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THE HISTORICAL BOOKS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT



BARNARD C. TAYLOR, D.D.

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II

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

BARNARD C. TAYLOR, D. D.,
Professor at Crozer Theological Seminary

“ The opening of thy words giveth light ”

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Ps. 119 : 130

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PREFACE

THE purpose in view in preparing this handbook has not been to make something for the student that would take the place of the Bible, but to give some help in the study of the Bible. After a general view of the books treated, in which the dates, authorship, and purpose of each book is considered, an analysis of each book is given. It was deemed best to place these analyses all together, instead of giving them in connection with the discussion of the history. In the subsequent treatment of the history it was not the aim to give a paraphrase of the biblical account, nor to give merely an analysis of it, but rather to point out the chief features of the record, that its significance might be the better comprehended, explaining as far as seemed necessary what might be thought obscure.

But few scriptural references have been inserted in the text, as it was thought that the statements made would be clear to one reading them in connection with the biblical passages discussed. Nor have many references to authorities been made, except where a fuller understanding of the topic referred to is desirable. In the Appendix B a list of works is given which the reader is earnestly requested to consult, as far as practicable. More works could have been named in this list; but those are named that are most likely to be

accessible to those for whom these handbooks are intended, and that may be regarded as of most worth. The book is sent forth with the sincere desire that it may be of some help in the study of God's word. No one will find more defects in it than the writer is conscious of; some of these are due to the fact that it has been prepared amid other pressing duties.

BARNARD C. TAYLOR.

CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Dec., 1894.

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THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

CHAPTER I

GENERAL VIEW OF THESE BOOKS

1. The term Historical Books is applied to all the books of the Old Testament from Joshua to Esther inclusive. While we find some history in the other books of the Old Testament, these are especially characterized as historical. Because of its close relation to the Pentateuch, Joshua has been treated already in the volume on the "Pentateuch."

By the Hebrews these books were not arranged as we have them. Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings were called the "Former Prophets," while Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles were classed among the "Writings," *i. e.*, the Holy Writings. The term Prophets was applied to the former books because it was supposed that they were written by members of the schools of the prophets, and also because they were written in the prophetic spirit. These were held in high esteem by the Jews.

2. The names of the authors of these books are not given. We have the books of Samuel, but they are not so called because Samuel wrote them, for he was dead before many of the events recorded had taken place (1 Sam. 25 : 1). But the fact that these books are anonymous does not invalidate their trustworthiness. The events were not effected by the recorder of them. Nor is it possible to determine precisely when these books were written. Their dates have to be

fixed from internal evidence largely. The authors themselves have not told us when they wrote.

There is a tradition that Samuel was the author of Judges. It seems to have been written after the establishment of the kingdom, but before David had taken Jerusalem. (See 17 : 6 ; 18 : 1 and compare 1 : 21 with 2 Sam. 5 : 6.) It is also possible that Samuel wrote Ruth. The books of Samuel were probably compiled from the writings of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad (1 Chron. 29 : 29). It is thought that Jeremiah wrote Kings, using for his authority accounts that were written by various prophets during the history of Israel. The books were composed soon after the captivity of Jerusalem, 586 B. C. The Chronicles were written after the return from exile. There is a tradition that Ezra was the author, but it is not certain. In the genealogical lists there are names that belong to a later date, but these may have been added afterward. Ezra and Nehemiah were probably written by the men whose names they bear. The authorship and date of Esther are unknown.

3. While these books are called historical, we find that they do not contain a full and complete history of the Israelites. Some periods are described quite fully, but others are just touched upon, or are passed over altogether. The reigns of some of the kings are given with minuteness, while others who ruled as long are barely mentioned. There are some things recorded that perhaps we would not look for in a history, and other things that we should like to know are left out. From a study of these characteristics it appears that the writers were not writing history in the ordinary sense; that they had a special reason for what they included and for what they excluded. They presented only those facts that were connected with the unfolding of God's purpose of redemption. We have a record of God's dealings with his people in order to prepare for the coming of the Saviour to lost man.

The afore-mentioned characteristic of the historical writers is illustrated, for instance, in the histories of David and Uzziah. Fifteen chapters of 1 Samuel and the twenty-four chapters of 2 Samuel are devoted to the life and reign of David, while but seven verses in Kings are given to the reign of Uzziah, though he reigned fifty-two years, and David only forty.

The purpose of the Pentateuch is to show how God had taken to himself a particular people ; how he had brought them out of the bondage of Egypt and made a covenant with them at Sinai, and how he led them to the land that had been promised to their fathers. Special laws were given to them, a special place and manner of worship prescribed, and the presence of God was manifested in the most marked way. The book of Joshua shows how the Israelites were settled in the land promised. Everything was thus prepared for this special people to carry out the purposes of God, and to honor him in the sight of the heathen by obeying his laws. The subsequent historical books show how the Israelites miserably failed in their obligations to Jehovah, how God showed mercy to them and severely punished them for their disobedience, and at last restored them to the land they had corrupted.

4. The book of Judges is so called because it contains an account of Israel during the period of the judges. It is especially intended to show how the people departed from the commandments of God at a time when there was no one in authority to secure obedience to the laws, when every man did what was right in his own eyes. It does not describe men as they ought to have been, but as they were. It shows the necessity for the divinely established kingdom. It does not commend each separate act of the judges, but shows that God raised up these men to deliver his people from their oppressors.

There are great difficulties in the way of determining the chronology of the period of the judges. It would seem from a casual reading of the book that the Israelites were

fighting most of the time, but if the periods of peace are reckoned up and compared with the periods of war it will be found that the land had rest a good proportion of the time.

Chapters 17-21 are not to be understood as describing events in their chronological order. It is not certain when these did occur, but they help to show the tendency to wickedness early manifested by the Israelites. It must be remembered too, that the incidents narrated in the book of Ruth belong to this period of the judges.

5. In the Hebrew Bibles the book of Ruth is found among the collection called the "Writings," but it more properly belongs where we have it; for it continues the history that leads up to the accession of the kings. The events narrated in it occurred probably about one hundred years before the reign of David. It gives us a very beautiful picture of life among the Israelites in this early period. It was probably written, not simply to give the descent of King David, but to show how the Moabitess Ruth left her own people and religion to share the covenant privileges of the chosen people.

In contrast with much of the book of Judges, which gives repeated instances of Israel's turning away from Jehovah to serve idols, this book shows how one from a foreign people turned to accept the living God. It is of considerable interest to remember that Jesus the Messiah, as Son of David, was a descendant of Ruth.

6. The two books of Samuel were originally written as one, and were first separated in the Greek translation, the Septuagint. They give the events that led to the establishing of the monarchy and the reigns of Saul and David. The purpose of the books was to show how the divinely appointed authority that was shown to be needed in the times of the judges was secured in the kings. One object

of importance, however, was to show that the king was not to rule according to his own inclinations only, but was to carry out the will of God ; for when Saul disobeyed he was rejected. It shows us to what a position of power and supremacy Israel attained under the reign of David.

7. The two books of Kings were originally written as one, and were first divided by the Septuagint as were the books of Samuel. They cover a period of almost five hundred years of Israel's history. Their purpose is not to give all the events of interest that happened during the monarchy, but to show to what extent the people failed to realize the high idea possible to them in political supremacy and religious isolation among the nations. The author especially dwells upon those sins that resulted in the severe punishment of the chosen people.

The first eleven chapters give an account of the splendor of Solomon's reign ; but even here we see those tendencies to evil so sadly prominent in the subsequent history. It is a bright background to a dark picture. Where the author carries along the history of the two kingdoms (1 Kings 12 ; 2 Kings 17) most attention is paid to the northern kingdom and to the most wicked kings of this kingdom, the evident purpose being not to narrate all that happened, but to give the causes of Israel's fall.

The work of Elijah and Elisha occupies a good deal of the history, and this was to show how much God did to turn the hearts of the people back to himself and to keep them from forsaking him for the idols of the heathen. The reforms by Hezekiah and Josiah show more of failure than of success.

8. The books of Chronicles present a history that is largely parallel with that given in Samuel and Kings, but the purpose of these books is not the same. In the Chronicles the chief attention is paid to the kingdom of Judah, and the author does not dwell so much upon the wickedness of the

people as upon the success attained by those kings who were most faithful in obeying God. The importance of the worship of God at the temple is shown, and instances of former prosperity when this worship was most carefully maintained are given. The object seems to be to keep the returned exiles from again forsaking Jehovah.

The name of these books in the Hebrew Bible means *the affairs of the days, i. e.*, an account of the chief national events. The present name was given because of a statement by Jerome, who revised the Latin version of the Bible. The original sources from which the author drew were probably written by some of the prophets. In some instances these books give more information than the books of Samuel and Kings. Both accounts need to be studied to get a correct understanding of the history.

Many of the higher critics reject these books as being historically untrustworthy. It is true that there are a few instances where the statements, especially the numbers given, are at variance with those given in the other books. But these are of minor importance, and can be explained as errors of text that have arisen from copying. The chief reason for rejecting these books is that their contents conflict with the theory of the critics, who claim that the worship of the Israelites was not so developed in the earlier times as the chronicler represents. But he appeals to his authorities, and we cannot suppose that he was deliberately deceiving.

9. The book of Ezra was written probably toward the close of the fifth century B. C. It is intended to show how the promise that the chosen people should return from captivity was fulfilled. It tells of the restoration of the temple and its worship. The building of the temple had been completed about sixty years when Ezra went to Jerusalem, so that if he is the author of this book he must have gotten his information from others. There is the further purpose here of showing how the tendency of Israel to depart from Jehovah again was checked by the zeal of Ezra.

The Jews have handed down traditions about the works that Ezra did. He is credited with rewriting the whole of the books of the Old Testament that had been written before the captivity and been destroyed when the Jews were carried to Babylon; with giving the vowel points to the Hebrew language; and with completing the canon of the Old Testament. Some of this work it is certain he did not do, but he was very probably instrumental in preserving the sacred writings of the Jews.

10. The book of Nehemiah is closely related to Ezra and Chronicles. Some suppose that one author wrote all three. But there is not sufficient reason for giving up the view that Nehemiah wrote the book bearing his name. The historical value of the book remains the same whoever wrote it. The book shows how the walls of the city were rebuilt under the zealous leadership of Nehemiah, and how the national life of the people was resumed after the exile. This book and that of Ezra throw much light upon the political and religious condition of the Jews at this time.

It should be borne in mind that the temple had been completed nearly seventy-five years before the walls of the city were rebuilt. During all this time the Jews were under the dominion of the Persian power.

11. The book of Esther is not placed in its chronological order in our Bible. The events which it narrates occurred probably about 486 B. C. It gives a remarkable instance of the providence of God over his people, guarding them from the destruction threatened by their enemies. It is said by some to have been written to give an account of the origin of the feast of Purim, but this can hardly be a sufficient explanation for the existence of the book.

SUMMARY.

1. Number of the Historical Books. How the Hebrews divided their books. The names they gave to them.

2. Names of authors and dates not given. Probable authors of the different books.
3. Not a complete history of the people given. Only those facts that are connected with redemption presented. Illustration of this. Relation of the Historical Books to the Pentateuch.
4. Purpose of Judges to show how the people were punished for departure from Jehovah. Different aspects of the period.
5. Purpose of Ruth to show a change in religion. Contrast between Ruth and Israelites.
6. Books of Samuel showing establishment of the kingdom.
7. Books of Kings showing punishment of the people for sins. Most attention paid to the wicked kings of Israel. Prophets and reformers unsuccessful.
8. Chronicles to secure fidelity to Jehovah and his worship. The author's sources of information. Objections to the book by higher critics.
9. Time and purpose of Ezra. Traditions about the author.
10. Relation and purpose of Nehemiah. Walls rebuilt.
11. Chronological order of Esther. Shows providence of God.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL ANALYSIS OF THE BOOKS

1. Judges :

Part I. Introductory, ch. 1, 2.

Part II. Deliverance by the judges, ch. 3-16.

1. Othniel and Ehud, ch. 3.
2. Deborah and Barak, ch. 4, 5.
3. Gideon, ch. 6-8 ; Abimelech's reign and death, ch. 9.
4. Jephthah, ch. 10-12.
5. Samson, ch. 13-16.

Part III. Instances of Israel's sin, ch. 17-21.

1. Micah's idolatry, ch. 17.
2. Migration of the Danites, ch. 18.
3. Sin of men of Gibeah, ch. 19-21.

2. Ruth :

1. The sojourn in Moab, ch. 1.
2. In the fields of Boaz, ch. 2.
3. Ruth's marriage to Boaz, ch. 3-4 : 17.
4. Genealogy of David, ch. 4 : 18-22.

3. First and Second Samuel :

Part I. Events before the monarchy, ch. 1-7.

1. Early life of Samuel, ch. 1-3.
2. Oppression by the Philistines, ch. 4-7.

Part II. Career of Saul to his rejection, ch. 8-15.

1. Choosing of Saul, ch. 8-10.
2. War with the Philistines, ch. 11-14.
3. Saul rejected by God, ch. 15.

Part III. Career of David till Saul's death, ch. 16-31.

1. David at Saul's court, ch. 16-20.
2. An outlaw in Judah, ch. 21-26.
3. An outlaw in Philistia, ch. 27-31.

Part IV. David's career as king, 2 Sam. 1-24.

1. His reign at Hebron, ch. 1-4.
2. Established over all Israel, ch. 5-10.
3. His sin and its results, ch. 11-20.
4. An appendix, ch. 21-24.

4. First and Second Kings :

Part I. The reign of Solomon, 1 Kings 1-11.

1. The accession of Solomon, ch. 1-4.
2. Building of the temple, ch. 5-8.
3. Solomon's greatness and sin, ch. 9-11.

Part II. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17.

1. Revolt of the tribes and sin of Jeroboam, ch. 12-16.
2. The career of Elijah, ch. 17-19.
3. Wickedness of Ahab, ch. 20-22.
3. Career of Elijah continued, 2 Kings 1, 2.
4. Career of Elisha, ch. 3-8.
5. Dynasty of Jehu, ch. 9-14.
6. Fall of Israel, ch. 15-17.

Part III. Kingdom of Judah alone, 2 Kings 18-25.

1. The reign of Hezekiah, ch. 18-20.
2. Reign of Manasseh, ch. 21.
3. Reign of Josiah, ch. 22, 23.
4. The fall of Judah, ch. 24, 25.

5. First and Second Chronicles :

Part I. Genealogies, 1 Chron. 1-9.

Part II. Reign of David, ch. 10-29.

1. His accession and great men, ch. 10-12.
2. His zeal for Jehovah's worship, ch. 13-17.
3. His victories, ch. 18-20.
4. Numbering the people, ch. 21.
5. Provision for the temple, ch. 22-29.

Part III. Reign of Solomon, 2 Chron. 1-9.

1. Building the temple, ch. 1-4.
2. Its dedication ch. 5-7.
3. Solomon's greatness and wealth, ch. 8, 9.

Part IV. Judah after the revolt of Israel, ch. 10-36.

1. Reign of Rehoboam, ch. 10-12. 2. Victory of Abijah, ch. 13. 3. Reign of Asa, ch. 14-16. 4. Reign of Jehoshaphat, ch. 17-20. 5. Jehoram and Ahaziah, ch. 21, 22. 6. Joash and Amaziah, ch. 23-25. 7. Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz, ch. 26-28. 8. Reign of Hezekiah, ch. 29-32. 9. Manasseh's wickedness, ch. 33. 10. Reign of Josiah, ch. 34, 35. 11. Captivity, ch. 36.
6. Ezra :
 - Part I. The temple rebuilt, ch. 1-6.
 1. Decree of Cyrus, ch. 1. 2. Who returned, ch. 2. 3. Foundation laid, ch. 3. 4. The work hindered, ch. 4. 5. The work finished, ch. 5, 6.
 - Part II. Reforms by Ezra, ch. 7-10.
 1. Ezra's journey, ch. 7, 8. 2. Confession of sin, ch. 9. 3. Covenant to obey the law, ch. 10.
7. Nehemiah :
 - Part I. Rebuilding the walls, ch. 1-7.
 1. Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem, ch. 1, 2. 2. The work on the walls and its hindrance, ch. 3-7.
 - Part II. Covenant to keep the law, ch. 8-10.
 1. The law read, ch. 8. 2. Confession made, ch. 9. 3. A covenant made, ch. 10.
 - Part III. Dedication of the walls, and reforms, ch. 11-13.
 1. Those who dwelt in the city, ch. 11-12 : 26. 2. The walls dedicated, ch. 12 : 27-47. 3. Evils corrected, ch. 13.
8. Esther :
 1. Esther made queen, ch. 1, 2.
 2. Haman's purpose to destroy the Jews, ch. 3.
 3. Esther's intercession, ch. 4-7.
 4. The Jews granted self-defense, ch. 8-10.

CHAPTER III

ISRAEL IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

1. Although we have an account of the conquest of the land of Canaan by the Israelites, it is yet evident from the statements in the book of Judges that the conquest was not complete. Much of the territory described was not taken from the inhabitants. These seem to have been generally conquered, but they were allowed to dwell among the Israelites and were required to pay them tribute. This failure on the part of the chosen people seems to have been due in part to the strength of the enemy; in part to indifference to God's command; and in part to a selfish desire for gain (ch. 1).

The fact that the Israelites were not able to drive out the Canaanites of course was not due to lack of power with Jehovah, but to the fact that the Israelites disobeyed God. He therefore did not conquer their enemies for them, but left them to plague the Israelites.

The boundaries of the land given in Gen. 15 : 18 that was to be possessed by the seed of Abraham are to be regarded as general terms, indicating that Israel was to be the great power lying between Egypt on the one side and Mesopotamia on the other. The more definite limits are stated in Num. 34 : 1-12.

2. Though the Israelites were one in origin and religion, and were all dwelling in the same country, they were not at this time united under one central government. From the days of Moses and Joshua there was no one man exercising authority over all the tribes. Provision had been made for the selection and conduct of a king when the people should

choose one (Deut. 17 : 14-20), but the time for that had not yet come. The patriarchal form of government probably still prevailed largely, and a modification of that in tribal regulations. The various cities had their own local rulers.

After the death of Joshua no one was appointed to take his place. It seems to have been intended that the people should follow their own inclinations in regard to the form of government that should prevail. The judges seem to have exercised but little authority and over a limited territory, and as a rule no provision was made for their successors. The lack of a central and supreme authority prevented the Israelites from successfully resisting the attacks of their powerful enemies.

3. The tribes generally acted independently, each caring for that which concerned it within its own territory, and there was no united action except when two or more tribes had a common enemy. When the Canaanites oppressed Israel under the leadership of Sisera only a part of the tribes responded to the call of Deborah and Barak. When Gideon drove out the Midianites, and when Jephthah conquered the Ammonites, the tribe of Ephraim was jealous because these men had taken such leadership without consulting it; and in the case of Jephthah this jealousy led to bloodshed. During most of this period we hear nothing of the tribe of Judah. They do not seem to have aided the more northern tribes in their struggles. They became more active later, when the Philistines increased their hostility toward them.

The fact that the Israelites were related by blood was not sufficient to secure a close unity among the tribes. A common religion and a common worship would have prevented disintegration if they had been faithful in observing the requirements of that worship, but they did not do this. If all the tribes had had a common enemy from the first, that

would have compelled them to unite for their common defense.

The tribe of Judah was more fortunately situated than the rest of the tribes, being out of the ordinary road between the great powers of the world at that time, and possessing a part of the country that was less accessible to invaders than the rest of Canaan. This was one of the things that made the subsequent revolt of the northern tribes more easy than it would otherwise have been.

4. During this period the central sanctuary was at Shiloh. This was situated in the tribe of Ephraim north of Bethel. After the conquest, the tabernacle was removed to Shiloh (Josh. 18: 1) and remained there until the days of Samuel. The priests were in charge of the worship there, though it seems that they were not so well supported as it was intended they should be ; for the Israelites were not faithful in bringing sacrifices to the altar. The matter of obeying the Law was left to the individual consciences of the Israelites, and it was not strange that they neglected it. Worship of Jehovah was, however, kept up at Shiloh by the more faithful of the people during this period.

The long distance that many of the Israelites would have to go to reach the tabernacle would lead many of them to neglect it. It must be remembered too, that they were surrounded by those who practised idolatry, and the example of these no doubt had its effect upon them. And besides, unless they took delight in keeping the law of God, they could easily persuade themselves that it was not of so great importance.

The fact that the Israelites did not carry out the Levitical ceremonies during this time is urged as a proof that the Law had not yet been given. But the reasoning appears of little force when we recall so many familiar instances of such neglect and disobedience. The few instances of apparent violation of the Law on the part of those who were leaders in religious matters can easily be explained without assuming the non-existence of the Law.

5. The neglect of the worship of Jehovah was accompanied by the worship of the gods of the nations around Israel, especially of Baal, the god of the Phœnicians, though they also worshiped the gods of the Syrians, and of the Moabites, and of the Ammonites, and of the Philistines. This was the great sin of Israel throughout their history. A tendency to this was shown even while they were at Sinai, and it was especially for this that they were at last driven from the land that God had given them. Baal worship was practised by the Canaanites, and when the Israelites intermarried with these they were the more easily led into idol worship.

6. For the sin of idolatry the Israelites were severely punished by oppression from the Canaanites and the surrounding nations. As long as they were faithful to Jehovah he defended them, not simply as a reward for fidelity, but to prove to them and the heathen that he was the true God. And the same lesson was taught when he withheld his help and allowed Israel's enemies to overcome them. The judges raised up by Jehovah in answer to the cries of the people for deliverance were leaders of Israel's armies, rather than judges in the ordinary sense of the term, though they did perhaps decide cases brought to them by the Israelites for arbitration.

Though these judges were divinely appointed, and were aided by the Spirit of God, it does not follow that every act of theirs had the approval of God. They are generally commended for their fidelity in carrying out God's purpose to deliver Israel from their oppressors, and they receive the approval of the New Testament writers as well as of the Old. If God used only perfect men to carry out his purposes on earth there would be little done.

7. The history given in the book of Judges is so condensed, and carries us along so rapidly that it seems as if the

Israelites were at war the most of the time ; but there were periods when the people were kept faithful by the influence of the judges, and when the land had rest. We get a beautiful picture of such a time in the book of Ruth. The exact date of the events cannot be fixed with certainty, but they may belong to the rest resulting from the victory by Jephthah.

SUMMARY.

1. Canaanites not all destroyed. Left to try Israel. The definite limits of the land.
2. The lack of a central government. Form of government to be left to the people.
3. The independence of the tribes, and their jealousy. Causes of unity lacking. Isolation of Judah.
4. Worship at the central sanctuary partial. Hindrances to this. Failure to observe the Law no proof that it had not been given.
5. Israel's tendency to idolatry, especially Baal worship.
6. Punishment for this sin and deliverance by the judges. Character of the judges not approved by their appointment.
7. Times of peace during this period.

CHAPTER IV

THE JUDGES WHO DELIVERED ISRAEL

1. It was intended that the Israelites should keep themselves altogether distinct from the Canaanites, but we find that they soon united with them, not only by marriage but in their worship. For this they were punished by being sold into the power of a people from Mesopotamia, whom they served for eight years. Othniel was raised up in answer to their cries to Jehovah, and he conquered the king of the oppressors. After the land had rest for forty years the people again sinned, and Moab, with the help of Ammon and Amalek, was allowed to subdue Israel for eighteen years. Deliverance this time was through Ehud, of Benjamin. He slew the king and then led the Israelites against the Moabites who had invaded their land.

It is not certain whether it is meant that Othniel was the brother or nephew of Caleb. Othniel had before shown his valor (Judges 1 : 13). Chushan-rishathaim was probably ruling in the upper part of Mesopotamia. Nothing further is known of him. The Moabites occupied the land east of the Dead Sea. The tribe of Reuben must have been subdued first by them before they crossed the Jordan to subdue the western tribes. Of course the treachery of Ehud is not commended by the Bible. But we must remember the hostility of the Moabites, their burdens upon Israel, and the Divine appointment of Ehud.

2. The evil of disobeying the command of God to destroy the Canaanites is shown in a marked way by the fact that the Canaanites in turn are able to subdue the Israelites. The oppression seems to have been confined mostly to the

northern part of the land. Especial mention is made of the fact that the enemy had nine hundred iron chariots. Their king is Jabin, his chief general, Sisera, doomed to a disgraceful defeat. The deliverer now is Barak, encouraged by the prophetess Deborah. Most of the credit for success is due to her. Sisera collected his forces in the plain of Jezreel, having his iron chariots with him in the field. Barak got together his ten thousand at Tabor, and when Deborah gave the command swept down upon the enemy. The God of Israel gave a special victory. The iron chariots were not invincible. Sisera escaped from the battlefield to be killed in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, a descendant of Moses' father-in-law. The victory is celebrated in a most thrilling poem, in which Jael comes in for a share of the praise.

The song of praise sung by Deborah throws a good deal of light upon this battle. It is one of the oldest poems that we have in the Bible. Reuben, Dan, and Assher did not help their people. Meroz is especially condemned for refusing to help. There seems to have been a violent storm that aided in the defeat of the Canaanites, in which the horses became unmanageable, and the chariots probably destroyed some of Sisera's own army. Milman, in his "History of the Jews," gives a spirited translation of this song.¹

In considering the act of Jael it must be remembered that God had commanded the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites; that this command rested upon individuals, and not only upon the nation as a whole; that Jael practically identifies herself as an Israelite, and thus accepts the obligation of an Israelite; that it would be especially desirable to destroy the leader of this hostility shown toward God's people; that the normal relations did not exist between the Israelites and Canaanites; that Jael could not have had Sisera in her power if she had revealed her purpose, and that the prophetess Deborah praises Jael above all other women.

3. The next oppressors were the Midianites, who swarmed

¹ "Hist. Jews," vol. I., book 6.

over the plains of Israel like grasshoppers, and devoured all they could reach. The Israelites are distinctly shown that this calamity had come upon them because of their sin. But again a deliverer is raised up. Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh. The site of his town, Ophrah, is not known. Israel was reduced to a very low condition, and had to hide their crops from the Midianites. Gideon hesitates to undertake the great work of deliverance, but is assured that God would be with him. He destroys the altar of Baal, where his people had been worshipping, and when they would punish him for this his father says, "Let Baal plead for himself if he is a god." This gives a new name to Gideon. The forces gathered by Gideon are so large that if they gain the victory they will think it is due to their own power, so most of them are kept out of the battle; only three hundred are employed to rout the Midianites. A panic seizes the invaders, and they are easily overcome. Ephraim is jealous of Gideon, but is pacified. The Midianites are pursued to the east of the Jordan, and Gideon afterward punishes those of his own people who did not have faith in his success, and refused to help him. For the first time the people manifest a desire for a king, but Gideon refuses to accept the position. He does, however, give occasion for Israel's turning away from Jehovah. The people's severe punishment for turning to Baal-worship did not keep them from falling into it again when Gideon was dead.

This deliverance by Gideon is one of the most important recorded. It was also a critical time in the history of Israel because of the attempt to set up a monarchy. It was some years after this before Israel had a king, but they were already desirous of having some one to whom they could look when their enemies came against them. It seems clear that this attempt to have a king did not extend over all the tribes. Only those that were especially affected by the Midianites joined in the movement. It was fortunate for Israel that the

attempt did not succeed ; for it would have been almost impossible at this stage in their history to secure unity among the tribes.

4. After the ambitious but vain attempt of Gideon's son to rule, two judges succeeded, who were, however, of but little importance. Then the people again yielded to their foolish wickedness and forsook Jehovah. At this time it is said that they served six different gods. They were sold for their sins into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites. In mercy God gave another deliverer, Jephthah, who successfully led the eastern tribes against the Ammonites. Jephthah had already shown his valor, and the elders of Gilead appealed to him for help. He responded, and the Spirit of God gave him the victory over the enemy. Again the tribe of Ephraim showed its jealousy of the supremacy of any other tribe, and a conflict resulted in which many of that tribe fell.

Some interesting facts of history are given here in connection with the controversy between Jephthah and the Ammonites before the battle. When they claimed that the territory held by the Israelites had long before belonged to themselves, Jephthah replied that when Israel had come there it was held by the Amorites, and that they had taken it from them ; and besides, it had been three hundred years since the conquest, and they ought to have presented their claim before.

There is a difference of opinion about the act of Jephthah in fulfilling his vow. Some suppose that he literally sacrificed his daughter upon an altar as a burnt-offering ; others suppose that he devoted her to a life of celibacy and to the service of Jehovah. Strong arguments are advanced on both sides. This has been called "the age of vows."¹

5. After Jephthah three judges are named, whose work is not recorded : Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. Then follows

¹ Stanley's "Hist. Jew. Ch.," I., 395.

an account of one of the most interesting characters among the judges. The oppressors this time are the Philistines, who from this time continue to be involved in the history of Israel until the reign of David, and often afterward. There are several points of special interest in the career of Samson: the circumstances of his birth; his consecration to the life of a Nazarite; his marriage to a woman of Philistia giving occasion for an attack upon the Philistines; his superhuman strength when his enemies sought to destroy him; his love for an immoral woman; his revealing the condition of his special strength and his consequent falling into the power of the Philistines; and his restored strength used to inflict a heavy punishment upon his enemy, in which he himself falls. The work of Samson differed from that of any other judge. It was not promised that he should deliver from the Philistines, but that he should begin to deliver, and indeed he aroused them to greater hostility toward the Israelites. But this resulted in good; for it made them at last discontented with the supremacy of the Philistines, and led them to attempt their independence, an effort which succeeded only in the days of David. Had it not been for the work of Samson Israel might have remained submissive under the dominion of Philistia.

Samson's unusual strength was given him from God. Of himself he was no stronger than others. His Nazarite vow, involving abstinence from wine and wearing long hair, was evidence that he was specially devoted to God's service; when this evidence was lacking God ceased to show his power in him. His life was not to show a curious case of strength, but to show that God was with the Israelites. While the other judges led armies, Samson wrought single-handed. Objections are sometimes offered to the facts recorded of him; but when we remember the purpose of his life there is nothing improbable in the account. The Bible's commendation of his faith does not include a commendation of his immorality.

SUMMARY.

1. Alliance with the Canaanites; punishment by the Mesopotamians and deliverance by Othniel. Delivered from Moab by Ehud.
2. Oppressed by Canaanites and delivered by Barak. Deborah's part in the victory; Sisera's death. The song of Deborah; the vindication of Jael.
3. Delivered from Midianites by Gideon; his small army; his subsequent sin. Israel's demand for a king.
4. Deliverance from Ammonites by Jephthah; Ephraim's jealousy. Some facts of early history recorded. The meaning of Jephthah's vow.
5. Oppression by the Philistines and their punishment by Samson. Points of special interest in his career. The special work that he was to do. The meaning of his superior strength.

CHAPTER V

EVENTS LEADING TO THE MONARCHY

1. Samuel was destined to be a man of very great influence in the history of Israel. The story of his mother's prayer for a son, her promise that he should be given to the service of the Lord, the regular journey of the family to worship at Shiloh, the annual visit of Hannah to the tabernacle, taking the coat she had made for the ministering Samuel, and the devout song of Hannah praising God for the answer to her prayer, give us a picture full of interest as showing the religious condition of the better part of Israel at this time. Elkanah was living in the territory of Ephraim, but was probably of the tribe of Levi. It may be that he belonged to the family of priests. Samuel assisted in the religious duties of the tabernacle.

Samuel was to be instrumental in guiding the people of Israel from the conditions prevailing during the time of the judges, when every man did what he pleased, to the time of the monarchy, when the tribes were united with a king to rule them. He performed the functions of a judge, of a prophet, and at times of a priest. After Saul was made king Samuel relinquished his duties as judge, but still controlled as prophet. His is one of the most worthy characters described in the Old Testament.

2. It was intended that the priests should be pre-eminent in holiness, and that they should teach the people in religious matters (Deut. 31 : 9-13), so that they would be faithful in all that Jehovah demanded of them. The sons of Eli, acting as the priests at this time, fell very far short of what was expected of them. They not only neglected their obligations,

but committed grievous sins against God. They thus made the people transgress. Though Eli rebuked his wicked sons, he did not punish them as he ought, and because of the dishonor brought upon the name of Jehovah a severe punishment was to come upon the family of Eli. His own descendants were to be removed from the priesthood, and another branch of the family of Aaron would be substituted. The prediction of this came through Samuel, and he was thus recognized as a prophet of Jehovah.

Aaron had two sons after the death of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10)—Eleazar and Ithamar. Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, and his descendant, Abiathar, was deposed from the priesthood by Solomon; Zadok, of the family of Eleazar, took his place.

With Samuel began that long course of revelation from God by the prophets which was intended to keep Israel faithful to Jehovah. The priests failed in their work, and so prophets were raised up to perform the important work of teaching God's will. The so-called schools of the prophets became prominent about this time, though it is not certain that they were originated by Samuel. These seem to have been occasioned by a desire to counteract the evil tendencies of the times.

3. The Philistines had been irritated by the conduct of Samson, and they had made more galling their supremacy over Israel, and this in turn led to an attempt by Israel to throw off the yoke. A battle was fought, but Israel was defeated. The Israelite leaders seem to have thought that their defeat was due to the absence of Jehovah, and that his presence would be secured by having the ark in the army. But their mistake was shown in a worse defeat; the ark was taken by the enemy; thirty thousand Israelites were slain; Eli was killed by the shock of the report about the ark; Eli's sons died in the battle, and the people of the true God were put to shame. The Philistines were to be taught, how-

ever, that Jehovah could defend his ark ; for this became a plague amid the Philistines, and they were glad to get rid of it. The ark, however, for some reason was not restored to its original position in the tabernacle at Shiloh. It was kept at Kirjath-jearim until David took it to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6 : 12). Afterward Samuel induced the Israelites to turn to Jehovah, who then gave them a decisive victory over the Philistines.

4. The tribes of Israel were now becoming more united. This was due largely to the fact that most of them were affected by the invasion and oppression of the Philistines. They were not united, however, in trusting Jehovah. They began to want some leader to whom they could look at all times to successfully withstand their enemies. They did not have faith in the invisible power of Jehovah ; they would have more confidence in a mighty warrior, some valiant man. Their request for a king was interpreted as a rejection of Jehovah. What they really wanted was some one who should take the place of Jehovah. Of course they might have had a king and yet remained faithful to their God. Provision had been made for the time when they should set up a king. Their motive in asking for one now was sinful.

It is said sometimes that the fact that the request of the people at this time is condemned, furnishes proof that the law of the king given in Deuteronomy must have originated later. But the objection was not to their having a king ; for we see in David's career the possibility of being ruled by both a king and Jehovah ; they could have had a king without rejecting Jehovah. The reason for their request must be remembered in order to understand the reign of Saul.

5. The king that was selected for Israel was one who exactly corresponded to their ideas, a man pre-eminent in physical qualities. They would put great confidence in such a man as Saul ; he certainly could fight valiantly against their

enemies. They believed that their success in conflicts with their enemies depended upon their being able to command greater physical strength than their enemies. Saul was the personification of their ideal. Now they thought themselves relieved from the restraints that Jehovah put upon them; even if they should turn to other gods they could not be overcome with such a king. Thus, while Saul was selected for the people by the Lord, he was selected in accordance with the people's request, and it could be said that God gave them a king in his anger (Hos. 13 : 11). Saul's superior physical qualities need not have prevented him from being faithful to Jehovah, but the people's idea eventually came to be his also.

SUMMARY.

1. Samuel's early life. The important position he occupied.
2. The wickedness of the sons of Eli. Their line of descent. Samuel's place in the succession of prophets.
3. Battle with the Philistines; the ark taken; the ark returned.
4. Lack of trust in Jehovah; the people demand a king. No objection to a king, but the people's motive an evil one.
5. Saul chosen according to their ideal; pre-eminent in physical qualities.

CHAPTER VI

REIGN OF SAUL

1. Saul continued his ordinary course of life until there arose an occasion when he could show himself a capable leader of Israel's armies. At first at least, the position of Saul differed little from that of a judge, but by his decisive victory over the Ammonites he proved to his people that their hopes in him were not misplaced. Those who had at first withheld their allegiance from the new king must now confess their error. Saul's victory gave occasion for a further ratification of the establishment of the kingdom, and for the retirement of Samuel from the functions of a judge. Samuel was, however, still a prophet, and he reminded the people of their sin in asking for a king, and assured them that they would have God's favor if they and their king would be obedient to him.

2. Saul selected a standing army of three thousand men, one-third of whom were under the command of Jonathan. The Philistines were now Israel's great enemy, and continued to be until their subjection by David. Because of an attack made upon them by Jonathan they invaded the country of Israel in large numbers, so that the army of Israel withdrew to Gilgal. Here Saul showed his lack of obedience by not patiently waiting for Samuel as long as he had directed (1 Sam. 10 : 8). When rebuked he attempted to justify himself on the ground that it would have been inexpedient to wait longer. But he was assured that his disobedience had brought upon him the loss of the right to rule. The Israelites were brought into almost complete subjection to the Philis-

tines. The small band left with Saul was regarded as of little consequence. But Jonathan brought on another conflict between the two peoples. Single-handed, by the help of Jehovah he started a panic in the Philistine garrison, and the invaders were completely routed.

The statement by Samuel to Saul that the Lord had sought him a man after his own heart is to be interpreted by the context. It is of course not an endorsement of all that David was to do, as though he was an ideal man in the sight of God, but rather that God desired a king who would not seek his own gratification, but would be obedient to God's commands.

By ignorantly violating a foolish command of Saul Jonathan very nearly lost his life, but the people defended him because of the great victory gained by his agency. Saul's rashness is further shown by the fact that he began to build an altar, that he then probably stopped to continue the defeat of the Philistines, and by his oath that whoever was the cause of Jehovah's failure to answer him should be put to death.

3. The climax of Saul's failure as king appears in his course when sent against the Amalekites. These were a persistent enemy of the Israelites. They had opposed them when they came from Egypt, and it seems that only a short time before Saul's campaign they had shown renewed hostility. They were to be punished for their enmity toward the people of Jehovah. Saul set out upon his mission, but saw fit to depart from what he was commanded. God would have them destroyed; he would spare especially the king. Even the flocks and herds were to share in the destruction, that the lesson might be all the more clearly taught; but Saul would spare these for the use of Israel. He said that they might be used for sacrifices, although we can hardly credit him with so much religious zeal. The prophet is sent to him with the message of his rejection by Jehovah. He tells him that his obedience would be worth more than all

the sacrifices he could offer. Agag was slain, and the prophet turned away from the king.

The Amalekites occupied the country south of Palestine, and appear very early in the history of the Hebrews. They were conquered by the kings that captured Lot (Gen. 14 : 7), and they opposed the progress of the Israelites through Sinai. They were not utterly destroyed by Saul, but were reduced in power, and were finally destroyed by David when he was living at Ziklag. They are not identical with the descendants of the grandson of Edom.

4. The rejection of Saul did not mean that he was to be deposed at once from his position of king, but that he was not to be the head of a line of kings, his son should not succeed him. He was not to be in God's favor the rest of his life. It is said that the Spirit of God was taken from him. The special Divine help by which he had been able to accomplish his work was now to be withheld. As had been provided when Israel should choose a king he must be familiar with the law of God, and must seek to carry out God's will. But Saul failed in just that respect—he cared more for his own individual interests than he did for what God wanted him to do ; he could not then be king over God's people. The fundamental requirement of the people when the covenant was made with them at Sinai was that they should obey the Law, and of course this would be especially demanded of the king.

The consciousness that he was rejected of God would furnish a satisfactory explanation of the spirit and conduct of Saul during the rest of his life. He was filled with envy, jealousy, hate. He did all in his power to destroy the man that God had chosen to succeed him. The statement that an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him does not mean that an evil being came to make him wicked, but refers to the madness that afterward came upon him.

5. It is not certain when Saul learned of David's being anointed, but it seems that he began his attempts to kill him soon after David came to be at the court. He was jealous because David received more praise than did he ; he feared him because the Lord was with him. He required David to do what would expose him to danger of death, he placed him where he would be likely to be killed ; he attempted to take his life with his own hand, and when David escaped to the tribe of Judah he pursued him with a portion of his army.

Nothing could surpass the magnanimity of Jonathan during all this period. He was the heir presumptive to the throne of Israel. Nothing stood in the way of his ruling, it would seem, but David, and instead of joining his father in his endeavor to remove this one obstacle, he does all in his power to defeat his father's purpose, and thus establish his rival in the place he would occupy himself. Truly the love of Jonathan was wonderful.

There were three divinely appointed institutions in Israel : the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly. The priest would have authority in religious ceremonies, the king would have the management of the secular affairs, and the prophet would be a special agent in the communication of God's will. The prophet then might be in a position to command the priest or king, while the king would have no right to interfere with the functions of either of the other two. Saul, however, did not respect the position or authority of either priest or prophet. He killed the one and disobeyed the commands of the other.

6. While David was in Ziklag the Philistines gathered a large army to fight against the Israelites. The battle took place in the plain of Jezreel. Before this time Saul had succeeded in holding this enemy in check, but now they strike a crushing blow upon Israel. Not only was the army of Israel defeated, but Saul and his three sons were slain. There seems to be a conflict between the two accounts of Saul's death. The fact appears to be that he fell upon his

sword and killed himself, while the Amalekite that brought the report of his death to David claimed to have killed him in order to secure a reward.

There are difficulties in the account of Saul's consulting the witch of Endor. Some understand that there was no actual vision, that the woman simply pretended that there was; others suppose that Samuel did appear to the woman, or to Saul also, and that this was permitted by the Lord; that the woman herself had no power to summon Samuel.

SUMMARY.

1. Saul's victory over the Ammonites; he wins popular favor.
2. Invasion by the Philistines; Saul's disobedience; the Philistines routed. Meaning of the expression, "a man after his own heart." Saul's rashness.
3. Commission to destroy the Amalekites and failure. Saul's rejection. Who the Amalekites were.
4. Meaning and cause of Saul's rejection. His subsequent madness.
5. Attempts to kill David. Jonathan's magnanimity. Saul's relation to the priests and prophet.
6. Battle with the Philistines; death of Saul. Visit to the witch of Endor.

CHAPTER VII

DAVID DURING SAUL'S REIGN

1. As Samuel had been instrumental in the appointment of Saul to be king so he was called upon to anoint Saul's successor. There was danger in doing this while Saul lived, but he could, in part at least, prevent a widespread knowledge of the real purpose of his visit to Bethlehem by making his visit the occasion of a public sacrifice there. When the sons of Jesse appeared before Samuel even he was inclined to select a king according to his physical pre-eminence again, but God would show him and Israel that his king would perform his work by God's aid, not by his own superior prowess. The great thing demanded now was a heart inclined to obey Jehovah.

It is not known how old David was when he was anointed, but he must have been quite young. He seems to have been strikingly fair of countenance. By the act of anointing he was formally recognized as the divinely chosen king. Of course those who witnessed the act must have understood its significance. David, however, did not suppose that he was to displace Saul. He would be king when Saul was dead, not before.

2. An opportunity soon offered itself for David to be brought to the court of Saul. The malady of the king led his officers to suggest that a skillful player on the harp might be able to give relief. David was chosen for the task, and he succeeded. He did not remain with Saul, but came to him as he was needed. Saul perhaps cared little who it was playing before him, for afterward when David offered to

fight against Goliath neither Saul nor his leading general knew who he was. After his victory over the giant, Saul kept David with him, and Jonathan loved him as he loved himself.

It is not clear how Saul could have been so ignorant about David if he had already been his armor-bearer according to the statement of the text as we now have it. Some think that the accounts have been transposed, that he had killed the giant before he was sent for to play before Saul. But it would still be difficult to understand the account. The Hebrew text of the books of Samuel contains very many errors, and it may be that this account has been changed at some time in copying.

3. David soon gained the praises of the people. The women sang of his victories, and placed him even above the king in honor. This made Saul jealous of David, who was now exposed to the danger of death from the king. David acted very discreetly, however, and gained the esteem of all the people. Saul removed him from his immediate presence and put him over a company of soldiers, thinking he would be more likely to be slain, but this only served as a better opportunity for David to show to the people his ability as a warrior. This was of service to him afterward when the people looked to him as their king. Each attempt of Saul to harm David but added to the evidence that the Lord was with him.

4. During the next stage of David's career he was in Judah, whither he had fled to escape Saul. He first went to Samuel, then after visiting the tabernacle at Nob and securing the sword of Goliath he went to Gath, but as the Philistines recognized him as their enemy he returned to the cave of Adullam in Judah. While here as an outlaw in Judah, Saul repeatedly attempted to take him and failed. The conflict between the two began to assume national importance ;

a large number of men joined themselves to the fortunes of David, and they seem to have been engaged, a part of the time at least, in defending the interests of their tribe. The incident recorded about Nabal would indicate this. While David may be called an outlaw at this time, he was such only in the view of Saul. He was not only interested in defending his people, but he was careful not to harm in any way the king himself. He would not presume to do violence to the anointed of Jehovah. While David was in Judah Samuel died. He had befriended David and to some extent controlled Saul, and now David sees that it will be all the more dangerous for him to remain where Saul can reach him.

5. In the last stage of this part of David's career he was in Ziklag, the city that Achish had given to him when he came to make his abode among the Philistines, Saul's enemies. This course of David in going among the enemies of his people has been regarded as open to censure, but it was the safest course for him to take, and he does not seem to have given any aid whatever to the Philistines. He was employing the force that was with him in subduing those tribes that had been hostile to the Israelites dwelling on their southern border. He came near getting into a greater difficulty when he started with the Philistines in their war against the Israelites ; but we can only conjecture what he would have done if he had not been prevented from going on by the lords of the Philistines.

6. The character of David manifested during this part of his life exhibits some most admirable traits. In spite of the cruel persecution by Saul, for which there was no cause but the king's jealousy, David controlled himself and refused to resent the injustice. He was aware that Jehovah had chosen him to be king over his people, but he did not attempt to hasten the time when he could rule. His lament

for Saul as well as Jonathan shows a most magnanimous spirit. When the Amalekite brought the news of Saul's death to David, he was himself put to death for presuming to harm the anointed of Jehovah. We may not be perfectly sure which of the psalms of David were produced during this period, but there are some of them which accurately express his circumstances at this time.

Says Stanley: "It is a period which has left on David's character marks never afterward effaced. . . Hence sprang that sagacity natural to one who had so long moved with his life in his hand. . . But yet more in these psalms we observe the growth of his dependence on God, nurtured by his hair-breadth escapes. The summary of this whole period is that of one who knows that for some great purpose he has been drawn up from the darkest abyss of danger and distress. . . It was the exodus, though of a single human soul, yet of a soul which reflected the whole nation. It was the giving of a second law, though through the living tablets of a heart, deeper and vaster than the whole legislation of Moses. It was the beginning of a new dispensation." ("Jewish Church," Second Series, pp. 79-81.)

SUMMARY.

1. David anointed by Samuel. The significance of this.
2. Brought to the court of Saul. Difficulties in the account.
3. David's advancement. Saul's hatred of him, and attempts to kill him.
4. David an outlaw in Judah; his course while there. Saul's failure to take him.
5. David among the Philistines. His destruction of Israel's enemies.
6. Character of David at this time. His regard for the king.
Stanley's estimate of this period.

CHAPTER VIII

REIGN OF DAVID

1. As soon as David learned of Saul's death he went by God's direction to Hebron, where he was anointed by the men of Judah to be king over them. It is true that he had already been divinely appointed to this position, but the tribe now formally recognized him as their king. He was not yet accepted as king over all the tribes, for the son of Saul had been chosen to succeed his father by the commander of Saul's army, Abner, and under the lead of the latter all the tribes of Israel except Judah rallied about Ishbosheth and opposed the rule of David; but the latter continued to become stronger and the other became weaker. There was a general lack of sympathy between the northern tribes and Judah, and the rivalry between the kings threatened a complete disruption of the people; this, however, was postponed for three-quarters of a century. Saul had done much to unite the tribes, but what success he gained in this seems to have been due to the fact that the tribes had a common enemy rather than to the kingly qualities of Saul.

2. It might have been expected that the rest of the tribes would prevail over the single tribe of Judah, but it was Jehovah's will that David should be king over his people, and different things aided to bring this about after David had ruled seven years and a half at Hebron. Abner aroused the jealousy of his king, and when censured by him, became angry and threatened to turn the kingdom over to David. He made known to David that he was ready to

deliver the kingdom to him, reminded the Israelites that they had before desired to have David as their king, and when making final arrangements for fulfilling his threat was killed by the treacherous Joab. When his death was followed by the assassination of Saul's son, nothing stood in the way of Israel's recognizing David as their king. They came to him at Hebron and expressed their own desire in the matter, and admitted that God had designated him to be king. Thus David began his magnificent reign over Israel. He captured Jerusalem and made it his capital and by so doing avoiding any tribal jealousy by choosing a city outside the territory of Judah (Josh. 18 : 16), no doubt selecting it especially because of its choice situation, already an ancient stronghold and easily defended. The Philistines learning that David was king attempted twice to subdue him and in each instance signally failed.

3. The first great work that David undertook as king was to provide a place for the ark and to bring it to Jerusalem. It had been in Kirjath-jearim since it was returned by the Philistines. All the people gladly joined in this religious movement. The king himself was most prominent in manifesting an interest in the worship of Jehovah. Even after the ark was safely housed in its new tabernacle David desired to make for it a temple of stone, but was not allowed to do so, as his great work was to be the subduing of Israel's enemies, while his son, whose reign would be one of peace, should build the temple for Israel's worship.

The religious character of David is shown in his care for the ark at the very outset of his reign. His delight was in God's will rather than in his own gratification. And thus he is promised that his sons shall continue to reign, that the kingdom shall not be taken from him as from Saul. The promise involves more than Solomon, it looks forward to the coming of Christ.

4. One thing that led to the magnificence of the kingdom of Israel under David was the subjection of the surrounding peoples. David went against the Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians, the Edomites, and the Ammonites, and was victorious over them all. The purpose of his conflict with these peoples was not that he might take possession of their territory, but that he might defend his people from destruction by them; it was for self-defense. As a result of his victories, Israel had peace during the later portion of his reign and that of Solomon. The booty that David secured in these wars was consecrated to the service of Jehovah.

The power of the Philistines was first thoroughly checked by David's victory over them. They were not destroyed, and indeed were influential in Israel's history in after years, but the nation of Israel was too mighty for them to subdue again. David's conflict with the Syrians was brought about by their making an alliance with the enemies that were nearer to the borders of Canaan. Garrisons were established in the countries conquered that they might be held in subjection and be compelled to pay tribute. In 2 Sam. 8 : 13 the word "Syrians" should without doubt be read Edom.

5. The darkest spot in the life of David is the record of his sin with Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite. The blackness of this sin appears all the greater because of the character of David manifested at other times. Our estimate of his character is of course not to be determined by this one act, nor indeed by any series of acts, but by his own estimate of his deed when its real nature was brought home to his conscience by the prophet. His act affected not only himself but also the nation; his exalted position made it all the more necessary that God should show his displeasure with his chosen king. David's punishment was severe.

The author of Chronicles does not mention the sin of David, not because he did not know of it, nor because he wanted to make David appear better than he was, but because his purpose did not involve the presentation of those features of the history. It is generally admitted that Psalms 32 and 51 were occasioned by this event in David's life.

It must not be supposed that the characters presented to us in the Bible are intended for models that we might imitate them. The histories of the different persons are given simply that we may see how they were connected with God's plan of redemption. Some of them are cited as examples of faith, but they are not held up as perfect models having the endorsement of the Bible.

6. Nathan had declared to David that he would have trouble because of his sin. Six chapters in 2 Samuel are taken up with the events leading to the revolt of Absalom and its results. The evils described were due in part at least to the system of polygamy that prevailed. When Amnon had sinned against Tamar, Absalom had him killed by his servants, and then fled to his mother's relatives in Bashan. Through the intercession of Joab, after three years David permitted him to return, but he was not allowed to see the face of the king for two years more. Afterward Absalom secretly gained the favor of the people, and when he proclaimed his treason against his father large numbers gathered to him and thus rejected David. The latter fled before the advance of his son, crossed to the east of the Jordan, fought and defeated Absalom's army, and then deeply grieved because of his death.

Even though the kingdom of Israel attained to such pre-eminence by the prowess of David there very soon appear indications of dangerous tendencies that led to the punishment of the chosen people. The actual decline of the nation did not begin till after the period of magnificence under Solomon.

The fact that the Israelites so easily exchanged David for Absalom as their king may perhaps be accounted for by the

fact that David had already shown a lack of care for the people, that he had lost some of his ability as a king. The fact also shows that the people exercised a right to choose whom they would for their king. That the people's will was not to be ignored is shown in David's waiting to return from Bashan until he was requested to come back by the Israelites. The lack of unity among the tribes begins to show itself again at this period; Judah is not in full accord with the northern tribes.

The conduct of David in this sore trial is worthy of note. He regards all his trouble as coming from God, and will not permit anything to be done for his own interests simply. He would not allow the ark to be taken from the city, nor did he resent the curses of Shimei. His grief over Absalom shows the forgiving father's heart, though it came near turning from him the allegiance of the tribes of Israel.

7. In the closing chapters of 2 Samuel there are recorded a few events that throw some light upon the last days of David's reign. The famine that was sent because of the wrong done by Saul, and the plague that resulted from the numbering of the people by David are significant, as they show how the whole nation was affected by the act of its king. The wrong in having the people numbered seems to have been that David wished to know what he had to rely upon in case of war, thinking his safety depended upon large numbers instead of upon God. David's provision for the temple building is given most fully in Chronicles. If he was not allowed to construct the building itself, he at least left little for his son to do in the way of collecting material. He also gave Solomon full instructions about the manner of the building, repeating what he had received from God. He both gave of his own property and also induced the people to offer willingly.

When Solomon erected the temple he employed skilled workmen from the Phœnicians, but we are not to suppose that these followed their own ideas in constructing the build-

ing. The pattern was given by the Lord himself. The total amount of material provided for the temple seems great, especially the precious metals, but there is no good reason for doubting the correctness of the amounts given.

8. The reign of David may be estimated in three ways : First, the results of his rule within the nation itself ; there was more perfect unity among the tribes, the people came to be more nearly one than ever before ; they had become strong and prosperous ; they were more than ordinarily faithful to Jehovah. Second, the relations existing between Israel and its neighbors ; all the surrounding peoples that had shown hostility had been subdued ; Israel had come to be at the head of all the powers in that part of the country ; this supremacy of Israel had been more easy than it might have been owing to the decline of the Assyrian power at this time Third, the religious condition of Israel due to David's influence ; at no time was the nation more free from idolatrous practices than during this period ; religious matters were of most importance in the estimation of David ; before his death he arranged for the worship by classifying the Levites who were to take part in the public temple service. David's personal religious condition is shown most fully in the psalms he wrote.

SUMMARY.

1. David anointed as king over Judah. Conflict with Saul's son.
2. All the tribes accept David as king. Jerusalem made capital.
3. David's interest in the worship of Jehovah. The ark brought to Jerusalem. Not permitted to build the temple. Indications of David's character.
4. Enemies of Israel subdued in self-defense. Power of Philistines checked. Conflict with Syrians.
5. David's terrible sin. How we should estimate his character. Effect of this upon the nation. Account omitted from Chronicles. Men of the Bible not given as models.

6. Absalom's revolt and death. Evil tendencies shown in this period. David's probable failures. Popular election. The submissive spirit of David.
7. Famine and plague as punishments. Material for the temple. The pattern for this from God.
8. Estimate of David's reign. Internal condition of Israel. Relations with other peoples. Advancement of religious matters.

CHAPTER IX

REIGN OF SOLOMON

1. The trouble that was threatened about the succession after David should die was averted by having Solomon anointed while David was still living. He was advised what to do concerning those who had shown enmity to David, and was encouraged to devote his powers to the great work of building the temple. The leaders among the Israelites were exhorted to render the young king all possible help. The age of Solomon at his accession is not known. The difficulties before him were great, especially because of the prevalence of wealth and luxury among the people, and the danger of national decline due to these. He, however, had some good counsellors about him, and the early part of his reign was probably influenced by these.

The reason why David did not himself punish those whom he counsels Solomon to punish, was due most likely to the fact that he looked upon their opposition to him as a punishment from God, and did not presume to resent it, while at the same time their conduct was deserving of punishment because they were enemies of the authority God had established, they had shown hostility to the anointed king.

2. Among the special advantages that Solomon had at the beginning of his reign was a message from God offering him whatever he might choose, and in answer to his request promising such wisdom as he would need for the government of so great a people. The wisdom asked was not religiousness nor piety, but ability to rule. The evidence that his prayer was granted was shown in the case he was called upon

to decide between the two contending women. These great privileges of Solomon, being neglected, came to be the cause of great punishment. He sinned against superior light.

3. The metals needed for the temple were already secured by David. The lumber was secured from the Lebanon range of mountains by a treaty made with the king of Tyre. This was paid for with wheat and oil, probably gotten from the territory of Asher. Solomon sent workmen to cut the timber, while Hiram had it transported by sea to Joppa. Stone seems to have been procured from the same region, though some of it may have come from some point nearer Jerusalem. Just as is often the case at the present day the stones were prepared for their positions at the quarry. The measurements of the temple were precisely twice those of the tabernacle. It required seven years to build it. It was not such a large building, but the work was difficult, and demanded skill. Solomon had also a palace built for himself exceedingly magnificent, requiring thirteen years in its construction.

The precious stones mentioned are such as were expensive because of their size. It seems to have been possible to prepare stones for building in those times with as much ease as at present, if not with even greater ease.¹ It is difficult to account for the remarkable polish of the surfaces of some of the stones used, and the great distances that they were transported.² Engraving upon gem stones was executed with as much skill then as now, and it is claimed with greater ease. The brass mentioned in the Old Testament is supposed to have been more probably bronze.

Besides the buildings at Jerusalem there was also extensive building carried on in other places, both for the pleasure of the king and for the welfare of the nation. Store cities were built and defenses made. It is not certain, but probable, that the name Tadmor in the wilderness is the same as Palmyra where the famous ruins still stand.

¹ Petrie, "Ten Years' Digging in Egypt," p 26.

² Wilkinson, "Anc. Egyptians," Vol II., 302.

4. The dedication of the temple was an occasion of great solemnity and magnificence. In a special manner God showed his acceptance of the house built for the glory of his name. In Solomon's prayer there is recognized the fact that God is omnipresent. The burden of the prayer is that Jehovah would answer in mercy those who should call upon him wherever they might be, or in whatever circumstances, especially that he would show mercy to those repenting of their wickedness. The dedication took place in the seventh month, the most sacred of all the months. Most of the sacrifices offered at this time were peace-offerings, in which the flesh was not burned, but eaten by the priests and the offerers themselves. It was a joyous feast before Jehovah.

5. The management of Solomon's estate was most elaborately provided for. What was needed for the maintenance of his large retinue was secured by officers appointed for the purpose. The various divisions of the government were placed under competent men. The personal wealth of the king and the magnificence of the court became increasingly great. The commerce with other peoples, carried on by the direction of the king, or through his encouragement, was very extensive. The fame of Solomon became so great that the prayer of David for him was answered by the coming of many kings to do him homage, and bring to him tribute. The income of Israel during this period from sources outside of the country was enormous. The visit of the queen of Sheba indicates the fame of Solomon among outside potentates.

The chief characteristic of the reign of Solomon, aside from his work of building the temple, was the wealth and magnificence at this time. It must be admitted, however, that this was due more to what David had accomplished than to the superior qualities of Solomon as a ruler. Everything possible was furnished him as he began to rule.

6. Despite the fact that Solomon was most highly exalted by Jehovah, was given such a noble work to do, and had God appear to him twice to encourage and warn him, yet he most wickedly turned from Jehovah through the influence of his heathen wives, and established the worship of idols by the side of the worship of Jehovah. No other king of Israel presents such a marked contrast between a splendid beginning and a wretched end. Even if the temptations were strong, because of the idolatry around him and the desires of the wives he had taken, he had the teachings of his father and the influence of the righteous ones in his kingdom, and especially the memory of the solemn warning God had given to him, and his fall is inexcusable in the highest degree.

The view advanced by some that Solomon's course in this matter of idol worship indicates a spirit of liberality is utterly unwarranted and indefensible. It was his chief business to secure fidelity to Jehovah on the part of his people, and this was impossible if he gave them to understand that other gods might be worshiped in the land that was not to be polluted by idolatry. He need not have gone outside to punish idol worshipers, but he cannot be justified for sanctioning it himself.

7. In estimating the reign of Solomon we find : First, the nation enjoyed under him very great prosperity, wealth was abundant, income from other peoples was great, the defenses of the country were secure. Second, the nation was raised to a position of supremacy over the surrounding peoples, no enemy appeared to defeat Israel, the glory of the nation reached its highest point. Most of this was due, however, to the reign of David. Third, in religious respects the reign was a sad failure. The influence of the king was not simply neutral, it was positively bad. At no time does Solomon exhibit any deep religious convictions. In the writings ascribed to him there is nothing to compare with

the lofty sentiments and rich religious experience shown in the psalms of David.

As far as the historical books are concerned there is no hint that Solomon regained the favor of God before his death.¹ He passes from view under a cloud of condemnation. If we may suppose that the book of Ecclesiastes was written by him toward the close of his life, we would get from that evidence that he had seen the foolishness of his course. On the whole, it may be said that the tendency is to estimate Solomon too highly. If it had not been for the great work he was given to do he would be ranked far lower than he is.

SUMMARY.

1. David has Solomon made king; advises and encourages him. Punishment of offenders.
2. Wisdom given to Solomon.
3. Timber and stone for the temple. Skill in cutting stone; other building of Solomon.
4. The dedication of the temple.
5. Wealth and magnificence in Solomon's reign. His magnificence largely due to David.
6. Solomon's turning to idol worship inexcusable. Wrongly interpreted as liberality.
7. Estimate of his reign; internal condition of Israel; relation with outside nations; religious character of the king. Evidence of his change of living.

¹ Stanley, "Hist. Jew. Ch.," Vol. II., 280.

CHAPTER X

REVOLT OF THE NORTHERN TRIBES

1. From the events recorded as following the reign of Solomon, it appears that the people had been compelled to bear burdens that had become too oppressive; the exact character of these burdens is not stated, but we may assume that they resulted from the king's attempt to increase the magnificence of the court and the royal possessions. It is probable that the support of the numerous forms of idolatrous worship became an expense to the nation. Solomon seems to have lost sight of the fact that he was to govern the people for the glory of Jehovah, and soon sought to govern for his own glory.

The central feature of Solomon's reign was magnificence. The provisions made for the large number of his attendants, the extensive commerce with distant countries, the glory associated with the king's person, the tribute rendered by other kings, the tribute demanded from subject peoples, all contributed to this magnificence, and it should not be wondered at that Solomon came to think that these were for the gratification of his own royal desires. The large number of his wives and concubines was the result no doubt of this desire for pre-eminence.

2. Though the tribes of Israel had become united under one king in the reign of Saul, and more thoroughly united by the reign of David, and were willingly held in this unity by the reign of Solomon; yet the central government was not so strong as to destroy the natural feeling of separateness due to tribal and local organization and social development. The tribal spirit still existed, and was ready to

manifest itself if the occasion offered. If a division were to take place of course it would be on the lines indicated by selfish interests. Judah was, by location and by circumstances, largely isolated from the other tribes ; and of course if the pre-eminence of Judah became offensive to the rest they would quickly resent it by denouncing its supremacy, and appointing a king who would consider their interests.

3. In the division of the kingdom the wickedness of Solomon was seen to be displeasing to God ; but for the sake of the promises made to David his descendants were not to be cut off altogether from the throne. Through the kings of David's line was to come the great King. The occasion for such a division was furnished by the foolish refusal of Rehoboam to lighten the burdens of the people as they demanded. Jeroboam had already been selected through the prophet to be king of the seceding tribes. He was thus favored on condition that he would be faithful to Israel's God. Rehoboam's attempt to bring the northern tribes into subjection again to his authority failed.

4. In comparing the situations of the two kingdoms at the time of the revolt of the northern tribes, it will clearly appear that Judah possessed certain advantages over Israel. In religious matters, it had the advantage of the divinely appointed place of worship, the temple, with its whole system of worship intended to aid in keeping the people faithful to Jehovah ; it had the priesthood, not simply to officiate in their worship, but also to instruct them in the requirements of Jehovah ; it had the sons of David as kings, heirs of special promises made by God. In material respects, it had the advantage of being so situated as to be almost inaccessible to any invading enemy ; its territory could be easily defended. Its soil was not so fertile as much of that of Israel, but would support its people. It had the disadvantage of being smaller than Israel, and presumably less powerful in

case of a conflict ; but, except with Israel itself, it was not directly exposed to conflict with outside powers.

5. The kingdom of Israel possessed the advantage arising from having the greater number of tribes ; it could muster more men for self-defense ; it had a territory much of which was exceedingly fertile ; it could carry on commerce with other people with greater ease than Judah could ; but it was for these very reasons exposed to greater dangers than Judah was ; its greater power made it an object of attack by the surrounding powers ; its rich territory offered inducements for invasion by plundering hordes from the east ; its easy accessibility exposed it to the conquest of powers marching against other enemies. Very much of its history was the result of the fact that it lay on the road between the great powers of Egypt on the one hand, and Assyria on the other. In religious matters, it would not only be affected by the absence of the temple and the priesthood, but especially exposed to the influence of the idolatrous people with whom they had such easy means of communication. The worship of the gods of the heathen soon became established in Israel.

SUMMARY.

1. Burdens resulting from Solomon's reign ; his magnificent court and idolatrous worship ; his seeking for personal glory.
2. The relations of the tribes that made division possible.
3. The division purposed of God occasioned by the foolish course of Rehoboam.
4. The advantages and disadvantages of Judah in religious and material respects.
5. The advantages and disadvantages of Israel in these respects.

CHAPTER XI

CHIEF KINGS OF ISRAEL

1. In our books of Kings the accounts of both kingdoms are carried along together. Some advantages may be gained by considering the two lines of kings separately. In Israel the kings were not all from one family as in Judah, but from several, the succession being determined in many instances by the accession to the throne of the murderer of the reigning monarch. There were three dynasties of most importance: that of Jeroboam I., that of Omri, and that of Jehu. These were not of equal duration, nor of equal importance, and there were some kings of considerable influence not of either dynasty. The history of these kings is but the history of the decline of Israel; its persistent course of wickedness that led to its removal from the land.

The chronology of this period is in some parts difficult to determine, the numbers given being at times conflicting, and at variance with data derived from outside sources, which are claimed to be reliable. It is not surprising that in the many numbers given, especially in the cross references from the one kingdom to the other, there should have errors crept into our text. Such errors, of course, do not make unreliable the facts presented.

2. The reign of Jeroboam I. was important not simply because he was the first king of Israel, but because of the policy he adopted to strengthen his kingdom against the possibility of its submitting again to the kings of Judah. He encouraged the spirit of independence and sought to offer to his people all the advantages they might obtain by a union

with the southern kingdom. They would especially feel the loss of a central place of worship recognized as the one where Jehovah had shown his presence, and in order to supply this want another place of worship with its feasts and priesthood was established. Jeroboam did not do this because he was anxious to have his people serve Jehovah, but because he was afraid he would lose his kingdom.

3. Because of Jeroboam's sin he was told that his family would not be established on the throne. His son reigned a short time and then was killed by Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar. The latter became king, and his reign is characterized especially by the warfare carried on with Judah. At this time Syria began to exert an influence in the affairs of Israel, having been requested to make an alliance with Judah against Israel. Baasha's son reigned a short time, was killed by Zimri, who committed suicide after a reign of seven days, and was succeeded by Omri, founder of one of the most powerful dynasties of Israel. He was probably of the tribe of Ephraim. Omri purchased the hill of Samaria and made it the capital of the northern kingdom. His reign was not a long one, but it must have been of considerable importance, for on the Assyrian monuments the country of Israel is referred to as "The house of Omri."

4. The son of Omri, Ahab, was on the whole the most influential king that Israel had. No other did so much to bring about the destruction of the nation as a punishment for its sins. By his alliance with Phœnicia through his marriage to Jezebel the way was opened for the introduction of Baal worship as the national religion. Ahab was at war with Syria most of his time. For the first time since the separation of the tribes a partial alliance was made with Judah. Jehoshaphat aided Ahab against the Syrians, and his son married the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. It was during the reign of Ahab that the prophet Elijah was en-

gaged in his mission to turn back the hearts of the people to Jehovah. The tendency of the king to override the rights of the people is shown in Ahab's reign when he took the vineyard of Naboth. The two sons of Ahab who succeeded him continued in their father's footsteps. Elisha's miracles of mercy did not lead the people to repentance. Conflicts with varying success were kept up with Syria.

5. The punishment that had been threatened against Ahab and all his house was inflicted by Jehu. The latter had been a valiant warrior and made at least a vigorous king. He zealously destroyed all of Ahab's family who could be found, showed that the worship of Baal was not to be tolerated, and yet continued in the sin of Jeroboam in worshipping the calves of Bethel. The power of Assyria was beginning to be felt in Israel at this time. One of its greatest kings subdued Samaria, then marched to the sea-coast where he received tribute from Jehu, king of Israel. Four kings succeeded Jehu before his dynasty was displaced. The reign of Joash was of some importance, the king of Judah being defeated by him in battle.

6. Jeroboam II. was the best king of the line of Jehu, and perhaps the best of all the kings who reigned over Israel. He seems to have been favored by the fact that Assyria at the time of his reign was not so able to cope with all her enemies, thus giving an opportunity to Israel to somewhat extend her dominions beyond the limits to which they had been restricted by the encroachments of her enemies. But Israel had become too thoroughly corrupt to be saved from overthrow. It had given up that reliance upon Jehovah that might have been a barrier against any enemy. The Assyrian power would soon sweep over the land of Israel and fulfill the threats made long before. The reign of Jeroboam's son, who was on the throne but a few months, brought the dynasty of Jehu to an end.

7. There were three other kings of Israel worth mentioning—Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea. The chief interest in these men arises from the relation existing between Israel and the outside powers while they were kings. Menahem was compelled to pay a heavy tribute to Pul, king of Assyria, who is identified with Tiglath-pileser, mentioned a little later. Pekah, who had conspired against the son of Menahem, killed him, and ascended the throne in his place, made an alliance with Damascus against Judah, now ruled by Ahaz, but the latter sought help from the king of Assyria, and Pekah was defeated and soon after slain by Hoshea, probably with the approval of Tiglath-pileser.¹ Israel at this time was scarcely more than a province subject to Assyria, and Hoshea would have been wise if he had remained submissive to Shalmaneser IV., who had succeeded to the throne of Assyria, but he refused to pay tribute, and sent to the king of Egypt for help against their common enemy. Tolerance could no longer be shown to the rebellious Israelites, and they were deported according to a custom long practised by the Assyrians. Samaria was finally taken by Sargon, who had succeeded Shalmaneser, 721 B. C.

SUMMARY.

1. The succession of dynasties in Israel; most important of these. Difficulties in the chronology.
2. The reign of Jeroboam; the policy he adopted.
3. The reign of Baasha and Omri; the latter the founder of Samaria.
4. Importance of the reign of Ahab; his relations with Judah; his wickedness.
5. The reign of Jehu; his zeal and faults.
6. The superior reign of Jeroboam II.; he strengthens the kingdom.
7. Reigns of Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea; their subjection to Assyria, and the fall of the northern kingdom.

¹ See Isa. 7 : 1, 2.

CHAPTER XII

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF ISRAEL

1. For the purpose of keeping his people from returning to their allegiance to the house of Judah, Jeroboam I. provided them a form of worship at Bethel and Dan. Golden calves were made. It is probable that this was not intended as a total forsaking of Jêhovah, but rather that Jehovah might be worshiped by the image of a calf. Whatever the intention was, it was a sin against Jehovah, and Jeroboam is ever after mentioned as the king who made Israel to sin. The view that this act was a protest against the idolatry of Solomon and his son, that it was in the line of reform in religious matters, cannot be substantiated by the narrative. The Levitical priests were deposed, and others from any source appointed; the time of the feasts was changed. All connection with the other kingdom was severed. Individuals no doubt in the northern kingdom remained faithful to Jehovah, but as a people they never gave up the sin established by Jeroboam.

2. The worship of Baal had been practised among the Israelites from an early time, but it was made to take the place of the worship of Jehovah as the national religion by Ahab. Phœnicia was the chief center of this form of idolatry. It was exceedingly debasing in character, being accompanied with immoral practices. The Israelites had been in close contact with the Phœnicians from the days of David. Ahab's marriage with the daughter of Tyre's king, one of the wickedest women described in history, made it all the more easy for this form of idolatry to invade Israel.¹

¹ "Story of Phœnicia," Rawlinson, ch. 7.

Jehu made Baal worship less prevalent, although it was not altogether given up by the Israelites. His work of reform did not, however, bring the people back to complete fidelity to Jehovah; they still persisted in violating God's commands at the shrine of Bethel.

3. Most of the prophets who wrote belonged to the kingdom of Judah. The so-called schools of the prophets flourished especially in the kingdom of Israel. Prominent in these were Elijah and Elisha. The mission of these two prophets was to turn the Israelites back to fidelity to Jehovah. Elijah protested against accepting Baal as the God of Israel. Punishment was sent because they had forsaken Jehovah, and the contest on Carmel was to convince the Israelites that Baal was not God. Elijah was the prophet of warning, condemnation, threat. Elisha was to induce the people to turn to Jehovah on the ground that he was merciful and would heal their sinfulness. Almost all the miracles performed through Elisha presented the thought of mercy, healing, restoration. The people of Israel, through their ruler, at times acknowledged their obligation to Jehovah, yet persisted in their sin.

4. Two of the most important of the minor prophets belonged to the kingdom of Israel, Amos and Hosea. Both of these prophets give us an exceedingly dark picture of the religious condition of Israel in their times. The people had given themselves up to luxury, oppression, idolatry, and vice generally. Amos assured them that the day of Jehovah, which they were looking for, would not be a day of help as they expected, but a day of punishment; that they would not be spared because they were the people of Jehovah, but would be all the more severely punished. Hosea endeavored to lead them to obedience because of God's great love. *

Micah and Isaiah, prophets of Judah, also prophesied

against Israel, and help us to understand the religious condition of the people in their times. In most cases at least the language used need not be interpreted as figurative, but we may suppose that when the prophet accuses them of murder or drunkenness he means just these sins. The mission of Jonah to Nineveh was not so much to convert the Ninevites as it was to show the Israelites themselves that Jehovah was ready to forgive the penitent.

5. In accounting for the great wickedness of Israel, especially the sin of idolatry, it must be remembered that they were surrounded by peoples that universally practised idolatry; and the more they carried on intercourse with these the more they were exposed to the danger of contamination. Human sacrifices were offered by some of these nations; the heavenly bodies were worshiped; the doctrine of many gods prevailed. The worship of all these was debasing and demoralizing in the extreme.

SUMMARY.

1. The sin of Jeroboam; not intended as a reform.
2. Baal worship established by Ahab, introduced from Phoenicia. The extent of Jehu's reform; Baal worship no longer national.
3. Schools of prophets; the work of Elijah and Elisha; the relation between these two.
4. Israel's condition shown by Amos and Hosea; the special message of each. Information also given by Micah and Isaiah.
5. Examples of idolatry around the Israelites; the practices and beliefs of these nations.

CHAPTER XIII

ISRAEL'S RELATION TO OTHER PEOPLES

1. After the division the northern kingdom did not come in contact with Egypt to an extent equal to that of Judah. Shishak invaded Judah while Rehoboam was king, and he recorded on his monuments the fact that he invaded Israel also. The last king of Israel attempted an alliance with Egypt against Assyria. The Philistines do not seem to have interfered much with Israel during its separate history. At one time the army of Israel besieged a city held by the Philistines. The Moabites were subject to Israel until they rebelled in the days of Jehoram, son of Ahab, and the latter failed in his attempt to subdue them. On the Moabite stone, now in the British Museum, Mēsha, king of Moab, records his defeat of Israel at this time.

2. Phœnicia, on the northwest of Israel, was famous for its extensive commercial relations with all countries. Of its two chief cities, Tyre was easily defended from attack. It was the market for all kinds of commodities, from cloth to gold, and from fish to captive slaves. Its effect upon Israel was due to the peaceful relations existing between the two countries, rather than to open hostility. A good description of Tyre's important position is given by Ezekiel (ch. 26-28). Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city for thirteen years, but in vain. It was, however, conquered by Alexander.¹

3. To the northeast of Israel was Syria, or, using the Hebrew name, Aramea. Its capital was Damascus. The extent of its territory is not easy to determine. The Syrians

¹ "Story of Phœnicia," Rawlinson.

were conquered by David, but were independent in the early days of the divided monarchy. When Asa, of Judah, was threatened by Israel he sent for help to Syria. There was war much of the time between Syria and Israel, with varying success. Ahab was assisted in his conflict with the Syrians by Jehoshaphat. The covenant that he had made with Ben-hadad before this time may be accounted for by the fact that both Israel and Syria were threatened by the advance of the king of Assyria. This king, Shalmaneser II., made four campaigns against Syria and other neighboring countries. During the last, Jehu submitted to his demands and paid him tribute. Afterward Hazael, king of Syria, renewed hostilities against Israel, probably because of the attitude of the latter toward this powerful enemy. About twelve years before Samaria fell, Syria was overthrown by Tiglath-pileser, to whom Ahaz had sent for help against Syria and Israel, who had united to conquer Judah. Thus Syria ceased to be a source of danger to Israel, but it also ceased to be a barrier against invasion by Assyria, a far greater danger.

4. Assyria was the country most important to Israel during its entire history. It lay in the upper part of Mesopotamia. It was powerful before the Israelites left Egypt. It had had some mighty kings, famous for their cruelty, before it came in contact with Israel. This contact took place first in the days of Shalmaneser II., who reigned, according to the dates of the Assyrian monuments, 860-824 B. C. Ahab led two thousand chariots and ten thousand men to join the forces of other nations in opposing an invasion by this king. Twelve years later, 842, Jehu paid tribute to him. The record of this is on the "black obelisk" found by Layard. After this the power of Assyria waned, but was restored by Tiglath-pileser II., 745-727. This king not only conquered and plundered, but sought to unite conquered

countries to Assyria. About one-fourth of the conquered peoples were deported to Assyria that they might become Assyrians. He received tribute from Menahem, king of Israel. In the account given of him in the Bible he is called Pul. He subdued Syria and Israel at the time that Ahaz sent to him for help. He carried many captive Israelites away with him at this time. At his instigation Pekah was slain, and Hoshea ascended the throne of Israel. His son, Shalmaneser IV., 727-722, B. C., received tribute from Hoshea, and when he rebelled he was put in prison. He laid siege to Samaria for three years, but just before the city fell he was succeeded by Sargon, who carried the Israelites into captivity.

The Israelites were removed to the cities of Assyria according to the regular custom of the kings of Assyria. There they no doubt were soon assimilated to the Assyrians, with whom the captives usually intermarried. The Israelites had nothing to tend to keep them isolated from those among whom they dwelt. They were idolatrous in religion, and did not care enough about Jehovah to obey him in those things that would have kept them distinct. Any attempt to identify the Israelites with some modern people of course is vain.

SUMMARY.

1. The relation of Israel with Egypt, Philistia, and Moab.
2. The influence of Phœnicia upon Israel; the power of Tyre.
3. Syria: its conflicts with Israel; its overthrow by Assyria.
4. Assyria: its importance; powerful kings; takes tribute from Israel; carried away captives; overthrew the kingdom of Israel. The reasons why the Israelites were easily lost as a separate people.

CHAPTER XIV

CHIEF KINGS OF JUDAH

1. All the kings of Judah were of the line of David. The line was nearly broken in the days of Athaliah, only one escaping her destruction. While all the kings of Israel were wicked, following the example of Jeroboam, some of the kings of Judah are commended for imitating David. Owing to its being less exposed to invasion, and to its greater fidelity to Jehovah, the kingdom of Judah lasted one hundred and thirty-five years longer than that of Israel. Its kings were hampered from the beginning by the idolatry introduced by Solomon, and that they did not depart altogether from Jehovah is due largely to the influence of the temple with its worship, and to the fidelity of the prophets.

The main charges brought against the kings of Judah are idolatry and seeking help from outside powers. This latter policy was adopted by Asa, who sent to Syria for help; by Ahaz, who relied upon Assyria; and seemingly by Hezekiah, who appears to have contemplated an alliance with Babylon.

2. The books of Kings are devoted especially to the events of Israel, in order to show why God punished them. Accounts of the kings of Judah are given more fully in the books of Chronicles. Rehoboam foolishly refused the request of the Israelites to lighten their burdens; was prevented from subduing the rebellious tribes by arms; is said to have followed David for a few years, and then turned from Jehovah; was punished by an invasion from Egypt, Shishak taking his fenced cities and receiving large booty from the riches of the temple and the royal palace. Vari-

ous forms of idolatry were encouraged by Rehoboam. His son Abijah conquered Jeroboam.

3. Asa was a good king, but had some faults. He strengthened the cities of Judah; fortified her defenses; completely defeated the Egyptian forces; was commended by the prophet for his reliance upon Jehovah; carried out additional religious reforms, even deposing the queen mother because she had set up an image for the worship of Ashera; and led the people in making a covenant to serve Jehovah.

4. Jehoshaphat was one of the most important kings of Judah. Ahab had been on the throne in Israel four years when Jehoshaphat became king. At first he opposed the power of Israel, but afterward made an alliance with Ahab; his son married Ahab's daughter, and he aided the Israelites against Syria. This alliance proved only an evil. Jehoshaphat made Judah strong. His attempt to establish a line of commercial ships proved a failure.

5. Jehoshaphat designated his son Jehoram as his successor. When he was established as king he killed all his brothers, possibly being induced to do so by his wife, Jezebel's daughter. He was a wicked king, and was punished by rebellions and invasions. His son Ahaziah became king; he was slain by Jehu, and then his mother, Athaliah, killed all that belonged to the royal family, except the child Joash, who was proclaimed king when seven years old. He ruled well as long as he was aided by the high priest Jehoiada. His reign is especially noteworthy for his repairing the temple.

6. The reign of Amaziah was marked by an important victory over the Edomites, who had thrown off the yoke of Judah in the reign of Jehoram. Elated by this victory Amaziah sought a battle with Joash, of Israel, but met a severe defeat. Subsequently he fled from conspirators against his power, but was overtaken at Lachish and slain,

His son, Uzziah, or Azariah, as his name is also given, was one of the best and most successful kings of Judah. But when he became so strong his heart was lifted up, and attempting to offer incense, he was smitten with leprosy.

7. The next king, Jotham, increased the internal defenses of Judah and made the Ammonites tributary. The reign of his son Ahaz marks a crisis in the history of Judah. Ahaz was the most wicked king of Judah. He encouraged various forms of idolatry, and especially refused to trust in Jehovah for help when offered it by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 7 : 4). The consequences of his reign did not cease till Judah was carried away captive.

Says Delitzsch : " In this hour, in which Isaiah stands before Ahaz, the fate of the Jewish people is decided for more than two thousand years." Facts about the reign of Ahaz are given in Kings and Chronicles and in the prophecies of Isaiah. References to him are found on the Assyrian monuments.

8. Hezekiah was probably the best king Judah had after the division. He did all in his power to counteract the evils of his father. The temple was cleansed ; the worship resumed ; the feasts observed ; the sacrifices offered ; the priests and Levites supported. He destroyed the implements of idol worship. He corrected the tendency to worship Jehovah at the high places. During his reign Judah was threatened by the Assyrians. Sennacherib took forty-six cities of Judah, and Hezekiah paid to him a large tribute, but afterward, when he demanded the surrender of Jerusalem, Hezekiah refused to submit, relying upon Jehovah for defense. A large part of the army of Sennacherib was suddenly destroyed, and the mighty king returned to Assyria.

9. Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh, an exceedingly wicked king. With twenty other kings he took

gifts to Nineveh to Esarhaddon. He was afterward taken captive and held at Babylon, either by this king or by his son, Assur-banipal, king of Assyria. He was allowed to return to Judah, however. His reign is given as the longest of any of Judah's kings.

There is a tradition that Isaiah was killed by Manasseh. He resorted to all kinds of idolatrous practices. The statement that he was taken to Babylon was formerly regarded as a mistake, since the Assyrians were still in power while he was king, and their capital was Nineveh, not Babylon ; but it is now known that Esarhaddon at least held his court at Babylon at times.

10. Josiah was another excellent king. He instituted many religious reforms ; repaired the temple ; observed the Passover ; destroyed idol worship ; and restricted the worship of Jehovah to the one sanctuary at Jerusalem. An important event in his reign was the discovery of the copy of the law while they were cleansing the temple. The loss of this is not so difficult to understand when we remember the long and wicked reign of Manasseh, who seems to have done all in his power to remove every vestige of the worship of Jehovah. For some reason Josiah attempted to oppose Necho, of Egypt, as he was going against Assyria, and was slain at Megiddo. He was highly esteemed and mourned by the people.

11. After the death of Josiah, Judah was no longer independent. Necho placed Jehoiakim on the throne, but Judah was soon conquered by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and was thereafter subject to that power. During his reign and that of his successor, Jehoiachin, invasions of the Babylonians occurred, resulting in the deportation of some of the people, and in the case of the latter, that of the king himself. His brother, Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, foolishly attempted to throw off the supremacy of Babylon,

but he only brought upon himself swift destruction. Because of repeated rebellions against the Babylonian authority, Nebuchadnezzar took captive all the remaining Jews of any importance, destroyed Jerusalem, and thus fulfilled the threat made centuries before by Moses (Lev. 26 : 33 ; Deut. 28 : 64).

With the first captives carried to Babylon was Daniel. With the next lot of captives was Ezekiel. A few Jews were left at Jerusalem, and a governor was placed over them ; but the latter was killed and the rest went down to Egypt. Judah was not colonized as Samaria was. The land seems to have been practically deserted till the return of the Jews.

SUMMARY.

1. The line of kings in Judah. The duration of the kingdom ; the general character of the kings.
2. The reign of Rehoboam ; the invasion of Shishak.
3. Asa's good reign ; religious reforms ; victory over the Ethiopians.
4. Reign of Jehoshaphat ; a good king ; allied with Israel ; strengthens his kingdom.
5. Jehoram, wicked ; killed his brothers ; Ahaziah succeeds ; is killed *by Jehu ; Joash king after Athaliah is slain ; first part of reign good.
6. Amaziah's victory over the Edomites ; slain at Lachish ; Uzziah's reign successful ; Judah made powerful ; internal advancement ; assumes priestly functions and is punished.
7. Jotham, next king, successful ; his successor Ahaz wicked ; marks a crisis ; rejects Jehovah ; consequences of reign perpetuated.
8. Hezekiah's reforms ; tribute to Assyria ; Sennacherib's success and defeat.
9. Manasseh's wicked reign ; taken to Babylon ; his return.
10. Reign of Josiah good ; religious reforms ; temple repaired ; copy of Law found ; opposing Necho is slain.
11. Judah now dependent ; subject to Babylon ; Zedekiah's resistance and punishment ; Jews taken captive ; Jerusalem destroyed. Some noted captives.

CHAPTER XV

RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF JUDAH

1. As already shown, the circumstances of Judah secured greater fidelity to Jehovah than prevailed in Israel. But here too, idolatry was practised. Reproof for idolatry is in most instances occasioned by the deeds of the kings, yet it is likely that it was practised by the people irrespective of the kings' attitude toward it. The people were treated as a nation, and the king was the representative of the people. At times there must have been many faithful to Jehovah when the king had forsaken him.

Of course the king could not enforce idol worship, but his example and influence must have been very potent in determining the conduct of the people. The work of the prophets cannot be overlooked in estimating the religious condition of Judah. Private persons may have heeded their warnings when the king would not. The difference between the religious conduct of two consecutive kings is at times remarkable. The summary statement that one was a good king, or was an evil king, is to be taken in a relative sense, not all their acts having the same religious character, yet these expressions determine whether a king should be classed with David, or with the kings of Israel.

2. Solomon and Ahaz were most influential in securing the apostasy of Judah. The former made idol worship extensive, popular, and magnificent. However much some may have opposed it, the glory of Solomon's name must have had great weight in leading others to overlook its wickedness. Ahaz combined with the introduction of the worship of other peoples a willful refusal to trust in the

God of Judah, preferring rather to rely upon visible means of help. Manasseh was the incarnation of wickedness, but his influence over the people was probably not so great as that of Ahaz.

3. The kings most influential for good were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah. The first three tended to check the idolatry of the people; the last two aroused the people to see how greatly they had sinned. The most important of these was Hezekiah, whose reforms, while they did not withstand the wickedness of his son, made the success of Josiah possible. All of these kings did something toward destroying images; Jehoshaphat taught the Law; Hezekiah and Josiah observed the Passover and destroyed the high places.

The high places were at first places where the Canaanites had worshiped their gods. The Israelites came to use these for the worship of Jehovah, and easily fell into the practice of worshiping other gods there as well. They were not always on heights. The term came to be applied to any place of idolatrous worship, though it might be in a valley.

4. The forms of idolatry introduced among the people of Judah included the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth from Phœnicia, Chemosh from Moab, Moloch from Ammon, the gods of Damascus, and the heavenly bodies. The worship of Baal, together with that of Ashtoreth, was most common. The word "groves" so often mentioned, is better rendered the "Asherim," wooden images set up in the worship of the goddess of the Phœnicians.

5. The prophets most influential during the period from the division of the tribes till the exile of Judah were Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah. The career of Isaiah came especially in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah. He attempted to turn the former from his evil policy but failed, and he was

largely instrumental in securing Hezekiah's firm refusal to yield to the demands of Assyria. His prophecies condemned the wickedness of his people; threatened them with the punishments that would come upon them, and also held out the hope that afterward there would be a righteous remnant who would enjoy the favor of Jehovah. He no doubt aided the people to remain faithful to Jehovah at the time of deep darkness, assuring them that light would come. Micah prophesied at the same time, and presented about the same theme. The work of Jeremiah occurred about the time that the punishment was at hand. His great work was to interpret the evils coming upon the people as the fulfillment of what had long before been threatened.

Habakkuk and Zephaniah also prophesied during this period. They are concerned about the punishment that is to come through the Babylonians. There may have been prophets who sought to improve the religious condition of their people whose words have not been recorded for us. The time of the greatest activity of the prophets was at the time of deepest distress and darkness among the people. God did not leave them without a witness against their evil doings, nor withhold from them the encouragement arising from a brighter prospect in the future. It is difficult to imagine what would have been the religious condition of the people of Judah if there had been no prophet sent to them.

6. It seems that during almost all this period the temple service was maintained. There were times, however, when the temple was closed, this being true in the reign of Ahaz and of Manasseh. At other times it might as well have been closed, for the service was merely formal and mingled with idolatry. Athaliah attempted to establish the worship of Baal, as her mother had done in Israel, but the priests continued the worship of Jehovah to some extent. No doubt the service was often, perhaps for the most part, little more than a form, relied upon as having some virtue in it, and

regarded as a ground for securing the favor of Jehovah. Isaiah especially condemns this formal worship (Isa. 1 : 10-17).

The chief purpose of the elaborate system of worship appointed for the Israelites was to teach certain truths. God could be approached, but only after man had been reconciled to him. The sins of men were a barrier between themselves and God. There was but one way of access to God, and the one sanctuary with its single priesthood and its one system of sacrifices would make prominent this truth. It was for this that the formal worship of Jehovah was restricted to one place. It was not intended to teach that God was in the temple only, nor literally, but that he was their God, and was among them for defense and to secure holiness on their part. If they should worship Jehovah in many places it would obscure the doctrine of monotheism, that Jehovah was one and the only God, and it would make it more easy for them to fall into idolatry. Of course the sacrifices were also intended to aid the Israelites in worshiping Jehovah, but that was not the chief meaning of them. It is not true that these were appointed because the Israelites were in a state of religious childhood, and could not understand religious truths unless given in symbols. These symbols were intended for all time. They are to teach us as well as the Israelites.

SUMMARY.

1. Idolatry in Judah; the king representative of the people. Relation of king to people.
2. Solomon and Ahaz most influential for evil; chief policy of each.
3. Kings influential for good; work of these. Meaning of high places.
4. Forms of idolatry introduced into Judah.
5. Work of Isaiah and Micah, in the earlier period, and Jeremiah in the later. Purpose of each. Other prophets; when most active.
6. Continuance of Jehovah worship at the temple; formalism of this. Chief purpose of the Old Testament system of worship.

CHAPTER XVI

JUDAH'S RELATION TO OTHER PEOPLES

1. Though Judah was so isolated from other peoples, yet the fate of the kingdom was largely determined by conflicts with the surrounding nations. These conflicts were most frequent with the peoples lying just at hand, Philistines, Edomites, Moabites—though more fateful conflicts were had with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. The natural strength of Judah made it all the more important that the great powers—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon—should subdue it. They would be led to this so that it could do no harm to them, and each would seek to support it as a barrier against the ambitious designs of the others. The one or the other of these policies actuated each of these leading powers at various times. Judah would have escaped many of the blows she received had it not been that she was a considerable power lying between two greater powers.

2. The Philistines, occupying the country to the west of Judah, entered this region from the north coast of Egypt. They had five principal cities, ruled over by five lords. The population was numerous, the land being exceedingly fertile, and their cities could be defended against a siege almost indefinitely. David had subdued them, and they paid tribute to Solomon, but after the division of Israel they gave Judah some trouble. Some of the more powerful kings of Judah made them pay tribute. Philistia was invaded, and more or less completely conquered by five different Assyrian kings. Lying in the path along which the Assyrian and Egyptian armies marched in their campaigns against

each other, Philistia, far more than Judah, was exposed to the devastations of these irresistible powers. At some periods of such danger, alliances were made with Judah for common defense. This was true in the reign of Hezekiah when attacked by Sennacherib.

The Edomites were subdued by David and paid tribute to Solomon, but attempted afterward, at different times, to throw off the yoke of Judah, being in some instances successful. They revolted in the days of Jehoram; were defeated by Amaziah; showed their hostility in the days of Ahaz; rejoiced at the downfall of Jerusalem. Edom is especially condemned by Jeremiah and Obadiah. The Moabites and Ammonites were both hostile to Judah, though probably they did not exert a very great influence over its destinies. They fell under the condemnation of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos.

After the exile of Judah, the Edomites encroached upon the southern border of the land of Judah, and their own country was occupied by the Nabateans. In the time of the Maccabees, the Edomites were subdued and compelled to submit to the rite of circumcision, and practically lost their identity as a separate people. Herod the Great was an Idumean or Edomite by descent.

4. Solomon had married a daughter of one of the Pharaohs and thus renewed a relation between God's people and the nation that had held them in bondage. This Pharaoh was probably one of the twenty-first dynasty. Shishak, who invaded Judah in the days of Rehoboam, was a Libyan by birth, the first king of the twenty-second dynasty of Egyptian kings. While this dynasty was ruling, Ethiopia succeeded in becoming independent of the Egyptian power, and at length attacked Egypt, conquered the twenty petty sovereigns who were ruling throughout the land, permitted these to retain their dominions and established the twenty-third, an Ethi-

opian dynasty. One of the kings of this dynasty went against Asa at the head of one million men, but was defeated by him. The kings of this dynasty seem to have ruled Egypt from Ethiopia, doing little more than to keep it in subjection. After a temporary revolt against the Ethiopian power, the Egyptians were re-conquered by them and ruled by the Ethiopian kings of the twenty-fifth dynasty. It was to one of these—So of the Bible, Shabaka of the monuments—that Hoshea sent for help against the Assyrians. Another king of the same dynasty came out to aid the nations that had formed a league against the Assyrians over whom Sennacherib was now ruling. Judah belonged to this league. Sennacherib at first conquered Tirhakah and compelled Hezekiah to pay a heavy tribute, but the league was renewed and Sennacherib came again against Judah. In one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians perished, and Sennacherib returned home. The next Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, completely conquered Egypt, and his son, Assur-banipal, put an end to the Ethiopian supremacy therein. The next Egyptian dynasty was a native one. Its second king, Necho, went against the Assyrian power, now almost passed away, was met and completely defeated by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Josiah, of Judah, was slain as he attempted to check Necho's advance. The latter placed Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah. In his reign, and also in the reign of Zedekiah, attempts were made to release Judah from the Babylonian supremacy by seeking help from Egypt, but they were vain. After the fall of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar invaded and conquered Egypt. It was again conquered by the Persian, Cambyses, son of Cyrus. This was after the return of the Jews from exile.

5. Syria had been allied to Judah against Israel in the days of Asa, but in the days of Ahaz it was joined with

Israel against Judah. Rezin, king of Syria, invaded Judah and took a large number of captives. Once before this, in the days of Joash, while Hazael was on the throne of Syria, he carried away many captives and much plunder. It is supposed that Hazael attacked Israel and Judah at this time because Jehu, of Israel, had submitted to Shalmaneser, of Assyria, instead of remaining in league with Syria against their common enemy.

6. The Assyrians did not have so close relations with Judah as with Israel, yet Judah was invaded by them at different times. It is not certain that Sargon invaded Judah, but his successor Sennacherib did. While Manasseh was king of Judah, he was required to take gifts to Nineveh to Esarhaddon. During the reign of this Assyrian king and that of his son Assur-banipal, Judah was probably tributary to them. The pre-eminence of Assyria ceased with the reign of the last named king.

It is supposed by some that the statement that in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah Sennacherib came against Judah is incorrect, that it should read Sargon. It would be better to change the date. Sennacherib began to reign 705 B. C., and according to the ordinary chronology, Hezekiah began to reign 726, and his fourteenth year came before the death of Sargon. At the first attack of Sennacherib, Hezekiah submitted, but encouraged by promised help from Egypt, he determined upon independence.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the power and magnificence of the Assyrian armies. The warriors were bold and fierce, treating the conquered foe with great cruelty. The advance of one of Assyria's greater kings must have been terrifying to the countries threatened.

7. The power that at last determined the fate of Judah was Babylon. In its wider use this name applies to the country in the south of the Mesopotamian plain. There was conflict during much of the time between Assyria and

Babylon. Assyria, however, had been the stronger power for centuries, and had held Babylon in subjection. At the accession of Sargon to the Assyrian throne, Merodach-Baladan seized the throne of Babylon. A century was to pass, however, before Babylon should gain the ascendancy. Somewhere about this time an embassy came to Hezekiah from Babylon with letters and a present. It is probable that the real purpose was to make a treaty with Judah against Assyria. When Necho, of Egypt, in 608 B. C., made his campaign against Assyria as it neared its end, Nebuchadnezzar, son of the king of Babylon, met him and defeated him. Afterward Nebuchadnezzar as king made Judah tributary to Babylon, and when the local ruler of Judah, Zedekiah, sought to rebel against his authority, he finally removed the Jews from their land, and destroyed their city, 586 B. C.

SUMMARY.

1. Judah's situation making it important to other powers; to be subdued or made an ally.
2. Philistia, its situation and power; hostility to Judah, and alliances against Assyria.
3. Edomites revolt; subdued by Amaziah; Moabites and Ammonites. End of Edom.
4. Egypt and Solomon; invasion by Shishak; invasion by king of Ethiopian dynasty, his defeat by Asa; league with Judah against Assyria; conquered by Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal; Necho goes against Assyria, slays Josiah, is defeated by Nebuchadnezzar.
5. Syria an ally of Asa; invaded Judah under Hazael and Rezin.
6. Assyrians; invasion of Judah under Hezekiah; Manasseh tributary. Error in date of invasion by Sennacherib. Great power and magnificence of armies of Assyria.
7. Babylonian embassy to Hezekiah. Nebuchadnezzar's conquests; fall of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XVII

THE JEWS IN EXILE

1. Captivity was common in Old Testament times. It was the usual practice to carry away, not only the soldiers taken prisoners, but the women and children of a conquered people. The Assyrians especially thus removed a large part of those whom they subdued. Very often extreme cruelties were practised upon those captured. It would be difficult to imagine anything more intensely cruel than the treatment of the enemy by the Assyrians as shown on their monuments. The Babylonians were probably not much less severe. Long before the fall of Jerusalem, Israelites from the northern kingdom and men of Judah had been taken as captives. Frequently the prophets foretell a future when the captives of God's people should be restored. When Samaria had been taken by the Assyrians, other peoples were brought into the land of Israel to establish colonies in it. It was not so in the case of Judah. The land was left practically without inhabitants until the Jews returned.

The chief purpose of removing a people from their own land seems to have been in the case of the Assyrians to have them become by union with Assyrians assimilated to this people, so that they would no longer show hostility to the power of the conquering king. At times they were allowed to remain distinct in the place to which they were taken, but by changing their location they would no longer be a source of danger.

2. Though Babylon maintained its supremacy in Mesopotamia about sixty-five years only, it was a considerable power. The city itself was made magnificent by Nebuchad-

nezzar ; the country was defended by walls and canals ; provision was made so that the river bed could be laid bare, or a large part of the country about Babylon could be flooded in case of an invasion. Most of the building was of brick. The wall of the city of Babylon was high and broad, and within this were two others around the king's palaces. The learning of the Babylonians was extensive ; they were especially advanced in astronomical studies and in literature. This country had been peopled by the Accadians before the Shemites had predominated there, and this ancient people, though supplanted by their successors perhaps four thousand years before Christ, already had a most remarkable literature, which continued to be studied as a dead language by the help of grammars and lexicons by the Shemites. The extensive literature of Assyria was chiefly Babylonian. There is evidence of advanced commercial activities among the Babylonians at the time the Jews were there. It is claimed that banking was carried on by one firm to which all the financial business of the court was intrusted, and which perhaps consisted of Jews. It was among such a people that the Jews were taken.

3. There is but little definite information about the condition of the Jews while in captivity. While some of the leaders of those taken captive were probably kept as prisoners, or were persecuted by their captors, there is no evidence that the people generally were. Though at first compelled to stay there, when they had the opportunity to return to their own land many of them preferred to remain. Some of them had come to occupy positions of prominence, even positions of influence in the government. They were probably in colonies by themselves ; they could assemble to hear the words of the prophets. Their religious beliefs were not interfered with.

4. There were two prophets especially active among the

Jews in exile, Ezekiel and Daniel. The prophecies of Ezekiel, though delivered to the captives among whom he was living, and many of them before the final fall of Jerusalem, seem to have been intended not so much for his hearers as for the nation as a whole. His great work was to show them that they were to be punished by the destruction of their kingdom, and after the fall of Jerusalem to show that they were to be restored as a people to their own land. Thus he gives both warning and comfort. Daniel showed the Jews that their subjection to their enemies was to be but temporary; that the kingdom of God would yet prevail over all the world-powers that might oppose.

5. The religion of the Babylonians was polytheistic. They had many magnificent temples built for the worship of their gods. At first different gods had been worshiped at different places; afterward they were arranged in one system where some of them held higher rank than others. Images of these were placed in their temples, and a body of priests officiated at the sacrifices. The leaders in religious matters were divided into classes, skilled in soothsaying and in magic. The religious practices of the Babylonians were not so debasing as were those of the peoples surrounding Canaan, but their beliefs were far below the elevating ideas that had been taught to the Israelites.

6. Nebuchadnezzar was the most important king of Babylon; he reigned until 561 B. C. His son, Evil-Merodach, released Jehoiachin from prison when he became king, but reigned only about a year. The last Babylonian king was Nabonidus, who surrendered to Cyrus when he conquered Babylon, 538 B. C. Though Cyrus is usually called the Persian, he was an Elamite. He had conquered Media, then marched against Lydia and conquered Cræsus, and continued his victorious career until he entered Babylon, overcoming all opposition. Belshazzar, son of the king of

Babylon, was slain in defending the citadel. Cyrus seems to have been gladly welcomed by most of the inhabitants of Babylonia, and probably by none so gladly as by the Jews, who regarded him as their deliverer.

7. The events recorded in the book of Esther, though belonging to the period after the first return of the Jews from captivity, are useful in showing how the Jews were scattered throughout the various provinces of the Persian dominion ; how many there were that did not return to their own land ; and what an influence they were exerting among other peoples. The book is especially intended to show how God was caring for his people ; how his providence guarded them from destruction. The king Ahasuerus named is identified with Xerxes the Great. His character given in the biblical account is in harmony with what is known of him from other sources.

Objections are advanced by some against the historical trustworthiness of Esther, but there is not sufficient ground for rejecting it. There is no need of discrediting a book simply because it records remarkable dealings of God with his people. It may seem romantic ; so is very much besides that happened to the people of God at other times in their history.

8. The effect of the captivity upon the Jews can be traced to some extent in their subsequent conduct. They had not wandered so far from Jehovah as to be unable to understand the significance of the affliction that was sent upon them. They did not fall into the sin of idolatry again after the exile. They had come to see that the temple itself was not inviolable ; that their land could be given up to devastation by enemies ; that Jehovah would not tolerate wickedness among the Israelites because of the fact that they were his chosen people ; that sacrifices were useless unless they truly symbolized the thoughts of the offerer. It is uncertain

to what extent the religious ideas of the Jews were modified by their contact with the Babylonians and Persians. It is not very probable that they received any religious ideas of value from the Babylonians. The religion of the Persians was more exalted, and it is not impossible that ideas of immortality, of heaven, and of angelic beings held by these modified to some extent the thinking of the Jews, but the evidence is not clear.

It would seem to be the opinion of some that nearly all the principal doctrines held by the Jews that are of permanent worth were obtained by them from other peoples with whom they came in contact. Of course there can be no possible objection to the view that others besides the Israelites possessed some truths, but there is no necessity for supposing that the Israelites had to go to these peoples to get the truth. The fact that certain doctrines are held more clearly by the Jews in their later history does not prove that they had to wait to receive them from other nations.¹

SUMMARY.

1. Captivity common; Assyrian cruelty; no others brought into Judah. Purpose of removing conquered peoples.
2. The Babylonian power; literature of the Accadians; banking.
3. Condition of the Jews in exile; little persecution; some of them prominent; living by themselves.
4. Two prophets, Ezekiel and Daniel; special work of each.
5. Religious beliefs and practices of the Babylonians; polytheistic and idolatrous; not so debased as Canaanites.
6. Conquest of Babylon by Cyrus; Nabonidus king; Belshazzar, his son, killed.
7. Book of Esther of interest; Jews widely dispersed; Xerxes king; God's providence taught. Objections to the book not valid.
8. Effect of captivity upon the Jews; not again idolatrous; better estimation of temple and sacrifices; Babylonian and Persian views perhaps not of much effect. Jews did not have to get their religious views from other peoples.

¹ See "Bampton Lectures," 1889.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE JEWS AFTER THE EXILE

1. It had been foretold by Jeremiah that the Jews would be allowed to return from captivity after a period of seventy years (Jer. 25 : 12). Isaiah had named Cyrus as the deliverer (Isa. 44 : 28). It is not improbable that he was induced to make his decree permitting them to return through the influence of the prophet Daniel, and it may well be that he was informed of Isaiah's prophecy. It was not only a good policy to so treat the peoples whom he conquered as to gain their good will, but there would be an advantage in having a friendly people on the frontier of his dominions. So the Jews were permitted to settle again in their own land.

The seventy years mentioned in the prophecy of Jeremiah is better understood as a round number, and not an exact one, just as in other instances seventy is named where we must suppose it used as a general number, perhaps equivalent to a generation.¹

The chief purpose in the return of the Jews as mentioned in the edict of Cyrus was to rebuild the temple. They were not to be an independent people, but were to be subject to the Persian power. They were given all needed help to accomplish this religious work.

2. Those who returned to Jerusalem according to the edict of Cyrus were evidently prompted by their feelings of fidelity to Jehovah. Some may have gone because of the hope of material gain, but the record is that those who were prompted to build the house of Jehovah went. It would not be just to conclude that all who remained were indifferent to the

¹ Cf. Isa. 23 : 15.

cause of Jehovah ; for afterward there were some anxious about the honor of Jehovah who were still in Babylon. It is not possible to determine what proportion of the Jews remained away from their own land, but it is probable that many did. Their leader was Zerubbabel—called also Sheshbazzar. Some members of the northern tribes returned with the Jews, but not as tribes.

There is some difficulty in the genealogy of Zerubbabel. He was probably the descendant of David, but not the descendant of Solomon. He is named the son of Shealtiel because he succeeded him as the head of the royal line. No descendant of David was actual king of Judah after the exile. Zerubbabel was governor but not king.

3. Cedar for the temple was obtained from the Lebanon range as it had been in the days of Solomon. This was according to the grant of Cyrus. The altar was built and sacrifices offered before the temple was begun. When the foundations were laid there was great rejoicing among the Jews, but some mourned as they remembered the splendor of the temple that had been destroyed. Jeshua, or Joshua, was associated with Zerubbabel in this work of building. Soon after the work was begun those dwelling in Samaria asked to be allowed to share in it on the ground that they were worshipers of the same God. They were refused, and then showed continued hostility to the Jews.

The Samaritans were a mixed race. It is probable that some Israelites remained in the land when Samaria was taken by Sargon. Afterward there were colonies brought from the East and placed in Samaria. These were idolatrous, though it is said they feared Jehovah, while at the same time they worshiped idols. The hatred between the Jews and Samaritans originated at this time. It is not improbable that among the enemies of the Jews at this period were

¹ Cf. Ezra 3 : 2 ; Matt. 1 : 12 and 1 Chron 3 : 19.

some who had taken possession of the land belonging to Judah, and who consequently would not wish to see the Jews restored to their former power.

4. Cyrus died 529 B. C. After the decree authorizing the return of the Jews, he seems to have been engaged in establishing his widely extended power. His son Cambyses succeeded him, and was engaged most of his reign, 529-522, with his campaign in Egypt. He is regarded as identical with the Ahasuerus, mentioned in Ezra 4 : 6. He was succeeded by Gomates, who pretended that he was Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, whom Cambyses had secretly murdered. He is regarded as identical with the Artaxerxes mentioned in Ezra 4 : 7. It is probable that he assumed the latter title when he usurped the throne. He ruled but a short time, and was succeeded by Darius, son of Hystaspes, whose reign continued from 521 until 486 B. C. He was a mighty and just ruler. He extended the dominion of the Persian power far beyond what had been gained by Cyrus. This is the Darius who was defeated by the Greeks at Marathon. The appeals of the enemies of the Jews to Smerdis (Artaxerxes) resulted in a decree from that ruler forbidding the work of rebuilding to continue. How much it had been hindered before this time it is not easy to determine. It is possible that it might have been pushed with more zeal than was actually shown ; for the Jews are condemned for giving more attention to their own houses than to the temple of Jehovah.

5. The two prophets Haggai and Zechariah were influential in getting the Jews to resume the work on the temple. The exact dates of the prophecies of Haggai are given, and we can see how soon the people responded to his exhortations. The Jews had not only become discouraged because of the opposition of their enemies, but they began to lose faith in the fulfillment of those promises made by the earlier prophets. They did not appreciate the fact that God's bless-

ing had been withheld from them because of their neglect of his worship. The success of the new undertaking was assured because Darius repeated the decree of Cyrus when appealed to by the enemies of the Jews, and commanded the earnest help of all concerned in the matter.

Both Artaxerxes and Darius rely upon documents found in the government archives to guide them in their decision about the Jews ; the one found that the city of Jerusalem had in former times rebelled against the authority of the power in Mesopotamia ; the other found the decree that Cyrus had made. These facts are of great interest in showing with what care government affairs were recorded. The archives of the Babylonians were not destroyed at the accession of the Persians.

6. The temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius, 515 B. C. About fifty-seven years after this Ezra went from Babylon to Jerusalem in order that he might secure the better observance of the Law among the Jews, he being especially familiar with its teachings. A large number of Jews went with him. He was given authority to appoint judges and magistrates who should see that the Law was enforced. It seems from his course after arriving at Jerusalem that he was not so much concerned with the observance of the ceremonial law of sacrifices, as with those regulations by which the Jews were to be distinguished as a separate people. It is to be observed that the people recognized their obligation to obey the Law which Ezra urged upon them. It was not some unheard-of thing. They confess that they had transgressed.

The act of the people at this time in putting away their strange wives was a most significant one. It shows how thoroughly they had learned the lesson taught by the captivity. They recognize now more readily than in earlier times the necessity of strict obedience to what Jehovah required of them. From this time they held firmly to the

belief that they were to be a separate people, even going so far afterward in this view as to suppose that God was little concerned about any people but themselves.

The Artaxerxes who was ruling over the Persian kingdom at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, was Artaxerxes Longimanus, son of Xerxes the Great. The latter had succeeded his father, Darius, 486, and ruled until 465, when he in turn was succeeded by Artaxerxes. The latter reigned until 425 B. C. It may be that the Egyptian revolt from Persian supremacy in his reign led him to accede to the wishes of Ezra and Nehemiah, since a strong friendly power on his frontier would be serviceable to him.

7. Nehemiah received permission to go to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. His purpose in going was to build the walls of the city. It is claimed by some that these had been rebuilt after the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel, but there is no proof of this, and it seems that there had been no attempt, up to the visit of Nehemiah, to do anything more than to restore the religious institutions of Israel. The object of Nehemiah is rather the restoration of the political status of the people. He did not seek to make them independent of the Persian power, but to remove the disgrace of their weak condition in the eyes of those about them. It is worthy of note that Nehemiah, though a Jew, occupied a prominent position in the Persian court. He had permission to be absent from his office twelve years (Neh. 2 : 1, 6 ; 13 : 6). At the end of that time he returned, and after some time, perhaps some years, he again went to Jerusalem.

The weakness of the Jews is clearly shown in the difficulty they had in building the walls in the face of the opposition from their persistent enemies. The Jews at this time seem to have regarded it more desirable to live elsewhere than at Jerusalem. To offer to live there was a special favor.

8. Nehemiah found other things demanding his attention

besides the walls of the city. Abuses similar to those mentioned in the book of Ezra had appeared again, so that it was necessary to rebuke those who had intermarried with the heathen. The desecration of the Sabbath was likewise corrected by him. The lack of the people in supporting the priests and Levites was rebuked, and a covenant made to faithfully bring all the offerings demanded by the Law. Nehemiah shares with Ezra the honor of having checked the tendency of the Jews after their return to depart again from Jehovah. Had it not been for the work done by these two men it is difficult to say what might have been the fate of this chosen people.

9. According to a Jewish tradition Ezra did much toward the collection and preservation of the books of the Old Testament. These claims are not altogether trustworthy, yet it is quite likely that he was largely concerned with the arrangement of the books as we have them. It is quite evident that the Israelites had long before this time taken a deep interest in their sacred books. There is no reason for doubting that they had distinguished them from other writings from the first. The final isolation of these writings, and the formation of the Old Testament canon, took place soon after the days of Ezra, if indeed he did not himself accomplish this.

In addition to closing the canon of the Old Testament, the Jewish tradition asserts that Ezra reproduced all the writings of the Old Testament which had been destroyed by the captivity, and that he added the vowel points to the Hebrew language. There is no reason to suppose that any of the inspired writings were lost by the captivity; and it is certain that the vowels were not added to the Hebrew writing until after the sixth century A. D.

10. At the close of the period of the history of the Israelites covered by the historical books the chosen people are

subjects of the Persian power, having little strength to contend even against the smaller powers about them. Only comparatively few of them were dwelling on the land given them for an inheritance. The rest were scattered widely, very many living in the country of their captivity. Those in Judea at least had been led to be zealous for the Law. The influential order of scribes had arisen who were destined to have a marked control over the future of this people. The germs of the religious sects, afterward to play so important a part in the history of the Jews, had already begun to grow. The line of the prophets was ended. Four centuries were to pass before God would reveal himself more fully in Christ.

SUMMARY.

1. Decree of Cyrus permitting Jews to return. The seventy years a round number; chief object of return to build the temple.
2. Those returning prompted by zeal for Jehovah; number left; Zerubbabel's descent.
3. The temple begun; source of material; foundation laid; Samaritans' request refused. Who the Samaritans were. Hatred generated and confirmed.
4. Succession of Persian rulers; Cyrus; Cambyses; Gomates; Darius. Building hindered; lack of zeal.
5. Work of Haggai and Zechariah; causes of discouragement; Darius' favor. Persian documents.
6. Ezra goes to Jerusalem; his work; wrongs corrected. Separation from foreigners. Reign of Artaxerxes.
7. Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem; his chief work; his office. The weakness of the Jews.
8. Reforms by Nehemiah; intermarriage; Sabbath desecration; neglect of priests.
9. Traditions about Ezra; collection of the canon. Untrustworthy traditions.
10. Condition of people at close of Old Testament; politically; religiously.

APPENDIX A

LISTS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

| JUDAH | REIGNED | | ISRAEL | REIGNED |
|------------------------|-----------|--|-----------------------|-----------|
| Rehoboam | 17 years. | | Jeroboam..... | 22 years. |
| Abijah..... | 3 " | | Nadab | 2 " |
| Asa | 41 " | | Baasha..... | 24 " |
| Jehoshaphat..... | 25 " | | Elah | 2 " |
| Jehoram | 8 " | | Zimri | 7 days. |
| Ahaziah | 1 year. | | Omri | 12 years. |
| Athaliah (Queen) | 6 years. | | Ahab | 22 " |
| Joash | 40 " | | Ahaziah..... | 2 " |
| Amaziah | 29 " | | Jehoram | 12 " |
| Uzziah..... | 52 " | | Jehu..... | 28 " |
| Jotham | 16 " | | Jehoahaz... | 17 " |
| Ahaz | 16 " | | Joash or Jehoash..... | 16 " |
| Hezekiah | 29 " | | Jeroboam II..... | 41 " |
| Manasseh | 55 " | | Zachariah | 6 months. |
| Amon..... | 2 " | | Shallum | 1 month. |
| Josiah | 31 " | | Menahem | 10 years. |
| Jehcahaz..... | 3 months. | | Pekahiah | 2 " |
| Jehoiakim..... | 11 years. | | Pekah | 20 " |
| Jehoiachin..... | 3 months. | | Hoshea..... | 9 " |
| Zedekiah..... | 11 years. | | | |

APPENDIX B

WORKS THAT MAY BE CONSULTED

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| "Dictionary of the Bible," Smith. | Phœnicia. |
| "Cyclopædia," McClintock and Strong | The Jews. |
| "Encyclopædia," Schaff-Herzog. | Men of the Bible. |
| "Introduction to the Old Testament," | Samuel and Saul. |
| Kell. | David. |
| "Companion to the Bible," Barrows. | Solomon. |
| "History of Israel," Ewald. | Kings of Israel and Judah. |
| "History of the Jews," Milman. | Elijah. |
| "History of the Jewish Church," | Isaiah. |
| Stanley. | Jeremiah. |
| "Hours with the Bible," Geikie. | The Minor Prophets. |
| "Antiquities of the Jews," Josephus. | Daniel. |
| "Five Great Monarchies of the An- | Bypaths of Bible Knowledge. |
| cient World," Rawlinson. | Egypt and Syria. |
| "Ancient Egypt," Rawlinson. | Fresh Light from Ancient Monu- |
| "Ancient Egyptians," Wilkinson. | ments. |
| "History of Egypt," Wendel. | Babylon, Life and History. |
| "Ancient Egypt and Assyria," Mas- | Races of the Old Testament. |
| pero. | "Buried Cities and Bible Countries," |
| "Nineveh and Babylon," Layard. | St. Clair. |
| Story of the Nations. | "Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old |
| Chaldea. | Testament," Schrader. |
| Assyria. | "Bible and Modern Discoveries," |
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