him as 'slaying his ten thousands' of their countrymen, insist on his dismissal. Achish therefore reluctantly sends him back to Ziklag⁴.

Reaching it on the third day, David finds that in his absence the Amalekites have made a raid on the city and burned it, and have carried off the women, including his two wives. In his distress he consults Abiathar, who had remained with him since joining him at Keilah, and the high priest encourages him to pursue the marauders.

He sets out with his 600 men, but at the brook Besor⁵, 200, worn out by the rapid march, are left behind. The rest, continuing the pursuit, come upon an Egyptian, who has been three days and nights without food⁶. When they have revived him, he gives them an account of the Amalekite invasion, in which he had been left behind 'sick' by his master⁷. On receiving a solemn promise that he shall not be delivered up to this master, he undertakes to guide David to the camp of the Amalekites. They are found in utter disorder, feasting and rejoicing over their spoil, and are smitten with great slaughter, 400 only escaping on camels. The captives and spoil taken from Ziklag are recovered.

On returning to the 200 who had been left at Besor, 'the wicked men and men of Belial' refuse to give these a share of the booty. David, however, overrules this selfish proposal⁸; and this is the origin of a 'statute and ordinance,' that they

³ 'Rode,' the old way of spelling the word, was really the past participle of 'ride,' and meant 'a place ridden over.' Hence it came to be used by old writers for an invasion or inroad, just as we use 'raid' now. So Gower speaks of making 'many hastie rodes'; and an old historian (Holinshed) describes the Scotch as 'making a road' into England. A trace of the old meaning is still found in 'road' or 'roadstead,' as used for a place where ships ride at anchor.

⁴ We learn from 1 Chron. xii. 20-22 that David was joined about this time by 'a great host, like the host of God,' who kept coming to him 'day by day,' and who helped him against the 'band of the rovers' or Amalekites. Among these were famous 'captains of the thousands that were of Manasseh.'

⁵ The brook Besor was probably a stream which flows into the sea to the south of Gaza, now the Wady Sheriah.

⁶ We learn from this that the Amalekites had got a formidable start, since three days must have elapsed between the burning of Ziklag and David's return.

⁷ The captive describes the raid as having been made 'upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and the south of Caleb.' In ver. 16 we are told that the spoil was taken out of the land of the Philistines. These and the Cherethites are coupled together in other passages (Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 4-7, &c.). Some suppose Cherethites or Cherethim to mean the people of Crete or Captor, from which island the Philistines also are said to have come (Amos ix. 7).

David's body-guard is afterwards described as consisting of Cherethites and Pelethites (2 Sam. viii. 18, xx. 23; 1 Chron. xviii. 17).

⁸ This has been compared with the story in Polybius of P. Scipio's conduct, after taking Nova Carthago in Spain. He required that all his troops should share equally, the sick and those guarding the camp, or those absent from any cause, receiving their fair share.

who 'tarrieth by the stuff' (or baggage) should share equally with those who take part in the actual engagement.

David, on reaching Ziklag, sends a present of spoil to all the towns of Judah where 'he and his men were wont to haunt'⁹; that is, which have been friendly to him.

XVIII. SAUL AND THE WITCH OF EN-DOR.

I SAMUEL xxviii. 3-25.

XXVIII. 3. Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6. And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

7. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

8. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit,

⁹ The Beth-el mentioned in this list is not the well-known Beth-el, but Bethuel, a town of Simeon. The other places named are mostly south of Hebron. This distribution shows the enormous amount of spoil taken, which must have been far more than the Amalekites could have carried off from Ziklag.

XVIII. SAUL AND THE WITCH OF EN-DOR.

I SAMUEL XXVIII. 3-25.

XXVIII. 3. This story is a digression, interrupting the history of David's exile, and leading up to the tragic end of Saul, which is to follow. The unhappy king, in his dismay at a fresh Philistine invasion, resorts to those magical arts, which the law of Moses had forbidden as an abomination unto the Lord (Deut. xviii. 9-12), and the professors of which he had banished from his kingdom.

The account of Samuel's death and burial and the mourning for him is repeated here from 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

4. Shunem was a village some three miles north of Jezreel. Abishag, David's last wife, lived there (1 Kings i. 3), and there Elisha restored to life the son of the great (or rich) woman who had entertained him (2 Kings iv).

The Israelites were encamped on Mount Gilboa, on the opposite side of the valley. This has been regarded by some as the place on which Gideon encamped, by the 'well of Harod' (or 'trembling'), before his attack on the Midianites ^a (Judges vii. 1).

^a Stanley, *S. and P.* p. 345, and *J. C.* ii. 28. In 1 Sam. xxix. 1 the Philistines are described as mustering at Aphek, and the Israelites as 'pitching by a fountain which is in Jezreel.' It was at Aphek that David and his followers were dismissed. The order of the narrative here would seem to imply that Aphek was between Shunem and the scene of the battle which follows, but no place of this name has been discovered in this locality.

Aphek, which means 'the fortress,' was a name given to several places in Palestine. In 1 Sam. iv. 1 we read of the

and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10. And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

14. And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

15. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou

6. After the massacre at Nob, Abiathar had joined David, bringing with him the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim (1 Sam. xxiii. 6). As we find Zadok officiating as high priest at Gibeon at the commencement of David's reign, it has been supposed that Saul had established a sanctuary there, and appointed him to this sacred office.

It is noticeable that in ver. 15 Saul makes no mention of Urim, but appears to have still had with him prophets, or expounders of the Divine will^b.

7, 8. The word for 'familiar spirit' here, as in ver. 3, is supposed to refer to the hollow mysterious voice, in which such as professed these arts gave their utterances, something like what we call a 'ventriloquist.' So in Isa. xxix. 4 we read of a voice, 'as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground,' and of 'whispering out of the dust'^c.

Philistines encamping at Aphek, before the battle in which the ark was taken. In 1 Kings xx. 26 Ben-hadad, king of Syria, is described as going up to Aphek, on his way to fight against Israel. This latter place was probably on the east of Jordan; the former in Sharon, a short distance west of Jerusalem.

It has been suggested that ch. xxviii. 4 describes the position of the two armies, after leaving those given in ch. xxix. 1. It was while at Gilboa that Saul paid his visit to En-dor (G. A. Smith, *Holy Land*, p. 401).

^b In 1 Chron. x. 13, 14 we are told that Saul 'died for his transgression,' and because he 'asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit,' and 'inquired not of the Lord.' The explanation of this seems to be that Saul did not show the faith, which alone could prompt worthy inquiry, but, despairing of Divine help in his perplexity, impatiently resorted to unlawful means of seeking for guidance.

Dean Stanley (*J. C.* ii. 28) quotes, as describing Saul's desperate expedient, the well-known words of Juno in her baffled fury against the Trojans:

'Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.'

(Virg. *Aen.* vii. 312.)

^c In the LXX version of 1 Chron. x. 13 this woman is spoken of as ἐγγαστριμυθος, which means 'a ventriloquist.'

In the account of Josiah's reforms, we read of his putting away 'the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards' (2 Kings xxiii. 24), with whom his grandfather Manasseh had dealt (2 Kings xxi. 6).

ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17. And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David:

18. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

19. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20. Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

21. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

22. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

23. But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

En-dor was a village about eight miles north of Gilboa. It is mentioned in the Psalmist's account of the defeat of Sisera: 'who perished at En-dor' (Ps. lxxxiii. 10).

According to a Jewish tradition, Saul's two attendants were Abner and Amasa, and the witch of En-dor was Abner's mother (Ellicott). One who brings up the spirits of the dead is called a necromancer (Deut. xviii. 11).

11, 12. The sorceress is evidently amazed at her own success; and recognizing Samuel, discovers, probably either by the prophet's indignant gestures, or by some words which he utters, that her visitor is the king himself. Imagining that the visit is a trap to catch her in the practice of her arts, she is terror-stricken.

13. The word here translated 'gods' (Elohim) may mean 'a god' (R. V.)^d. Samuel's head was wrapt in 'a mantle' (or 'robe,' R. V.), such as he had worn in his lifetime^e.

14. Saul now 'does obeisance' (R. V.) to Samuel. Afterwards (ver. 20), when he has heard his doom pronounced, he falls prostrate on the ground in despair.

15-19. In answer to Saul's piteous appeal, Samuel reminds him of his sin, by which he had forfeited the kingdom; and tells him of the fate approaching for him and his sons, who to-morrow shall be with the prophet among the dead.

In Eccclus. xlvi. 20 it is said of Samuel that 'after his death he prophesied and showed the king his end.'

20-25. This conduct of the woman to Saul in his distress is inconsistent with the view held by some, that she was

^d It is the word commonly used for God. In some passages it is applied to earthly 'judges' or 'rulers' (Exod. xxi. 6; Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6).

^e Some have supposed that this was the prophetic or priestly robe, and that it was by this he was now recognized. Dean Stanley (*J. C.* i. 392) speaks of it as his 'peculiar robe,' made like the 'little coat' his mother brought to him at Shiloh, which was his badge unto the end. So, in *Dict. of Bible* (ii. 231), it is spoken of as his 'official priestly tunic,' of which his childish garment was a miniature. Others, however, maintain that it was the ordinary tunic worn by the upper classes at that time.

24. And the woman had a fat calf in the house ; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof :

25. And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants ; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

XIX. THE DEATH OF SAUL.

I SAMUEL xxxi—2 SAMUEL i. 16.

XXXI. 1. Now the Philistines fought against Israel : and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons ; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons.

3. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him ; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4. Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith ; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not ; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was

actuated throughout by bitter hatred for him, because he had sought to expel all that practised magical arts^f.

^f Such a view assumes that the bringing up of Samuel was an imposture practised on Saul by the woman. The question has been much discussed, whether the appearance of the prophet was real, or a spectral illusion; and, if the latter, whether it was due to the magic arts of the woman, or was a vision specially sent from God. The latter is the view held by Jewish writers, by the early Fathers, and by most leading commentators now.

XIX. THE DEATH OF SAUL.

I SAMUEL xxxi—2 SAMUEL i. 16.

XXXI. 1, 2. The story of Saul's death, of which we have no less than four versions^a, is told briefly. No details of the engagement itself are given^b. The account opens with the retreat of the Israelites from the plain of Jezreel^c to Mount Gilboa. Saul's three sons have already fallen^d.

3. The words mean rather, as in R. V., 'the archers overtook him; and he was greatly distressed,' &c. Conspicuous by his gigantic stature and royal armour, the Philistine attack was mainly directed against him^e.

^a That given here, and repeated almost word for word in 1 Chron. x; the Amalekite's story in 2 Sam. i. 1-16; and David's lament in 2 Sam. i. 17-27.

^b 'The details of the battle are but seen in broken snatches, as in the short scenes of a battle acted on the stage, or beheld at remote glimpses by an accidental spectator' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 30).

^c Esdraelon was the great battle-field of Palestine. There Deborah and Barak routed Sisera (Judges iv, v), and Gideon surprised and put to flight the vast host of Midianites (Judges vii). There, long years afterwards, King Josiah was slain at Megiddo, when fighting against Pharaoh-nechoh, king of Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 29).

^d Of two of these we know nothing except the names. Abinadab is probably the same as Ishui of 1 Sam. xiv. 49.

^e So in the battle at Ramoth-gilead the king of Syria had ordered his men to fight only with the king of Israel; and

dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

7. And when the men of Israel that *were* on the other side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8. And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish *it in* the house of their idols, and among the people.

10. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtarothe: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.

11. And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul;

12. All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

13. And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

4-6. Suicide was regarded by many ancient nations as a lawful means of escape from disaster or disgrace^f. But among the Jews it seems to have been rare.

The most remarkable case besides this, recorded in the Old Testament, is that of Ahithophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23); and, in the New Testament, that of Judas Iscariot (Matt. xxvii. 5) g.

According to tradition, Saul's armour-bearer was Doeg the Edomite.

7. 'On the other side Jordan' would naturally mean to the east of Jordan. But here it clearly means the country between the battle-field and the river. The words may mean 'the country alongside Jordan'; or possibly the writer of this part of the narrative was at the time on the east of Jordan.

9, 10. We are told in 1 Chron. x. 10 that 'they put Saul's armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.'

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, in his royal robes, was hard pressed by the enemy, who mistook him for Ahab, the latter having gone into battle disguised (1 Kings xxii).

^f In the *Phaedo* of Plato (vi. 61, 62) the question of the lawfulness of suicide is solemnly discussed, and the arguments against it are such as these: that man is a prisoner, who may not break loose from his prison; and that he is the property of the gods, and therefore may not rob them by taking his own life. We may compare with this, Spenser's *Faery Queene*, Bk. I, Cant. ix, st. 41, where he says:

'The terme of life is limited,
Ne may a man prolong nor shorten it;'

and compares him to the soldier or 'centonell,' who may not quit his post till

'Licensed to depart at sound of morning drome.'

^g The case of Samson (Judges xvi) rather resembles those of the heroes, like Codrus or P. Decius Mus, who sacrificed themselves for their country.

We have a parallel to Saul's case in the story of Brutus and Cassius, and others of the 'Liberators,' who destroyed themselves after the fatal battle of Philippi.

2 SAMUEL.

I. 1. Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag ;

2. It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head : and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

3. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

4. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

5. And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

6. And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

7. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I.

8. And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite.

9. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me.

There were several temples of 'the Ashtaroth' (R. V.), the most famous being that at Askelon^h.

Beth-shan (now called Beisan) was an important town on the edge of the Jordan valley, on the high-road between Egypt and Damascus. It has been called 'the key of Western Palestineⁱ.' It was one of the towns which had been left in the hands of the Canaanites (see Part I, p. 248).

11-13. The men of Jabesh-gilead were connected with the Benjamites, Saul's tribe (Judges xxi). But this gallant rescue was doubtless prompted by a feeling of gratitude for Saul's relief of their city at the commencement of his reign (1 Sam. xi. 1-11).

'Cremation' was contrary to Jewish custom. It was probably resorted to in this case, because the bodies had been mutilated, or to prevent insult of this kind. The bones were afterwards removed by David to the sepulchre of Kish, Saul's father, at Zelah (2 Sam. xxi. 12-14).

The mourning for Jacob at Atad also lasted for seven days.

2 SAMUEL.

I. 1. There is no real break between the two Books of Samuel. This is a continuation of the story of Saul's death.

2. We may compare, for these signs of grief, the account of

^h Ashtaroth or Astarte has been identified with the Aphrodite of the Greeks, and the Venus of the Romans (Cic. *de Nat. Deorum*, iii. 23). Herodotus (i. 105) tells how some of the Scythians, on their way to attack Egypt, plundered the temple of 'Celestial Aphrodite' at Ascalon, and were punished by the goddess. He describes it as her oldest temple.

ⁱ It was often used by invaders as a base of operations against Western Palestine. It was at last destroyed by Saladin in A. D. 1187.

'The one event by which this town becomes vivid in the Old Testament, the hanging of the bodies of Saul and Jonathan upon its walls, is but a symbol of the standing menace and insult it proved to Israel, from its proud position across the plain' (G. A. Smith, p. 358).

10. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

11. Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:

12. And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

13. And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

14. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?

15. And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

16. And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed.

XX. DAVID'S LAMENT—THE RIVAL KINGDOMS.

2 SAMUEL i. 17—ii. 11.

I. 17. And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

18. (Also he bade them teach the children of

the messenger who came to Shiloh with news of the capture of the ark (1 Sam. iv. 12).

The Amalekite's 'obeisance' showed his recognition of David as successor to the throne.

6-10. The Amalekite's story seems to have been a pure invention, by which he hoped to gain favour with the new king. Some, however, suppose that Saul had rallied, and that this man had, at his bidding, given him a final stab (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 31). Josephus adopts the messenger's account as true^k. He had brought to David the insignia of royalty.

11, 12. David might well mourn for Jonathan, his dearest friend; but his mourning for Saul, his bitter persecutor, is a noble example of forgiveness.

14-16. David had himself refused on two occasions to stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. xxiv. 6; xxvi. 9, 11)^l.

^k The word for 'anguish' (ver. 9) means rather 'giddiness' or 'cramp.' The LXX has *ὅτι κάτεσχέ με σκότος δεινόν*, 'terrible darkness has come over me.'

^l 'Regicide was not in David's eyes merely a political crime. . . . He considered taking the life of "the Lord's anointed" as a religious offence of the greatest magnitude' (Ellicott).

So Shakespeare says:

'There's such divinity doth hedge a king
That treason can but peep to what it would,'
(*Hamlet*, Act iv, sc. 5.)

XX. DAVID'S LAMENT—THE RIVAL KINGDOMS.

2 SAMUEL i. 17—ii. 11.

I. 17. This is the first dirge, or lament for the dead, recorded in the Bible^a. Another instance of such a dirge

^a Such dirges or elegies are found in the literature of many nations. Besides the well-known Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, we have in English Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais*, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

Judah *the use of the bow*: behold, *it is written in the book of Jasher.*)

19. The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

20. Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21. Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *as though he had not been* anointed with oil.

22. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23. Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

24. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

is the short lament of David over Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33, 34)^b. Jeremiah is said to have composed such a lament over Josiah (2 Chron. xxxv. 25).

This poem is another example of the parallelism, in its simplest form, which is the principle of Hebrew poetry (see Part I, p. 19).

18. 'The use of the bow' should be 'the song of the bow' (R. V.). This was already one of the common weapons of 'mighty men' (1 Sam. ii. 4). The name of 'The Bow' was probably given to this dirge, from the mention of Jonathan's bow in ver. 22^c; and the poem was taught by David to the 'children of Judah' during his reign at Hebron. The Benjamites, Saul's tribe, were especially famous for their skill in archery (1 Chron. xii. 2, &c.).

'The book of Jasher' has been already referred to in Joshua x. 13 (see Part I, p. 225). Perhaps one section of this book of national ballads was given to the great deeds of archers.

19. The words here should rather be, 'Thy glory, O Israel,' &c. Some have translated the word for glory 'the gazelle,' referring it solely to Jonathan.

Mount Gilboa, the scene of the tragedy (ver. 21; 1 Sam. xxxi. 1), is described as 'the high places.'

20. Gath and Askelon are specially mentioned; the former as the royal city, where Achish reigned (1 Sam. xxvii. 2); the latter as the centre of Philistine worship (see p. 171).

Women used to celebrate victories with music and dancing; as after the passage of the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 20); on Jephthah's return from the slaughter of the Ammonites (Judges xi. 34); and after the slaughter of Goliath (1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7).

^b This and the present poem are the only specimens of David's 'secular poetry'; of poems not, like the Psalms of David, on distinctly religious subjects.

^c We may compare with this the use of the name 'the Bush,' for the account in Exod. iii of Jehovah's appearance to Moses at the burning bush (Mark xii. 26; Luke xx. 37, where R. V. has 'the place concerning the Bush').

25. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.

26. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

27. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

II. 1. And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

2. So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

3. And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

4. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were they* that buried Saul.

The Philistines were commonly described by the Jews as 'the uncircumcised' (1 Sam. xiv. 6 ; xxxi. 4).

21. 'Fields of offerings' mean fields from which first-fruits for offerings might be gathered. The curse of barrenness is thus invoked on the scene of the disaster.

The loss of the shield in battle was looked upon as the greatest disgrace. The exhortation of the Spartan matrons to their sons, when they went out to foreign service, is said to have been, 'Either return with your shield or on it^d.'

Our version, following the Vulgate or Latin translation, makes the anointing refer to Saul. But the passage probably describes his shield, as 'anointed' or polluted with blood. It was customary to rub the shield with oil before battle. So Isaiah says (xxi. 5), 'Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.'

24. 'Clothing with scarlet' refers to the spoil taken by Saul from his enemies. The rich purple robes and ornaments were divided among the women. For 'with other delights' R. V. has 'delicately.'

26, 27. 'The love of women' means the love felt for women.

'The dirge is divided into three stanzas, each ending with the pathetic exclamation, "How are the mighty fallen!"' (Wordsworth).

II. 1. David's position, after his long exile and his alliance with Achish, is one of perplexity ; and he again inquires of the Lord (cp. 1 Sam. xxiii. 9, 10). He asks first whether he

^d Horace (*Odes*, ii. 7. 9, 10) describes himself as having suffered this disgrace :

'Tecum Philippos et celerem fugam
Sensi, relicta non bene parmula.'

He is probably thinking of the story of the Greek lyric poet, Alcaeus, of Lesbos (whose metre, with Sappho's, he first introduced at Rome), who lost his arms in a battle between the Mytileneans and Athenians (Herod. v. 95).

^e 'Fitly has this special portion of the sacred narrative been made the foundation of those solemn strains of funeral music, which will for ever associate the Dead March of such celebrations with the name of Saul' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 38).

5. And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.

6. And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you : and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7. Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant : for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

8. But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim ;

9. And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

10. Ish-bosheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

11. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

shall move from Ziklag to one of the cities of his own tribe of Judah; and then, which of these he must choose.

Hebron was well fitted in many ways to be his first capital, where he should reign over the south of Palestine^f. The northern part was in the hands of the Philistines; and the east had been seized by Saul's adherents.

3. Hebron seems to have given its name to the fertile plateau south-east of the town, on which there were several cities or 'villages' (Joshua xxi. 11, 12; Neh. xi. 25). We may compare the expression 'the cities of Samaria' (2 Kings xxiii. 19).

4-7. We learn from 1 Chron. xi. 1, 2 that the men of Judah claimed kinship with David, and recalled his achievements during Saul's reign. This new ceremony confirms his first anointing by Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 13).

David's conciliatory message to the men of Jabesh-gilead proved a failure, and he seems to have made no further effort to win over the other tribes.

8. Kish, Saul's father, and Ner, Abner's father, were brothers (1 Chron. ix. 36). This cousin had helped Saul in his pursuit of David.

Mahanaim was also suited for a capital, as is shown by David's retreat there, when driven out of Jerusalem by Absalom (see p. 222; cp. Part I, p. 81).

Ish-bosheth is called Esh-baal in 1 Chron. viii. 33; ix. 39^g. It was probably some five years after Saul's death, when he was set up as king^h.

9. 'The Ashurites' were probably the 'Asherites,' or tribe Asher. Another reading is the Geshurites (Deut. iii. 14; Joshua xiii. 13). 'Jezreel' means here the whole plain of Esdraelon.

^f Partly from its antiquity, and connexion with the history of the patriarchs (see Part I, pp. 36, 58, 105); partly from its strong position among the mountains of Judah (see Part I, p. 59).

^g We may compare the change of Gideon's name from Jerubbaal to Jerubbesheth (2 Sam. xi. 21: see p. 19).

^h It is probable that the end of Ish-bosheth's short reign of two years coincided with that of David's seven and a half years' reign at Hebron. Ish-bosheth, Saul's youngest son, could hardly have been forty years old at the time of Saul's death.

18. HISTORY TO THE RUPTURE BETWEEN
ISH-BOSHETH AND ABNER.

2 SAMUEL ii. 12—iii. 16.

The first encounter between the forces of the rival kingdoms takes place at Gibeon¹. David's troops are under the command of Joab; Ish-bosheth's under Abner. As the two armies are encamped by 'the pool' (or reservoir) of Gibeon, Abner proposes that the young men should 'arise and play,' that is, fight before them². Twelve champions are chosen from either army. In the fierce struggle each seizes his adversary by the head, and thrusts his sword into his side, and thus all are at once slain. The place is called from this encounter Helkath-hazzurim, 'or the field of heroes'³.

Exasperated by this sight, the two armies now engage, and Abner's forces are defeated and take to flight. The three brothers, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, are all with David's army⁴. Of these, Asahel, 'light of foot as a wild roe,' or gazelle, pursues Abner. The latter urges him to turn aside, and at last, as he presses close upon him, runs him through with 'the hinder end of the spear'⁵.

The pursuit is continued to the hill of Ammah, where the Benjamites rally round Abner, and he now cries out to Joab to desist⁶. Joab recalls his men, of whom he has lost only 20, while 360 of Abner's followers have been slain. Abner returns to Mahanaim. Joab and his troops, after burying Asahel at Beth-lehem, retire to Hebron.

During his reign in Hebron, six sons are born to David, of whom three are afterwards conspicuous: Amnon, son of Ahinoam; Absalom, son of Maacah; and Adonijah, son of Haggith.

The 'war,' or state of hostilities between the houses of Saul and David, continues, though we hear of no more actual engagements for some time. The power of David is continually growing greater.

18. HISTORY TO THE RUPTURE BETWEEN
ISH-BOSHETH AND ABNER.

2 SAMUEL II. 12—III. 16.

¹ Gibeon, now called El-Jib, was in the tribe of Benjamin, some five miles from Jerusalem, and so some distance from both Hebron and Mahanaim (cp. Joshua ix. 17).

Abner was probably seeking to secure Saul's native tribe for Ish-bosheth, with a view to establishing his capital there; while Joab regarded this movement as a menace to David's capital at Hebron. Or perhaps Joab's object was to add Benjamin to David's rule.

² Abner's object in this proposal may have been to avoid weakening by a pitched battle the forces on both sides, who might at any time be called upon for combined resistance to the Philistines.

Other instances of the issue being thus entrusted to the contest of a few champions are given in the notes on 1 Sam. xvii (p. 127). But here the contest is followed by a general engagement.

³ Some explain it 'the field of sharp blades.' In the LXX it is *Μερίς τῶν ἐπιβούλων*, the portion of the plotters.

⁴ They were the sons of Zeruah, David's sister (1 Chron. ii. 16). They appear to have been hard and stern men. David afterwards says of them, 'The sons of Zeruah be too hard for me' (2 Sam. iii. 39).

Abishai has been already mentioned as one of David's companions in exile. It was he who wished to kill Saul (1 Sam. xxvi. 8).

⁵ The butt end of the spear was commonly sharpened, perhaps shod with iron, so that it might be planted in the ground, when not in use. So Saul's spear was stuck in the ground beside him while he slept (1 Sam. xxvi. 7).

⁶ Joab's words (ver. 27) may mean either that there would have been no battle that morning, but for Abner's challenge; or

At last a rupture takes place between Ish-bosheth and Abner. The king accuses his general of marrying his father's concubine, Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah⁷, which was an act of treason, implying a desire to get possession of the throne⁸. Abner indignantly denies the charge, and declares he will transfer his allegiance to David, to whom he at once makes overtures for reconciliation. David consents to 'a league,' on condition of his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, who had been given to one Phaltiel (1 Sam. xxv. 44), being restored to him. Ish-bosheth, no doubt at Abner's dictation, takes her from her new husband, who follows her weeping as far as Bahurim⁹. This convinces David of Abner's sincerity, and of his power over Ish-bosheth; and an excuse is also thus furnished for Abner, as her conductor, visiting David at Hebron.

XXI. JOAB'S VENGEANCE ON ABNER.

2 SAMUEL iii. 17-39.

III. 17. And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you:

18. Now then do *it*: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

19. And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

20. So Abner came to David to Hebron, and

that, but for his appeal now, the pursuit would have been continued till the next morning.

⁷ Rizpah is mentioned again in 2 Sam. xxi. 8-11, as watching by the bodies of her two sons, who were among the seven sons of Saul hanged by the Gibeonites.

⁸ So Ahithophel counselled Absalom to seize his father's concubines (2 Sam. xvi. 21); and Solomon interpreted Adonijah's request preferred through Bath-sheba, for Abishag, as 'asking for the kingdom also' (1 Kings ii. 22).

⁹ Bahurim was probably on or near the Mount of Olives, and so on the high-road between Mahanaim and Hebron. Shimei, who cursed David on his way to Mahanaim, lived there (2 Sam. xvi. 5); and the two messengers, who brought news to David of Absalom's proceedings, were hid in a well there (2 Sam. xvii. 18).

XXI. JOAB'S VENGEANCE ON ABNER.

2 SAMUEL iii. 17-39.

III. 17-19. Abner has lost no time in carrying out his threat. He has at once commenced to undermine Ishbosheth's power, reminding the northern tribes of David's former popularity with them, and of his selection by God as the champion of the nation against the Philistines. He has even opened successful negotiations with Saul's own tribe of Benjamin, and now reports the results of his efforts to David.

20, 21. The 'feast' is probably a solemn religious ceremony, to ratify the new alliance. At this festival Abner renews his promise to bring all Israel under David's rule, after which he and his retinue are courteously dismissed.

22-25. Joab had perhaps been purposely sent in pursuit of

twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast.

21. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22. And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23. When Joab and all the host that *was* with were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

24. Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

25. Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

26. And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not.

27. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

28. And afterward when David heard *it*, he said,

some marauders, to keep him out of the way during Abner's visit. His charge against the latter of being a spy is a mere pretence. Besides his hatred on account of Asahel's death, Joab is afraid lest Abner, through fulfilling his promise of bringing over the other tribes, should supplant him in the king's favour.

26. Joab's return must have followed immediately after Abner's departure. According to Josephus, 'the well of Sirah' was only two and a half miles from Hebron. The summons to return was probably represented as coming from David.

27. In this treacherous assassination Joab professed to be acting the part of the avenger of blood ^a.

Hebron was one of the six cities of refuge, which may have been the reason of Joab meeting Abner at the gate, so as to kill him before he actually entered the town ^b.

We learn from ver. 30 that Abishai took part in, or at least was privy to and approved of, the deed.

28, 29. David at once declares that he is innocent of any connivance at this foul murder. His imprecation on the family of his nephew Joab is a terrible one. It is that they may be the victims of hereditary and incurable disease; that they may be cripples and mendicants, or may die in battle ^c.

The fulfilment of the curse on Joab himself is recorded in

^a This duty devolved on the *goel*, or next of kin (see p. 67). But Abner had slain Asahel unwillingly and in self-defence. Joab, as David afterwards tells Solomon (1 Kings ii. 5, 'shed the blood of war in peace,' from motives of jealousy as well as of revenge.

^b 'Under the fifth rib' means really 'in the abdomen.' R. V. has 'smote him there in the belly.' By such a wound Abner had killed Asahel (2 Sam. ii. 23). Rechab and Baanah killed Ishbosheth (2 Sam. iv. 6), and Joab afterwards killed Amasa (2 Sam. xx. 10), in the same way.

^c This 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children' is spoken of in the second commandment (Exod. xx. 5); and the prophets tell us that it had become the subject of a proverb among the Jews: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the

I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner :

29. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house ; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.

30. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31. And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the bier.

32. And they buried Abner in Hebron : and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner ; and all the people wept.

33. And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth ?

34. Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters : as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.

35. And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down.

36. And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them : as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.

37. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

1 Kings ii. 34. He was slain by Benaiah, while clinging to the 'horns of the altar' in the tabernacle.

31, 32. David thus shows all possible respect to the murdered Abner. He proclaims a public mourning; and compels the murderer himself to walk before the corpse, while he follows as chief mourner. As a further mark of honour, Abner is buried in the royal city of Hebron^d.

33. We may compare this short dirge with the lament over Saul and Jonathan in ch. i. The first words mean rather, 'Should Abner die as a fool,' or 'as a good-for-nothing fellow?' He, says David, was no convicted and fettered criminal; but, though his hands were free to fight, and his feet to flee, he was treacherously slain, while suspecting no evil.

35. Such fasting was a sign of deep mourning. So David had fasted, when he received the tidings of the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 12). So he afterwards fasted, while Bath-sheba's child lay dying (2 Sam. xii. 16, 17). Sundown was the usual time of ending a fast.

36-39. David has thus publicly cleared himself of all suspicion of being an accomplice in this crime. To his own friends he expresses himself more openly, speaking in the highest terms of Abner, and denouncing the lawlessness and

children's teeth are set on edge' (Ezek. xviii. 2; cp. Jer. xxxi. 29; see p. 23).

Such punishment was denounced against the family of Eli, of whom none were to live to old age (1 Sam. ii. 31-33). The leprosy of Naaman was to cleave to Gehazi, and to his seed for ever (2 Kings v. 27). We have another instance of belief in such visitations in the question of the disciples to our Lord as to the man that was born blind (John ix. 2).

The doctrine of 'heredity' has brought this terrible law of retribution into fresh prominence. But it has been well said that while 'outwardly and temporally children may fare the worse for their father's sins, spiritually and eternally they cannot' (Bp. Sanderson, quoted by Wordsworth).

^d This, however, may also have been because his natural burying-place, Gibeon (1 Chron. ix. 35, 36), was in Ish-bosheth's dominions.

38. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?

39. And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah *be* too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

19. HISTORY TO THE CAPTURE OF AND SETTLEMENT IN JERUSALEM.

2 SAMUEL iv, v.

The death of Abner is quickly followed by the fall of Ish-bosheth. The chance of retaining the power for the house of Saul is thus ended. The only other possible claimant, Mephibosheth¹, the son of Jonathan, is lame, his nurse having let him fall in the flight from Jezreel. He is, moreover, only a boy as yet, and a 'minority' would be full of danger.

Two of Ish-bosheth's captains, Baanah and Rechab, Beerothites², of the tribe of Benjamin, resolve to assassinate him. They make their way into the palace while the king is taking his midday rest, and, having stabbed him and cut off his head, fly with all speed to David at Hebron.

They expect a welcome and reward for having slain David's 'enemy.' But David, horrified at this cold-blooded murder, gives orders for their immediate execution. The head of Ish-bosheth is placed, with all respect, in the tomb of Abner.

Every obstacle to David's reign over the whole kingdom is now removed. All the tribes claim kindred with him, and he is re-anointed by the elders king over all. But

cruelty of the sons of Zeruiah. But he is afraid to punish Joab, on account of his popularity with the army⁶.

⁶ David here shows the weak side of his character. He leaves Joab to live on for further cruelties ; to cause him bitter grief by killing Absalom against his express order (2 Sam. xviii. 5, 14), and to commit another such crime in the assassination of Amasa (2 Sam. xx. 10). He afterwards shows his horror of such murders in the execution of the assassins of Ish-bosheth. But he leaves the punishment of Joab to his son and successor Solomon (1 Kings ii. 5, 6, 34).

19. HISTORY TO THE CAPTURE OF AND SETTLEMENT IN JERUSALEM.

2 SAMUEL iv, v.

¹ He is called in 1 Chron. viii. 34 and ix. 40 Merib-baal, or 'contender with Baal.' So Ish-bosheth is called in 1 Chron. viii. 33 Esh-baal, or 'man of Baal.' Gideon, in 2 Sam. xi. 21, is called Jerubbesheth, for Jerubbaal. 'Bosheth,' or 'shame,' is in each case substituted for Baal.

² Beeroth was one of the towns of the Gibeonites, and these men may have been actuated by desire of revenge for Saul's massacre of their countrymen, referred to in 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2.

³ For its earlier history, see Part I, pp. 235, 237.

⁴ From ch. v. 8 we learn that this became the occasion of a proverb, 'The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.' The words probably mean either that these, or any who like them are 'hated of David's soul,' should not be allowed to dwell near him. The LXX has 'shall not enter into the house of the Lord.'

⁵ This is commonly explained of the entrance being effected secretly through some unguarded or subterranean watercourse. This would be like the capture of Babylon by Cyrus (Herod. i. 191), who diverted the course of the Euphrates, which ran through the city, so that his troops might make their way unobserved up the bed of the stream.

The capture of Jerusalem has also been compared to the capture of Sardis by Cyrus (Herod. i. 84), 'taken through neglect of the

Hebron, where he has reigned for seven and a half years, is too remote to be the capital of the whole nation, and a more convenient city must be found.

The place which seems most suitable is Jerusalem, on the frontiers of Benjamin and Judah, Saul's and David's tribes³. The fortress is still in the hands of the Jebusites. These, deeming their position impregnable, taunt David and his forces, telling him 'the lame and the blind' would suffice to defend it⁴. He promises that 'whosoever getteth up to the gutter (R. V. watercourse) shall be chief and captain⁵.' Joab leads the attacking force into the fortress by this way, and thus establishes his claim to the post of commander-in-chief.

David now takes up his residence in the 'fort' (or stronghold) of Millo⁶, or the hill of Sion, which hence is called 'David's city'; and his reign of thirty-three years in Jerusalem begins⁷. The effects of his conquest are soon seen in the desire for friendly relations by Hiram, the powerful king of Tyre, who supplies him with timber from Lebanon, and skilled workmen⁸ for building his palace. Also in the desperate efforts of the Philistines, who are twice defeated in the valley of Rephaim (or the giants); first by direct attack at Baal-perazim, or 'the place of breaches'; and then taken in the rear by David's troops, who advance unheard, through the rustling of the mulberry trees. The Philistines are pursued from Geba (or Gibeon) to Gezer.

David now assumes greater state, and, to be like other Eastern monarchs, takes more 'concubines and wives.'

XXII. THE ARK BROUGHT UP TO JERUSALEM.

* 2 SAMUEL vi.

VI. 1. Again, David gathered together all *the* chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand.

one point, which Nature seemed to have guarded sufficiently' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 80).

Jerusalem was entered in a similar way by the Fellahin in A. D. 1834, through a sewer on the south-east (Geikie, iii. 231).

The words 'shall be chief and captain,' not found in the original here, are inserted from the parallel account in 1 Chron. xi. 6. The passage is translated in R. V., 'Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and smite the lame and the blind;' meaning that he was to hurl them down the precipice.

⁶ The LXX has ἡ ἄκρα, the summit or 'acropolis.' This was probably part of the old Canaanitish fortification. It was rebuilt by Solomon (1 Kings ix. 24 and xi. 27), and repaired by Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 5).

⁷ Jerusalem was now to be the capital of the undivided monarchy, and always continued to be the capital of the southern kingdom. In the northern kingdom there were successive centres of government at Shechem, Tirzah, Samaria, and Jezreel. Jerusalem was also to be the religious capital; the centre of the worship of the one true God (John iv. 20); the point to which the thoughts and affections of His people turned through all chances and changes. 'Thither,' says the Psalmist, 'the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord. . . O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee' (Ps. cxxii. 4, 6).

It was 'destined to be the scene of more extraordinary events, more strange and awful vicissitudes, than any city in the universe, not excepting Rome' (Milman, *H. J.* i. 290). And it was to be the type of 'the holy city, new Jerusalem' (Rev. xxi. 2); the 'Jerusalem which is above' (Gal. iv. 26).

⁸ The Phoenicians were the great engineers and architects of the ancient world.

XXII. THE ARK BROUGHT UP TO JERUSALEM.

2 SAMUEL VI.

VI. 1, 2. Jerusalem has thus been made the political capital of the whole nation. It remains to make it also the

2. And David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherubims.

3. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

4. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

5. And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6. And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*.

7. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his error*; and there he died by the ark of God.

8. And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

9. And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

10. So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David

religious capital. David takes the first step towards this change, the completion of which is reserved for his peaceful son, by having the ark brought up from Kirjath-jearim^a, here called by its old name of Baale (Joshua xv. 9; 1 Chron. xiii. 6), in Judah. It had been removed there from Beth-shemesh after its restoration by the Philistines (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2)^b.

For this ceremony there is a great gathering of all the people. We are told in the fuller account in the Book of Chronicles, that they came from 'Shihor of Egypt^c,' in the extreme south, to 'the entering in of Hemath,' at the head of the valley of the Orontes, in the far north (1 Chron. xiii. 5).

3. This placing the ark on a cart was an irregularity, from the consequences of which the reverential selection of a new cart did not save the people. According to the law, it might only be carried on the shoulders of the Levites (Num. vii. 9). David remembers this when the ceremony is commenced again (1 Chron. xv. 2, 15).

5. We may compare with these instruments those of the company of prophets in 1 Sam. x. 5 and those in Ps. cl. The word for 'cornets' probably means 'castanets' (R. V.), or 'sistra' (Vulgate), the latter being a sort of Egyptian rattle or tambourine.

6. Uzzah was probably a Levite, and so well aware of the

^a Kirjath-jearim means 'the city of the woods.' This is probably referred to in Ps. cxxxii. 6: 'Lo, we heard of the same at Ephrata, and found it in the wood.' Dean Stanley supposes the first words to mean that the idea of bringing up the ark had occurred to David, when at Ephratah or Beth-lehem.

^b The tabernacle is apparently still left at Gibeon, to which it was removed after the massacre at Nob. There God afterwards appears to Solomon (1 Kings iii. 5; 2 Chron. i. 3, 7). The motive for leaving it there is not clear. Perhaps there was some reason to fear resistance to such further change; or perhaps two sanctuaries were retained, to avoid possibility of collision between the two high priests; Zadok, whom David had found in office, remaining at Gibeon, while Abiathar, his companion in exile, came to Jerusalem (Ellicott).

^c This is sometimes used for the brook, which formed the southern boundary of Palestine, sometimes for the Nile (see Part I, p. 47).

carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11. And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

12. And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

13. And it was *so*, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

14. And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod.

15. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16. And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

17. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

18. And as soon as David had made an end of

regulations about the ark, which should have prevented his thoughtless act ^d.

8-10. This means that David was grieved and dismayed at the interruption of the ceremony. He abruptly closes it, and places the ark in a house at Gath-rimmon, one of the Levitical cities ^e.

12-16. David, reassured by the safety and prosperity of Obed-edom and his house, renews the attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem. This time it is duly carried on the shoulders of the Levites. Solemn sacrifices are offered as soon as a safe start has been made, and again (ver. 17) when the procession has ended. David himself changes his royal robes for priestly vestments, and takes part in the music and dancing. Michal, in whose father's time the priesthood had been little thought of, regards this enthusiasm as undignified, and 'despises' her husband.

17. The brief account of the entry of the ark here given is supplemented by the psalms which refer to this occasion.

The most remarkable picture is that given in Ps. xxiv. 6-10, where the procession is compared to a victorious host, summoning the city to surrender ^f. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates,' they cry, 'and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.' The warders on the walls respond, 'Who is the King of glory?' and the answer comes back, 'The LORD of hosts ^g, He is the King of glory.'

^d In the LXX, Ps. xxix (there given as Ps. xxviii), which describes a terrible thunderstorm, is headed 'A psalm of David about the removal of the tent (tabernacle).' This is supposed to refer to the removal of the ark, and hence it has been conjectured that Uzzah was struck by lightning.

For Perez-uzzah, cp. Baal-perazim in 2 Sam. v. 20.

^e Gittite commonly refers to the Philistine city of Gath; but is here used of one belonging to this Levitical city.

^f Hence this is selected as one of the Proper Psalms for Ascension Day, this ceremony being regarded as a type of our Lord's ascending into the heavens.

^g 'This is the solemn inauguration of that great name, by which the Divine nature was especially known under the monarchy, Jehovah-Sabaoth, the LORD of Hosts.' Before, God had been

offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19. And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good peice *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

20. Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!

21. And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.

22. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

23. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

20. DAVID'S WARS—ORGANIZATION OF THE KINGDOM.

2 SAMUEL vii—x.

David next proposes to build a suitable house or temple for the ark, which dwells 'within curtains,' while he himself

Among other psalms belonging to this occasion are the following: Ps. lxxviii, beginning, 'Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered,' the battle-cry with which the ark used to be moved in the wilderness, tells of the setting out of the procession. Ps. cxxxii. 8, 'Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting-place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength,' refers to the same.

Ps. xv, 'Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle,' &c., describes the characteristics of those who are fitted to dwell in this now hallowed capital. So too Ps. ci depicts the true citizens of the holy city, and Ps. xcvi tells of the higher worship now to be inaugurated.

The great historical thanksgivings in Ps. cv and cvi were perhaps composed for the same ceremony, and there are many expressions in other psalms, which refer to it^h.

19. This giving of largess or bounty was a common part of any great national rejoicing. 'A flagon of wine' should be 'a cake (or cluster) of raisins.'

21-23. David explains to Michal that nothing, which is designed to promote God's glory, can be mean or dishonourable. This event leads to a separation from the wife, for whose restoration to him he had been so anxious (2 Sam. iii. 13, 14), and Michal has to bear the 'reproach' of being childless.

known first as Elohim, 'the Strong One;' then as Jehovah, 'the Eternal' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 87).

^h In 1 Chron. xvi. 8-36 we have a psalm recorded, which David is said to have given at this time into the hands of Asaph. Portions of this resemble parts of Psalms xcvi, cv, cvi, cvii, cxviii, and cxxxvi.

20. DAVID'S WARS—ORGANIZATION OF THE KINGDOM.

2 SAMUEL vii—x.

¹ Metheg-ammah probably means 'the bridle (or key) of the metropolis'; some fortress, that is, which commanded Gath. But

dwells 'in an house of cedar.' Nathan at first approves of the design, but is told by the word of the Lord in a dream that David, as a man of war, may not undertake this task, which is reserved for his more peaceful son Solomon. He reports the vision to David, with an assurance of God's favour; and the king resignedly accepts the decision.

The king's attention is now claimed for foreign wars.

i. The Philistines are defeated, and Metheg-ammah¹ (2 Sam. viii. 1) is taken. In 1 Chron. xviii. 1 it is given as 'Gath and her towns.'

ii. The Moabites² are smitten, and two-thirds of their army put to death.

iii. Hadadezer, king of Zobah, is defeated³. The Syrians of Damascus, who come to his rescue, are also routed with great slaughter, and made tributary. Garrisons are placed in Damascus.

As the result of this victory, Toi, king of Hamath, who had been at war with Hadadezer, makes overtures of friendship, and sends presents to David. These, with the spoils taken from David's enemies, are 'dedicated to the Lord.'

iv. The Edomites⁴ sustain a crushing defeat, and their country is garrisoned.

v. The Ammonites, aided by the Syrians, are routed by Joab and Abishai; and their capital, Rabbah, is besieged and taken. David, who had received kindness from their king Nahash, had wished to be on friendly terms with them; but Hanun, Nahash's son, had outraged his ambassadors, shaving off half their beards, which Orientals regard as a deadly insult, and cutting short their long robes.

vi. The Syrians under Shobach, captain of the host, are once more defeated and crushed.

David now inquires whether any of Saul's house survive, to whom he may 'show kindness for Jonathan's sake.' Ziba, a servant of Saul, tells him of Mephibosheth, who has found refuge with a chief called Machir⁵. Mephibosheth is summoned, and comes to David in alarm; but all Saul's

others explain these words as a metaphor, describing the tearing off of the 'bridle' or dominion of the Philistines over Israel.

It is perhaps to this campaign that the encounters of champions belong, which are recorded in 2 Sam. xxi. 15-22, and 1 Chron. xx. 4-8.

² The Moabites had before been friends of David, and when in exile he had placed his father and mother in their charge (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4). According to a tradition, his parents had been treacherously murdered; or perhaps the Moabites had turned against David and helped his enemies. Ps. lx. 8 seems to imply some alliance between Moab and Edom.

³ Hadadezer is described as on his way 'to recover his border'; that is, to recruit his forces, or to renew the attack, at the river Euphrates.

⁴ 'The Syrians,' smitten 'in the valley of salt' (viii. 13), should probably be the Edomites, the correct reading being Edom, instead of Aram or Syria.

⁵ Machir afterwards helped David against Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 27-29).

⁶ In 2 Sam. viii. 17 he is called Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar. So, in 1 Chron. xviii. 16, Ahimelech, son of Abiathar, is coupled with Zadok. But in 1 Sam. xxii. 20 we are told that Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech; and from 1 Kings i and ii we gather that Abiathar continued to be priest throughout David's reign, and was deposed by Solomon for his share in the conspiracy of Adonijah (1 Kings ii. 27). It has been suggested that father and son alike had both names, and that each was spoken of by either name.

⁷ The king's power 'was limited by the constitution drawn up by Samuel, and carefully preserved as the national Magna Charta. It was also tempered by the ancient institution of the "elders" of

private estate is given to him, and he is always to be a guest at the king's table.

David has meanwhile been engaged in the organization of his kingdom. This work may be divided into three heads :

i. Religious. There were, as we have seen, two chief priests, Zadok, and Abiathar or Ahimelech⁶. There were also two prophets, Gad and Nathan. The priests were divided into twenty-four courses, sixteen of the house of Eleazar, and eight of Ithamar. These ministered in weekly rotation. The Levites were arranged in similar divisions, and had their several duties assigned them.

ii. Civil. David 'executed judgement and justice unto all his people⁷.' In these duties he was assisted by the 'recorder⁸,' Jehoshaphat, and the secretary or 'scribe,' Seraiah. There were other officials who collected taxes, or had charge of the treasures and estates of the king, &c.

iii. Military. The army included all fit for active service, who were divided into twelve courses, one for each month⁹. The whole force was under the command of Joab. The king's body-guard of Cherethites and Pelethites¹⁰ was commanded by Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. These were probably foreigners. There was also another guard, under Abishai, consisting of the six hundred heroes, who had gathered round David when he was a fugitive¹¹.

21. DAVID'S SINS OF ADULTERY AND MURDER.

2 SAMUEL xi.

It is during the war with the Ammonites that David, who 'still tarries at Jerusalem,' falls into those terrible sins, which have cast such a dark shadow on his character and history¹.

While walking in the evening on the roof of his palace, the

the people, the "princes" of the tribes, and the heads of clans and families' (Geikie, iii. 252, 253).

⁸ The recorder's duty 'is supposed to have been something like that of the modern "chancellor," and he not only registered the king's decrees, but was his adviser' (Ellicott).

⁹ It consisted of infantry ; spearmen, archers, and slingers. All that David probably had of the nature of a cavalry force was the hundred chariots taken from the Syrians (ch. viii. 4).

¹⁰ Some have explained these terms as 'executioners and runners.' But apparently they were names of tribes. We read of the Cherethites in the account of the Amalekite raid in 1 Sam. xxx. 14 ; and in 2 Sam. xv. 18 these two names are coupled with the Gittites. In Ezek. xxv. 16 they are described as 'the remnant of the sea coast,' and in Zeph. ii. 5 as 'the inhabitants of the sea-coast.' From these passages they seem to have been Philistines, who had entered David's service as mercenaries.

¹¹ They were called the Gibborim, or 'mighty men.' We have an account of them in 2 Sam. xxiii. There were among them 'thirty chief men,' promoted for special deeds of valour. It was three of these who performed the gallant feat of bursting through the Philistine host, to get for David a draught of water out of the well of Beth-lehem (2 Sam. xxiii. 13-17).

21. DAVID'S SINS OF ADULTERY AND MURDER.

2 SAMUEL XI.

¹ The full record here given of David's fall is one conspicuous proof of the veracity of Holy Scripture, which never seeks to conceal or excuse the frailties and failures of the best of God's servants. 'The failings of a David and a Solomon remind us that no human examples are to be substituted for the Divine law as rule of life, and that there is no spotless example but that of Christ' (Wordsworth).

king sees and conceives an unlawful passion for a beautiful woman, called Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite². The latter, who is one of the Gibborim, or 'brave men,' is serving with the force under Joab at the siege of Rabbah. But David, overpowered by his passion, and heedless of the claims of his faithful officer, summons Bath-sheba to the apartments of his own concubines³.

In his anxiety to hide his own and her crime, which by the Levitical law should be punished with death, the king summons Uriah to return; and, hypocritically giving him a friendly welcome, bids him go down to his own house. Uriah, however, will not so indulge in comfort and luxury, while 'the ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in tents⁴'; but sleeps with the watchmen at the palace gates, as if he were still roughing it in the field. The king, having 'made him drunk,' again tries to carry out his plan, and, after a second failure, sends him back to Rabbah with a letter to Joab. In this the latter is bidden to put Uriah 'in the forefront of the hottest battle,' and then treacherously to leave him alone to be slain by the enemy.

Joab does not literally carry out these instructions. He is probably afraid of such a mean trick being discovered and resented by the troops. But he sends Uriah, at the head of a forlorn hope, to attack the part of the fortifications where the 'valiant men' are, and in this attack he and many of his companions are slain.

The news of this disaster is at once sent to David, and, if the king should show indignation at the rash enterprise, by which the lives of brave men have been sacrificed, the messenger is instructed to add, 'Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also⁵.' The king, on hearing this, ascribes the occurrence to the fortunes of war, saying that 'the sword devoureth one as well as another,' and that Joab must not be disheartened by this reverse.

As soon as Bath-sheba's time of mourning for her husband

² In 2 Sam. xxiii. 34 Eliam, Bath-sheba's father, is said to be the son of Ahithophel. It may therefore have been in retaliation for this outrage to his granddaughter, that Ahithophel afterwards joined Absalom in his rebellion.

³ From the following features in the story of David's giving way to temptation, we may learn these lessons of warning:—

i. It is when all things seem well with him. He is firmly seated on the throne; he is victorious over his enemies; he has been assured again of God's favour. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (1 Cor. x. 12).

ii. It is in a time of inaction. There may seem to be something of reproach in the words, 'but David tarried still in Jerusalem.' Had he gone out at the head of his army, he might never have so fallen.

iii. It is in his hours of solitude. We are too ready to ascribe our sins to the evil influence of others. It is in our hours of loneliness that our deadliest temptations assail us. This is the lesson taught us again in the story of Him, who 'was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.' In all the crises of our lives we are alone; 'alone in temptation, alone in sin, alone in remorse, alone in reconciliation, alone in communion with God, alone in high resolutions, alone in death' (H. M. Butler, *Harrow Sermons*, i. 11).

⁴ It would seem from this that the ark was now again taken out with the army, to inspire them with a sense of Divine protection, as had been done in the time of Eli (1 Sam. iv. 3-6; cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 18).

The separate mention of Israel and Judah is probably a reminiscence of the recent severance, when Ish-bosheth reigned at Mahanaim, and David at Hebron.

⁵ Joab describes the king as likely to recall the fate of Abimelech, who was killed in the siege of Thebez by a woman throwing a millstone from the wall upon his head (Judges ix. 53).

Jerubbesheth here is for Jerubbaal, the other name for Gideon (see pp. 18, 19).

⁶ The whole story is omitted in 1 Chron. It has furnished the occasion to unbelievers of many a scoff, at this revelation of the weakness and wickedness of the 'man after God's own heart.' But 'the sneer,' it has been said, is 'a shallow one.' 'All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest

is ended, David takes her to be his wife, and a son is born to them. 'But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord,' and was the beginning of grievous troubles to the royal house⁶.

XXIII. NATHAN'S PARABLE--DAVID'S
REPENTANCE.

2 SAMUEL xii. 1-23.

XII. 1. And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

2. The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3. But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die:

human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, driven as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended, ever with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew' (Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-worship*, p. 43).

XXIII. NATHAN'S PARABLE—DAVID'S REPENTANCE.

2 SAMUEL xii. 1-23.

XII. 1-4. David has been for months with these terrible sins lying on his soul, unrepented of, unconfessed, unpardoned. And so, when at last Nathan comes to reprove him, he does not recognize the account of his own transgression, given by the prophet in a figure or parable^a.

5, 6. The story of Nathan is directed not to the sensuality of David's conduct, but to its selfishness and cruelty, and the king's indignation is aroused against the oppressor here described. He declares at once his intention of enforcing against this man, who had 'shown no pity,' the strict letter of the law, by compelling him to restore fourfold^b.

7. For like instances of boldness on the part of God's prophets, who 'reproved even kings,' we may compare the rebuke of Saul by Samuel (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23); of Jeroboam by the man of God at Beth-el (1 Kings xiii. 2, 3); of Ahab by Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 17, &c.); of Ahaziah and Jehoram by Elisha (2 Kings i. 16 and iii. 13); of Ahaz by

^a Other instances of such teaching in the Old Testament are—the parable of Jotham (Judges ix. 7-15); the story of the woman of Tekoah (2 Sam. xiv. 4-7); and the message of Jehoash, king of Israel, to Amaziah, king of Judah (2 Kings xiv. 9, 10). But the first and last of these are fables rather than parables.

^b The punishment for stealing an ox was to restore five oxen; for a sheep, four sheep. Zacchaeus tells our Lord that, if he had 'taken anything from any one by false accusation, he restored fourfold' (Luke xix. 8).

6. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7. And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8. And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

11. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12. For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

13. David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

Isaiah (Isa. vii. 3-25); and of Herod by John the Baptist (Matt. xiv. 4, &c.)^c.

8. We read of only one wife of Saul, Ahinoam (1 Sam. xiv. 50), and one concubine, Rizpah (2 Sam. iii. 7, xxi. 8), and there is no account of David taking either of these. But the Eastern custom was for a new king to succeed to the wives and concubines of his predecessor, and so these words mean simply that David was entitled to all which had belonged to Saul. No one might marry a king's widow but his successor, and any attempt to do so was an act of treason^d.

9. It was not Joab nor the Ammonites who were the real murderers of Uriah, but David, who gave instructions how he was to be got rid of. 'Sins committed by the intermediate agency of others will be brought home at the day of judgement to those who have employed that agency' (Wordsworth).

10. This is the first punishment foretold; and the prediction is fulfilled in all the family strife and troubles which ensue; the murder of Amnon, the usurpation and death of Absalom, and the rebellion and execution of Adonijah.

13. No sins were more distinctly sins against man than David's. But a still darker shade falls over them when viewed as offences against God^e. He repeats this expres-

^c "Thou art the man" is, or ought to be, the conclusion, expressed or unexpressed, of every practical sermon' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 110).

^d So Absalom, to confirm his usurpation, took David's concubines (2 Sam. xvi. 22); and Bath-sheba's request for Abishag to be given to Adonijah was interpreted by Solomon as 'asking for the kingdom also' (1 Kings ii. 22). We read in Herodotus of Smerdis Magus marrying all the wives of his predecessor Cambyses (Herod. iii. 68), and of Darius taking over the wives of Smerdis (ib. 88).

^e Saul, after his rebuke by Samuel, had used similar language (1 Sam. xv. 24). But his was not true repentance. He was only seeking to conciliate the prophet, and so to retain the kingdom.

The contrast between genuine and spurious repentance is described by St. Paul in 2 Cor. vii. 10: 'For godly sorrow worketh

14. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.

15. And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17. And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19. But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21. Then said his servants unto him, What thing

sion of true penitence in Ps. li. 4, 'Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight^f.'

14. There was to be an immediate punishment in the death of the child, as well as the more remote one foretold in ver. 11.

16-22. We find David thus lying prostrate upon the earth again, when he thought that all his sons had been slain by Absalom (xiii. 31).

David here exhibits the ordinary signs of mourning for the dead, while entreating that the child's life may be spared. But as soon as he finds that the special object of his prayer is denied him, he resigns himself to the will of Him who 'chasteneth whom He loveth' (Heb. xii. 6).

23. David's words about reunion with his child are one of the passages of the Old Testament which imply belief in a future state. Among several others, the most remarkable are that in the Book of Job, beginning 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' (xix. 25-27); the words of Isaiah, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise'

repentance unto salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.'

^f According to its title, Ps. li was composed at this time, and its whole tone breathes the spirit of David's contrition. As the most profound expression of true and deep sorrow for sin and desire of amendment; for that change of heart and life (*μετανοία*), for which David prays in the words, 'Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me,' it is selected as the penitential psalm for our Communion Service.

'In this the crisis of his (David's) fate, and from the agonies of his grief, the doctrine emerges, as universal and as definite as was wrung out of the like struggles of the Apostle Paul. Now, if ever, would have been the time, had his religion led him in that direction, to have expiated his crime by the sacrifices of the Levitical ritual.' But 'he knows that it is another and higher sacrifice which God approves. . . . "The sacrifices of God," he says, "are a broken spirit, &c."' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 112).

There is another psalm which also refers to this period, Ps. xxxii, beginning 'Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered': in which David shows his perfect faith in God's goodness, and in the 'pardon and peace' which have been promised him.

is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was alive*; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

22. HISTORY OF DAVID'S REIGN TO THE REBELLION OF ABSALOM.

2 SAMUEL xii. 24—xv. 6.

Another child is born to David and Bath-sheba. He is named, by David, Solomon, or 'peaceable'; and, in a Divine message brought by Nathan, Jedidiah, or 'beloved of the Lord¹.'

The conclusion of the Ammonite war is next recorded, the long siege of Rabbah being brought to a successful close. Joab, after taken the lower town or 'city of waters²,' sends a message, summoning the king to come and complete the conquest in person, and David repairs with a large force to Rabbah. The spoil of the city is great, and includes the huge golden crown taken from the head of the national idol³. The captives are treated with barbarous cruelty. David has them 'put under' or cut through with saws⁴, or torn with 'harrows of iron,' or burned alive in the 'brick-kiln' or furnaces.

These external successes are the last gleam of brightness in David's reign. Henceforth it is clouded by the family disasters which are the punishment for his sin.

(Isa. xxvi. 19); and the words of Daniel, 'And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Dan. xii. 2).

^g 'They are not to be heard which feign that the fathers did look only for transitory promises' (Articles of Religion, VII).

These words of David also imply belief in 'personal identity' in a future life; that is, that those who shall meet in another world may recognize one another. This seems also to be implied in St. Paul's argument (1 Cor. xv. 42-44). Jesus Christ, though not always recognized after His Resurrection (Luke xxiv. 16; John xx. 14, xxi. 4), was recognizable; and He proved his identity to Thomas (John xx. 27).

22. HISTORY OF DAVID'S REIGN TO THE REBELLION OF ABSALOM.

2 SAMUEL xii. 24—XV. 6.

¹ The name Shelomoh or Solomon thus forecasts the character of his reign. We find a feminine form of it in Salome (Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1). Suleyman, 'the favourite title of Arabian and Turkish princes,' is its diminutive. 'Alexander, the name of the greatest king of the Gentile world in Eastern ears,' was regarded by the Jews as the Western version of it (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 162).

The name Jedidiah, an assurance at the time of Divine favour, s never afterwards used. In Neh. xiii. 26 Solomon is described as having been 'beloved of his God.'

² It was so called from a perennial stream of water, rising within the walls, and running through the city (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 102). It was probably this supply which enabled the city to hold out so long.

On the site of Rabbah afterwards stood the Greek town of Philadelphia, founded by the immigrants who followed in the wake of Alexander the Great. This was one of the Decapolis (Matt. iv. 25; Mark v. 20, vii. 31), or league of ten towns, banded together against their Semitic neighbours (G. A. Smith, *Holy Land*, pp. 593, 596).

³ 'Their king's crown' should probably be 'the crown of Malcam' or Milcom (see R. V. marg.; cp. Zeph. i. 5).

The troubles begin with the outrage of Amnon, David's eldest son, on his half-sister Tamar. His love for her afterwards turns to hatred; and Absalom, Tamar's own brother, finding her in her 'desolation,' resolves to avenge her. After waiting two years, he invites the king and his family to his feast of sheep-shearing⁵. He asks specially for Amnon's presence, but all the king's sons go with him. During the feast Amnon is assassinated, and the other princes take to flight. News is brought to David that all have been murdered, but this rumour is corrected by his nephew Jonadab.

Absalom finds a retreat with his grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshur, where he stays for three years⁶. At last Joab devises a plan for bringing about his return. He sends a 'wise woman' of Tekoah⁷ to David, with a story of the murder of one of her sons by the other. She asks the king's aid to prevent the vengeance, which the rest of the family are seeking on the murderer⁸. David does not at first recognize the object of this story, but, when she has explained it to him, he discerns in it 'the hand of Joab,' who confesses his share in the matter, and his motive⁹. Absalom is recalled, but for two more years is not admitted to his father's presence.

Resolved to see Joab, who refuses to visit him, Absalom at last tells his servants to set the commander's barley-field on fire; and, when Joab comes to complain, persuades him to intercede with the king. A reconciliation between father and son takes place, but this leads to unlooked-for results. Absalom, whose personal beauty has made him very popular, at once prepares for rebellion; surrounding himself with a retinue of horsemen, and chariots, and footmen, and gaining the favour of the people by administering justice, which duty the king is neglecting¹⁰. 'So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.'

⁴ In Heb. xi. 37 we are told of the same cruel death being inflicted on heroes of the faith; 'they were sawn asunder.'

The making them pass through furnaces was doubtless suggested by their own barbarous custom of thus sacrificing their children to Moloch, the national god. The correct reading here is perhaps 'through Malcam.'

⁵ This was always a time of hospitality and rejoicing. We may compare the story of Nabal in 1 Sam. xxv.

⁶ There is much doubt as to David's feeling about Absalom during this time. The words in ch. xiii. 39, about his soul 'longing to go forth unto Absalom,' may imply that David is longing for his return, or that he now abandons his design of pursuing and punishing him. The LXX and Vulgate adopt the latter meaning (*ἐκόπασεν τοῦ ἐξελεθεῖν*: cessavit persequi).

⁷ Tekoah was a village five miles south of Beth-lehem. It was afterwards the birthplace of the prophet Amos (Amos i. 1).

⁸ This woman is rich in figurative language. She speaks of 'quenching the coal that is left,' a metaphor for destroying her only surviving son; and she compares the end of human life to 'water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.' She tells too of the mercy of God, who 'deviseth means that His banished be not expelled from Him'; a forcible account of His desire that all should 'come to repentance,' which might well recall to David his own experience.

⁹ David seems to have been fully aware of Joab's interest at this time in Absalom, who is the heir-apparent to the throne. But Joab's desire to win Absalom's favour is soon changed by the latter's outrageous conduct.

¹⁰ Absalom 'stands beside the way of the gate,' the usual court of justice, to settle all controversies (see pp. 65, 67).

Adonijah assumed the same royal state and retinue, when aiming at the kingdom (1 Kings i. 5).

XXIV. ABSALOM'S REBELLION—DAVID'S FLIGHT.

2 SAMUEL XV. 7-31.

XV. 7. And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

8. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.

9. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

11. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12. And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13. And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

14. And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed

XXIV. ABSALOM'S REBELLION—DAVID'S FLIGHT.

2 SAMUEL XV. 7-31.

XV. 7-9. The 'forty years' should probably be 'four years,' dating either from Absalom's return to Jerusalem, or from his reconciliation with David. But some would reckon the 'forty' from the first anointing, or from the accession of David.

Hebron, as Absalom's native town (2 Sam. iii. 2, 3), would be the natural place for his performance of a vow. It was also an ancient sanctuary. But his real object in choosing it was probably because he had many friends there, and because its inhabitants were dissatisfied at the capital having been transferred to Jerusalem.

10, 11. The 'spies' were rather agents, who were to sound the feeling of the people in different parts of the country, and wherever they found them favourable to Absalom, to proclaim him king.

The men, who 'went in their simplicity,' that is, in ignorance of his design, were doubtless leading citizens of Jerusalem, whose presence with him at Hebron would give the impression that they were his supporters.

12. Giloh was in the hill country of Judah (Joshua xv. 51). Ahithophel had been David's confidential adviser, but probably was estranged from him through the treatment of Bath-sheba and Uriah (see p. 203). He is supposed to be the 'familiar friend' referred to in Ps. xli and lv, both of which are commonly assigned to this period; the man whom David 'trusted, who did also eat of his bread,' and who then 'laid great wait for him' (Ps. xli. 9); with whom he 'took sweet counsel together,' whose 'words were softer than butter, having war in his heart' (Ps. lv. 15, 22)^a.

^a He has been regarded as a type, both in his treachery and his suicide (2 Sam. xvii. 23), of Judas Iscariot, to whom the words of Ps. xli. 9 are referred by our Lord Himself: 'He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me' (John xiii. 18).

to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

15. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

16. And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the house.

17. And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18. And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19. Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile.

20. Whereas thou camest *but* yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee.

21. And Ittai answered the king, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

22. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.

It may be that the sacrifice was made the occasion of binding all together in a solemn league, when their religious enthusiasm was aroused, and when they were gratified and excited by the feast which followed ^b.

13-16. David's courage fails him, on hearing the news of the rebellion. He foresees that this is part of the Divine punishment predicted by Nathan (ch. xii. 10), and is probably conscious also of much disaffection among his subjects ^c. He also realizes that delay is his best chance of crushing this rising, and is eager to avoid a sudden attack on the city, and the horrors which would follow. He therefore resolves on instant flight ^d.

17. This first halt was probably at the last house in the suburbs, on the road to Jericho, known by the name of 'the Far House' ^e.

18. The Cherethites and Pelethites were the king's body-guard (see pp. 200, 201). The 600 Gittites were probably the band of chosen men mentioned in 1 Sam. xxvii. 2. They may have been called Gittites from their having been at Gath with him. Some suppose that their ranks had been recruited by Philistines of Gath. Others read for Gittites, Gibborim or 'mighty men.'

^b So Tacitus (*Hist.* iv. 14, 15) tells a story of Civilis, the leader of the Batavian rebellion in the time of Vitellius, binding all by solemn oaths at a feast purposely held with religious rites in the sacred grove (*Speaker's Commentary*).

^c Some have supposed that the numbering of the people (ch. xxiv) took place before this; that it was very unpopular, being regarded as preparatory to a general conscription or taxation, or a step in some way towards despotic power; and that Absalom took advantage of this disaffection, aggravated by the plague which followed as a punishment, to commence his rebellion (Geikie, iii. 319, &c.).

^d 'There is no single day in the Jewish history of which so elaborate an account remains as of this memorable flight. There is none, we may add, that combines so many of David's characteristics; his patience, his high-spirited religion, his generosity, his calculation; we miss only his daring courage' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 118).

^e The LXX gives ἐν οἴκῳ τῷ μακρῶν. R.V. has 'Beth-merhak,' and in the margin, 'The Far House.'

23. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24. And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

25. And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me *both* it, and his habitation:

26. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am* I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

27. The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not* thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28. See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

29. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

30. And David went up by the ascent of *mount* Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31. And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is*

19-22. David generously advises Ittai not to mix himself up in a civil war. He, as a stranger, may without disloyalty 'abide with the king'; that is, with Absalom, who has usurped the throne. But Ittai declares his faithful allegiance to his 'lord the king'; that is, David. His expression of devotion has been compared to that of Ruth (Ruth i. 16, 17) ^f.

23. The procession having left the city by the Eastern gate, soon reaches the valley or gorge between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, through which flowed the brook Kidron. In John xviii. 1 it is called 'Cedron.'

24-26. David refuses to let the ark be exposed to the dangers of his exile, or to use it as a charm. He will have it taken back to Jerusalem. Perhaps too he did not wish 'to punish his subjects for his son's sins,' by taking from them the sign of God's presence and favour ^g.

27-29. These two sons were afterwards most useful in bringing tidings (ch. xvii. 17-21) ^h.

30. Covering the head was a sign of deep mourning. So David covered his face after Absalom's death (2 Sam. xix. 4. Cp. Esther vi. 12; Jer. xiv. 3, 4; Ezek. xxiv. 17) ⁱ.

^f Also to the too bold profession of St. Peter (Matt. xxvi. 35). 'Ittai declares his resolution, (with a fervour which almost inevitably recalls a like profession made almost on the same spot to the great Descendant of David centuries afterwards), to follow him in life and in death' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 118).

^g The psalms supposed to have been written in David's exile show how earnestly he desired at this time communion with God. Ps. xlii begins, 'Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God.' In Ps. xliii. 3 he cries, 'O send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me.' But he realizes that God is present everywhere, and puts his whole trust in His mercy.

^h The words 'Art not thou a seer?' imply that Zadok might be of use, through his power to observe and report all that went on in the city. Others explain them as a reproach, 'O thou seer!' or 'Thou a seer!' meaning that his prophetic insight ought to have shown him the wiser course.

ⁱ Some have explained the word used of St. Peter in Mark xiv. 72, of such outward sign of sorrow; *ἐπιβαλὼν* being supposed to imply an ellipse of *τὸ ἰμάτιον*. Our translation, 'and when he thought thereon, he wept,' implies an ellipse of *τὸν νοῦν*.

among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

23. HISTORY OF ABSALOM'S REBELLION (continued).

2 SAMUEL XV. 32—xviii. 5.

David's prayer that God would frustrate the designs of Ahithophel is quickly answered. On reaching the top of the mount, where was one of the 'high places' or local sanctuaries¹, the king is joined by his 'friend,' Hushai the Archite². David feels that he is the man to counteract Ahithophel's influence, and sends him to Jerusalem for this purpose, telling him how he had arranged with Zadok and Abiathar for reporting events in the capital.

A little further on the road Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, meets the fugitives, bringing with him a gift of provisions. He invents a story of his master having joined the rebels, in the hope of gaining possession of the throne. David believes his tale, and tells him that all that pertained to Mephibosheth shall be his³.

At Bahurim, Shimei, also of the house of Saul, appears. Keeping pace with the procession on the other side of the ravine, he curses David as a 'man of blood,' and throws stones and dust at him. Abishai asks permission to cross over and kill him; but David accepts these insults as part of the punishment sent from God⁴.

Meanwhile Absalom has reached Jerusalem, where Hushai hypocritically welcomes him. By the advice of Ahithophel, Absalom at once takes the desperate step of seizing David's concubines, which was a decisive assumption of royal rights. Ahithophel next offers to go with 12,000 men, and, overtaking

David's weeping, as he ascended Olivet, has been regarded as a type or forecast of our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem, while crossing the same mountain (Luke xix. 41).

23. HISTORY OF ABSALOM'S REBELLION

(*continued*).

2 SAMUEL xv. 32—xviii. 5.

¹ 'Where he worshipped' should probably be 'where men worshipped' (R. V. 'where God was worshipped').

² Archi was a town on the borders of Ephraim and Benjamin (Joshua xvi. 2).

³ David's faith in man has been rudely shaken. This alone can account for his conceiving that the crippled son of his beloved Jonathan, after having been treated with such kindness, should be plotting for the sovereignty.

⁴ Shimei says that 'the Lord hath returned upon David all the blood of the house of Saul'; holding the king responsible for the murder of Ish-bosheth and Abner; and possibly referring also to the death of Saul and his sons, since David had just before that disaster been in league with the Philistines. If the events of ch. xxiv ought to come before this, Shimei may have been thinking also of the slaughter of seven of the descendants of Saul, to satisfy the Gibeonites.

Abishai's words show 'the offensive language bandied to and fro among the political rivals of that age' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 121). He calls Shimei 'a dead dog'; an expression of utter contempt (1 Sam. xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. ix. 8).

Though David does not suffer vengeance to be taken now, Solomon is afterwards charged to punish Shimei (1 Kings ii. 8, 46).

⁵ By the neglect of this politic advice, the cause of Absalom is ruined. Ahithophel, in giving it, had shown that his high reputation for wisdom was well deserved. The people commonly believed that he spoke like 'an oracle of God' (2 Sam. xvi. 23).

David while 'weary and weak-handed,' to smite *him* only, and spare the people, who would then flee⁵. This advice would have been at once adopted, but for Hushai; who impresses upon Absalom the danger of driving David and his followers to desperation, and flatters the usurper's vanity by a description of his bursting in person upon his opponents with an overwhelming force, and utterly routing them, or destroying any fortress in which David has entrenched himself⁶. Ahithophel, finding his counsel rejected, retires in chagrin and despair to Giloh, and hangs himself⁷.

News of all this is at once sent to David by the two spies, the sons of Zadok and Abiathar. They are pursued, but concealed by a woman in a well at Bahurim; and, on overtaking the king, they urge him to cross the river at once. Before daybreak he and all his forces are in safety on the east of Jordan⁸.

David then retires to Mahanaim⁹. There he is joined by powerful allies: Shobi, the son of Nahash, king of Ammon; Machir, a powerful chief of Eastern Manasseh¹⁰; and Barzillai, a wealthy man of Gilead.

It is probably about three months before the decisive encounter takes place. Meanwhile Absalom has been anointed king (2 Sam. xix. 10). He has appointed his cousin, Amasa, commander of his troops, and these have encamped in the land of Gilead. A large force has also gathered round David. The king proposes to take the command in person, but the people will not let him imperil his life. The army is divided into three parts, placed respectively under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, who are enjoined to 'deal gently' with Absalom.

He saw at once, when Hushai's counsel prevailed, that the cause of the usurper was lost.

⁶ Hushai urges his proposal 'with all the force of Eastern poetry.' He compares David and his mighty men, if thus rendered desperate, to 'a bear robbed of her whelps.' He draws a picture of the king as hiding in some safe retreat, and bursting suddenly on his adversaries; the sudden panic which will follow, and the first reverse, reported as a crushing defeat. David's heart, he says, is 'as the heart of a lion.' Absalom must gather a force, 'as the sand that is by the sea for multitude,' which shall descend upon the king's followers 'as the dew falleth on the ground'; or shall drag any fortified town, in which David may have sheltered, stone by stone, into the valley below.

⁷ Thus in his end, as in his treachery, Ahithophel is a type of the traitor Judas (see p. 215). Besides the psalms already referred to, Ps. lxxix and cix have been commonly supposed to refer to him.

In the famous political satire of Dryden, called *Absalom and Achitophel*, the Earl of Shaftesbury is introduced in the character of the latter; while the Duke of Monmouth, 'the Protestant Duke,' is represented as Absalom. The poem, published in A. D. 1681, was a successful rejoinder to the attack headed by these nobles against the Roman Catholics.

⁸ Ps. iii and iv probably tell of this eventful night, and are the expression of David's trust in, and thankfulness to God. Ps. cxliii has also been assigned to this crisis.

⁹ The strong position of Mahanaim had led to its selection by Abner as Ish-bosheth's capital; and this doubtless now suggests it to David as a retreat.

¹⁰ Machir was the man by whom Mephibosheth had been sheltered. He thus shows his gratitude for David's kindness to his former ward.

XXV. THE END OF ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

2 SAMUEL xviii. 6-33.

XVIII. 6. So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7. Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*.

8. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9. And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10. And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

11. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle.

12. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom.

13. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood

XXV. THE END OF ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

2 SAMUEL XVIII. 6-33.

XVIII. 6. Some have maintained from this that the battle must have been fought on the west of Jordan, and that the absence of any mention of David's force recrossing the river is due to gaps being left in the narrative^a. But Absalom's force too, when last heard of, was on the east of Jordan (ch. xvii. 24, 26), and the words about David succouring his troops 'out of the city' (ch. xviii. 3) imply that the battlefield was not far from Mahanaim.

It appears then that, for some reason, Ephraim had given its name to a wood or jungle on the east of the river. Various explanations of this have been suggested.

i. That this was a continuation of the forest of Ephraim on the west of Jordan.

ii. That the name had been given to this wood from the slaughter of the Midianites by Ephraim (Judges vii. 24).

iii. That the name commemorated the slaughter of the Ephraimites themselves by Jephthah (Judges xii. 6).

iv. That the name was *now* given to it from this defeat of the Ephraimites, who were Absalom's leading supporters.

v. That a colony of Ephraimites had settled here^b.

7-8. We have no account of the battle itself. Absalom's force was probably much the larger, but David's was superior in organization and generalship. The routed army was entangled in the wood, and impeded in its flight by the rough stony ground, and by the pits (ver. 17) and swamps, so that the slaughter was greatly increased^c.

^a Ephraim has been supposed by some to be the town mentioned in ch. xiii. 23, near to which Absalom had his sheep-shearing.

^b 'We read of Ephraimites settling in Gilead in such large numbers, that the western Ephraimites (Judges xii. 4) call the Gileadites fugitives from Ephraim' (Smith, *Hist. Geog.* p. 335).

^c As in the case of Sisera's troops, in the disastrous flight after their defeat by Barak (Judges v. 20, 21).

against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*.

14. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

16. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

17. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

18. Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

19. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.

20. And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

21. Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

9. Absalom was probably riding the king's own mule, which was an assumption of royal state. So, when Solomon was to be proclaimed king at Gihon, David ordered that he should be mounted on his own mule.

'A great oak' should be 'a great terebinth,' or turpentine tree^d. The idea of his having been caught by the hair originated with Josephus^e. Others suppose that, as he rode furiously through the wood, he was caught and wedged between the forked branches.

13. 'Against mine own life' should probably be 'against his life' (R. V.). So the LXX renders it; meaning that, if he had treacherously slain Absalom, the king would have heard of it, and Joab himself would have been against him.

14. Joab refuses^g to waste time in discussing the matter. He takes three rods, or wooden staves, and with these stabs Absalom, as he hangs from the oak. Then his ten armour-bearers finish the work with their swords.

16, 17. The retreat having now been sounded, the body of Absalom is hastily thrown into one of the many pits in the wood, and roughly covered with a mound of stones. Such a cairn commonly marked the grave of a traitor or criminal, as in the case of Achan, and of the king of Ai (Joshua vii. 26, viii. 29)^f.

^d 'These words mean the terebinth, a common tree in Palestine, having the general appearance of the oak, but not attaining so great a size. From it is obtained the aromatic resin called Chio turpentine' (*Helps to Study of Bible*, § xlvi, art. 'Teil').

^e It was suggested no doubt by the description of Absalom's luxuriant hair in ch. xiv. 26. It has been widely accepted; and some have added that the tall mule on which he rode in his presumption, and the beautiful hair on which he prided himself, conducted to his inglorious death.

^f 'At Damascus I saw a huge pile of stones rising above a high garden wall. It was a cairn raised over the supposed grave of

22. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

23. But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush.

24. And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

25. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26. And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27. And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28. And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29. And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.

18. The indignity thus offered to Absalom's corpse is contrasted with the splendid 'pillar' or monument which, having no son, he had erected to perpetuate his name ^g.

This 'pillar' was in the 'king's dale.' Tradition has identified it with a monument in the valley of Jehoshaphat or the Kidron, about a quarter of a mile east of Jerusalem. 'The modern Jews . . . have buried its sides deep in the stones, which they throw against it in execration' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 127). Others suppose it to have been near the site of Sodom, as the king of that city is described in Gen. xiv. 17 as meeting Abraham at 'the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.'

19-23. Joab, knowing that David's grief for Absalom will be greater than his joy at the rebellion being crushed, does not wish one of the king's friends to be the bearer of the tidings, but proposes to send the news by 'the Cushite' (R. V.), an Ethiopian slave. Ahimaaz takes the longer but more level route, and so arrives first ^h.

The words 'no tidings ready' should rather be 'no sufficient (margin, 'convenient') tidings'; or 'thou wilt have no reward for the tidings' (R. V.).

24-32. 'The king sat, waiting for news, between the two gates, which connected the double city of the two camps of

Cain: its enormous size resulting from every passer-by, for generations, throwing another stone on the heap' So, on the grave of Absalom 'every passer-by afterwards, doubtless, threw a stone, as Arabs still do with detested graves' (Geikie, iii. p. 341 .

^g In 2 Sam. xiv. 27 we are told that Absalom had three sons. But no names are given, and it is probable that they died in infancy.

^h Those who maintain that the battle was fought on the west of Jordan explain 'the way of the plain' as the Jordan valley, for which the expression is commonly used. But both messengers must in that case have gone by way of the plain (Smith, *Hist. Geog.* p. 335).

30. And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31. And, behold, Cushie came; and Cushie said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32. And the king said unto Cushie, *Is* the young man Absalom safe? And Cushie answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

24. THE RETURN FROM MAHANAIM.

2 SAMUEL xix.

The king has withdrawn into privacy, to indulge in his grief for Absalom's death. This 'turns the victory into mourning,' the people stealing into the city as if defeated and ashamed. But Joab rouses him from his dejection¹, telling him that if he does not show himself, his followers will all desert him in despair. David therefore comes forth, and 'sits in the gate'².

There is need of wise counsel and prompt action. The whole country is in a state of anarchy. David is still an exile. Absalom is dead. 'The people are at strife throughout all the tribes.'

David adopts a course, which is conciliatory; but, as the

Mahanaim' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 127). The watchman was on the look-out on the tower above¹. Ahimaaz, afraid to make the whole truth known, only reports the victory. It is reserved for the rough Ethiopian slave abruptly to reveal the rest of the news.

33. The glad tidings that the rising is crushed are forgotten in the passionate outburst of sorrow for the son, so deeply loved, so sadly slain in the midst of his rebellion. David retires to the watchman's tower; and there in solitude gives way to that grief, in which, with the feeling of the bereaved father, there may well have mingled the bitter thought that all their troubles were the outcome of his own flagrant sin.

¹ We may compare with this the story of the watchman at Jezreel, who recognizes the driving of Jehu, as this man recognizes the running of Ahimaaz (2 Kings ix. 17, 20).

24. THE RETURN FROM MAHANAIM.

2 SAMUEL XIX.

¹ Joab claims that, if Absalom has been killed, the victory has saved the lives of all the rest of David's family. For, among Orientals, a usurper, to secure his being the founder of a new dynasty, commonly puts out of the way all who may prove rivals (see p. 149).

² 'Israel had fled every man to his tent' (ver. 8) refers to the dispersion of the followers of Absalom, of whom the name Israel is used throughout in this narrative (ch. xvi. 15, 18; xvii. 24, 26; xviii. 6, 7, 16, 17).

³ Amasa, as one of the leading rebels, deserves punishment. But David, while anxious to conciliate him, also desires some one to take the place of Joab, after the share the latter has had in Absalom's death.

result proves, unwise. He sends Zadok and Abiathar, to urge his own tribe of Judah to take the lead in restoring him, in spite of the prominent part taken by this tribe in the insurrection; and he wins over Amasa, by promising to make him 'captain of the host' instead of Joab³. So the men of Judah come to Gilgal, 'to conduct the king over Jordan.'

With them comes Shimei, full of professions of remorse and of loyalty. Abishai wishes to put him to death, for having 'cursed the Lord's anointed'; but David spares his life⁴. Ziba has accompanied Shimei.

The next arrival is Mephibosheth, unwashed and dishevelled, in sign of deep mourning. He exposes Ziba's deceit and slander. David, in spite of this, decides that he and Ziba shall divide the land⁵.

Barzillai has accompanied David to the Jordan valley. The king tries in vain to tempt him to join the court at Jerusalem. He pleads his old age, and sends his son Chimham instead.

The king has been conducted to Gilgal by 'all the people of Judah, and half the people of Israel.' The fact of the former having, by David's invitation, taken the lead in his restoration, provokes the jealousy of the rest; and a violent altercation takes place. The men of Judah assert their right to take precedence on the ground of nearness of kin, and deny that they have been in any way bribed to act as they have done. The others put forward their claim on the ground of being by far the more numerous; having 'ten parts' in the king, as including ten tribes. 'And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel⁶.'

⁴ David is bound by his oath for his lifetime, but he afterwards enjoins Solomon to punish Shimei, who is at last executed by Benaiah, for breaking his pledge to remain in Jerusalem (1 Kings ii. 8, 9, 36-46).

⁵ David thus revokes his hasty transfer of all Mephibosheth's property to Ziba (ch. xvi. 4). But his decision now is perplexing, unless there is some secret reason for it. It has been suggested that David knew that Mephibosheth was at heart disloyal, and saw through his story, which was 'as lame as the tale-bearer' (Blunt, *Script. Coinc.* pp. 168, 169).

⁶ This jealousy had been shown as long before as the times of Gideon and of Jephthah (pp. 22, 23, 40, 41). The haughty Ephraimites could not bear on any occasion to take a subordinate place. The division of the kingdom on the death of Saul had widened the gap between the northern and southern tribes.

The controversy here is quickly followed by the revolt of Sheba. It is the most open display as yet of that bitter feeling which leads to the disruption of the kingdom on the death of Solomon.

'Three elements,' says Dean Stanley, 'had been at work in the late insurrection—

' i. The personal struggle of Absalom to gain the throne.

' ii. The still lingering hopes of the house of Saul and of the tribe of Benjamin.

' iii. The deep-rooted feeling of Ephraim and the northern tribes against Judah' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 129).

XXVI. THE REVOLT OF SHEBA—THE MURDER
OF AMASA.

2 SAMUEL XX. 1-22.

XX. 1. And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

2. So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3. And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4. Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5. So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6. And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

7. And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the

XXVI. THE REVOLT OF SHEBA—THE MURDER
OF AMASA.

2 SAMUEL XX. 1-22.

XX. 1. A 'man of Belial' means here an ungodly or unprincipled man. So it is applied, in 1 Kings xxi. 10, to Jezebel's false witnesses against Naboth (see also page 97).

Sheba was probably well known as 'a fanatical partisan of the supposed rights of the ten tribes, in opposition to those of Judah' (Geikie, iii. p. 348). The Benjamites were still aggrieved at the monarchy having been transferred from their tribe to that of Judah.

Sheba seizes the opportunity of this gathering and controversy. The cry, 'To your tents, O Israel,' was the signal of revolt. These same words were used by those who followed Jeroboam, when exasperated by Rehoboam's foolish threats (1 Kings xii. 16).

2. Thus it was 'all but an anticipation of the disruption under Jeroboam' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 130).

Absalom's rebellion had originated in Judah, and the 'men of Israel' had been the first to desire David's return to Jerusalem. But his impolitic conduct, in making overtures to the men of Judah, had now estranged the ten tribes.

4, 5. Thus David's promise to promote Amasa in Joab's room was kept. We are not told why Amasa was so dilatory. Perhaps, as the leader of Absalom's army, he was still distrusted. Or he may have been trying to enlist some of the Israelites, as well as the men of Judah, since he was returning to Gibeon, when Joab met him. Or, as ver. 11 seems to imply, his delay may have been due to his being only half-hearted in supporting David.

6. David realizes that this insurrection is more formidable than Absalom's had been. It is uncertain whether Abishai

mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8. When they *were* at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle *with* a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9. And Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

10. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11. And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab.

12. And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13. When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

14. And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

was in command of this second force sent out, or whether the king, unwilling to hold communication with Joab, issued his orders through Abishai. The expression 'Joab's men' (ver. 7) seems to imply that he was leader of a part of the force only, but he is spoken of and acts as the commander immediately after the death of Amasa^a.

7. These, who were David's guard, were naturally kept at home till last. The 'Gibborim' or 'mighty men' were originally the heroes who had joined David in exile (see p. 201).

8-10. It would seem that Joab purposely let the short sword or dagger fall, so that his having it in his left hand, when he had picked it up, might not excite Amasa's suspicion^b. He kills Amasa with the same thrust with which he had killed Abner (ch. ii. 23).

Gibeon was about six miles NW. of Jerusalem^c. The tabernacle was there at this time. So Joab was afterwards slain at the place, at which he had committed this treacherous murder (1 Kings ii. 28, 29).

11-13. The words of Joab's servant are designed to give the impression of Joab having killed Amasa as a traitor. The people at first stand horror-struck at the sight; but, when the body is removed, 'the spell is broken,' and they follow Joab^d.

^a The Syrian version puts 'Joab' for 'Abishai'; the LXX, 'Amasa.'

^b So Ehud had the dagger in his left hand when he stabbed the unsuspecting Eglon, king of Moab (Judg. iii. 21).

^c 'Amasa went before them' should be 'Amasa came to meet them' (R. V.).

^d 'He, when they overtook him, presented an aspect long afterwards remembered with horror. The blood of Amasa had spurted all over the girdle to which the sword was attached, and the sandals on his feet were red with the stains left by the fallen corpse' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 131). We learn this from 1 Kings ii. 5.

15. And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

16. Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

17. And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? And he answered, *I am he*. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

18. Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*.

19. *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful* in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

20. And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

21. The matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

14, 15. Abel was an important city in the far north, which Sheba had intended to make his capital^e. It is called in ver. 19 'a city and a mother,' or metropolis, being at the head of a cluster of villages. Siege operations are at once commenced by Joab^f.

18, 19. Abel was proverbial for its wisdom. People used to say that to get advice from its inhabitants was the way to ensure success in any undertaking. The 'wise woman' reproaches Joab for not first inquiring whether the people are ready to make terms.

20, 21. Joab disclaims any hostility against the people themselves. His attack is against the leader of the rebellion only.

22. 'In a short time the head of the arch-rebel was thrown contemptuously over the wall, and the trumpets thereupon sounded the recall, leaving the city forthwith in peace. One death had extinguished the whole movement, lately so threatening' (Geikie, iii. p. 351).

^e The name Beth-maachah perhaps implies some connexion with Maachah, Absalom's mother.

^f 'Stood in the trench' should rather be 'stood against the rampart' (R. V.). This casting up banks or mounds in besieging cities was common in ancient warfare. It was foretold that Sennacherib should not 'cast a bank' against Jerusalem (2 Kings xix. 32; Isa. xxxvii. 33).

We may compare the plans of the Peloponnesians in the celebrated siege of Plataea, who worked seventy days and nights at raising a mound, which device the besieged ingeniously defeated, first by raising the height of their wall, and then by undermining the mound and drawing away the earth from beneath (Thucyd. ii. 75).

25. HISTORY TO THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE.

2 SAMUEL XXI. I—XXIII. 39.

The rest of 2 Samuel contains the account of two other disasters of David's reign, the famine and the pestilence¹; the names and exploits of his mighty men; and his psalm of thanksgiving, and 'last words.'

David, inquiring of the Lord the cause of a three years' famine, is told that 'it is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites².' These, when the king wishes to make 'atonement,' refuse to accept any compensation in money³, and demand as satisfaction that 'seven men of the sons of Saul' be given them, whom they may hang up in his town of Gibeah⁴.

Mephibosheth is spared for Jonathan's sake. Two sons of Rizpah⁵, the daughter of Aiah, and five sons of Merab, Saul's daughter, are given up. These are crucified 'at the beginning of barley harvest,' and the bodies remain impaled till 'water drops upon them out of heaven⁶.' All this time Rizpah keeps watch by the corpses of her sons, guarding them carefully from the vultures and the jackals; 'an unspeakably touching instance of maternal love.' The descent of the autumn rains is taken as a proof that the 'atonement' is accepted, and the king orders the bodies to be removed for burial⁷. At the same time he recovers the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had rescued them from Beth-shan after the battle of Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. xxxi. 11-13). The bodies are all buried together in the sepulchre of Kish at Zelah.

The historian next relates the exploits of David's heroes: how Abishai rescued the king from death at the hands of Ishbi-benob, one of 'the sons of the giant'; how, after his extreme peril, the people refused to let the king go out

25. HISTORY TO THE NUMBERING OF THE
PEOPLE.

2 SAMUEL XXI. 1—XXIII. 39.

¹ There is nothing to show the precise date of the famine. 'Then there was a famine,' &c., should rather be 'And there was,' &c. (R. V.). It would seem to have been after David's first meeting with Mephibosheth (ch. ix); and, if Shimei's words (ch. xvii. 7) refer partly to this slaughter of Saul's sons, this would place it before the rebellion of Absalom. Some suppose that the numbering and pestilence also preceded that rebellion (see p. 217).

² This was a violation of the league made with them by Joshua (Joshua ix. 15). We have no account of this massacre of Saul's. As they had been made servants of the sanctuary, they were perhaps included in the massacre at Nob (see p. 144).

³ Money payments for bloodshed, common among many ancient nations, were forbidden by the law of Moses (Num. xxxv. 31). Such payments, called 'wergyld,' were made in England in the time of the Saxons (*Speaker's Commentary*).

⁴ This may either mean that they may impale or crucify the victims, or expose their bodies as an indignity, after executing them.

⁵ Rizpah was the concubine of Saul, and afterwards of Abner (ch. iii. 7). 'Michal' is clearly the error of some copyist. We are told in 1 Sam. xviii. 19 that Merab (not Michal) was the wife of Adriel. Michal had no children (2 Sam. vi. 23).

⁶ The law required that the bodies should be taken down on the day of execution (Deut. xxi. 22). But this was an exceptional case; and these bodies must remain till the rain came in proof of forgiveness.

to battle any more, lest he should 'quench the light of Israel'; how Sibbechai slew the giant Saph, and Elhanan slew the brother of Goliath; and how another man of gigantic stature was slain by David's nephew, Jonathan, the son of Shimeah.

The psalm of thanksgiving in ch. xxii is almost the same as Psalm xviii⁸. This is followed by 'the last words of David'⁹, in which he compares the blessings of a ruler, who 'ruleth in the fear of God,' to 'a morning without clouds,' and to the 'grass shining after rain.' He tells how 'the sons of Belial' shall be as 'thorns thrust away,' and 'utterly burned with fire.'

A list is added of David's 'mighty men': Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah, who defeated bands of Philistines; and the three¹⁰ who achieved the memorable exploit, when David was in the 'hold' at Adullam, of bursting through the Philistine ranks, and bringing him the water from the well of Beth-lehem, which he refused to drink, because procured at the risk of brave men's lives. Other exploits of Abishai and Benaiah are recorded.

XXVII. THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PESTILENCE—THE SITE FOR THE TEMPLE BOUGHT.

2 SAMUEL XXIV.

XXIV. 1. And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

2. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

⁷ The LXX says they were removed by 'Joah, one of the descendants of the giants.'

⁸ This psalm is described in the title as composed by David, 'in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.' It appears to have been written after the successful completion of his foreign wars, and before his grievous fall and domestic troubles, since it contains no reference to these. It is the longest of the psalms ascribed by their titles to David. The alterations in it from the version in 2 Samuel were probably made to adapt it for use in the Temple services.

⁹ These are not actually David's 'last words,' for we have instructions given later in 1 Kings i and ii. But they are 'his farewell utterances, as a divinely inspired prophet of God' (Wordsworth).

¹⁰ Abishai is called the 'chief among three' (ch. xxiii. 18). The others were probably Benaiah and Asahel.

XXVII. THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PESTILENCE—THE SITE FOR THE TEMPLE BOUGHT.

2 SAMUEL XXIV.

XXIV. 1, 2. The word 'again' shows that this was after the famine. Probably it was towards the close of David's reign. (But see p. 217.)

In 1 Chron. xxi. 1 it is said that 'Satan provoked David' to this act. The impulse came, like every sinful desire, from the spirit of evil (see Jas. i. 13, 14). God allowed it, as bringing to a crisis the growing pride of the king and people ^a.

^a 'Both God and Satan had their hand in this work ; God by permission, Satan by suggestion' (Bp. Hall ; see Wordsworth).

Others however explain the word for 'Satan' in 1 Chron. xxi. 1

3. And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

4. Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

5. And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:

6. Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon,

7. And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beer-sheba.

8. So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9. And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

10. And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away

This numbering was not a mere census; it was a military levy or conscription. A census had twice been taken by Divine command; at the beginning and at the end of the wanderings in the wilderness (Num. i and xxvi). But this proceeding 'implied a confidence and pride, alien to the spirit inculcated on the kings of the chosen people' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 131)^b.

3, 4. Joab, who feels how important it is that David should do nothing to estrange his lately divided subjects, represents to him the folly of that which he is proposing. He tells him that it would be 'a cause of trespass to Israel' (1 Chron. xxi. 3). But this time the king refuses to listen to his advice.

5-9. The circuit commences from the south-east, and, going round by the north-west, returns to the south of Judah. We

as meaning 'the adversary'; that is, some enemy of David's, who incited him to this act, to make him unpopular. Dean Stanley refers here to the idea of a 'Nemesis,' or retribution on excessive pride or prosperity, which 'pervades all ancient, especially Oriental religions'; the principle illustrated, e. g., by the story of the ring of Polycrates (Herod. iii. 39, 43). See also the speech of Artabanus in Herod. vii. 10; and Horace, *Odes*, ii. 10. 8-12.

^b There have been different opinions as to the nature of David's sin:—

i. That he showed an unlawful desire of aggrandizement by foreign conquest.

ii. That he designed to impose heavy taxes (like those of Solomon and Rehoboam, which led to the disruption), and so establish a despotism.

iii. That he intended, like other tyrants, to oppress the people by forcing them to labour at great public works (see Part I, p. 127).

iv. Josephus says that he neglected to require the tax of half a shekel a head, for 'an offering to the Lord,' which the law required at every such numbering (Exod. xxx. 13). But there is no special reference to this in either account.

the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

11. For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12. Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee.

13. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

14. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

16. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

17. And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep,

are told in 1 Chron. xxi. 6 that Benjamin and Levi were omitted ^c.

10-12. David seems to have regretted his foolish proceeding, before Gad was sent to him ^d. He was conscious of the want of faith he had shown. As in the case of his former sin, a prophet is commissioned to tell him of the temporal punishment which must follow. It is to be one that may recall the offence itself; one which shall reduce the number of his subjects.

13, 14. The land had recently suffered from such famine, and David had learned in the rebellion of Absalom what it was so to flee before his enemies ^e.

In Ezek. xiv. 21 another visitation is added to these, as destined to be sent on Jerusalem. The 'four sore judgements' are 'the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence.'

15. 'The time appointed' should probably be 'the time of the assembly,' or evening sacrifice.

^c The Levites were of course exempt from military duties. It is not so easy to see why Benjamin was omitted. Some suppose that Joab, half-hearted in the work, purposely made an incomplete return.

There is a difference between the numbers given here and in 1 Chron. xxi. 5, where that of Israel is given as 1,100,000, and that of Judah as 470,000. Perhaps the latter writer included the estimated numbers of Benjamin and Levi, or the standing army, which consisted of twelve divisions of 24,000 each.

^d Gad has not been mentioned since the time of David's exile (1 Sam. xxii. 5). He is called the 'seer,' or 'one who sees.' This, as we learn from 1 Sam. ix. 9, was originally the title of all those who were afterwards called 'prophets,' or revealers and expounders of the will of God.

^e In 1 Chron. xxi. 12 it is given as 'three years' famine.'

what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

18. And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

19. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

20. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

22. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23. All these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

24. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

16, 17. David intercedes for the innocent people, and the plague is stayed. The destroying angel^f stops at a spot just outside the eastern walls of the city, used as a threshing-floor by Araunah (1 Chron. 'Ornan'), one of the old Jebusites; perhaps the former king of Jebus.

18, 19. The spot where the angel halted is to be consecrated for ever. An altar is at once built there. The place is called Moriah, or 'the vision of Jehovah' (2 Chron. iii. 1)^g. But, more than this, it is to be the site of the gorgeous Temple of Solomon, the centre of national worship.

20-25. It has been supposed from ver. 23 that Araunah was the former king of Jebus. But the words should probably be, 'All this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the king^h.'

^f Cp. the destruction of Sennacherib's army (2 Kings xix. 35). In Exod. xii. 23 he is called 'the destroyer.'

^g The only other passage in which the name is used is in Gen. xxii. 2, in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac (see Part I, pp. 55, 57).

^h In 1 Chron. xxi. 25 the price is given as 600 shekels of gold by weight. It has been suggested that this included the cost of the whole site for the future Temple; or, that the words here should be rendered fifty shekels of money, which is explained in Chronicles as gold shekels, equal to 600 silver shekels.

The meeting of David and Araunah was 'the meeting of two ages. Araunah, as he yields the spot, is the last of the Canaanites, the last of that stern old race that we discern in any individual form and character. David, as he raises that altar, is the close harbinger of the reign of Solomon, the founder of a new institution, which another was to complete. Long before, he had cherished the notion of a mighty Temple, which should supersede the temporary tent on Mount Zion' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 135).

26. THE CONSPIRACY OF ADONIJAH.

I KINGS i. 1-31.

We are told little in the Books of Kings about the rest of David's reign¹. From the account in Chronicles we learn that he devoted the concluding years of his life to preparations for the Temple, which his son was to build (1 Chron. xxii, xxviii).

These years appear to have been free from external troubles. But there is to be one more disturbance of David's and the nation's peace, caused by one of his own family.

He is described as now 'old and stricken in years'². The eldest of his surviving sons is Adonijah, the son of Haggith, who was born when the court was at Hebron, and so was now between thirty and forty years old³. It is known, however, that the king has chosen as his successor Solomon, Bath-sheba's son, who is still young for such a charge⁴.

Adonijah resolves on usurping the throne before his father's death. Like Absalom, he prepares him 'chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.' David, who had not 'displeased' or thwarted this son at any time, does not suppress the assumption of royal state. Like the former usurper, Adonijah is 'a goodly man'; and such personal attractions did much in those days towards gaining respect and popularity.

The conspiracy, which is joined by Joab and Abiathar, soon becomes formidable⁵. Adonijah's first open act is to hold a sacrificial feast, as Absalom had done. The place chosen for this is a stone or rock near the city, called Zoheleth, or 'the serpent,' close to En-rogel⁶. 'The king's sons' and others are invited; but Solomon, Nathan, Benaiah, and the 'mighty men' are left out, because they have already refused to support Adonijah.

Nathan, however, hears of the plan, and urges Bath-sheba to go at once to David, and so save her own and Solomon's

26. THE CONSPIRACY OF ADONIJAH.

I KINGS i. 1-31.

¹ The division between this and the previous books, like that between the two Books of Samuel, may seem an arbitrary one. But the events here recorded, the conspiracy of Adonijah, the confirmation of Solomon as successor, and the instructions David gives him, though they belong to David's reign, are really rather an introduction to that of Solomon. The mention of Abishag at the beginning seems only to be introduced, as leading up to the part which she is to play in Adonijah's second attempt.

The Books of Samuel and Kings, though probably of different authorship, are all one continuous history. In the LXX and Vulgate the former are called the First and Second, and these the Third and Fourth Books of Kings. They embrace the whole period from the end of the judges to the captivity of Israel and of Judah. But, while portions of the history are but briefly noticed, others, which enforce more clearly moral and spiritual lessons, are given in full; especially the ministry of Elijah and of Elisha, and the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah.

² David was apparently about seventy years old. But his early life had been one of hardship and suffering, and he had gone through much trial and sorrow.

³ Amnon and Absalom were both dead. Of Chileab, the other son born before Adonijah, no further mention is made after that of his birth, so he probably died in infancy. Solomon's words in ii. 22 seem to imply that Adonijah asserted 'the rights of primogeniture.'

⁴ Solomon was probably now about twenty years old. Josephus speaks of him as only fourteen.

⁵ We may be surprised to find Joab and Abiathar taking part in the conspiracy. The former probably still felt aggrieved at his treatment after the rebellion of Absalom. Abiathar, who had been David's faithful adherent, since he joined him in his exile (1 Sam. xxii. 20), may have been jealous of the growing influence of Zadok. But they probably both regarded Adonijah as the heir apparent to the throne, and resented the preference of a son of Bath-sheba.

lives⁷. He promises to follow her to the palace, and confirm the news of the rebellion. They remind the king of the assurance he had given that Solomon should be his successor. This assurance David now renews, and takes prompt and energetic measures for crushing the conspiracy.

XXVIII. SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.

I KINGS i. 32-53.

32. And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

33. The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon :

34. And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel : and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

35. Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne ; for he shall be king in my stead : and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

36. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen : the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*.

⁶ En-rogel, or 'the spring Rogel,' was a spring in the valley of the Kidron, not far from Siloam. This would supply water for the needful ablutions, and the stone or rock would furnish a natural altar.

⁷ For the practice of usurpers putting to death all members of the dethroned house, see p. 149.

XXVIII. SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.

I KINGS i. 32-53.

I. 32. David's conduct in this crisis is a marked contrast to that at the rebellion of Absalom. His old spirit revives, and he takes prompt and vigorous measures for suppressing the rising.

33. Riding upon the royal mule was a sign either of usurpation, or of lawful succession to the throne. So Absalom apparently adopted this mark of royalty (2 Sam. xviii. 9). David now gives this order as a public proof of his selection of Solomon ^a.

There is doubt as to the exact position of Gihon, some placing it to the west, others with more probability to the east of the city. It is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30, where Hezekiah is said to have stopped the watercourse at Gihon, and diverted it 'to the west side of the city of David.'

35. The right of succession by seniority was not strictly

^a We may compare with this the account of Pharaoh making Joseph ride in his own chariot (Gen. xli. 43); and of Mordecai being mounted on the king's horse, as one of the signs of royal dignity and favour (Esther vi. 8-11).

So some explain the description of our Lord in the triumphal entry, 'meek, and sitting upon an ass' (Matt. xxi. 5; cp. Zech. ix. 9), as marking a contrast; 'meek,' though with the appearance of royalty. Others however explain it as riding 'not upon a war-horse, but on an animal which was the symbol of peace' (Farrar, *Life of Christ*, ii. 197).

37. As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

38. So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

39. And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

40. And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

41. And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard *it* as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore *is this* noise of the city being in an uproar?

42. And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou *art* a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

43. And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

44. And the king hath sent with him Zadok the

observed in the old world. A king not uncommonly appointed his successor^b.

The expression 'over Israel and over Judah' is one more sign of the tendency to 'disintegration'; to a separation, that is, between the northern and southern tribes (see pp. 233, 235).

36. 37. Benaiah shows by these words his sense of David's unselfish desire for the growing prosperity of his people, and for Solomon's reign to be more glorious than his own^c. From ver. 47 we learn that David responded to the prayer, 'bowing himself upon the bed.'

39. Anointing was the divinely appointed ceremony on the selection or accession of a king. So Saul was anointed by Samuel (1 Sam. x. 1). David was first anointed, when chosen from the sons of Jesse (1 Sam. xvi. 13); and the rite was twice repeated; first, on his acceptance by the house of Judah, and then when he was recognized as king by the tribes of Israel also (2 Sam. ii. 4, v. 3). The expression used to describe the sanctity of the king was 'the Lord's anointed^d.'

Zadok probably brought the 'holy oil' with him from the tabernacle at Gibeon. We read of no such ceremony in the case of Adonijah.

^b We find instances of this in the case of Alyattes, king of Lydia, appointing Croesus his successor; of Cyrus, king of Persia, selecting Cambyses; and of Darius nominating Xerxes (Herod. i. 91, 208; vii. 3). The Roman emperors also claimed and exercised this right of naming or adopting successors (*Speaker's Commentary*).

^c "No good father is jealous of his son, but desires to see his children more famous than himself." Every good king wishes that the reign of his successor may be happier than his own' (Wordsworth).

^d So in Ps. lxxxix. 21, 'I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him.' The same ceremony was used in the consecration of a priest (Exod. xxviii. 41, &c.), and of a prophet. Elijah was ordered to anoint Hazael and Jehu to be kings, and Elisha to be prophet in his room (1 Kings xix. 15, 16).

All these rites typified the mission of Him who, as the Christ (the Anointed One), combined these three offices; of Him whom 'the Spirit of the Lord anointed to preach the gospel to the poor,' &c. (Isa. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18).

priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule :

45. And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon : and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This *is* the noise that ye have heard.

46. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

47. And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed.

48. And also thus said the king, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which hath given *one* to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing *it*.

49. And all the guests that *were* with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

50. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

51. And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon : for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let

For the blowing of trumpets we may compare the proclamation of Jehu by the officers in the camp at Ramoth-gilead (2 Kings ix. 13); and of Joash by Jehoiada the high-priest (2 Kings xi. 14). In the latter case we are told there were the same acclamations. With such greeting Hushai had mockingly welcomed Absalom (2 Sam. xvi. 16). So the conspirators had cried, 'God save King Adonijah' (ver. 25).

40. Such wild expressions of delight are common with Eastern nations^e. We may compare the account of bringing up the ark to Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12-16).

41, 42. The noise of these rejoicings reaches to En-rogel. Jonathan, who presently arrives with news, is the same who had been chosen with his brother Ahimaaz, as swift runners, to bear tidings from the capital to David at Mahanaim (2 Sam. xv. 35, 36). He, with his father Abiathar, had joined the rebels.

Adonijah greets Jonathan here, as David had greeted Ahimaaz, when he arrived as messenger after the battle in which Absalom was slain (2 Sam. xviii. 27).

49. The sudden collapse of the conspiracy is surprising. Perhaps the supporters of Adonijah had hoped that the king's choice of successor might be turned from Solomon to him, when he was found to have such powerful supporters as Joab and Abiathar.

50. Adonijah alone seems to have dreaded capital punishment, and to have taken 'sanctuary.' It is uncertain whether he fled to the brazen altar at Gibeon, or to the altar now erected beside the ark on Mount Zion.

The 'horns' were projections at the corners of the altar, made of wood, and overlaid with brass (Exod. xxvii. 1, 2). To these the victims were commonly bound. So in Ps.

^e Instead of 'piped with pipes' the LXX has here 'danced with dances' (ἐχορεύον ἐν χοροῖς). Some, with Josephus, explain 'rent' as 'resounded.' The Vulgate has 'insonuit.' But most versions of the LXX have ἐπράγη, some having ἤχησεν. Such strong metaphorical expressions were common among the Hebrews, as among other Oriental nations.

king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

52. And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

53. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

27. END OF DAVID'S REIGN—EXECUTION OF ADONIJAH, JOAB, AND SHIMEI.

I KINGS ii. 1—iii. 3.

Thus Solomon ascends the throne, reigning at first jointly with David, whose death follows soon after these events.

David's parting instructions to his son open with an exhortation to 'be strong, and show himself a man¹,' and to rule justly in the fear of God. Then follow special injunctions as to the treatment of some of those, who have been conspicuous in David's reign. Joab is to be put to death for the two murders of Abner and Amasa². Kindness is to be shown to the sons of Barzillai. Shimei's life has so far been spared, in accordance with David's oath to him; but now he, too, is to be punished.

So ends David's reign of forty years, and he is buried in 'the city of David³.'

Solomon succeeds, and 'his kingdom is established greatly,' but not at first without dangers. Adonijah renews his designs, persuading Bath-sheba to go to Solomon, and ask that Abishag, David's last wife, may be given him. This, as Solomon

cxviii. 27: 'Bind the sacrifice with cords, yea, even unto the horns of the altar^f.'

52. Solomon's sparing Adonijah's life was an act of remarkable clemency for those times; one, as it proved, ill requited by this treacherous brother.

^f 'There was nothing in the law of Moses to give the right of sanctuary to those who laid hold of the horns of the altar (see Exod. xxi. 14); but it was a common custom of all nations for men guilty of crime, or in danger of their lives, to seek safety at the altar. . . . The same idea was prevalent and was legalized in the Church from early days. The precincts of Westminster Abbey are still called the Sanctuary' (S. P. C. K. *Commentary*).

27. END OF DAVID'S REIGN—EXECUTION OF ADONIJAH, JOAB, AND SHIMEI.

I KINGS ii. 1—iii. 3.

¹ David's charge recalls the exhortation given to Joshua (Joshua i. 5, 9). Solomon, young though he is, must be brave and manly. We find that he was conscious of the difficulty caused by his youth. He describes himself as 'but a little child' (1 Kings iii. 7). The dangers thus involved in his accession, and the knowledge of his peaceful disposition, may partly explain the vindictive spirit, which appears to have dictated David's orders about Joab and Shimei.

² Joab is to be put to death; not, as we might have expected, for his recent disloyalty in supporting Adonijah, nor for his slaying Absalom, which was the chief cause of his estrangement from David, but for these two deeds of treachery and cruelty.

³ During these forty years great progress has been made. A standing army has been organized; the Philistines and other formidable enemies have been crushed; Jerusalem has been established as the political and religious capital; and the site and materials for building the Temple have been procured. So the man of war has prepared the way for the man of peace.

at once understands, is a renewal of his claim to the kingdom⁴, for which his life is forfeited. Benaiah is sent as executioner; 'and he fell upon him that he died.'

Others, who had before supported Adonijah, whether privy to this second attempt or not, are involved in its consequences. Abiathar's life is spared, in consideration of his former services to David; but he is deposed from his office, and banished to his private estate of Anathoth in Benjamin. Joab, hearing of this, hurries in alarm to the tabernacle, and takes sanctuary, clinging to 'the horns of the altar,' as Adonijah had done. This, however, does not protect him. Benaiah is sent after him, and, on his refusing to come forth, he is slain there. He is buried 'in his own house in the wilderness⁵.' Benaiah succeeds to the post of commander-in-chief, and Zadok takes the place of Abiathar.

One more notorious offender remains, Shimei. He is told that his life will be spared, on condition of his staying in Jerusalem. After three years he breaks his pledge, going to Gath in pursuit of some runaway slaves. There is no reason to suppose that this expedition implied any treacherous design; but he, too, falls by the hand of Benaiah.

Solomon now marries the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt⁶. He continues the work of building his own house, and the wall of Jerusalem; and 'the house of the Lord,' which is to supersede the 'high places,' where the people still sacrifice.

XXIX. SOLOMON'S PRAYER—THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON.

I KINGS iii. 4-28.

III. 4. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that *was* the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

There is great doubt as to the exact position of the royal sepulchre. The traditional 'tomb of David' is on the south side of Mount Zion. This is said to be comparatively modern, though it may be built over more ancient tombs. From a reference in Neh. iii. 16 to 'the sepulchres of David,' these would seem to have been to the west of the Temple. All the kings were buried there to the time of Hezekiah. Jehoiada was allowed a resting-place there, as a special honour (2 Chron. xxiv. 16). St. Peter, in his speech on the Day of Pentecost, speaks of David's sepulchre as 'with us unto this day.'

⁴ Solomon at once says, 'Ask for him the kingdom also.' The meaning of this has been already explained (see pp. 182, 183).

⁵ If, as is possible, it was at Gibeon that Joab took refuge, his execution was close to the spot where he had murdered Amasa (2 Sam. xx. 8).

⁶ This marriage is said to show the recognition now of Israel as a powerful nation. Egypt, however, had declined greatly in repute and prosperity. It is very uncertain which Pharaoh this was. Solomon's step was no doubt a politic one, and there is nothing said to imply that this alliance led to the introduction of idolatry.

Ps. xlv has been thought by many to have been composed in honour of this marriage. In it the bride is exhorted to 'forget her own people, and her father's house,' including her old religion. The Book of Canticles or Song of Solomon has also been referred by some to these nuptials.

XXIX. SOLOMON'S PRAYER—THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON.

I KINGS iii. 4-28.

III. 4. Gibeon stood on a plateau, some five miles north-west of Jerusalem. It was the chief of the four towns of the Hivites, who had migrated to Southern Palestine

5. In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night : and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee ; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

7. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father : and *I am but* a little child : I know not *how* to go out or come in.

8. And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad : for who is able to judge this thy so great a people ?

10. And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

11. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life ; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies ; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment ;

12. Behold, I have done according to thy words : lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

(Joshua ix. 17; see Part I, p. 221). The name itself, like Geba and Gibeah, implies that it was on a hill. It is now called El-Jib.

We do not know when the tabernacle and the brazen altar were removed here from Nob. Through the presence of these, Gibeon was regarded as 'the great high place.'

Sacrifices were often on a very large scale. The festival probably lasted for several days^a.

7. Solomon, feeling his inexperience, and the grave responsibilities of his position, calls himself, in all humility and diffidence, 'a little child.'

'To go out and come in' is used elsewhere also for the performance of important duties. So we read of Moses entreating God to appoint a successor, who may 'go out' and 'go in' before the congregation (Num. xxvii. 16, 17); and he thus describes himself, when too old for the conduct of public affairs, 'I can no more go out and come in' (Deut. xxxi. 2).

8. God had told Abraham that his seed should be innumerable, as 'the dust of the earth' (Gen. xiii. 16); and Balaam had said, 'Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?' (Num. xxiii. 10).

9. The wisdom, for which Solomon specially prayed, was that which would enable him to give right judgement^b. We must remember that in those days the administration of justice belonged to the king himself^c. Before, it had be-

^a Hecatomb (*ἑκατόμβη*) meant originally the sacrifice of 100 oxen, but it came to be used of any great public sacrifice, without regard to number. Herodotus (vii. 43) tells us that Xerxes, when setting out on his expedition to Greece, sacrificed at Troy 1000 oxen to Athene.

^b So, in the Collect for Whit-Sunday, we pray to God to grant us by His Holy Spirit 'to have a right judgement in all things.'

^c The ideal ruler is depicted by Isaiah xi. 2-4 as one who, having 'the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord,' shall not judge hastily on the mere evidence of sight or hearing, but 'with righteousness shall judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.' This is a prediction of the perfect reign of the Messiah.

13. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

15. And Solomon awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

16. Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

17. And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

18. And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

19. And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

20. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

longed to the 'judges,' who took their title from these functions; though, as we have seen, they were really military rather than civil rulers. One cause of the people clamouring for a monarchy was the misconduct of Samuel's sons, when called to help him with this work. They 'took bribes, and perverted judgement' (1 Sam. viii. 3)^d. David had apparently lost influence through the neglect of these duties, and Absalom sought and gained popularity by professing to make up for his father's deficiencies (2 Sam. xv. 2-6).

12. Solomon 'showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom.' And there was granted to him that 'natural, moral, and civil wisdom, wherein he excelled all men' (Hooker, *Ecccl. Pol.* iii. 8, § 9). But, as we are told in 1 Kings iv. 29-34, his powers showed themselves in various other ways, in poetry and natural history, as well as in moral philosophy^e. His own ideas as to the value of wisdom are given in his writings (see esp. Prov. iii. 13-18, iv. 5-9).

13. The gift of these further blessings may be compared with our Lord's words, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matt. vi. 33; Luke xii. 31).

^d Herodotus (i. 96, 97) relates how, when the Medians, after recovering their independence, were again brought under the rule of kings, much lawlessness prevailing, Deioeces, a man of great wisdom, applied himself to the settlement of disputes in his own village. His reputation as an honest and upright judge soon spreading far and wide, he refused any longer to postpone his own interests to those of others. Thereupon the people in their difficulty resolved to make him king.

^e The answer to Solomon's prayer, and his after history, may teach us two lessons:

i. That secular learning is not, as some have described it, displeasing to God, or a hindrance to true wisdom.

ii. That the clearest knowledge of that which is wise and right is not in itself a safeguard against errors and offences. Solomon, who knew and proclaimed that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Prov. ix. 10), himself fell afterwards into grievous sins.

22. And the other woman said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king.

23. Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living.

24. And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

26. Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but* divide *it*.

27. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she *is* the mother thereof.

28. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him, to do judgment.

Of these blessings, 'long life' was granted conditionally; and Solomon forfeited it by the sensuality and religious apostasy of his later years. He probably died about the age of sixty. He was to be a man of peace, but we find from ch. xi. 14-25 that he had some troublesome enemies. Riches he had in abundance (ch. x. 23, 27).

Solomon holds another great sacrifice and festival of thanksgiving, on his return to Jerusalem.

16-27. Of this familiar story of 'Solomon's judgement,' Dean Stanley says, 'Every part of the incident is characteristic' (*J. C.* ii. 177). These degraded women are admitted to the king's presence. They tell their own stories, unsupported by witnesses. The king appeals to natural instinct, and the cause is at once decided^f.

28. The occasion was apparently a critical one. It was to test the young king's fitness for his duties as judge. The sagacity he displayed was such as to make a deep impression on the minds of Orientals, 'whose wisdom is that of common life, and whose philosophy is that of proverbs^g.'

^f 'In such paternal dispensation of justice, there was no appeal to witnesses or statute-books; . . . but the king was expected to strike out some new light, in which the real bearings of the case would so appear as to appeal to all men's convictions, and to command their approval of his sentence' (Edersheim, *Bible History*, iii. 66).

^g Tradition records other instances of Solomon's readiness in deciding. It is told, for instance, that he settled the contention between two claimants to a treasure by ordering the son of one to marry the daughter of the other (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 230). Also that when the queen of Sheba tried him with two wreaths exactly alike, one of natural, the other of artificial flowers, he ordered the window to be opened, whereupon the bees outside at once flew into the real flowers (S. P. C. K. *Commentary*).

28. SOLOMON'S ADMINISTRATION—PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE.

I KINGS IV, V.

The work of organizing the kingdom, to which David had given so much care, is now completed by Solomon. The country is divided into twelve districts, with an 'officer' at the head of each, to regulate the contributions of money and of produce for the king's household¹. Besides these, there is a central government in the capital, the chief officials being two 'scribes,' or secretaries to the king; a 'recorder,' or chronicler of events; Benaiah, the commander-in-chief; the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar; a vizier, or chief of the household; an overseer of the provincial officers; another overseer, called Adoniram, in charge of the 'levy' or bond-servants; and an official described as 'the king's friend' or counsellor².

The early promise to Abraham is now fulfilled (Gen. xxii. 17), the people being 'as the sand which is by the sea in multitude.' The empire extends from 'the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt³.' It is an age of peace and prosperity. Every man 'dwells safely,' resting 'under his vine and under his fig-tree⁴.' Chariots and horses, hitherto little known in Palestine, are imported in large numbers⁵. The magnificence of Solomon is proverbial⁶. References are found, both in the historical and poetical books of the Bible, to his gorgeous palaces, his sumptuous banquets, the stately splendour of himself and his queen.

But above all else he is famous for his wisdom. In this he excels 'all the children of the east country,' and the Egyptians⁷. His proverbs are 3,000, and his songs are

23. SOLOMON'S ADMINISTRATION — PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE.

I KINGS IV, V.

¹ So, as Herodotus tells us (i. 192), the Persian dominions were arranged in divisions, to supply the king and his army with food in turn. The 'officers' here correspond to the Persian satraps.

² The title of 'friend' was given in David's time to Hushai the Archite (2 Sam. xv. 37, xvi. 16). Jehoshaphat, the recorder, and Adoniram are described as holding the same office under David, the latter being called Adoram in 2 Sam. xx. 24. The 'tribute' should be 'the levy'; that is, the labourers pressed into service for Solomon's great works.

³ This wide extent of empire had been promised to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18), and to Joshua (Joshua i. 4). Tiphshah is the Greek Thapsacus, on the Euphrates, not far from Carchemish. Azzah is another name for Gaza.

⁴ A similar description of a peaceful kingdom is given in Rabshakeh's message to the Jews (2 Kings xviii. 31); and by the prophets Micah (iv. 4), and Zechariah (iii. 10).

We may compare also Horace's account of the peaceful age of Augustus:

'Condit quisque diem collibus in suis,
Et vitem viduas ducit ad arbores.'

(*Odes*, iv. 5. 29, 30.)

The vines were also trained over the walls of the houses and courtyards (Ps. cxxviii. 3).

⁵ The 'multiplying' of horses was a violation of the instructions given in Deut. xvii. 16. The Israelites were not to 'put their trust in chariots and horses,' like the surrounding nations; but 'in the Lord their God' (Ps. xx. 7). Samuel had however foretold a time, when the kings should thus copy other Oriental rulers (1 Sam. viii. 11, 12).

⁶ 'When Christ bade His disciples look on the bright scarlet and gold of the spring flowers of Palestine, which "toil not, neither do they spin," He carried back their thoughts to the

1,005; he is the founder of Hebrew science. People come 'from the uttermost parts of the earth' (Matt. xii. 42) to hear his wisdom.

Amid all this, the preparations for the building of the Temple are continued. The league with Hiram, king of Tyre, 'a lover of David,' is renewed; and timber for the great work proposed is sent from Lebanon, Solomon supplying the Phoenician king in return with food for his household.

An exceptional 'levy' of 30,000 Israelites is raised, free men as well as bondmen thus taking part in this sacred work (see ix. 22); and these labour, by relays of 10,000 at a time, in Mount Lebanon, where skilled Phoenician workmen direct and help them⁸. There are also 150,000 bondmen enrolled, who are at work at the various materials, with 3,300 officers at their head. So the stones and timber are prepared, and at last the work of building is commenced.

XXX. THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

I KINGS VI. 1-22.

VI. 1. And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

2. And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof *was* threescore cubits,

great king, Solomon, who, "in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." He had no mightier comparison to use' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 200).

⁷ His wisdom is combined with 'largeness of heart'; that is, comprehensive grasp and versatile genius. His proverbs and songs are briefly described in Supplemental Note C.

'The children of the East' were famed for wisdom. The name appears to have been given to the Aramaean, Arabian, and Edomitish races. We learn from Jer. xlix. 7 that the people of Teman in Idumaea were famed for their wisdom (cp. Job ii. 11). Job is described as 'the greatest of all the men of the East' (Job i. 3). We may also compare the Magi or 'wise men from the East' in Matt. ii. 1.

In Acts vii. 22 Moses is said to have been 'learned (or educated) in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.'

⁸ The Phoenicians were the great engineers and artisans, as well as the greatest commercial people of the ancient world. A curious instance of their superiority as engineers is given by Herodotus, in the account of the cutting of Xerxes' canal through Mount Athos. All the other workmen employed found the sides of the trench continually falling in. The Phoenicians alone understood that the sides must be sloped! (Herod. vii. 23).

XXX. THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

I KINGS VI. 1-22.

VI. 1. The chronology commonly accepted for the events of Old Testament history rests on this statement. Dating backward from the subjection of the Babylonian empire by Cyrus in B.C. 538, and reckoning the seventy years of the Captivity, the duration of each reign of the kings of Judah, and the remaining years of Solomon's reign, the year B.C. 1012 appears to be the date of the commencement of the Temple^a.

^a Many however suppose that this statement of the date was not part of the original text. It is not found in the corresponding

and the breadth thereof twenty *cubits*, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

3. And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits *was* the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; *and* ten cubits *was* the breadth thereof before the house.

4. And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.

5. And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, *against* the walls of the house round about, *both* of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about:

6. The nethermost chamber *was* five cubits broad, and the middle *was* six cubits broad, and the third *was* seven cubits broad: for without *in the wall* of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that *the beams* should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

7. And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

8. The door for the middle chamber *was* in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle *chamber*, and out of the middle into the third.

2. The arrangements of the Temple corresponded to those of the tabernacle (see Part I, p. 179). The dimensions given for each part are exactly double those of the latter, so that the proportions remained the same. The Holy of Holies was now 20 cubits in length; the Holy Place was 40 cubits long, and the porch added 10 cubits more; the breadth throughout being 20 cubits, with probably a uniform height of 20 cubits.

The building, therefore, was of no great size ^b. But the Temple was only for the ministering priests, as was also the 'inner court' (pp. 278, 279). The congregation worshipped in the court of the Israelites ^c.

account in Chronicles (2 Chron. iii. 1), and this passage is quoted without it by old writers. The LXX gives the time from the Exodus as 440 years; Josephus as 592. In Acts xiii. 19-21 it is said to have been 450 years from the settlement in Canaan to the time of Samuel; and this and other passages seem to point to a period of from 550 to 600 years between the Exodus and the accession of Solomon.

Bishop Wordsworth, accepting this date, remarks on the period between the call of Abraham and the settlement in Canaan being almost exactly the same as that between the Exodus and the building of the Temple, and as that from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the death of Christ. The former, adding the forty years of the wanderings to the 430 years up to the giving of the law (Exod. xii. 40; Gal. iii. 17), was 470 years, the latter 490.

^b It was much smaller than our cathedrals, 'not larger than a good-sized parish church, and in proportions not unlike a church of Gothic construction' (Ellicott). The division was like that into chancel and nave, and the 'chambers' or 'stories' (R. V.) resembled externally our 'side-aisles,' though they were probably a sort of 'lean-to,' shut off from the Temple itself by a wall.

^c 'The courts, called in popular language the Temple, or rather the inner quadrangle, were in fact the great place of divine worship. Here, under the open air, were celebrated the great public and national rites, the processions, the offerings, the sacrifices; here stood the great tank for ablutions, and the high altar for burnt offerings' (Milman's *Hist. of Jews*, i. 314).

The word Temple seems also to be used for the Holy Place, as distinct from the Holy of Holies; the whole building being called, as here, 'the house.'

9. So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.

10. And *then* he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

11. And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

12. *Concerning* this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father:

13. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

14. So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

15. And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the cieling: *and* he covered *them* on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

16. And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of

The building and enclosures were on different levels, or graduated platforms. First came the 'court of the Gentiles'; then, on a higher level, the 'court of the Israelites'; and above this again, 'the court of the priests.'

3. The porch, or vestibule, faced the east. According to 2 Chron. iii. 4, it was 120 cubits high, and might thus resemble the tower or spire of a modern church. The meaning of the passage, however, is doubtful^d.

4. This is given in the margin 'broad within, and narrow without'; like the windows of a Gothic church. But it should probably be rendered, as in R. V., 'windows of fixed lattice work.'

5, 6. There were three stories. These chambers were probably used as residences for the priests, and for storing the furniture and supplies for the Temple.

7. The law had forbidden the use of hewn stones in building an altar (Exod. xx. 25; Deut. xxvii. 5). In a like spirit of reverence, the stones and timber for the Temple were prepared beforehand (ch. v. 17, 18); so that the site might not be desecrated with the noise of manual labour^e.

'No workmen's steel, no ponderous axes rung;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.'
(Heber.)

11-13. This blessing anticipates that given at the formal consecration of the Temple (ch. ix. 3-9). The solemn promises made to David are renewed (2 Sam. vii. 12-16); and to these is added the earlier promise made to Moses, that God

^d Dean Stanley says (*J. C.* ii. 207), 'On the eastern side was a colonnade or cloister, which formed the only barrier. The later kings continued it all round; but this alone was ascribed to Solomon, and its name therefore lingered on the spot long afterwards, and even in the time of the second Temple, gave to it or the cloisters built upon its ruins the title of "Solomon's Portico"' (*John* x. 23; *Acts* iii. 11, v. 12).

^e This silent erection of the Temple has been regarded as a figure of the silent building up of the Church of Christ; that spiritual house, of which we are 'lively stones' (1 Pet. ii. 5).

cedar : he even built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle, *even* for the most holy *place*.

17. And the house, that *is*, the temple before it, was forty cubits *long*.

18. And the cedar of the house within *was* carved with knops and open flowers : all *was* cedar ; there was no stone seen.

19. And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

20. And the oracle in the forepart *was* twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof : and he overlaid it with pure gold ; and *so* covered the altar *which was of* cedar.

21. So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold : and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle ; and he overlaid it with gold.

22. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house : also the whole altar that *was* by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

would dwell among His people (Exod. xxv. 8). This is the promise which was fulfilled in a higher sense, when One came, whose name should be called 'Emmanuel,' God with us (Isa. vii. 14; Matt. i. 23); when 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (John i. 14); and which is to be yet again fulfilled in the new Jerusalem, where 'the tabernacle of God' shall be 'with men, and He will dwell with them' (Rev. xxi. 3).

17. The word for 'knops'^f is elsewhere translated 'gourds' (2 Kings iv. 39). We read of 'knops' again in ch. vii. 24. 'Many kinds of wild gourd are found in Palestine.' It was like a wild vine. Jonah's 'gourd' (Jonah iv. 5-9) was a shrub of a different kind (*Helps to Study of Bible*, § xlvii. art. 'Gourd').

19-21. The Holy of Holies is here called 'the oracle g.' The chains were probably placed across the opening in the partition, which divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, so as to prevent any intrusion into the former.

22. 'The altar' here is the altar of incense. It was immediately in front of the entrance into the Holy of Holies. The passage should probably be, as in R. V., 'that belonged to the oracle'; this altar, though actually standing in the Holy Place, being regarded as part of the furniture of the sanctuary itself.

^f 'Knop' probably means here a carved imitation of the bud of a flower; the same word as 'knob.'

^g It resembled the 'adytum' (*ἄδυτον*, from *a* and *δύω*, 'not to be entered') in a heathen temple. But its 'mysterious vacancy' was a contrast to all other sacred buildings of antiquity. 'No idol, statue, or sacred animal profaned it. The pure spirituality of Jehovah was sublimely indicated by the absence of any symbol of His presence' (Geikie, iii. p. 463).

Tacitus remarks, as a peculiarity of the Jews, that they have purely mental conceptions of Deity; they conceive Him to be supreme and eternal, incapable of representation or decay, and so allow no images of Him in their cities, much less in their temples (Tac. *Hist.* v. 5).

29. THE TEMPLE (*continued*). SOLOMON'S
PALACE.

I KINGS vi. 23—vii.

As in the tabernacle, the oracle or Holy of Holies is for 'the ark of the covenant of the Lord' alone. Here again there are two cherubims¹; not now of gold, but of olive wood overlaid with gold. They are much larger than the original ones, and apparently do not face each other as before, but face the entrance, their wings meeting in the centre. The walls and doors are covered with carved representations of these cherubims, and of palms and open flowers. The 'inner court'² is then built round the Temple itself, and the whole is completed. The work has occupied 'seven,' or rather seven and a half years.

The building of Solomon's 'house' or palace is next described. This takes thirteen years³, so that the two works extend from the fourth to the twenty-fourth year of his reign. Besides his own house, he builds 'the house of the forest of Lebanon,' and 'a house for Pharaoh's daughter.' These are probably not separate buildings; the former being 'state apartments' adjoining the royal residence, and named from the pillars of cedar which came from that mountain, and which made it resemble the forest of Lebanon itself (*Speaker's Commentary*). The latter are the queen's apartments. In front of the former is 'the porch of judgement,' where the king may administer justice, as in old times was done at the gate of the city. These are all built of 'costly stones,' with beams of cedar.

For making the furniture of the Temple, an artificer called Hiram⁴ is brought from Tyre. He 'casts' the two magnificent pillars of brass, called Jachin and Boaz⁵. He also constructs the 'molten sea,' to take the place of the old laver of brass (Exod. xxx. 18)⁶. This, which is of great size,

29. THE TEMPLE (*continued*). SOLOMON'S PALACE.

I KINGS VI. 23—VII.

¹ There is much doubt as to the shape of these 'cherubims.' Some have supposed that they resembled the winged bulls found on the Assyrian monuments, and that they thus suggested to Jeroboam the golden calves which he set up at Dan and at Beth-el. Josephus, however, tells us that no one knew of what shape they were.

² The 'inner court' was the court of the priests. It is called in Jer. xxxvi. 10 'the higher court,' being on a higher level than the court of the Israelites (see p. 273).

³ In comparing this with the seven years occupied in building the Temple, we must remember that the materials for the latter were all prepared beforehand.

⁴ This 'Hiram' or 'Hiram' must of course be distinguished from the king of Tyre, who sent this artificer, in answer to Solomon's request for a man 'cunning to work' in precious metals (2 Chron. ii. 7).

⁵ Jachin means 'he shall establish'; Boaz, 'in it is strength.' It is uncertain whether these pillars stood in front of the porch, or were used as supports for the roof. They were broken up by the Chaldaeans, and the brass carried to Babylon (2 Kings xxv. 13; Jer. lii. 17, 20).

⁶ King Ahaz took it from off the oxen, and put it on a pavement of stone (2 Kings xvi. 17). This too was broken in pieces and carried off by the Chaldaeans (2 Kings xxv. 13).

⁷ In 2 Chron. iv. 1 we are told that Hiram also made the brazen altar of sacrifice. It is not mentioned in the account here, but is referred to in 1 Kings ix. 25, as the altar which Solomon 'built unto the Lord,' and on which he made offerings three times a year.

⁸ The LXX renders 'shewbread' by *ἄρτοι τῆς προσφορᾶς*, 'the loaves of the offering.' In Matt. xii. 4 the 'shewbread,' of

and rests on twelve brazen oxen, is to be used for the ablutions of the priests; while ten 'lavers' of brass, resting on ten 'bases,' are provided for washing the sacrifices (2 Chron. iv. 6)⁷. Besides these, there are made the altar of gold for offering incense, the table of gold for the shewbread⁸, the candlesticks of pure gold, five on each side, and other smaller vessels required.

So the work is ended; the treasures which David had dedicated are brought in, and the Temple is ready for consecration⁹.

XXXI. THE DEDICATION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

I KINGS viii. 1-21.

VIII. 1. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which *is* Zion.

2. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month.

3. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

4. And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

which David did eat, is called ἄρτοι τῆς προθέσεως, 'the loaves of the setting-forth'; that is, those which were presented before God.

As the shewbread was a type of Christ as the Bread of Life (John vi. 48, 51), so the candlesticks prefigured Him as the Light of the World (John i. 4, 9, viii. 12, ix. 5, xii. 46).

⁹ 'The lavish employment of gold for the decoration of the interior of Solomon's building exceeds everything told us of other ancient temples. The reverence shown for this sanctuary by the Hebrews displayed itself by the richness of the material so freely expended on it' (Geikie, iii. 459).

XXXI. THE DEDICATION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

I KINGS viii. 1-21.

VIII. 1, 2. In the year after the completion of the Temple, the dedication takes place at the Feast of Tabernacles; a feast which brings the people up from all parts of the country. Besides its historical meaning, as commemorating the living in tents during the wanderings, this was the great 'harvest' or ingathering festival (see Part I, p. 171). It was held in the month called Ethanim, afterwards named Tisri, which corresponded to parts of our September and October. The festival usually lasted for seven days, but on this occasion it was extended to fourteen (ver. 65); the dedication of the altar, which occupied seven days, probably preceding the annual festival (2 Chron. vii. 9, 10).

3. In 2 Chron. v. 4 it is said that 'the Levites took up the ark,' it being commonly their duty to carry it. But, according to the more accurate account here, it would seem that on this great occasion the priests bore the ark, as at the passage of the Jordan (Joshua iii. 6, &c.), and at the taking of Jericho (Joshua vi. 6). The Levites probably carried 'the holy vessels.'

4-7. The tabernacle, which was still at Gibeon, 'the great

5. And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

6. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy *place*, *even* under the wings of the cherubims.

7. For the cherubims spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

8. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy *place* before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

9. *There was* nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,

11. So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

12. Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

13. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

high place' (I Kings iii. 4; I Chron. xvi. 39, 40, xxi. 29; 2 Chron. i. 3), was now brought up in solemn procession^a. It seems to have been placed somewhere in the Temple precincts, but we hear no more of it after this. Its use was over now.

The ark, which David had already brought to Zion (2 Sam. vi), was now placed in the Holy of Holies, Solomon offering sacrifices of many victims along the line of procession, as David had done before^b.

8. When the ark had been deposited there between the cherubims, the staves by which it was carried were drawn out so far, that the ends could be seen projecting beyond the door. This was a reminder to the people that 'its long wanderings were over'^c.

9. The ark, as we learn from Heb. ix. 2-5 (cp. Exod. xvi. 33, 34; Num. xvii. 10), had originally contained also the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded (see Part I, p. 179). These must now have been removed^d.

10, 11. This was the Shechinah, or visible presence of God (see Part I, pp. 45, 159). It appeared to Abraham (Gen. xv. 17); it led the Israelites 'in a pillar of a cloud' by day and 'in a pillar of fire' by night (Exod. xiii. 21, 22); it rested on Mount Sinai (Exod. xxiv. 15-18); and covered the tabernacle (Exod. xl. 34-38).

12. At Mount Sinai, God said to Moses, 'Lo, I come unto

^a Others suppose that this was the tabernacle erected by David in Mount Zion, as a temporary shelter for the ark.

^b Ps. xxiv and the other processional psalms, sung when the ark was brought to Mount Zion, were probably repeated now, and Ps. cxxxv and other dedicatory psalms were also sung.

^c R. V. gives, 'And the staves were so long that the ends,' &c. Thus 'they remained long afterwards, even to the latter days of the monarchy, and guided the steps of the chief priest as he entered in the darkness' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 216).

Here the ark stayed, 'hidden from all eyes, till the destruction of the Temple, except when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year' (Geikie, iii. 466).

^d Or perhaps they were lost, when the ark was taken by the Philistines, or when the sanctuary of Shiloh was destroyed.

14. And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel : (and all the congregation of Israel stood ;)

15. And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled *it*, saying,

16. Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein ; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.

17. And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

18. And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.

19. Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house ; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

20. And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

21. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein *is* the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

thee in a thick cloud' (Exod. xix. 9). In the tabernacle He had appeared 'in the cloud upon the mercy-seat' (Lev. xvi. 2). So it is said in the Book of Psalms, 'He made darkness His secret place' (Ps. xviii. 11); and again, 'Clouds and darkness are round about Him' (Ps. xcvi. 2).

14. In 2 Chron. vi. 13 we are told that Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, and had 'set it in the midst of the court,' before the altar of burnt offering. Having uttered the preceding words, looking towards the Holy of Holies, he now turned and faced the people, while he solemnly blessed them. Then, kneeling upon the platform, and stretching forth his hands towards heaven^e, he offered his long and beautiful prayer.

16. The connexion of ideas in this verse seems to be as follows. In earlier times there were no fixed rulers, only judges raised up for each emergency. Saul, the first king, soon proved himself unworthy. Then one who should be king in a truer sense, David, was chosen. So there had been hitherto no permanent religious centre. Gilgal, Shiloh, Gibeon, Zion, had all been for a time sanctuaries. But henceforth there was to be a fixed centre both of government and of religion.

21. 'The covenant of the Lord' here means the two tables of stone, on which 'the words of the covenant' were written (Exod. xxxiv. 28).

^e He 'exchanged the usual standing posture of Oriental prayer for the extraordinary one of kneeling, now first mentioned in the sacred history, and only used in Eastern devotions at the present day in moments of deep humiliation' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 219). So the exile Ezra 'fell upon his knees' (Ezra ix. 5), and Daniel kneeled down in prayer three times a day (Dan. vi. 10). So our Lord kneeled in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 41). Other instances of this attitude, used in times of anxiety or distress, are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (vii. 60, ix. 40, xx. 36, xxi. 5). In Ps. xcv. 6 we read, 'O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.'

For the stretching forth the hands to heaven, 'as if to receive the blessing sought,' we may compare the account of Moses in Exod. xvii. 11, 12; and the 'duplices tendens ad sidera palmas' of Virg. *Aen.* i. 93.

30. CONCLUSION OF THE DEDICATION—OTHER
WORKS OF SOLOMON.

I KINGS viii. 22—ix.

Solomon's sublime prayer begins with an expression of trust in 'the Lord God of Israel,' who 'keepeth covenant and mercy with His servants'; and with a petition for the continuance of His favour. While acknowledging that God's presence cannot be confined to any temple¹, he asks for a blessing upon all prayers offered 'toward this place' now consecrated², including the prayers of 'strangers³'; especially in times of personal or national troubles, of famine or pestilence.

On concluding his supplication, the king rises from his knees, and, turning to the congregation, solemnly blesses them. Then follows the enormous sacrifices, in which 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep are offered⁴. The altar by itself being quite insufficient for these victims, the king 'hallows' the 'middle' or area of the court, and sacrifices are offered there.

The great congregation at the feast embraces those from 'the entering in of Hamath' in the valley of Lebanon, in the far north, to 'the river (or brook, R.V.) of Egypt,' or southern boundary of Palestine⁵. When all is ended, the people

30. CONCLUSION OF THE DEDICATION—OTHER
WORKS OF SOLOMON.

I KINGS VIII. 22—IX.

¹ Solomon's words (ver. 27-30) combine the two different, but not conflicting ideas, found throughout the Old Testament; the belief in an invisible God, whom 'the heaven of heavens cannot contain'; and the assurance that He is specially present among His chosen people in the place consecrated to His service (Ellicott).

They may be compared with the words of Isaiah (lxvi. 1), quoted by St. Stephen, when he refers in his speech to the building of this Temple (Acts vii. 49); and with those of St. Paul to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 24). The omnipresence of God is also described in Ps. cxxxix. 7-10. Our Lord rebuked the narrow idea that God could only be worshipped in one sanctuary, when answering the Samaritan woman as to the rival claims of Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim (John iv. 20-24).

² The marginal rendering is 'in this place.' But the Jews, wherever they were, worshipped 'toward God's holy temple' (Ps. v. 7, xxviii. 2, cxxxviii. 2). So the exiled Daniel offered prayer, 'with the windows open toward Jerusalem' (Dan. vi. 10).

³ The law had recognized the possibility of strangers worshipping the true God (Num. xv. 14), and the Israelites had now been brought much more into touch with foreign nations. This wish of Solomon's anticipates in some degree the time, not far distant, when God's mercy should be shown to those of other races, in the miracles wrought by His prophets (1 Kings xvii. 9-24; 2 Kings v. 1-14); these in turn forecasting the work of Him (Luke iv. 24-30), in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. xxii. 18).

⁴ The same numbers are given in 2 Chron. vii. 5, and by Josephus. The worshippers had gathered in hundreds of thousands.

⁵ 'The entering in of Hamath,' between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, was the northern boundary of Palestine (Joshua xiii. 5; Judg. iii. 3; 2 Kings xiv. 25; 1 Chron. xiii. 5, &c.; see p. 193).

‘ bless ’ or thank the king, and depart full of gladness to their ‘ tents ’ or homes.

After this the Lord again appears to Solomon, assuring him that his prayer is heard, and promising to grant it, if the Divine ‘ statutes and judgements ’ are kept ; but warning him of the rejection of both people and Temple, which shall follow national apostasy.

To Hiram ‘ twenty cities in the land of Galilee ’ are given for his services⁶. With these he is dissatisfied, and calls them ‘ Cabul,’ or ‘ displeasing.’ He does not, however, break off friendly relations, sending Solomon 120,000 talents of gold, and afterwards helping him to man his ships. Solomon engages in many other works, building or fortifying the citadel (‘ Millo ’), and the walls of Jerusalem; and the important towns of Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Beth-horon, Baalath, and ‘ Tadmor in the wilderness⁷.’ Store cities and cities for the king’s chariots and horsemen are also built, and pleasure-gardens made in Jerusalem and in Lebanon⁸. For these works, ‘ a tribute of bond-service ’ is levied on the people left of the native tribes ; that is, they are compelled to labour at them (see Part I, p. 127). A ‘ navy of ships ’ is built at Ezion-geber, for which Hiram supplies experienced sailors ; and these import gold from Ophir⁹.

'The river of Egypt' is the brook on the southern border, now called El-Arish (see Part I, p. 47).

⁶ These cities are described as 'in the land of Galilee.' This name, signifying 'a circle' or 'circuit,' was given to the country round Kedesh-Naphtali, on the borders of Hiram's territory (Joshua xx. 7, xxi. 32). From these villages being occupied chiefly by strangers, the district was called 'Galilee of the nations' or 'Gentiles' (Isa. ix. 1; Matt. iv. 15). This is the origin of the name Galilee in the New Testament.

⁷ David had fortified Jerusalem (2 Sam. v. 9), but these works were now completed or repaired by Solomon. The other towns mentioned were all positions of importance. Hazor, near Lake Merom, had been the capital of the north (Joshua xi; Judges iv). Megiddo in the great battle-field of Esdraelon, Gezer not far from Bethlehem, Beth-horon famous for Joshua's victory, and Baalath on the Philistine border, all commanded important passes. Tadmor, if the same as Palmyra, which was an oasis in the great desert reaching to the Euphrates, would be an important station for commerce. The name here, however, is really Tamar (Tadmor being found in 2 Chron. viii. 4), which some suppose to be Hazazon-Tamar (the old name of En-gedi), in the wilderness of Judah (G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.* p. 270).

⁸ 'That which Solomon desired to build' (ver. 19) means those charming resorts, those vineyards and orchards and plantations and artificial lakes, the beauties of which are referred to in Eccles. ii. 4-10, Song of Sol. ii. 10-13, &c.

⁹ Ezion-geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akabah (see Part I, Map III), was one of the last stations in the wanderings of the Israelites (Num. xxxiii. 35; Deut. ii. 8).

Eastern Africa, Arabia, India, and the Malay Peninsula have each been suggested for the locality of Ophir. The best authorities now place it in Southern Arabia. It was probably the chief emporium for the gold and precious stones collected from both Africa and India (1 Kings x. 2, 10, 11; 2 Chron. ix. 1, 9, 10; Ezek. xxvii. 22). The 'gold of Ophir' is mentioned in several other passages (Job xxii. 24; Ps. xlv. 9, Bible version; Isa. xiii. 12, &c.).

XXXII. SOLOMON'S GLORY—THE QUEEN
OF SHEBA.

I KINGS X. 1-24.

X. 1. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

2. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5. And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

6. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

XXXII. SOLOMON'S GLORY—THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

I KINGS x. 1-24.

X. 1. Sheba was in that part of Arabia known as Arabia Felix^a. Our Lord speaks of 'the queen of the south,' who 'came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon' (Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31). So Jeremiah (vi. 20) describes Sheba as 'a far country,' and Joel (iii. 8) calls the Sabeans 'a people far off'^b.

The expressions about Solomon's 'fame' may refer to his fame in building the Temple of Jehovah; or his fame as one who ruled worthily in the Lord's name (ver. 6).

For the proving with riddles or 'hard questions,' see p. 49. The Arabians were famous for their riddles and proverbs.

5. The 'ascent' may mean the king's private way from his palace to the Temple, referred to in 2 Kings xvi. 18 as 'the king's entry without,' and in 1 Chron. xxvi. 16 as 'the causeway of the going up.' In Ezekiel's vision of the later Temple, such a private entrance is spoken of (Ezek. xlvi. 2).

The word, however, commonly means 'a burnt offering,' and may refer to Solomon's magnificent sacrifices (see R. V., margin)^c.

^a Josephus (*Ant.* ii. 10. § 2) speaks of 'Saba, a royal city of Ethiopia, which Cambyses named Meroe, after the name of his own sister.' In Gen. x. 7 Seba is mentioned as one of the sons of Cush, the son of Ham, and it is coupled with Ethiopia in Isa. xliii. 3 and xlv. 14. But in Gen. x. 28 Sheba is given as one of the descendants of Shem, and in Gen. xxv. 3 as descended from Abraham and Keturah. Josephus has apparently confused the two names. In Ps. lxxii (Bible Version) they are both mentioned: 'the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts' (in the P. B. version, 'the kings of Arabia and Saba'; cp. ver. 15 in these two versions).

^b Herodotus says, 'Arabia is the last of inhabited lands towards the south' (Herod. iii. 107.)

^c So LXX gives it *καὶ τὴν ὀλοκαύτωσιν αὐτοῦ ἣν ἀνέφερον ἐν οἴκῳ Κυρίου*; and the Vulgate, 'et holocausta quae offerebat in domo Domini.'

7. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8. Happy *are* thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom.

9. Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

10. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

11. And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

12. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

13. And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside *that* which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty.

10. Arabia was famous for its 'spices.' This is another argument in favour of identifying Sheba with it^d. Ethiopia was not a 'spice'-growing country.

11. Hiram had helped to man these ships (ch. ix. 26-28). This 'navy' is distinguished in ver. 22 from 'the navy of Tharshish.' The former probably traded eastwards; the latter westwards (see note on ver. 22).

The Israelites had hitherto had little trade with foreign nations, and no commerce by sea. The desire for the latter was due to the alliance with the Phoenicians. These were the great sailors of the ancient world. It is said that Pharaoh-necho sent ships manned by Phoenicians to sail round Africa, which voyage they completed^e. Carthage, which was a colony of Tyre, was afterwards the great trading centre of the Mediterranean^f. Modern discoverers have delighted to believe that they were repeating the exploits of the navy of Solomon^g.

Ps. civ, which speaks (ver. 25, 26) of 'the great and wide sea,' where 'go the ships'; and especially Ps. cvii, which tells of those who 'go down to the sea in ships' (ver. 23), probably belong to this time of innovation.

12. The timber of the almug (or 'algum,' 2 Chron. ix. 10) trees was probably the red sandalwood, still used in China and the East. The 'pillars' were balustrades, used for the

^d Herodotus says it was 'the only country which produced frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and ladanum.' The last was a kind of gum. He also describes the whole country as scented with these, and 'exhaling a marvellously sweet odour' (Herod. iii. 107, 113). Other writers speak of it in the same way.

^e Herodotus says that they sailed down the Erythraean Sea to the Southern Ocean, and returned by the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar), and the Mediterranean (Herod. iv. 42).

^f 'The first Punic war was caused by the determination of the Phoenicians to keep Rome from participating in the sea-trade of the Mediterranean' (Geikie, iii. 424).

^g 'The very name of West Indies, given by Columbus to the islands where first he landed, is a memorial of his fixed belief that he had reached the coast of those Indies in the Eastern world, which had been long ago discovered by Solomon' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 186).

So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

14. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

15. Beside *that he had* of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

16. And king Solomon made two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target.

17. And *he made* three hundred shields *of* beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

18. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

19. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round behind: and *there were* stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

20. And twelve lions stood there on the one side

'terraces,' or raised walk from the palace to the Temple (2 Chron. ix. 11).

Psalteries were stringed instruments, like a lyre or guitar.

14, 15. The computations of this revenue of Solomon's vary from nearly £4,000,000 to over £7,000,000; in addition to the customs on certain imports, and the tribute exacted from the border tribes, and from the princes or satraps of subject kingdoms^h.

16, 17. These 'targets' were large shields, which protected the whole body; the others were smaller shields or 'bucklers.' Such shields were hung on the walls of buildings for ornament. Ezekiel (xxvii. 10, 11) speaks of the shields hung round the walls of Tyre, 'making her beauty perfectⁱ.' These, with the 500 shields of gold taken by David from Hadadezer, king of Syria (2 Sam. viii. 7), were probably so hung round the tower of 'the house of the forest of Lebanon.' In Song of Sol. iv. 4 the bride's neck, decked with golden coins, is compared to 'the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.'

They seem also to have been carried in procession. The brazen shields, which were substituted, when these had been taken by Shishak, king of Egypt, were so borne by Rehoboam's guard, when they escorted him from the palace to the Temple (2 Chron. xii. 11).

18-20. This throne, like Ahab's ivory house (I Kings xxii. 39), was probably inlaid with ivory. In Ps. xlv. 9, which appears to belong to this period, we read of 'ivory palaces.'

The lion was the emblem of sovereignty. It was also the special badge of the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 9).

22. Some, with Josephus (*Ant.* i. 6. § 1), identify Tharshish

^h This was an enormous revenue. Herodotus (iii. 95) estimates that of the vast Persian empire in the time of Darius at about £3,500,000.

ⁱ So at Athens shields were hung round the Parthenon, and at Rome round the Temple of Bellona (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 195, note).

and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.

21. And all king Solomon's drinking vessels *were of gold*, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of pure gold*; none *were of silver*: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

22. For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

23. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

24. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

31. THE DECLINE OF SOLOMON—JEROBOAM.

I KINGS X. 25—XI.

The court thus paid to Solomon, the enormous wealth which comes in to him, and the luxury and extravagance which follow, have a most injurious effect on his character and administration¹.

He now copies the pomp and the vices of the worst Eastern despots. In defiance of the Divine command (Deut. xvii. 16), he imports a large force of horses and chariots from Egypt. He brings to Jerusalem, as his wives and

with Tarsus in Cilicia, St. Paul's birthplace ; but it is commonly regarded as the same with Tartessus in Spain, which was a famous seaport. In other passages it is mentioned in connexion with Western nations (Ps. lxxii. 10 ; Isa. xxiii. 1 and lx. 9 ; Ezek. xxvii. 12). Jonah sails from Joppa in a ship 'going to Tarshish' (Jonah i. 3). The imports, however, mentioned here seem rather to point to trade with India^k.

23. The two great kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt had both now declined in wealth and power.

^k The following explanations have been suggested :—

i. That large merchant ships generally were called 'ships of Tarshish.' The expression is apparently so used in Ps. xlviii. 7 (Bible version), Isa. ii. 17, &c.

ii. That this fleet sailed round Africa, touching also at ports in India.

iii. That the imports mentioned here, though most plentiful in India, may also have been produced in North Africa.

Of these imports Dean Stanley says: 'Imagine the arrival of these strange plants and animals enlivening the monotony of Israelitish life; the brilliant metals, the fragrant woods, the gorgeous peacock, the chattering ape; to that inland people rare as the first products of America to the inhabitants of Europe' (*J. C.* ii. 186).

31. THE DECLINE OF SOLOMON—JEROBOAM.

I KINGS X. 25—XI.

¹ Dean Stanley (*J. C.* ii. 249-253) assigns four main causes of this corruption :

(a) Polygamy. This was not an innovation. Gideon 'had many wives' (Judges viii. 30). David had been guilty of it. 'But Solomon carried it out to a degree unparalleled before or since.'

(b) Polytheism. Solomon himself probably continued his formal acts of worship to the Lord (ch. ix. 25). But there was 'a system of toleration,' sanctioning foreign rites for his wives

concubines, many strange women; some belonging to the kindred tribes of Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites; others to the Canaanitish races of the Zidonians and Hittites. These import with them their national idolatries, and 'turn Solomon's heart from the Lord God.' 'High places' are built for these false gods 'in the hill that is before Jerusalem².' For this apostasy the Lord is 'angry with him,' and declares that, though the kingdom shall not be rent in his lifetime, his son shall succeed to one tribe only.

The adversaries, whose first opposition must have belonged to the earlier part of Solomon's reign, now renew their attacks. One of these is Hadad the Edomite, who had fled into Egypt, when Idumaea was subdued in David's time (2 Sam. viii. 14). He had there married the sister of Tahpenes the queen; and, on Solomon's accession, had asked leave to return to his own country³. The other is Rezon, who had revolted from Hadadezer, king of Zobah, and seized Damascus.

Together with this renewal of external troubles, disaffection appears among the native subjects. Jeroboam, an 'Ephrathite' (or 'Ephraimite,' R. V.)⁴, 'lifts his hand against the king,' heading probably an insurrection of the oppressed workmen, over whom he had been placed, when employed in repairing Millo and the walls of Jerusalem. Jeroboam is told by the prophet Ahijah of the coming disruption of the kingdom, at which he is to receive ten tribes. This is symbolized by the prophet tearing his robe into twelve pieces, and giving ten of these to Jeroboam⁵. God's favour is promised him, if he will hearken unto all that is commanded him. Solomon, learning of Jeroboam's disloyalty, seeks to kill him, and he flies for refuge to Shishak, king of Egypt⁶, where he remains till Solomon's death.

We have no 'last words' of Solomon, or account of his end. He is buried 'in the city of David.' The 'rest of his acts . . . and his wisdom' are said to be written in 'the book of the acts of Solomon.'

and concubines and others; which involved disloyalty to the one true God.

It is told of the Roman Emperor Severus, that he wished to build a temple to Christ, and enrol Him among the national gods. Such attempts to blend different religions are sometimes called 'syncretism.'

(c) Despotism. The people were oppressed by heavy taxes, and by being forced to labour at the buildings which Solomon undertook. These burdens had now 'extended from Canaanite subjects to the free Israelite population' (see Part I, p. 127).

(d) The absence of prophets, of whom we hear little or nothing during Solomon's reign, except Ahijah, who predicts the 'rending' of the kingdom.

² This is the Mount of Olives, hence called, in 2 Kings xxiii. 13, 'the mount of corruption.' We are there told that Josiah purified it of these idolatries. Part of it is still called the 'Mount of Offence,' from its desecration by Solomon. (For Ashtoreth, Milcom or Molech, and Chemosh, see p. 35.)

³ 'Refugees might not depart without the king's leave.' This is illustrated by two stories in Herodotus; that of Democedes, a physician of Crotona in Italy (Herod. iii. 132-137), who was detained at Susa, till by a trick he escaped home; and that of Histiaeus of Miletus (Herod. v. 25, 35, 107), who helped to stir up 'the Ionic revolt,' that he might be sent home again to suppress it (*Speaker's Commentary*).

⁴ This rebellion was apparently one more proof of the bitter jealousy of the Ephraimites against the tribe of Judah (see p. 233).

⁵ This is the first instance of the 'acted parables,' or symbolism, afterwards common in the prophetic teaching. We may also compare the unintentional rending of Samuel's robe by Saul, which portended the rending of the kingdom from the latter (see pp. 118, 119). The 'one tribe' means the tribe of Judah, the small tribe of Benjamin being here included in this.

⁶ Shishak is called on the monuments 'Sheshonk,' and by other historians 'Sesonchoris.' He is probably the same as the Asychis of Herodotus (ii. 136). A new dynasty had been founded since Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and the new king was probably jealous of the wealth and reputation of the Jewish ruler.

His history is a proof of the truth of that warning, that no man ought to be accounted happy, till we know what the end of his life will be⁷. It tells 'how the promise of youth was overcast by the evil passions of manhood, or the worldliness of age; how the wisdom of Solomon was turned into folly; his justice into tyranny; his prosperity into misery and ruin' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 254).

XXXIII. ACCESSION OF REHOBAM—
DISRUPTION OF THE KINGDOM.

I KINGS xii. 1-24.

XII. 1. And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

2. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;)

3. That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

4. Thy father 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.

5. And he said unto them, Depart yet *for* three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

6. And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he

The LXX has an addition to this chapter, in which it is said that, when Jeroboam wished to leave Egypt, 'Sousakim' (Shishak) gave him the queen's sister in marriage, to induce him to remain. This seems to be a confusion with the story of Hadad.

⁷ This saying is put by Herodotus (i. 32) into the mouth of Solon, at his alleged interview with Croesus, king of Lydia (cp. Arist. *Eth.* i. 10; Soph. *Oed. Tyr.* 1528-1530; Eur. *Androm.* 100-102; Eur. *Troades*, 509, 510).

XXXIII. ACCESSION OF REHOBOAM—DISRUPTION OF THE KINGDOM.

I KINGS xii. 1-24.

XII. 1. Rehoboam seems to have been at once recognized by the men of Judah as Solomon's successor. But after the jealous and independent spirit which had been shown in David's time by the northern tribes, it was necessary that he should be formally acknowledged as king by these also.

His choice of Shechem as the place of congress was a wise and politic move. It was a compliment to the proud Ephraimites, to whom the time-honoured city belonged^a. And so there seems to have been at first no opposition to his accession^b.

2. The meaning probably is that Jeroboam returned from Egypt, on hearing of Solomon's death, and was then invited by the Israelites to head the deputation to Rehoboam (2 Chron. x. 2)^c.

^a Its associations went as far back as the time of Abraham (Gen. xii. 6). It was made a sort of capital on the first settlement in Palestine. There the tribes were convened to hear the law recited (Joshua xxiv). The usurper Abimelech set up his kingdom there (Judges ix). It was afterwards destroyed by him (Judges ix. 45), but must have been now rebuilt (see Part I, pp. 35, 241).

^b Others, however, suppose that the gathering of the tribes at Shechem, and not at Jerusalem, was itself a sign of disaffection.

^c The LXX represents him as remaining another year in Egypt, till after the birth of Abijah, the son of his Egyptian wife.

yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7. And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, *and* which stood before him :

9. And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10. And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* lighter unto us ; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke : my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him ;

14. And spake to them after the counsel of the

3-5. The selection of Jeroboam for this purpose was natural in many ways. He had been set over those Ephraimites, whose forced labour at Solomon's works was part of the 'grievous yoke' and 'service' complained of. He was 'a mighty man of valour,' and had before resented the despotism of the late king (ch. xi. 26-28). Moreover Ahijah's prophecy about his coming greatness may have been known to some; and his favour at and connexion with the Egyptian court had further made him a man of note.

6, 7. These wise advisers urge the young king to make concessions to the people now by lightening their burdens, and to make fair promises to them, since he will thereby secure their lasting loyalty.

8, 9. In 1 Kings xiv. 21, and 2 Chron. xii. 13, we are told that Rehoboam was now forty-one years old. In 2 Chron. xiii. 7, however, he is described as 'young and tender-hearted.' Moreover, as his mother Naamah was an Ammonitess (1 Kings xiv. 21), and it was only in his later years that Solomon took foreign wives, it has been suggested that we should read 'twenty-one' for 'forty-one'^d (*Speaker's Commentary*).

11, 14. Some suppose 'scorpions' to mean whips or scourges, loaded with leaden balls or hooks; others, sticks from a prickly shrub. Others, again, think that the stinging scorpion itself, which was so terrible (Deut. viii. 15; Ezek. ii. 6; Luke x. 19), is here used as a figure of galling oppression.

15. The disruption of the kingdom was by Divine decree. It was perhaps to some extent a punishment for the wickedness of the people in asking a king; but the immediate cause

^d 'It is hardly credible that Solomon should have contracted such an alliance before his accession to the throne, which of course would be implied, if Rehoboam was forty-one years old at the time of his father's death' (Edersheim, *Bible Hist.*, iii. p. 131).

The LXX also describes 'the young men' as τὰ παιδάρια τὰ ἐκτραφέντα μετ' αὐτοῦ, which could only be used of those still quite young.

young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16. So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17. But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18. Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

20. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

21. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe

is described as the apostasy and the iniquities of Solomon's later reign. This is the reason assigned by Ahijah to Jeroboam (ch. xi. 33).

16. A like war-cry had been used in the revolt of Sheba, the son of Bichri (2 Sam. xx. 1).

17. Such members of the other tribes, as were settled in places of Judah, did not join the revolt. The expression here may include the Simeonites, whose territory had been absorbed in that of Judah, and such of the Danites as had not migrated northwards (Judges xviii) ^e.

18. This sending Adoram ^f, intended to awe the rebels, was a most unwise proceeding. When they saw the man, whose duty it had been to enforce the 'tribute' or levy, they were naturally exasperated beyond all endurance.

Stoning to death was a form of capital punishment for many offences. Achan was stoned to death (Joshua vii. 25); and Naboth, after his mock trial (1 Kings xxi. 13). It was also the common way with a mob of taking vengeance, by a sort of 'lynch-law.' Such an outbreak was feared at Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 4); and again after the return of the twelve spies (Num. xiv. 10). David's followers threatened to stone him when they found Ziklag burned (1 Sam. xxx. 6); and Zechariah was murdered in this way (2 Chron. xxiv. 21). The Jews twice threatened to stone our Lord for supposed blasphemy (John viii. 59, x. 31, xi. 8).

Other instances are the death of St. Stephen (Acts vii. 58), and the persecutions of St. Paul (Acts xiv. 5, 19; 2 Cor. xi. 25). Our Lord reproaches Jerusalem, as 'thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee'

^e We find that Benjamin also, in spite of the close ties by which it was bound to the house of Joseph, ranged itself under Rehoboam. This was probably due to Jerusalem being on their border, so that Benjamites and men of Judah mingled freely, and many of the former may actually have resided in the capital.

^f Adoram seems to be the same name as Adoniram. We find an Adoram holding such office under David (2 Sam. xx. 24), and an Adoniram under Solomon (1 Kings iv. 6). It is supposed therefore that the office was hereditary.

of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

22. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

23. Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying,

24. Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

(Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34; cp. Matt. xxi. 35). Such outrages are referred to also in Heb. xi. 37^g.

22. Ahijah 'the Shilonite' (that is, of Shiloh in Ephraim) had announced the Divine purpose to Jeroboam (ch. xi. 29-39). Shemaiah, as the prophet of Judah, now reveals it to Rehoboam. He afterwards brings a message to the king, at the time of Shishak's invasion (2 Chron. xii. 5-8).

Knowing that it is useless to 'fight against God,' Rehoboam, on learning that 'this thing is from Him,' abandons the proposed attack on the men of Israel^h.

^g So Hector tells Paris (*Iliad*, iii. 56, 57) that, were not the men of Troy too forbearing, 'his body had in stones been cased'; that is, he had been buried under stones by the soldiers. In Livy, iv. 50, we read of Postumius, a military tribune, being stoned to death by his troops (*Speaker's Commentary*).

^h So the tendency to 'disintegration,' signs of which have appeared from time to time, comes to a crisis, and the short period of the undivided monarchy ends. According to the ordinary chronology, it has lasted 120 years, each of the three kings reigning for about forty years. The date given for the Disruption is B. C. 975.

32. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE A. FIRST AND SECOND CHRONICLES.

Besides the Books of Samuel and Kings, we have another history in what are called 'the Books of Chronicles.'

These were originally one book, bearing a title which means 'the Diaries' (*Helps to Study of Bible*, § viii.), or 'Book of daily events.' In the LXX they are called 'the things omitted ^a'; a title which is applicable to portions only. The name 'Chronicles' means a list of events in chronological order, and so is almost equivalent to 'Annals.' The authorship of the Chronicles is commonly ascribed to Ezra. The book which bears his name commences with the closing passage of 2 Chronicles, and the two books, with those of Ezra and Nehemiah, seem to form one continuous history.

The Chronicles supplement in parts the Books of Samuel and Kings; but this does not appear to have been their main object. The history is viewed in the two records from different standpoints. The Books of Samuel and Kings are a general or political history; the Books of Chronicles are an ecclesiastical history, dealing with the Jewish Temple and worship, rather than with the Jewish nation as a whole ^b. They were written with the design of restoring the religious life of the people after the Captivity ^c. The writer aims at showing, from the history of his countrymen before the Cap-

^a The LXX name is *Παραλειπομένων πρώτων or δεύτερον (βιβλίον)*. The name *Χρονικά* was first proposed by Jerome, who seems to have borrowed it from the title of a treatise of Eusebius.

^b The Books of Kings are properly so called; they 'dwell chiefly on the succession of kings to the two thrones, the acts of the kings, their lives and their deaths. The Books of Chronicles may be rather called the Books of the High Priests, more especially those of the house of Zadok, the son of Eleazar' (Milman, *Hist. of Jews*, i. 329).

^c 'Nothing could more effectually aid these pious and patriotic designs than setting before the people a compendious history of

tivity, that 'righteousness exalteth a nation' (Prov. xiv. 34); that the prosperity of the people had always depended on their moral and religious condition.

Hence all that is most valuable for enforcing this truth receives special prominence, while those periods or events which do not so clearly illustrate it are omitted. The greater part of the account of David and Solomon is given to the religious history of the times. In the case of the former, his earlier adventures, his reign at Hebron, his sin in the matter of Uriah, and the revolt of Absalom are passed over altogether. After the Disruption, the northern kingdom is ignored, and in the southern kingdom the interest centres in the religious reforms of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah; which are described at length. The reforms, for instance, of Hezekiah, dismissed in a few verses in 2 Kings, occupy in 2 Chronicles four out of the five chapters given to his reign.

The other great feature in the Books of Chronicles is that they are in parts of the nature of archives or records, rather than of actual history, abounding in mere lists of families or officials. This may be accounted for by the need for such precise statements of claims, when the land had to be re-allotted after the Captivity; and the importance of furnishing clear proofs of the legal right of the priests and others concerned in the revived Temple services, as belonging to the tribe of Levi.

I Chron. i-ix is entirely occupied with such genealogies. The history proper commences in ch. x with the death of Saul and accession of David, in B. C. 1055; and deals with those kings who reigned in Jerusalem, down to the captivity of Judah in B. C. 588.

the kingdom of David, which should embrace a full account of its prosperity, should trace the sins which led to its overthrow, but should carry the thread through the period of the Captivity, and continue it as it were unbroken on the other side' (Smith, *Dict. Bible*, i. 309).

33. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE B. THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

Further light is thrown on this period, and especially on the history and character of David, by 'the Book of Psalms.' This title refers to their being composed to be sung to a musical accompaniment (cp. *psaltery*, pp. 292, 295). It is taken from the LXX, and is the title used for this book in the New Testament (Luke xx. 42, xxiv. 44; Acts i. 20). The Hebrew name was Tehillim, or 'Songs of Praise.' But some of the psalms are rather confessions (e. g. Ps. li), and some are prayers (e. g. Ps. xc).

The Book of Psalms has been called 'A Bible within a Bible' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 145). It is a collection of hymns by various authors, and belonging to various periods. Ps. xc, which is headed 'A prayer of Moses, the man of God,' carries us back to the wanderings in the wilderness; and Ps. cxxxviii is a lament of the exiles at Babylon; while other psalms are probably of still later date.

The Jews divided the Psalms into the following five books:—

First Book. Ps. i-xli, probably compiled by David. Thirty-seven are assigned to him as their author.

Second Book. Ps. xlii-lxxii. Of these, eighteen are assigned to David, one to Solomon, the remaining twelve to other writers.

Third Book. Ps. lxxiii-lxxxix. These are chiefly attributed to Asaph, one only to David. This book was perhaps compiled by Hezekiah for his great Passover.

Fourth Book. Ps. xc-cvi. One of these (xc) is assigned to Moses, five to David; the rest are anonymous. This book was apparently compiled during or soon after the Captivity.

Fifth Book. Ps. cvii-cl. Probably compiled by Ezra and Nehemiah after the Restoration.

‘No portion of the Hebrew Scriptures has transfused its spirit into the Christian Church, more completely than the Book of Psalms’ (*Speaker’s Commentary*)^a. It has become in a peculiar sense ‘the Sacred Book of the world.’ It has always been used in public worship by the Christian, as well as by the Jewish Church. It contains compositions which are suited to men of all classes, on every occasion, and in every mood. It may be described as a summary of all the teaching contained in the Bible; of all which we need for our instruction, and correction, and consolation^b. In spite of its variety, there is throughout a unity of thought and feeling; the expression of a perfect trust in the one living and true God, and of a longing for communion with Him; of admiration for His law, as ‘holy, and just, and good^c’; and of a deep sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Our Lord Himself speaks of the things ‘written in the Psalms concerning Him’ (Luke xxiv. 44)^d; and of David giving in this book the title of ‘Lord’ to the Christ, whom the Jews described as the ‘Son of David’ (Luke xx. 41–44). St. Peter, in his speech on the Day of Pentecost, refers the words of Ps. xvi. 8–11 to the Lord’s resurrection. The teaching of the Psalms is in parts clearly ‘Messianic’;

^a Of 283 direct quotations from the Old Testament in the New, 116 are from this book (*Speaker’s Commentary*).

^b ‘Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known or done or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth’ (Hooker, Book V, *Eccles. Polity*, xxxvii. 2).

^c This is especially brought out in Ps. cxix, which is throughout an encomium on God’s law, describing in every possible way its perfection and its power, and the love and regard which the writer feels for it.

^d This expression, however, may include all the ‘poetical books’; the Old Testament being divided here into the Law of Moses, and the Prophets (including the historical books), and the Psalms.

inspired, that is, by the hope of the Deliverer, who should come to Zion, and foretelling His work, and character, and sufferings.

We have three commonly accepted versions of the Psalms in English :

i. That of the Great Bible of A. D. 1540, adopted in A. D. 1548 for the Book of Common Prayer.

ii. That of A. V., which was part of the retranslation of the Bible in 1611.

iii. That of R. V., issued in 1884.

(All quotations in this work are given from the P. B. Version, as being, if not always so accurate as the others, by far the most familiar.)

34. SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE C. PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SOLOMON, ETC.

The 'wisdom of Solomon' is preserved for us in his writings, especially in the book called 'The Proverbs ^a.'

^a The LXX title is *Παροιμίας Σολομώντος*. *Παροιμία*, like the Latin 'proverbium,' means a by-word or common saying.

A proverb has been defined as 'the wit of one man, and the wisdom of many.' It is commonly some striking or humorous saying, which has been uttered by a wise man, and then generally adopted. Hence proverbs are regarded as 'the people's voice.' Shakespeare makes Coriolanus scornfully describe the Roman plebeians as 'sighing forth proverbs' (Shakesp., *Coriolanus*, Act i, sc. 1).

Παροιμία is used in St. John for a 'parable' (ch. x. 6), or for an obscure saying (ch. xvi. 25, 29); just as *παραβολή* is used in Matt. xv. 15. Mark vii. 17. In Luke iv. 23 *παραβολή* is used of a proverb. 'The Proverbs of Solomon,' it has been said, might be called 'the parables,' and the parables of the New Testament the proverbs (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 247). In the Vulgate the book is headed 'Liber proverbiorum'; but in ch. i. 1 it is called 'Parabolae Salomonis.' In 1 Kings iv. 32 we are told that Solomon spake *τρισχιλία παραβολαί*. (For the difference between a proverb and a parable, see p. 31.)

The Hebrew name means 'comparisons,' or 'similitudes,' a name suited to 'parables' rather than 'proverbs.' In ch. i. 6 proverbs seem to be described as 'the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.' Some, however, suppose this to be the description of a particular section of the book.

The Book of Proverbs is really an ethical or moral treatise, consisting of epigrammatic or short statements of moral truths, or rules of conduct. 'It is the philosophy of practical life.' But its tone throughout is profoundly religious. Goodness is declared to be the true wisdom, while wickedness is folly.

The opening words describe it as, 'The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David'; but it is afterwards divided into different sections. Ch. i-ix are a discourse upon wisdom. To ch. x is specially prefixed the title, 'The proverbs of Solomon.' These extend to ch. xxii. 16, and then follow, to the end of ch. xxiv, 'the words of the wise,' probably a collection of wise sayings of different authorship. Ch. xxv-xxix contain 'proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.' Ch. xxx and xxxi are by unknown authors, called Agur and King Lemuel.

'Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,' is by its opening words ascribed to 'the son of David, king in Jerusalem.' The Preacher's text is 'vanity of vanities.' The ceaseless revolutions of the natural world, and the unsatisfying nature of earthly aims and pleasures, show that 'all is vanity.' And yet, amid this 'vexation of spirit,' there is one source of comfort and hope, the cheerful performance of duty. One thing is certain, the righteous judgement of God. This is 'the conclusion of the whole matter.' In anticipation of this final judgement, we must 'fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man^b.'

^b The book describes the struggle of faith and doubt, of hope and despair, the former prevailing in the end. 'It is an interchange of voices, higher and lower, mournful and joyful, within a human single soul' (Stanley, *J. C.* ii. 256).

‘The Song of Solomon,’ or ‘Song of Songs’^c (that is, the most excellent of songs), is supposed by some to have been composed for Solomon’s marriage with Pharaoh’s daughter; or, as the language seems rather to suggest, with a maiden of northern Palestine. It is full of ‘the simple, genuine sentiment of delight in nature,’ which we might expect from one who was such a student of nature as Solomon (1 Kings iv. 33). Some regard it as purely allegorical, giving a picture of the union between God and His people; or forecasting the union between Christ and His Church.

These, with the Book of Job, and the Psalms, make up what are commonly known as ‘the poetical books’ of the Bible^d. As to the date and authorship of the former, there has been much difference of opinion, but its general tone is that of the age of Solomon. Its subject is the course of God’s providence; the question how far in this world good is rewarded, and evil is punished; and it contains intimations of a future life, in which all that is now perplexing will be made clear, and the perfect justice of God will be vindicated (Gen. xviii. 25).

There are two books of the Apocrypha, which are later imitations of the works of Solomon; those called ‘The Wisdom of Solomon,’ and ‘Ecclesiasticus,’ or ‘The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach.’

^c The other name, ‘Canticles,’ is taken from the Latin title, ‘Canticum Canticorum.’

^d They are called in Greek ‘*Ἀγιόγραφα*. ‘Lamentations’ is sometimes added to them; and also other books, which are not ‘poetical’ in the same sense. (For the principle of Hebrew poetry, see Part I, p. 19.)

The Book of Psalms contains what we should call ‘lyrical poems.’ Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are ‘didactic’; that is, they convey instruction in the form of poetry. There is no strictly ‘dramatic poetry’ in the Bible, but the Book of Job and the Song of Solomon approach this in form.

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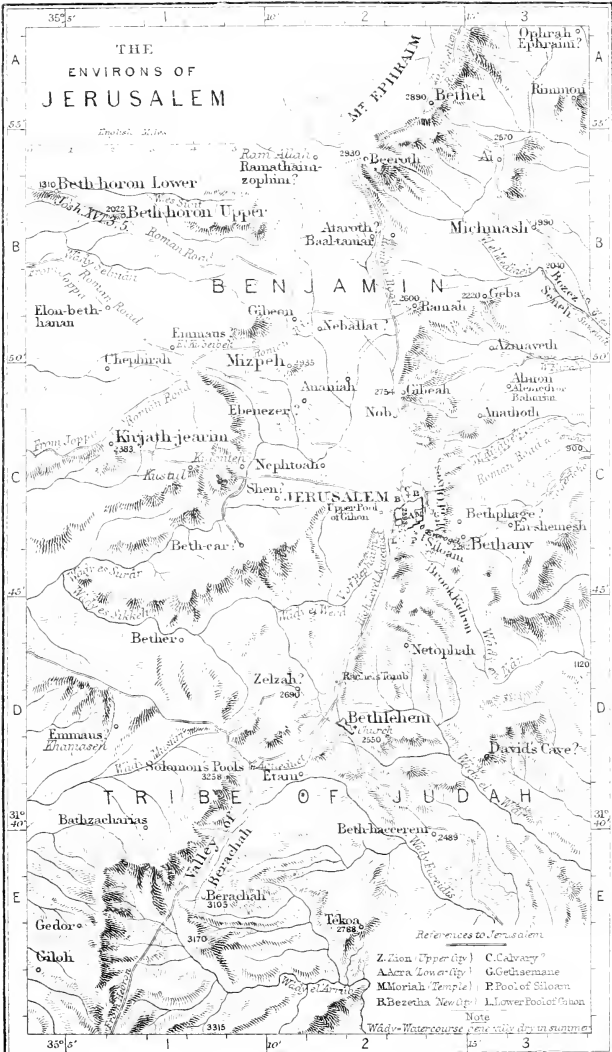
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