

The Jew and Jerusalem Past and Future

BY ROBERT HARE

*Author of "The World's Crisis," "Hereafter," "The Beacon Light,"
"Marvels of Creation"*

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"Jerusalem which is above is free, and she is our mother"—Paul

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Preface

JUST now, when the historic kaleidoscope casts into view once more the possibilities of the Hebrew race, the reader will be interested in tracing some of the definite outlines in the biographic picture-history of earth's most remarkable people.

Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome have all passed by; the Alexanders, the Cæsars, and the Charlemagnes have levelled kingdoms, traced their blood-maps over the world and disappeared. National empires of Medieval years have changed or ceased to be,—but the Jew still lives!

With a history more distant than Babylon, and more enduring than Rome, the national seed of Abraham confronts the world to-day a living reality. Fire, sword, exile and spoliation have all proved ineffectual in the work of extirpation. Why is this? Whence comes that remarkable life-energy that animates the Hebrew people? And is there yet a future for the city over which their tears have fallen for ages past?

It is in answer to such questions that the Author has penned these pages.

Faith's Prayer



Unanswered yet, through all the years of waiting,
Till grief has dimmed each scene with sorrow's rain.
Unanswered, yet in holy expectation
Faith walks across life's furrowed field of pain.

Unanswered yet, though in the twilight pleading
The heart forgets the gleam of moon or star;
Yet, uttered face to face with the Eternal,
It must be answered thee, sometime, somewhere.

Unanswered yet, though grief in expectation
Lights the last hilltop on her distant way;
Yet, o'er the grave where hope lies deeply buried,
Faith, in its darkest midnight, kneels to pray.

Unanswered yet; Oh, holy revelation,
Sometime across the path of pain to fall;
Then in the glory of a cloudless dawning
Love's hand will measure to the heart its all.

The Chaldean Exile

CHAPTER ONE

AMONG ancient historic characters there is none that takes a higher place than "Abraham the Hebrew." To the Jewish people he is known as "Father Abraham." The Arabian descendants of Ishmael speak of him as "El-Khalil-Allah," the friend of God. By the Mohammedans he is placed first among their four great prophets—"Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Mohammed." While to the great Christian world he has been and still is, "Father of the faithful."

Born about 1996 B.C., almost two thousand years before the appearing of the Man of Calvary, Abraham, the man of Chaldea, rises out of the mists,—God's prototype of faith for all succeeding generations. The name of this man is found 300 times in the Bible, and he is pointed out as the one to whom Jehovah gave the promises of eternity.

In the Jewish Talmud numerous details of his life are supplied in addition to what we have in Scripture. Some of these are, no doubt, fanciful, while others again have all the semblance of truth. The first ten years of his life are said to have been

spent with his mother in a cave where he was hidden from the rage of Nimrod. He was afterward cast by this wicked king into a fiery furnace, but was preserved in the fire like the Hebrews in the furnace at Babylon. The book of Jasher narrates this circumstance, and also states that Terah, the father of Abraham, was an officer of high standing in the employ of Nimrod.

It was largely owing to this association with false worship and idolaters that God called Abraham away from his home and people. This, and the object of having his faith tested and perfected through trial, sent forth the "Chaldean exile" to pitch his tent in a strange country.

In the language of Abraham the name "Hebrew" signifies "one who had crossed over." According to genealogy he descended from Eber, or Heber, who settled his family in the land of Mesopotamia and crossed the Euphrates from west to east. Terah and his family afterward recrossed from east to west, and became citizens in Ur of the Chaldees. In the Septuagint translation of Gen. 14:13 he is called "*Abram tu perate*," Abram the crosser or passenger.

Abraham lived among idolaters, and even his father was a worshipper of idols. Joshua 24:2. An interesting recital is given in the Talmud of how Abraham destroyed idolatry in his father's home. Going into the room where the idols were worshipped, Abraham took an iron bar and destroyed them all but one large one, and then in its hands he placed the iron bar. On Terah demanding who had broken his idols, Abraham pointed

out the large idol with the iron bar as the guilty one. Terah told him that he spoke falsely, stating that his own hands had made the gods, and they could not move. Abraham then enquired why he should continue to serve senseless gods who could neither defend themselves nor those who worshipped them.

Not only had Abraham crossed the "flood," for he formerly dwelt on the other side of the Euphrates (Joshua 24:3), but he had also passed over from darkness to light, from unbelief to the life of faith, and from the worship of idols to the service of Jehovah. His faith left the world that "now is," and took hold of that which is to come. Between these two worlds he had made his choice of the unseen,—it was the Immortal Land.

An Arabian tradition, and also the Talmud, tells of Abraham coming from the cave where he had been hidden, and in his search after the true God adoring the sun. But with the coming night it disappeared. He then turned to the moon and offered it adoration, but it set and left only the stars in the heavens. To these he offered worship, but finally they grew dim, and in the dawning disappeared also. Then, disappointed, he turned to seek the God who had made them all. He grasped the revelation of the Unseen, and in that faith—a faith that obeyed without hesitation and followed without delay—he became "father of all them that believe."

Chaldea, ancient Babylonia, or the land of Shinar, lay to the east of Palestine. It was one of the first populated countries of the world, and

Babylon was its capital. The ruins of many cities and sun-temples have been discovered in that land, and in them the archæologists have found whole libraries written on sun-dried bricks. Thousands of these book-tiles have been discovered, and on them, in the strange romance of ancient mythology, men read to-day of the creation, the loss of Eden, the Sabbath, the deluge, and the Tower of Babel. It may be that Abraham had the opportunity of reading these strange and ancient books. Josephus speaks of him as being skilled in "arithmetic and the science of astronomy." Berossus also refers to him as a righteous man among the Chaldeans, "great and skilful in the celestial sciences."

The home of Abraham, "Ur of the Chaldees," was not far from Babylon. It lay in the world's garden-valley with the commerce, learning, and millions of the earth all around. There Abraham heard the mysterious call—"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee." Gen. 12:1. Then the finger of the Unseen pointed up the valley northward for five hundred miles to Haran, then down southward for seven hundred miles to Egypt, then back again to the plains of Beersheba in Palestine. There the Chaldean exile pitched his tent, the heir-prospective of a world, yet not owning a foot of its land; a stranger, moving hither and thither in the darkness at the bidding of the Voice, in his exile learning to obey.

Both prophetically, prospectively, and in the plan and promise of the Eternal, Abraham owned

the world, and yet he was content to be the "Hebrew"—a stranger and a pilgrim—"the crosser over." But the bridge upon which he walked touched two worlds. In this his only possession was a grave, which he had purchased from the sons of Heth. Gen. 23:4.

Among those who have walked the earth, no nobler distinction can be found than that given by Inspiration to this man—"The friend of God." He is also known as "Father of all them that believe."



Nearer to Thee

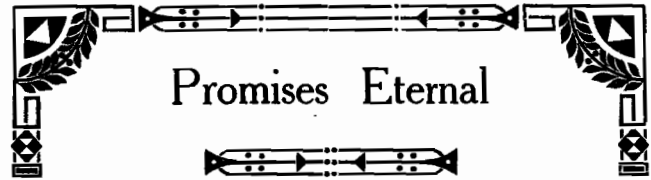
Nearer to Thee, my God,
Love prays to-night;
The cross that raiseth me
Grows still more bright;
It is Thy way, and best,
However dark the test,
It leadeth up to rest,
Where all is light!

Angels may hover near
The pilgrim lone;
Pillowed on downy bed,
Or on the stone;
What matters if His will
In me He may fulfil,
And lead me upward still,
To be His own!

Nearer to Thee, my God,
Though friendships die;
And earthly loves forget
Each cherished tie;
Still all my song would be
Of Christ who raiseth me,
Nearer my God to Thee,
Who rules on high!

Nearer still nearer Thee,
Earth's prospects fade,
Its fairest blossoms die
In winter shade;
Tinselled with dust of gold,
The treasures it would hold,
Pass with the rust and mould,
That time has made!

Nearer, then, evermore,
O, heart of mine!
Through dawn or gloaming shade
This hope shall shine,—
Suns may go down in night,
Moons lose their silver light,
His promise still is bright
With love divine!



CHAPTER TWO

WITH eyes fixed on the promise of the Eternal, Abraham left his country and his father's house to sojourn as a stranger in a strange land. Everything around was changing, transitory, and uncertain. On one thing alone could he depend—the pledge of destiny given by Jehovah in the promise that he should be “heir of the world.”

Abraham believed God as no other man had ever done, and he went forth a pilgrim of the tent, to build his altar where the evening found him, in a land for which he could hold no title-deed except the pledge of the Unseen. But when twenty-five years had passed, and no apparent evidence concerning the inheritance or the promised seed appeared, his faith asked for a further demonstration.

Pointing to the stars in their clustering multitudes, Jehovah declared, “So shall thy seed be.” Abraham said, “Amen.”—But the land? “To thee will I give it,” declared the Voice. Then it

was that Abraham asked the question of his life—"Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" Gen. 15:8.

The oath of assurance was a common feature of Oriental life. Sometimes this was given by standing before the altar, lifting the hand to heaven, or placing it upon the head of the condemned. But the most impressive and binding of all forms lay in that of passing between the parts of a divided victim. In doing this, the person taking the oath, or making a covenant, "interposed himself," or placed his own life as a pledge of the assurance given. This latter method, the most binding and sacred of all, Jehovah adopted, and Abraham was directed to prepare the sacrifice. Gen. 15:9-18.

Abraham secured the offerings as directed, divided them, and placed piece over against piece with a pathway between, that the dead might witness to the sincerity of the living. Then he waited the attendance of Deity. When the sun went down, robed in His garments of flame, or as the Hebrew expresses it, in the "lightning," Jehovah submitted to the covenant of a man, "interposed Himself," and walked with Abraham between those parts. Heb. 6:17.

Among the Hebrews this was called "cutting the covenant." It is frequently referred to in the covenant records of the Bible. Commenting on the statement, "The Lord made a covenant with Abraham," Dr. Clark writes:—

"'Carath berith' signifies to cut a covenant,

or rather the covenant sacrifice; for as no covenant was made without one, and the creature was cut in two that the contracting parties might pass between the pieces, hence cutting the covenant signifies making the covenant. The same form of speech obtained among the Romans; because in making their covenants they . . . divided the parts as we have already seen."—*Commentary, Gen. 15:18.*

Another interesting reference to this custom is found in the "Jewish Nation," page 164. It reads as follows:—

"In that case the parties who covenanted together passed between the pieces of the sacrifice. By this ceremony was denoted, that if either of them broke the covenant, they might expect in like manner to be cut asunder by Divine justice. Such appears to have been the view taken by the Jews, and by the heathen among whom this sort of sacrifice was common."

A direct reference is made to this plan of covenant-making by Jeremiah. In it the Lord declares a forfeit over the lives of the men who, having "cut the calf and passed between the parts thereof," proved unfaithful to their pledge. Their dead bodies would be given to the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth. Jer. 34:16-20.

Think of it, child of earth, the Great Jehovah, the mighty Ruler of the Universe, stepping down to take the place of a man in His pledge of destiny with the Hebrew exile, and through him with every child of faith! This was done that there

might be no question in the mind of Abraham concerning the heritage, and no question in the mind of anyone who wishes to share with Abraham when he becomes "heir of the world." Think how sure the promise concerning that inheritance must still be since the life of God Himself remains pledged to its fulfilment.

Paul writes of "two immutable things." The divine promise—the word spoken to Abraham—was one, and the action described in ratification of that promise, passing between the parts,—“interposing Himself,”—was the other. Neither of these can ever be undone. Jehovah *did* make the promise. He *did* place His life at stake in the agreement, and eternity must witness the complete fulfilment of all that was promised. Heb. 6:18. With this reality before him the child of faith may walk hopefully, though a pilgrim in a strange land.

Reader, do you accept God's pledge? He has gone as far as it is possible for Him to go. His oath has been taken in a way that touches His own existence. It still rings in the promise, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The ancient Egyptian, as a debtor, gave the embalmed body of his father as a pledge to remain with the creditor till the debt was paid. But the Christian is pledged in a living Christ, for "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." 2 Cor. 1:20.

Slow-moving years, crumbling kingdoms,

falling empires and changing dynasties mean nothing as hindrances to the great Arbiter of eternity. His plans will yet rise and shake themselves from the dust of ages. His promises will yet find their perfect fulfilment, for Jehovah has "interposed Himself" as a pledge of the destiny yet to be. His promises are eternal and they can never fail.

Abraham was known as the "friend of God." But before he could receive that title of dignity, he had to give up the friendship of the world. God called him to separate from his country, his kindred, and his father's house, so that he might sojourn as a stranger in a strange land—a type of all those who should after become the friends of God.

Abraham went out as though into the darkness, not knowing whither he went. Star after star, that cheered the days of his early manhood, declined. Every earthly sun went down, and every earthly project proved a failure. Then it was that the sunlight of the Eternal kindled the glory in which Abraham saw the "City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

When that aged patriarch at last fell asleep, the final vision that faded from his gaze was the home of light, just across the borderland. No! it did not fade; the closing eye-lids only shut it out; and when those eye-lids open in the resurrection of the just, the vision, seen so long ago, will not have changed only in that the visioned foun-

dations will have become real foundations of jasper and amethyst and pearl.

Abraham could walk the earth as a stranger; he had seen a better country. He could give up the friendship of this world, for he had gained the friendship of God. He could place a true estimate on things temporal, knowing that "the things which are not seen are eternal." He could afford to pitch his tent and live without a home while a home in the glory-land was being prepared.

The riches and beauty of Sodom, that so fascinated Lot, counted for nothing with Abraham. The honour of being a leader among men disappeared in the honour of serving God. The prospect of gaining all the world could give, faded before the knowledge of what God could give. And so he was content to pass through the world as a stranger. Even that very world which rightly belonged to him by the promise of Jehovah and his relationship with God, could not charm his soul while it was marred by the mildew of death and defiled by the curse of sin. Abraham had heard the message—"Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted; it shall destroy you even with a sore destruction." He believed God's testimony, and therefore:—

"Built no foundation wall of stone;
But camped each night a few short hours,
And ere the morrow's dawn moved on."

Ever since the loss of Eden, God has been trying to impress the mind of man with the

thought that this world is not his home. Thorns and briars have closed around his way all through the years. Disease and death have haunted his steps. Pain has pressed his soul, and sorrow has caused floods of tears to flow. Yet in spite of the pestilence and the mildew, and the warning voice of Deity, man has continued to cherish the fond hope that this world was his home after all.

Granite walls have been reared, and gorgeous palaces spread abroad; stately cities have been built, and lofty mansions prepared with the object of providing a home for man. But, after all, the greatest and proudest sons of earth find a resting place in the dust. "This is not your rest" is the Divine decision, and God would have His people arise and go on.

Lot planned to have a happy and prosperous time in Sodom, but it came near being his destruction.

Had it not been for the mercy of God, Lot would have been consumed with the treasures that he had gathered. For Abraham's sake God pulled him out of the fire.

The mind of man has been so intent on providing a home in this world, that God's promise and warning have both been disregarded. He promises "a better country," and warns of the danger below. There is danger here for the child of God only when he walks not as a "stranger and a pilgrim."

Centuries have gone by since Abraham fell asleep with the promise of God in his soul and his

eyes resting on that city with the sunlit towers across the borderland. If the vision was bright enough then to hide every earthly picture, what should it be to the child of God now? Every passing year of the century has lessened the prospective, and brought it nearer.

We are almost home; the clanging wheels of the centuries run not in vain. God's promise to Abraham, and to his Seed, which is CHRIST, is drawing near to its fulfilment, and homeward-bound pilgrims may well lift up their heads and rejoice, for their "redemption draweth nigh."



“ Judge Not ”

*Frown not at a brother in trouble
Or sneer when you see him distressed;
It may be his heart still is loyal,
It may be he's doing his best.
It may be the flood of temptation
Was greater than aught you have known;
Or, it may be, his spirit, forgetting,
Lost strength in being alone.*

*Chide not when a friend is defeated,
For you cannot tell how severe
The conflict, in which he went under,
Nor yet can you tell how sincere
The sorrow, that burdens his spirit,
When thinking of wrongs that are past;
Then give him a cheer in his struggle,
It may be he'll conquer at last.*

*Too often we censure in judgment
When the tale is only half told;
We hasten to speak condemnation,
And character loses its gold.
Thus a life may be darkened forever
That we might have helped to be clear,
If instead of condemning in haste
We had spoken some kind words of cheer.*

*Then touch with a hand that is kindly
The life that has failed in its test;
It may be he struggled sincerely,
It may be he aimed for the best.
And only the record in heaven
Can tell what to man is unknown;
It may be the wrong pictured darkly
Will fade in the light of the throne!*



In "The Furnace of Iron"

CHAPTER THREE

WITH Abraham, "the father of all them that believe," Jehovah made His covenant, and with it there was linked the life of God. But the promises and possessions embraced in that covenant were all distant and his descendants must pass through the furnace. Four generations must go by before the exiled sharers in the promise might return.

Hence it was that from the fair valleys and hills of Palestine, the Sons of Jacob departed to sojourn in the land of the Pharaohs. Hence it was that 215 years passed over the Hebrews while they dwelt in Goshen, and built treasure cities at Raamses and Pithom. For the first 215 years of the 430 promised, they sojourned in the land of their fathers. Then the famine sent them to Egypt that they might buy bread.

For a time Jacob and his sons were honoured in Egypt as the associates and relatives of Joseph—the man whom Pharaoh had styled "Saviour of the World." Joseph had stored the corn of seven

plentiful years and so prepared for the seven years of famine. In the monumental record of this work he is called "A friend of the harvest." For more than seventy years Joseph stood by the throne, but he died and finally there arose a new king, the Assyrian oppressor, the man "who knew not Joseph." Isa. 52:4.

At the time of their migration to Goshen the people of Israel numbered seventy souls. But they increased so rapidly that in 215 years there were some 3,000,000 of them in Egypt. Then it was that the Egyptians began to fear that they might rise and take the kingdom. The new king from Assyria planned to oppress this growing population lest they should outnumber the people of the homeland. Hence heavy burdens were placed upon them; severe restrictions hemmed them round, and they laboured in "the iron furnace." Deut. 4:20.

At this great distance we cannot tell how bitter Israel's oppression must have been. The mind of that terrified Assyrian-Egyptian ruler became more and more opposed to the people as they continued to multiply—this too, in spite of the deadly restrictions that condemned every man-child to death. The multiplication was rapid and certain. Nothing had been heard of like it. Here was one nation growing up in the midst of another nation with the promise of a supremacy that must at some time capture the crown itself! It was in view of this threatened usurpation that Pharaoh laid the heavy burdens upon Israel and bound them in the "furnace of iron." 1 Kings

8:51. Three times this expressive statement concerning the "furnace of iron" is made by Bible writers in referring to Israel's sojourn in the land of Egypt.

Historic testimony adds emphasis to the reality of that slavery and also to its cruelty and extent:—

"There is a tomb at Thebes, the inscriptions of which show that its occupant, Roschere, was superintendent of the great buildings in the reign of Thothmes III; on its walls the operation of brick-making is represented. Men are employed, some in working up the clay with an instrument resembling the Egyptian hoe, others of them in carrying loads of it on their shoulders moulding it into bricks, and transporting them, by means of a yoke laid across the shoulders, to the place where they are to be laid out for drying in the sun. The physiognomy and colour of most of these who are thus engaged show them to be foreigners, and their aquilline nose and yellow complexion suggest the idea that they are Jews. Their labour is evidently compulsory; Egyptian taskmasters stand by with sticks in their hands; and though one or two native Egyptians appear among them, we may easily suppose that they have been condemned to hard labour for their crimes. As the foreigners do not resemble any of the nations with whom Thothmes carried on war, and who are well known from the paintings and reliefs of the subsequent monarchs, it is not probable that they are captives taken in war. They can therefore hardly be any other than the Israelites, whom we know

from their own history to have been employed in this drudgery."—"*Testimony of the Ages*," page 129.

Egypt was a land of temples, pyramids, and mighty wonders—a land where human imagination had wrought its marvels in all that was gigantic and enduring. It was also a land of many gods, and ancient deities where shaven priests and gilded altars did constant service before gods unnumbered both living and dead. But with all its worship, its deities, and its temples, Egypt was a land of tyranny where a despised yet masterful people endured their slavery.

Under ordinary circumstances a people oppressed and burdened in such a distressing manner would have decreased. Even a multitude would have melted away in the heat of such burning. But not so with Israel! Like the burning bush by Horeb they remained unconsumed, and even increased in defiance to all the restrictive measures that Pharaoh could employ. The Keeper of Israel planned an astonishment for the world in the preservation of that people. He had pledged Himself to their multiplication and in spite of all human opposition that pledge was being maintained!

Pharaoh had scattered Israel all over Egypt with the design of preventing, as far as possible, their organisation and fraternity. He hoped that a people so scattered and oppressed would diminish, but a Power that he had not measured had determined otherwise.

Israel had been a Sabbath-keeping people,

but in their slavery the proud oppressor would grant no Sabbath or rest to his slaves. The memory of their Elohim, with all His demands, as well as the memory of their independence, must be blotted out. No Sabbath privileges would be permitted. "Get you to your burdens," was the cruel demand hurled at the deputation that sought redress. In this way Pharaoh and his courts thought to disparage Jehovah and Israel before the nation and the world.

Deep, dark, and hopeless appeared the condition of Abraham's national seed. Only a few leaders were left to them, for a hostile nation demanded service from every man. Thus passed the years—the slow-moving, painful years—until, with Israel, there remained but a shadowed dream of the promised emancipation.

But the story of those years spent in the "iron furnace," when the hearts of a nation were welded together, has not been written but in Biblical cipher. Had it been otherwise written, the wildest and most fantastic dream of the novelist would not equal the romance. The story has, however, been left rudely graven in the buried cities of Pithom and Raamses, in stately pyramids and granite obelisk, and in the traditions of the ancient people of Egypt.



The Grave

*A resting place, when tempests cease,
Where jealous rage is o'er,
Where clarion call is never heard,
And terrors fright no more!*

*There wild ambition's throbbing heart,
Lies calm as mirrored wave
For pride with all its boasted power,
Is helpless in the grave!*

*The lowly and the great repose,
Wrapt in a kindred clay;
And side by side in dreamless sleep,
Pass changing years away.*

*What matters if the shackled hand,
Touches its sovereign lord,—
The rusted chain is loosened now,
The tyrant voice unheard!*

*Unconscious dust no weapon wields,
Whether of king or slave,—
All equal in their mantling clay,
All vanquished in the grave!*

*The warrior's sword unbuckled lies,
The writer's pen is still;
The artist's pencil shades no more
The visions of his will!*

*O quiet resting, silent land!
Needless the heart's regret,—
The curtain lifts, the shadows pass.
And love will triumph yet!*



Liberty for Three Million Slaves!

CHAPTER FOUR

LIBERTY is a costly thing. By decision of the British Parliament, in 1833, 770,000 slaves were set at liberty; but that liberation of her slaves cost England £20,000,000. At the close of the American war in 1865, 4,000,000 slaves were given their liberty, but it cost America £1,000,000,000 and the lives of 600,000 soldiers.

When the time came for Israel's 3,000,000 slaves to go free it proved both an expensive and disastrous thing for the land of Egypt. But it was their rebellion against the God of liberty that cost Egypt so much in gold, in tears, and in blood.

From the quiet woods behind Horeb, Jehovah called the Emancipator that He would use in the deliverance of Israel. True, Moses had spent forty years in the royal court of the Pharaoh. He had been trained in all the "wisdom of the Egyptians," but that wisdom was not all divine. So another forty years had to be spent in the quietness of

forest life where God could speak to the heart and prepare an humbled spirit for the greatest task historic—a task that Inspiration puts next to the work of creation itself. Deut. 4: 32-35.

Rameses II, esteemed the Pharaoh of the oppression, was a ruler of proud and imperial spirit. He was the man "who knew not Joseph," the atheist who "knew not the Lord," neither would he let Israel go. With more than 600,000 toiling slaves in his grasp, the tempting investment appeared too valuable to open his hand and let them go free.

But Jehovah's demand was imperative—"Let My people go"! Ten times it came ringing to the ears of the haughty ruler, and ten times the plague-stroke of destruction fell. Against the gods of Egypt the God of heaven was at war. Israel must see the difference between the mighty God and the impotent deities of the false worshippers in Egypt. Ex. 12: 12.

Hence it was that every stroke, falling on that rebellious kingdom, was a blow, aimed by Jehovah at one of the many gods worshipped by the Egyptians. The demonstration was fully made, and in the contest Jehovah stood above them all. Ex. 18: 11.

The last stroke fell upon the firstborn, the god of the home, and on the morrow a weeping nation had to go forth to bury more than 20,000 dead,—the fairest, the brightest, and most beloved in all the land of Egypt!

Stung by a surprise that heart could not endure, the Egyptians clamoured loudly for the departure of Israel. "We be all dead men," was the exclamation that burst from horrified lips and hearts filled with terror. Gifts were offered in wild profusion, great gifts and costly, so that Israel might depart the more readily from the land spoiled and peeled and now the land of death.

Israel had been instructed to ask for jewels of gold and silver from their neighbours. These treasures were to serve as wages for Israel's toiling multitude for 215 years. They were not "borrowed" as suggested in our text. But they were asked for or demanded as the Hebrew word "shaal" indicates. In Jewish tradition the story is told that years after, in the time of Alexander, the Egyptians brought an action against the Hebrews to secure the land of Palestine in return for the treasures taken away at the time of the Exodus. The lawyer employed by the Hebrews stated that if the Egyptians would pay wages to the Hebrews for all the years of toil spent in slavery there, they would restore all taken away in their departure from bondage. But the claim for wages was not met.

Earnest and extensive preparations had been made for the Exodus—an event that meant so much to Israel as a people. It was the last hope of an oppressed nation, the last hope of relief within their reach.

Imagination must picture the gathering of that excited people, and the settling of that strange

cloud, with its mysterious light, that appeared to direct their march. Portentous and surprising it rested over the gathering multitudes as they assembled on the lowlands of Goshen. Then, in a dictation equally mysterious, it moved forward, while Israel, tribe after tribe, followed through the darkness, the path chosen by their unseen Leader.

Thus began that march with its forty-two wilderness-encampments, and its forty years of wandering, that led Israel through the sea, across the desert past the Jordan, and into the Promised Land. They came out "in the fourth generation" and at the exact time that God had determined 430 years before. Ex. 12:41.

In speaking of the Red Sea, Diodorus, the Greek historian, remarks:—"A tradition has been transmitted through the whole nation, from father to son for many ages, that once an extraordinary ebb dried up the sea so that its bottom was seen, and that a violent flow immediately brought back the waters to their former channel."—*Rolen, Book I, page 21.*

Their passage through the wilderness was no less miraculous!—water flowing from the rock, a river always behind and the corn of heaven meeting their daily need in a full supply. Over 7,500 tons of manna fell weekly, 390,000 tons every year. Thus 15,600,000 tons, during the forty years, came down from the blue to provide "a table in the wilderness." True, the journey of 550 miles was lengthened into several thousand miles, and over 600,000 strong men fell by the way, while a multitude was buried in the graves of lust. Still it

was a marvellous deliverance, and the inhabitants of the Eastern world learned to tremble before the God who could work such wonders.

When the Jordan rolled back its waters to let Israel pass over, the fast-flowing tide stood upright and then swept back for more than twenty miles up the stream, while the ark of God stood between the crystal wall and Israel's passing host. At length they all stood on the other shore a ransomed people, with one stone pyramid, deep in the bed of that mighty river, and another reared on the other shore to commemorate their passage.

It was a wonderful and glorious deliverance, and in it the romance of Israel's exile ended, and they stood a free people in the possession promised to Abraham. Cities and nations had gone down before them, opposing armies had fled, and then in their own land they spread abroad, a victorious people, from Dan to Beersheba, and from the great sea to the mountains of the East.

Why, it might be asked, should the inhabitants of Canaan be thus rooted out for another people? Their cup of iniquity was full, their probation of 430 years had ended, hence Israel was used in part as the agent of their destruction. But the hail from heaven, the hornets, and the flood waters of the Kishon were also employed by Jehovah in the work of driving out the unholy from the promised rest.

As freed men, liberated by a mighty hand, Israel should have, henceforth, rendered loyal service to the God of their salvation.

Coronation Hymn

*There is a Hand unseen that rules afar,
In planet-world and distant glittering star,
Beyond all outposts of earth's changing night,
Omnipotent in power, and peerless in its might!
Worlds piled on worlds, ten thousand fold,
Wrapt in their gilded dress of orient gold,
Obey its high behest and, restless, still
Move at the dictates of its sovereign will!
Sun-worlds that roll in glory-lighted spheres,
Timed to the marching of eternal years,
Accept as destiny the great command
That points the rule of that Almighty Hand!*

*There is a Form that stands beside the throne
Where monarchs rule, with destinies unknown.
Wrapt in mysterious shroud, that hides from sight
His chariot wheels, the thunder-clouds of night.
He speaks and all creation hears His voice,
And answers to His will and meets His choice.
Empires remote and kingdoms, small or great,
Survive or perish as He wills their fate.
Thrones bow and crumble as He passes by
In judgment, for the sins that lie
Perhaps unwritten by recorder's pen,
Yet known to Him who rules the kings of men!*

*Time is an agent in His changeless plan,
That curbs and rules the stubborn will of man;
For kings of yesterday with haughty tread,
To-day lie numbered with the dead;
While men of yesterday, to fame unknown,
To-day find place upon the throne!*



Imperial Failures

CHAPTER FIVE

MULTITUDES of men have grasped after the sceptre of earthly dominion. Few, only a very few comparatively, have ever succeeded in obtaining it. But how few, even of this few, have administered the royal or delegated power in the way that Heaven designed. Selfishness, ambition, intolerance, and cruelty have been leading characteristics among the rulers of men. The human heart unable to control itself, is but seldom fitted to control others.

After 350 years' sojourn in the Land of Promise, Israel became dissatisfied with their theocratic and tribal government. The judges no longer met their will, hence the request presented by the elders, in 1096 B.C., for a king. To be like the other nations in social standing and to have a visible leader to go before them to battle, were the reasons assigned for such a request. But in that request Israel rejected the Leadership of Heaven.

Jehovah granted this request and early in 1095 B.C., Saul was chosen and anointed as their first

king. But, first through disobedience and then rebellion, his rule proved a failure and he finally died a suicide on Gilboa.

David and Solomon followed Saul, each with another forty years of government. Then in 975 B.C. Solomon died, and the kingdom was divided. David had proved a successful ruler, though his life had been marred by many wrongs, but for these he deeply repented and found forgiveness. Because of his eager willingness to do the will of Heaven in his early years, he was called "the man after God's own heart."

For the first twenty years of his reign Solomon possessed the wisdom that has made his name proverbial. During that time he was engaged in building the temple and the royal palace of his kingdom. Then contrary to the divine plan, he joined in affinity with the heathen, multiplied wives and horses, and became a selfish and an oppressive ruler. At his death the kingdom was involved in heavy taxation that estranged the heart of its people.

Rehoboam, the son of an Ammonitess, whom Solomon had married contrary to the will of God, then became ruler. But his lack of diplomacy and statesmanship caused a rebellion in which ten of the tribes declared for Jeroboam. Thus there was formed the Northern Kingdom, with Samaria as its capital, and idolatry as its professed and constant form of worship. Jeroboam was known as "the man who made Israel to sin."

Nineteen kings followed in each of the two kingdoms. The line of Israel was often broken

and periods of anarchy intervened. All of her kings were wicked and mercenary. The whole of Judah's kings, however, continued in the line of David, and among them several noble characters appeared.

Sun-worship was introduced into Israel by Jezebel about 915 B.C. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, king and sun-priest of Zidon. As queen of Ahab she brought over 900 prophets of sun-worship into Israel, and her daughter Athaliah afterward married Jehoram, king of Judah, and so introduced it into the southern kingdom also. Finally the time of retribution came, and the "horns of the Gentiles" did their work in the "scattering of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." Zech. 1:19.

Four Destroyers

In 724 B.C. Shalmaneser, an Assyrian monarch, besieged Samaria. The siege was completed by Sargon, and in 721 Samaria went down.

The northern kingdom after existing for 254 years ceased to be, and her people were taken as captives to the cities of the Medes. 2 Kings 17:6, 7. Sargon chronicled his victory by writing it on stone, and on that slab he tells of taking 27,280 as captives from the fallen kingdom.—See "Records of the Past," Vol. 9, p. 5.

The next destroying horn was Sennacherib, another king of Assyria. He came down against Judah in the time of Hezekiah, 703-2 B.C. He captured forty-six fenced cities of Judah, and then turned to destroy Jerusalem. But its hour

had not yet come. To appease the rapacity of this Assyrian destroyer, Hezekiah took all the treasures available, even to the gold that adorned the doors of the temple, and gave them to the invader. This satisfied him, but only for a time, and he soon returned with a louder boast and a more bitter threat of destruction. Then it was that the Lord stepped in and sent the angel of death over that Assyrian host, and in the morning 185,000 lay dead outside the city. Sennacherib fled from the awful scene to perish by the hands of his own sons in the temple at Nineveh. 2 Kings 19:34-37.

Hezekiah, the Hebrew king, threatened by Sennacherib, died after his fifteen years probation, and then other hands took the sceptre. Josiah ruled in 610 B.C., when Pharaoh-Necho went up against the king of Assyria. While on the way at Megiddo, Josiah went out against him, and in the battle lost his life. His youngest son was then placed upon the throne by will of the people, but on the return journey Pharaoh came to Jerusalem and took Jehoahaz a prisoner to Egypt, where he died. The land was then put under tribute by the king of Egypt at a sum of £40,000, and another son of Josiah, Jehoiakim, was placed upon the throne of Judah.

Nabopolassar of Babylon, Cyaxeres of Media, and Pharaoh-Necho had joined in a confederacy against Nineveh. And after the fall of that city, Necho, having captured Carchemish, all the country west of the Euphrates fell to his share. So the land of Judah came under the dominion of the

king of Egypt, and thus Pharaoh-Necho would represent the third horn among the destroyers of Israel and Judah. 2 Kings 23: 31-33. See "Empires of the Bible," p. 385.

About three years later, in 607 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar went to fight with the king of Egypt, and having subdued him, he purposed to subdue Jerusalem on his return journey. This he accomplished by three invasions, and Jerusalem was finally left a ruin in 588 B.C.

The king of Babylon, in his overthrow of Israel's capital, took 5,400 sacred vessels from the temple, and also 15,000 captives. 2 Kings 24: 10-16. Thus Jerusalem was left as though every horned beast of the forest had trampled upon its beauty and devastated its fields and vineyards. Then for seventy long years the captives mourned, and toiled, and died in the land of a stranger. Nebuchadnezzar was the fourth and last horn pictured by Zechariah as sharing in the overthrow and scattering of Israel and Judah. Jer. 50: 17. These were all heathen powers, and the Lord speaks of them as "horns of the Gentiles," who lifted up their power over the Holy Land to scatter it. Two divisions of the nation, Israel and Judah, with the national city, Jerusalem, were overthrown by the Gentile powers, and unless the Lord had worked marvellously the nation and city would never have been restored.



Faith's Vision

*I have gazed on the hills and the valleys
Crag-splintered, sun-crowned and serene;
I have paused by the dew-spangled blossoms,
All decked out in spring's fairest sheen.*

*I have watched the stars as they twinkled,
Till fancy in wildest delight
Has deemed that no prospect could rival
A vision so tranquil and bright.*

*I have kissed in life's happy moments
Fond lips that were bright as the day,
And toyed with love's silken traces,
Forgetting the idol of clay.*

*I have listened to sweet strains of music
Where home hearts have breathed out the song,
While deeper-voiced winds and the ocean
Rolled ever the chorus along.*

*All sweet, all bright, all enchanting,
These visions have charmed life and heart,
But ever there rises above them
A dream that will never depart.*

*And in it the hills rise more grandly,
Love breathes an immortal breath;
And in it joy fears not the gloaming,
For nothing is tarnished by death.*

*The stars shine nearer and brighter,
And symphonies sweeter are heard
Than ever has linked with the chorus
The tongue of mortal has shared.*

*Thus ever it rises above me
That vision star-gemmed and unriven,
And oft in my dreamings I waken
To gaze on—faith's picture of heaven!*



By the Rivers of Babylon

CHAPTER SIX

BEAUTIFUL as a flower in the wilderness, cheering as a spring in the desert, and hopeful as green buds when the winter is past, the "love of home" rises in the human heart.

In our conventional forms of speech we sometimes call it "patriotism," sometimes "heroism," and not infrequently has it been regarded as the sum total of all the virtues in the life of man. The reader will readily recall Scott's beautiful lines:—

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land."

Chopin, the Polish composer, lived an exile in France. There, too, he died, and his body now lies at Pere La Chaise. Some earth was brought from his homeland to sprinkle over the grave. The heart that had loved and prayed for his country was sent back to Warsaw to rest in the Church of the Holy Cross. It was lately removed by the Russians before evacuating that city. The history of his depressed and trampled country may be read in the minor strains of his music. His heart was filled with a single sentiment—"the love of home."

(40)

This is not an unholy thing. It is still the blossom in the wilderness, and the green sprig on the barren crag—the one thing, perhaps, that remains in human experience to tell of a lost Paradise. In the mind of man it has surely covered a multitude of sins, and even in the mind of the Eternal it has not passed unnoticed.

But, like all other beautiful things in the mind and life of man, it is subject to perversion. In its exercise, man has too often forgotten the warning, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest." Micah 2:10. Inspired by its dreamings he has undertaken to make of this earth an abiding home. Deceived by its visions he has often failed to recognize the mildew, the disease and death that breathe in the atmosphere and touch its hills. In spite of all misfortunes and distresses, the soul has continued to indulge this passion, and even the broken ties of the cemetery have bound the heart—that sad heart of man—closer to home and country.

Jehovah does not wish to eradicate this thought from the human soul. Surely the hand of God planted it there when He beautified that Eden home and placed man amid its blossoms. But like all other thoughts and impulses of humanity, this must take a subordinate place. All the things of time are transitory. Since the curse defiled things earthly it has not been safe for man to give these things supremacy in his thoughts.

This is where millions of men have failed, and are failing now. The things of time, present and enjoyable, eclipse the things of eternity. The "things that are seen" overshadow the things that

are not seen, though the things unseen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4:16. Abraham left his country to become a stranger in his exile, not because he did not love that home with its friendships—this he surely did. But he had seen a “better country,” and in that revelation he found a charm that earth could not give. Heb. 11:10-16.

Carthage and Cyrene lay as rival states on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. On the desert between them there was no definite boundary line, and it was decided to establish one. Two delegates were to travel from each city, and where they met the boundary line would be located. The two brothers chosen by the people of Carthage rose early and travelled so rapidly that they had covered almost two-thirds of the distance when they met the delegates from their rival city. The Cyrenian delegates would agree to the boundary being thus placed only on one condition—that the two brothers should consent to be buried alive beneath the altar that would mark the national division. To this the brothers of Carthage agreed. They were buried alive; altars were reared over their graves, and for centuries those monuments—“Altars of the Philæni”—served as a frontier boundary between the two countries and their people.

Here was devotion and home love, but the sacrifice was too great for a few miles of desert land. Yet there are millions making a choice equally sad. For the grave, of their own choosing, awaits them on the boundary line of the country they have loved.

Israel had learned to love their Canaan home. More than eight hundred years had passed since, as a freed people, they had crossed the Jordan to possess the land that flowed with “milk and honey.” No wonder they loved its hills, for over them the vine cast its purple fruit, and the pomegranate painted them with its crimson flowers. No wonder they loved its valleys, for through them there flowed the clear streams, cool as the snow-waters of Lebanon.

It was the Land of Promise, the land of the early sojourn of their fathers, and though oppression had spread its iron hand over them during the time of the Judges, and strife had often embittered their life during the reign of their kings, still, it was their home. Hence the sad picture of the exiles hanging their harps on the willows by the rivers of Babylon, to weep over the remembrance of Zion.

Scattered as sheep without a shepherd, Israel had been driven away first by the king of Assyria, the king of Babylon completing the work of ruin. Jer. 50:17. Under the king of Assyria 27,280 captives had been removed from the northern kingdom at the overthrow of Samaria in 721 B.C. Then some 15,000 were taken from Judah by the king of Babylon.

Assyrian monuments still picture these captives as called up for sentence before proud rulers. Some of them walk with halters around their necks, and others with cords fastened through their tongues. Their exile must have been a time of great humiliation and distress, but

over it the Lord had stretched the rainbow of promise—seventy years were allotted as the period of their sorrow and trial. Jer. 29:10. Daniel understood by reference to what had been written that the period of time had almost reached its termination. Dan. 9:2. However, the exiles did not appear to have remembered the promise. Though twice definitely stated in Jeremiah and once in the Chronicles, their minds, buried deep in lamentation, failed to appreciate what God had already done. 2 Chron. 36:20, 21.

Among the captives there was one of royal birth. This was Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, and grandson to Josiah. Two other names are given to this boy-king,—Coniah, and Jeconiah—for he was only a little over eight years of age when carried into captivity. After thirty-seven years of prison life this captive-king was taken out of the dungeon, and placed among those favoured by the king of Babylon. The remainder of his life was spent under royal patronage. Jer. 52:31-34. This man had a son called Salathiel, who in turn had a son named Zerubbabel, which signifies “born in Babylon.” But when the days of their exile ended in 536 B.C., this son, Babylon-born, was sent as governor over the returning captives, by Cyrus, king of Persia. To Cyrus he was known as “Sheshbazzar, the Prince of Judah.” Ezra 1:8.

The long night at last closed, and those exiles, who had “kept Jerusalem in mind” had opportunity to return.

Visions

*Linger, dream-land visions, linger,
Through the day's decline,
Let me hear again the chorus,
Catch the songs divine;
See the faces veiled in darkness,
Moulded now in silent clay,
Hear again angelic whispers,
From the far away!*

*Linger dream-land visions, linger,
Glad life's shaded hours,
Till the thorns that pierced are hidden,
'Neath the fragrant flowers.
Linger till meridian splendour
Makes the gloaming bright;
And the twilight's radiant gleaming,
Gilds the darkened night.*

*Linger, dream-land visions, linger
Till my wounded soul,
In the fullness of its rapture,
Is again made whole;
Till the pain and grief, forgotten,
Pass with passing sigh,
Never more to shade or darken
Love's bright sky!*



CHAPTER SEVEN

ZECHARIAH saw "four carpenters." These represented the four historic repairers of Israel's lost dominion. The first friend that came to the help of Israel, after the ruin wrought by the four horns, was Cyrus, king of Persia. In some respects he was the most remarkable king of ancient history. He was one of the few Bible characters named by Inspiration before birth. More than one hundred and thirteen years before that king of Persia was born, Isaiah had foretold his name, character, and the work he would do. Isa. 45:1-3. Here he is spoken of as the Lord's "anointed" or "Messiah," for so the Hebrew reads, whose right hand Jehovah would strengthen, to overthrow Babylon and also to rebuild Jerusalem. Isa. 44:26-28. Cyrus was born about 599 B.C. In 536 he came to the throne of Persia at the death of his uncle Darius. He reigned seven years, and died in 529 B.C. He was a great statesman, conqueror, and a prince of renown. His tomb is still to be seen in the east. The golden coffin in which he was buried bore the inscription: "O man, I am Cyrus, who conquered the empire for the Persians,

and was king of Asia; grudge me not this monument."

The First Carpenter

Cyrus was the king who issued the first decree for the restoration of Israel. At that time Persia ruled the world, and the decree issued by the king of Persia would reach to all parts of his empire. This emancipation edict was issued in 536 B.C., just two years after the fall of Babylon. It was given as a proclamation to all people, and also put in writing by command of the king, so that it might reach all parts of his kingdom. The decree is found in Ezra 1:1-4, 2 Chron. 36:22, 23, and also in Josephus.—*Anti., Book XI, chapter I.*

By the terms of this decree all who so desired were permitted to return and assist in restoring and rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, and also the holy city.—"I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to rebuild the temple of God at Jerusalem, on the same place as it was before."

Thus the work of restoration was projected by this royal carpenter, as predicted by the God of heaven through the prophet Isaiah, long before Israel had gone into captivity under the despotism of the Gentile powers. Isa. 44:2.

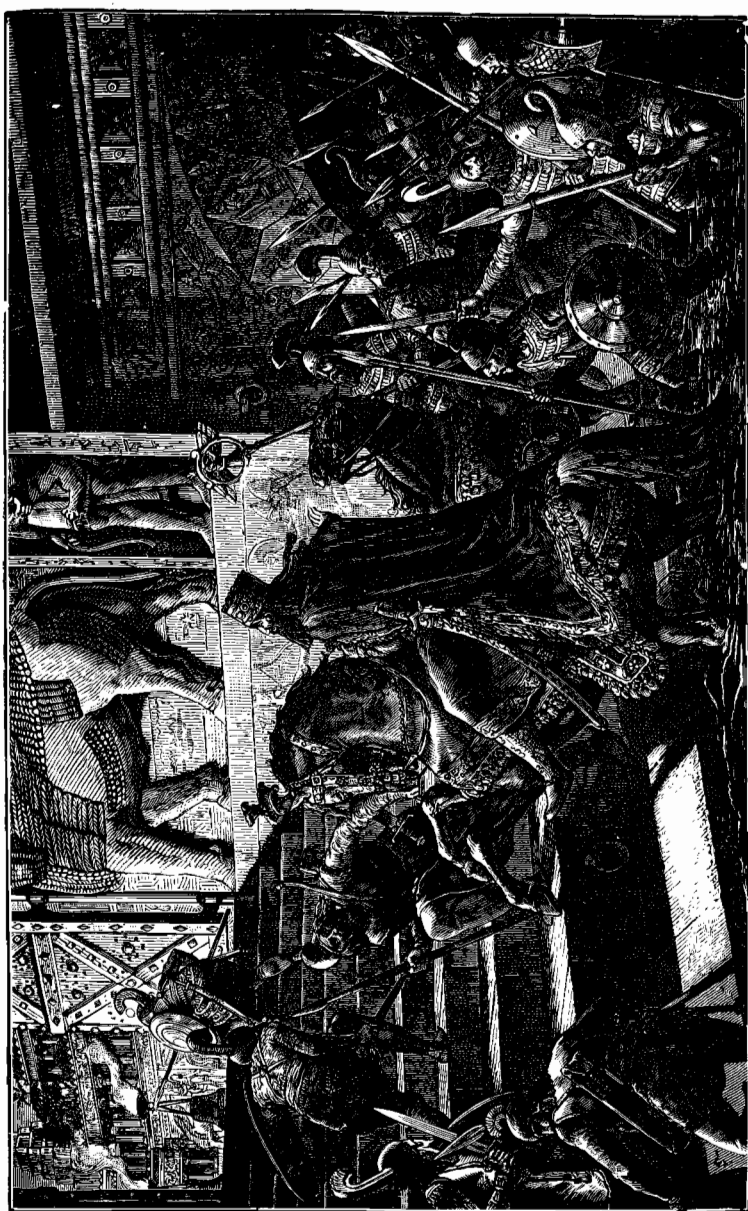
Under the decree given by Cyrus, captives to the number of 42,360, besides 7,337 servants and helpers, returned. Ezra 2:64-67. But why did not all return when the decree was world-wide, and touched all the lands of their exile? The Jewish historian will answer:—"Yet did many of them

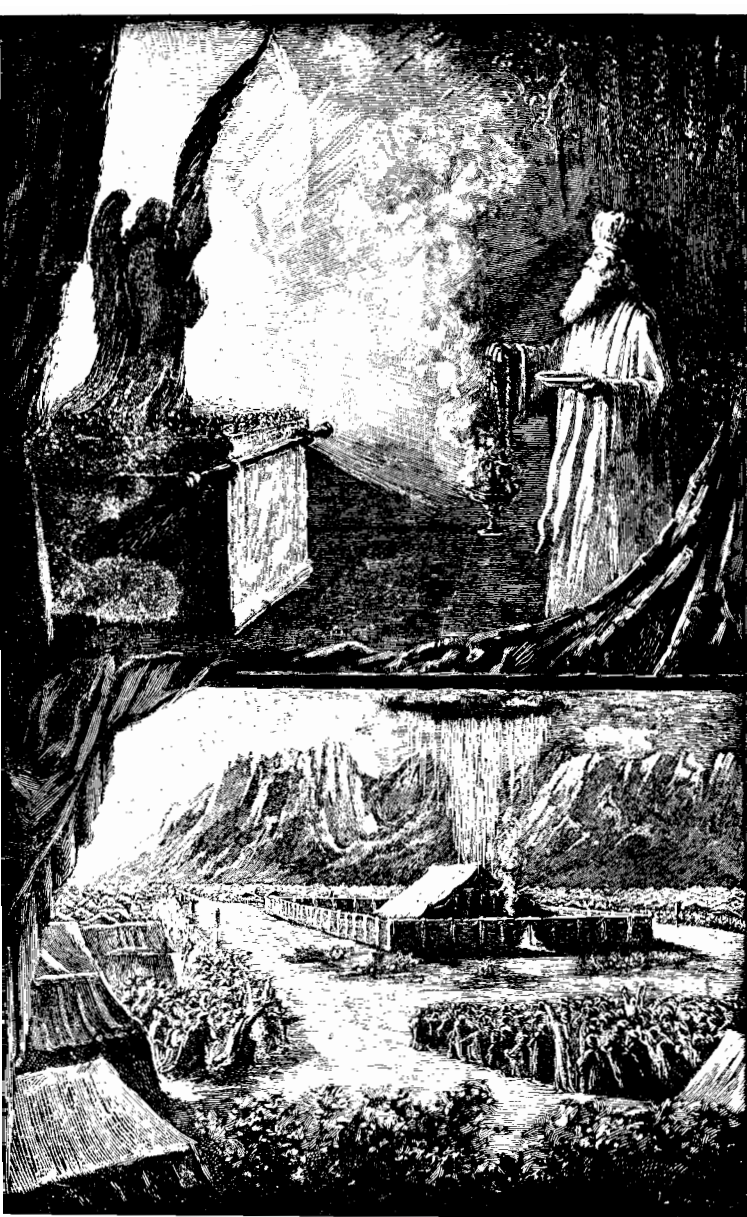
stay at Babylon as not willing to leave their possessions."—*Anti., Book XI, chap. 1.*

Many of them had been born in the land of their captivity, others had joined with the people in business and various relationships making it appear more expedient that they should remain. God had already told them that when Babylon went down they were to "let Jerusalem come into their mind." Jer. 51:50. But many of them refused to leave the countries they inhabited. However, the work was started according to God's direction, and Cyrus was the first carpenter, or the first of the four restorers seen in vision by Zechariah.

After reigning seven years, Cyrus the great, the good, exiled Israel's first friend and helper, died, and was succeeded by his son Cambyses. This prince and profligate proved himself to be a monster of wickedness, and under the false accusations made by the enemies of Israel, he withdrew the royal favours offered by Cyrus, and the work of restoration had to cease for a time. Ezra 4:6. These enemies had tried to hinder the work all through the reign of Cyrus, but he would not permit them to interfere. When Cambyses (Ahasuerus) came to the throne their plan succeeded, and the work was stopped.

Cambyses ruled seven years, and then died of a wound caused by his own sword. He was followed by Smerdis, an imposter, who only held the throne for nine months. Like all evil doers he also opposed the work of Jehovah, and refused to let the restoration, planned by Cyrus, be carried

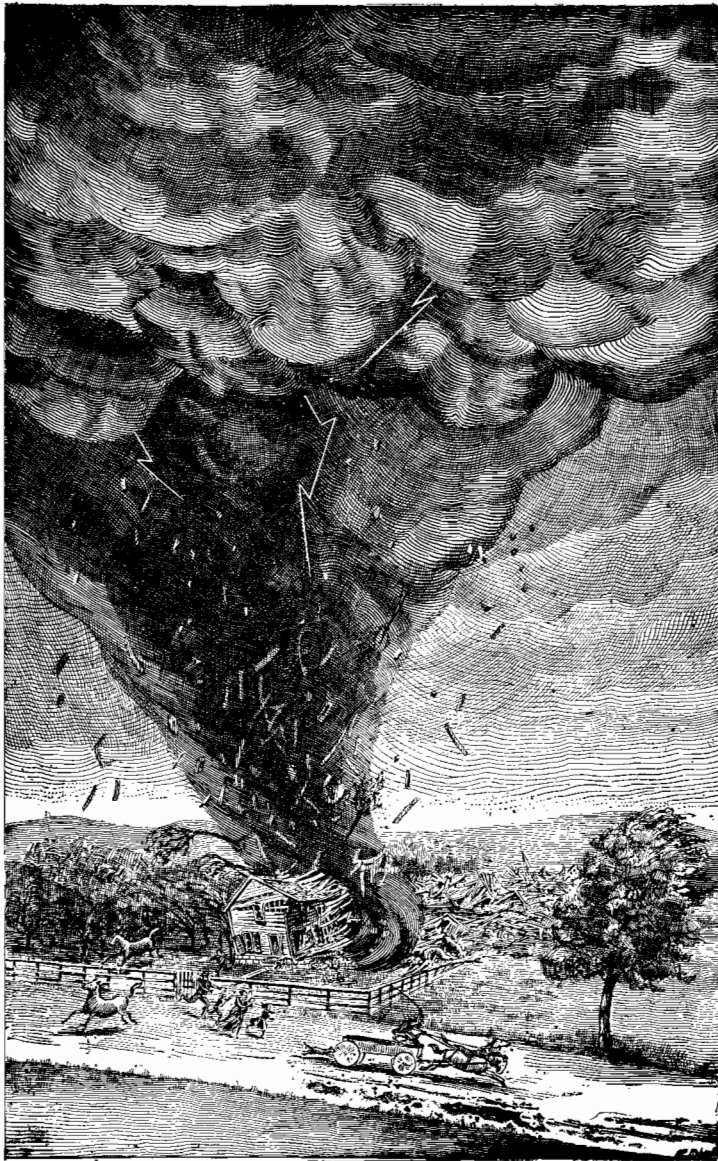






The Rejected Prince





Prince of the Royal Line

Fairer than star-worlds in their fairest glory,
Brighter than sun-worlds uneclipsed, that same
will be,—
Angelic myriads, chanting in their gladness,
Escort the coming King, to rule eternally !

out. This wicked ruler is called "Artaxerxes" in Ezra 4:7-24.

By the opposition of these two unholy men the work of restoration at Jerusalem was hindered for more than seven years. Then God called a man to the throne of Persia and the world, who had promised to help the Jewish people if ever it lay within his power.

The Second Carpenter

Darius Hystaspes came to the throne of the empire in 521 B.C. Like Cyrus he ruled over "all the kingdoms of the earth." He is said to have married the daughter of Cyrus, and, like his renowned father-in-law, he began immediately to favour the Hebrew race. In writing of him Josephus says:—

"Now he, while a private man, had made a vow to God that if he came to be king he would send all the vessels of God that were in Babylon to the temple at Jerusalem."

Darius had a personal acquaintance with Zerubbabel, and after his elevation to the throne, his friendship continued. Hence we are told that, "All that Cyrus had intended to do before him, relating to the restoration of Jerusalem, Darius also ordained should be done." *Anti., Book XI, chapter 3, par. 8.* Not only did Darius remove the restrictions that hindered the work of restoration, but he also gave a second decree, offering assistance and freedom to all the exiles who would return to the land of their fathers. The decree is thus given by Josephus:—

E



In the Days to Be

“He also wrote to them that all the captives who should go to Judea should be free; and he prohibited his deputies and governors to lay any king’s taxes upon the Jews; he also permitted that they should have all the land which they could possess themselves of without tributes. He also enjoined the Idumeans and the Samaritans, and the inhabitants of Coele-Syria, to restore those villages which they had taken from the Jews. . . .”—*Anti., Book XI, chapter 3, par. 8.*

The Jewish historian tells us that when Darius came to the throne Zerubbabel reminded him of the promise he had given concerning Israel. It was carried out, and again all the Jews in the kingdom of Persia—“the kingdoms of the world”—had the opportunity of returning under the most flattering and favourable conditions possible.

Again we might ask: “Why did not all the exiles go home?”—Because many of them chose to remain. They had mingled with the world and lost the spirit of reverence for the things of God, and when Jehovah told them to “let Jerusalem come into mind,” instead, they let their own gain and associations stand in the place of that which God had chosen for them.

The Third Carpenter

Darius reigned thirty-six years, and through all these years the Jews still had the privilege of returning. No doubt many did return, for the command given by Darius reached also the northern part of the kingdom of Israel. The land was to be restored to the Jews. In 485 B.C. he was

succeeded by Xerxes, Ahasuerus III, the great king spoken of in the book of Esther.

This king is the one spoken of by Dāniel as the one who should be “far richer” than the others, and also the one who should “stir up all against the realm of Grecia.” Dan. II:2. This Xerxes did. He gathered an army that is said to have numbered 4,000,000 men, crossed the Hellespont on his bridge of boats, destroyed the 300 Spartan braves, and in triumph entered Athens. But his fleet was defeated at Salamis, and he returned to Persia, having lost most of his great army.

Speaking of this ruler, whom, in mistake, he calls Artaxerxes, Josephus says:—

“When this man had obtained the government over the Persians, the whole nation of the Jews, with their wives and children, were in danger of perishing.” The decree, deceitfully obtained by Haman the Amalekite, threatened destruction upon the entire nation, and the ruin would have been complete had not the God of Israel overruled for the help of His people. Many of the Jews had gathered to Palestine, but some were still scattered through the distant provinces of the great empire. The decree of death was sent to the “one hundred and twenty-seven provinces” of the Persian kingdom, so that none of the people whom Haman hated might escape.

But all who have read the book of Esther will know the story of how a Jewish maiden was raised to the throne of Xerxes, and how that,

through her influence and faithfulness, the awful decree was set aside, and a proclamation of life took its place.

Jehovah had devoted the Amalekites to destruction for their wickedness in opposing Israel (Ex. 17:13-16), but Satan determined that the sentence would be reversed, and Israel's name be "blotted out from under heaven." In this he worked through one of the very nations that God set apart for death. But He who works all things after the counsel of His will frustrated the scheme, and it turned out rather to the help and elevation of Israel.

The royal decree bearing the name of Xerxes, went to all parts of the empire, and for a time the Jews were the most important people in the kingdom. One of their maidens ruled as queen of the great empire, and Mordecai, one of the Jewish leaders, prominent in the work of restoration under Darius, was prime minister. Esther 10:2, 3. With royal garments, crown of gold, and a golden chain about his neck, Mordecai went forth next in power to the king of Persia.

The splendour of the Persian court in the days of Xerxes, the esteem that came to the Jewish people when the wicked device of Haman was frustrated, the high positions assigned to many of their leaders in the realm of Persia, and the difficulties that confronted them in Palestine, were among the reasons that appear to have made Israel more satisfied with their surroundings and less anxious to escape from their exile. Xerxes ruled for twenty-one years, and in 464 B.C. Artaxerxes

Longimanus came to the throne and took the sceptre of the world.

The Fourth Carpenter

Artaxerxes gave the final decree for the restoration of the Jewish State. In referring to the man who made this decree, Josephus says: "He was exceeding friendly to the Jews." Mordecai was prime minister in the reign of Xerxes, and Nehemiah became one of the most trusted servants in the time of his son Artaxerxes. The book of Esther, historically, takes its place between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra. In it is outlined the wonderful story of the Jewish maiden who became queen of Persia, and also the story of Amalek's final overthrow. So, then, between these two chapters there lies the reign of the king who was "far richer than all,"—the man who "stirred up all against the realm of Grecia," and the king whose counter decree saved a nation.

The decree found in Ezra 7:12-26 was given by the king who followed this ruler, and this was Artaxerxes Longimanus, third son of Xerxes. He reigned forty-one years, but it was not until the seventh year of his reign, 457 B.C., that the final decree for the restoration of Israel was given. This decree made him the fourth and last of the carpenters that the Lord could send to repair the ruined estates of Israel.

The exodus from captivity was still proceeding, for during the reign of this king, and as a result of his favouring decree, many others left the land of their exile for their native country.

In Milman's "History of the Jews" we read:—"The reign of Artaxerxes, the successor to Xerxes on the Persian throne, was favourable to the Jews. In the seventh year a new migration took place from Babylonia, headed by Ezra, a man of priestly descent and high favour at the court of Persia."—*Vol. I, p. 341.*

Still later on another exodus followed under Nehemiah, and of it Josephus writes: "Now when he was come to Babylon, and had taken with him many of his countrymen, who voluntarily followed him, he came to Jerusalem in the twenty and fifth year of the king."—*Anti., Book XI, chap. 5.*

While Nehemiah took command of the work of rebuilding the city, Ezra devoted himself to the preservation and restoration of the sacred books. He is sometimes called the "Second Moses." The canon of the Old Testament writings was at this time arranged by him. Much of the sacred literature had been lost during the time of captivity. Ezra applied himself to the work of seeking out, and arranging the sacred books, with earnest devotion.

After an energetic effort Nehemiah succeeded in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He found enemies within and enemies without, and the situation was one of great perplexity. The hindrances and final completion of the wall and city are thus set forth by Milman in his history:—

"Still the city of Jerusalem was open and defenceless, the jealous policy of the Persian kings would not permit the Jews to fortify a

military post of such importance as their capital. On a sudden, however, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, a man of Jewish descent, cupbearer to the king, received a commission to rebuild the city with all possible expedition. The cause of this change in the Persian politics is to be sought, not so much in the personal influence of the Jewish cupbearer, as in the foreign history of the times. The power of Persia had received a fatal blow in the victory obtained at Cnidus by Conon the Athenian admiral. The great king was obliged to submit to a humiliating peace, among the articles of which were the abandonment of the maritime towns, and a stipulation that the Persian army should not approach within three days' journey of the sea. Jerusalem, being about this distance from the coast, and standing so near the line of communication with Egypt, became a post of the utmost value. The Persian court saw the wisdom of entrusting the command of a city and the government of a people always obstinately national, to an officer of their own race, yet on whose fidelity they might have full reliance."—*Vol. I, p. 343.*

The work of rebuilding was thus finally hastened, and in forty-nine years from the seventh of Artaxerxes, 457 B.C., to the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus, the succeeding king, the Jewish state and city, with their religion and the occupation of their lands, were all restored, as far as Jehovah could restore them, to a rebellious people.

Into captivity 27,280 were taken from Israel, and some 15,000 from Judah. This would give a

total of 42,280 carried into captivity. Thousands had been slain in the besiegements of their cities and the levelling of the two capitals. In their returnings, under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, more than 50,000 exiles were numbered, beside the multitudes that came in privately under the many favours shown by the Persian carpenters in their royal decrees of restoration. God could not restore them all, because the people would not accept the privilege offered or obey the command that was given.



That Sacred Spot

*There's a place on the sod out yonder,
Beyond a dark city's gate,
Where the sunlight falls in the noontide,
And waits till the hour is late.
The stars smile out in the darkness,
And gleam with their tenderest ray,
While the moonlight, in softest shading,
Falls there at the close of day.*

*But not in the splendour of sunbeams,
Or the starlight's tenderest glow,
Lies the untold charm that lingers
Round that spot of the long, long ago.
It speaks to my heart in the darkness
When all earthly lights are forgot,
And whispers in its silent beauty
Of earth's most sacred spot.*

*I think of it ever and always—
A cross stood there once on the lea,
And Love poured its holiest treasure
Beside it for you and for me!
And though the dark scene has now faded,
When the sun hid its face from the sight,
The spell still rests o'er my spirit,
And I kneel beside it to-night.*

*And if you should ask me the reason,
It measures so much in life's plan,
I whisper the story in wonder—
" 'Tis the place where Love died for man! "*



The Rejected Prince



CHAPTER EIGHT

IN the second chapter of Zechariah, after the four carpenters had been presented before the prophet in their work of restoration, the scene centres around Jerusalem. A man is pictured as measuring the place of the city in preparation for the rebuilding. The angel spoke to the young man, who was evidently Zechariah, and gave the assurance that Jerusalem would be inhabited beyond the proscribed limits of the wall. Towns without walls would be established over the land, and the Lord would be a protection—a wall of fire round about, and the “glory in the midst of her.”

Then the great gathering call is sounded:—
 “Ho, Ho, flee from the land of the north. . . .
 Deliver thyself, O Zion!” Had this call been answered as the Lord intended, cities without walls would have been found all over Palestine for the “multitude of men and cattle.” Jehovah would have been their protector, and they need not have feared the heathen had they but obeyed the

call. However with many the world conquered, and they lived and died in exile.

In verse eight we find the prophet speaking of being sent “after the glory.” The Hebrew word here rendered glory is *kabod*, and signifies “heavenness, glory, splendour, majesty, the glory of God.” This name was given to the shechinah that had its abode over the mercy-seat in the most holy place of the sanctuary. In the days of Samuel it departed when the ark of God was taken, and “Ichabod” was the word used to tell the sad story. I Sam. 4:21, 22.

Back in the days of Adam that glory rested between the cherubim at the gate of Eden. Gen. 3:24. In the time of Moses it appeared in the burning bush just beyond Horeb. Ex. 3:2. It went with Israel through the wilderness, and filled the temple that Solomon built. I Kings 8:11. But when Israel’s capital was destroyed because of their rebellion, the glory departed.

The sacred vessels of the sanctuary were taken to Babylon and there desecrated in the service and worship of strange gods. Yet nothing is said of the ark being taken there.

Jewish tradition claims that when the destruction of the temple appeared certain, Jeremiah, with several companions, removed the ark from the temple, and hid it in a cave in the mount, where “Moses climbed up and saw the heritage of God.” 2 Macc. 2:4, 5. The opening of the cave was closed up and the ark remained hidden. When at last the seventy years of their exile ended

Jeremiah was dead, and probably all those who knew where that sacred relic lay, thus it remains hidden to this day.

The other sacred vessels were brought back and restored to the second temple; but it had no ark,—the “glory” was not there! In vain they sent to the nations to inquire concerning it. The sacred memorial with its glory-symbol of Jehovah’s presence was never found, nor can history give any trace of it beyond that cave where the weeping prophet left it in the day of Israel’s dishonour.

Had the Jewish nation been willing to accept Christ when He came, the ark would have been restored, and the splendour that flashed over the transfiguration scene on Hermon would have again kindled its light over the mercy-seat and the Lord would have been the “glory in the midst of her.” Zech. 2:5; Mal. 3:1-4.

Christ was the “brightness of His Father’s glory.” But that glory had to be veiled in human flesh that He might talk with men. Had they been willing, place would again have been found for the “glory,” but in the rejection of Christ the last hope of God’s plan for Israel was cut off, and their house forever “left desolate!”

Other men beside the Jewish exiles have sought for that wonderful ark. The sacred associations, the heaven-engraven tablets, the glory that flashed above it as the symbol of divinity, its typical form as the throne of Deity, all combine to make it the most sacred thing in

the history of man. Could any of the nations find it, probably it would be enshrined as an exhibit, and pilgrims from all lands would come to view that upon which human eyes dared not gaze before the glory had departed.

In all probability it will be discovered before the end comes. In its discovery the unchanging law of Jehovah will bear its last testimony before the rebellious sons of men.

The writer of the Maccabees states that Jeremiah forbade the marking of its place of concealment, stating: The “place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather His people again together and receive them unto mercy.” 2 Macc. 2:7. This would have been fulfilled at the time of their restoration, and God would have received them to mercy, had they been willing to obey. The promise, then, must pass over to the spiritual seed at the second coming of Christ.

Three times in Zechariah 2 the Lord speaks of taking His place in the “midst” of Israel, but when “He came unto His own, His own received Him not.” John 1:11.

This rejection of the Prince of Life—the Delegate from Heaven—was the most fatal of all the follies and fatalities linked with the history of Israel. Its consequences were the most tremendous and its results the most disastrous.

When Christ appeared, He came as a direct descendant of Abraham and David. As the descendant of Abraham He was the “Seed” and

heir to the promise that embraced the world. Rom. 4: 13. As the Son of David He was rightful heir to the crown and sceptre. Luke 1: 32, 33.

Zerubbabel, Prince of the restoration, had two sons, Abiud and Rhesa. Joseph was a descendant of Abiud, and Mary came in the line of Rhesa. Hence, even to human appearance, He was the rightful heir to the crown, and the Jews appeared conscious of the fact when in their dilemma they exclaimed, "We have no king but Cæsar."

No man ever had or could perform the miracles that marked the life of Christ. But even these, great as they were, counted for nought. Israel would not believe, even for the "work's sake."

No life had ever appeared, so true and unselfish, to be the Light of men, yet they closed their eyes because they loved the darkness. The "great light," that flashed over "Zebulon and Galilee of the Gentiles" attracted the disciple-fishermen, but the leaders of Israel would neither hear nor see.

The time, to which the prophetic finger had long been pointing, was "fulfilled," and the "Shiloh" had come. Angels had proclaimed Him the "Prince of Peace,"—devils had called Him the "Son of God." The Voice that echoed from heaven over the Jordan-baptism had ascribed Divinity to the Baptized, the "common people heard Him gladly," but Israel did not know the time of her visitation. So they prepared Him a cross instead of a throne, a crown of thorns instead

of a royal diadem, a manger cradle instead of a kingly mansion, and a grave instead of a kingdom! Signs, miracles and wonders had all been wrought before them that they might see. Words of power, healing, blessing, and warning had all been spoken that they might hear. But they refused saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." Fatal decision! But the God of heaven must accept the verdict of the human heart, hence, the sorrowful, solemn and retributive decree—"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Eight times in His last discourse to the Jewish leaders, as found in Matthew 23, did Christ pronounce "woe" upon the self-willed and hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees. He then left the temple, and only turned as He ascended the Mount of Olives to look at hope's sun, setting for the last time, over Jerusalem.

Looking across that valley, with tear-filled eyes Christ exclaimed:—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. 23: 37. It was the sob of a broken heart. The rejected Prince went forth to die, and the house that might have been filled with His glory was left desolate forever.

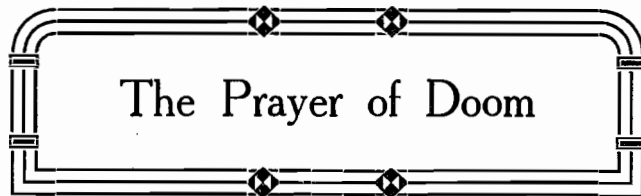


“Measure for Measure”

Say, is it fate, or have the gods decreed it
To puzzle sons of men who thoughtless read it?
“Measure for measure, as you give 'twill be,
By unseen hand, returned to thee.”
Nay, there is something even more divine
Moulding the fashion of your life and mine.
Measure for measure, ages thus record,
“Measure for measure” God writes in His Word.

The hand of destiny moves slow and seemeth
Uncertain oft as when some spirit dreameth,
But on the changing dial, see 'tis cast,
“Measure for measure” comes to view at last.
Mills of the gods grind slow, but grind for all,
While ages pass they “grind exceeding small.”

Then learn the lesson, Heaven itself has thought it.
And human history has surely taught it,
Whether for weal or woe, for life or death,
In sorrow's pain or joy's sweet song of mirth,
“Measure for measure,” thus the warning rings,
For each, for all, for beggars as for kings!



CHAPTER NINE

PONTIUS PILATE was the sixth Procurator sent over by the Romans to govern in Judæa. He was appointed about A.D. 26, but he does not appear to have reached Palestine till A.D. 29. He is described by historians as a man of impetuous and obstinate temper, cruel and imperious in his government. He was deposed by Vitellius for rapine and cruelty, condemned by the Emperor Caligula, and finally banished to Gaul, where he is said to have committed suicide.

Having apprehended Christ, it was to this man, as governor of Judæa, that the Jewish elders brought the One condemned by their law. Though twice declared guilty of death by His own people it required also the consent or condemnation of the Roman ruler for His execution. Hence we read in the words of Tacitus: “while Tiberius was emperor, by the Procurator Pontius Pilate, Christ was put to death.”

What a time was that night of trial and condemnation in the history of Heaven's Delegate! From the supper room in Jerusalem Christ went

with His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. There He faced the awful ordeal, with His own life and the world in the balance. From the garden He was hurried by the mob to the hall of the high priest; there an informal tribunal pronounced Him "worthy of death."

In the early dawn He was brought before Pilate, then sent to Herod, mocked, insulted, derided, and once again returned to the Roman judgment hall. Standing in the early light of that Judæan morning, Pilate declared, "Behold the Man." Since that hour the eyes of a world have gazed upon the Man who claimed no nationality or country—only kinship with humanity. True, the Roman judge declared, "I find no fault in this man." Still the Judæan leaders demanded His condemnation. They claimed to "have a law," and by that law He must die.

Pilate refused acquiescence in a decision so illogical as that of condemning one in whom he could find no wrong. It was then that by the side of Christ he placed the man whose life was full of wickedness, demanding of the populace which they would choose—"Christ or Barabbas?" Loud and strong was heard the cry, "Barabbas."—"Now Barabbas was a robber!"

Pilate, according to the ancient custom, washed his hands in token that he had no share in condemning the Innocent. Then was heard that prayer—the prayer of doom—"His blood be on us, and on our children." Matt. 27 : 25.

God does sometimes answer the human heart

according to its folly, as in the case of the men who asked to be excused from the marriage feast. Sometimes according to its selfishness, as in the case of Hezekiah, when he prayed for longer life. But *this* prayer of doom was answered according to its awfulness. In the answer we see the Valley of Gehenna filled with dead, and the hill beyond covered so thickly with crosses that there was no more room for the crosses.—"*Wars of the Jews,*" Book V, chapter XI.

But the answer was not all immediate, neither did it end in the destruction of that city and the crosses on the hill. It has followed that unhappy people down through all the ages with a certainty that is astonishing. The people who rejected the Prince of Life have in turn been rejected by all nations for generation after generation. Their history has been perhaps the saddest of all histories, and over it the shadowing of blood has always been seen.

Thus writes the historian:—"The history of the Jews, from the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, is one of exile and terrible persecution. The church of the middle ages appeared to think that it honoured Christ by despising and maltreating the Jews. Their history is one of the most pathetic that the world's drama affords, and the patient endurance with which they have adhered to their national faith under obloquy and suffering is sublime."—"*Beaton's Dict. Universal Information.*"

In the rejection of Christ the last hope of the nation was cut off. In their madness, they had reasoned that if they received Him, and permitted

His work to go on, the Romans would come and take away their city and nation. John II:48. Oh foolish and sophistical reasoning! It was through destroying Christ that the Romans did finally come and take away both their nation and their city.

Christ was the last of David's royal line, and in rejecting Him they had "no king but Cæsar." In place of Christ they accepted the kingship of Cæsar, and Cæsar did unto them as he would. Christ was the last of Judah's royal line. Soon after His birth Mary and Joseph signed the Roman register. They were then only Roman citizens, and the "sceptre had departed from Judah!"

Since that time the Jews have had many rulers, served under many masters, suffered under many tyrants, and submitted to many conquerors, but they have had no king. The answer to that prayer of doom has given them a cup of suffering such as no other nation or people has ever had to drink.

Little did they think that "His blood," representing the life of the Son of God, was Heaven's most costly sacrifice. A tremendous retribution would come in consequence. Had they known, surely, human lips would never have dared to breathe that prayer. In it there was the hidden pronouncement of a nation's doom. Hence the shadow that fell over Calvary eclipsed their national glory for all time!

The Silent Christ

*The cross was lifted and the cup was filled;
The Christ of Nazareth saw and knew it all,—
The cruel Roman rods, the shame, the pain,
The mocking throng, the spear, the gift of gall.*

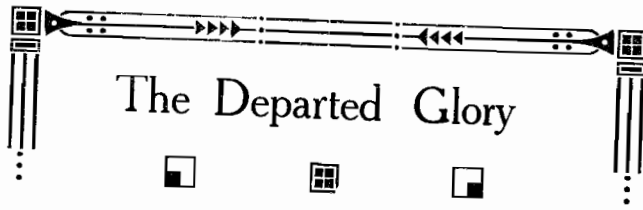
*The loneliness, the gloom, the darkened sun,
The rending rocks, the open graves of clay,
The earthquakes and the dim forgetfulness
That must appear to close that saddest day.*

*He heard the words of scorn and bitter hate,
The jeers from sanctimonious lips, the call,
The howlings of the mob that chose Barabbas
And the mocking plea, within the judgment hall.*

*Yet knowing, hearing, seeing all He stood
Calm as a sunbeam shining on the storm.
No passion fired His soul or terrified
The heart that beat within that God-like form.*

*Condemned, and yet unmoved, He stood, as though
Earth and its howling mob had fled away.
While facing death with bold and dauntless soul,
Calm as a statue moulded in its clay.*

*O Christ, Thou Silent Christ! Teach me to know
The dignity of courage so divine;
Help me to copy and in love discern
A life so deep, so true, so calm as Thine.*



The Departed Glory

CHAPTER TEN

MANY cities have held place in the world's national life—great cities, wonderful cities, cities that have counted their inhabitants by millions, that have weighed their treasure by tons, and decked their palaces with the golden spoil of fallen empires. But to no other city has there fallen the strange prominence that has linked with the history of Jerusalem.

Between the seas, at an altitude of 2,550 feet, stands the Jerusalem that now is. Thirty-two miles to the west roll the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea, while eighteen miles to the east there is that mysterious depression of waters known as the "Dead Sea."

In history that city appears as the most "holy," yet the most desecrated; the most beloved, and yet the most despised; the most glorious, and yet the most dishonoured of all cities. Its very history must bear the character of a panorama of contradictions. But now all its glory has departed!

During the fifteen centuries before the time of Titus, it was besieged seventeen times. Twice its

walls were overthrown, and twice its very foundations were destroyed. Finally, Rufus the Roman drove his ploughshare across the place of its magnificence, to indicate that now it would be given over to the ploughman. Of its people, at the siege in A.D. 70, 1,500,000 perished; 87,000 were sold as slaves, while 17,000 were taken to Rome to grace the triumph of a conqueror, and to make a Roman holiday.

For centuries strange predictions had floated around that city on the hill. Seers of the Hebrew race wept over its pictured doom, and the scenes of its overthrow strangely complete the details of their prophetic photographs.

In 138 A.D. the Emperor Adrian partially rebuilt the city that had been overthrown by Titus. The name he changed from Jerusalem to "Ælia Capitolina;" but he prohibited its ancient people from entering or even approaching the place where their temple once stood.

The last prophetic utterance made contained the words "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." Early in the fourth century Constantine restored the name of Jerusalem, but Julian, the emperor who had renounced his profession of Christianity, determined that he would prove this prediction untrue. With this object in mind he gave full liberty for the Hebrews to return, and to assist in the restoration of their temple.

In chapter 23 of the "Decline and Fall," Gibbon tells the story of the enthusiasm and eagerness with which the work was undertaken. But

strange to say, both the royal efforts and the endeavours of a devoted people failed. The work was never completed, and Jerusalem is still "trodden down of the Gentiles." The mosque of Omar crowns the temple hill, and the strangest of nationalities still crowd her streets.

In 363 Julian died on an eastern battlefield, declaring, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered." It was even so, and Jerusalem is still "trodden down of the nations."

Since 1516 A.D. the Turk has claimed that city as his own. The banners of the Crusaders had floated over it for a while, but the sharp sword of the Moslem cleft the standard and its people asunder, and placed the crescent above the walls.

Jerusalem of to-day holds nothing in common with the city of the past. The departed glory has never returned, and the hope of its restoration has been lost. After the rejection of Christ three shepherds were to be cut off in one month. Zech. 11:8.

Under the measure of prophetic time with a day for a year, and thirty days to the month, we have here "thirty years." Let it be remembered that the seventy weeks, the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation, came to an end in A.D. 34. Here, by the stoning of Stephen, God's witness for Christ, that people declared that they would not tolerate the religion of the Man of Nazareth. Here ended their second 490 years of probation. But the Lord is merciful even to the rebellious. Thirty years of grace, a prophetic month, was granted

before the final retribution fell. In this time the gospel still continued to go to the Jews.

This is to be seen all through the book of Acts. Notice the texts: Acts 11:19. The disciples preached the gospel to "none but the Jews," starting from the death of Stephen. Acts 13:46. Also Acts 18:2-6. At last we find Paul a prisoner brought to Rome, but he is still preaching to the Jews. Acts 28:17-20. There he continued for two whole years, and this brings us to about the year A.D. 64. Here would end the thirty years from A.D. 34, and there, too, the people "beloved for the father's sake" were cut off forever from the promises of God.

Hosea has a singular reference to this same period of time. Hosea 5:7 reads, "They have dealt treacherously against the Lord: . . . now shall a month devour them with their portions." At the end of this "month" the war began between the Jews and the Romans that ended in the subversion of a nation and the annihilation of their capital.

Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70, but the war that ended in its overthrow had begun a number of years before that time. Josephus dates its commencement from "the twelfth year of the reign of Nero," A.D. 66; but it had really begun before that date. All the while God was pleading with that rebellious people yet their rebellion was becoming more and more pronounced. The Roman yoke was becoming more intolerable, and their national demise more certain.

During this thirty years from A.D. 34 to 64, three of the most prominent of the Jewish high priests, or shepherds, were dismissed from office in disgrace by the Roman power.

Caiaphas, the man who condemned Christ to death, ruled for eleven years. Then in A.D. 36, when Vitellius, governor of Syria, came to Jerusalem, to please the populace whose displeasure he had incurred, this priest was deposed from office. In his disgrace he disappears from history.

Ananias, son of Nebedæus, came to the priesthood in A.D. 47. He is the man who condemned Paul, and of whom that prophet said, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." Acts 23 : 3. He soon after lost prestige, and was finally pulled from a drain-pipe where he was hiding, and put to death by the populace.—*Connection of Sacred History,* p. 398.

The third was Ananas, son of Annas, the associate of Caiaphas who condemned Christ. This man condemned to death James the brother of Christ, and the last of the disciples who remained in Jerusalem. For this he was put out of office by the governor Albinus. He was slain in the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem.—*Stackhouse, "History of the Bible," pp. II, 12. Also Ant., Book 20, chap. 9.*

So the three shepherds were cut off,—the month ended,—the siege did its awful work,—the city fell, and the night settled down over that people with a horror that has ever continued to terrify the historian.

The last act in the tragedy might be told. City after city was destroyed; Jerusalem was at last taken, plundered, and burned, and its matchless sanctuary deluged with blood and then consumed. Three strong towers alone remained—Herodium, Machaerus, and Masada. Of these Herodium surrendered, and Machaerus was taken by stratagem. Masada was a strong fortress built above the crags near the south-western shore of the Dead Sea. Here about a thousand refugees took their last stand against the Romans. The enemy encircled this fort, and the besieged saw their last hope die out.

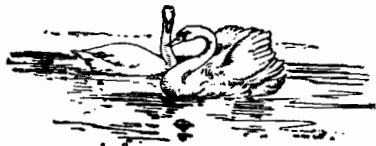
Eleazar, who had command of this band of disheartened men and women, persuaded them that it would be more honourable to destroy each other than fall into the hands of the Romans. This they all agreed to do. They then embraced their wives and children, and the next moment stabbed them to the heart. Their riches were then piled up and set on fire. Ten were chosen by lot to kill the remainder, and when this was done, a second lot was cast for one to kill the remaining ten. He accomplished the awful task, then fell on his own sword and expired. In the morning the Romans entered the fort of death, saw the long line of dead bodies, but found no living man to hinder their way. Two women, who had concealed themselves through the slaughter, came out and told the awful story.—*Connection of Sacred History,* p. 495.

This was the end of the nation which said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." God had

given them 490 years to prepare for His coming. Then thirty years more were extended as a month of grace, but they would not hear. The carpenters had done their work, and Jehovah had performed marvels in bringing Israel back to their own land. But now their hope was lost forever. Their cities were a desolation, and Cæsar had issued his imperial orders that Judæa should be sold.

Surely the glory had departed, and in the blood of the slain One, "Ichabod" was written over both city and people. With all its hallowed memories, its sacred associations and its neglected opportunities, Jerusalem went down, to be trodden under by the Gentiles, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. Then God's controversy with both divisions of humanity will be completed and the day of God will come. Zeph. 1:14-18.

That day of darkness, when the mighty men shall weep bitterly, presents no prospect of any restoration to the favour of God. Israel's national glory is a departed glory, and like the sheckinah of their ancient temple, it can never return!

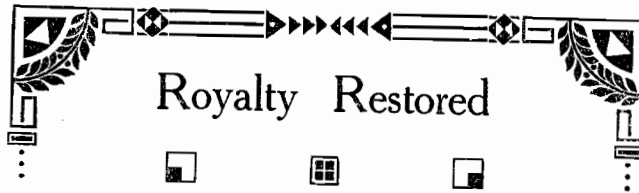


"Redemption Draweth Nigh"

*Are you weary, brother, weary,
Of the struggle and the toil—
Weary of the sin and waiting
Where all pleasures spoil?
Weary of the shaded darkness,
With its cup of mingled pain,
And your soul is longing, longing
For the glad, the sweet refrain
That will tell you He is coming,
Coming back again?*

*Struggle on, the day is ending,
And the toil will soon be done;
Struggle on, for heaven is nearing,
Crowns will soon be won.
Days count ages now, remember,
For each moment brings to thee
Some decision that will measure,
Though thy dim eyes may not see—
Some decision that must measure
For eternity.*

*See, the world is chasing pleasure,
Phantom joys that will not stay;
Better far the weary toiling
On the upward way.
Weary not, thy Lord is coming,
And His coming brings release
From the burden and the struggle,
From the care that will not cease,
From the lone and weary waiting,—
And it brings thee peace.*



CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE name "Israel" is often regarded as merely a national distinction, though from God's standpoint it possesses no such meaning. It was the name given by the Angel to the conquering Jacob. The man who had been a supplanter and a robber was transformed in that night of struggle into a man of faith. It was fitting that this change should be marked by the giving of a new name.

This title was afterward employed as a national designation for the descendants of Jacob. Yet with God it is still the conqueror's title—"the prince who has power with God." Whatever earthliness men may attach to it; whatever national distinctions it may suggest to their minds, with Jehovah it will ever bear His original idea, "The prince that has power with God." Nathaniel was "an Israelite indeed," one in whom there was no guile. John 1:47.

When the kingdom was divided in 975 B.C., "Israel" became the recognized distinctive title

for the Northern division, while the South was known as the "Kingdom of Judah." But in the restoration, and after, no separate divisions were recognized and "Israel" was again employed as a national title that included all the people. Ezra 6:17-21. It was so regarded in New Testament times, for Christ sent His disciples to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," hence their mission, at that time, only reached Palestine. Matt. 10:6.

Here it must be remembered that all the national promises made to Israel were written some five hundred years before Christ, either before or during the restoration from captivity. In Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, and the only one written after the return from captivity, no word is spoken regarding the restoration and no promise is given of dominant nationality.

God's original promises were made to Abraham and his "Seed," but that seed was "Christ"—not the Jews, hence nationality does not count with God. Gal. 3:16. "They are not all Israel that are of Israel," and the "children of the flesh are not the children of God." Rom. 9:6-8.

The Divine ideas concerning Israel were all spiritual rather than national. It was human thought that linked the name with national life. In later times both Christ and Paul recognized God's thought of spirituality in the "Seed," and the true Israel must be a people "in whom there is no guile." Through their rejection of Christ,—Jehovah's spiritualizer—and the subsequent overthrow of their city and nation, God has, of

necessity, set aside all plans concerning the national seed. But His promises to the spiritual seed still hold good and must all be fulfilled in Christ.

Neither Jew nor Gentile counts in God's plan of salvation to-day—only the child of faith is reckoned, for "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. There is now no difference between the Jew and the Greek. The same Lord and the same salvation is provided for both. Rom. 10:12.

In God's original design concerning the peopling of the earth, He had planned a kingdom with twelve divisions. The national people with their twelve divisions were intended to represent that kingdom. Deut. 32:8. The original design must finally obtain, and in that kingdom—"prepared from the foundation of the world"—there will be twelve thrones, twelve gates, twelve foundations, and twelve kings. Matt. 19:28. The earthly, with its plan and its people, was always, and only, a typical foreshadowing of the spiritual—the kingdom that is yet to be.

The 144,000 who are to complete God's kingdom-number will, through the everlasting gospel, be gathered from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Rev. 14:6, 7. When this is done God will return to man a pure language and the Babel-tongues will forever disappear. Zeph. 3:9.

In Revelation 7 we read of the gathering that God is to make. Unfortunately our translators

have made it appear as if this gathering was "from," instead of "for" the 12 divisions of Israel. The Greek word *ek*, translated "of" 13 times between verses 4 and 8, signifies, "of, out of, for, because of." It is translated in 25 different ways in the New Testament. In Matt. 20:2 it is translated "for," and also in Rev. 16:10. We would only be reading scripture in harmony with itself to thus translate it in the 13 times used in Rev. 7:4-8. Notice a few other ways it is translated, "among, because, by, over, to, since, reason." It is very evident that the word would rightly carry the translation "for," or "because of" rather than "of" as in our present reading.

The 144,000 are described as being "without guile," and as such are the true Israel of God, irrespective of earthly nationality. God is now, and always has been, seeking such characters for His kingdom.

Though Israel was once a "green olive tree," the branches were broken off "because of unbelief." Rom. 11:17-21. Now, children of faith must be grafted in to make up the number, "and so all Israel shall be saved." Like Jeremiah's typical earthen vessel, the city and its people have been broken "never to be made whole again." Jer. 19:11.

God will save His people, for faith's royal line is still being recorded in the books of heaven. Under Prince Emmanuel they will enter in to full possession of the Promised Land. But that promise embraces "the world," hence the true children of faith all over the world. Rom. 4:13.

Men seek vainly for the restoration of the national seed. All human anticipations and human endeavours in this direction must ultimately prove disappointing. In all endeavours at restoration now, man is putting the earthly in place of the heavenly, the fleshly in place of the spiritual, the national in place of the family of God, and the typical in place of the antitypical. The Deliverer *has* come out of Zion, but in rejecting Him the national seed have utterly rejected the plan of God.

Millionaires may give their treasures, national committees may formulate their plans, governments of earth may foster and favour the project, the nations may even decide that the Holy Land shall be given back to the people claiming descent from Abraham, but it will be in vain. Some *may return*, but the national seed differ so widely now in their ideals, in their country preferences, in their language, in their plans of government and in their policy for national existence, that a homogeneous commingling would be impossible. Many would not even wish to return, for their business and associations stand in the way just as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

In all this man may propose, but God's decision is final:—"I will overturn, . . . and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Ezek. 21:26, 27. Only in Christ can God's royal line be continued.

The great Teacher Himself pictured the impossibility of their national restoration when He preached that discourse which ends with the rich

man buried, and the poor man in "Abraham's bosom."

Christ stood with His disciples while the Pharisees gathered on one side and the Publicans on the other. Accused of associating with sinners, He told of the shepherd anxiously seeking the one sheep. It was found, borne home, and the neighbours called in to witness, so that the shepherd's work might be justified.

A woman loses a piece of silver; it is found and again, the neighbours are called in to rejoice. Her husband had presented her with a necklace of ten pieces, and in it there lay the evidence of her character. She would have her neighbours know that it had been accidentally lost, not taken away.

Next is the touching parable of the "prodigal son." The Pharisees are brought face to face with the selfish conduct of the "elder brother." The "younger brother" represented the Gentiles, who had wandered from God since the days of Nimrod.

To the Jews, as descendants of Heber through Abraham, had been committed the oracles of God. Now the Gentiles were returning to share the good things of the kingdom, but the "elder brother" was angry.

Following this, the steward, the very one entrusted with his Master's goods, is accused of unfaithfulness. He must be no longer steward. To the Jews were entrusted the oracles of God, the commandments and the promises. Rom. 9:4, 5. This trust had not been faithfully discharged. In Israel refusing the light of God to the nations,

their own light necessarily grew dim. The time had come for the change presented in the solemn words of the Greatest Prophet:—"The kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. 22: 43.

One picture remains in that notable discourse. The symbolic rich man, surrounded by all his blessings, dies. Lazarus, typifying the Gentile, is carried into the bosom of Abraham—the very place of preferment that the rich man had hoped to gain.

Here the lines of national history cross, and father Abraham himself is made to pronounce the sentence of a great gulf over which no one may pass.

Since their death as a nation, at the destruction of Jerusalem, how painfully sad has been the history of that people once clothed in the purple and fine linen of the priesthood of God. More than eighteen centuries have passed, but the pain, exile and spoliation has not ceased, and the great gulf is still fixed.

It is, therefore, of necessity that God must gather out of the *nations* a people for His name.



The City of God

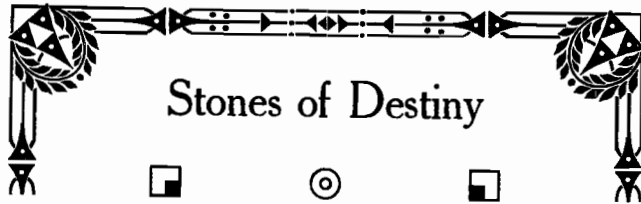
*Past the gleam of the moonlight that city is builded,
 Foundationed with jasper and gilded with gold;
 Its gateways supernal,
 Its skies ever vernal,
 Its glories eternal,
 Have never been told;
 And then, its inhabitants never grow old.*

*Past the blaze of the sunlight, in glory eternal,
 Its gem-crested turrets exultingly rise;
 No night ever falleth,
 No joy ever palleth,
 No saddened voice calleth
 In anxious surprise;
 For grief cannot enter that home in the skies.*

*Past the glory of star-worlds its archways are glowing,
 Undimmed by the death-shade of sorrow or pain;
 They rise in the splendour
 Of love-light so tender,
 That earth cannot render
 One shadowy stain;
 And then, all its beauties forever remain.*

*Past the reach of the mildew its holy expansions
 Extend as the ages eternally roll;
 While peace like a river,
 From God the great Giver,
 Flows onward forever
 In joyous control;
 And sorrow no longer can darken the soul.*

*How often, God help us, forgetful we linger,
 Enchanted by trifles that please but a day;
 While the gem-crested turrets that rise over yonder
 Invite us to mansions that cannot decay—
 To eternal treasure,
 To infinite pleasure,
 To joys beyond measure
 That pass not away;
 And yet 'tis for us though we walk on the sod,
 That city "whose Builder and Maker is God."*



CHAPTER TWELVE

OVER in Westminster Abbey there is an oak chair in which the kings of England have been crowned since 1296. Beneath, and forming part of the bottom of the chair there is a mysterious stone claimed to be the stone that served as Jacob's pillow when he saw the vision of angels, over three thousand five hundred years ago. Tradition follows it from Palestine to Ireland, from Ireland to Scotland, and from Scotland to England. In Ireland it was known as the "fatal stone," but of its origin and history little more can be learned.

The stones that composed the breastplate, worn by the ancient high priest, with the other mysterious stones of the Urim and Thummim, have all disappeared. But the reflection of them is seen over again in the foundations of the Holy City.

The stones in the breastplate were divisional, representative, and memorial stones. With them there was woven the history and destiny of the divisions of Israel. Engraven as a signet each of

the twelve stones bore one of the names of the twelve divisions. Twelve is God's kingdom number and each division of Israel was representative of one of the twelve thrones and divisions in the kingdom of God. Each tribe might have fulfilled its destiny, and finally obtained its place in the kingdom, but the picture was spoiled by disobedience and rebellion, and now the destiny of each is lost forever.

In the foundations of the Holy City the stones lost to men reappear, but they no longer bear the names of Israel. Instead the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are inscribed upon them.

Yet above the gateways to that city the twelve-division names are seen. Hence it must be that the *true followers* of the Lamb become the true Israel of God and enter in through the Israel-gates to the New Jerusalem.

With a reality unquestioned, a glory undimmed, a splendour unequalled, and a beauty unsurpassed by any creation on earth or in heaven, that Holy City rises beyond the mists that darken our vision as the home and the inheritance of the true Israel of God.

The Judæan kingdom had its ancient capital, but Jerusalem was only a typical city. Through it kings and prophets walked in the long ago, and the glory of the Eternal was seen in its temple. But the centuries cast their shadows over it, and it went down. Its very walls disappeared, and the Roman ploughshare sealed its desolation.

The kingdom of Babylon had its empire metropolis. There the treasures of a world were gathered. "Babylon the great" was the lofty title supplied by its kingly builder. But it has also disappeared. The ages have passed, and lo, it is not!

But to the new kingdom, the kingdom of peace, there will be given a capital that will not decay or grow old with the years—a capital that the hand of the spoiler cannot destroy or the mildew of time corrupt, for its "builder and maker is God." Heb. II : 10, 11.

Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms," the capital of earthly empires, had its streets of polished stones—the Holy City has its streets of burnished gold. Babylon had its walls of sun-dried brick—the Holy City has its walls of jasper. Babylon had foundations of clay and sand—the Holy City has foundations of jacinth, amethyst, and topaz. Babylon had gates of brass—the Holy City has its gates of pearl. Babylon was the dream of imperial glory—the Holy City is the plan of a Divine Architect.

The City of God has been planned with twelve divisions, and to these lead twelve gateways, where the pearl gates are hinged. Neither Gentile nor Jewish are those divisions, for they stand according to the eternal purpose of God. All who belong to the kingdom that is to be must pass in and out through one of those gates as the redeemed. No Gentile gate can be found; neither will it be needed, for no Gentile will be in the

kingdom. All numbered for immortality belong to the Israel of God, and when they go in or out from the city, with its twelve thrones, it will be as members of that kingdom planned from the foundation of the world. Matt. 25 : 34.

Rome, the city of the Cæsars, was thirteen miles in circumference; Memphis, the capital of Egypt, was nineteen miles round; Paris is twenty-five miles; London one hundred and sixty miles; while to walk around ancient Babylon would require a journey of sixty miles. But the City of God, the Holy City, is 1,500 miles in circumference, and its walls and foundations are all built of precious stones. Babylon was built of brick, Tyre of granite, Memphis of marble; but in the walls of the Holy City unfading rainbow glories are seen, for the true stones of empire are there. Isa. 54 : 11, 12.

Three entire chapters—one in the Old Testament and two in the New—are devoted to a description of this city. Isaiah 54 and the last two chapters of Revelation paint the picture of its marvellous beauty, while many other passages give glimpses here and there of its glory.

Notice, Abraham pitched his tent to rest through the night, but he looked "for a city that hath foundations." Heb. II : 10. Christ made the promise of a home "prepared" to His weary disciples. John 14 : 1-3. Isaiah writes of the land of "far distances," but in it there is the "city of our solemnities," the quiet habitation, the Jerusalem of peace. Isa. 33 : 17-20. Paul writes of

his visioned Paradise, but there he saw the Jerusalem that is "mother of us all." Gal. 4: 26.

Alexander the Great was wounded and sick unto death. He slept, and in his dreaming thought he had discovered a plant that if applied to the wound would heal and save. Messengers were sent forth in haste to find the plant he described, and the historian states that it was found, applied to the wound, and the world's conqueror lived. In the City of God, by the river of life, there grows a tree, the fruit of which ripens every month, and its "leaves are for the healing of the nations." Rev. 22: 2. Jehovah has placed some wondrous secret in the tree of life, and as it grows by the water of life, bearing its buds, blossoms, and fruit month by month, the inhabitants of that land say not, "I am sick."

The sun, robed in a sevenfold glory, will circle its course above that city of the jasper walls, yet the glory from within will shine in a splendour so supreme that the sun will no longer need to be the light-bearer, hence there will be "no night there." Isa. 30: 26.

"The nations of them that are saved" will walk in its light. Nationality, however, will not be known, for these are the divisions that God planned in His kingdom from the beginning. Not the nations divided by language and racial characteristics, but the twelve divisions, governed by the twelve thrones of the kingdom. No language difficulties will be known, for the tongue of the dumb will have been taught to sing, and the

inhabitants will speak the language of heaven. Zeph. 3: 9.

No robber will be there, neither the libertine, nor the impure. Only loyal hearts will throb to the pulsing of its music, and only the feet of love will walk its golden streets. No law-breakers will be admitted, for every one in that immortal congregation will attend at the Sabbath meeting to worship before the King. Isa. 66: 23. Month by month, as they gather to eat the fruit from the tree of life, and Sabbath by Sabbath as they join to worship, will the redeemed "see His face." The secrets of both time and eternity will then be revealed, and "we shall know even as also we are known."

Reader, do you live in some earthly city? Have you made it your home? If so, have you thought of how soon the rust will tarnish? or perhaps the earthquake destroy, or the flames consume? Or have you thought of how soon you must leave the trinkets you have gathered, as thousands are leaving them every day, for the grave? Think, think deeply and earnestly, and then decide to live for that city,—the Holy City,—"whose builder and maker is God."

"The cities of the nations fell." In these few graphic words the Patmos seer predicted the ruin of earthly greatness. The building of cities and city life has always claimed a large share of human attention. Since the days when Cain builded a city and hid behind its walls for safety from the avenger, men have continued to build

their cities. Walls of wood, of stone, of dried clay bricks, and even of rushes have been reared, and behind them men have endeavoured to find safety.

The hand of time has been busy levelling these structures with the dust, and it has often been a question whether the hand of time or the skill of man would win in the race. One fact, however, is so far evident, man has not been able to build anything that time has not been able to overthrow. Babylon's walls of sun-dried clay, Tyre's walls of rough granite, and the white marble walls of Memphis seem to have alike given way before its crumbling touch.

To-day men are planning for grander palaces, loftier buildings, more extensive cities, and costlier monuments than ever before. But they are doing it in spite of the protest of all ages, in disregard to the lessons of all time, and in opposition to all the warnings of Jehovah.

The architectural skill first given to man by the Creator was bestowed that man might build and beautify the Eden capital of this new world. Its walls were to be of jasper, its foundations of precious stones, its gateways of pearl, and its streets of gold—all beautiful and durable materials. But with the removal of that possibility man began to build for himself cities of clay. The world to-day is strewn with the ruins of temples and clay cities reared by the sons of men.

Over a thousand times the story of ruin has been told, but man will not learn the lesson. The city built by Cain, on the other side of the flood

has disappeared absolutely. Not one vestige remains to tell of its existence. On this side of the deluge, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Ecbatana, Memphis, Jerusalem, and the giant cities of Bashan, with Sodom and Gomorrah, have all gone down.

Still nearer, the horizon kindles with flame, and the earthquake rumbles, and again the cities go down. Pompeii and Herculaneum are folded in a mantle of burning dust. Rome of the "iron kingdom," the city of the Cæsars, desecrated by the Huns, spoiled by the Vandals, and plundered by Alaric and his Gothic followers, with the glory of eleven centuries of independence over it, went down. Lisbon was shaken to pieces by an earthquake in 1755. Paris was painted red by blood and fire in 1798 and again in 1870. In 1871 Chicago went down in a sheet of flame that measured nine miles, swallowing up 25,000 homes, and spoiling £1,000,000,000 worth of treasure. In 1905 San Francisco went down under the earthquake and flame, and soon after Martinique was overwhelmed by the volcano.

Thus it has been in the past, the richest and greatest of earth's cities have gone down. But the fiat of doom stretches over them all, for the Word still reads, "The cities of the nations fell."

Jeremiah, the prophet of Jerusalem's woe, gazed with tearful eyes upon the ruin of that sacred place. Then the vision changed, telling of a corresponding doom awaiting all empire cities—"All the cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord." Jer. 4:23-27.

Architects are building with iron frames and steel girders and reinforced concrete walls, hoping to find some means of withstanding the spoliations of time and fire and earthquake. But all in vain is their endeavour. The cities of the nations have fallen, and the cities of the nations will fall.

Where is your inheritance? In some earthly Babylon or Sodom? Is it measured by lot and insured? Stone-faced, may be its building, and, withal, of modern design? But none of these things will stand. The earthquake has proved its power to overthrow, and the fire its strength to destroy, while the hand of time has effaced the fairest monuments of human skill.

If you are depending upon anything terrestrial your hopes must perish, and if your treasure should for awhile escape, the finality of all things approaches, when the cities shall go down! "The Lord will shake terribly the earth," and beyond that shaking, man's tinsel treasures, his habitations of clay, and his cities will all be scattered in a nameless ruin.

In his prophetic picture of the new creation, Isaiah tells of the "solitary place" being glad, and of "the desert blossoming as the rose." The snow-whiteness of Lebanon and the flower-glories of Sharon are set forth as lending their beauty and fragrance to the visioned landscape over which "the sun shall no more go down."

Thorns and briars, uprooted forever, give place to the fir tree and the myrtle—emblems of

peace and prosperity—while all the trees of the new creation clap their hands in gladness. The beasts of the field, long estranged by their thirst for blood, join in a friendship without dissimulation; and "the lion and the ox eat straw together."

The inhabitants of that land say not, "I am sick;" neither do they weep, for the days of mourning are ended. Opened are the blind eyes, and unstopped are the deaf ears, while the stammering tongue is loosened to join in the song of eternity. Pain is banished forever, for they neither "hurt nor destroy" in the holy inheritance. Sunlight-glories of "sevenfold" splendour fall over vale and wood, both at noontide and the gloaming, for "there is no night there." The pale moon, walking in garments of honoured brightness, hitherto worn by the day-star, ascends the upper skies in sun-robcs that darken not at the eventide.

The City, garnished with all manner of precious stones, has its foundations of jasper, of sapphire, and of amethyst. Pearl gateways open on streets of gold, and above the carbuncled walls rise sun-pinnacles of agate that reflect back the rainbow shadings that surround the throne.

There the redeemed shall see His face—the face of the Beloved, earth's "Man of sorrows," once "led as a lamb to the slaughter," but now King and Father of eternity. Thronging multitudes of immortals crowd the many mansions, and strike the harp-chords of the everlasting hymn.

Then, month by month the tree of life spreads

its golden harvest before the inhabitants of the "land of far distance," and from Sabbath to Sabbath they assemble to worship the "King in His beauty." Gathered from all lands, now citizens of the better country, they "plant and build" with their days measured only by the years of the tree of life—the long, glad, endless years that make up eternity.

The river flows on—the broad river, wherein no galley with oars will float to tell of toil or struggle, and in its sweet murmurings there is heard the soft whisper of "Peace, peace to thy children"—peace for evermore.

Reader, will you share that inheritance? will you enter that city and gaze upon those stones of destiny? will you walk amid the stones of fire that border the pathways that lead to the shrine of the Eternal? The precious stones of earth, the inscribed stones of the ancient breastplate and the stone of Jacob's dream are all but trifles now. A transfer has been made and we must look to the city of God for all the true stones of destiny.

The glory of that New Jerusalem will eclipse every memorial of the earthly city, and in its splendour all nationality will be forgotten! Gathered from all lands the redeemed dwell in safety, for Jerusalem, which is above, "is the mother of us all!"

