WRITINGS OF ISAAC LEESER

by Isaac Leeser

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Isaac Leeser, compiled for study and devotional reading.

110 Chapters

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01.0.0. Catechism for Jewish Children

CATECHISM FOR

JEWISH CHILDREN

DESIGNED AS A Religious Manual FOR HOUSE AND SCHOOL "Which ye shall command your children, to observe to do all the words of this law."

Deuteronomy 32:40 By ISAAC LEESER.

PHILADELPHIA:

STEREOTYPED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY L. JOHNSON & Colossians 5623/1863 Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1839, by

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01.01. Religion in General

CHAPTER I RELIGION IN GENERAL 1. What is religion?

Religion is the knowledge we have of God, and the duties we owe in obedience to His will.

2. What do you mean by saying, "I believe in God?"

I believe, that every thing I see around me, the trees, the flowers, the earth, the water, also the sun and the moon, and the thousands of bright stars that shine so beautifully in the sky, were made by the great Creator, whom we call "The Almighty God."

3. What object do you think God had in creating so many varied living creatures, and especially man? Their happiness: that is to say, God made them, not for his own sake, since He cannot be assisted by them, but in order that they might have the means and capacities to rejoice in their existence, and to become better and wiser by education and the knowledge of His will.

4. What should we then do to become happy?

We should endeavour to obtain a correct knowledge of those actions which our Creator bids us do, and to omit no opportunity to do that which we have learned to be the right, and agreeable to His will.

5. What will be the result of this conduct? That we shall feel an inward joy, or, as it is called, a consciousness of having done right, a repose of mind, and a tranquil conscience.

6. What is meant by Conscience?

It is that sensation which tells us (if we have been correctly instructed) whether we have done right or wrong; and if our conduct has been correct, it makes us feel satisfied; but if we have done wrong, it makes us ashamed and dissatisfied with ourselves.

7. How would you term these two different states of feeling?

I would call the first a tranquil conscience, the second a disturbed conscience.

8. What should be your choice, as a reasonable and good child?

I ought to endeavour to have an easy conscience and to do nothing which can in any way disturb it, or make me ashamed of myself.

9. Can you tell me what you are to do first, in order to obtain this?

I must first of all learn to know what is right, and to distinguish between this and what is wrong.

10. Have you now any idea what is right?

Yes; if I do what God has commanded us to do, certainly must act correctly; since one so good as He is, could teach nothing which is hurtful.

11. What is wrong? To do that which God has forbidden us to do.

12. How can you obtain a knowledge of this? By a careful study of religion; that is, those doctrines and directions which we have received as a declaration of the will of God, which we must learn and obey in order to obtain happiness.

13. What would you call "being religious?" Not only to know these doctrines and directions, and to believe them, but also to obey them and live accordingly.

14. What is the foundation of religion or knowledge of God? and from what source do we derive the doctrines of which you just now spoke? The existence and power of God are taught to us by His greatness, which He has manifested in the creation and arrangement of external nature; and the doctrines of religion, which regard our faith and conduct, are derived from the revealed word of God.

15. What do you understand by the term "external nature?" The visible world, which we perceive by our senses, as also the whole system of creation. The greatness and extreme regularity of all things of which we have knowledge, or of which we hear from others, all unite in teaching us that there must be a God, or Creator supremely great, who has made all, and fixed all as we find it.

16. How may you call this acknowledgement of God?

NATURAL RELIGION, or religious knowledge and faith derived from a study of the Creator’s works.

17. What is meant by a belief in Revelation? That the Lord God made His will known by communicating to us, in a manner perceptible to our senses, those duties which He has thought proper to give us as the direction for our conduct.

18. Where do we find these duties described?

They are contained in HOLY WRIT.

19. What is Holy Writ? A collection of books written by divine inspiration.

20. What do you call "Inspiration?"

Inspiration is the knowledge of the truth which God imparted to men of great piety, who were particularly sincere in serving Him. He gave them this knowledge in order that they might teach to other men the duties they ought to observe, that they might thereby obtain happiness and felicity.

21. How should we regard this Holy Writ? As the word of God, kindly sent us from heaven to teach us how to please God by our actions.

22. How do we call the doctrines contained in Holy Writ collectively? THE REVEALED RELIGION.

23. Do Revealed and Natural Religion agree?

Yes; because both are the gift of God: both are addressed to our reason, and can therefore not contradict each other.

24. What would you call those ideas which are not taught either by Revealed or Natural Religion?

Irreligion, superstition, and false belief.

25. Do all men belong to the same religion?

No; there are different species of religion; but they all agree in acknowledging a supreme Being, to whom mankind are bound to render adoration.

26. In what do men differ?

Men are not of the same opinion concerning the word of God, and serve not the Lord in the same manner.

27. What is the cause of this difference?* *This question might be omitted in the first reading of the book. At first all men had the same knowledge of God’s will; but by degrees superstition and false belief were intermixed by wicked men with the pure truth which they had received, and they taught their children not the correct knowledge of the Lord. In this manner different nations by degrees obtained different versions of the Holy Word of God; and these differences are called different religious systems; whereas, in point of fact, there is but one true religion, the one taught in the books of Holy Writ contained in the Bible.

28. What do you understand by "Irreligion?"

Actions contrary to the doctrines contained in Holy Writ, or a denial of the Divine Power.

29. What is "Superstition?"

Superstition is when we look upon things not commanded in the bible as of religious importance, or when we imagine certain unimportant things to have consequences which they naturally do not possess.

30. What is "False Belief?"

False belief is that awful error which men are guilty of when they imagine that any thing can be possessed of Divine power, except the great Creator alone. Likewise, to imagine that the Creator is divided into different persons, or that He is liable to change or death. Such false belief we call IDOLATRY.

31. You have mentioned the word Bible: what is it? The collection of books of HOLY WRIT.

32. In how many parts do you divide the Bible?

Into three:--The Law, or TORAH, containing the directions and commandments of Religion; the Prophets, or NEBEEIM, containing historical records and foretellings of future events; and the Hagiographa, Holy Writings, or KETOOBIM, containing psalms, moral reflections, and historical records of a later period than the prophets.

33. What do you now understand by speaking of a particular Religion? the belief which a nation or a people are attached to, the system which they have received, and by the doctrines of which they endeavour to Acts 34. Is it right to quarrel about difference in Religion?

No; belief is a matter over which every person must be permitted to decide in his own conscience, according to the knowledge which has been given him; it is wrong to hate or despise any one

because he has a different belief from ourselves.

01.02. The Mosiac Religion in Particular

Chapter II The Mosaic Religion in Partiticular 1. What religion do you profess?

I believe in the Mosaic Religion, which was revealed by the Lord; and I esteem the same as the true, pure, and unmixed word of God.

2. Are you firmly convinced of the truth of this belief?

I am firmly and completely convinced of the truth thereof, for the following reason: because the Mosaic Religion is based upon that celebrated revelation which God imparted in the immediate presence of a whole people, amidst extraordinary signs and wonders.

3. What is the peculiar distinguishing feature of the Mosaic Religion?

It teaches that there is but one God, and that He is incorporeal and indivisible; that is to say, that there exists no other being who has power to create any thing, or to destroy the least of those things which God has made. That this God does not possess a material figure like all those things which we can perceive by our senses, which are called corporeal or bodily substances; and that lastly, He cannot by any means be divided into different parts, being always the same, and not liable to change.

4. Whence is the name "Mosaic Religion" derived? From MOSES, the son of Amram, of the tribe of Levi, through whom God communicated his law to the people of Israel. So also teaches the Bible:

"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, to whom I commanded on Horeb statutes and judgments for all Israel." Malachi 4:4.

5. Was not the Deity known and worshipped already before Moses?

Yes; for the patriarchs, and even before them, Enoch and Noah, acknowledged the Lord God, and worshipped Him.

"Enoch walked with God, and was no more here; for God had taken him away. Genesis 5:24.

"Noah was a righteous, upright man in his generation: Noah walked with God." Ibid. Genesis 6:9.

6. Who were the Patriarchs? The original fathers of the Israelitish people, now called the Jews: these were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or Israel.

"And He (God) spoke, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Exodus 3:6.

7. Why is Abraham called the first Patriarch?

Because he was the first with whom God made a covenant on account of his piety and devotion to the service of the Lord.

8. In what consisted the covenant on the part of Abraham? In the circumcision of all the males of his family; for this was to be the sign of the consecration to Divine service, which Abraham covenanted, that is, agreed, to perform in himself and his descendants during all succeeding ages.

"And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Genesis 17:13.

9. What was the covenant on the part of God? That He would bestow his peculiar favour on Abraham and his descendants, as a reward of their obedience to his will. As we read:

"And I will establish my covenant between me and between thee, and thy descendants after thee, in all their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy descendants after thee." Genesis 17:7.

10. To whom was the observance of this covenant commanded?

Only the family of the patriarchs and those belonging to them were bound to its observance; but it was not required of any others.

11. Did God make himself known to the Patriarchs?

Yes; for He appeared to them at times in nightly dreams and indistinct visions, to make known unto them his will.

"After these events came the word of the Lord unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, thy reward is very great." Genesis 15:1.

"And the Lord spoke to Israel in the dream of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob! and he said, Here am I." Genesis 46:2.

12. By what name did God make himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

He appeared to them as EL SHADDAY, the Almighty God, whose power is not limited by that of any existing being, and who is able to execute and do all that He desires.

"And the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am the God Shadday, walk before me and be perfect." Genesis 17:1.

"And God spoke with Moses, and said to him, I am the Everlasting One: I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Shadday." Exodus 6:2-3.

13. In what manner did the Patriarchs worship the God Shadday?

They feared God, and believed truly in his word and promises; they built altars in honour of Him, and confided in his power.

"And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and He accounted to him as righteousness." Genesis 15:6.

"And Jacob erected a pillar of stone in the place where He had spoken with him; and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the place where God had spoken with him, BETH-EL (the house of God)." Genesis 35:14-15.

14. Do you know the name of the country in which the Patriarchs lived?

It was called the country of Canaan, and is situated on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. This country God promised to Abraham as the peculiar property of his children; and it is therefore called the Land of Promise, also Palestine, the Holy Land, or the Land of Israel.

"And I will give unto thee, and to thy descendants after thee, the land wherein thou sojournest, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Genesis 17:8.

15. Can you recite any passages from Scripture wherein is mentioned the peculiar protection which God promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob? To Abraham it was said:

"And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall be blessed all the families of the earth." Genesis 12:2-3. To Isaac was promised:

"Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I have sworn unto Abraham thy father; and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven; and I will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 26:3-4. And lastly, concerning Jacob we read:

"And behold the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land, whereon thou liest, I will give to thee and thy descendants; and thy descendants shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 28:13-14.

16. Had Abraham and Isaac any children who were not included in the great nation that was to descend from Abraham?

Yes; for Abraham had Ishmael and other sons, and Isaac had Esau, who were not included in the great nation through whom all the world should be blessed; for this promise was given only to the whole family of Jacob.

17. Of how many persons did this family consist? Of twelve sons, who were the parents of the twelve tribes, or families into which the people of Israel were formerly divided.

18. You just now said that the Patriarchs lived in the land of Canaan: did Jacob and his sons always continue to live there?

No; Joseph, one of these sons, had been sold by his brothers as a slave to some Ishmaelitish merchants who traded to Egypt, a country situated on the northeastern corner of Africa; where, by direction of God, he was at last made the chief officer of the king of Egypt; and when his father heard, after many years, that he was yet alive, he was induced to go there to see his son Joseph before he died.

19. Be good enough to give me some farther account of what took place in consequence? When Jacob had arrived, the kind of Egypt, called Pharaoh, told Joseph to give his father and brothers as much land as they wanted in the country of Goshen, one of the divisions of Egypt; Joseph did so, and the family of Jacob settled there in peace and security. But when Jacob, Joseph, and all

the people of that time, had died, and when the Egyptians found that the Israelites grew to be a numerous people, they began to be afraid of them, and resolved to injure them.

20. by what means did they try to do this? As the Egyptians were the strongest in number, that is to say, that there were more Egyptians than Israelites, they compelled these to work for them as slaves, and they treated them with great cruelty.

"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel labour with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." Exodus 1:13-14.

21. Was hard labour the only consequence of the cruelty of the Egyptians? By no means; the faith which the patriarchs professed was in a great measure forgotten during a slavery which lasted nearly two hundred years, and the Israelites by degrees learned the idolatry and false belief of the Egyptians.

22. By what means was the true faith again restored? When the sufferings of the Israelites had become very great, God sent his servant, the prophet Moses, to ask of the king of Egypt to let Israel go free; and when this was refused, Moses wrought unheard-of wonders by Divine power, and at length delivered the Israelites, and led them out from the land of Egypt.

"And Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed in the Lord, and in Moses his servant." Exodus 16:31.

23. Was this all that Moses was the instrument of doing for the people of Israel?

It was but the first act of the mission which God sent him to perform.

24. Can you tell me the other purpose for which God used him?

He was chosen as the means to unite Israel in the second and permanent covenant with god.

"Face to face the Lord spoke with you on the mount, from the midst of the fire; I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to tell unto you the word of the Lord; for ye were afraid of the fire, and ye ascended not the mount." Deuteronomy 5:4-5.

25. In what consisted the second covenant? The Israelites accepted for themselves and their latest descendants the laws of God’s holy religion.

"The Lord our God made with us a covenant on Horeb. Not with our forefathers made the Lord this covenant, but with ourselves, who are here all alive this day." Deuteronomy 5:2-3.

26. In what manner was this covenant made?

God, the Lord, descended in his glory on Mount Sinai, also called Horeb, and announced to all the people of Israel, who were there assembled, his holy law; and all the people said: "We will do and obey."

"And the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount, and the Lord called Moses unto the top of the mount, and Moses went up." Exodus 19:20.

27. How is this covenant called in Scripture? The covenant on Horeb, or the revelation and Divine legislation on Sinai. this revelation also we consider as the holiest and greatest of all revelations known to us.

28. Why do you call it the holiest?

First. Because God revealed himself, that is, He made himself known to the whole people, which never took place upon any other occasion; as we read:

"And all the people perceived the thunders and the flames, and the sound of the cornet, and the smoking mount." Genesis 20:15.

Secondly. The ten commandments made known on that day were afterwards written upon two tables of stone by the finger of God.

"And when He had finished speaking to Moses upon Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Exodus 31:18.

Thirdly. The tables of the testimony were kept as the most holy thing in the ark of the covenant.

"And he (Moses) took the testimony and placed it in the ark; placed the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat on the ark above the same." Exodus 40:20.

"There was nothing in the ark but the two tables of stone, which Moses had put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they went out of the land of Egypt." 1 Kings 8:9.

29. Where did the revelation of the other commandments take place?

Likewise at Sinai, in the first instance; but no more than the ten commandments were told to the whole people by God; but He told them to Moses, who had to tell them afterwards to the people of Israel.

"And the Lord said to Moses, Ascend unto me upon the mount and remain there, and I will give thee the tables of stone, the law and the commandment which I have written, to teach them. --And Moses went into the cloud and ascended the mount, and Moses stayed upon the mount forty days and forty nights." Exodus 24:12; Exodus 24:18.

30. Can you state to me something of the subsequent history of the people, after the revelation on Sinai, which is closely connected with the revelation of the law?

After the Israelites had remained for nearly a whole year in the wilderness of Sinai, they travelled farther in the direction of the land of Canaan, in order to take possession of it, --the land which God had (as we said already) promised to Abraham, for an everlasting possession to his descendants. As they were now no longer near Horeb, the few remaining laws, not already made known to them, were told to Moses from the mercy-seat, as the cover of the ark of the testimony was called.

"And when Moses went into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim: and thus did He speak with him." Numbers 7:89.

31. Is there any difference in the holiness of the commandments first given to Abraham, and afterwards to Moses in Egypt, on Horeb, and from the mercy-seat, and the ten commandments, spoken before the whole people?

No; they are all alike the will of God, and therefore we are bound to obey the whole of them as the best source of our happiness.

"All the commandments which I command you this day you must observe to do, in order that you may live, and multiply, and go and possess the land, which the Lord swore unto your fathers." Deuteronomy 8:1.

32. You said above that God revealed himself to the Patriarchs in nightly dreams and in indistinct visions: did He appear to Moses in a similar manner?

No; God spoke to Moses, as the Bible expresses it, face to face, as one man speaks to another; meaning, that Moses was awake, conscious of what took place, and heard with perfect distinctness the commandments aas they were spoken to him.

"And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet like you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision, speak with him in a dream; not so is my servant Moses, who is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth I speak with him, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and he beholdeth the similitude of the Lord." Numbers 12:6-8.

33. How is Moses, therefore, to be considered?

We must consider him as the greatest of prophets and lawgivers; and as the benefactor of all mankind no less than of our people in particular.

34. Why do you say that Moses was the greatest prophet?

Because the bible testifies concerning him:

"And there arose not a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." Deuteronomy 34:10.

35. How is this expression to be understood? That Moses had more knowledge of the wisdom and goodness of God than any man who lived before him, or any one that will come after him; and that he was more than any other person the means of spreading a knowledge of the true and ever-living God, the sole Creator and incorporeal Ruler, among the people of Israel, from whom it will at last be carried to all the children of man.

36. Under what name did God announce himself to Moses?

He called himself the Everlasting and Unending One, He who was, who is, and who will be.

"And He spoke to Moses, I am He that every will be: and He said, Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I WILL BE hath sent me to you." Exodus 3:14.

37. Why do you say that Moses was the greatest legislator?

Because the laws which he taught are founded upon the wisdom of God, and, being given by Him, they will stand for ever.

38. Why is he the benefactor of the whole human family?

Because Moses was the first, and the only one, who received the law of God from heaven, and taught mankind thereby how they can live in a manner pleasing to the Lord. All the later prophets and legislators, as also all teachers of morals and religion, followed but in the way he pointed out, since no new doctrine or any ptractible virtue has been made known to men after the death of Moses.

39. Why is he called the particular benefactor of our people?

Because the law was in the first instance taught to our forefathers, they being the children of the patriarchs, with whom, as we said, the Lord had made a covenant that He would be a God to them, and to their children after them. By its possession, also, we have at all times since the revelation on Sinai been blessed with a knowledge of Divine truths, and of the manner by which we could please our Heavenly Kind, even whilst all the rest of mankind were believers in false religions, and did those things which are hateful in the sight of God. Thus we also read:

"The law which Moses commanded us is an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." Deuteronomy 33:4.

. Can you tell me the chief articles of belief which the Mosaic Religion demands?

First. the belief in one only God, and in the superintending providence of this God.

Second. The belief in the religion revealed by God through the means of Moses and the other prophets, and in the permanence of this religion.

Third. The belief in a reward of the good and a punishment of the evil we have done after our death, even if in our present life we may escape the punishment or not receive the reward due to our actions.

01.03. God and His Attributes

Chapter III God and His Attributes 1. What is the first article of the Jewish faith?

I believe firmly and truly that there is ONE God, who has created the heavens, the earth, and all creatures which are therein; I farther believe that the Lord God preserves his creatures by his continual watchfulness, and that He governs all by his all-seeing care; that is to say, that nothing ever happens to them which He has not ordained or sent to them.

"Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 18:30.

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all their host with the breath of his mouth. He gathereth together as a heap the waters of the sea, He layeth up the depths in storehouses." Psalms 33:6-7.

"All these wait upon thee, to give them their food in due season; they gather that which thou providest for them; Thou openest thy hand, and they are filled with good; Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; Thou takest away their breath, they perish and return to their dust; Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: thus Thou renewest the face of the earth." Psalms 103:27-30 Psalms 104:27-30.

"He made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein; He keepeth truth for ever; He executeth judgment for the oppressed; He giveth bread to the hungry. The Lord looseneth the prisoners; the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind; the Lord raiseth those who are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous; the Lord protecteth strangers; He relieveth the fatherless and the widow; but the way of the wicked He overthroweth." Psalms 146:6-9; Psalms 145:6-21. Are you convinced of the existence of God?

Yes; I am firmly convinced that there is a Creator. For every thing which I find in every direction around me must have been made by some one more powerful than every such thing itself is; and this superior power, as I have said before, I call God the Creator, He who first caused every being to have existence, shape, and form.

"In the beginning god created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1.

"Raise your eyes to heaven, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number, calleth them all by name." Isaiah 40:26.

3. Could not Chance have produced the world; that is to say, could the world not have been made as we find it, without design by an intelligent Creator?

No; chance cannot have any order or regularity; but we find in every part of the universe that it is governed by fixed laws, and that the greatest regularity prevails in every thing; and this could only have been made by a wise and intelligent Maker.

"Thus saith the Lord who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who shaketh the sea that its waves roar, the Lord of Hosts is his name." Jeremiah 31:35.

"Praise Him, ye sun and moon; praise Him, all ye stars of light; praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens; let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded, and they were created. He also established them for ever and ever; He gave a decree which shall not pass away." Psalms 148:3-6.

4. Can we see God?

No; God is a spirit and cannot be seen by human eyes.

"And he said to him (Moses), Thou canst not see my face, for no man can see me and live." Exodus 33:20.

"Take ye, therefore, good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of figure on the day that the Lord spoke with you on Horeb, out of the midst of the fire." Deuteronomy 4:15.

5. You said "God is a Spirit;" what do you mean by "Spirit?" A living, invisible being, which is nevertheless possessed of power, reason, and will.

6. How can such a being be known?

Through the spirit dwelling in man; that is to say, we can recognise or discover a spirit through the working of our soul or mind, which is likewise a spirit.

7. Is man then a Spirit? Not as far as his body is concerned, which can be seen and felt; but the power through which this body moves, breathes, thinks, and lives, is a spirit, acting without being known, and is not seen by the eyes; or, in other words, we are composed of body and soul, of matter and spirit.

8. How do you now wish to be understood by saying that God is known to us?

We know Him through the knowledge which He has placed within our souls. He has given us intellect and thought more than to any other animated thing with which we are acquainted; and planted in us a spirit which is not like the outward world, in order that we might understand his ways and acknowledge Him as our Creator. I would call this briefly, God has revealed himself to our spirit.

"I thank Thee that I am so fearfully, wonderfully made; incomprehensibly wonderful are thy works, this my soul knoweth right well." Psalms 139:14.

9. In what manner did god reveal himself to our spirit?

First, Through the CREATION: all nature proves that it had a Creator, that his power is without end or limit; and thus is God visible to our mind through his works.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse tells of the work of his hands." Psalms 19:1.

Secondly, Through the HOLY SCRIPTURES: God is known to us by his holy word.

"He made known his ways to Moses, his wonderful deeds unto the children of Israel." Psalms 103:7.

10. What do we farther learn from the works and the revelation of God? That God is the most perfect spirit.

11. What do you mean by "the most perfect Spirit?" That in Him there exist power, wisdom, and will, in the highest degree. God is perfect in all his qualities; there is nothing defective in his power, for He is able to do whatever he desires; He is the Author of all wisdom, and his happiness is without any mixture of sorrow or suffering.

"Who is like unto Thee, O Lord! among the mighty? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, tremendous in praises, working miracles?" Exodus 15:11.

"There is none like Thee, O Lord! Thou art great, and great is thy name in might. Who should not fear Thee, O King of the nations? for to Thee it doth appertain; for among the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like Thee." Jeremiah 10:6-7.

"With Him is wisdom and might; His are counsel and understanding." Job 12:13.

12. How do we call these perfect qualities?

God’s attributes and ways.

"the way of God is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; He is a buckler to all those who trust in Him." 2 Samuel 22:31.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9.

13. What does Holy Writ teach us concerning the nature of God?

First. That the Lord is ONE and the only God; there is no deity beside Him.

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is ONE." Deuteronomy 6:4.

"Know, therefore, this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, and on the earth beneath, there is none else." Ibid. Deuteronomy 4:39.

"I am the Lord, and none else, there is no god beside me. -- I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Isaiah 45:5-7.

Secondly. That God is an everlasting being; He has had no beginning, and cannot have an end; we cannot imagine a time when He was not, nor think of a period when He will be no more; He was, He is, and He ever will be.

"Thus speaketh the Lord, Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord of the universe (Zebaoth), I am the first and I am the last, and without me there is no god."Isaiah 44:6.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Psalms 90:2.

Thirdly. God is a self-existent, unchangeable Being. He received not his existence and power from any other being, and He suffers no change with increase of years and change of circumstances. He is and lives through his own power, and is always the same.

"I, the Lord, change not; and you, sons of Jacob, shall not cease to be." Malachi 3:6.

"Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. they will perish, but thou wilt subsist; yea, they will wax old as a garment, as a vesture Thou wilt change them, and they will be altered. But Thou art the same, and thy years have no end." Psalms 102:25-27.

14. What would you derive from the latter doctrine, that God is unchangeable? That the promises of God are likewise unchangeable, and that He promises nothing which will not ultimately be strictly fulfilled. For, as He is unchangeable himself, He cannot say any thing which He would afterwards be unwilling or unable to execute, as this would prove an uncertainty of purpose, which is in fact a change, or an inability to do his will, which is a want of power.

"God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that he should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and not fulfil it?" Numbers 23:19.

"And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent." 1 Samuel 15:29.

15. What do the Scriptures teach concerning the attributes of God?

First. God is almighty; He can at all times do whatever He wills.

"Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. for He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it was established." Psalms 33:8-9.

Secondly. God is the wisest of all beings, or, as it is called, He is all-wise, or the Supreme Wisdom. He, therefore, always uses the best means to attain the best results; that is, the means He employs to do any thing are the best possible for that purpose, and nothing that He attempts is otherwise than wise and beneficial.

"Dost thou not know? or hast thou not heard? the God of everlasting is the Lord, He created the ends of the earth; He is not fatigues, and He is not weary; there is no searching of his understanding." Isaiah 40:28.

"But wisdom, where is it found; and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not its value, it is not found in the land of the living. It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the fowl of heaven. God alone understandeth its way, and He knoweth its place." Job 28:12-13, Job 28:21-24.

16. Where do you find the proofs of this Supreme Wisdom? The whole mass of created things forms but one chain of beings; that is to say, as in a chain one link is connected with and supports those next to it, so is one being depending upon and connected with the others, and forms thus one link, as it were, of the great chain of creatures which were produced by the will of the Great Supreme. There is no break anywhere to be found, all is in unison and harmony, and nothing is which has not its use and its object.

"The Lord hath with wisdom founded the earth, ordained the heavens with understanding." Proverbs 3:19.

17. You say, There is nothing which has not its use and object; can we always discover them ourselves? Not in every case; but of so many things do we readily find out for what they are useful and why they were so made, that we must reasonable conclude that the others, which we do not know so well, are equally useful, and the effects of wisdom and foresight.

18. What else do the Scriptures teach concerning the attributes of God?

Thirdly. God is omnipresent; that is to say, He is present in every place in the whole universe; there is, consequently, no spot in heaven or earth where God is not, and where He does not live and act.

"Am I then but a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not also a god afar off? Could a man so hide himself in a secret place that I could not see him? saith the Lord; do I not fill the heavens to the earth? saith the Lord." Jeremiah 23:23-24.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there, and if I should lie down in the deep, I should find Thee. Should I fly on the wings of the morning-dawn, to dwell at the farthest end of the sea, even there thy hand would lead me, and thy right hand would seize me." Psalms 139:7-10.

Fourthly. God is omniscient; that is to say, He knows every thing which any man does or thinks. Nothing is so secret, concealed, or mysterious, but the Lord knows it, and the cause thereof.

"I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 17:10.

"O Lord, Thou hast searched, and knowest me. Do I sit, do I rise, it is known to Thee: already afar thou probest my thoughts. My walk and my couch Thou hast measured for me, and prepared all my ways. Before yet a word was upon my tongue, Thou, O Lord! didst know all." Psalms 139:1-4.

Fifthly. God is all-just; that is to say, that nothing which is unjust is ever done by Him. He pays no attention to the person of any one, He only looks upon the deed; He loves the good and hates the evil. If, therefore, a poor or foolish man does any good action, God will look upon it with equal favour as though a rich and wise man had done the same. If a wrong act is done by the greatest man, even though he be as great as Moses and wise as Solomon, God will send the punishment which the sin deserves. And though we may not always be able to understand the reason for God’s action upon earth, we must reflect that our wisdom is not equal to his wisdom; and that, therefore, the doings of the Lord are without fault, though our mortal reason is not able to understand his motives and the causes of his actions.

"For the Lord, your God, is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords; the great, mighty, and terrible God, who hath no regard for persons, and receiveth no bribes; who executeth justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger to give him food and raiment." Deuteronomy 10:17-18.

"He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are just: the God of truth, without iniquity; just and upright is He." Deuteronomy 32:4.

"For Thou art not a god delighting in wickedness; no evil shall dwell with Thee." Psalms 5:4.

Sixthly. God is all-good, gracious and merciful; He loves all his creatures, and provides for all their wants. More than we deserve we obtain from his bounty; and when we even transgress his commandments He readily forgives us, if we only repent of our errors. He repays us not the evil we do, but in his mercy overlooks our thoughtless sins, and visits with mild punishment our wilful transgressions.

"The Lord passed by before him (Moses) and proclaimed, The Lord is the immutable, eternal Being, and omnipotent God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in beneficence and truth; keeping mercy even unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Exodus 34:6-7.

"The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works. The eyes of all wait on Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest all beings with beneficence." Psalms 145:8-9, Psalms 145:15-16.

19. Has God any other perfections?

Yes; and no human thought can think them all, no human tongue can repeat them all. God is elevated above all our reflections; we see Him in his works, we recognise him by his goodness; but our understanding cannot reach a knowledge of all his ways, all his power, all his wisdom, all his goodness.

"Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord, tell all his praise?" Psalms 106:2.

20. What attribute do you call this great perfection?

God’s holiness: He is the holiest being; there is nothing imperfect in Him, but all is truth, goodness, greatness.

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Isaiah 6:3.

"To whom would ye compare me, that I should be like him? saith the Holy One." Isaiah 40:25.

Chapter 5

01.04. The Relationship of God to man

CHAPTER IV The Relation of Man to God 1. In what relation do we stand to God?

God is our Father, and we are his children.

"You are children of the Lord your God." Deuteronomy 24:1.

"For Thou art our Father; for Abraham knoweth nothing of us; Israel recogniseth us not; Thou, O Lord! art out Father; our Redeemer is from everlasting thy name." Isaiah 63:16.

"But now, O Lord! Thou art our Father; we are the clay, Thou art our Former, and we all are the work of thy hand." Isaiah 64:8.

2. What is accordingly the conduct of God towards us?

God loves us as a father loves his child, and He desires only our welfare. Every created thing on earth is for our benefit; the ground is for our labour that it may produce bread for our support; the light of the sun is to gladden our eyes, and to bring to ripeness the labour of our hands; so are also the various animals destined to aid man in his work and pursuits, or to benefit him in various other ways, (if even the method is unknown to him,) or they serve him as food: in short, all nature is so organized as to sustain, assist, or gladden the heart of, the son of man.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. and God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree on which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food." Genesis 1:28-29.

3. What is, therefore, required of us? that we should repay the love of God with sincere love on our part, and return Him our heartfelt thanks for his many benefits. For as the child ought to love the father from whom he receives his daily food, the garments which cover him, and the instruction which teaches him the righteous way: so ought we to love our heavenly Father and Benefactor for his innumerable acts of goodness, and thank Him daily for the bounties which He so graciously bestows on us, although we be unworthy of his favour.

"He giveth food to all flesh; for his mercy endureth for ever. O! give thanks unto the God of heaven; for his mercy endureth for ever." Psalms 136:25-26. In what manner can we display our love to God? By using the gifts which He has given us for the best purposes. To hold whatever we possess as liable to be at all times taken back, when He in his wisdom may see fit to take it away from us. To devote our possessions to acts of benevolence towards other human beings, who are, like ourselves, children of the same great Father.

"For all things come from Thee, and of thy own have we given thee." 1 Chronicles 29:14.

5. How can we thank God? By impressing on our mind the great goodness which we receive from the Supreme Being.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not any of his benefits." Psalms 103:1-2.

6. How should we express by outward conduct this inward gratitude? By prayer.

"A Psalm of Thanksgiving.--Shout unto the Lord, all inhabitants of the earth. serve the Lord with gladness, come into his presence with a song. Know ye that the Lord is God alone; it is He who hath made us, and His we are--His people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter ye his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise; be thankful unto Him, and bless his name. for good is the Lord; his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations." Psalms 100:1-5. What is prayer? The raising of our thoughts to God, and the expressing of the feelings of our hearts in words addressed to our Maker. That is to say, when we see how many benefits we receive from the Lord, and discover how great is his power, we should reflect and think that to Him, therefore, is our gratitude due; and we should say to Him, by words of our mouth, that we sincerely feel that we are so indebted, and that it is not through our own exertions, but through his blessing, that we enjoy the good we have received.

"But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is He who giveth thee power to get wealth." Deuteronomy 8:18.

"O Lord! open thou my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise." Psalms 51:15.

"Trust in him at all times, O ye people! pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us." Psalms 62:8 8. But is prayer intended only for the purpose of returning thanks?

No; we should also pray when we are in trouble and danger, in which case we should express before God the things we stand in need of, in the hope that He may grant us what we ask of Him; also, when we have sinned; when, feeling the unworthiness of our conduct, and the ingratitude with which we have offended our great Benefactor, we should express our regret to God, and ask of Him to forgive us, because He is merciful, the sins we have committed.

"But if from there thou wilt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and all thy soul." Deuteronomy 4:29.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will pardon abundantly." Isaiah 55:6-7.

"But in my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God, and he heard my voice from his temple, and my cry came before Him, into his ears." Psalms 18:6.

"With a loud voice I call unto the Lord, with a loud voice I make supplication unto the Lord. I pour out my complaint before Him, tell my trouble before Him. I cried unto Thee, O Lord! I said, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of life." Ibid. Psalms 142:2-6.

9. What effect has prayer upon ourselves?

It teaches us our dependence on God, and impresses on us that we are his servants, with whom He may act at pleasure; and that consequently He may take from us to-day what he bestowed on us yesterday. If we, therefore, pray when we are in joy, we will not be too much carried away by our prosperity, but be humble before our Maker, who is the Author of our happiness. but if we are in affliction, the pouring out of our heart will remove the load of sorrow and distress which otherwise might make our life bitter and unhappy. We say, therefore, that prayer is necessary to the nature of man.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for his mercy endureth forever." Psalms 107:1.

"In distress I called on the Lord, and the Lord answered me with enlargement." Psalms 118:5.

10. Has prayer any other beneficial effect upon us?

Prayer makes us cheerful, resigned to God, and gives us hope and confidence in his protection and assistance. for if we are in sorrow and express our pain before God, then it is absolutely necessary that we must feel that He has power to assist us; and we must consequently be made more cheerful and resigned, knowing that our case is in the hands of the Almighty, who can save us if He deems us worthy.

"And Hannah answered and said, No, my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. so the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad." 1 Samuel 1:15-18.

"And I have trusted in thy mercy, my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation: I will sing unto the Lord, because He hath dealt bountifully with me." Psalms 13:5-6.

"I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withheld from Thee." Job 42:2.

11. Does God grant the prayer of man, or, as it is commonly called, answer his prayer?

Yes; when the prayer is offered up in truth and sincerity, and in true confidence upon Divine grace and assistance; of which we have many examples in Scripture. Nevertheless, if our petition be not granted, we should not complain of the want of mercy, but ascribe it to our own unworthiness, or to the probable fact, that what we asked might have been injurious to ourselves or others if it had been granted.

"The Lord is near unto all those who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and save them." Psalms 145:18-19.

12. What do you mean by saying, "To call upon God in truth?"

It is our duty to be earnest and sincere in our prayers; to feel at heart what we utter with our lips, and to do carefully whatever we promise during the moments of devotion.

"That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform, even a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth." Deuteronomy 23:23.

13. Do Scriptures speak against praying without devotion, or without repentance? And what is said of sincerity? Of deceitful prayer we read:

"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you: yea, when ye multiply prayer, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood." Isaiah 1:15.

"And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the most high God their Redeemer; nevertheless, they did flatter Him with their mouth, and with their tongue they lied unto Him. When God heard this He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel." Psalms 78:35-36; Psalms 78:59. but of a sincere prayer it is said:

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God! Thou wilt not despise." Psalms 51:19.

14. What is the object of prayer?

It is chiefly intended, since God needs not to be told of our wants, that we may be sanctified by our approaching, as it were, nearer to god when we are praying, than we are at those times when we are engaged in pursuits of pleasure or profit.

"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord." Joel 1:14.

"Therefore, thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." Amos 4:12.

15. What do you understand by "That we may be sanctified?" By this I understand that we should endeavour to become like God, who is the most perfect and holiest of beings; that is to say, we ought to be, as near as possible for human nature, like Him in his qualities of mercy and goodness.

"And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Exodus 19:6.

"And God spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation of the children of Israel and say unto them, You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." Leviticus 19:1-2.

16. Is it possible for man to be like God?

Already, from the nature of his soul, man is like his Creator; for, to use the language of Scripture, "God created man after his own image."

"And god created man after his own image; in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." Genesis 1:27.

17. What do you mean by the "image of God?" By these words I do not mean to say that the body of man has any similarity to God; for the blessed One has no corporeal figure, no outline of body, to which we could liken any thing; He being a pure spirit, not subject to measure of space and time, like ourselves. But God imparted to the body of man a living principle, a part of his own spirit, which living principle we call soul, and this is the image of God.

"And the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became an animated being." Genesis 2:7.

18. In what light then is man to be regarded? By the possession of the soul man is endowed with power, wisdom, and goodness, and these qualities make him the image of his Creator.

"And Thou madest him but little less than angels, and didst crown him with honour and glory; Thou gavest him dominion over the works of thy hands, and didst place all beneath his feet." Psalms 8:6-7.

19. In what consists the power of man? The power of man consists chiefly in his having freedom of will to do good or evil, and next, in doing whatever is agreeable, and to avoid what is disagreeable to his inclinations and feelings.

"Behold, I lay before thee this day life and the good; also, death and the evil." Deuteronomy 30:15.

20. In what consists the wisdom of man? In the possession of reason, by which he is enabled to distinguish the true from the false, and the good from the evil.

"For God knoweth, that on the day ye eat thereof, your eyes will be opened, and you will be as angels, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5.

21. In what consists the goodness of man?

Man has a consciousness to understand and to value, and a will to desire and to exercise the good, and to dislike and avoid the evil.

"I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you: I have set before you life and death, blessing and the curse; but do thou choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deuteronomy 30:19.

22. You understand then by the "image of God" a state of goodness and intelligence: what do you call a man who acts in accordance with these qualities?

I call him innocent and perfect. Innocent, because he then must be free from guilt; and perfect, because he is just as his Creator intended he should be.

"And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me and be perfect." Genesis 17:1.

23. Did man always maintain his innocence, or the image of God, as you call it?

No; he lost his state of purity and innocence by voluntary transgression and disobedience.

24. What is the present state of man?

Man is in a state of sin; and we may freely say that we all are sinners before the Lord.

"There is no man so righteous on earth, who would do the good, and never sin." Ecclesiastes 7:20.

25. How did this state originate, since man was created with the great endowments you have mentioned? The sinful transgression of the parents of the human race, or the fall of Adam, as it is called, caused a state of sin to be the portion of all mankind, the descendants of the first parents.

"Thy first father sinned, and they that plead for thee have transgressed against me." Isaiah 43:27.

"Is one clean among the unclean? not one." Job 14:4.

26. What is the present state of man in consequence of the fall of Adam?

He is from his earliest infancy inclined to do the evil, and disinclined to do the good.

"For the desire of the heart of man is evil from his youth." Genesis 8:21.

"Lo! I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psalms 51:5.

27. What is sin?

Every action and thought which are against the will of God, and the commandments which He gave us in his law.

"After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye have dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep my ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 18:3-4.

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deuteronomy 6:5.

"Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination of the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods." Deuteronomy 12:31.

28. What causes this inclination to sin?

Man is created of a twofold nature, one intellectual, or the soul; the other sensual, or the body. Now, as far as the soul, the intelligent spirit, is concerned, he feels pleasure and satisfaction in obeying the will of God, which is, in other words, doing good; but as regards the body, which was, like that of other animals, formed out of the dust of the earth, and is liable to decay and death, he is subject to sensual desires, defects, and weakness; or, what is the same, he is, because of the formation of his body, drawn to sin, in disobedience to the will of God.

"For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Psalms 103:14.

"Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast shaped me like clay, and wilt cause me to return unto dust. Behold, Thou didst pour me out like milk, and curdle me like cheese; clothe me with skin and flesh, and cover me with bones and sinews." Job 10:9-11.

29. Can we escape the power of sin?

We are constantly and at every point incited to sin; but we have the power, and are therefore bound, as intelligent creatures of God, to resist the inclination which would mislead us to forsake the law of God.

"The sin will rest at the door: to thee is its desire, but thou shalt rule over it." Genesis 4:7.

"For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. for all his judgments were before me; and from his statutes I did not depart. I was also upright before Him, and guarded myself from my iniquity." Psalms 18:22-24.

30. But how can we control this inclination to sin? By the fear of God. We should reflect, as has been said in the verses from the 18th Psalm, just quoted, that we are accountable to God for whatever we do; that He always sees us, and watches our conduct; that we cannot hide our doings from Him, no matter how secretly we commit wickedness; and that, lastly, we cannot escape his punishment, which will surely overtake the sinner, if even it be a long while delayed.

"I have always set the Lord before me, that being at my right hand, I might not be moved." Psalms 16:8.

"Be not wise in thy own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil." Proverbs 3:7.

31. How do we obtain the fear of God? When we consider how great our Maker is; when we seriously reflect how little we can accomplish without his assistance, and that we are his creatures, with whom He can act at pleasure: we must be filled with reverence for his goodness, and with fear at the great power He has over us; these feelings will next teach us that it is necessary that we should endeavour to do nothing to displease Him. In this fear there is nothing mean or unworthy of the character of an intelligent creature; for by it we merely acknowledge the supreme power of our Maker, and that his wisdom is the origin of our wisdom; we submit to One greater and wiser than we are, who is only solicitous for our happiness.

"Out of heaven He caused thee to hear his voice, that He might instruct thee; and upon earth He showed thee his great fire, and his words thou didst hear out of the midst of the fire." Deuteronomy 4:36.

32. What is the fear of God as displayed in our conduct?

We should fear the Lord our God above all; we should regard no danger or worldly inducements, when these would mislead us from the laws of God; but we should strictly obey his will, and adhere unto Him under every difficulty.

"The Lord thy God thou shalt fear, Him thou shalt serve, to Him thou shalt cleave, and by His name thou shalt swear." Deuteronomy 10:20.

33. What do you call the fear of God when actively displayed in our conduct?

Virtue, pity, or righteousness.

"And it will be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us." Deuteronomy 6:25.

34. In what consists this feeling? By letting our reason have the victory over the passions, the spirit over the flesh, and duty over inclination; that is to say, we should not be anxious to do what we might resolve on at the impulse of passion and hasty resolution; we should submit the body, even if it causes pain and inconvenience, to our calmer resolution and serious reflection, and to place the will of God above every inducement which interest, or pleasure, or inconvenience, might hold out to us.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Proverbs 16:32.

35. What is the will of God concerning us?

We should observe the commandments of God, which He gave to us for our own happiness only.

"And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God ask of thee? Only to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. To observe the commandments of the Lord thy God, and his statutes which I command thee this day, that it may be well with thee." Deuteronomy 10:12-13.

36. You said, The law was given for our happiness: how do you understand this? The fear of God as displayed in obedience to the law is the only thing which enables us to fulfil our destiny, that is to say, to accomplish those duties for which we were created, and it is only by fulfilling these duties that we can be truly happy.

"Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13.

37. What is this destiny?

Perfection and similarity to God.

"Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." Deuteronomy 18:13.

"When thou observeth the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walkest in his ways." Deuteronomy 28:9.

38. How do we obtain similarity to God?

We ought to acknowledge with the utmost sincerity his power and goodness, search into his attributes and ways of mercy, and endeavour to act according to the example which He hath set us.

"For the Lord your God is the God of gods; and the Lord of lords, the great, mighty and terrible God, who hath no regard to persons and receiveth no bribes; who executeth justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger to give him food and raiment. Love ye then the stranger." Deuteronomy 10:17-19.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will not direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:6.

39. What do we now learn from the almighty power of God, one of his attributed? That we should not trust in, nor boast of our own strength and power, nor despond when we discover our own means to be insufficient for our intended actions; nor dare we despair when we are beset with difficulties and dangers too great to be overcome by our feeble efforts; it is also sinful to fear or to confide in any other being more than the Almighty our god, or to put any such being upon an equality with Him in our thoughts; for all are like ourselves far beneath Him, and equally dependent on his power and benevolence.

"The Lord is for me, I will not fear; what can man do unto me?" Psalms 118:6.

"Put not your trust in princes, in the son of man in whom there is no salvation. His spirit goeth away, he returneth to his native earth, in that very day all his thoughts perish. But happy is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Psalms 146:3-5.

. What do we learn from the justice of God?

We should endeavour to be like God, just in our dealings and conduct; we should without regard to persons love the good and abhor the evil.

"Thou shalt not pervert judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. The just, the just alone thou shalt pursue, that thou mayest live." Deuteronomy 16:19-20.

"Thou shalt not have in thy bag different weights, a great and a small one. Thou shalt not have in thy house different measures, a great and a small one. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure thou shalt have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. For all who do such things are an abomination unto the Lord thy God, all who do unrighteousness." Deuteronomy 25:13-16.

41. What do we learn from the goodness of God?

We shall, like God, act and think with love, affection, and goodness towards all mankind; not hate any one who may even injure us, and not think any man, however mean and unknown, unworthy of our regard and kindness. Does not god let his sun shine to all the world? Are not the great and the small, the good and the bad, alike fed and sustained by his bounty? We ought, therefore, like our great Teacher, to act benevolently towards every one as far as our means go, without regarding whether he be an Israelite or not, whether he be a stranger to us or not; nay, even the wicked should be relieved and instructed by us; perhaps they may repent and be again taught to love God, whom their sins have displeased.

"If a stranger sojourneth with thee, in your land, you shall not oppress him. Like a native born among you shall the stranger who sojourneth with you be unto you, and thou shalt love him like thyself." Leviticus 19:33-34.

"It has been told thee, O man! what is good, and what the Lord asketh of thee: to exercise justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God." Micah 6:8.

42. What farther do we learn from the goodness of God?

Never to despair of God’s mercy, even if we have sinned against his commandments. Let no man say, that he is cast off because he has transgressed; or that his sins are too great for forgiveness. for to argue in this manner would be to set limits to the mercy of God, and to doubt of his goodness, which is without end. But if we are conscious that we have sinned, we should pray God to forgive us our sins; and we should alter our conduct, and endeavour to merit in future the favour of the Lord by a careful observance of the precepts of the bible.

"For thus saith the High and Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, and whose name is Holy, The high and holy place I inhabit, yet also with the contrite and humble of spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to give life to the heart of the contrite. For I will not always contend, neither will I be wroth for ever: when the spirit from before me is overwhelmed, and the souls which I have made." Isaiah 57:15-16.

"Thou turnest men to contrition, and sayest, Return, ye children of man." Psalms 90:3.

43. What do we learn from the grace and mercy of God? As god the Lord has compassion over all his works, so shall we exercise mercy and kindness toward all our fellow-creatures.

"He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth; but happy is he that hath mercy on the poor?" Proverbs 14:21.

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and He will pay him what he hath given." Proverbs 19:17.

44. What do we learn from the eternity and immutability of God?

That, as God is no man that He should deceive, no son of man that He should repent; should He say and not do it? promise and not fulfil it?" Numbers 23:19.

"Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mayest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life." Deuteronomy 6:1-2.

45. What do we learn from the universal knowledge, or omniscience, as it is called, of God?

We should do the good, and avoid the evil, and abstain from sinning, even if no one be present to see us; for the eye of the Lord sees whatever we do.

"If a man even conceal himself in a secret place, should I not see him? saith the Lord: do I not fill the heaven and the earth?" Jeremiah 23:24.

"The Lord looketh down from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his residence He superintendeth all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth all their hearts, and understandeth all their works." Psalms 33:13-15.

"For high is the Lord, and regardeth the low, and chastiseth afar the exalted." Psalms 138:6.

46. What do we learn from the omnipresence of God?--that is to say, what effect should the knowledge we have of the Lord's being present everywhere have upon us? That God is everywhere present and ready to assist us, whenever we call upon Him; but so is the sinner likewise everywhere under the observance and cognizance of God; and, consequently, he can do nothing which can escape the knowledge and the visitation of his Maker.

"In every place where I will permit my name to be mentioned I will come to thee, and I will bless thee." Exodus 20:21.

"There is no darkness, no shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves." Job 34:22.

47. What else do we learn from the omnipresence of God? Not to rely upon any mediator to pray for us, or to make an atonement for our sins before God. But whenever we pray, we should speak directly to Him, who is always near to hear us, and who exists to all eternity; and if we have sinned there is no being but God alone, who in his mercy can or will remove our transgression, in case we repent and alter our conduct.

"For what nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, whenever we call on Him?" Deuteronomy 4:7.

"You are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servants whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He; before me no god was formed, and after me there shall be none. I, I am the everlasting One; and beside me there is no saviour." Isaiah 43:10-11.

48. What do we learn from the supreme wisdom of God? That we cannot search out nor fully understand the ways of God; we should therefore confide in the Lord, and unhesitatingly place our entire trust in Him, that He will do every thing wisely and for a good end.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass." Psalms 37:5.

"Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and depend not upon thy own wisdom. Be not wise in thy own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil." Proverbs 3:5-7.

49. What else do we learn from the wisdom of god? that whatever the Lord has commanded is just and true, even if we cannot discover the reason for its being so ordained; and that the wisdom of man is of no value, if it is not founded upon the fear and love of god.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and good success attendeth all who keep his commandments; his praise also endureth for ever." Psalms 111:10.

"Open Thou my eyes, that I may behold the wonders of thy law." Psalms 119:18.

"And He said to man, Behold! to fear the Lord is wisdom, and to eschew evil is understanding." Job 28:28.

50. What does Holy Writ teach with regard to the difference between the wisdom of God and that which He has given to man? That man can only look to the outside of things, but that the Giver of wisdom understands every thing which is said, done, or even thought of.

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our god; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:28.

"But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for the man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7.

51. You said, "That we may do all the words of this law;" which law is here spoken of? The law which God made known unto us through Moses and the prophets, whom He selected to make his will known to the children of man.

01.05. The Law Revealed Through Moses

Chapter V. The Law Revealed Through Moses 1. What is the second article of the Jewish Faith?

I believe firmly and truly that the Lord god did reveal himself to the whole people of Israel on Mount Sinai, and there made known the TEN COMMANDMENTS; I believe also that the Lord God taught his servant Moses the whole law, which was afterwards delivered to us just as he had been taught it; and I farther believe that Moses, and, after him, the other prophets, were true and faithful messengers of God, and that they spoke the truth as it was announced to them.

"And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might do them." Deuteronomy 4:14.

"A prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, will the Lord thy God raise up unto thee: unto him shall ye hearken." Deuteronomy 18:14.

"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, to whom I commanded at Horeb statutes and judgments for all Israel." Malachi 4:4.

2. What do you understand by the words "revealed law?"

All the books of the Scriptures, in number twenty-four, which we call the covenant of the Lord with Israel, through Moses and the prophets. These books are first, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, called the five books of Moses, or the LAW; Joshua, Judges, first books of Samuel, second book of Samuel, first book of Kings, and second book of Kings, in all six, called the OLDER PROPHETS; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets (namely, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephania, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi), in all four books, called the LATER PROPHETS; and lastly, the books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the five rolls (namely, the Song of Solomon, the books of Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther), Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, the first book of Chronicles, and the second book of Chronicles, in all nine, called the HAGIOGRAPHA, or holy writings. He have, therefore, five books of Moses, also called the Pentateuch, six of older prophets, four of later prophets, and nine of the holy writings, in all twenty-four.

"These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb." Deuteronomy 29:1.

3. What would you understand by "the whole law of Moses?" By the law of Moses I would be understood as meaning all the written ordinances and commandments, which were written down by Moses himself, and the oral traditions which he left to the Israelites by word of mouth.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written to teach unto them." Exodus 24:12.

4. What is the written law? The five books of Moses, which Moses wrote by the command of God.

"And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel." Deuteronomy 31:9.

5. What is the oral law? The interpretations of the written laws, which were delivered by Moses, by word of mouth, to the Israelites of his time, and which were so continued from generation to generation, till at length they were written down in the Mishnah and Gemarah. This oral law consists of the particular explanations of the written law, and contains the directions of the manner in which the ordinances of Scripture are to be observed. It is chiefly by this tradition also that we are acquainted with the doctrines of the Bible, and the extent of the things permitted and prohibited, which are laid down in the Scriptures merely in a general manner.

6. Do the Mishnah and Gemarah contain no other matter beside the traditions?

Yes; they contain the opinions of certain learned men, together with arguments, drawn from the Scriptures for their opinions, on disputed matters which were brought before them for their decision; and these decisions, so supported by bible-authority, are binding upon Israelites, since the doubtful matters were left to the decision of the people to whom the law was given. for so we read:

"If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke; being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and go up to the place which the Lord thy God will choose; and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge who shall be in those days, and inquire, and they shall tell thee the sentence of judgment. According to the sentence of the law which they will say unto thee, shalt thou do; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they will tell thee to the right or to the left." Deuteronomy 17:8-11.

7. What are the contents of the Mosaic law?

First, The MORAL law.

Secondly, The CEREMONIAL law.

Thirdly, The POLITICAL law; and

Fourthly, The CHURCH law.

8. What is the moral law?

Commandments and prohibitions which our religion lays upon us as members of the human family, dependent, as other men are, upon the bounty of God; and the observance of which is founded even upon human reason, and is necessary towards promoting the peace and happiness of mankind at large. They are called in the bible Mitzvot or commandments.

"And ye shall remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after the inclinations of your heart and the delight of your eyes, in pursuit of which ye have been led astray. That ye may remember and so all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." Numbers 15:39-41; Numbers 9:1-38. What is the foundation of the moral law?

It is founded upon the fact of its being necessary to the protections and preservation of the human family; and it is by its exercise chiefly that man appears truly as the creature made in the image of God. we may state, therefore, that the moral precepts contained in the Mosaic Law are based upon the divine nature inherent in the soul of man.

"For this commandment which I command thee this day is not hidden from thee, nor is it far off. It is in not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, and cause us to hear it, that we may do it? Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and cause us to hear it, that we may do it? but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

"He that keepeth the commandment, guardeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die." Proverbs 19:16.

10. What is the ceremonial law?

Such laws and enactments which the Mosaic Religion demands of us Israelites only; we alone of all mankind being those who profess to follow and to be bound by this law. these enactments are called Chuckim or statutes.

"Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land, whither ye go to possess it. Keep them and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who shall hear all these statutes, and they will say, Surely this great nation is a wise and intelligent people." Deuteronomy 4:5-6.

11. On what is the ceremonial law founded?

It is based upon the peculiar relation of our forefathers and of us, the people of Israel, their descendants, towards God.

"And thou shalt remember that thou hast been a bondsman in Egypt: therefore, shalt thou observe and do these statutes." Deuteronomy 16:12.

12. Please to explain more fully some of these peculiar relations. When Abraham in his time acknowledged alone, in the presence of idolaters, the Lord who made heaven and earth, God promised him, as was said above, that He would protect him and his descendants, and be peculiarly their god. and as a sign of the existence of this covenant or promise, the Lord demanded the covenant of circumcision from Abraham and his descendants. As we also read:

"And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Genesis 17:13.

13. Correctly stated: so this covenant was to be the sign of the descendants of Abraham being in a peculiar relation to God, to distinguish them, one and all, from the heathen multitude. But as this is not the only enactment, be kind enough to give me a few more, together with such reasons as you may discover.

After the death of Abraham, besides the children of Isaac, other nations also adopted this sign of the covenant, in memory of their descent from or connection with the great patriarch; thus do the children of Ishmael, even to this day; and, as some aver, the people of ancient Egypt were likewise

so distinguished. but it was the will of the Lord to erect those children of Abraham, descended from him by Isaac and Jacob, into a people devoted to his service: He therefore gave them other laws to mark the new relation which this people should maintain before all the world. And so we read:

"But you did the Lord take, and he brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day." Deuteronomy 4:20.

"For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; of thee the Lord thy God made choice to be to Him a special people, of all the nations that are upon the face of the earth. Not because you were the most in number of all nations did the Lord desire and choose you; for you are the fewest of all nations. but because of the love of the Lord for you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your forefathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a strong hand, and redeemed thee from the house of bondage, from the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt." Deuteronomy 7:6-8.

14. This is the view I would take myself of the subject, and the texts which you have quoted prove the view to be correct: continue now to give me a few more particulars. In order to effect this separation, or division of one people from the rest of the world, it was necessary to divide them from other men by such laws as would prevent the mixing up of the handful of Israelites with the multitudes of the other nations. God, therefore, instituted the ordinance of forbidden meats and drinks; so that his chosen servants should not, by too close and too intimate an intercourse with the heathens and other non-Israelites, become like those who are strangers to his service, forgetting that they are bound to regard Him as their Deliverer and Saviour.

"For I am the Lord your god, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy; nor shall you defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. for I am the Lord your god that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." Leviticus 9:44-45.

"They who eat swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord." Isaiah 66:17.

"They joined themselves also unto Baal-Peor, and ate of the sacrifices of the dead." Psalms 104:28.

"But Daniel purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank." Daniel 1:8.

15. These quotations fully prove that certain meats were not forbidden without a good reason. How is it in regard to the festivals? When the Israelites dwelt in Egypt, they were compelled by the kind and people of that country to do all sorts of hand-labour without receiving any pay for their work; or, as it is called, they were reduced to a state of slavery or bondage. Now it happened, that god, mindful of his promise to Abraham, sent Moses to the king of Egypt, called the Pharaoh, to demand of him the freedom of the Israelites, that they might go and worship God the Lord in the wilderness, in the manner He might be pleased to direct.

"And thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, the Lord the God of the Hebrews hath made himself known to us; and now let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God."

Exodus 3:18.

16. Did Pharaoh obey the will of God?

No; on the contrary, he refused to acknowledge the power of god, and scornfully disobeyed the command conveyed to him by the great prophet. Whereupon, the Almighty caused many wonderful things to happen in Egypt, and sent such severe punishments upon the king and people of Egypt, that they at length gladly consented to send the Israelites away.

"And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, in order to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We shall be all dead men." Exodus 12:33.

17. But what has this history to do with the festivals?

It is the foundation of all the festivals of the Lord, which He gave unto us. For, that we might remember all the days of our life the wonderful manner in which we were relieved from this Egyptian slavery, He commanded us to celebrate every year the feast of Passover, at the season in which our forefathers sent forth from Egypt.

"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and you shall keep it as a feast unto the Lord, throughout your generations; as an everlasting statute ye shall keep it." Exodus 7:14.

"Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a feast unto the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten these seven days, and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be any leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt tell thy son on that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thy eyes; that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in its season, from year to year." Exodus 8:6-10.

18. Can you state any thing with reference to the Pentecost?

After the Israelites had been redeemed from Egypt, God resolved that they should be taught to serve Him, whom they had found to be so powerful and good. He therefore brought them to the wilderness of Sinai, and there proclaimed before the whole people the Ten Commandments. This took place on the fiftieth day from their going out of Egypt; and this was therefore fixed as a festival forever.

"And ye shall proclaim on the self-same day, that it may be a holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no servile work thereon; it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings, throughout your generations." Leviticus 23:21.

"Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, that thou forget not the things which thy eyes have seen--the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb." Deuteronomy 4:9:10.

19. Give now briefly the reason for the feast of Tabernacles. When the Israelites had received the law in so wonderful a manner from the mouth of God himself, it would have been reasonable to expect that they should have been sincere worshippers, and fully convinced of the truth of God’s

ordinances. but it was not so; they sinned often and grievously; till at length it was decreed that all the males over twenty years old, who had left Egypt, should die in the wilderness of Arabia. To effect this, and not to leave the children unprotected, and the youths without guides, God would not destroy them all in one pestilence; but He caused them to travel about from place to place, for a space of thirty-eight years, till all the persons, doomed to death, had died by degrees.

"And the space in which we came from Kadesh Barnea, until we came over the brook Zared, was thirty-eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from the midst of the camp, as the Lord had sworn unto them." Deuteronomy 2:14.

20. Continue your account, and show its application to the festival.

During all these travels in a land where there is no water even to drink, the people wanted for nothing; bread was given them in the shape of manna, which was found every day round their camp; water flowed unto them out of the hard rock; their garments grew not old, not did their shoes wear off from their feet; and, more than all, God's pillar of cloud was a shield over them by day, and the pillar of fire lighted their camp and guided their travels by night. Throughout this time the whole people dwelt in tents or booths, and entered not into a city of houses, or in a land where there can be sowing and reaping. In this manner, though the punishment of God lay heavily on them, still his protection and goodness were doubly displayed; and thus were the young men educated under the immediate guidance of God, whilst their parents were left to watch over them, although not permitted to enter themselves into the land of Canaan for their manifold sins.

"Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths. That your generations may know, that I caused the Israelites to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 23:42-43.

21. So then, I understand from your account, that the three festivals had all a close reference to the history of the Israelites, and their education as a people devoted to the service of God. Were there any other observances connected with them?

Yes; on the Passover we were commanded to eat a lamb roasted in a particular manner on the first evening of the feast, together with bitter herbs and unleavened bread; at the same time we were bound to speak of, and tell to those younger and not knowing, the wonderful manner in which God delivered us from Egypt. Since at present we have no longer the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, (as sacrifices belong to the temple-service only,) we celebrate this event on the first two evenings of the Passover by eating the unleavened bread and bitter herbs; and drinking the cup of grace amidst psalms, and reading the account of the redemption from Egypt. This we call Reading the Haggadah.

"And it shall be, when thy son asketh thee, in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us forth from Egypt." Exodus 8:14.

22. Proceed.

These ordinances, which in themselves may perhaps have no meaning to one not acquainted with our laws and history, are nevertheless full of meaning, and wisely adapted to the object for which they were instituted. They are peculiar ordinances, such as no human wisdom would have invented; they are enactments from God as a special gift to the people whom He had chosen. The

other ceremonies relating to the Omer, or a measure of barley to be brought to the temple as the commencement of the harvest, as also the two wheaten loaves to be brought on the Pentecost, cannot now be observed any more; because we have no longer a temple or a priesthood, as was the case formerly, since our dispersion and expulsion from Palestine have deprived us of the same; nevertheless, when these ceremonies were observed, they were to show that we devoted to God, the Giver of all, the first of all fruits which He was pleased to give to us.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye have come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, ye shall bring an omer-full of the first fruit of your harvest unto the priest." Leviticus 23:10.

"You shall bring from your habitations two wave-loaves, of two tenth parts; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked leaven; they are the first fruits unto the Lord." Leviticus 23:17.

23. Correctly stated. The feast of Tabernacles was also distinguished by the presentation of the fruits of the earth unto the Lord. As the Passover and Pentecost were the commencement of the barley and wheat-harvest in Palestine, so was the Tabernacles feast the close of all field-labour. Then everything must be taken home on account of the approach of winter. The fruits of the tree are then ripe; the green leaves must soon turn yellow, and fall off; and plants as well as the soil must rest during the cold, to get new strength for the coming spring. At this period, therefore, the citron, the fairest of fruits, the branch of that blessing of Palestine and Arabia, the palm-tree, the hardy evergreen myrtle, the robust yet easily-withering willow, were all united in one bunch, to be waved in the presence of the Lord, who made everything so well adapted for the service of man. In this offering are likewise joined the great and lowly, the fragrant and the inodorous, the useful and ornamental, in one bond, consecrated to the service of the Maker of all, He before whom all his creatures are alike.

"And ye shall take unto you, on the first day, the fruit of the tree hadar, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of the myrtle-tree, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." Leviticus 23:40 2424:1-51. How about the New Year? The day when the Lord created his world should be made holy to his service; then we should resolve to devote ourselves anew to worship Him in sincerity, and proclaim the Holy One as King of all the earth. We therefore assemble in our places of worship and blow the cornet in memory of God’s perpetual and universal kingdom over all that is.

"God ascendeth amidst the shout, the Lord amidst the voice of the cornet. Sing praises to god, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises! for God is King over all the earth; sing the song of instruction. God is King over the heathen; God sitteth on his holy throne." Psalms 47:6-9.

25. There is one more festival, the Day of Atonement; what does this mean?

Led away by the desires of the human heart, we are constantly induced to forget the God who has made us; we sin, as it were, by habit, and one wrong causes another to be done. The Lord therefore ordained, that one day at least in the year should be entirely devoted to reflection and repentance; that each man should then examine his heart, and refrain thereon from all earthly enjoyments. Not that God has need of our fasting, or that our suffering would give Him pleasure; but that we should fast and afflict ourselves, in order that we may be healed of our transgressions, and become worthy to be servants of the Most High, and holy unto our God.

"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall fast, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work on that same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God.--It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings." Leviticus 23:27-31.

20. We will not trouble you any more at present with giving explanations of the other ceremonies relating to the festivals, as we wish to leave them for a future occasion; but tell me in one word the foundation of all our ceremonies and particular prohibitions. The whole of our ceremonies were calculated and given for the purpose of separating Israel from all nations and preserving them as a distinct people. It was therefore made unlawful for an Israelite to marry a non-Israelite; as by such connections we might be induced to forsake the faith of God and join ourselves to the erroneous beliefs of others. So also were we prohibited marking our bodies, or pulling out the hair for the dead, as was the custom of heathens; or, ploughing the field, or working in general with divers sorts of cattle; or sowing different kinds of seed in the same field, which, as some supposed, would increase the products of the earth. So also all systems of fortune-telling, divinations, omens, belief in lucky or unlucky days; in forebodings, watching of clouds, the flight of birds, or similar acts of superstition or false belief, practised by heathens or superstitious persons; as all such acts would withdraw us from God, and induce us to rely upon falsehood and vanity for support. In the same manner the ceremonial commandments for certain acts to be done were given as an exercise of devotion and attachment to God, which Israelites should display, they being the people consecrated to his service.

"Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, and his daughter thou shalt not take unto thy son." Deuteronomy 7:3.

"Ye are the children of the Lord your God; ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all nations that are upon the face of the earth." Deuteronomy 14:1-2.

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divinations, or is an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a wizard, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a conjurer, or one that asketh of the dead. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

"Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds; lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of the vineyard, be defiled. Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, of woolen and linen together." Deuteronomy 22:9-11.

27. What would you say with regard to such enactments for which no particular reason can be given, such as the ceremonies belonging to the sacrifices? That they are ordinances proceeding from the Supreme Wisdom, therefore they must be wise and useful, even if our reason be not able to discover the cause of their being given. They are obligatory on us as followers of the law, and as exercises of a sincere faith towards the Author of our holy religion. The law brings life, and in the faithful performance of its enactments, and in a perfect conviction of their wisdom and usefulness

alone, can we be deserving of the favour and mercy of God. Thus we read of the priestly garments, about which so many particular directions are given:

"And they shall be upon Aaron and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the assembly, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place, that they bear not iniquity, and die. It shall be a statute for ever unto him, and for his seed after him." Exodus 28:43. So also of the ordinances of forbidden marriages:

"Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which, if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." Leviticus 18:5.

28. Your views are quite satisfactory, I should judge; and consequently, seeing how holy the reasons are upon which the ceremonial law is founded, we should be extremely cautious to pay due respect to the commandments, which, if strictly observed, will purify the heart, and cause us to adhere to our God. But it is time that we proceed to other subjects.*

*If thought too difficult, the explanation of the ceremonies (from Par. 10 to 28) might with advantage be left out, till a second reading of this work. It is inserted as a guide, more than a complete exposition. Can you tell me now what is the political law?

Those laws and ordinances which bound our forefathers as citizens and members of the Israelitish state: they are called Mishpatim or judgments.

"There are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do, in the land which the Lord the God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess, all the days that ye live upon the earth." Deuteronomy 12:1.

29. Which are some of the political ordinances? The law of the tax of a half shekel to be given for the temple-service (Exodus 30:11-16); the laws relative to domestic servants and slaves (Exodus 21:1; Leviticus 25:10, &c.); the laws of war (Deuteronomy 20:1-20), and many of like character.

30. Upon what principle is the political law of God founded?

All the laws of god in this respect have for their object the maintenance of each person’s rights and possessions, and to enforce the great law of "And thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself." Leviticus 19:18.

31. What is the church law?

Those enactments which had reference to the public service of the Lord in the tabernacle in the wilderness, in the first instance, and afterwards in the great temple at Jerusalem. They are called Toroth or laws.

"And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man of the house of Israel, or any of the strangers who sojourneth among them, that offereth a burnt-offering or a sacrifice, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the Lord, that man shall be cut off from among his people." Leviticus 17:8-9.

"Take heed to thyself, that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest. but in the place which the Lord will choose in one of thy tribes, there shalt thou bring thy burnt-offerings,

and there shalt thou do all that I command thee." Deuteronomy 12:13-14.

32. Name some of these church laws. The laws of sacrifices (Lev. i.-vii.); of priests and Levites and their services at the temple (Lev. xvi.; Numbers 1:48-53, &c.); the tithes (Numbers 18:8-32, &c.); the three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem (Exodus 34:23), and many others of the same kind.

33. On what is the church law founded? On the wisdom of God, who himself chose to ordain the manner in which He delighted to be served. As followers of his law, we are bound to possess a simplicity of faith, and an entire reliance upon his unerring wisdom, if we really desire to devote ourselves to his service; and it is only for such faith and for service of this kind that He promises to bless and protect us. So too we read:

"And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Numbers 6:27.

34. What is the reason that we observe not now the two kinds of enactments, called judgments and laws?

Because we form no longer an independent state, governed exclusively by the law of God, and on account of the loss of the temple, where all the chief commandments relative to the public divine service were to be executed. but all those not immediately referring to the temple, such as the priestly blessing by the descendants of Aaron, the service of the Levites as attendants on the Cohanim, and a few others, are to be observed even to this day upon all proper occasions.

35. But tell me, are these laws abolished, because they are not now obeyed? By no means; the law is in every respect unchanged and in full force, and is consequently binding on every Israelite, who should do whatever lies in his power. But the enforcement of the judicial and church laws is suspended, only for want of the means on our part to execute them: still we hope that the time will come, when, by a restoration of the Jewish state, both these institutions will again be made the law of the land, as heretofore in the times of David and Solomon. for so we are taught in Scripture:

"And they shall teach my people to decide between the holy and profane, and inform them to distinguish between the unclean and clean; and in controversy they shall stand to judgment, and they shall decide according to my judgments; and my laws and my statutes for all my festivals they shall keep, and they shall hallow my sabbaths." Ezekiel 44:23-24.

"Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Malachi 3:4.

36. Which parts of the law are now practicable? the moral and ceremonial parts; and both are equally beneficial in their consequences; for by the first we are taught to do justice and exercise kindness towards men, thus imitating in a feeble manner our heavenly Father; and by the other, we are daily brought nearer to sanctity, and the love of God, and devotion to his will.

37. What are the consequences of obedience? What of disobedience?

Obedience will bring happiness to ourselves, as well as to others; but if we disobey the laws of God, we expose ourselves to his displeasure, and we will surely receive such punishment as our bad conduct deserves. In a word, obedience will make us happy here and render us permanently

blessed hereafter; but disobedience will deprive us of peace here, and of the blessing of god when we are dead.

"Behold! I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day." Deuteronomy 11:26-28.

"For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is the light, and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Proverbs 6:23.

01.06. The Moral Law

Chapter VI. The Moral Law 1. What does the moral law teach?

It teaches us our duty.

2. What is this duty?

We must do whatever God demands of us.

3. What obliges us to do this? By the possession of the life given by God we are from motives of gratitude compelled to obey his wishes; and by the benefits which He daily and hourly bestows on us, we should be induced to show that we are not unworthy of his fatherly care; and lastly, as children of the covenant with the Lord, it is reasonable that we should repay his especial kindness by a more ardent display of activity in the fulfillment of our duties.

4. Towards whom have we duties to perform? a. Towards God, through whose favour we live.

b. Towards our fellow-men, who, as well as ourselves, have received life and being from God.

c. Towards ourselves, both as regards our body and our soul.

5. Can you as a religious person do one part of these duties whilst you neglect the others?

No; because they are connected one with the other, and are all founded upon the bond which united us to the Lord our God.

6. What is this bond? The love of God.

7. How do you explain this?

First. We shall love the Lord God above all, even more than ourselves.

Secondly. We shall love God in ourselves, since we also are the work of his hands.

Thirdly. We shall love God in ourselves, since we also are the work of his hands.

8. What are the words of the principal commandment which enjoins the love to God?

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is ONE. and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

9. How are we to love God with all our heart?

We should prize his favour and bounty as our highest good, and direct to Him alone all our wishes; never desire any thing which He has forbidden to us, and lastly, fear Him in sincerity, and devote our life to his service.

"The Lord thy God thou shalt fear, Him thou shalt serve, to Him thou shalt adhere, and by his name thou shalt swear." Deuteronomy 10:20.

10. How are we to love God with all our soul?

We should direct all our thoughts to the Lord, and place always our god, his holy will, his law, his goodness and his providence before our eyes. Furthermore, we should never transgress his will, if even harm should come to us for obedience; but we should reflect that He is our Creator, and He is therefore justified in demanding of us an implicit obedience, even if the life which He has given should thereby be taken from us.

"And these words which I command thee this day shall be upon thy heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

"I have always set the Lord before me, that being at my right hand, I might not be moved." Psalms 14:8.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear evil; for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Psalms 23:4.

11. How are we to love god with all our might?

We should direct all our power and energy of mind to honour the Lord God with our conduct throughout life, and to devote every thing which we have to serve Him; since He is the Giver of all the good we enjoy, as well as the Author of our being.

"This day the Lord thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and judgments; and thou shalt keep and do them with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Deuteronomy 26:16.

"And the people answered and said: -- For the Lord our God it is that brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight, and preserved us on all the way whereon we went, and among all the people through whom we passed;-- therefore will we also serve the Lord, for He is our God." Joshua 24:16-18.

12. Be kind enough to tell me in a few words what you understand by the words "serving the Lord?"

We serve the Lord when we stand in fear of offending Him, and are engaged in pious works whenever we have an opportunity of doing them.

13. What is the chief commandment of those relating to our conduct towards our fellow-men?

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18); what you do not wish that others should do to you, do not unto others. If you, before acting, reflect that your conduct might give pain or offence to another, you should on no account do as you intended; for you would feel grieved if others were to treat you in a similar way.

14. Is this all?

No; we should not alone abstain from injuring others, but we ought also to endeavour to serve them. for instance, if I see a poor man asking for bread, or a garment to put on, and I have the power to grant what he asks, it is my duty to assist him; for I should reflect that I may at one time stand also in need of the assistance of others; and surely I would be sorely grieved were I then to

be refused the favour which my distress might compel me to ask of others.

15. Are there any more particulars in these duties?

Yes; we should never show pride towards those who are not so rich as we are; for we ourselves would not like to be treated with contempt by those richer than ourselves. It is sinful to be overbearing to our fellow-men because of our greater power and wisdom; for we would ourselves be very unwilling to receive such treatment from others. Likewise, it is ridiculous to look upon beauty of the body as a particular claim to distinction; but most sinful it is to mock others for personal defects, such as blindness, lameness, deafness, stammering, or similar misfortunes; for we should consider that all the advantages we have are gifts of God, and the disadvantages of others afflictions sent by Him.

16. What is the duty therefore of superiors towards those less than themselves?

Those entrusted with power over their fellow-beings, such as rulers of states, judges, magistrates, military commanders, superintendents and teachers, ought, as servants of God, to use their power with mildness; nor should they ever dare to make those under their control feel the weight of the mastery which they have over them: so that the governed may obey their superiors from duty and affection more than from interest and fear.

17. What should be our conduct towards persons in our domestic employ, and servants in general?

It is our duty to behave mildly and affectionately to those who are engaged to work for us; never to make their task heavier than occasion and absolute necessity require; to speak to them in a polite and conciliatory manner, but never in the insolent tone which the proud and presumptuous make use of. We should reflect, that though they are subject to our control, from the force of circumstances, such as slaves, or from their own free choice, such as domestics who work for hire, or because we can make better use of their labour than they themselves could do, such as apprentices and journeymen mechanics and labourers: still they, as well as ourselves, are creatures of the same God, and, as such, objects of his care and bounty no less than ourselves.

18. How should we act towards the poor? When we see a poor person, or are notified that a fellow-being is suffering for want of the necessaries and comforts of life, and we have the means to help him: we should not feel an indifference towards his sufferings, but it is our duty to give freely according to the blessing of the Lord which He has given us to our brother in distress. We should consider, that we only then deserve the blessing of God, when we are willing to bless others.

19. Is it enough merely to give?

No; when we give, we should give cheerfully, but not do it as though we were parting with something great and of importance to us. We should not make the poor feel his poverty, nor humble him, because he is compelled to ask us for assistance. We should consider, that God’s bounty to us is freely given; He gives us food before we want it; and He grants us his favour, though our conduct does never deserve his mercy.

20. What should be the conduct of inferiors to their superiors?

Those who from their stations in life are under the power of others, should endeavour by all proper means to gain their favour; they ought to be respectful, obedient, and ready to do at all times the reasonable duties which are demanded of them; not to give sharp answers, even when harshly spoken to; so that they may overcome the anger of their superiors more by humility and becoming submission, than by insisting upon their supposed rights, and not irritate them more by hasty and impertinent replies, and useless bandying of words; and lastly, to execute the trusts reposed in them with fidelity and strict honour, as though the work and the advantage thereof, were entirely their own.

21. How should scholars behave to their teacher?

Scholars, such as those who have the fear of God in their hearts, ought to treat their teachers with the utmost possible respect; they ought to get well the lessons that are given them to study; they ought to be early at school, and have their clothes always clean and tidy; they ought to sit quietly and still during school hours, and listen with the strictest attention to whatever is taught them; if the teachers reprove them, they should not look sullen or angry, much less give an impertinent answer; when the teachers have to use punishment, they should submit with becoming patience; when the teachers inquire about any transaction, they should answer according to the strictest truth, and never excuse themselves by falsehood or prevarication, which is a concealment of the truth; and lastly, no scholar should ever get angry or displeased, if the teachers reward a deserving fellow-scholar; for such reward should stimulate the others to excel likewise, but should be no cause for envy and bitter feeling.

22. What should our conduct by to equals?

We are bound to meet all persons with becoming politeness; to greet them upon meeting, and to return their salutation; to be decorous in our deportment when in society, and to do nothing there which could offend any one present, either by boisterous mirth, or by unpleasant allusions to the faults of our companions or their friends. Neither are we permitted to make ourselves ridiculous by boasting of our own merits, or to give offence by a behaviour which would seem to indicate that we thought ourselves better than our neighbours. Thus also teach our wise men:

"Whosoever has the good will of men, has the good will of his Maker; but whosoever fails to please his fellow-creatures, cannot be pleasing to God." Abothe iii.

23. Now tell me, in a few words, how we are to act towards others?

We should be kind and considerate towards inferiors; obedient and respectful to superiors, parents, and teachers, and polite and decorous to our equals in society: in short, humility is the virtue which we ought to display in our intercourse with others.

24. How are we then to love God in our neighbour?

We should honour in our neighbour the image of God, and look upon him as our equal and brother, though he may be subject to our control for the present; for the time will come, when death will render us all equal again, and when we all must appear in judgment before the Lord our God. It is therefore that we ought to practise brotherly love and kindness towards all the children of the Lord’s creation.

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, to profane the covenant of our fathers?" Malachi 2:10.

25. What are our duties towards ourselves?

We are bound to value highly the life which God has given us; we are not at liberty to expose our health or life uselessly, so as to show a disregard of God’s favour, displayed in giving us existence; and if we wish to be obedient to the will of the law, we must make the best use of our time and the intellect we have received, and endeavour to acquire all the knowledge which is accessible to us; so that we may become intelligent and religious, and better calculated to promote the general interest of all mankind, and to glorify God in our persons.

26. How then can we love God in ourselves?

We should endeavour to honour the image and likeness of God in ourselves, and to preserve it pure and unstained; that is to say, we should always try to keep our soul, the true image of God, unstained and free from the effects of sin, and preserve it holy and worthy to enter again the presence of the Lord when our life on earth is ended.

"And you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy; for I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 20:7.

01.07. The Ten Commandments

Chapter VII. The Ten Commandments 1. What are the Ten Commandments?

Those celebrated commandments which God the Lord communicated himself to the people of Israel on Mount Sinai, without the intervention of a prophet; which means that the people heard them from God himself, and not from Moses, who received the other laws first from the Lord, and afterwards told them to the people.

"And the Lord spoke with you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the voice of words, but ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice. And He declared unto you his covenant, which He commanded you to perform, the Ten commandments, and He wrote them upon two tables of stone." Deuteronomy 4:12-13.

2. In what light would you regard these Ten Commandments? The Ten Commandments are the everlasting fundamental principles of the divine law, and are to be observed during all times, and throughout every generation. We may call them the Divine Constitution, according to which the other statutes have been enacted; and every other commandment has reference to one of the other of them, whether it regards the worship of the Lord, or our intercourse with other men.

"The Lord our God made with us a covenant on Horeb. Not with our forefathers made the Lord this covenant, but with ourselves, who are here all alive this day. Face to face the Lord spoke with you on the mount, from the midst of the fire. I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to tell unto you the word of the Lord, for ye were afraid of the fire, and ye ascended not the mount." Deuteronomy 5:2-5.

3. Why do you believe this?

Because the Ten Commandments are the testimony of the Lord, always true, and just throughout all times.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, quieting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and uniformly just." Psalms 19:8-10.

4. What are therefore the characteristics of true religion?

Religion, to be true, must be in accordance with the precepts of the Decalogue, as the Ten Commandments are usually called, (from two Greek words signifying ten and precepts;) and we may therefore maintain, that any system of belief and action, commonly termed religion, which contradicts these precepts, cannot be from God.

5. Why?

Because, inasmuch as God is ever the same, and his word being unchangeable, it cannot be supposed that He would give at one time a religion which He would destroy or repeal at a future period. It is therefore impossible that such a religion, which contradicts the Decalogue in its doctrines, can be from God; and as no system of religion can be true, unless it be from the Supreme source, it follows farther, that whatever contradicts the Decalogue is false or erroneous belief, and consequently we are forbidden to act in accordance with such a system.

"Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you: you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left. You shall walk entirely in the way, which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live." Deuteronomy 5:29-30.

"Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. After the Lord your God you shall walk, and Him ye shall fear, and his commandments ye shall observe, and his voice ye shall obey, and unto Him ye shall cleave." Deuteronomy 13:4-5.

"But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of foreign gods--even that prophet shall die." Deuteronomy 18:20.

6. What religion does answer to these requisites? The Mosaic Religion, as we ourselves profess it. It is therefore that system which we should obey, if we wish to prove our love and adherence to God.

7. Please to recite the FIRST commandment.

"I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

8. What are we commanded in this precept?

We are commanded to believe in the existence of God, the only Creator and the Lord of all; and in consequence to love, fear, and honor Him as the mightiest and holiest Being, and as our greatest Benefactor.

"Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God, there is none else beside Him. Out of heaven He caused thee to hear his voice, that He might instruct thee; and upon earth He showed thee his great fire, and his words thou didst hear from the midst of the fire. And because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his presence with his mighty power out of Egypt.--Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Lord He is God, in heaven above and on the earth beneath: there is none else." Deuteronomy 4:35-39.

9. Why does the bible mention the redemption from Egypt as the reason for our faith in God?

Because the Lord wanted to prove to the Israelites, that, since they had seen his power displayed in the punishments sent upon the Egyptians, it was evident that He was in truth the Creator and Supreme Ruler, capable of doing whatever He wishes to do; since He compelled the king of Egypt

to let the Israelites go free by the performance of wonders and miracles, such as are beyond the power of man to accomplish. So also is it said in Exodus:

"Therefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." Exodus 6:6-7.

10. What duty did God likewise wish to enforce? By reminding the people of the benefits they had received, He wanted to teach them gratitude, and to impress on their minds, that the only thing which they could do to repay all this kindness would be to be faithful and obedient to his voice in doing whatever He might demand of them.

"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." Exodus 12:26-27.

11. What is the SECOND commandment?

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them."

12. What are we commanded in this precept?

That, since God alone is supreme above all, we should honor and worship Him alone; for, though He cannot be seen by our eyes nor perceived by our other senses, He is still the only one God, who watches over us, and directs all our ways.

"Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, (for ye saw no manner of figure on the day when the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire,) that you do not corrupt yourselves and make yourselves a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of a male or female." Deuteronomy 4:15-16.

"For Thou art great and performest wonders: Thou art God alone. Teach me, O Lord! thy ways, let me walk in thy truth; cause my heart to devote itself solely to fear thy name; that I may thank Thee, O Lord, my God! with all my heart, and honor thy name for evermore." Psalms 86:10-12.

13. What is forbidden by this precept?

We are prohibited to practice all manner of idolatry.

14. What is idolatry?

Idolatry is when a man believes in the existence of any other god besides the Creator, or pays religious adoration to any other being, be this great or small, save the Lord our God alone.

"You shall make yourselves no idols, nor rear yourselves up a graven or standing image, neither shall ye set up a carved stone in your land to bow down upon it; for I am the Lord your God."

Leviticus 26:1.

"And that thou lift not up thy eyes unto heaven, and see the sun, and the moon, and the stars--all the host of heaven--and be misled, and bow down to them, and worship them." Deuteronomy 4:19.

15. What do you understand by "believing" in idols? By this I mean to entertain a belief that any being whatever has any power independently of God; or that such a being could exist without Him, or do any thing by which He could be injured, or which He should not have the power to prevent, if He wished to do so. For there is nothing, of which we can form any idea, which has not its existence given, and its power for good or evil limited, by the great Creator our God.

"I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me; that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none without me; I am the Lord and there is none else; I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Isaiah 14:5-7. And again it is said:

"I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I--my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded" (to exist). Isaiah 45:12.

16. What is meant by "worshipping" idols? To pray to any being save God alone, to ask it for assistance in our need, or to offer it presents or sacrifices, as though we could by this means obtain any assistance from such a being, whether this be actually existing, such as the sun or moon, or be only a creature of our imagination. It is likewise wrong and idolatrous to worship the Lord even in the manner the heathens serve their idols, or to introduce into the holy religion which we have received, customs not consistent with its letter and spirit.

"And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the name of them out of that place. Ye shall not do so unto the Lord your God." Deuteronomy 12:3-4.

"Take heed to thyself, that thou be not ensnared to follow them after they have been destroyed from before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations use to serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination to the Lord which He hateth have they done unto their gods." Ibid. 80, 81.

"Because they have forsaken me,--and have build the high-places of Baal, to burn their sons in fire as burnt-offerings to Baal, which I did not command, nor spoke, and which came not in my mind; behold, therefore, days are coming, that--I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place--and I will make this city desolate and a hissing: every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss, because of all its plagues." Jeremiah 19:4-8.

17. What else is prohibited under this precept?

It is sinful, and showing a want of faith in God, to place confidence in things which have no influence upon our fortunes. By this I mean that we ought to regard signs, omens, fortune-telling, or similar superstitious notions, as withdrawing us from our God, who alone is the Ruler of our life and fortune; and if we are convinced that our intentions are lawful and honorable, we should fearlessly fulfill to do what we intended, and not be frightened by what superstitious fears or foolish signs might threaten, according to the opinion of the ignorant and those weak of faith.

"Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel; at this time it shall be said to Jacob and to Israel, what God hath wrought." Numbers 23:23.

18. Does this commandment prohibit nothing else?

It likewise is sinful to imagine God as possessed of a material form, or as having the faults of a mortal being. It is sinning against the dignity of the Supreme, to teach or to believe that He ever divided himself into parts, or that any change was made in the being of the Deity; farther, that the Lord is incapable of doing whatever is pleasing to Him, or that He requires any mediator or assistant to grant salvation to the creatures which He alone has created. In short, we are forbidden to ascribe to God any other qualities than those which He has taught us himself.

"To whom then will ye liken God, and what likeness will ye compare to Him?" Isaiah 40:18 hew:18 hew:18.

"Fear not, thou worm of Jacob, men of Israel! I help thee, saith the Lord, and I, the holy One of Israel, am thy Redeemer." Isaiah 41:14.

"I, I am the everlasting One, and beside me there is no savior. I have told, and I have saved, and I have proclaimed, and no strange god was among you, and you are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God.--I, the Lord, am your holy One, the Creator of Israel your King." Isaiah 43:11-15.

19. When are we guilty of a refined species of idolatry? When we fear any existing thing more than God, or when we place greater confidence in any earthly thing than in our heavenly Father. It is therefore rebellion against the Lord, if we omit doing his will, in order to gain money, or to please another man, or from fear of offending those who like ourselves are creatures, bound to obey the Creator. And we are not acting as honest servants of God, if we value ourselves on account of our riches, political power, or great wisdom, thereby forgetting to serve Him; or if we ascribe such possessions to our own skill and power, and not to the goodness of God, from whom all our happiness comes.

"Beware, that thou forget not the Lord thy God, so as not to observe his commandments, and judgements, and statutes, and art satisfied, and hast build good houses and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold are multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied, thy heart be not lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery:--and thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand have obtained me all this wealth; but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He who giveth thee power to get wealth; that He may fulfil his covenant, which He swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day." Deuteronomy 8:11-18.

20. How does the second commandment read in continuation?

"For I the Lord thy God am a watchful God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing kindness unto the thousandth generation of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

21. What are we to learn from this? That God is just when He punishes, and merciful in forgiving our sins.

"For his anger is momentary, but his favor is everlasting." Psalms 30:6.

22. Please to explain yourself a little more at length: did you not say "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation?"

Yes, so says the Scripture; but it adds also "of them that hate me;" when the children persevere in their fathers' sinning, then will they be punished for their own wrongs and bear the iniquity of their fathers since the consequences of the preceding punishment will and must be continued, whilst there is no merit in us to deserve the return of God's favor. As we read:

"And they that are left of you shall pine away for their iniquity in the lands of your enemies, and also for the iniquities of their fathers with them, shall they pine away." Leviticus 26:39. Which is explained "for the iniquity of their fathers with them," when they persevere in the wrong done by their fathers, and are not warned by the punishment sent upon these.

23. I understand you therefore to mean that, only when the misconduct of the children deserves punishment, will they receive the consequences of their fathers' sin; how is it when a wicked father had a virtuous child? When the child is virtuous and obedient to God's will, when, seeing how his father merited the visitation of the Lord, he himself returns and seeks to serve his Maker in faith and truth: then will most assuredly no evil come to him for the sin of his parent; on the contrary, he will be blessed, because, seeing the evil done, he preferred the service of Heaven to the vain doings of the world.

"But if from there thou wilt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him: if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Deuteronomy 4:29.

"The word of the Lord came again unto me saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all the souls are mine; no less the soul of the father, than the soul of the son, is mine; the soul that sinneth alone shall die." Ezekiel 18:1-4. And in continuation we read:

"As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, surely he shall die for his iniquity. Yet say ye, Why doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?--when the son hath done that which is lawful and right, all my statutes he hath kept, and hath done them: he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezekiel 18:18-20.

24. How is it with the piety of the parents? The piety of the parents will stand good to their children; and we are promised in many parts of the Bible that God will remember the virtue of the good even to their undeserving children.

"And the Lord appeared to him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and I will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for the sake of Abraham my servant." Genesis 26:24.

"Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake." 1 Kings 11:12.

"Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand,--for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes." Ibid. 34..

25. What are the words of the THIRD commandment?

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

26. What does this precept command? That we should love and fear the Lord our God to such an extent, and regard Him holy to such a degree, that we should never make use of his name except it be to promote sanctity in ourselves.

"And they shall lay my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Numbers 6:27.

27. What is prohibited by this precept? To swear uselessly by the name of God, or to utter any curses; but above all to swear falsely whilst invoking the holy name; or to lie or practice deceit under color of religion; lastly, to pretend to the power of sorcery, witchcraft or conjuration, all which tend to dishonor the name of the Lord.

"You shall not swear by my name falsely, and thereby profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord." Leviticus 19:12.

"Regard not those who have a familiar spirit, not the wizards, seek not to be defiled by them; I am the Lord." Leviticus 19:31.

28. How and when are we permitted to use the name of the Lord? In prayer and in studying or teaching the law.

"O give thanks unto the Lord; call on his holy name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing, and chant hymns unto Him; proclaim ye all his wondrous works. Glory in his holy name; let the heart of them rejoice who seek the Lord." Psalms 105:1-3.

29. Upon what other occasion can the holy Name be used? When we are called upon in a court of justice to take an oath as a confirmation of what we say.

30. What is an oath?

It is an assertion of a fact, or an assumption of a duty, at which we call God to witness that we say the exact truth as far as we know it, or obligate ourselves to do as we speak, and call upon Him to avenge the sin if there be falsehood, untruth, or deceit, in what we declare to be true, or intend doing.

"If any man trespass against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to swear, and the oath come before thy altar in this house: then hear Thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, to condemn the wicked, in order to bring his way upon his head; and to justify the righteous, in order to give to him according to his righteousness." 1 Kings 8:31-32.

31. How does a man transgress this precept? When he takes an oath, that is, swears, against the truth, and against his own inward conviction, or conceals the whole or any part of the truth, which is requisite to set any matter of controversy in its true light.

"If a person sin, and hear the voice of swearing, (that is, if he be called upon to testify), and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known any thing: if he do not tell, he shall bear his iniquity." Leviticus 5:1.

"Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He who is clean of hands, and pure of heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Psalms 24:3-5.

32. What is called "swearing deceitfully?"

If we affirm with an oath to do any thing which we afterwards omit doing, we are guilty of rebellion against God; because we have called upon Him to be witness to the honesty and truth of our intention, and we now dare to show that we only meant to deceive Him who cannot be deceived, and who knows all our thoughts: it is therefore also that He will punish such rebellion with proper visitation.

"When thou shalt make a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee." Deuteronomy 23:21.

"Lest there be among you one--who when he heareth the words of this curse would bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: him the Lord will not forgive, but then the anger of the Lord and his indignation will smoke against that man, and every curse written in this book will rest upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under the heaven. And the Lord will single him out unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant, which are written in this book of the law." Deuteronomy 19:17-20.

"Who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not--he that doth these things shall not be moved for ever." Psalms 15:4-5.

33. What are the words of the FOURTH commandment?

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath in honor of the Lord thy God: on it thou shalt not do any work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

34. What are we taught by this precept?

We should out of love and reverence to the Lord regard as holy that day which He has set apart as devoted to his service, and do nothing to profane it. God is the Master of our labor, the Possessor of our bodies, and, as such, He demands of us that we, his servants, should cease from labor one day in seven, and this on the last day of that period which He instituted as the week from the first creation of man upon the earth.

"Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord." Leviticus 26:2.

"And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord, Take heed to yourselves and carry no burden on the Sabbath day; nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers." Jeremiah 17:20-22.

35. What is the meaning and object of the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between us and our Creator, by which we are to be sanctified, and acknowledge that we are sincerely convinced of our subjection to his will.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord who sanctify you.--And the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested." Exodus 31:12-17.

36. How shall we sanctify the Sabbath?

We shall sanctify the Sabbath by abstaining from labor and business, and spend it in devotional exercises and contemplating the word and works of God.

"Ye shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy unto you; every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doth any work thereon, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Exodus 31:14.

37. What sort of labor is prohibited?

Every sort of labor, even the slightest, were it even but for amusement. The Sabbath is intended as a day of perfect rest, and we cannot therefore do any work, for instance, writing, playing on instruments, travelling, superintending the work of others, or similar things, without infringing the commandment, though we ourselves might not call such things labor.

"If thou restrain thy foot on the Sabbath day, not doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy feast of the Lord honorable; and honor it by refraining from thy usual ways, from pursuing thy pleasure, and speaking vain words: then shalt thou find delight in the Lord, and I will cause thee to tread upon the high places of the earth, and I will cause thee to enjoy the inheritance of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13-14.

38. Is it permitted for us to work on the Sabbath from fear of losing money, or of not gaining as much as otherwise we might do? By no means; all our work must stop before the Sabbath begins; on Friday, or sixth day afternoon, before the sun goes down, every true Israelite should be prepared to do honor to the Lord’s day; he should be clad in clean and decent clothes, and go to the house of God to offer up his prayers in thankfulness and freedom from care; nor suffer the fear of loss, or of not gaining enough, to induce him to pursue his usual labors on the day of rest.

39. Do I understand you to say that we are to rest on the Sabbath, even if we lose money by so doing? This is the law; and no one who professes to have faith in the Lord his Maker can

transgress it without confessing that he is not sincere in his religious profession. For we read:

"Six days thou shalt do work; but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: even in ploughing and in harvest thou shalt rest." Exodus 34:21. This text teaches us that even the farmer, who can only work in such weather as is suitable to his labors, must leave his field-work undone, whenever the Sabbath commences; and from this we may draw a comparison to every other employment in which we may be engaged.

. You said, "That no one who professes to have faith in the Lord can transgress this precept, without confessing that he is not sincere:" why not?

Because God promises us his blessing if we rest; and the violator of the Sabbath proves by his acts that he does not have confidence or faith in the promises of the unchanging One; and surely there can be no greater act of rebellion, than a disbelief of the truth of the Lord.

41. Do you know of an instance in the Bible-history of a special manifestation of the holiness of the Sabbath? When God had redeemed out forefathers from Egypt, He led them into the land of Arabia, in order to teach them more effectually how He wished them to serve Him. But the country, in which it was his pleasure to cause them to sojourn for a period of forty years, is one in which there is scarcely a single spot where any thing can grow,--it is what we call a desert, and is known by the name of the Arabian desert, or at times Stony Arabia. When they now became dissatisfied because they had no bread to eat, the Lord sent them every day a new species of food, especially created for the people consisting of at least two millions of persons. This was called Manna. Now they obtained every day for each person one omer-full; but on the sixth day there were two for each, because on the seventh day no manna fell; thus proving, that it was a day holy to the Lord, and no one should even go out and gather up what was on other days provided without human labor.

"And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one; and all the chiefs of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is what the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; what ye wish to bake, bake now, and what you wish to boil, boil now; and all the remainder lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up until the morning as Moses had bidden; and it did not stink, nor were there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord; today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath, on it there shall be none." Exodus 16:22-26.

42. But is it not matter of indifference which day of the seven is kept holy? And is there any evidence that the seventh day was always looked upon as the Sabbath? In reply to your first question I would say that, as the Lord ordained the seventh day, it must be requisite that this and no other day should be kept holy; He sanctified the seventh and no other day; we have therefore no right to choose any other as a day of rest and sanctification. To your second question I have to answer, that there is positive proof, that at the time of Nehemiah, which is at the close of the books of the Bible, the Sabbath was again confirmed, and declared to be holy. Now if it even were possible to suppose that God could change, which we do not believe, there is no evidence in Scripture that He has done so; for after Nehemiah to this day, there has arisen no prophet by whom the Lord has been pleased to make his will known; and surely mere men have no right to

alter what God has established.

"And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem were closed before the Sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be locked, and I charges that none should open them till after the Sabbath; and some of my servants I placed by the gates, that no burden should be brought in on the Sabbath-day." Nehemiah 13:19.

43. Is there any occasion when work may be done?

Only in case of actual necessity to preserve the life, or to prevent danger to the life of one or more of our fellow-men; because the preservation of human life is the first duty which is commanded to us.

44. What are the words of the FIFTH commandment?

"Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

45. What are we commanded by this precept?

We should honor and fear God in the respect and honor we pay to our parents, and to obey their commands equally as the word of God, whenever the will of our parents does not demand a disregard of the divine law; and to do nothing which could vex them or make them angry.

"He that smiteth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.--And he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." Exodus 21:15-17.

"Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my Sabbaths; I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:3.

"My son, keep the commandment of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them continually upon thy heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall guard thee; and when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee." Proverbs 6:20-22.

46. In what light do you look upon this commandment? As the noblest duty of man. We are to love our parents who watch over us in our helpless infancy; who provide with anxious care, under God, for all our wants; who attend us during the hours of sickness and affliction; who labor for us that we may have ease and plenty. we are to esteem them, because they point out to us the way of life, in teaching us the law of God, and directing us to observe the duties which, if observed, will render us happy and cheerful. How wicked, therefore, is the child that disregards the words of father or mother! such a one cannot love his God; one who loves not God cannot love his fellow-men; and one who has no love for others is a useless member of society, and is an evil, a disgrace, and not deserving of the life that has been given him, nor of the favors he daily receives from his Maker.

"Cursed be he who lightly esteemeth his father or his mother." Deuteronomy 27:16.

"The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother--the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Proverbs 30:17.

47. In what manner should we honor our parents? By love, obedience, and gratitude. Love, because they are our best friends and kindest benefactors; obedience, because they are to us on

earth what God is to us in heaven, the authors of our being; and gratitude, as a slight return for their care and kindness.

"A wise son maketh the father glad; but a foolish son is the grief of his mother." Proverbs 10:1.

48. What else is commanded by this precept?

We shall out of reverence to the Lord honor and love our teachers and instructors; pay deference to our superiors and masters; and honor and respect aged people, and endeavor to be at all times obedient, in all lawful things, to the will of all these persons.

"Before a hoary head thou shalt rise up, and honor the face of an old man, and feat thy God; I am the Lord." Leviticus 19:32.

"Hear me now, therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.--that thou mourn not at last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart hath despised reproof; and I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to them that instructed me!" Proverbs 5:7-13.

49. What duty is derived likewise from the fifth commandment? The love for our country.

50. What do you understand by "our country?" Not only that country in which we were born, but also, and chiefly, that in which we enjoy liberty of person, security of property, and the protection and benefit of the laws enacted for the common welfare.

51. How is this love to be shown?

We ought to love our country to such an extent, that we should do whatever might benefit it; we should likewise pay due deference to the laws, provided always they do not contradict the law of God; pay the taxes and dues without any evasion or fraud, and be obedient to the authorities, without regard whether they be monarchical or republican; and whenever our country should be in danger from foreign enemies or domestic commotions, we, as Israelites, are bound to hurry to its defense, and share the dangers and toil of our other fellow-citizens.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon, Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.--And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Jeremiah 29:4-7.

52. What is the SIXTH commandment?

"Thou shalt not kill."

53. How do you understand this?

We should love and reverence God in his image; that is to say, we should regard the life of our fellow-men as sacred, and of equal value with our own; and reflect, that the Almighty, who has given us being, has created also all other human beings in his image, and has given them life and being.

"Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in his image hath God made man." Genesis 9:6.

54. What is forbidden by this precept?

First. Self-murder, commonly called suicide.

Secondly. Murder of another person.

55. What does the Bible call "murder?"

First. An actual slaying or taking away of life; God has given us life, and we are not permitted to take away either our own or that of another. Because, since we have been sent on earth for a wise purpose, we are not authorized to throw away our own life without being summoned by the actual agency of the Lord; or to deprive another of his earthly being, except by a judicial decision, by which evil-doers can be punished with death according to the expressed will of the divine law:

"He that smiteth a man that he die, shall surely be put to death." Exodus 21:12.

Secondly. The injuring of our neighbor even in a remote degree, either in body or in soul.

56. How in "body?"

We are forbidden to strike, wound, maim, or cause bodily pain to any one, or to let him suffer from cold, hunger, or thirst, if we can by a possibility relieve him.

"And if a man cause a blemish on his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him." Leviticus 24:19.

"Is it not, to distribute thy bread to the hungry? and to bring the miserably afflicted poor into thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou clothe him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh?" Isaiah 58:7.

57. How in "soul?"

We are forbidden to persecute or injure any one through quarrelling, disputing, or maliciously contradicting him; through anger, hatred, derision, or game-making; farther, through ingratitude, faithlessness, tale-bearing, revenge, or unmerciful behavior; in short, in any manner which could mortify him, or tend to shorten his life. All men are equal before the Lord, though one may be richer, more powerful, or wiser than the other; and therefore no one has a right, and it is for this reason sinful, to do any act to another which he would look upon as an injury if done to himself.

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou mayest in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor like thyself: I am the Lord." Leviticus 19:17-18.

"Thou shalt not deliver up to his master the servant who hath escaped unto thee from his master." Deuteronomy 23:16.

"Say not unto thy neighbor, Go and come again, and tomorrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee. Devise not evil against thy neighbor, who dwelleth securely by thee. Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm." Proverbs 3:28-30.

58. What is the SEVENTH commandment?

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

59. What is meant by this?

We should reverence the covenant, entered into by man and wife in the presence of the Lord, and hold it so sacred as to do nothing to violate it.

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife--the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death." Leviticus 20:10.

60. What are we commanded by this precept?

Man and wife whom the Lord has joined in the holy bonds of wedlock should love each other, and live in faith, union and harmony, and not violate the covenant which they have entered into. God was witness to their vow, and He will surely avenge the wrong, if even human beings should not be able to discover the sin which has been committed secretly.

"Therefore doth a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife; and they become one flesh." Genesis 2:24.

61. What else are we taught in this precept?

We should be particular in our conduct; not to speak, nor even think, indecent things; to be chaste and modest in our behavior, and not to acquire habits which might be indecorous, or offensive to others; and lastly, not to dress so as to expose the body more than strict modesty will allow, nor should men and women put on any other clothes than the customs of the country permit each sex to wear. Our body is the work of God, and we should not defile it, which immodest conduct would do; we are to be holy, because He is holy, and this holiness consists in due propriety, and decorum in our behavior, and in obedience to the precepts of the law.

"A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man; neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment; for every one that doeth so is an abomination unto the Lord thy God." Deuteronomy 22:5.

62. What is the EIGHTH commandment?

"Thou shalt not steal."

63. What is meant by this precept?

We shall, loving and fearing the Lord our God, regard as sacred the property which He has given to our neighbor, and do nothing to deprive him of the same, either through our own agency or that of others.

64. What do the Scriptures call "stealing?"

First. We shall not commit actual theft or robbery; we shall not have false weights and measures; not sell fraudulent wares or merchandise; not cheat any one in any manner whatever, nor withhold from him the wages he has earned, or any part of his property which may be in our hands, either accidentally or by having been entrusted to us.

"Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, nor lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and not profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, nor rob him; the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee until the morning." Leviticus 19:11-13.

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgement, in meteyard (cloth measure), in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt." Leviticus 19:35-36.

65. What else is prohibited under this commandment?

Secondly. We shall not commit secret theft; we shall never try to obtain any thing through artfulness, lying, or fraud, nor through concealment of the quality of merchandise, usury, or selfish seeking of our own interest, thereby disregarding the rights or property of others; farther, we are prohibited to receive or conceal stolen property, or to retain any thing which has been lost, and has come in our possession, by our finding it, or receiving it from others, even though the loser by our enemy.

"If a person sin and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath defrauded his neighbor; or hath found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely:--then shall he bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord." Leviticus 5:21-25.

"Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thy own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and so shalt thou do with every thing lost by thy brother, which he hath lost, and thou hast found: thou mayest not hide thyself." Deuteronomy 22:1-3.

"When thou dost lend unto thy neighbor any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand without, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge; in any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment and bless thee; and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God." Deuteronomy 24:10-13.

66. Is possession only confined to property? by which I mean, has a man nothing besides goods and actual visible possessions in which he can be injured?

Yes; such as his honor, his good name, his peace of mind, his words and his thoughts made known in his writings; all these and similar things are likewise possessions, and are to be sacred as much as goods and property which our neighbor has acquired.

67. What is therefore prohibited with regard to them?

It is sinful to slander, abuse or vilify any one, by which means his honor or fair name might be injured in the least; likewise to report the words he has spoken to another, or to carry to him what others have said to his disadvantage, by which his peace of mind might be disturbed, unless the

cause of truth or justice should absolutely demand it. We are also forbidden to divulge any secret entrusted to us; to persuade another to do any thing which he ought not to do, or to flatter him so as to gain his favor by saying that to him which we know he does not merit; and, lastly, to appropriate designedly to ourselves the words and thoughts of others as our own, for by this means we deprive them of their just and due praise, or cause them actual injury.

"Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." Leviticus 19:16.

"He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; and meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips." Proverbs 20:19.

"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not the secret of another." Proverbs 25:9.

68. What is the NINTH commandment?

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

69. What is meant by this?

We should always have the love and fear of God in our hearts, so that we should never be induced to say any falsehood, or give any untrue testimony against our neighbor; but we should always say the truth, and give publicity only to what is correct.

"If a false witness rise up against any man, to testify against him that which is wrong: then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who shall be in those days. And the judges shall make diligent inquiry; and, behold! if the witness be a false witness, and has testified falsely against his brother: then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to do unto his brother; so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." Deuteronomy 19:16-19.

70. What is forbidden by this precept?

It is forbidden to give a false or unjust decision in judgement, to calumniate any one, to spread false reports, or to give false evidence, or to testify to any thing as absolutely true of which we have no direct and positive knowledge; it is likewise sinful to be deceitful or double-dealing toward our neighbor, or to be so anxious for reputation or overbearing as to induce us to act towards others in a proud and presumptuous manner, as though we were better than they. In short, we should not do any thing or say any thing without having the strict truth on our side; and whoever does otherwise, either directly through injustice, or indirectly through deceit, falsehood, or pride, offends against the will of God.

"Thou shalt not raise a false report; put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Exodus 23:1.

"Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause." Exodus 23:6.

"An ungodly person, a wicked person, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eye, pusheth with his feet, pointeth with his fingers. Frowardness in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord." Proverbs 6:12-14.

"Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 16:5.

71. What is the TENTH commandment?

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s."

72. What is meant by this precept? The love and fear of the Lord should be deeply rooted in our heart; we shall therefore purify our inclinations and feelings; suppress all evil desires, and remove every thought which could tend to induce us to injure our neighbor in any of his possessions which are lawfully his, and which the Giver of all has assigned to him as his portion on earth. Such purity of thought will teach us benevolence for our fellow-men, inasmuch as it must produce content with our own lot, and render us thereby cheerful in the observance of the duties to others which the other precepts of the Decalogue demand of us.

"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every one to his brother; and oppress not the widow and the fatherless, the stranger and the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in his heart." Zechariah 7:9-10.

"Stand in awe and sin not; commune with your heart upon your bed, and cease from murmuring." Psalms 4:5.

73. Can the mere thought be injurious?

Certainly; inclination, if not checked, will become desire, and unchecked desire will soon induce us to act; and thus what was first but idle thought has become by gradual steps transgression and actual sin.

"Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house, and the master and his heritage." Micah 2:1-2.

74. What does the Bible call "coveting?"

We should never yield ourselves to any sensual desires, that is to say, we should never suffer our thoughts to desire those things which we cannot lawfully obtain; nor are we justified to indulge in idle wishes; but we should labor cheerfully, relying upon God’s blessing, in order that we may avoid idleness and consequently escape sinning, which is the usual consequence of a state of inactivity.

"And that ye seek not after the inclination of your heart, and the delight of your eyes, in pursuit of which ye have been led astray. That ye may remember, and so all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." Numbers 15:39-40.

"I have treasured up thy words in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalms 119:11.

"Blessed is every one who feareth the Lord, who walketh in his ways. When thou eatest the labor of thy hands, then shalt thou be happy, and it shall be well with thee." Psalms 128:1-2.

75. What else is prohibited by this precept?

It is forbidden to us to be envious of the wealth of others, or to be jealous of their success. It should be enough for us to know that our neighbor’s wealth and success proceed from the Lord; and that, therefore, we would be in fact accusing Him, who never wrongs, of injustice, were we to feel dissatisfaction, because others are happy, or more wealthy than we.

"Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, nor be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and be fed in faith. And thou shalt find delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass. And He will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day. Rest in the Lord, and hope patiently in Him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." Psalms 37:1-7.

01.08. The Kingdom of the Messiah

Chapter VIII. The Kingdom of the Messiah 1. What do you call the Divine Kingdom on earth? A time will come when all the people of the earth will be united under one paternal government, and when all mankind will acknowledge the ONE and ONLY TRUE God, and serve Him along in truth and sincereity.

"And deliverers shall go up to Mount Zion, to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s." Obadiah 1:21.

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: on that day the Lord alone shall be acknowledged, and his name shall also be ONE." Zechariah 14:9.

2. In what is this description different from the present state of the world? In this: that at present parts of mankind are governed by unjust and tyrannical laws, not founded upon the law of God, but contradicting it in every respect; and that the knowledge of true religion is confined to a very limited number of human beings; whereas the greater part acknowledge not the ONE Supreme, but invest Him with qualities foreign to his being, or worship images and idols of their own invention.

3. Do you think that this state will be altered? and in what light do you look upon the Revelation at Sinai? As I said, I believe that nothing but the precepts of the Lord will be the rule of conduct for all men, and that they will live under a government acknowledged to proceed from Him; and I believe likewise, that the revelation of the law on Sinai, though at the time of its promulgation it was only given to the Israelites, will at that period be the only law by the regulations of which all men will be governed.

"Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant: even them will I bring unto my hold mountain, and I will make them rejoice in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Isaiah 66:6-7.

4. Upon what reasons do you ground this hope?

Upon the promises of the Lord made through the mouth of his servants the prophets. The other promises of the Lord have always seen their fulfillment, and consequently no one who has faith in his Maker can doubt the fulfillment of this glorious hope for all mankind.

5. Through whose agency will the Divine reign on earth be established?

Through the Messiah, or the anointed of God, who is to descend from the family of David; it is therefore also called the reign or kingdom of the Messiah.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a scion from his roots shall sprout forth. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and it shall make him

quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor decide according to the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his hips.--and on that day it shall be the root out of Jesse, who shall stand for an ensign to the nations; after him shall the gentiles inquire, and his rest shall be glorious." Isaiah 11:1-10.

"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man, BRANCH shall be his name, even from his descendants shall he grow up, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: yes, he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and the priest also shall be upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zechariah 6:12-13.

6. What do you understand now by "the king Messiah?" The Messiah is to be a person, a human being, sent by God to do those acts which He purposes should be done on earth at the time of the redemption. He is to be endowed with wisdom more than any other man; with superior intelligence, and knowledge more penetrating than were ever given before; and his government is to be terrible only to the wicked, but peaceful and benevolent to the just, no matter how poor or humble they may be.

7. Is he to be independent of God’s law? or is he to do, like other messengers of the Lord, just what he is sent to do under the limitation and rule of the law? The Messiah is to be entirely the servant of the Lord, under the law, just as every other Israelite; he is to do nothing which the others ar enot permitted to do; and his duties will be pointed out and strictly defined. As such therefore he is himself accountable, and can accordingly have no power to be a mediator between God and man, farther than Moses and the other prophets and pious men of our people were. In accordance with this view the prophet says:

"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall have all one shapherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes and do them." Ezekiel 37:24.

"And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the door-post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt-offering and peace-offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate, and then go forth; but the gate shall not be shut till the evening. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord on the Sabbaths and on the new moons." Ezekiel 45:2-3.

8. What will take place when the reign of the Messiah is established? The only pure faith, the law promulgated by God, will spread itself in its utmost purity, free from all admixture which, in process of time, may have been mixed up with its precepts, over all the earth, and be the only governing principle of all hearts: all men will then acknowledge the Only One, the everlasting God, as the sole object of their worship, and love each other as friends and brothers.

"And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit over all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; also upon the servants and upon the maid-servants even, in those days, will I pour out my spirit." Joel 2:28.

"Then will I change unto the nations a pure language, that they may all call on the name of the Lord, and serve Him with one consent." Zephaniah 3:10.

9. What will the Messiah especially effect for Israel?

He will be the means of the making of a new covenant between the Lord and Israel, and through his agency the conversion of the whole people to righteousness will be effected, in consequence of which change the Lord will forgive their sins, and be no more angry with them for their former misconduct.

"For a short moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith thy Redeemer the Lord." Isaiah 54:7-8.

"And the redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy children, nor out of the mouth of thy children's children, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." Isaiah 59:20-21.

"Behold! days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will make with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, a new covenant. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers, on the day when I took hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they violated, and I felt disgust for them, saith the Lord; for this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I have placed my law in their inmost part, and upon their heart I will write it, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach any more one his neighbor and one his brother, saying, 'Know ye the Lord;' for they all shall know me, from their small to their great ones, saith the Lord, for I will pardon their iniquity, and their sin I will no more remember." Jeremiah 31:31-34.

10. Is there any other consequences to arise to Israel?

We are also promised that the people of Israel, now scattered over all the earth, are to be assembled again into one state in the land of Palestine, where they are to be governed by the king Messiah, under the rule of the divine law, as were their forefathers in the time of the prophet Moses and at subsequent periods. The divisions and quarrels of the different sections of the country are to cease forever; and the outcasts even of the nation, they who have lost the name of Israel, no matter where scattered, shall be brought back from the most distant countries to the land of Canaan, which shall then be free from the plague of ferocious beasts and noxious reptiles, and be blessed with fruitfulness and plenty, and no one shall make afraid or disturb the people, who have so often been the object of scorn and contempt to their enemies; for these too will then acknowledge that the children of Israel are indeed the beloved of the Lord.

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things have come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God shall have driven thee, and thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul: that then the Lord thy God will restore thy captivity, and have compassion upon

thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God shall have scattered thee. If thy outcasts be at the utmost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from there will He fetch thee; and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." Deuteronomy 30:1-5.

"And it shall come to pass on that day, the Lord will put forth his hand again, the second time, to recover the remnant of his people, which shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will set up an ensign for the nations, and will gather the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." Isaiah 11:11-13.

"And speak to them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I take the children of Israel from between the nations whither they have wandered, and I will gather them from around, and bring them unto their own land. And I will make them into one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one kind shall be to them all as kind, and they shall be no more two nations, nor be any more divided into two kingdoms. And they shall not defile themselves any more with their idols, and with their abominations, and with all their transgressions; and I will save them from all their places, where they have sinned, and I will purify them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And my servant David shall be king over them, and one shepherd shall be to them all, and in my mudgments they shall walk, and my statutes they shall observe and do them. And they shall dwell upon the land which I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your fathers have dwelt, they and their children and their children’s children for ever, and my servant David shall be prince to them for ever. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, an everlasting covenant it shall be with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and fix my sanctuary among them for ever. And the nations shall know, that I am the Lord who sanctify Israel."* Exek. 37:21-28.

*This paragraph has been given at unusual length, in order to give the whole doctrine at one view. If considered best it might be merely read to the class without getting it by heart.

11. What will be the external situation of this kingdom?

Peace and good-will shall prevail over all the earth; because the blessing of God and the knowledge of his law shall be the universal portion of all mankind.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:9.

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Ibid. 65:24-25.

"And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his

vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." Micah 4:3-4.

12. Give me some reasons and extracts from Scripture to prove that the religion of the Bible shall be the universal religion. To judge from probability alone, we should say that the law made known at Sinai would be the law of all the world at the time of the Divine rule on earth. For in the Lord there is no change of purpose, no want of firmness; and what He therefore declares to be right at one time must be so always. But Scripture actually declared that our religion, at least a part thereof, shall be the sole law and religion of all men; and it is this chiefly which will make the time of the Messiah the period of universal blessing and peace.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established at the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Isaiah 2:3-4.

"And the Lord alone shall be exalted on that day. And the idols He shall utterly abolish." Isaiah 2:17-18.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zechariah 14:16.

13. When is the time of the Messiah? The prophets speak of the time as surely coming, but have not given us sufficient means to fix the precise period; the day is known to the Lord alone; but it is in our power to hasten its coming, through virtue and the fear of the Lord. But if even we should persevere in our wickedness and be undeserving: still God will bring about the fulfillment of his word at the time beyond which the redemption of the world is not to be delayed.

"Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." Isaiah 55:1-2.

"I the Lord will hasten it in its time." Isaiah 60:22.

"Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Not for your sake do I this, O house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy name which ye have profanced among the nations whither ye went." Ezekiel 36:22.

"But it shall be one day, which is known only to the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light." Zechariah 14:7.

14. But tell me, how are we to recognize the time when it does arrive? how are we to guard against imposition by designing men, who may assume falsely the dignity of Messiah?

Whenever all the signs given by the prophets take place, and all the predictions are accomplished, then, and only then, has the Messiah actually come; and the person who is gifted with the spirit of

God as laid down by Isaiah will be known as the true anointed; for so it was with Moses, whom all the people believed to be the prophet of the Lord, because he fulfilled the message with which he was sent. But the time of the Messiah will also be farther distinguished by the previous coming of Elijah the prophet, who will prepare the way for the renovation of mankind.

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold, he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts." Malachi 3:1.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Malachi 3:23-24.*

*As the doctrine of the Messiah has been but briefly given in the text, the teacher would do well to read at least some of the Bible passages quoted more at length from the Bible, in order to give the scholar a more complete idea than the limits of a work like this permit.

01.09. Life After Death

Chapter IX. The Life After Death 1. What is the third article of the Jewish Faith?

I believe firmly and truly, that the Lord God has made the soul which He has placed within me a spirit like himself, and it is therefore not mortal; but that He will call me anew into life after the dissolution of the body, and restore me again, after death shall have severed the connection between the flesh and the spirit, and the grave shall have received the part of me which is of the earth; farther, that He will judge me after my departure out of this life, according to the good or evil which I may have done on earth; reward me with inexpressible happiness and grant me everlasting life, free from pain and sorrow, if I have merited his favor; but punish me according to his wisdom and justice, if I have been forgetful of his law and followed the evil inclination of my heart.

2. How do you classify what you have been saying?

Into the RESURRECTION of the dead, and REWARD and PUNISHMENT after death.

3. Why do you think that there does exist a reward and punishment after death?

Because, in viewing with attention the present state of the world, we often see that the virtuous are poor, oppressed, and suffering, whilst the wicked are wealthy, prosperous, and powerful. Could therefore the good have no farther hope than here on earth, there would evidently be injustice in the holy One above, in whom there is no evil or perversion of justice, but all whose ways are just and true. I therefore must believe that there will be a state after this, where the just will meet their reward, and where the wicked will receive their deserved punishment.

"There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that liveth long in his wickedness." Ecclesiastes 7:15.

"Because sentence is not executed speedily against deeds of evil, therefore the heart of the sons of man becometh careless in them to do evil. But let the sinner do evil a hundredfold, and God withhold long his anger from him: yet am I convinced that it will be well with them that fear God, whilst they fear Him. But it shall not be well with the wicked; and like the shadow he shall not prolong his days, because he feareth not before God." Ecclesiastes 8:11-13.

4. What do we derive from this article of our Faith?

We should persevere in doing good, and be zealous in the discharge of the duties which our Maker demands of us, and endeavor to practice virtue, even if no man will approve of our conduct. It should be satisfaction enough for us to know that God watches all our actions, and that He will carefully weigh them and give to us all the reward which we deserve, and always show us mercy far above what our little merit can with justice lay claim to.

"And unto Thee, O Lord! belongeth mercy; for Thou wilt render unto every man according to his deeds." Psalms 62:13.

"For every deed will God bring into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." Ecclesiastes 7:14.

5. But suppose, as you said just now, that virtue be not rewarded on earth, then indeed would we have cause to despair of happiness, if we take riches, honor, and power as the chief objects of our being here. But there are joys, even on earth, beyond the things which men so much desire to possess; and a man poor, unhonored, and subject to the will of others, can be much happier than those who rule over him, provided he be content with his lot, and obedient to the will of God.

"Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right." Proverbs 16:8.

6. This idea is correctly expressed; please to continue.

It is thus that we can learn to be content with whatever we receive, if we but consider that it is the will of God which gives us our portion on earth; and He therefore must think that we are better as we actually are, than we could be under different circumstances. But if we look farther into ourselves, and reflect that our soul is immortal, that it is the undying image of the holy One within ourselves: then indeed have we cause for joyful hope; because in the life after this the pleasures imparted by divine grace far outweigh all the joys which can be sent us here; for they are like our future existence, undying, unchanging, coming directly from God, and all depending on his favor; and the righteous will enjoy them without fear, without being disturbed by the wicked, who then cease from troubling, whilst the weary pious ones are at rest.

"My heart therefore is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in safety. For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thy pious servant to see corruption." Psalms 16:9-10.

"There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. Together repose in peace chained prisoners, they hear not the task-master’s voice. The small and the great are there; the servant too, now free from his master." Job 3:17-19.

7. Are you convinced of the truth of this belief?

Yes; for both reason and religion unite to demonstrate the immortality of the soul.

8. How does Reason alone prove it?

God is the most beneficent of beings; all his intentions are pure and never fail to effect a good end. We see, however, that this life is short, and is constantly exposed to be ended by death arising from accidents, sickness, or the violence of wicked men; besides this, whilst we live, we have to submit to sorrow and suffering of every kind; and no man, if ever so great, can escape these sorrows, nor the death which awaits all. We therefore must judge that we were not created for this state of being alone; but that another, and a better, and a happier, and a more durable life awaits us, when our present state of existence has passed away, and our body has been laid to rest in the grave.

"The days of the years of our life therein are seventy years; and if by extraordinary vigor we see eighty years: yet is their essence labor and sorrow; for our life is soon cut off, and we flee away.--O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." Psalms 90:10-14.

9. How does Religion teach the same? The holy Scriptures teach us that God has created man in his image; the body of man we know to be mortal, and, unlike the being of God, it is subject to decay, sorrow, and death; but the true divine image is the soul, which has reason, and is spiritual, and enables us like Him to judge between right and wrong, though at an immeasurable distance and with the greatest difference between the creatures and the Creator; and this spirit therefore must be like the great Spirit, undying and incorruptible.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever. He will guide us even beyond death." Psalms 48:15.

10. What is death?

Death is the separation of the soul from the body, of the spirit from matter; by it the body is rendered no longer fit for service, but is made immovable and corrupt; and the spirit is set free to return to the presence of the Creator.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Ecclesiastes 7:7.

11. How should we therefore look upon this state of being? This life is but a preparation for the life everlasting; this is the time for action and labor, that, the period of enjoyment and repose. Thus also teach our wise men in their Proverbs of the Fathers: "Prepare thyself in the outer hall, that thou mayest be worthy to enter the palace."

12. What actions and labors are they which will fit us to enter the palace of God? Not the pursuit of wealth, and fame, and power, for they, like our life, must soon pass away; but the riches of the soul are the knowledge and the fear of God, the sincere and humble pursuit of his law of truth; for such conduct will always give peace to the mind, and will leave fruits which will, like the everlasting life of the righteous, be always undying, never ending.

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness on the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 9:22-23.

13. Is the other world preferable to this?

Yes; because there are the everlasting life in God, and the permanent happiness. For the righteous, when their labor on earth is done, return to the Lord where their souls are to dwell for ever, enjoying the delights and blessing which their obedience has obtained for them from their Maker.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fullness of joy; at thy right hand are everlasting pleasures." Psalms 16:11.

14. Is it therefore right to grieve unbecomingly long for the death of a friend?

No; whenever any of our friends are taken from us by death, we should reflect that it is the Lord who thought proper to afflict us in this manner, and that to his decree it is our duty to submit with fortitude and resignation. Farther, that sooner or later we ourselves must follow them, and that the grave will receive our bodies likewise: the same lot awaits all men. Whilst, therefore, it is but proper to feel deeply our loss, we should bear it as becomes the servants of the Most High, who know that they are always in his power and care, whether in life or in death. But rather than grieve inordinately it should be the means of making us reflect upon our conduct, and of inducing us to look upon it as a warning sent from God, that we may return to Him with sincere repentance, and thus stay the anger which might be poured over us if we continue obstinate and sinning.

"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall deliver his soul from the power of the grave?" Psalms 89:49.

15. What else do we learn from the nature of life and death?

Every thing earthly is vain and perishable; riches will not assist us on the day of wrath, but virtue alone will save us from condemnation.

"When thou goest, it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." Proverbs 6:22.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Ecclesiastes 1:2.

16. What do you understand by "the day of wrath?" The great day of the Lord, or the day of the universal resurrection of the dead.

17. What is the Resurrection? The reunion of the souls of the departed with their bodies.

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast forth the dead." Isaiah 26:19.

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are entirely cut off. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves. And I will put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." Ezekiel 37:11-14.

18. Why do you call this great period the "day of wrath?"

Because at the time of the resurrection the Lord God will hold judgment over all the children of man, and award to each eternal reward or punishment according to his good or evil deeds.

"For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.--And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted on that day." Isaiah 2:12-17.

"Therefore wait ye for me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation, all my fierce anger; for with the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be devoured." Zephaniah 3:8.

"For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall not leave them root or branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Malachi 3:19-20.

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the expanse; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 7:2-3.

19. Do you mean to say that any person will be punished everlastingly?

There are some who deserve everlasting condemnation; and they are those who, knowing the law of God, reject it scornfully, and, so to say, rebel against the Lord, and die without repentance. Such persons cannot hope to receive that pardon which we are taught will be extended to those who have sinned by being misled by worldly desires and enticements, and who in this life return with sincere repentance to the Most High. For these last the prayers of the living, we trust, will be of avail; but for the first there is no hope save the undeserved mercy of God.

"The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." 1 Samuel 2:6.

"And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the man that have transgressed (willfully) against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Isaiah 66:24.

"Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine, the soul that sinneth, that alone shall die." Ezekiel 18:4.

"Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." Ezekiel 18:27.

20. When is the time of the Resurrection? This has not been made known to us; but we are given to understand that the resurrection of the dead is connected with the kingdom of the Messiah, and will not take place till this has first been established.

"And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked will do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.--Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Daniel 12:9-13.

21. What changes will take place in those days?

Scripture teaches us that the present form of the earth and of the universe will pass away, and that a better form, and one better suited to the altered state of man, will take its place.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Isaiah 66:22.

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; bitterly shall cry the mighty man. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for He will make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell on the earth." Zephaniah 1:14-18.

22. What will then be the condition of the good? The pious ones, they who feared God, will receive an everlasting happy life in the Lord; and they will enjoy heavenly delight and unceasing pleasures, and dwell with Him in the utmost purity of the spirit, and in entire love and faith.

"Yet in righteousness shall I behold thy face, and be satisfied at awakening from contemplating thy countenance." Psalms 17:15.

23. What will be the state of the ungodly?

Those who have forsaken their Maker will be condemned to utter darkness, and will be excluded from the communion of the righteous, who, as said, will be united to the Lord.

"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Psalms 1:5.

"As wax melteth before the fire, so may the wicked perish at the presence of God. But the righteous shall exult, they shall rejoice before God; yea, they shall be exceedingly joyful." Psalms 68:3-4.

24. Have we any distinct idea of the nature of the reward and punishment after death and at the resurrection?

No; we can form no clear idea of the state of the spirit unconnected with the body; but we have every reason to suppose that the reward as well as the punishment will be essentially spiritual, unlike any bodily joy or sorrow: still, the extent and nature of both are known to God alone, for no human eye has ever seen the reward which "He treasures up for those who wait upon Him" with hope and devoted faith.

01.10. Repentance and Atonement

Chapter X.

Repentance and Atonement 1. By what means can the sinner escape the punishment due to his sins? By conversion, a change of conduct, and repentance.

"Gather yourselves together, and search your ways, O unwilling nation! before the decree go forth, before your day pass away as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord’s anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, who have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; that ye may perhaps be hidden on the day of the Lord’s anger." Zephaniah 2:1-3.

2. What do you call "Conversion?"

If the sinner separates himself from his sin and returns to the service of the Lord; this he does when he heartily abhors his previous bad conduct, and accuses himself sincerely of the wrong he has done, and resolves to be pious and good for the future. If he does this, he has well-founded hopes that the Lord will let him experience grace, mercy and forgiveness.

"Go, and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thy iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." Jeremiah 3:12-13.

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; but truly, that he should return from his ways and live." Ezekiel 18:23.

3. How can we repent?

First. By sincere regret for past misconduct; that is, awakening the soul to the effects of sin.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7.

Secondly. By prayer; that is, humbling the heart to our Maker.

"If they sin against Thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and Thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto Thee in the land of them that carried them captive, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto Thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies that led them away captive, and pray unto Thee towards their land which Thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: then hear Thou their prayer and their

supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against Thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against Thee, and give them compassion before them that carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them." 1 Kings 8:46-50.

Thirdly. Through pious deeds; that is, obedience to the will of God.

"But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed shall not be remembered unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done shall he live." Ezekiel 18:21-22.

4. In what way is regret a part of penitence?

Because regret for misconduct is the sorrow and affliction of the soul which recognizes and acknowledges her past sins, and feels ancious to enter again into the peace of God, which her former wrongs have deprived her of. Besides this, without penitential regret for the wrong, and detestation of our sins, no amendment of the heart can take place, and this it is which is demanded of us if we wish to be forgiven.

"Be gracious unto me, O God! according to thy lovingkindness; according to the abundance of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I am sensible of my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, who art God alone! have I sinned, and done the evil in thy sight." Psalms 51:3-6.

5. How is such regret to be shown? Not so much by outward tokens of sorrow, as by a contrition of the soul that feels her errors and humbles herself sincerely before the Lord. Nevertheless, external humbling, such as leaving off ornaments and outward exhibitions of wealth, fasting and acts of charity, are also very useful; as by this means we tear ourselves away from the allurements and pleasures of a perishable life, and seek protection from Him who is alone able to forgive, and whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, return ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments, and return unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth of the evil." Joel 2:12-13.

"The sacrifices of the Lord are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God! Thou wilt not despise." Psalms 51:19.

6. How does prayer form a part of repentance?

Because by prayer we are to make with our own lips an acknowledgement of the wrong we have done, and to promise a better course of life for the future. It is therefore the expression of what the heart feels, when we sincerely repent. It brings accordingly the evil of our conduct nearer to our soul; and by speaking as it were in the presence of the Lord of our wrong, and asking his forgiveness, relying at the same time upon his mercy to atone for our sins, we must become more impressed, and feel more strongly, that it is necessary for us to be more obedient for the future, if we would in the least degree deserve the favor of God.

"When I was silent concerning my sins, my bones wasted away, from my cries all the day.--Therefore did I confess my sin to Thee, and would not hide my iniquity; I said, I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and Thou didst forgive the iniquity of my sins." Psalms 32:3-5.

"I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him, and observe his commandments: let thy ear be now attentive, and thy eyes open, that Thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before Thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against Thee; for both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against Thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commanded thy servant Moses.--O Lord, I beseech Thee, let now thy ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Nehemiah 1:5-11.

7. Which is the last means of repentance?

Pious and godly acts are the last means of perfecting the reformation and repentance commenced by sincere regret, assisted by prayer and penance. For prayer and fasting, although otherwise essential, avail nothing, if they do not induce us to lead a better and truly reformed life.

"Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil." Isaiah 1:14-16.

8. What is to be the effect of repentance upon man?

First. Repentance shall effect a reformation and amendment of our course of life.

"Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:17-18.

Secondly. Repentance shall purify our heart from sin, and restore our soul to the purity she possessed before transgression, in order to make us fit again for the kingdom of the Lord, who is pure and holy.

"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that deserveth to die, saith the Lord God: therefore return and live." Ezekiel 18:31-32.

Thirdly. Repentance shall gain for us anew the grace and mercy of our heavenly Father, which we have lost by our sins.

"Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create me a pure heart, O God, and renew the spirit of rectitude within me. Cast me not out from thy presence; nor take from me thy

holy spirit. Restore me the joy of thy salvation; and support me with thy liberal spirit." Psalms 51:11-14.

9. Is there not one day in the year devoted to universal repentance in Israel?

Yes; the tenth day of the seventh month, Tishry, has been appointed by the Lord as the day of general atonement for our sins. Therefore it is called Yome Kippurim, Day of Atonement.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement, it shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall fast.--And ye shall do no work on that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God." Leviticus 23:26-28.

10. What is the object of this day?

We shall abstain on this day from all carnal enjoyments, to live in spiritual communion with the Lord; that is to say, we are not to eat, drink, or do any thing by which the body can be pleased; it is to be a day of entire abstinence devoted alone to the service of the Lord; and we shall sanctify ourselves then by a sincere repentance, and resolve to sin no more as we have sinned.

"Ye shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute for ever, throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall fast; on the ninth day of the month at even shall ye begin; from even unto even shall you celebrate your Sabbath." Leviticus 23:31-32.

11. Are all sins pardoned on that day?

No; those sins alone which we have committed against God will be forgiven on that day, if we sincerely repent.

"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." Leviticus 16:30.

12. Which are the sins for which this day is no atonement?

Those sins which have been committed against our fellow-men; as these cannot be forgiven unless we have satisfied those whom we have offended or injured.

"For sins between man and God only will the Day of Atonement avail; but for sins between a man and his neighbor the Day of Atonement will not atone, unless he have satisfied his neighbor." Yoma viii. 9.

13. But suppose that the person we have injured be dead, or beyond our reach, or unforgiving, and too much addicted to revengeful feelings to forgive us: how shall we then do in order to obtain forgiveness for our trespasses? In all such cases we should be doubly diligent to do acts of mercy to those who suffer, and be very careful to do nothing against the law of God. If we do so, we have well-founded hopes that the Lord, seeing the sincerity of our repentance, will in his mercy forgive us, although our injured fellow-man is either unable or unwilling to grant us his pardon for the wrong we have done him.

"Is such then the fast which I choose, a day that a man should afflict his soul? when he should bow down his head like a bulrush, and spread sackcloth and ashes for his couch? shall this be called a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this rather the fast which I choose? to dissolve the bands of wickedness; to loosen the oppressive burdens; and to let the oppressed go free; and that ye should break asunder every yoke? Is it not to distribute thy bread to the hungry? and to bring the miserable afflicted poor into thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou clothe him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth like the morning-dawn; and thy health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall receive thee. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer; thou shalt cry, and He will say, Lo, I am here." Isaiah 58:5-9.

14. What doctrines can you derive from all we have endeavored to lay before you?

First, God has connected the welfare of man with virtue, and there can be no real or lasting happiness unless our conduct be based upon the knowledge of God’s law, and we always act as beings accountable to Him and subject to his rule.

"Who is the man that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see happiness? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it." Psalms 34:13-15.

Secondly, It depends upon ourselves whether we obtain happiness in this life and in the future state. God has given us the choice, and the power of choosing likewise; and we are therefore enabled to become happy, and consequently justly deserving sorrow, if we neglect wilfully the good which has been placed within our reach.

"I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you: I have set before you life and death, blessing and the curse; but do thou choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deuteronomy 30:19.

Thirdly, True fear of God and religious feelings are not to be shown through words and professions only, but should be displayed by our actions also,--God demands devotion of heart, but likewise deeds and active exertions in his service.

"And I gave them my statutes and made known to them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them." Ezekiel 20:11.

15. How does David speak concerning this doctrine?

"Lord! who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy mountain? He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. He that backbites not with his tongue, does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes the vile is condemned, and who honors them that fear the Lord; who swears to his own hurt and changes not; who puts not out his money to usury, and protects the innocent without bribe: he that does these things shall not be moved for ever." AMEN

01.11. Appendix 1 - The Ceremonial Law

Appendix I The Ceremonial Law 1. What is the Ceremonial Law? The duties which the law of God as revealed through Moses demands of us, the Israelites, in particular, as the professors of its religion.

2. Upon what is this Law founded?

Upon the history of the Mosaic Religion, and of the people of Israel before and since the promulgation of the Ten Commandments from Sinai.

3. What is the object of the ceremonies? The constant observance of the ceremonies is intended to remind us perpetually of the events upon which they are founded, and to cause their being handed over to our children after us, to the latest generations.

"Remember his miracles that He hath done, his wonders and the Judgments of his mouth. O ye seed of Israel, his servants; the children of Jacob, his chosen people. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Remember ye his covenant for ever; the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. Which He covenanted with Abraham, and likewise his oath unto Isaac. And he confirmed the same to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant." Psalms 105:5-10.

4. Which are the principal events of which the Ceremonial Law is to remind us? The following three:

First, The Exodus, or removal, of our forefathers from Egypt.

Second, The Divine Revelation, and the promulgation of the Law on Sinai.

Third, The destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, and of the kingdom of Israel.

5. What observances are to remind us of the Exodus?

First, The Sabbath day, regarded as the sign of the covenant of the manifestation of God’s power in Egypt.

"And remember that thou were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." Deuteronomy 5:15.

Second, Several others of the festivals.

6. Which are these festivals?

First, The Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Secondly, The Feast of Tabernacles.

7. What is the Passover?

Seven days every year we are commanded to eat unleavened bread, to the exclusion of all ordinary bread, or things made of or mixed with corn, in memory of the mighty wonders wrought in our favor, when we were redeemed from Egypt.

"Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even before the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses.--And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for on this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day, throughout your generations, as an ordinance for ever." Exodus 7:15-17.

8. Which of the seven days are, properly speaking, strict festivals, when no work can be done? The first and the seventh; but also the second is kept as a day of abstinence from labor, likewise an additional, or eighth day; the same is the case with other festivals, at which the Israelites out of Palestine have, for many hundred years, kept an additional day, beyond the period absolutely commanded in the law.

"And on the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done on them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you." Exodus 7:16.

9. At what time is the Passover to be kept? In the first month, or Nissan,* from the fourteenth to the twenty-first day of the month.

"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even." Exodus 7:18.

*The names of the Hebrew months, as now in use, are, the 1st, Nissan; 2d, Iyar; 3rd, Sivan; 4th, Tamuz; 5th, Ab; 6th, Elul; 7th, (the first of the usual or civil year) Tishry; 8th, Marcheshvan, or Heshvan; 9th, Kislev; 10th, Tebeth; 11th, Shebat; 12th, Adar; in the leap year, the last-named is called Adar Reeshon, first Adar, and the 13th month Veadar, Adar Sheny, or Second Adar.

10. What is the Feast of Tabernacles?

We shall dwell seven days every year in booths, tents, or tabernacles, in memory of the going out of our forefathers from Egypt, when they sojourned for forty years in the wilderness of Arabia, and lived in temporary dwellings, and not in cities or regularly-build houses.

"Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths. In order that your generations may know, that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 23:42-43.

11. At what time is this Feast kept? From the fourteenth day of the seventh month, Tishry, until the twenty-second day. The fifteenth of the month is the commencement, and the twenty-second the conclusion, of the feast, and both are to be devoted to abstinence from labor, and dedicated to divine worship and rejoicing at the holy season of the Lord.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, as follows, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work thereon. Seven days ye

shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall make an offering made by fire unto the Lord; it is a solemn assembly, and ye shall do no servile work thereon." Leviticus 23:33-36.

12. What other laws are founded upon the going out of Egypt? The prohibitions concerning the use of many animals used as food by other men. For by the redemption from Egypt God intended to raise up our nation as a people holy to his service, and that we should receive the laws which He wished to declare as his will; and the prohibitions of certain meats should prevent the Israelites from mixing too intimately with other nations, and becoming gradually like them, forgetful of the law of Heaven.

"For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and be holy, for I am holy; neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." Leviticus 9:44-45.

"Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean;--and have separated you from other nations, that you should be mine." Leviticus 20:25-26.

13. What ordinances are founded upon the Revelation and Announcement of the Law on Sinai? a. The Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks.

b. The blowing of the Shofar, and the New Year Festival.

c. The Day of Atonement.

d. The reading of the Shemang

e. The Tephillin

f. The Mezuzah; and

g. The Tzitzith.

14. What is the Pentecost?

Seven weeks after the first day of Passover we shall celebrate a feast in memory of the descent of the divine glory, and the public announcement of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

"Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee; from the time thou begin to put the sickle to the corn, begin to number the seven weeks. Then shalt thou keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God." Deuteronomy 16:9-10.

15. When should we celebrate this Feast of Weeks? On the sixth day of the third month, or Sivan, which day is to be kept holy unto the Lord, by abstinence from labor, and consecration to divine worship.

"In the third month after the children of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day they came unto the wilderness of Sinai." Exodus 19:1.

16. What is the blowing of the Shofar? On the first day of the seventh month, which is the first day of the common or civil year, we shall assemble in the houses sacred to the service of the Lord, and

blow the Shofar (which is a sounding instrument made of a ram's horn), to commemorate the intended sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah, by his father Abraham, and resolve on this first day of the year to offer up every earthly possession in the service of the Lord, if it be required of us, as Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son, because he thought it would be pleasing to God.

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there was a ram afterward caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went, and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering, in the stead of his son." Genesis 22:13.

"And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of sounding of the cornet unto you." Numbers 29:1.

17. What other reasons are given for blowing the Shofar, on the day you mentioned? This day being the first of the year, we are to acknowledge anew the Lord our Creator as our King and God. We therefore blow the cornet at the appointed time, as a testimony of our renewed allegiance; for thus in the land whence our forefathers came was it customary to do, when appointing a chief.--they blew the cornet, and shouted "Long live the King." (1 Kings 1:39)

"Blow the cornet on the day of the new-moon, at the appointed time, on the day of our solemn feast. For this is a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob." Psalms 81:4-5.

Besides all this, it is the season of atonement. On the tenth of this month, as was said already, is the great fast, when we are to appear before the Lord to be forgiven if we repent. It was customary among the ancient Israelites to station men upon high places and towers to watch the approach of an enemy. If these guards saw any danger, they blew the cornet to give warning to the townsmen to arm themselves and to be ready for defense. In the same manner are we called on to prepare for the day of trial of iniquity, to purify our hearts by repentance and a solemn resolution to sin no more, in order that we may be forgiven.

"Shall the cornet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos 3:6.

18. How is the Day of Atonement to be observed? On the tenth day of the seventh month is the great day of humiliation and prayer before the Lord. During the whole of its continuance, from sunset of the ninth till after the stars have appeared on the tenth, we shall abstain from food and drink, and all earthly enjoyments; and perform no manner of labor, just as on the weekly Sabbath. We shall seriously think over our past conduct, and offer up to God a contrite spirit for our manifold transgressions; if we have offended our neighbor we should satisfy him, before we ask forgiveness of the Lord; and it is for such repentance that we are promised a remission of sin, and an atonement for our iniquities.

"And this shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall fast, and do no work at all.--And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year." Leviticus 16:29-34.

19. What is the reading of the Shemang?

We are commanded to read daily in our morning and evening prayers the chief commandment of the Mosaic religion, which commences with the words Shemang Yisrahel (Hear, O Israel); in order

that we may be reminded of our duty to God, and of the religion which He revealed to us.

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is ONE. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt teach diligently unto thy children, and shalt speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

20. What are the Tephillin?

We are commanded to bind the chief commandment of the Mosaic religion as a testimonial of the covenant at Horeb on our arm and forehead; in order that bearing on our bodies the words of the Lord we may remember and do them.

"And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thy eyes." Deuteronomy 6:8.

21. What is the Mezuzah?

We shall write down this same chief commandment of our religion, and fix it on the door-posts of our houses and gates; in order that we may be reminded upon our going out and our coming in of the presence of the Almighty and of his universal protection.

"And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." Deuteronomy 6:9.

22. What is meant by Tzitzith?

We shall affix fringes on the borders of one of our garments; in order that we may be always reminded, by looking at the same, of the holy faith which has been revealed to us, and be prevented from falling into the power of sin.--In short, this and the other ceremonial observances were given that being always surrounded by evidences of God’s law, and our subjection thereto, we should daily, hourly, and even every moment, be reminded of our duties, and of the Holy One who demands them of us.

"And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after the inclinations of your heart, and the delight of your eyes, in pursuit of which ye have been led astray. In order that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." Numbers 15:39 23. What ceremonies are founded upon the destruction of the temple? The fast days, or days of penance.

24. What constitutes the observance of fast days?

We shall, on certain days every year, remind ourselves by abstinence from food and other enjoyments of the evils which came over us because of the sons of our ancestors; and endeavor to reflect upon our own conduct, and consecrate our lives to the service of God.

"And even now, also, saith the Lord, return unto me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments, and return unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, withholding long his anger, of great kindness, and repenteth of the evil."

Joel 2:12-13.

25. What is the object of fasting?

It shall be the outward mark of repentance, but it can avail nothing without true inward regret, and sincere amendment of our course of life.

26. Which are the fast days? a. The seventeenth of the fourth month, Tamuz,

b. The ninth of the fifth month, Ab,

c. The third of the seventh month, Tishry, and,

d. The tenth of the tenth month, Tebeth.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy, and gladness, and happy seasons; therefore love ye truth and peace." Zechariah 8:19.

27. What is the meaning of these fasts?

They are days of mourning, which our forefathers, with consent of the prophets, set apart in memory of the loss of their temple and the independence of their state.

28. Are there any other ceremonies which are to remind us of important events in our national history?

Yes; the following two:

a. The lighting of the lamps on the festival of Hanukkah; and,

b. The reading of the book of Esther on Purim.

29. What is the lighting of the Hanukkah lamps? In the time of the second temple there was a period, when a heathen kind, by the name of Antiochus of Syria, had nearly abolished the observance of our religion, by the great cruelties he committed in Palestine, over which he had dominion. At length the Jews, led on by the valiant Judas Maccabaeus, drove the Syrian army out of the land; and when the people again consecrated the temple they instituted a festival, called Hanukkah, or the Consecration, and ordered that for all future periods lamps should be lighted in our synagogues and dwellings, commencing from the evening of the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, or Kislev, as an everlasting memorial of the mercy of the Lord, displayed in delivering his people and his religion from the power of the oppressor.

30. What is the festival of Purim?

We shall celebrate a festival on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the twelfth month, Adar, in memory of the great deliverance which God gave us from the evil designs of Haman, who, with concurrence of the kind of Persia, has resolved to destroy all the Jews residing in that kingdom, which in fact included nearly, if not all, the descendants of Israel. We therefore keep a fast on the thirteenth, and a festival on the next two days; and to commemorate the event, we read the Book of Esther which contains the history thereof; in order that we may be always reminded how good our heavenly Father has ever been to us; and that thereby we may be animated with a sincere

desire to deserve in future his love and mercy, by a devotion to his will and a strict adherence to his law.

"The Jews ordained, and took upon themselves, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so that it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year. And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed." Esther 9:27-28.

31. By what is this festival distinguished?

We should give liberal presents to the poor and needy, so that they also might rejoice "on the days when the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor." Esther 9:22.

01.12. Appendix 2 - The Jewish Creed

Appendix II The Jewish Creed 1. What do you call a creed?

Those doctrines which are the foundation of any system of religion: in other words, those ideas of belief which one admits as the followers of a particular faith.

2. Have we any ideas peculiar to us, as followers of the Mosaic Law?

We have; and upon the admission thereof rests the distinction which divides us from other nations.

3. Is the belief in this creed alone sufficient to insure salvation? By no means; we should believe and confide in the truth of religious doctrines; but without acts to demonstrate the existence of such faith, our life is not pleasing to God, who demands of us active exertions in his holy service.

4. What is then the use of a creed? The firm faith in and admission of acknowledged truths will best promote a correct course of life; for by being impressed with holy feelings we will be best able to withstand temptations and the inclination to sin inherent in man.

5. Which are the chief doctrines already given?

I. The belief in God.

II. The belief in the revelation of the Law.

III. The belief in reward and punishment after death.

6. Are there not some modifications, or more extensive ideas, connected with these chief doctrines of Faith?

There are several, which have been already partly mentioned.

7. Into how many divisions is then the whole Jewish Creed divided, as generally accepted among us?

Into thirteen, which are generally called the Thirteen Fundamental Principles of the Jewish Faith, because upon the admission of them we found the truth and the justness of our lives as Israelites faithful to the law of God.

8. Please to recite them in the order in which they are found in our books.

I. I believe with a firm faith that there exists a Creator, who, blessed be his name, has created and governs all his creatures; and that He alone has made, does make, and will make, all things that can by any possibility have existence.

II. I believe with a firm faith that the Creator is ONE, and there is no unity like Him in any manner, and that He alone is our God, who was, who is, and who will be.

III. I believe with a firm faith that the blessed Creator is incorporeal; that no bodily infirmities or accidents can reach Him, and that He can be compared to nothing corporeal of which we can form any idea.

IV. I believe with a firm faith that the blessed Creator is the first and the last.

V. I believe with a firm faith that the blessed Creator is the only one to whom we should pray, and there is besides Him no being to whom we ought to address our prayers.

VI. I believe with a firm faith that all the words of the prophets are true.

VII. I believe with a firm faith that the prophecy of our teacher Moses (upon whom be peace) is true, and that he was the chief of all the wise men that lives before him or will come after him.

VIII. I believe with a firm faith that the whole law, which we have now in our possession, is the same which was given to our teacher Moses (upon whom be peace).

IX. I believe with a firm faith that this law will not be changed, and that there will not be another law from the Creator, blessed be his name.

X. I believe with a firm faith that the blessed Creator knows all the deeds of the sons of man, and all their thoughts; as it is written: "He fashions all their hearts, and understands all their works."

XI. I believe with a firm faith that the blessed Creator will reward those who keep his commandments, and punish those who transgress them.

XII. I believe with a firm faith in the coming of the Messiah; and though he tarry, still will I daily wait for his coming.

XIII. I believe with a firm faith that the dead will be called to life at the time it may be the will of the blessed Creator, whose memorial be glorified for everlasting, and to all eternity.

9. Why do you believe in these doctrines?

Because they are all founded upon the revealed word of God, as we have shown by the various texts from the Bible which we have quoted before. In short, our creed is based upon the truth of God, and in confidence upon his wisdom and goodness, and in reliance upon his mercy and justice, which, like His existence, are everlasting.

Chapter 14

S. A Sermon Warning the People

Warning The People.

A Sermon For Sabbath Tazreeang and Metzorang.

“Thine, O Lord! is the mercy, for Thou wilt reward every man according to his deeds;” this hast Thou taught us concerning thyself, in that Thou art mindful of whatever acts a man commits, and that never can anything escape thy cognizance, nor be forgotten in thy memory; since darkness hides nothing from Thee, nor does lapse of time diminish the strength of the impression which past events have made in thy presence. Thou hast also promised the son of Abraham that Thou wouldst bless him for the sake of the piety of his father.* Behold us, then, coming before Thee, to crave thy mercy for the deeds which the righteous of old have done, for those works which are constantly ascending up before thy throne, as an agreeable savour brought upon thy altar. Thy servants have gone to their rest, but we their descendants are left to battle with the dangers which they triumphantly overcame. Do, therefore, aid us for the treasured up piety which Thou wilt ever remember,† and save us from the power of sin and temptation, that we too may fulfill our task, and be pleasing in thy eyes as those whose works have been accepted. So shall we, too, be found righteous in thy judgment, and receive the light of thy presence, the peace for which our soul does pant, the reward which is the perfection of joy, the highest aim for which the living spirit is destined. Amen.

* Genesis 26:5, and ibid. 24.

† Leviticus 26:45; compare also with 2 Chronicles 6:42.

Brethren,-

Judaism is true, not because other religions are false, but because it is true in itself. It has borrowed nothing from other systems, nor is it dependent upon their truth or falsity as its foundation. It must, nevertheless, be admitted that many of its principles are opposed to the views and doctrines promulgated by other religions; and in defending, therefore, what we have received as a heavenly legacy from our fathers, we may occasionally be compelled to examine controversially the opinions of other persuasions. But controversy is a legitimate weapon in the defence of truth; and whilst it is carried on in candour and fairness, the very persons whose opinions we examine, cannot attach any blame to us for so doing; for our religion is regarded by all as the foundation for every system based on the truth of revelation, by all who admit that at some period of the history of man, the Lord of Glory made his will manifest to mankind; and whilst, therefore, others claim that they have now a superior light, and whilst they invite us to forsake our faith to embrace theirs, it is evidently our business as reasoning beings to prepare ourselves by study and reflection to understand what we are to yield and what to accept.

None, but one brutally ignorant, would cease to be a Jew because he is invited to change his belief, without questioning what he accepts; and if he claims to be instructed and enlightened,

some personal interest and not conviction, must cause the conversion. It is, therefore, evidently our duty to endeavour to scatter all the information accessible among our people, in order that they may he able to investigate understandingly the religion of their fathers. This religion, as you well know, is one of peace towards all men; it is the basis of civilization and true enlightenment; and we are, therefore, bound to value it, if for no other reason, because it is the first of all systems which aims at the happiness of mankind. Nevertheless, harmless as it is in its relation to all those not belonging to Israel, energetic as it is in its injunction to us to love all mankind, Judaism has had many opponents; in all aged it has been exposed to the malign attacks of those desirous to destroy it; and yet it appears as firmly rooted in the hearts of our people as ever, although it is not to be denied that an adherence to its practices is in many not as strict as it formerly was. Still, we must not lose sight of one fact, that a general dereliction is nothing new with us; for during the period of the first temple, there were many occasions when, to judge from the prophetic admonitions and the terrible denunciations which these holy messengers pronounced in the name of God, the observance of religion had almost ceased in the land of Israel, with the exception of a few devoted hearts who would not forsake the standard of the ancient faith. It is, therefore, presumable, that what has occurred before will occur again, there will be an awakening to serious reflection among us, in the same measure as means are taken to destroy our adherence to religion; for you will find in the perusal of history, that no sooner did outward enemies come over the Israelites to take from them, by the power of the sword, what they believed the truth, than they became inflamed with ardent zeal to defend by argument, by endurance, and at times by force of arms, the religion of their fathers. It is, therefore, to be hoped, nay, to be expected, that in the present age of general delinquency a similar result will be witnessed, and that the lethargy which now appears to benumb our faculties, and renders us spell-bound in the midst of apathy and indifference will yield to a renewed zeal and energy, the moment we become aware that there is danger to our religion threatened from the insidious attacks, both open and secret, from enemies to Israel-from those worldings and adherents of falsehood, who have ever deemed the existence of the religion of Israel as a severe libel on their own belief.

What is it to them, that many nations and powerful individuals bend the knee to them and their idols? It is as nothing, “whilst,” to borrow the words of Scripture, “Mordecai the Jew sitteth at the gate of the king.” They see him early, they behold him late; he bears a charmed life; he is gifted with ubiquity; let them traverse the ocean, they have him on board the ship; let them ascend mighty rivers, they see his Asiatic features mingling with the crowd in the floating palace, and sitting side by side in the bark canoe with the tawny Indian; let them climb the highest mountain, and they will discover that he has before them carried thither his wandering staff; let there travel through sandy desserts, the surface of which is more unstable than the wavy sea, and they will find him established among the sooty sons of Africa, with his Jewish descent strongly marked on his sunburnt visage, but also with the ancient book of the law in his possession.

Yes, he is the universal contradiction to assumed fact; he has wandered, he has suffered, he has borne every thing, and he remains the Jew at heart, changed as he may be by climate, by country, by association; and whether he be the rover of the desert, the shepherd in the mountains of Kurdistan, the agriculturist of Russia, the banker in the capitals, or the humble mechanic or tradesman in Europe, he is essentially the same, he contradicts by his presence, if not even it words, the popular systems of belief, and whilst he exists, the triumph of these is not complete; for

the ancient bearer of civilization is not a convert to their tenets. That the efforts made in accordance with this spirit of hostility are of a gigantic order, is what might be expected. Political influence of the most stringent order, the power of money in its amplest form, association of intellect of a high degree, the influence of the press in a multitude of publications, from the entire Bible, printed so as to suit sinister purposes, down to a paltry card or double-faced tract-all these and many other instruments are employed to decoy or force us away from our religion; and it is not to be wondered at if occasionally we hear that some stray sheep has been carried off from the flock by the prowling wolves who are hunting for their destruction. But let us ask on the other hand, “What have the Jews done of late to counteract so much malevolence?” And we shall be grieved to receive in answer, that we are too disunited to do anything, nay, too much occupied with the mere affairs of life to attempt doing aught in defence of our faith. Do I speak the truth? Or do I state a falsehood? Let each one answer who now hears me, or to whom a report of my words may be brought; our enemies are watchful whilst we sleep; they endeavour to scatter the seed of darkness, whilst we refuse to harvest the rich truth which stands ripe in many a golden field ready to our hand; and yet our hands are not bound with fetters, nor are the chains of captivity fastened to our feet; the fear of the tyrant daily grows less and less, and he that formerly was ready to devour becomes hourly more the object of derision to his former bondmen. And still where is our industry? Where our energy? Where our wonted wisdom? Do we feel nothing, see nothing but worldly interests? Or are we so supine, so neglectful of our patrimony that we care not how soon we dissipate it? That we heed not whether with us the legacy of so many centuries is to be scattered to the four winds of heaven?

It is a libel on freedom, that men are free only to become rich and to live at ease; the brute that is well fed in his master’s stable, and is dressed up in a fine harness to drag his pleasure carriage in a bright and sunlit day, is equally free, if this were all for which we ought to live; yes, a man might as well loose his high appreciation of truth, and his capacity for understanding the sublime and the beautiful, if these noble faculties are to lie dormant, and rust away uselessly in the all-absorbing pursuit of gain and pleasure. Our pious ancestors thought and acted differently. They could have enjoyed life also in their day; they might, if so they had wished it, have become the associates of their fellow-countrymen in the pursuits then thought to be most fitting for the high born and the noble; but they preferred the Jewish gaberdine, the crowded ghetto, to be scorned and cuffed as Israelites, sooner than purchase a single indulgence by an appearance even of defection from their oppressed people. However refined we of the present day may be, however ignorant we may conceive those of former ages to have been, no one can deny that in all that is appealing to the spirit for admiration, on account of a dauntless perseverance in a line of duty, in a conscientious discharge of what they conceived to be true and right, they are far in advance of us, so immeasurably far, that the best of us must, in regard to them, be compared to a deformed cripple, running a race with one swift of foot and sound in limbs. I do not say this because I would desire the return of days such as are gone, nor because they had not their evils; for let us pray that it may be the will of God that such a cup of bitterness as we had then to drain may never again be presented to our lips, if his providence does not deem this necessary to our being preserved intact as the nation of Israel. No, I do not praise the days that are gone in comparison with the freedom which we now enjoy. I prize too highly the privilege which is mine at the present moment in being able to stand up among you, brethren, and to speak fearlessly and boldly about the concerns of eternal life; to canvass freely, without dread from the civil arm, the wrongs which are done to us,

and the sins which are committed by ourselves. But I only speak of the little concern which we display with respect to our religious interests in comparison with our fathers. They wrote about their faith, they treasured up for us imperishable truths, midst perils which would appall the stout-hearted warrior, who flinched not in the heat of battle; they breathed under the dread of the torture; they ate their scanty morsel apprehending to be led to execution, or to be overpowered by a furious mob, led on by fanatical priests or designing demagogues; and still they continued to study their faith in all its bearings, and to teach it by all the light of the sciences accessible to them in their days. But we, answer me, do we pursue religion as a vital concern, as the glorious martyrs who left us their lives as a legacy, did in all their troubles? Do we, as a class, glorify our religion by our conduct? do we teach it with all our energy to those who are to live after us? or, on the contrary, are not many thirsting for the water of life without any one being there to give it to them?

We are increasing in this land-daily new accessions are made to our numbers; but religion remains the concern of a few, the many are indifferent; they have done enough in building a Synagogue, and repairing thither once or twice a year! But the schools whence are to go forth the law and the light-where are they? where are the teachers who are to inculcate the words which God has taught? We are free, we are prosperous, but we calculate too closely the chances of success; we are too parsimonious to venture on an extensive plan of usefulness, for fear of the outlay, for fear of failure. But whilst prudence is requisite, whilst blind zeal is like a torch in the hand of a madman, which can only destroy, it is not acting in faith, not acting as friends of religion, to wait, and wait; to let the precious years, I will not say moments, pass by without attempting something to rescue our blessed religion from the dangers which threaten her. See her standing on an elevated hill, with the rising sun surrounding with a golden light her holy head; see her stretching out her angelic hands to rescue from destruction her beloved children, who hasten through dangerous coverts unmindful of the hidden perils; hear her calling on you all to aid her in her efforts to preserve them from the jaws of devouring beasts; behold her tears flow at being compelled, for want of strength, to see many destroyed without the means of helping them, and then feel that it is your fault, your neglect, your deafness to her earnest appeal that she weeps for her ensnared offspring; that it is owing to your indolence that her labours have been in vain, that her warning voice did not reach all who, though in peril, might have been saved by a timely admonition that danger lurked by the way, that enemies were watching in the by-paths, and then flatter your conscience by a false excuse that the rescue was beyond your power, the admonishing a business which religion had no right to ask at your hands.

We complain of the decline of religion among us, some even express a fear of its extinction in the course of time. Now, the latter result need not be feared, for the same Providence who has watched over us so long, will, by his watchfulness, guard us against annihilation. But we have no right to look forward to a special act of grace to be wrought in our behalf, when we have the means ourselves of doing what is required. The Bible says:

[redacted]

“And you shall warn the children of Israel against their uncleanness, that they may not sin in their uncleanness when they make unclean my dwelling, which is in the midst of them.- Leviticus 15:31. This verse, taken from our section of to-day, teaches us that a defilement, through bodily

uncleanness specified in the law, of the sanctuary of the Lord, would cause the death, through the infliction of Heaven, the punishment not being surrendered to human tribunals, of the transgressors; whilst at the same time those who have received knowledge are charged to warn the people, and to teach them to distinguish between what is clean and that which is unclean. The people should obey the priests, who were to point out to them when a man had the leprosy, and when he was cured from it; but the priests too, must not be satisfied with a mere knowledge of the details of the law for their own pleasure, (for the possession of superior knowledge confers a delight on the soul,) but they should lay it open to the masses, that they might know how to guide themselves on all occurrences, and to distinguish at once between what may be done, and what is prohibited. Though at present the institution of the ancient Aharonic priesthood has lost a great deal of its importance and signification, as we have neither temple nor sacrifices, no tithe nor heave-offerings, still the spirit of the precept is with us, and this says:-“And you shall warn the children of Israel.” And to the question, “Who is included in the term you?” I would answer, every one of us who has received knowledge, every one who has the means of aiding in the diffusion of instruction, every one who can encourage the teachers of religion to go abroad to scatter the seeds of life. All are admonished to take due care that religion should not decline, or rather that its followers should not be diminished; that, if possible, not a single disciple of Moses should be lost, if by instruction, persuasion, admonition, kindness, or rebuke, he may possibly be retained true to his God, or if he has left, it be at all possible to reclaim him to the path of rectitude and truth. It is, however, wonderful how easy many satisfy their conscience in regard to the amount of their exertion. “We have done enough, all that can be expected,” is often heard when we are asked concerning our spiritual labours; but how would it stand with us were the question varied to, “have you done all that could be accomplished?” This is the proper test, and it is to be feared, that tried by this standard the most of us, if not all, would be found wanting in their duty; be found to have left undone nearly everything which was intelligible and accessible to them.

It is very easy to frame a measure of our own which is to satisfy our own love of ease. But all such half-way exertions are certainly not doing our whole duty, and still we are perfectly content in practice with half-measures; we never think about the unprepared state in which, in modern times, youths and maidens are sent out into the busy scenes of life, to encounter the perils which the craft of our opponents, and which their own passions prepare against their progress in religion. And then we wonder often that such a one has intermarried with the gentiles, or that another openly joined some one of the many subdivisions, which singularly enough form the universal church of the Nazarenes. I speak of these because we live among them, though possibly a similar result may be witnessed in Mahomedan countries. Yes, we wonder at such defections, as though they were not the most natural things in the world. You are lax in your religious observances at home, you read no religious books, your houses are not open to the familiar intercourse with pious and intelligent Israelites; on the contrary; you do what the law prohibits; you permit pernicious reading to become a familiar exercise of your children; you speak disparagingly of your own people, whilst you welcome with open arms as constant visitors, exclusively those who are strangers to Israel; you go, and permit your charges to repair to public meetings, and to drink in unprepared the sophistry which is so powerfully often declaimed from gentile pulpits by fashionable preachers; or you take them to hear infidel lecturers declaiming against all religion: and do you-wonder that your children are not good Jews? that they do not love their religion? that one or the other of them shows a fondness for the strangers and their doctrines, and turns his

back on the paternal home, and seeks for alliance, and sympathy, and consolation, in the tents of the stranger?

I wonder that this so seldom occurs; I wonder at the strength and simplicity of our faith, which is propagated and maintained in the minds of its adherents, under so many discouraging circumstances, under disadvantages which would overwhelm any system less perfect than ours. But now look at the result with calm and dispassionate eyes, and what does it say to you? Simply this: If Judaism has preserved itself without our doing the least for it, how much more gloriously would it have flourished, how few defections would there have been from its ranks, had we done our duty in teaching it early and late, making it the subject of domestic conversation, seeking for light from those well informed, and encouraging pious men and women to be constant visitors at our house; had we religiously attended on public worship, and taken our children always with us; in short, had we done that for the faith of Israel which other religions do for what they profess to believe in.

Singly can thus a great deal be done to remedy the evils which now oppress us, by each one's exerting his best influence over those whom the ties of nature, or other circumstances, have placed under his control. But why should we act without a plan? why not unite our energies for the promotion of a general good? Why do we not establish schools, where the daily practice, the daily lesson, and the constant intercourse, look only to the perfection of the mind in that which is most valuable in life; where science and religion are to go hand in hand, enkindling in the soul an ardour for what is true and beautiful, for what is to bless the child of earth here and hereafter? It is well, indeed, in the absence of a better system to make the education in religion a weekly exercise; but it is not enough, it does not thus become a part and parcel of our being, whereas we ought to be so united to our faith that we may be able to act in its spirit, and according to its letter, in every emergency of life; to be ready to defend it with argument whenever it is assailed, and to sacrifice for it our passions, our inclinations, our interests, should these come in conflict with its behests. We require for this end a combination of individual powers, so that many may be able to accomplish what is too much for the strength of the individual.

It is thus our duty to warn our brothers against all sin, and this against any departure from the duties of religion, as pointed out to us in the law; and if we fail in this through any neglect of ours, (Ezekiel 3:18) we are the guilty parties, should any one forsake our household through want of knowledge of the principles and practice of Judaism. Let us not forget that "there is a lion in the way, a leopard in the streets," and let it be our study to teach all of Israel how they may escape from the danger which is always threatening them. A child, indeed, can understand what Judaism is in in its main cardinal doctrine; the first dawning intellect can be taught that God is one, blessed be his name for ever; but it requires time, it demands labour, so to impress this simple truth that it may not be obscured by doubts and specious false teachings in after life. We may defy open attacks, but we must guard against secret machinations, exerted against the young and ignorant, by which they are to be lured away. Therefore are you told, "and you shall warn the children of Israel;" a warning is a lesson often repeated, and strongly enforced; and only by carrying out this precept to its fullest extent do you discharge your duty to one another, and only thus can you say that you have educated your children to be staunch adherents to Judaism, and heirs of everlasting life, after the manner, and in the spirit of your glorious ancestors. Amen.

Iyar 5th, April 27, 5609.

Chapter 15

S. A Sermon during the Dearth

A Sermon.

Delivered at the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogue Bevis Marks, on Wednesday, 7th Nisan, (24th March,) 5607, being the day appointed by Her Majesty as a general fast and day of humiliation, on account of the dearth now unhappily prevailing; by the Rev. D. A. De Sola, Minister of the above Synagogue.

[illegible]

"For when thy judgments are on the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."-Isaiah 16:9.

We read in the Talmud, treatise Berachoth: "Death is the result of sin, so also are divine chastisements never inflicted but as the consequence of transgression." The occasion of our present assembly in this holy place, must needs impress you with feelings of awe and devotion, and cannot fail to call forth the sympathy and best feelings of every reflecting and sensitive mind. Still more must it impress with awe, and appall him whose task it is to address you this day, even if better qualified for it, than I can presume to be. For devastation has gone forth through the land, Death stalks around, with disease in its train. The failure of an important vegetable production in various parts of this empire, and of Europe, has caused a scarcity and dearth, in articles constituting the first necessaries of life. Thousands of our fellow-men and fellow-subjects have, and are at this moment, suffering the indescribable pangs of famine, and are perishing from want. Therefore are the portals of every house of prayer opened this day throughout the land, at the command of our most pious and beloved Queen, and numerous congregations are everywhere assembled, jointly to invoke the Universal Creator, and merciful Father of all mankind, humbly to supplicate Him that He may deign to behold our affliction, accept our penitence, stay his desolating hand, and remove from us the heavy judgments which our many sins and repeated provocations have so justly deserved. And surely, among the judgments by which the Almighty God asserts His sovereignty and providence over the children of man, there is none more grievous, none more awful than that which is the occasion of our present assembly. We have seen sufficient in this metropolis, and have heard and read still more of the dire effect of this calamity (in the sister island, in the north of Scotland, and in various parts of Europe), and they must needs present themselves so strongly to your mind, that I may spare myself the painful task of dilating upon it, and harrow your feelings by a reiteration of the miseries, the diseases, the acts of despair and of insubordination, and the many physical and social evils to which this calamity has given rise. It is certain, however, that so much misery is only the result of a visitation of the Almighty God; and that if we turn to Him, in humble contrition and penitence, He will withdraw His afflicting hand and pardon our iniquities. For such is the infallible dictum of God himself, pronounced by means of His prophet Joel, on the occasion of a calamity, similar to the present, desolating the land of Israel, [illegible] "The fields lay waste, the land mourneth." "The husbandmen are

ashamed for the wheat and for the barley, because the harvest of the field is perished." "The trees of the field are withered." ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ "Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests. Weep, ye ministers of the altar." ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ "Sanctify ye a fast-day, convoke a solemn assembly; gather the elders, assemble all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord, and cry unto God." ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ "For is not the food cut off from before our eyes, and joy and gladness from the house of the Lord?" ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "And now, saith the Lord, turn ye to me, with all your heart, and with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ "And rend your hearts, not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God; for he is merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repents of inflicting evil."* *Joel 1:10-16; and Joel 2:12-13. In the graphic description and impressive admonition I have read to you, the eloquent prophet at once states the true cause and the sole remedy for this affliction and judgment. Accordingly, I will, in this brief discourse, endeavour to show:-

First, that calamities like the present, are not accidental events of nature, but visitations of Providence in consequence of the sins of the world.

Secondly, That our sins have been ample to provoke that anger; and, Thirdly, endeavour to point out the means most likely to avert these chastisements. And ye, my dear brethren, join, O join me in my fervent invocation to our God, that He may enlighten my understanding, direct my words, and grant me his aid and favour, that these my words which proceed from my heart may enter yours, and produce their intended effect. ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■ "May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart be acceptable before thee, O Lord! my Rock and My Redeemer."*

* Psalms 19:15.

I. The words of my text are too obvious in their meaning to require any explanation, except that the word ■■■■ judgment is often applied in Scripture to those acts of divine justice by which God vindicates His Divine Providence and rule over the world, and for those acts of divine justice by which he manifests his wrath against those who have excited it. Although the calamities with which a considerable part of this realm has been visited, have not exhibited themselves in their more severe and desolating aspect in our immediate, vicinity still we have seen enough of their dire effects to make us shudder, inwardly reflect, and ask ourselves-■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ "Wherefore has the Lord done so to this land, wherefore this great anger?"† And I fear that the answer would be the same as that given in the quoted text-■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■ "Because the covenant and law of God has been forsaken."‡ At least, it were to be wished that either as Britons or Israelites we had some just ground to suppose ourselves exempt from the dire judgments now on this land, and, what is still more important, that the hope of such an exemption for the future could be founded in our state and condition as a people that acted righteously, and did not forsake the ordinances of their God.§

†Deuteronomy 29:24.

Deuteronomy 29:25

§ Isaiah 58:2.

■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ But let us not deceive ourselves. We cannot, alas! put this flattering unction to our soul. The open impiety and profligacy we e see daily around us in this vast metropolis, the great corruption both of principles and manners, and the decay of religion among ourselves, give us but too ample cause to conclude, that this exemption is not owing to our righteousness, but to the long-suffering and mercy of our God. “Who did not deal with us according to our sins nor retributed to us according to our iniquities.”* ■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■ But let us remember that the rod and judgment which are now only suspended over us, will descend with increased severity, if we persevere in our evil courses, and slight this fatherly admonition. For although as our holy law informs us, “God is all-merciful, most gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and in troth.” ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ “He will not allow the guilty to go altogether unpunished.”† ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ Reason as well as revelation loudly proclaim to us the existence of a divine and all-governing Providence. Whatever lives or moves on the earth or in the skies, and every event, are not only produced but directed by Him, and are attributed in Scripture to his immediate agency. Thus it is said that God “shuts up the heavens that there be no rain, so that the earth yields not its produce;”‡ or that “He opens the stores of heaven”§ and commands Nature to increase. “He maketh the barren wilderness fruitful,” or “through the wildness of the inhabitants He renders a fertile land sterile.”|| He alone commands the elements, and “raises or hushes at his pleasure the wild tempest and the raging billows of the ocean.”¶ “He maketh peace”** or war, and “the heart of kings is at his cornmand.”†† In short, there is no act, be it for the private or public benefit or calamity of inan, which does not originate or is guided by Providence. True, we think we see but the effect of natural causes, but God has invariably preferred to act by them, even in the operation of miracles. How the laws of Nature are guided by God, so as in every case to produce the various results He intends them to have, is far too recondite for our confined understandings. For, as the prophet truly says,-“God’s ways are not like ours, nor his thoughts and acts like those of mortal man.”‡‡

Psalms 103:10

†Exodus 34:5.

Deuteronomy 11:17

§ Ibid. 28:12

Psalms 107:33-34

¶ Ibid, 25,29.

Isaiah 14:7

Proverbs 21:1

Isaiah 55:8-9

Even the unhappy occasion of our present meeting affords us an apt illustration of this.

You all know that the present scarcity and dearth, with its usual train of calamity, is mainly owing to the failure of an edible root which has long formed a considerable portion of the food of the people

of this country, and the only support of the greater part of the Sister Kingdom and elsewhere. Now that destruction has been in so remarkable a way, as to baffle the investigations of science, and has set at naught all human wisdom and skill, either to detect the cause, or to prevent the recurrence for the future. Therefore, be it, that hosts of microscopic animalculae were chosen by God as the ministers of his wrath, or that he employed other occult agents to devastate and destroy this and other valuable vegetable productions, on which the food, and consequently the life of man in a great measure depends: it is certain, that this extraordinary fact ought to open the eyes of the most incredulous, and cause him to exclaim, like Pharaoh, ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ "The finger of God,"* i.e., his immediate agency, is here visible in this extraordinary event, which so much deviates from the usual course of nature; but in this; as in every event of life, the all-directing hand of Providence is visible to every thinking mind. Reason, as well as revelation, incontestably proves this. For we know that God is the source and perfection of all wisdom; we are equally convinced that the purpose of our creation and sending us into the world, was both for his glory and for our happiness and perfection. Is it therefore not evident that neither of these ends could have been fully attained unless Divine Providence regulated and controlled events? How truly, therefore, and philosophically proved, are the expressions of the Psalmist-■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ "From the place of his Divine residence. He superintendeth all the inhabitants of earth," because "He who fashioneth all their hearts must needs understand all their doings."† ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■■

* Exodus 8:15.

†Psalms 33:12-13.

Let us, therefore, be careful that we do not both foolishly and wickedly misapply to this calamity, and to similar occasions, the words "accidental events;" for truly nothing happens in the world by accident: in fact, there is no such thing as chance or accident; what we call so, is nothing else than that for which we cannot discover a cause. It was well remarked by a wise author, that the word "accident" is the reproach of our vocabulary, inasmuch as it is a term of no real meaning, but only invented to veil our ignorance. I trust, therefore, to have proved, that since what we term "accidental events" are but the effect of the rnysterious interpositions of a Divine Providence, whose aim it is to promote our happiness, and since nothing does nor can happen without a cause, it therefore follows, that our reason, strengthened as it is here by the direct and explicit words of Holy Revelation, cannot arrive at any other conclusion, than that the cause of this and similar calamities and judgments are only sent as incentives to our repentance and future improvement, as in the words of my text, "When thy judgments are on the earth, the inhabitants of the world learned righteousness."

II.

We are next to prove, "that we have given ample cause for this judgment." Her most gracious Majesty, in her Proclamation appointing this day of humiliation, truly states, "the many iniquities of this land" to be the cause of the present calamity. Indeed, no one who calmly views modern society, and observes the unceasing, the all-engrossing, and insatiable pursuit of wealth by all classes, and the lax morality and vices it has induced, can for a moment doubt the correctness of this assertion. It is the nature of sinful man in prosperity, to forget the Author thereof. Our own nation has proved an early example of this truth. ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■* was the reproach

Moses made us, and often since his time have we continued to deserve it. It was, perhaps, not to be expected that our nation, living as it does in the midst of the present artificial society, could have escaped the faults or vices of the age; but it is to faults peculiar to us, as Israelites, that I feel it my duty this day more particularly to advert. I am aware that I am treading here on tender ground; but the paramount sense of this my duty silences all other considerations, and therefore "That which God shall put in my mouth, that will I speak;"† premising, however, in order not to be misunderstood or misconstrued, that the observations I am about to make, do not apply to either this or any other particular congregation, but to Israel and the state of Judaism in general.

* Deuteronomy 32:15

† Numbers 23:1.

In this and in other countries it is, alas! of that nature, as to give us cause justly to dread that the same retribution which has punished our ancestors, must also overtake us, unless we avert it by timely repentance. At no period of our history, excepting that immediately preceding the destruction of our Sanctuary, when Sadducees, Pharisees, and other sects mutually destroyed each other, and caused our nationality to perish, has infidelity and abandonment of God's law shown itself more strongly and more openly than during the last few years. Have we not seen in Israel not only some of the laity, but even some of those who should have been the shepherds and guides of their flocks, impiously and presumptuously, like Uzzah of old, extend their hand against the ark of the Lord, to alter and (according to them) reform and improve the law of the Omniscient, which He, to whom futurity is revealed, has declared to be eternal and unchangeable. How forcibly are we reminded of the words of the prophet Jeremiah,* when he predicted the approaching downfall of Israel: ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ "The professors of the law knew me not, and the pastors rebelled against me."

* Jeremiah 2:9. I more particularly allude here to the so called "Assembly of Rabbis" held at Frankfort last year.

How many, alas! there are in Israel who, having neither piety, nor mental energy, to enable them to emancipate themselves from the thraldom of the attraction of the world, know of no other way (to use their own phrase) "to make the law and life agree," than to lower the law to their level, and constantly to place it in the background whenever it interferes with their inclinations or convenience.* * Compare Psalms 1:16-17.

Neither are those wanting, whose blind zeal and superstition cause as much mischief as the preceding class, who, instead of friendly guiding and admonishing the erring brother, and giving him a helping hand to restore him to the right path, cast him forth with maledictions, and are thus the cause of his persevering in error and constantly falling into greater and more grave ones. True religion is thus brought to unmerited reproach, as if it prompted or sanctioned proceedings, so entirely opposed to its nature and best interest. Yes, my brethren, there are yet Pharisees, as well as Sadducees among us. Both, as in the days of old, threaten the destruction of our sanctuary, and from neither can Israel expect much good.

If I further consult the holy writings and our ancient history, I find the cause of all our calamities attributed to ■■■■■ ■■■ and ■■■■ ■■■ i.e. rancorous and causeless enmity against each other. ■■■ means the abandonment of God's worship for that of idols. It is true that since the

destruction of the first temple, we do no longer, in the literal sense of the word, worship golden calves, the Moloch, or any other idols of our own invention or as adopted from other nations. But, would to God, we could hold ourselves equally guiltless of having abandoned the service of our God, and of having set up in our hearts, instead of Him, idols: in a figurative sense of the word indeed, but idols nevertheless, and devoted to them those powers and energies derived from, and due to our great Creator. In this figurative sense God's revealed will, and the duties we owe to Him, are but too often laid aside, to follow and worship the golden calf of filthy lucre, and to sacrifice our children, nay our own lives and dearest affections, to the idol of insatiable avarice and ambition. But it may be said: Is it not lawful, nay, indispensable, that we should devote our best energies to obtain our daily bread, and even to improve our condition, when we can honestly do so?-Undoubtedly this is our duty, and also the intention of Him, who gave us those energies and powers. But it is against God's intention, against His revealed will, and against our best interests, if we unnecessarily render ourselves such slaves of our ambition and to money-getting, that even the chance or pretext thereof, is held a sufficient excuse for the neglect of our sacred duties and the obligations of the law. Do the exertions to obtain our daily bread, necessarily occasion that so many Israelites cannot find time to worship and thank their Maker when "they rise up" or "lie down"* without ■■■■ ■■■■■ or ■■■■■, or or even a few words in lieu thereof? Will it justify the neglect of the great precept of ■■■■■■ and ■■■■■† by so many in Israel? And how many take that very daily bread without thanks or thoughts of the Giver, like ungrateful children, who eat at the tables of their parents, and take it as a thing to which they are entitled, and for which they need not be thankful. Business, all-engrossing business is the excuse. But is not the praise of God, the acknowledgment of His goodness, and the propitiation of His future favour, at least, as important a part of our business of life, as any other we can have?-Acknowledged as this may be in theory, yet, in practice, the all-absorbing desire to procure riches and superfluities, engrosses all the thoughts, faculties, will, and feelings of mankind. Thus, for the chance of obtaining the fleeting goods and pleasures of this world, they neglect the certain and permanent bliss attached to the observance of God's will, as our sages remark: ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■

* Deuteronomy 6:7

† Ibid. 25, and Numbers 15:37-40.

Many other derelictions of our duty I could specify, but one more must suffice, to which I request your particular attention. None of the observances of our holy law is described as more sacred, and is oftener repeated, than that of the Sabbath.

"The Sabbath," say our sages, "is equal to all the other commandments of the law."■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ That great and eternal sign between God and Israel, which as men and Israelites we are bound to celebrate, on account of the cessation thereon of the action of the Creative power: ■■■ ■■■■■ -that day, hallowed by God, and ordained unto Israel as a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage-that holy day, given to us as a boon in this weary life, and as a type and foretaste of the eternal rest and bliss in the world to come-that most sacred day is but too often desecrated, the name of God profaned, His commands contemned, and sacrificed to the idol of lucre and the worship of the golden calf. To that, the transgressors of the Sabbath trust. For they will not believe God's promise that He will give them sufficient during the week if they observe the Sabbath. ■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■

[redacted] Nay, they will not believe their own eves and experience, which tells them that those who do not work on the Sabbath have generally as much as those that violate it. They shut their eyes to the great fact that their fathers and grandfathers who observed the Sabbath, and who had greater political difficulties to contend with, which hampered the development of their industry, than we have at the present day, did nevertheless prosper. The only allegation we hear from transgressors of the Sabbath, in justification of their conduct, amounts to this-“Its strict observance,” they say, “would occasion loss of money.” Would they not feel utterly ashamed to assign this as a justification for the breach of moral laws? And yet, how inconsistent are they, if they consider that the mere fact of the danger of losing money, is a sufficient cause for the violation of this great and divine precept. But let them remember that this very golden calf they so assiduously follow, will no doubt grievously disappoint most of its worshippers. For thus God spoke by means of his prophet Hosea, [redacted] “Thy calf, O Samaria! hath cast thee off, mine anger is kindled against thee.” [redacted] “For as they have sown the wind, so shall they reap the whirlwind; having no stalk, the bud shall yield no meal, and should it even yield, strangers shall devour it.”* [redacted] The application of this text is obvious. And so much I have thought it necessary to say on this head, in order that the judgment of God may be justified unto man, and that we may truly say as our ancestors did of yore, on the occasion of their solemn fast and repentance, in the days of Nehemiah, [redacted] “But thou art just concerning all that is come upon us, for Thou art just, but we have acted wickedly.”†

† Nehemiah 9:33.

III.

If I have succeeded in proving to you the allegations of the two first divisions of this discourse, I need not in this last enlarge to show you, that the only remedy and preventive for this and similar judgments, consist in a perfect and immediate repentance, not however externally only, and limited to words, but we must prove our sincerity by deeds. “Tear your hearts, not your garments,”* says the prophet. “God did not accept the penitence of the Ninevites, and regarded neither their fast, nor the sackcloth they had put on, until they had changed their actions and turned from their evil ways.”† [redacted] “Let, therefore, he who knoweth repent, and God will turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish.”‡ Let us remember, that the same power and mercy which causes the humble grass to grow, as well as the lofty cedar to flourish, “provides for all, and for the meanest of His creatures;” and assuredly, he could not design that man, the first of His creatures, whom he intended for happiness, should perish through misery and want, in the common course of nature, unless it be caused by his own act and misuse of the divine gifts. The poor, the orphan, and helpless will find “that God’s mercies extend over all his works.”§ “For, lo! the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear Him, and hope for His mercy. To deliver their souls from death, and to preserve them alive in time of famine.”|| Finally, let us remember, that divine chastisement has no other motive, than to bring about our amendment, and promote our eventual good. Thus says the Lord in His holy law: “Consider in thy heart, that even as a father chasteneth his son (for his good), thus doth the Lord, thy God, chasten thee,”¶ “to humble and try thee, and to do thee good at thy latter end.”** And in the words of my text, “When thy judgments are on the earth, the inhabitants

thereof will learn righteousness." Then, if we repress our worldly desires and observe God's law, both the ceremonial and moral; if the holy Sabbath be called and esteemed a day of delight, dedicated to the honour of God ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■;†† "if we, as in duty bound, think of Him and thank Him, when we lie down and when we rise up," and gratefully remember His benefits when we take our daily food, and on other occasions, then He also will observe His promise, as written in the law. ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■. . .■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■

"If ye observe my Sabbath, and reverence my sanctuary, if ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments, then will I give you rain in due season, the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field their fruit; ye shall be satisfied with food, and dwell securely in your land."‡‡ "Be then comforted and have good courage, O ye who trust in the Lord!"§§ For (as the prophet Joel says),|||| "The Lord will pity His people and say unto them: Behold, I will send you corn, wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith; the threshing-floors shall be full of wheat, ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God, that he has dealt wondrously with you, and my people shall never be ashamed." "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered, for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance."

* Joel 2:13.

† Jonah 3:10.

‡ Ibid. 9.

§ Compare Psalms 145:15-16.

|| Psalms 33:18-19.

¶ Deuteronomy 8:5.

** Ibid. 5:16.

†† Isaiah 48:13.

‡‡ Leviticus 26:2-5

§§ Psalms 31:25

|||| Joel 2:18-32.

May this soon happen, Amen.

S. A Voice from the North

■■■ ■■■■■

A Voice From the North. To the Rev. Gustavus Poznanski, Charleston.

Sir,-Before this shall have reached you, you will have been glad to enjoy a little repose from the many congratulatory themes which admiring friends will leave addressed towards you, pleased to have had a little rest from the mental fatigue which you must have recently endured in preparing, watching and tending your case, to bring it to a successful issue. Imagining that your wishes have in these particulars been gratified to your heart's content, that adulation and sycophancy have exhausted their potent charms, that your point has been gained, and that you have now enjoyed your wonted repose: I deem the present moment well befitting and opportune to address you on the subject of your present position as regards the Jews in your city, their dissension and disorder, the means yet at your disposal to restore harmony amongst your late flock, the chance still in your power to serve your God in faithfulness, your coreligionists in love. In order to stimulate you in some measure for so hallowed and glorious a scheme, I ask you to take a retrospective glance, not at the triumph you have achieved, but at the ruin you have effected. In this view, I require your memory with reverted eye to look at Charleston as it was, and as it is. If I am rightly advised, when you, sir, were elected Hazan of the congregation, the greatest confidence was reposed in you, the greatest respect paid towards you. Rabbinist and liberal, orthodox and waverer, paid you the same attention, not on account of your personal qualifications only, but in consequence of your being strictly orthodox from your profession as Shochet, and, judging charitably, doubtlessly from inclination. A few years' residence in New York had joined you the confidence of its Israelites, and in good faith they recommended you to the Charlestonians, as a good man, a Pious Jew.

Calumny was silenced; the breath of slander was stifled in its own pestiferous effluvia; liberalism veered about to orthodoxy; laxity in attending to religious observances gave place to a strict attention to time-honoured observances; your people were united; you, sir, became happy, seeing that your position enabled you to confer true happiness on others. Your state was enviable by all Israel's ministry, seeing that in your position there was a capability which, if rightly directed, would enable its votary to bring ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ "the scattered lamb Israel" to its peaceful fold. In order as it were to afford you still greater scope for action, the God of Israel caused you to find favour in the sight of a lady of your faith who is reputed to be extremely wealthy; you were united; and by this union, and your attitude in the ministry, you were placed on a pedestal which, like the beacon-light, would have afforded you the power to guide the wayfaring traveller to the haven of repose. You were placed in a situation seldom enjoyed by Israel's teachers; you were wealthy and respected; you had the means to serve your fellow-creatures, and to love your God; you had the opportunity to exalt your nation, the power to exhort them to their heaven-born duties. In fine, as a minister over an intellectual and favoured people you had the chance to maintain an equilibrium, to stand firm in your position, to close your eyes against all attempts at reform, by informing those changelings, who desired alterations, that they required more reforming than the noble system

which had withstood the ravages of time. You, sir, if I am rightly informed, disregarded the means in your possession, and became a violent partner in the firm of "innovation." Changes were mooted, ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ "they devised instruments of music," the polity of other systems was consulted; and amidst those attempts at changing Judaism for something more congenial to man's beclouded reason, it was left for you to confirm the position assumed, or to deny the authenticity of the stand taken. You, sir, however, saw no harm in this, no wrong in that; and, if the world be not uncharitable, you stand accused of being the master-spirit that wrought the revolution. Now then behold the work of your hands; do you not recoil from the contemplation? Your late flock have no shepherd to guide them, but they graze ■■■ ■■■ "like perishing sheep." The respect that other sects have borne towards them is considerably diminished; the father is armed in religious strife against his son; collision takes place amongst the members of the same family; dissension is of daily recurrence; the social bond is severed; the scions of Judaism become waverers in their own faith; and your late united, respectable, and harmonious congregation is scattered in fragments.

This, sir, is your work! Before the God of Israel I charge you with a gross dereliction of duty, which you will have reason to regret all the days of your life, without speculating on the night surrounding death. I know you glory in your present position, your friends condole, nay they idolize you; they consider you a saint, and flattery has so captivated you, that in the words of Samuel, with a slight variation in the stops,- ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ . "If you are humble, you imagine yourself the chief of the tribes of Israel."

Yet mistake not your position; imagine not that an ephemeral popularity is an eventual triumph. Look at the temple at Hamburg, from which you have drawn the materials with which to build your fabric. But twenty-five years since its friends were sanguine that it would regenerate the house of Israel. Has it done so? I say it unreservedly, that it has brought forth a generation of Deists, whilst the temple itself is neglected by its former votaries. Contemplate the situation of Glogau in Silesia. It is not many years since they too were seized with a spirit of innovation. Where is it now? Orthodoxy again occupies its proud position. But why enter into details? let me rather look at Charleston; can nothing be done to improve her present wretched position? can things remain as they are now? You surely will not maintain so impious a declaration. You do not expect that those who have done so much for conscience' sake, will desert the banner they have so nobly unfurled. What then? Conscientiously I assert, you have the power to restore union, by making a plain declaration, that seeing so much misery engendered where you expected support, you will forego all your new opinions about the power of music waking the soul (as if the spirit ever slept), and use all your exertions to remove the "Baal from their sight." You will change your opinion about other matters, removing the Hebrew to make way for the English, altering the leading articles of our faith, and putting in the background the Psalmody of Israel's shepherd king to give place to some poem composed by modern minds. Let a reaction seize your heart on all these matters, and place things as they were; and thus all the good desired will at once be effected. But perhaps you will assert that in so doing you would act inconsistently with your publicly declared principles. "Tell it not in Gath;" your whole life has been an inconsistency, and the plea under the present circumstances would be of no avail. Have you not been trained in a rabbinical school? Was not your former course or life marked for your pertinacity in adhering to the most minute forms? and can there be a greater inconsistency than to throw off early habits through which you have been

successful, and put on a habit which so ill becomes you! Then, sir, if by the means of a trifling inconsistency, you can cause jarring elements to subside into uniformity, it would be the acme of folly to disregard the means in order to obtain so glorious an end. In concluding, let me entreat you to ponder well on this effusion. You and I, Mr. Poznanski, have been extremely fortunate in being appointed ministers to the house of Israel; you excel my position in being wealthy, whilst I am what the world terms poor; yet in the face of that world I make a solemn asseveration that I would not exchange my condition with yours for all that which the world terms wealth. Look at my flock and then at yours, mine is happy and united, religious and prosperous. With a sigh contemplate yours,-how has this been effected? I work at their hearts, I tell my people their transgressions; and thus I bear myself, I change not the outer forms, I labour at the internal disease, I endeavour to reform the inner man; and thank Heaven! I have been successful beyond my humble expectations; our shrine is well attended, we pray to our God in simplicity but with devout hearts; we instruct our children, and we can afford to relieve distress. And to this your energy should be aroused, look not to the fabric with "golden eyes" but with "mental gaze." Thus you will be happy yourself, because you will confer it on others. Act thus, and you will confer the like blessing on Israel, as now felt by Yours,

S. M. Isaacs.

Note by the Editor.-The Rev. Mr. Isaacs desires us to say that he assumes the entire responsibility of the above letter. If Mr. Poznanski feels himself aggrieved, we again offer him the use of our work to reply in whatever manner he may desire.

S. Address

Address* of the Rev. S. M. Isaacs, of New York, at the Consecration of the Wooster Street Synagogue, on Friday, June 25, 5607.

* We deem it our duty to state that we have had the MS. of this address in our possession for more than two months, and it was only owing to the press of other matter that it was excluded hitherto. In the mean time, however, it has lost nothing of its value.-Ed. Oc.

[illegible]

“I will cleanse my hands in innocence, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord, that I may cause to be heard the voice of gratitude, and recite all thy wondrous works. Lord, I have loved the habitations of thy House, and the location where thy glory resides.”- Psalms 26:6-8.

Beloved Hearers, By the mercy of God, favoured to enter these sacred portals, especially to dedicate this house to the service of the (Deity) the Holy One of Israel, overwhelmed with feelings so immediately associated with our nearest and dearest interests, connected with time and eternity, we seek in vain to give expression to the flood of absorbing thoughts in the studied phraseology of inadequate words; but, grateful for the past, and hopeful for the future, simply to elucidate the language of our text, so comprehensive, embodying all that is most strictly suitable to this hallowed occasion. The holy ceremony or [illegible] we have met to celebrate, originated in the pious custom practised by our ancestry, (consonant to divine precept,) and afterwards copied by the Greeks and Romans. The ritual being so highly symbolical, demands exposition, which will be given in the sequel; our chief object in the present Discourse being mainly directed to illustrate the momentous questions, 1st, What constitutes a Synagogue or House of Prayer? 2d, What means are indispensibly requisite to support the cause in all its efficiency?

First. What constitutes a Synagogue? [illegible] “They shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell amongst them.” (Exodus 35:8)

It is thus by express command we are enjoined to consecrate some specific place to the service of the Most High, where he may abide, glorifying it by his divine presence, (or Shechinah,) as if it were possible to confine his glory within an enclosure of walls, or circumscribe his majesty even by geographical bounds. What, by the limited appliances of human means to raise a structure for the Omnipresent Sovereign of the universe, whose omniscience truly unconfined pervades numberless systems, and makes all space his temple? “The heavens constitute my throne, and the entire earth my footstool; where is the house we would build for me, and where the place devoted to my rest?” “For in very truth will God deign to dwell with man on earth, when behold the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee?”-(Chron.) Is it predictable to raise an edifice for him of whom the Oriental sage speaks, [illegible]

These words of Job may be thus paraphrased:

“If I go forward to the eastern coast,

To seek him out, I mourn my labour lost;

If I turn backwards to the western seats,

To find him there, he still my hopes defeats;

I roam through populous northern kingdoms, where

His most surprising works and wonders are:

Yet is my strict inquiry fruitless there.

Nor will his place be in the south revealed,

Who is in clouds pavilioned and shades concealed;

Yet this is my comfort, that his searching eye,

Does all my thoughts, my aims, and ways decry.”

Then to the all-present and all-felt God, here so eloquently portrayed, are we to rear a tabernacle, when the whole world is the arena manifestive of his glory, and ruling dominion? No, dear hearers, it is not for Him required, ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ but ostensibly for ourselves it is most needed, that we might have a sanctuary as a refuge for the His that float on time, a spot consecrated to holiness, within whose sacred precincts, we atoms of the supreme creative Power, children of a day, may seek and find abiding calm, the truce to worldly clamour and confusion, there to have free access to unvarying goodness, an asylum from the corruptions of sin, where also in unostentatious devotion purity of heart may yield its choicest and costliest offering. This we hold was the intention of Israel’s royal bard when in the words of the text he said, ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ “I will cleanse my hands in innocence, so will I encompass thine altar, O God !” Yes, it is only proportionate to our purity of mind, it is only in ratio to our cleanliness of hand, that the invisible God is found in a pacifying sensation by the regenerated; for, although it is utterly impossible to be altogether spotless, yet will it readily appear, that purification is the grand essential of our blessed religion, which by this process prepares man to meet his God.

How pathetically has King Solomon symbolized the prayer-fraught soul in his inimitable canticles. “Oh, my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret of gradations, let me see thy countenance (if pure), let me hear thy melodious notes, for sweet is thy voice, and comely thy countenance.” King David, in the same spirit, asks, “Who shall ascend to the mount of God, and who abide in his holy place? he who is pure-handed, and pure-hearted, shall receive a blessing from God, and righteousness from the God of His salvation.” Thus Maimonides observed, ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ “Prayer must be performed in purity,” so to surround the sacred altar, as typified in the ceremonial just concluded,* cherishing the holy law in our hearts, as well as we carry it in our arms. To bring here the unfeigned homage of our gratitude, all we have and can render our Father above, as an acceptable offering, will lead us to apprehend the purpose of raising a building we term a house of Assembly, ■■■ ■■■■■ where the members who meet may influence each other, by the

common bond of brotherhood to the prosecution of the true good, in its real character and permanence. Treating on this sublime subject, we cannot forbear to observe, that when Isaiah the Prophet in the vision of enthroned glory, caught the sounds of the heavenly Cherubim and Seraphim, that unceasingly minister before the throne of the God of Hosts, in sorrowing accents he spoke: “Wo is me, I am undone, for a man of unclean lips am I.” My impure voice, said he, cannot approach that unsullied choir. Now, if the favoured of Heaven felt this, should we, steeped in defilement, not have cause to tremble for our sins, and immediately apply ourselves to the benign requirement, “Purify thyself, and be clean,” ■■■ ■■■■ so shall we feel and know by internal evidences, that our affections are not misplaced, that our bosom-nursed and most sanguine hopes will not be disappointed, and that the Deity, in pity to our frailty, in commiseration for our wavering impulses, directed us to build this house, where our purest felicities may be consummated.

* In the Hackafote.

If, in all this, you fail to discern what constitutes a Synagogue, we would add, when with chafed feelings and bruised spirit you come here to unbosom your griefs before the eye of supreme Mercy, even if when laden with guilt, you venture to give utterance to your emotions of contrition, knowing He delights to forgive the penitent: ah, in those hallowed moments you will deeply feel that finely sympathetic link which binds us to his gracious paternity. Then, in conference with our Best of beings, the genial tear glistens in the faith-directed eye, the noble susceptibilities of the heart expand in devotion, and the soul drinks deeply from the fount of salvation, freed from all debasing passions and corroding care; the spirit serene will find a blissful calm. And while in the sanctuary we hold that intercourse with Heaven, experiencing those nameless ecstacies, those spiritualized sensations: enraptured we should realize the grand purpose of the Synagogue, exclaiming with the Patriarch, as if awakening from a dream to life’s reality: “It cannot be otherwise than the house of God, and this indeed is the gate of heaven.”-From that auspicious moment that we learn the exalted nature of this sacred spot, the intellect, emancipated from its former puerilities, refined by the contemplation of divine perfection, elevates itself in the lofty theme of adoration, as exultingly it proclaims the emphatic assertion of our text, “O Lord, I love thy house and the residence of thy supreme glory,”-From that instant we appreciate the nature of this holy abode; we shall learn that the Psalmist in his declaration, “I will cleanse my hands in innocence, so to compass thine altar, O Lord,” had in view the four pre-requisites which animate devotion, namely, purification, gratitude, intelligence, and love; and, farther, it will be evident that revelation in this respect has taught us what all the accumulated learning of ages could not and did not reveal. Look at the Grecians, regard the far-famed city, the homestead of science, the Acropolis, the court of Greece, where Homer sang, and Plato taught, even after they had deified all subjects, having their thousands of gods, their learning humiliated at its own impotence, drooped over the grandest altar dedicated to the unknown god. Now we, as Hebrews, have been taught to know our God. “Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightiest know that the Lord he is God, there is none else besides him,” and in our own land, as well as in our dispersions, we raise an altar, build an edifice, and hope to endow it with suitable appurtenances, to the known God; known as one, all-beneficent, and all-wise, Being of beings, creation’s Creator, besides whom there is none beside, first and last, perennial source of blessedness, our shield and protector, our Father and God. Thus, superstition, which degraded and degrades other nations, must be unknown to us,

basking as we do in the full noontide of divine truth; our mental faculties are not cramped by those rites which ever becloud and narrow the mind. Far otherwise; our religion teaches us to serve our God, and benefit our fellow-man, and thus we conceive we obey the intention of our common Parent, who loves all his creatures, and wishes that all men should know and comprehend their eternal happiness. To this end run all our holy laws appertaining to the temple, and its apparently mystic appurtenances solely directed, to shadow forth the grand lessons of morality, of which numerous instances could be adduced. For example, speaking of the ark, our legislator Moses, enjoins: “Inwardly and outwardly shall it be overlaid laid with pure gold,” which is incorruptible; to teach us that we likewise are bound internally and externally to exhibit candor, that deception is not to corrode our hearts, nor illiberality to tarnish our reputation; but that sterling integrity must mark our intercourse with our fellow-man;-no double-dealing, no overreaching, no dissimulation must tarnish our fair fame, as the adopted of God. By the structure we have raised, we seek not to confine sanctity to four walls, as if none were holy excepting those who utter their words of praise within its precincts; nor do we assume to keep the keys of heaven, as if none were co-heirs of immortality, save those who worship within the portals of a Synagogue. Heaven forbid! that we should think so little of our God, or so greatly of ourselves; no, our creed teaches that all men are the objects of his care, inasmuch as they conform to his will. My beloved hearers, the banner we unfurl is but to portray that temple of nature of which was spoken so truly and so eloquently, that it is a sanctuary formed by Almighty Power, whose resplendent dome is the cerulean sky, whose columns are the lofty trees, whose secret incense is the flower-perfumed dew, whose symphony is the melodious anthem of nature, whose ornaments are the rich and varied productions of revolving seasons, whose altar is the cloud-capped mountains. Yes, beloved hearers, the entire world is the sacred fane, where, trembling and adoring, we may yield devotion’s tribute.

Then, if such be the case, of what use is the Synagogue? if the whole world be his temple, why should we confine our worship to Him to time and place? is it not the dream of bigotry and idle superstition, (to assume,) to imagine that the Deity can be more easily propitiated in one place than another. Our reply is simply this, that the law of God distinctly prohihits worship in all places indiscriminately. [redacted] “Take heed that thou bringest not thine offerings in all places thou seest.” Thus Maimonides asserts [redacted] “that man should at all times join in the service of the Synagogue, not to offer up his devotion by himself, whenever it is possible to pray with a congregation; for the prayer of the many in a suitable place is never rejected.”-Hilchath Tephilla, 8, 1. The psalm we have selected concludes, “My foot standeth in an even place, in the congregations will I bless the Lord.”

Irrespective of this consideration, praying in places not adapted to devotional purposes, the very objects by which we are surrounded, must, nay, do, mar devotion; while on the other hand, the place where sanctity is localised, claims a space from worldly turmoil, an immunity from din and tumult; on this, if on no other grounds, our gratitude is due, and hereby freely offered to that small and trusty band, who having the Lord in their hearts, made every sacrifice of person and purse, in order to build this miniature temple to be a house of God. To adduce the importance of devoting certain places to religious exercises, has been taught by our philosophers in many places, more especially in their comments on the well-known passage: “And many nations shall come and say,

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob."- (Micah 4:2) Not saying the house of the God of Abraham, nor that of Isaac; for Abraham spoke "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," no temple nor house does he mention; ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ Isaac went to meditate in the open field; but Jacob denominated the place of his devotions ■■■ ■■ house of God. With the like holy purpose and heavenly feeling, with a keen comprehension of our past suffering, and our present halcyon state, with a solemn assurance that orthodox principles alone shall here hold undivided empire, and a vow made to Heaven before this assembled multitude, that no changes In. our religious polity will be introduced: we dedicate this shrine from henceforth to the God of Israel; we consecrate it holy to the Lord, ■■■■ ■■■. And wo to the being, be he high or low, who will attempt to divert it from its hallowed object; Heaven avert such a true calamity. Remember the motto on the corner-stone, ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ "And the work of righteousness shall be peace," let us be endowed with the spirit it conveys, and assert ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■. Peace, glorious peace be thy motto; peace to those who aid this heaven-born virtue; for thus endowed, the building will perpetuate its usefulness, God being its mainstay and support.

Haying thus manifested what constitutes a Synagogue, or House of God, we now proceed to evince what the requisites are to maintain its efficiency.

Beloved Brethren-It is an undeniable fact that every member of our community is in a great measure dependent on the perfections of the institutions under which he lives; it is, therefore, our interest, as it is our duty, to improve, and to make our sanctuary a receptacle for blessings. To effectuate this it is necessary, next to purification, to be constant and punctual in our attendance here; to occupy the seats as well as to pay for them; nothing can be more detrimental to our peace of mind than absence from stated worship, or presence only on extraordinary occasions. Not alone is such conduct injurious to ourselves; it is repugnant to the requirements of our faith, opposed to the spiritual health of our children, and a reproach to the common cause; whilst, by our constant attendance, and our ardent devotion, we familiarize our minds with heaven-born truths, we become more and more intimately acquainted with the holy attributes of God, and as far as is practicable we assimilate ourselves to that standard of perfection:-"Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy." And what, we would ask, is so much calculated to consummate this most desirable object, as the stated use of the heart-stirring prayers and thanksgivings composing our beautiful and liturgical services, so admirably adapted to inspire piety, reclaim the wanderer, and to lead the mind, by easy gradations, to the recognition of the sublime principles constituting our holy faith, and which are as strictly undeviating in the moral, as the laws of gravity are in the physical world? Far be it, then, from us, to mutilate or abrogate an iota of these prayers, composed by our sages, amongst whom were even prophets of God; let not our modern ideas deprive Judaism of its historic worth, of its proudest heirloom, its antiquity; let not pride usurp the name of religion.-For from the moment we become tributary to its influence, then sanctity, in its most venerable associations, will be desecrated by its sacrilegious hand, till the whole fabric of our religious polity becomes a mutilated structure, soon to fall. From the dread moment that spirit gains an entrance to the human heart, it will seek to extend its perilous influence; in its over-weening all-sufficiency, it will enlarge or contract, build up or pluck down, unite or sever; in a word, that turbulent, ungovernable spirit, will be satisfied with nothing short of a total renunciation of everything that bears an ancient or ordinary appearance.It is that factious spirit which would

unhinge society, and hurl us once again into anarchy and ruin. Earnestly we exhort you, suffer not the sacrilegious hand of innovation, under the euphonious title of reform, to vitiate the sanctity of those precious relics of bygone days, for the possession of which our forefathers surrendered all their worldly advantages, nay, their very life's blood. If you really desire reform, commence within your own hearts, and the improvement will manifest itself in our Synagogue; scrupulously observe the landmarks fixed by wisdom, guard well each avenue of the court of God's house, let not the smallest inroad be made on the sacred and inviolable; it is not the last blow that fells the tree, but the slow sapping means which accelerate its downfall. Our New Synagogue will flourish, if we bear constantly in our minds, that Judaism is planted in the Rock of Ages; but from the moment we give it a chameleon-like form, it ceases to be Judaism, only living upon the air it breathes, contradistinguished from that heavenly plant, (the Synagogue,) which in dark ages brought life and salvation in cell or cavern, and in our halcyon days assured us of immortality wheresoever we unfurl our banner. In thus admonishing you against the reckless spirit of the age, we must not be understood as rejecting all improvement; we are well aware, and desirous to impress it on your attention, that in order to maintain the Synagogue in its efficiency, the study of our sacred language should be sedulously cultivated; it is not enough that Hebrew should be read in the Synagogue, it is of vital importance that it should be understood. Not alone would it conserve and render our Synagogue efficient; it would also excite children to emulation; for by understanding the holy tongue, they would kindle the sparks of wisdom, genius, and talent, at these smouldering fires, which, however neglected, remain unquenched, destined still to be the beacon of Israel amidst her tribulation. Were we attached to a court, how soon should we study and acquire that language desired to be spoken by the sovereign; wherefore, then, should the Hebrew language be disregarded, reflecting, as we must, that in that language God promulgated his laws, and which was once the vernacular in that land on which our hearts are fixed, and where we hope to return to find repose from suffering and unmerited obloquy? But not to digress, the Supreme, who is immaculate, is attracted by purity, his image, in man; this purity must be the atmosphere of the Synagogue. When truth springs from the sacred place, it will not fail to attract righteousness from above,[redacted] and bring its rich dower of happiness to elevate us above the low tangling. mass of corruption, and to lead us in those paths tracked by Mercy and Love. The last though not the least requisite remains yet to be mentioned, it is that all who are here assembled will, with cheerful alacrity contribute to the support of the shrine you have raised as commanded by God when, the tabernacle was first raised.

"From every man whose heart prompts him thereto, shall ye take my offering." n Knowing your liberality on all occasions, having for the past eight years been an eyewitness of your ever-active charity, exerted in the cause of benevolence; noticing the readiness in which you cheered the poor man's fireside in cheerless winter; the alacrity with which you laved bleeding feet; the energy with which you stanched the wounded heart; the activity with which you wiped the tear of sorrow, without making any invidious distinction of sect or grade, any inquiry whether the recipient of your bounty worshipped in a Synagogue:-happily for me you will not require an eloquent appeal to rouse you to duty, we feel quite certain that inborn generosity which characterizes the true Israelite, and liberal feeling which distinguishes the noble people among whom it is our pleasing destiny to dwell, that these feelings will not now relax.

We know of no better cause in which your funds can be employed, than in dedicating places of instruction and worship to the glory of the living God. By such means you honour the religion you profess, so that all the venerable associations with which its sacred rites are connected, will render the altars they have consecrated doubly dear to us; by properly endowing God's house, you will be the means of blessing generations yet hidden in the womb of futurity. A large outlay has been incurred in raising this holy fane, to render it in all respects worthy of our cause, and the respectability of the Hebrews in this splendid city of the West; where we meet beneath the same shade which shelters all men, secure from the shafts of malevolence, and the poisonous arrow of benighted bigotry. Oh, how glorious is this sight to the theologian and philanthropist! for a moment let us contemplate the scene before us, and ask the eye of the soul, whether the predictions of the seer do not appear to be fulfilling: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together?" Unclasp the volume of the past, and amidst the dark paper, or the chequered leaves, see if you can find one as fair as this; it is a sight at which angels might weep for joy, at the consecration of a Synagogue, to behold the elite of the city, members of Congress and State Legislature, its most eminent judges, clergy, and laity, holding different opinions as regards external worship, yet looking with veneration and attachment at the parent tree from which their sapling has come forth. And who will tell me that this is not better for the cause of religion than the scholastical subtleties and polemical ingenuities on which our forefathers spent their substance, the narrow illiberality and mutual hatred, in which they embittered the well-spring of their lives? tell us of your Fultons, and a correspondent galaxy of talent, who by their genius illumined their age; without a wish to detract from their merit or greatness, they shrink into comparative obscurity, when we properly consider the spirit of inquiry by which you are actuated. Their thoughts were on earth, yours soar to heaven. Be assured, my hearers, whatever your creed, that such contemplation is your noblest employment; for as oft as we benefit humanity by the diffusion of happiness consequent on the advancement of truth; as oft as we raise the standard of excellence by the elevation of religious principles; as oft as we widen the field of our own usefulness, by the promotion of the grand motives of religion: so oft shall we have rendered essential service to mankind, by contributing our modicum to that general happiness predicted by various prophets, when all differences shall merge into fellowship, all jarring discordance subside in uniformity. Then all discrepancies will be adjusted, every incongruity dissolve into one harmonious connexion: in those days shall righteousness flourish. To hasten that period, give each of your store, in accordance with the blessings you have received, to do good in life; and in thus doing good, be grateful that you have the means of perpetuating your name on the tablet of immortality, of registering your good acts in indelible colours. Remember, my hearers, your substance cannot follow you to the grave; naked we came into the world, and denuded of all (save good deeds) we must return to our original element. I adjure you by that purity, gratitude, intelligence, and love, which form the four pillars of our faith, inculcated by our text, lay this tribute of your duty on the sacred altar of our holy religion; invest some of your share capital in the Bank of Futurity; by such means will you enjoy the interest while here, and when you shall be called on to depart for shores of everlasting bliss, you will then find that the principal will have been carefully garnered for your use ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■. Let not frigid calculations arrest the hand of generosity; say not you have so many calls on your benevolence, or that your means are limited. Has the hand of the Lord grown short in his benevolence to you? Look at the old world, how it is stricken down by poverty, sickness, and famine. "Every head is sick, every heart is sore." The mind recoils from reflecting this day on a

subject so heart-rending and harrowing, where old and young appear of one age, from the afflictions with which a wise Providence has thought proper to essay their principles. Now let us contemplate our own condition; here every lap is filled with plenty, and our superabundance helps to supply those who suffer from the ravages of famine. Under such circumstances, shall our hand wax short, or shall we who do so much for the body, be unmindful of the soul? Heaven forbid! that we should give money a thought for when, for once, we are called on to give purely for the House of God, where, in all our casualties we may come before the Hearer of Prayer, soliciting strength; for indeed we are frail, and require to be invigorated; praying for steadfastness, feeling our inconstancy and wavering affection; importuning for pardon, being so full of sin. In a word, if already you have given freely, give again! for here the heart, purified, shall coruscate in lovely affection, fructify in all the luxuriousness of grace, and the soul effloresce in true holiness; that when the moral adjuncts shall have fallen, and withered all vigour, the spirit will wing its flight, on well-poised wing, to breathe its proper element; clinging to the arm of Omnipotence; it will hear the consoling words, ■■ ■■■■■ “I will never leave thee,” no, never, never leave thee; but conduct thee to those realms of bliss, where care and sorrow no more contend, to the House of God, and within the portals of heaven. May this be the destiny of all who give for the glory of God. ■■■ ■■■

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Prayer

Lord God of Israel, Source of life and light, whose illimitable goodness is certified by all living, our thoughts and our expressions fail in addressing Thee as we ought! Where shall the timorous tongue begin thy praise? where end its thanksgivings? for thy mindful eye, unseen, sees; thy providence, unknown, guides; and thy mercy, unbounded, upholds. When we have explored all nature, the wide range of existence is inadequate to utter the lofty theme of thine adoration; the soul falleth back on itself in the deepest humility, exclaiming ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ “There is none so holy as God, there is none besides Thee!” To the glorification of thy sacred Name, we have dedicated this sanctuary. O that thine eyes may be upon this place, and thine ear, to which the gentlest whisper is audible, be open to hear the cries and prayers of thy people.-Every one acquainted with his own griefs, spreading forth his hands in supplication to Thee:-deign, O Father, to hear from heaven, and mercifully forgive, when in purity he returns to Thee and thy service. O that truth and mercy, heaven-sent, might spread their wings over this altar of devotion and love! Shower thy benign influences on those who have built this house, on those who give freely from their substance in aid of the cause, and on those who have the heart but not the means to strengthen this fane; give them thy best gifts, that hereafter they may be better conditioned. And, in pity, inspire thy servant, and others who minister before Thee; inspire them with strength and fortitude to vanquish error and doubt from all who come here to seek thy Divine Presence, that in fraternal affection we may hold on that way which leads to Thee, where the wanderer is sheltered

from the blast, and where the exile finds his fatherland, in the boundless regions of immortality.-Amen.

Chapter 18

S. Address to Jewish Youth

Address

Delivered Before The Society For The Instruction Of Jewish Youth, In Charleston, S. C., On The Anniversary Of The Society, February, 1842. By N. L. [Nathaniel Levin?]

IT has been frequently and truly said, that the influence of woman upon society is one of the most powerful and efficient causes of its progress in refinement and civilization. In every age and nation in which she has been permitted to occupy the position allotted to her by nature, reason and religion, she has exerted a power of an almost unlimited force and extent, and this with the, most happy consequences. Delicate in her constitution, mild and beneficent in her disposition, warm in her affections, and lovely in all her actions, she has ever been (where her worth was properly appreciated) the guardian and the ornament of the social compact. Her domestic virtues confer on home all its comforts and allurements; her presence in society humanizes law and imparts a more lofty honour and a more refined state of morals to the civil relations; her connection with our country adds strength to its institutions, and her graceful and softening manners give order and beauty to its political fabric. In countries where her true charms are unknown, and where her sphere of action is circumscribed within the narrow circle of household labours, or the more degrading limits of unintellectual pleasures, man rises but little above the level of animal organization, and despotism and injustice mark the operations of government. There is not, nor can there be, such a thing as that community of friendship and interchange of good offices which bind mankind together without her interposition. What woman is, man will for ever be; for man cannot be other than depressed, where woman is not exalted. Patriotism would be little more than a blind devotion to the soil but for her presence in society; and the devotion displayed at the family shrine, would be scarcely more than idolatry, if she did not preside at the altar and mould the sacrificial rites into the forms of holy religion. Wisely and bountifully has the supreme Creator fashioned the female heart in all the richness of its faith and affections; wisely did He ordain that she should be a companion to man; and bountifully has He supplied her with every requisite for a companionship, both attractive and agreeable. Man, naturally hardy in constitution, and rugged and boisterous in temper, turns to her from native impulse, to seek relict from his conflicts and his own oppressive strength; and finds not only the repose he covets, but a refining tenderness, a cheering confidence, and a consoling faith, which awaken the noble emotions of his soul, and excite him to the generous and lofty pursuits of patriotism and philanthropy. She makes him forget that he is an individual, by teaching him to love; and by surrounding him with the enchantments of home, she fixes him in his sphere in society, and invests him with the reciprocally agreeable relationships, immunities and duties of husband, father, friend, and citizen.

"Who that would ask a heart to dulness wed,

The waveless calm, the slumber of the dead?

No! the wild bliss of nature needs alloy,

And fear and sorrow fan the fire of joy!

And say, without our hopes, without our fears,

Without the home that plighted love endears,

Without the smile from partial beauty won,

Oh !what were man?--a world without a sun!" The influence of woman has ever been celebrated in song, marked by deeds of chivalry, and acknowledged so fully and so often, that it would be in vain now to attempt to impress it more thoroughly upon the public mind. All admit that her influence is great in the accomplishment of good, and while they make the admission, they must freely own, too, that it is irresistible; for come in what shape she may, whether as mother, sister, wife or friend, she ever meets a sincere welcome from the feeling heart, and as she never approaches to encourage but with a smile, nor to move our mercy but with a tear, she invariably wins us to her cause, as we would not, if we could, repulse her. In this enlightened age and country she deservedly ranks among the highest. On an equality with man in this happy land; she shows herself worthy of her station by emulating him in every good enterprise in which she can properly embark, and by taking a prominent, though modest part, in his moral reformation and intellectual improvement. Indeed, so accustomed has the American citizen become to the cooperation of woman, in undertakings which affect the community in its social aspect; that he seldom ventures far in his labours, whether they be of a moral, religious, or charitable character, without first obtaining. her sanction, or at least her advice. This is alike creditable to her and to him. It proves that her power and influence depend not so much upon the beauty of a perishable outward form as the possession of intrinsic excellence; and it also shows that while he can, and does, admire the graces of her person, he is not insensible to her higher endowments of mind and heart. The Jewish female, enjoying all the blessings and privileges that emanate from a free and republican government, does not wait to be led into schemes of benevolence; she does not merely accompany man in the promulgation of useful principles, or the performance of popular charities. Like an angel of light she points the way herself, and is often among the foremost in missions of mercy. I might easily enumerate many instances in proof of this; but shall content myself with merely referring to the institution of this society, the anniversary of which we have assembled to honour. It is exclusively the work of woman’s hand. Her benevolence prompted its foundation; her labour, patience and devotion, have raised the superstructure to what it now is. Not our faithful ancestors restoring the temple of God, surrounded by enemies, with arms by their side, whilst progressing with their allotted labour, were engaged in a more hallowed task than you are now, beloved friends; for ye are upholding the temple of the Jewish mind, and giving perpetuity to that faith which threw the majesty of Heaven from the harp of David, and which wrapped Isaiah’s hallowed soul in fire. This institution is one of those which, without making any pretensions to notoriety, is calculated to produce results of the utmost importance to us and to the community at large. In a country like ours, depending for its stability upon the intelligence and virtue of the people, it becomes our duty to educate our children so that they may fully understand their civil rights, and at the same time teach them to cling to that, which we can prove to have been before all human charters, the "first born" of the rights of man, the indefeasible inheritance of every genuine worshipper of the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Over the internal operations of the Jewish mind a dominion is reserved which it belongs not to man to assume. There the arm of

flesh has no power; thither the fiat of sovereignty carries with it no terrors, and the formalities of law recoil from the mission on which tyranny would array them. "Secure within her winding citadel" the intellect holds her sway, and not even the united powers of earth can shake, for one instant, that "sceptre" from "the sons of Judah." The chief object of your institution is to disseminate such principles and knowledge among those for whose advantage it was formed, as will afford them the best guides in their future connection in this world, and place them in that bright path which finally pleads to the throne of the one, omniscient, eternal God. You, its founders, knew how much depended upon the culture of the tender mind; you knew that early impressions are the last to fade from the memory; you knew that the character, the permanency and the happiness of the state are formed and influenced chiefly by the manner in which its children are educated; and you felt that your power and position required you to unite in the noble task of superintending the development of that mind, of forming those impressions, and of supplying that education to the full extent and compass of your ability. The purity of your motives must be apparent, even to the casual observer, while the wisdom of your design is manifesting itself daily. Already has abundant evidence of the usefulness of your institution been given, and, by the blessing of Providence and the aid of the good, its founders will soon see their brightest anticipations realized, their hopes crowned with success, and the harvest of their labours gathered up in mental wealth and moral worth.

Such objects are in true accordance with the character, the influence, and the power of woman. Men seldom attempt such works, although they frequently claim, and receive a share of the honours which belong to them. In many respects they possess a larger degree of universal influence and collective strength, and are, from circumstances, her superiors in knowledge and the reasoning faculties; but they lack her patience under difficulties, her devotion under opposition, her unwavering constancy of purpose under all circumstances; and they but partially know the great secret, which she possesses intuitively, of exercising power and influence with the certainty of success. Let us now take a brief view of some of the important results of your institution. In a very short time the youth embraced in its organization will become ripe in the maturity of years, and must embark in the business of active life for and by themselves. They will then be called upon to exercise their faculties in a twofold character, they must exhibit themselves in the aspect of religious and moral agents.

Upon you, my dear young friends, as the peculiar children of an omnipotent and bountiful Parent, the duty will devolve of practising his laws in that true spirit of Jewish gratitude and of Jewish faith, which since the days of Abraham the faithful has not been weakened. As members of one great family, bound together by holy ties of relationship, as the children of the same great and good Father, your moral obligations will call upon you to reorder those services of love, and kindness, and good-will towards each other, which have been ordained by that Father, and which are necessary to your own peace, safety and happiness. Upon the exercise of these two duties your whole fate will depend. If you perform them well, your lives will be full of joy, and your deaths full of promise. But if you wander from the true path, your feet will be entangled with snares, and wounded by thorns; discord and discontent will follow you in your wanderings, and when your wide and weary journey shall be closed, you must fall unhonoured, like the leaves of autumn swept off by the rude blasts of the tempest. Contentment, the respect of the world, pure happiness, and the smiles of Heaven, are the rewards only of good works-they are the blessings which must be won before they can be enjoyed. For your especial benefit was this society founded. Much of its

success, then, will depend upon your conduct; and as you are the most nearly, if not the most dearly interested in its prosperity, it. is necessary that you should be reminded of the duties that are required of you in carrying on its operations. One of the first of these is, that you should give your whole attention to the lessons you are here taught. You must remember that the instructions you receive are intended for your eternal benefit, arid you should preserve them in your hearts as the surest guides to virtue and happiness. Your teachers are your friends, and you should reverence them for the kindness they show you in taking so much pains to improve your minds, and to prepare you to go abroad in the world, guarded against its sins and snares. You must remember, too, that your heavenly Father is constantly watching over you; that your least action and all your thoughts are open to his searching eye, and that He will protect you and bless you while you continue to obey his word, and frown upon you if you refuse or neglect to do so. You should not look upon the tasks allotted to you as labours, nor should you think that the rules laid down for your conduct are intended to prevent you from enjoying yourselves. Both are designed to increase your pleasures; and you will see and own this when you ask yourselves, "How could we be happy with nothing to do? with no religion, and with no regulation for our actions?" The angels obey and serve God, and are always busied in doing his commands. In this they take most delight; and will you give up the religion of your fathers, a religion that has stood the shock of four thousand years-a religion which your ancestors clung to amidst persecution and oppression, but which you may enjoy amidst peace and sunshine? Another duty which you should perform is that of kindness to each other. You cannot live alone, but must depend upon one another for happiness, comfort and consolation. Your own hearts reflect, like mirrors, the joy or the sorrow of those around you; your interest is their interest; your good their good; for you are all of the same great family, having the same nature, the same hopes, and should and must share each other’s fortunes and afflictions. Still another duty, which you should take pleasure in performing, is that of diligence in study. Knowledge is better than silver or gold, for it will give you happiness which money cannot purchase; it will enrich your minds with treasures that will increase the more you seem to draw from them, and they will not only give you respectability in the world, but cause your way through life to be full of peace, contentment and prosperity. May you then keep the law and the commandments; for (in the words of King Solomon) "length of days, long life, and peace will it add to thee." And you, my hearers of a more advanced age, will readily acknowledge that a religious feeling gives strength to moral ties and obligations, and is essential to the very existence of society. Without it there can be no faith in promises, no honour in compacts, no honesty in commerce, and no unity of interest in social intercourse. A community cannot long hold its elements together unless cemented by this sentiment; or if it could exist, it would present the appearance of a half-organized tribe gathered together without order or harmony, whose members, pursuing adverse interests, regard each other as rivals if not as enemies. There is no fellowship among men who feel not that they arc the offspring of the same beneficent and eternal Parent; nor can there be justice in their dealings, or humanity in their laws, while they possess no standard of religion by which to frame and regulate them. In our happy land there is no legal standard of faith; the thing is an absurdity in a country where all enjoy equal rights; for can any free people delegate to any sovereign the business of determining for them what religion they are to believe? Here, therefore, we are free to choose for ourselves, and thus of a free accord we still fondly cling to that faith in which our fathers lived and died. To inculcate principles of pure religion, in agreement with this faith, is one of the chief purposes of this institution, the anniversary of which

we have assembled to commemorate; and it designs to effect this purpose by imparting instruction to those within its charge, and by pointing out to them the advantage which they will unquestionably derive from a firm adherence to the precepts of our inspired lawgiver,-for by his laws they are taught to shape their course through this sin-worn world, and they are to them the only guide to that bright and beautiful "land of promise" which lies beyond the grave. In this view of the influence and objects of this institution I have blended the two great subjects of morality and religion, because they are essentially one and indivisible in point of principle, although they seem to have different aims. Morality embraces, it is true, when strictly taken, nothing more than our duty to each other. But how are its doctrines sanctified unless by religion? In its confined acceptation religion may also be deemed nothing more than our duty to God. But how can we better perform that duty, than by obedience to the ten commandments communicated to man amidst the thunders of Sinai, which embrace also love for those of our own species? If, however, they are to be separately considered, we must add another to the important purposes of this institution, and include the dissemination of correct principles of humanity among its happy influences.

There is yet another effect to be produced by its operations, which is connected with the former, but perhaps less prominent in its character. I allude to the intellectual elevation which such lessons as are here imparted give to those who receive them. It .has been well observed, "that every useful accession to the mind adds new strength to its power, and brings its possessor one step nearer to the source of all intelligence.’ The more we exercise our faculties, the more vigorous and active will they become; and the larger the demands made upon our capacity, the greater will be its capability to retain, digest, and apply the knowledge which may be brought within its grasp. This is a wise economy in nature, which is exhibited as well in our physical as in our mental construction. It is this remarkable property which makes the hand skilful and the intellect wise, and it is this more than any other attribute, short of the great principle of immortality which distinguishes man from the inferior animal creation. They, it is true, manifest something of the same quality; but man only possesses it in perfection. They may be improved to a slight degree; but they have no power of retaining this improvement, or of communicating it to others of their kind. Man, on the contrary, not only is enabled to preserve to himself the acquisitions he makes, but he gives them to his race, and they are treasured up as common property for the benefit of succeeding ages. His progress, therefore, is constantly upward and onward. Every step he advances gives him new strength and confidence; every field he explores unfolds to his view another, still more lovely in prospect; every addition he makes to his stock of knowledge excites his appetite for more; and he continues to advance from the rudiments of knowledge contained in his primer, and explained by his early governess, to the highest point of human intelligence, a knowledge of himself and his Creator, contained in the great Book of Life; and explained by nature herself. It must not be forgotten that while he becomes a wiser, he also becomes a better being. Every ray of light which breaks upon him serves to show him more closely his real interests and duties, and to prove to his understanding that true and substantial happiness is to be obtained only by serving his Father in heaven, and by extending, justice and charity to his brethren on earth. Thus, then, it will appear that the institution of which it is my business and pleasure to speak, is designed to accomplish three important objects: the religious, moral, and intellectual improvement of the interesting objects of its care.

These three objects embrace within themselves many other minor considerations, to which I have briefly and incidentally alluded, but of which before an audience of so much intelligence as this, I need not give the details, as their own intrinsic value will sufficiently recommend them to your notice. The immense good that must naturally follow the attainment of these ends, cannot fail to strike the view of every observer. The recipients of the instruction here afforded will, perhaps, feel the advantages the more sensibly, because the impressions made upon them will be immediate, strong, and lasting; but the effect produced through them upon society will be no less salutary and sterling. Besides, every individual, however humble, exercises some influence upon the social organization, and according as that influence may be good or evil, will society be the better or the worse from its exercise. Every occurrence in life, too, no matter how insignificant it may appear in itself, affects in a similar manner men and nations.

What can there be, then, in the whole philosophy of religion or morals, more essential to men than early religious education? By the lights of this they are prepared to wield their influence rightly in after life, and to protect themselves, in a great degree, from the shafts of adversity, and to mould the more fortunate accidents of time into the means of promoting human happiness, and of fulfilling the divine will and law. Such are the purposes, the designs and the influence of this benevolent and praiseworthy institution.

Having thus imperfectly noticed its character and objects, can it be necessary that I should make a formal appeal in behalf of such an enterprise? I trust not! I hope and believe that there is not an individual present who will not say to the wives and sisters, the mothers and daughters engaged in it, "Go on and prosper in the good work so auspiciously begun! Continue your efforts in the high and noble cause you have embarked in! Stay not, hesitate not in your holy mission; but advance in the path you have chosen; and may success crown your exertions, peace, happiness; and length of years be your reward here, and the smiles of an approving God your recompense hereafter!"

I trust that it will not be deemed officious to say a word or two to the parents of the young people connected with this school. Upon them an important duty devolves, the neglect or exercise of which may make or mar the fortunes of their children for ever. I have already observed, that early impressions are the last to fade from the memory; and that occurrences of the most trivial character apparently often affect the whole future destiny of an individual, as well as of a nation. Of this you must have been repeatedly assured in your experience of the world, and you will readily perceive, that it is so in obedience to the natural and inevitable law of cause and effect. Does it not behoove you, then, to see that the first impressions made upon the minds of your children should be of such a stamp as to render them less liable, than they would otherwise be, to the influence of the accidents which may befall them? It is your duty; and if I have formed a proper estimate of you, it will be your desire, and pleasure also, to instil correct and pure principles of religion and morality in the hearts of your offspring, and to sanction and enforce the precepts by your example. Your children instinctively look to you for the model of their own faith and deportment; and if that be imperfect or misshapen, you cannot hope that they will exhibit excellence, at least while they are taught to imitate your errors. But I need not dwell upon this subject. You understand this duty, and only need to be reminded of it to renew your determination to discharge it fully, freely, and with satisfaction to yourselves, as well as with advantage to the cherished objects of it.

Before I conclude this hasty and undigested address, (which my late domestic affliction nearly disqualified me even from undertaking,) may I not be permitted to make a few remarks to my auditors generally, in reference to their interest in the success of this institution? That they, and indeed all of us, have a deep and abiding interest in its operations, is easily demonstrated, and will be readily admitted. We are members of one political compact, engaged in one common pursuit of happiness, constituted and organized in conformity with one inherent and eternal principle, bound together by one harmonious community of object and interest, with one language, one country, and one God. By this union of action and purpose we are merged, as it were, into one being, and the wants, the wishes, and the welfare of the individual are blended and identified with the wants, the wishes, and the welfare of the mass. We move on in the great journey of life as a people, a fraternity, not as fragments of a disjointed tribe; and all the progress we make, all the good we achieve, and all the evil we encounter or practise, are shared in common by all. If any injury or injustice be inflicted upon any one of us, the whole mass feels it; if anyone make a valuable discovery, or become wise and skilful, the advantage of his discovery, his wisdom and his skill is dispensed to all. The good and the evil which may be the lot of the humblest amongst us, is felt to a proportionate extent by the greatest, while the fortunes of the whole gladden or depress with still greater power its several parts. If, then, we are so intimately connected, will not the success of every undertaking of a general character contribute in some degree to the success of each individual, and are we not, therefore, in duty to ourselves, as well as in furtherance of the common object of our social organization, bound to lend our support to every such undertaking, and to add what we can to its promotion? I have already, I trust, proved that this institution will exercise an important influence upon society, through the impressions it will make upon the more immediate objects of its solicitude, and it is consequently only necessary that you should feel that you are members of that society, to observe and own that you have an interest in the progress of the school conducted by your own relatives, and a duty to perform in promoting its success and more extended usefulness.

After thus exhibiting the important objects and bearing of this excellent institution, it is needless for me to endeavour, by any other means, to win your countenance to its encouragement. It would indeed be paying a poor compliment to your judgment to make any formal appeal to you in its favour. You know its purport and its value, and your own perception of right will prompt you to give it the consideration and support to which it is entitled. In concluding, I cannot deny myself the pleasure, nor should I forego the grateful duty of noticing in becoming terms the laudable efforts of one, who has long occupied an honourable and prominent position in the institution from which she is about to retire. I allude to its esteemed and efficient president [Miss Sally Lopez]. With an untiring devotion to the objects of the society, and a benevolent regard for those who claimed its cares, she has bestowed upon both a large share of her attention and time, and has contributed in an eminent degree to its progress and prosperity. From its origin to the present moment she has, in the true spirit of Jewish benevolence, laboured to place it in a favourable and advantageous position, and to extend its benign and happy influence. How far she has been successful in her exertions, the condition of the society, and the gratitude of many hearts made devout and joyous under her teachings will amply testify. In leaving this post, which she has so greatly adorned, she takes with her the most fervent wishes of a host of friends for her future prosperity; and if these, and the smiles of an approving Heaven, can make her life a pleasant one, then will her journeyings be bright as the honoured name she bears-a name that is identified with all that is pure and

delicate in Jewish love, and all that is high and generous in Jewish devotion. N. L.

S. Discourse

Discourse

Delivered by the Rev. Jacob Rosenfeld, at the Consecration of the Orthodox Synagogue, Charleston, S.C., on Friday the 1st Day of Elul, 5607, 13th of August, 1847.

Prayer for the Congregation

Almighty God of Israel, Lord of Hosts, Father of all Creatures, King of all Kings, Thou who dwellest in infinite regions, whose footstool is the earth, Thou who art the Creator of myriads of worlds with innumerable creatures, who praise, reverence, and glorify thy holy and blessed Name! look down favourably from thy dwelling-place, the heavens, upon this house which we have erected to thy sacred Name, and which we now consecrate to thy holy worship. Accept our exertions in thy blessed cause as a sacrifice upon thy altar, and may our praises and thanksgivings ascend as a sweet savour before thy throne of glory. O Lord, most gracious and benign, there is none like unto Thee in heaven above or on the earth beneath. Thou didst keep the covenant with our ancestors and give unto them the land of thy choice. Thou didst make them prosperous and place them above the nations of the earth; yet, as they violated thy covenant, and transgressed against Thee, Thou didst scatter them over the face of the whole earth. The holy land is a wilderness, in the hands of other nations; the holy city desolate, and the temple, once thy dwelling-place, is razed to the ground. O Lord, what can we do to reconcile Thee? how can we serve Thee to atone for our sinfulness? We are but feeble mortals, neglectful of our duties, led astray through our weakness; we entirely throw ourselves on thy mercy and unbounded compassion; for Thou wilt not abandon thine inheritance, nor forsake the children of thy covenant. O God of Israel, Thou hast not yet found us worthy of restoring our country to us, and rebuilding our Temple;-yet our hearts are anxious to worship Thee, and approach Thee in prayer and thanksgivings. We have therefore erected this house to thy Name, and we now consecrate it to thy worship.

We have no sacrifices to offer up to Thee; but, O Lord, we will endeavour to approach Thee with purified hearts and clean lips, with prayers deep and fervent, with praises and thanksgiving, to exalt and glorify Thee and thy holy Name. O Lord, mayest Thou be in our midst and bless us, and may thy divine ■■■■■ ever rest in this house; mayest Thou hear the prayers and supplications of all who pray to Thee in this sanctuary. Console the afflicted, heal the sick, give food to the hungry, sustenance to the needy, forgiveness to the sinner, reflection to the wicked, and true repentance to the violators of thy sacred law. O most gracious God, shower thy heavenly blessings upon this congregation, who have erected this building to thy holy worship. May peace and union ever prevail among them; may the spirit of piety and true faith animate them ever to adhere firmly to thy holy law, and to act up to thy divine precepts; may a feeling of brotherly love and charity ever keep them united as members of one family, and assemble them in this sanctuary to praise Thee and thy holy and exalted Name. O Father, fill our hearts with humility and reverence; may true piety dwell in our midst; may we never become haughty and presumptuous, or forgetful of Thee. Remove sickness and other evils frorn our midst, and when we approach Thee in prayer and

supplication, hear us, O God, most graciously. Hear the child that supplicates thy divine blessing in behalf of the beloved parent. Hear the mother when she prays for her children's welfare. Hear the widow and the fatherless who look up to Thee alone for protection. Hear the old and decrepit, and give them strength to endure patiently the trials of life. Hear all who seek Thee in this sanctuary and assist them, in thy infinite goodness. Bless, O Lord, all those who have been zealous in the erection of this sanctuary; bless the president and trustees of this congregation with thy divine grace; inspire them with true piety and a devotional zeal to maintain our holy worship as we have inherited it from our ancestors, and guard us against innovation, or anything that may tend to disturb the harmony of this congregation. Bless, O Merciful Father, every individual member of this congregation with health, contentment and happiness. Bless all this assembly, and all who love Thee and thy holy name. To Thee, O Lord, we hope; in Thee we put our trust; Thou art our only Saviour and God, and from Thee alone cometh salvation.-Amen.

Prayer for the Government

Great and glorious God or Israel, Thou art our stronghold and safeguard in time of need, our beloved Father and Protector in our wanderings through this vale of tears. In thy hand lieth the destiny of the world and its innumerable inhabitants, and before Thee nothing is hidden. We approach Thee in humility and reverence, we enter thy house with prayer and supplications, we step over thy threshold in filial love and gratitude; for Thou hast been most gracious and merciful towards us in granting us to consecrate this house to Thee and thy holy worship. O Lord, Thou knowest that our country has been wrested from us. Our holy city has become a prey to the barbarians, and we are dispersed and wandering strangers over all the earth. Thou knowest, O Lord, that we have borne thy chastisement in submission to thy holy will, as an atonement for our, and our ancestors' sinfulness. Thou hast heard the voice of thy oppressed people when they cried unto Thee, and hast granted them thy heavenly aid; for Thou, O Almighty Father, hast in thy infinite wisdom aided the people of this country in throwing off the yoke of arbitrary power, and granted unto them to become a free nation. Here, on these shores of liberty, thy suffering people have found an asylum and a refuge; here they can serve Thee, without fear, in a manner most pleasing to Thee. O Lord, may thy watchful eye rest graciously on this beloved country; may thy protecting hand guard its Constitution, that liberty may ever prevail over oppression, enlightenment over bigotry and fanaticism, and liberty of conscience over arbitrary power. Bless, O Lord, the President of our beloved republic, and all those patriotic members of Congress who have the welfare of the country truly at heart; may wisdom prevail in their councils, and mayest Thou guide them in the true path which may ever lead to our country's prosperity and welfare. Bless, O Lord, our fields and orchards with fertility and abundance. Remove famine and all evil diseases from this happy clime,-let internal peace prevail undisturbed, and grant us, we beseech Thee, thy divine grace. Bless, O Merciful Father, this our beloved State with thy gracious protection;-bless the produce of our soil and the labours of our hands;-bless the governor, senate, and representatives with wisdom, that our State may prosper by their administration. Shower thy heavenly blessing upon our fellow-citizens, and our beloved city;-may it flourish and increase. Remove poverty from our midst, and protect it with thy grace, for Thou art gracious and full of compassion, Thou art the source of all happiness and blessing, and in Thee we trust.-Amen.

Address

Brethren-With feelings of deep emotion do I address you this day, for the first time, in this sanctuary which we have erected in the name of the Most High, and which we now consecrate to to Him and His holy worship. O my friends, if we reflect for a moment on the wonderful protection which the Lord has extended to our ancestors and ourselves, from the liberation from Egypt even unto this day, the innumerable benefits conferred on us as a nation, as well as individual members of the family of Abraham, and our hearts overflow with deep and fervent gratitude;-if we look around us with minds filled with that exalted admiration, which the wonderful works of creation inspire, and turn in reverence and filial love to the supreme and invisible Author of the whole: how poor and inefficient, my friends, are words to give expression to our feelings! It is thus we feel this day, assembled here with our wives and children,-youth, manhood, and old age, clad in festive garments, prepared to worship the Lord. It is indeed a pleasing and most interesting sight, to see the family of Jacob congregated for so noble and holy a purpose! To the true Israelite it affords an indescribable gratification to see the dispersed of Jacob still clinging to their God as their only refuge and hope, who has not forsaken them entirely, although they have caused his wrath to be kindled against them. But now let me ask you in the words of our captive ancestors by the streams of Babel, ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "How can we sing the song of the Lord on strange ground?" Yes, my brethren, I call this "strange ground," because this is not the consecrated spot which was dedicated by your ancestors in days gone by, to the worship of the Most High. This is not the spot endeared to you by early recollections. It is not here where your parents before you poured forth their devotion to the glorious, invisible, and omnipotent I AM, the Creator of heaven and earth. Why, therefore, I ask, do you sing the praises of the Lord on this strange spot? This question must necessarily call forth sad recollections within you. It must lead you back to the time when the congregation of Israel in this city was united, all worshipping in the same sanctuary erected by your pious ancestors, all joining in that holy and genuine worship, inherited from them; the time when peace and harmony prevailed amongst you, and your congregation prospered. It will bring before your imagination that fatal day when your place of worship was consumed by fire, and you will recall to mind the unfortunate condition of the congregation after that period, when innovations began to creep in, and a desire for change grew so strong, that the admission of one was but the precursor of many; threatening the total destruction of all those sacred forms and rites, venerated by the congregation of Israel throughout the world, as a precious and sacred inheritance from their pious and wise ancestors. Yes, my friend, the spirit in which that reform was carried on plunged you in misery, banished you from the altars of your fathers, disunited the holiest ties, severed the bonds of affection and friendship, and from the hand where the olive branch should have come forth with gladness, a destructive firebrand was hurled amongst you; from the lips which should have proclaimed the pious words of the royal bard,■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," words of strife and discord came forth, which brought disunion among you. Ah, my friends, if you reflect on all the wrongs and injuries which you have suffered, from the time this unhappy contest began up to this day, and the manner in which the holy religion of your fathers has been handled-a religion most ancient and divine, the superstructure of which has stood the shock of ages and the ravages of time,-if you reflect farther that you have succeeded in opposing that arrogant, baneful, and preposterous attempt of reforming a creed so purely divine as ours,-you should feel exceedingly happy, this triumphant day, that the Lord has opened your eyes, and assisted you in His benign goodness to be strong,

and to resist firmly all the temptations which have beset you.

Let me, however, impress on your minds in this solemn hour, that feeling of true humility, charity, and benevolence, which becomes every true descendant of Jacob; that although you were sufferers in the struggle, by being driven from the inheritance of your fathers, you should harbour no ill feeling, hatred, or enmity against those who deprived you of your rights. Remember, my friends, that they are nevertheless your brethren, members of the same family, and believers in the same God; and, although they differ with you in opinion concerning matters of religion, it is for God to judge, not for man. You should pray to the Lord of Mercy to fill their hearts with repentance; and you, bury the past from this day, for ever. My brethren, the question is fully and satisfactorily answered. You have preferred to relinquish your rights, and to sing the songs of the Lord on strange ground, rather than worship God in a manner not congenial with the feelings of a true Israelite. You have preferred this plain edifice to a magnificent temple, rather than be dictated to by men-how to worship your God. This day, therefore, is to us a day of gladness and triumph, an era in the history of our existence as a religious denomination in this happy clime-again has orthodoxy grappled with her foe-and prevailed. It is true the struggle was hard; your prospects were sad, your means little, and expectations few. Many of your members lacked that true zeal which could have levelled those mountains before you. Lukewarmness and indifference prevailed among many. Your opponents saw it and smiled in scorn; they beheld your emergency and predicted your downfall. Yet there was one stronghold that supported you, and pleaded in your behalf before the throne of Mercy, “the justice of your cause,” although men were leagued against you, shortsighted mortals endeavoured to injure your cause; yet, the Lord, who is the protector of the oppressed, sanctioned your actions, and carried you safely through your trials. Your congregation is established on a more lasting basis, and with gladness do I welcome you to this sanctuary, and say in the words of Moses■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ “Blessed art thou in thy coming in!” ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■’ “Thus far has the Lord supported us!” Great, almighty, and glorious is the Lord, full of justice and mercy; what can frail mortals effect against his divine will? can the counsels of man be accomplished if it be the will of God to frustrate them? I say the justice of your cause has gained you the especial protection of God.

Now, my friends, the dedication of this house to the service of the Most High is indeed a most pleasing and gladsome task. The Lord has favoured us with his divine sanction by which we have been enabled to accomplish this holy work, and we have this day assembled to pour forth the incense of grateful hearts. In the dedication of this Synagogue you may see established the sublime truth:-1st. That the Lord assists those who are zealous in this cause; 2d. That the schism of your Synagogue has been for the wise purpose of arousing you from your lethargy, to guard your religion and public worship from innovations, and of bringing back to the fold those who were indifferent or astray. This, my friends, we have all experienced,-and this conviction should encourage us to hold firmly and adhere religiously to the divine precepts, which have been given to our ancestors on Horeb, as an inheritance of the house of Jacob. This conviction should make us, as true Israelites, cling to our God,-united among ourselves as members of one family, destined to accomplish some glorious end, devised by God for the happiness of all mankind. It should finally impress on us solemnly the promise made to our fathers that the Lord will not forsake his chosen people, but gather them from the four corners of the globe, and re-establish them in the Holy Land, when all the nations of the earth shall acknowledge that the Lord is one and

his name One. My brethren! the obstacles are surmounted, the taunts and scorn of your opponents silenced, the cavils of the discontented amongst you hushed. You have, with the help of God, accomplished your holy undertaking. I need not tell you, my friends, the design of this building; you all know it is a Synagogue, a substitute for that sanctuary which the Lord commanded Moses to build in the wilderness, and Solomon to erect in Jerusalem, in order that Israel might worship the Lord in a manner most acceptable to Him.

It is in lieu of that temple which was destroyed through our ancestors' sinfulness, when the curse of the Lord rested heavily upon his chosen, but disobedient people. From that time of affliction and wo in Israel up to the present moment, the worship of the Most High, as commanded in Holy Writ, has ceased, our priests and Levites have lost their dignity, our burnt, peace, and daily offerings are no more; our pilgrimages to Jerusalem on Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles have been discontinued. The question is now, my brethren, How should Israel, under such circumstances, worship the Lord most acceptable to Him? This question has caused in modern times great excitement among the descendants of Jacob. As for ourselves, we are firm in our adherence to what we have inherited from our ancestors; and we will endeavour to answer it, based upon the following passage, Deuteronomy 5:13 : ■■ ■' ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; Him thou shalt serve, and in his name thou shalt swear." 1st. In our thoughts. 2d. In our actions. We will first take a general view of the subject, and then apply it particularly to our own case.

After the Lord had, in six days, created the heaven and earth and all their host, He lastly completed his stupendous work by creating man, the masterpiece of creation, endowed with a divine soul, so as to enable him to enjoy the inestimable gifts and beauties of nature, to acknowledge the glory, greatness, and majesty of his Maker, and appreciate his goodness and mercy. This world, therefore, was not created for its mere existence' sake, but for that glorious purpose of having in it beings, able to comprehend the sublime design of creation, and to adore Him who spoke and the world stood firm. Man, the noblest creature of God, was destined to accomplish that great end. From Adam the first man, to Abraham, the faithful patriarch, who first knew the Lord, and promulgated his holy name on earth, the world was wrapped in total darkness. Having no true conception of an only, invisible Creator and yet urged by that celestial part within them, the soul, that there must exist a being superior to man, able to create this immense universe, mankind worshipped the constellations of heaven, or beings of their own imagination. Through Abraham's faithful oeyng the Lord, he was promised that his descendants should be that chosen nation appointed by the Lord to accomplish the great design of creation, viz.: to establish his unity over the whole earth. The Lord, ever true to his promise, miraculously delivered our ancestors from the Egyptian bondage, after a thraldom, of 430 years, by the agency of his faithful servant Moses. This was the first event of importance that affected the fate of mankind. The tyrant's power was, for the first time, crushed before the will of God; the bondmen triumphed over their cruel taskmasters, and Israel became a free and independent nation, of which no human power can deprive them. Liberty was then established on earth, for in Israel all nations of the earth shall be blessed; the fate of Israel, and that of the rest of mankind are closely and indissolubly connected. Israel having then witnessed their miraculous deliverance, and seen their foe dead before them on the sea shore, were seized with fear and veneration for their deliverer, and inspired with faith in God and his servant Moses. This great end once gained, the Lord found it

necessary to give them a law by which they should he governed as a nation; a religion by which they should be guided individually, in faith and piety; and morals, to make them socially happy and prosperous. That giving of the law was the most important event on earth since the creation, and tended to ameliorate the degraded condition of mankind; for the law of Israel was destined to become, in part, the religion of the world, and render millions of human beings happy through its divine precepts. On Mount Sinai did the Lord give his people commandments, statutes and judgment, and elevated them to be his treasured and priestly nation. The law, containing 613 commands, principally concerns our nation; for the Lord, having created man in his own image, desired his actions to be in consonance with the celestial part within him. When Moses, therefore, admonished the nation to fear the Lord, he meant we should fear to displease the Lord by actions contrary to his divine commands; we should fear Him as a Creator and Master of our destiny, who demands our entire submission to his will; we should fear to disobey his commands, as our King, who governs us in justice, and through whose protection we enjoy life and all its blessings. But as He is omnipotent, penetrating our most secret thoughts, good actions must necessarily be accompanied by pious thoughts to render acceptable.■■ ■' ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ "Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God; what is meant by service, but the service of the heart?" our thoughts must be entirely with Him, that is, we must have faith in Him, and his holy word; we must have faith in his power, holiness, mercy, and justice; we must have faith in the fulfilment of his promise.■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ By the service of the heart is also meant prayer, that devout communing with the Lord, as children with their beloved parents, either to thank Him for goodness, or to conciliate his anger. The erection of this house being an act of piety emanating from pious thoughts, has consequently had for its design that twofold purpose: 1st, as a house of prayer, ■■■ ■■■■, wherein to purify our thoughts by a communion with God, to pray within these sacred walls in a manner inherited from our ancestors in the holy language in which the Lord revealed his holy will to his servants the prophets, and to maintain this mode of worship unimpaired; 2d, as a place where the law of God is to be espoused, ■■■ ■■■■, that we may understand it and meditate on the word of God, and walk in the path of righteousness as worthy descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As orthodox Jews and champions of the holy cause, you are expected to act up to orthodox principles on all occasions, in your daily pursuits, in your private dealings, and in your mode of living at home and abroad. If, in your intercourse with your fellow-beings, you have been just and upright; if you have not wronged them in any manner, but done unto them as you would wish to be done by; if, when the holy Sabbath approaches, you throw of the yoke of slavery of this material world, and prepare yourselves to commune with your Maker; if you have examined the internal sanctuary, the heart, and with a clear conscience you behold in every fellow-being a brother and friend: then, my brethren, bend your steps to this sanctuary, and enter this house with humility and reverence. You have no high priests nor sacrifices, it is true; but you have a pure heart and clean lips, ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■"And we will render the calves of our lips." Pray, my friends, to your God, that He may open your eyes in his law; pray that He may guide your steps in uprightness and virtue, that He may assist you in his wisdom to resist the temptations of this temporary life; pray like true descendants of Abraham, true followers of Moses, in that holy tongue in which they prayed. Here at his holy shrine thank Him for his goodness, implore his mercy. If you have fulfilled your duties towards your God; if you keep the Sabbath and festivals holy, and abstain from the food which the Lord pronounced abominable and unclean; if you have not taken his name in vain, nor worshipped

worldly gods besides Him;-if in short, my friends, your faith is founded upon those sound principles of piety and belief which have ever been the safeguard and stronghold of your orthodox ancestors in those gloomy days of persecution and slaughter, when fanaticism raged, threatening to exterminate our race, and you feel thankful to the Almighty for his gracious protection: then, my friends, this house opens its portals to welcome you; then step over this threshold in love and devotion, open your thankful hearts in prayer to Him who dwelleth in infinite regions among the cherubim, and whose footstool is the earth. Pour forth those feelings of gratitude which fill your heart; prostrate yourselves before Him. Ah! you must then feel happy, for your thoughts are with God; no misfortune can make you falter, no argument can make you doubt; joyfully do you shout forth the ■■■ ■■■■■, and you feel you are descendants of Israel, the chosen ones of God!

If you have fulfilled your duty towards God and man, and are in peace with your own conscience,-if fortune smiles on you, and the blessings of God follow your footsteps; if you are surrounded by a happy family, your wealth increases, honours shower down upon you on all sides, and you feel happy,-forget not, my friends, Him who is the Author of your happiness; but repair to this house, sing praises and hallelujahs to his holy Name, for the manifold benefits bestowed on you; humble yourselves before Him, and acknowledge that you are but dust, and honour and glory come from Him alone. Yet, my friends, if in a moment of weakness yon have forsaken your God, disregarded his commands, and violated his laws; if the chastising hand of God is upon you, and you are overtaken by misfortune; if poverty enters your dwelling, and your families are in want and destitute; if sickness brings desolation in your once happy home; if your dearest on earth, the beloved partner of your joys, is snatched from you in the prime of life and usefulness, or your children, once so lovely and bloorning, are drooping like flowers that fade and wither,-and you feel so lonely, so forsaken-the world appearing to you desolate and full of misery, and life is a burden to you:-in such hours of despair, when all human aid is naught, and in the anguish of heart you ask ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■, “Whence shall come my help?” bend your steps to this sanctuary, my poor afflicted friends; for here, you will find a refuge! Prostrate yourselves before your God in penitence; pray with an humble and contrite heart to Him who declared that He does not desire the death of the wicked, but that he return unto Him and live. Here, within these sacred walls, you will find consolation in disburdening your afflicted heart. Pray fervently, my friends, as our ancestors did, and the Lord, Israel’s God, who stood by them in time of need, will surely not forsake you in your affliction.

Yes, my brethren! this sanctuary which you have erected, and this day dedicated to the Lord and his holy worship, shall become the corner stone of your happiness, an asylum for those who are wretched, the school where you and your children shall be taught the way to heaven, the standing evidence of your struggle to preserve your holy religion and its observances unimpaired, and above all the temple in which “Peace” ■■■■ shall be the motto; peace with our God in obeying his commands, peace with our fellow-beings in doing unto them as we would wish them to do unto us, and peace among ourselves as members of one family, believers in one God, and adherers of one creed. Can you have accomplished anything nobler? Can you have been zealous in a cause holier and more acceptable to your God? No, indeed not; for the latest generation will bless your memory, and this Synagogue shall be a witness between you and them to guard carefully the religion of your fathers, the most precious gem ever inherited, to preserve it pure and to adhere rigidly to its tenets, and strenuously to oppose all that may tend to cause a schism in the family of

Jacob. In conclusion, my brethren, I hail you in the words of Moses,[redacted], “May you be blessed in your coming in, and blessed in your going out.” Blessed with health and contentment, blessed with devotion and fear of the Lord, blessed with peace and union, blessed with true piety and love of God. In short, my friends, blessed with moral courage and religious zeal to resist the temptations of the wicked, and to serve your God in truth. And now, my brethren, be courageous and strong, neither be terrified nor dismayed, for the Lord is with you whither you go. Amen!

Chapter 20

S. Divine Justice

Divine Justice. A Sermon.

O Lord our God! How exalted is thy goodness, how fearful is thy power! Thou speakest, and we are called into being, and thy right hand and thy support shield us as we gradually advance into life. And when we stand before Thee in all the strength of manhood, in the vaunted light of human intellect, it is at last thy light and thy wisdom which fill our soul with knowledge and imbue our spirit with understanding. And when in thy unerring judgment our end has come, when it seems to Thee best that our allotted task be ended: is it not then thy power which sets a limit to our being? O truly we know that we are thine, the work of thy hands; thine to dispose of as seems best to Thee, with no one to gainsay thy will, saying, "What doest Thou?" O cause us then to feel our nothingness, fill us with the full appreciation of our dependent state, in order that we may learn to subdue our hearts to thy worship, and to subject to thy will all our desires and our otherwise unholy wishes; so that we may be able to submit cheerfully to whatever Thou decreest over us; and to say even when those dear to us are all removed, "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken ; blessed be the name of the Lord." Amen!

BRETHREN!

We often hear persons boast of their religious observance, of their religious hopes and comfortable experience of an inward holiness; whereas there are others who ridicule all such sentiments and actions founded upon them, and speak and live as though there were nothing deserving of more consideration than the mode of life which they would fain make us believe to be the legitimate result of human reasoning. The pride of spiritual elevation of the first class, and the vaunting indifference of the other are equally apparent; and if the first is at times onerous through its often misplaced zeal and stoical indifference, the latter become disgusting through its disregard of the spiritual light which the Creator bestows on men through the variety of incidents and changes which constitutes human life. When therefore a man is absorbed in the idea of his own excellence, be this the result of an overweening sense of righteousness and religious confidence, or produced by a disregard of the duty which man owes to his Maker, he is equally void, although in different degrees, of that religious humility and singleness of faith which is held up to our imitation by the great luminaries of our race, such as Abraham and Moses. But the number of outwardly strict zealots, whose religion consists in externals more than in a deep-seated knowledge of their sinful nature, is not so great as of the class of the unbelievers in a direct responsibility to God for all their doings; or, in other words, there are more who do not feel religion both outwardly and inwardly, than those who are mere formalists; consequently, we are very apt to be oftener shocked by non-conformity, than by the heedless, persecuting zeal of men who lack spirituality in their religion.

It is not, however, our purpose to day to contrast the evils which spring from the absence of religion on the one side, and its misapplication on the other; but we will merely endeavour to show the applicability of a proper sense of our relation to God to the endurance of whatever may be

dispensed to us; and to exhibit the dangers which must arise, if our mind is not betimes subjected to a proper training, and a correct conception of things which it behooves us to weigh well in every stage of our existence. Let us reflect. We are the creatures of an all-wise Providence. What is Providence? It is that quality or attribute of the Deity which surveys, superintends, and provides for all the occurrences of life. Can this attribute be exercised by inadvertence? without due care and reflection? Assuredly not; or else we must impute to our God the imperfection of finite nature, since the absence of care and thought is the cause of error in man as often at least as want of knowledge. To impute want of knowledge to God would at once strike any reflecting mind as inconsistent with his purity; and for the same reason the absence of must be equally so. Now, if God knows every thing,-we know he does and must,-it follows from our definition, that he cannot avoid from the immensity of his knowledge and power, which extend and are applicable to the minutest thing, no less than the greatest, from directing his view and superintendence to every portion of what He has created, that is, to every thing which enjoys an existence. In such a superintendence there can occur no mistake in any event within the ken of the supervising Power; or, in other words, no event can take place in all the range of existence which has not received the sanction of Providence, which is the power exercising this superintending care. I do not mean to assert that this limits our liberty of choice; for the agents endowed with intellect, such as man is, have received a freedom to do as they please without control, so far as actual force is concerned; that is to say; there is no compulsion exercised to make them act counter to their will and inclination. In addition to, and in consequence of, this freedom of choice; there is responsibility, by which I mean, that each and all are responsible for any act they do from a free choice, where no insurmountable force is laid upon their freedom of choice. In so far only, then, the Providence which guards us is not accountable for every occurrence, and in so far are we not at liberty to say, that every event in which man as a free agent is the actor is of an unmixed good character and tendency, since herein man and not Providence is responsible. It is not, however, for us to determine precisely how the omniscience of God is compatible with an unlimited freedom of action; enough for our purpose that this is the doctrine of Scripture; and with this we must rest satisfied as believers in the justice and truth of the Most High. All that was meant to be exhibited in this connexion is to assert, as a legitimate deduction from scriptural authority, that all the occurrences of life emanating immediately from a Source independent of direct human agency are in their nature an unmixed benefit to the world at large, and within the scope of a just administration of the world by its Divine Author. Let us examine this by the standard we have laid down. The Creator must be beneficent, or else He would not of a free choice have given life to so many beings, and filled the world with so many means of affording enjoyment to every living creature; as says David, (Psalms 145:15-16,) "The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season; Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." He cannot be capricious, irritable, and changing in his affections; for wherever we turn our view, if we inquire into events of a bygone age or of our own time, we shall discover that an unceasing chain of acts of kindness is visible in every department of nature; and that where a destruction is presented at a first glance, it is but a step to a renewed existence in another and perhaps a more beautiful and permanent shape and form; in fact, that which in our haste we term destruction, annihilation, or loss, is not so in reality.

Now, if this can be proved to be true; it follows as a necessary consequence, that every act of Providence is of an unmixed good character. But what can be said of pain? of sorrow? of

sickness? of death? are they not evils? they certainly are so, to speak the language of man; but it does not follow that they are not requisites in the economy of a beneficent Providence. It is only necessary that we come to approach the investigation, whenever any such evil is presented in our own instance or that of those dear to us, with minds properly imbued with knowledge and confiding trust, and the consideration that, however we may look upon ourselves and our own immediate friends as of vast importance to ourselves, we and they are at last nothing more than a small integral portion of the entire immensity which forms, in its various ramifications and almost endless variety, the system of nature which our and its God has created in wisdom and mercy.

Says David (Psalms 145:9): "The Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works;" and the longer we investigate, the more readily will we yield assent to the truth of this assertion. We must not forget that our God is eternal, everlastingly the same, of unending power. If then to-day we are suffering from any thing we call evil, that does not prove that to-morrow there may not be a sudden and blissful change in our circumstances. At the beginning of night there may be weeping, and sobs, and sorrow, and the rising sun may scatter joy, and gladsome smiles, and renewed hope. Ay, the sun of our earthly life may set, as men speak, for ever; but may, does it not shine more lucent, more unclouded in a renewed state of existence? Are we cut off utterly, because our earthly life is ended? Reflect, brethren, that admitting you do not understand this, I would ask you to explain to me what is life as we find it before us? Look upon the butterfly which flits along on gay painted pinions;-has it not life? Upon the nightingale whose melody, though himself unseen, ravishes your delighted ear;-has he not life? Upon the fleet horse as he dashes along in his heedless career obeying the will of his rider? Upon the vast and huge elephant, who stands in his towering strength amidst the din of battle and the rush of contending hosts; has he not life? And then turn upon the many races of man, each distinguished by some peculiar characteristic, by some marked difference of feature; and tell me, have they not life? And then inform me, if you can, what paints the butterfly’s wings? What gives sweetness to the nightingale’s song? what fleetness to the horse? what strength, and sagacity, and courage to the elephant? what speech, variety of dialect, diversity of colour and temperament, to the different races of our own species? Perhaps to explain this mystery, you will resort to the assertion that it is the result of organization, coupled with vitality. But by saying this you only use synonymous terms with the word life, and you have not advanced a single step in your attempted explanation. And no matter how learned you are, all you can do is assert it is so; and if you are really wise, you will at once confess your ignorance of God’s ultimate purpose, and your inability to penetrate farther than the mere surface into a proper understanding of his creation. We assume, therefore, as proved, that life itself is a mystery, that the intellect which distinguishes man above the brute is too subtle a substance, (if substance it may properly be called which can not be subject to the admeasurements capable to be performed by our bodily senses,) to be correctly comprehended by any means in our power. We will proceed a step farther, and assert that there is an essential difference between animal and human life; for, despite of the great sagacity which some dumb creatures, such as the horse; dog, camel, and elephant display; despite of the forethought exhibited by others, for instance, the beaver and the busy little bee; despite of the extreme swiftness possessed by some, as the chamois and the deer, and the inaccessible heights which they resort to; despite of the ferocity exhibited by many others, like you see in the lion, the ferocious tiger, and the spotted leopard, they are all subject to the power and control of man, who is generally their inferior in some physical capacity; and nearly all, if not all, can be tamed to his use, and be even domesticated and live in companionship, though in

servitude, with him. Does not this prove the truth of the Scripture which in the history of creation asserts, that man was created to be the lord of all subordinate nature, from the insect that dances in the sunbeam, to the mighty whale that lashes into foam the waters of the vasty deep? Another thing, however, it proves likewise, that the spirit of man is essentially different from the vitality which is inherent to animals; and that though man, considered as an animal, which he undeniably is, has propensities and wants which ally him to his subordinates, there is something, whatever that something may be, which places him in a state of exaltation far, far above the greatest and wisest of them all. This something, by way of distinction, we call in Hebrew ■■■ or ■■■, soul or spirit in English. It is not so much the words we use as the idea we convey which is of any importance in our inquiry. We say, therefore, that, deny as you please the independent existence of spirit, you must admit that there is a something which elevates man above the beast, properly so called, and whether you call it spirit or not, soul or something else, it matters not; the existence of this ethereal, invisible fluid, (again to use a phrase often employed, though it does not correspond altogether with the idea, so poor is language that very often we feel more than we can express,) is proved by the very means which you employ to deny its existence; for it is felt, its activity is experienced, whether you put man as a rider on the back of the horse, whether you exhibit him as leading the bear along obedient to his every nod, or whether you place him before others of his species expressing by articulate and defined sounds the emotions which are agitating, or the fears which trouble him. Is there not enough of evidence in all these and a thousand other things, to prove beyond doubt, that, as we read in Job 32:8 : "But there is spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding?" And if you say, it is too wonderful for belief, then again we will recur to the question which we already propounded relative to the organization of animal life; and till this be clearly and incontestably elucidated, we will rest for security upon the authority of Scripture, which is, as we have proved, borne out by our own experience, that there is a SPIRIT distinct from matter. If now such an existence is possible, what hinders the Almighty to let it continue in existence after the body shall have taken the usual course of organized life, that is, ceased to exist in the shape it was wont to bear? or to express ourselves in terms more familiarly used, what prevents God to grant us a heavenly life, after our earthly career is ended? But again you say, you do not understand it; let us, therefore, resort to some more minute elucidation. What is death? The cessation of animate existence, or decay, rottenness, corruption, whether applied to animal or vegetable life. Is it any thing else? surely not. You will perhaps say it is annihilation, a destruction, total and final. But is this borne out by our every-day experience? Behold the voracious silkworm, or the destructive caterpillar. It crawls as it were into life, a minute, unsightly, shapeless thing. Watch it,-it seizes upon the green herbage which nature so bountifully provides; it grows rapidly, amazingly, to the full size which it is capable of attaining; behold, its work is done; it eats no more; it only seeks for repose, to weave its own winding-sheet. Approach it again, it lies motionless, buried, dead in its silvery sepulcher; and is its existence ended? You err; a new life soon is active in the tiny charnel-house, and from the wonderful cerement springs forth a new insect, and speeds along to a new existence, and with wondrously spangled wings, basking in the bright sunlight of summer, alighting on the open cups of flowers less glowing and beautiful in gaudy array than the erst despised and crawling worm!-Or follow the ploughman as he draws the lengthening furrows over the yielding soil; behind him steps lightly the seedman and drops into the open bosom of the earth the seed which is to yield him a rich return. The harrow passes again over the furrow, and from the human sight the rich treasure is

hid, and is surrendered confidingly into the hands of the Giver of life. And soon the seed dies, rots, decays, is no longer fit for human food, and its bright colouring is changed to a dull, colourless mass. But is the death final? has existence terminated with decay? Again come hither, and look: as far as your eye reaches a covering of the richest green o'erspreads the field, for the decaying seed has become instinct with new life, and a beneficent Providence elicits the germ from a putrescent source. Anon the wintry snows bury up the tender shoots, and again the field is hid from view for days and weeks by the gentle, downy cover which drops from the cloud-clad sky; but still the seeds die not-they yet survive this change even. And when the vernal sun bursts forth to gladden anew the frozen earth, he speedily strips the landscape of its uniform deadness and dreary aspect; and as he mounts higher in his course, so too the young and tender shoots acquire strength and fullness, and ere the summer has sped away, a blissful harvest overjoys the husbandman, who reaps the fruit of his labour from amidst corruption and decay. Is this not so? is not every growth and increase preceded by corresponding changes of form? What, then, is death, even as we find it, but a transmutation from one state to another? And who says, then, that death is final when applied to man? True, we too open the earth, and each and all of us deposits in the opened grave a seed more valued, than that which readily drops from the hands of the husbandman, with tearful eyes we stand by as more and more the beloved is hidden from view; but do we not, even as does the husbandman, entrust what we place in the earth into the hands of the Lord of life? and may we not then expect to see arising from the grave bedewed with our tears, and warmed ere long by the sun of heaven, a new life, a new and holier existence? It is wonderful thus to believe; but are the physical changes which we have described less wonderful, though they admit not of doubt or cavil? And shall a mere speechless insect rise into a newer and more beautiful life? shall the inanimate seed rise into a new existence, multiplied and varied a thousand fold? and yet shall it be unreasonable to believe that the crown of God's creation may not be likewise restored, nay in the very flesh, arising again from the corruption into which his body has been thrown? Yes, we are doubters; we fancy that our cause is not correctly judged by our everlasting Judge; nevertheless, his word is full of promise, full of the assurance of better things; and thus speaks the prophet (Isaiah 26:19-20): "They shall live, thy dead; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the inclination be overpast." We could cite many more passages from the blessed volume to prove, that it affirms in language not to be misunderstood, that death is but a phase in our existence, a connexion between life and eternity; and if a mystery, it is certainly no greater mystery than life itself, as was endeavoured to be shown.

All this proves, incontestably, that the so-called evil is a part of providential rule, and one of the changes which we must undergo in order to be able to assume that station or that state of existence for which we were created. Some of you may perhaps ask: "Why are we not at once placed into the highest state of perfection without our passing first through so many trials to reach it?" But reflect that to dive in this manner into the counsel of God would be in effect arrogating to ourselves wisdom of an equal degree as possessed by Him. As well might the infant ask, why he is not born at once a man in stature and intellect. Every thing on earth is progressive, every thing is capable of improvement by education and training; and why may we not assume that our earthly existence is also a state of progressive improvement, no less than of probation? The Lord gave us

for this reason a law of truth, which, being the emanation of his own will and wisdom, must, if obeyed, lead us aright on the path which leads to happiness. And in this spirit we read (Isaiah 42:21): "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; He magnifies the law, and makes it honourable." Yes, brethren, without diving daringly into the secret will of our Maker, we may assert that angelic perfection is no test of merit, inasmuch as perfection attained as the gift of the Creator, without the previous labour of the creature, is not deserving of reward, seeing that it was impossible to reject the least part of the blissful attainment. Whereas the presence of temptation, the existence of attainable evil, renders the avoidance of the last and the disregard of the former a matter of praiseworthy and meritorious activity. If man were immortal, then must he have been made sinless and passionless; for only in such a state would it comport with wisdom to leave him on earth; since, as it now is, the only relief mankind has, under Providence, of the injuries inflicted by the wicked is their removal by death, or incapacity by diseases, mental or bodily. Ask we then, "Why does evil exist? why do we meet with sorrow, with pain, with suffering, with death?" we shall be answered, these are the agents of the Deity to restrain the effects of sin upon mankind at large." Why do the righteous die? and suffer?" Because no man is free from sin, and because man in a mixed state of good and evil is not destined to remain so for ever; and since the spirit cannot be purified whilst it is in connexion with the body, it follows as a necessary consequence that a severance must take place whenever the Lord deems it best. Do not many pious people die young and in the midst of usefulness?" Assuredly; but again, are we the judges of our Maker, to prescribe Him rules for action? Our wise men have left us a beautiful apologue on this subject, which permit me to relate to you in this place. A wise king upon a time hired a number of labourers to work in a beautiful garden near his palace, and about midday he came himself to superintend and to look at his servants. All were at work, but he singled out one who appeared most industrious and intent on his labour. The king seeing this called him to himself, and suffered him not to return to his work for the remainder of the day. At nightfall all the labourers called for their pay, and those who had worked the whole day, were surprised when the king ordered the full amount to be paid out to him who had been at work but half the time. As natural, the others murmured at what they conceived an injustice to them: "Have we not laboured the whole day? and are we to be paid no more than one who has not earned more than half that we did?" "Silence," commanded the king; "it was my fault that he did not work as long as you did, and it was my knowledge of his superior for excellence that I took him early from his task to converse with me." You, of course, understand the application. The king is the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be his name; the garden is our earthly existence; the palace the state of felicity in the presence of our Lord; the labourers all mankind; the day of labour the life of man; the labourer called by the king from his work the righteous who diligently strives to fulfill all the duties accessible to him; nightfall is the close of life, when all mankind come before the divine tribunal to receive the reward of their labour. And when now it pleased the Lord, to remove a faithful servant betimes from the field of his usefulness, what needs he complain? will not his reward be as ample as though all his good intentions had been accomplished? and what right have the aged labourers to complain? was it not the Lord of the beautiful garden, the Master of them all, who called to himself thus early the one who had been appointed to work with them for a time? In this night must we view the loss of the righteous; God found it best to end their task; they had found grace in his sight, and their reward, therefore, must be sure, though others have done more and laboured longer.-"Why are diseases sent?" If life were to pass away without any pain to endure, how bitter would be the parting; we could not think of

quitting an existence so constantly blessed with sweets and joys. But in mercy to corruptible nature, the seeds of decay shoot up into sight before the harvest is ready for the sickle; and when the body is racked with pain, when the intellect becomes clouded: man himself looks forward to a cessation of life by the mild hand of death; mild, I say, because it closes upon him a scene of anguish, insupportable for his feeble strength.-"And why do we often suffer from penury? From obloquy? from unmerited censure?" All these are trials by which our constancy is proved, by which we ourselves can judge of ourselves, whether or not we love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and might.-Again, we have often sinned, and all such sufferings are then sent us in mercy, to awaken our attention, and to admonish us, that we are in wrath, and that we ought speedily to return and seek a renewal of divine favour. Who then will complain of the injustice of God? seeing that we are his in every sense of the word, finite while He is unending; mortal whilst He is of everlasting life? Yes, why should we doubt of his mercy when we suffer, seeing that it is in his power to save and to bless, yea, to save and to bless though our life is ended? And so we are taught by our pious teachers. (Berachoth, 9.5): "A man is bound to bless God for the evil, as well as he blesses Him for the good; for it is written, And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might; with all thy heart, subject to Him, thy bad no less than thy good propensity; with all thy soul, even if He take thy soul; and with all thy might, with whatever thou possessest of worldly things; so also art thou bound to be extremely thankful to Him for every measure He may mete out to thee." Yes, this should be our study from our earliest youth, to consider every act of the Lord as intended for our individual and social improvement, as sent in mercy to bind the creature closer and closer to his Maker.

Having premised this much, let us turn our attention to the second point of our subject, namely, the dangers arising from an improper training, which we stated to be an over-confidence in our righteousness, and disregard of spiritual light. The person who looks upon himself as better than his neighbour because of his piety, is not likely to go through life in humility and devotion. He looks upon God as his debtor, who ought to pay him liberally for the many good deeds he daily executes. If, then, any evil occurs to him, he feels himself wronged by his great Judge, he imagines, perhaps, that his case has not been properly noticed before the august tribunal. Again, he beholds those who are wicked prosperous and joyful; and straightway he asks, "What use is my piety? the wicked flourish as well as myself,-nay, they are richer, happier, more renowned than I am; there is no use, so far as I am concerned, in my righteousness. Many feel so, though but few may give vent to their complaints in words; many thus arraign the justice and mercy of Him before whom there is no perversion nor deceit. And see you not, that the next step to such complaining may be an apostasy to the way of the sinner? may not boastful, self-sufficient piety, degenerate into open rebellion? And has not this, alas, been the case with many an Israelite, who, seeing the nations prosperous and at peace; whilst his own brothers are wanderers and oppressed, burst the chains which bind him to the yoke of the Lord; because he felt not the full force of the cause of tribulation, of the purifying effects of sorrow and humbleness upon the rightly thinking mind? And suppose even that the piety of the complaining should be too deeply seated to be moved by his envy and discontent; still he will not be equal to the task of bearing becomingly the lot which the highest of all wisdom and justice may assign him; life will be rendered miserable, and his end, notwithstanding his good deeds, will not be the death of the righteous who have learned betimes, and practised what they leave learned, to regard God not alone as merciful and great, but as just and impartial in all He dispenseth.

Now turn we to the scornful unbeliever, who esteems his own will and wisdom as paramount to all, who looks not to the word of God for his guide through life. How does he regard the workings of Providence? He sees in them nothing to admire, nothing to dread. He knows, at least he cannot help knowing, that he is mortal and corruptible,-the child of disease, of sorrow. But what is that to him? To use a phrase familiar to such spirits, he says, "Whilst we live, let us live:" and he accordingly plunges to satiety into the pleasures and follies of life, as though by such means he could ward off the annihilation which he professes to expect, which he nevertheless dreads. His spirit, his soul, the better part of himself, is in the meanwhile in total darkness; he will not listen, he will not know. He is irresponsible, so he fancies; and if the thought of a Deity present itself, he denies his providence, alleging that One so exalted will not regard the deeds of one so humble as himself. But is this idea the offspring of humility or of pride? Evidently the latter; for if he were humble, and not elated at the consciousness of his dignity, wisdom, and importance, he would forego the inspiration of his own wild notions of things, and submit to be taught by the recorded will of his God. Yet speak to him of an Avenger of the covenant, and he will ridicule the weakness which would ascribe to the purest Spirit the malignity of human passion, forgetting, all the while, that it is not so much our gracious Father who punishes, as the justice which pervades every thing that demands, retribution, for light given and for grace willfully rejected. He therefore lives as though there were no eternity; he fancies there is nothing beyond material life, and nothing more to be prized than the enjoyment of material things whilst this life endures. Thus his days pass away in idle pursuits, in vanities which leave no fruit behind. And when evil befalls him, he curses the fate which he believes unavoidable, and thinks not of prayer, of grace, and divine aid. And when the sands of life run low, he glories, perhaps, in having so long braved the anger of the Most High with impunity, and that despite of his blasphemy he has lived to a high old age, in the enjoyment perhaps of many blessings, with no thunderbolt of Heaven to cut him down in his daring wickedness. He sinks into death, still denying his accountability, and now he believes that annihilation will close on the scene for ever.-But there will be an awakening, an awakening of horror and anguish: the sinner has indeed passed away, but the Avenger, the Judge is ready to mete out retribution! O now it is too late! the agonized soul shrinks abashed, overwhelmed before the Almighty’s awful throne; her sins unconfessed, her transgressions unatoned! And gladly would she now return to life to obey the precepts which were once contemned, to seek the light which was formerly shunned, to accept the grace which was but lately rejected. No lying evasions will now avail, and the hiding of the light, perhaps for ever, the denial of grace for enduring years, the rejection from favour till all the sins are expiated, will be the doom. Still even then in mercy will existence be vouchsafed, for even to the wicked their death will not be final; and though "their worm will not die; nor their fire be quenched,’ they will yet have the grace given them to endure the punishment to which they are condemned, and be a memorial of the difference between those who served the Lord and those who sought not his worship.

No, brethren, neither overweening pride of religious hope, nor its opposite, religious forgetfulness, can tranquilize the spirit: nor can that stoical indifference be approved of, which can look unmoved upon suffering, with feelings so blunted that all the shafts of God fall harmless at the sufferer’s feet. Sufferings are sent to be felt, trials are dispensed that they might improve us; we may weep, and mourn; but we are only not permitted to murmur; and he who smiles when a friend is carried to the grave, who drops not a tear as the remains of the precious dead are laid low in their narrow dwelling, is equally far from the true point of religious resignation, as he who murmurs and

complains, as though a wrong had been done to his person and the merits he has claims for upon Providence. True religion is meek and hopeful; it feels the chastisement of the Lord, yet bows with resignation; it endeavours to learn lessons of humility, and, strives to profit by the warning which is discoverable in the visitation, whilst deeply in the bosom rankles the arrow which has been sent to wound, only to be a call to amendment, and a return from the path of error which prosperity and peace may, peradventure, have opened to us. And thus says the wisest of men (Proverbs 3:11-12):

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"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

Indeed the Providence which we adore, watches over us with paternal solicitude, and not the slightest occurrence reaches us, be it good or evil, but has been dispensed from Him. We are his children, He our Father; not in anger but in love are his visitations; and even as the Father is everlasting, so is his mercy; and thus are his children always under his care, be they here in this mutable life, or in yonder existence where there is no change nor sorrow.

Considerations like these should ever be before our eyes, whenever the current of life does not run along in one undisturbed calm surface. And how seldom is this! every day almost brings with it some care, some grief to remind us of our mortality, to convince us that we are but a shadow that passeth away. Nations and communities, no less than individuals, are liable to these warnings; for death is constantly busy to snatch away those prominent for virtue and usefulness, after their task is done, and to bear them off to the silent tomb. Is it, then, proper, that such an event should occur without our attention being arrested? without the chastisement being felt? No, this were not wise; this would not be the part of children of grace, as are the people Israel, who have so long been taught to know that their Redeemer indeed liveth, and that they are his creatures, and to Him accountable. Let us, then, pause awhile on the bereavement which this congregation so lately experienced in the death of its president.* It is not my purpose now to pass a splendid eulogium upon the departed; for it becomes not a mortal when he acknowledges his nothingness, to glorify another mortal. But this much we may be permitted to say, that our late president was a sincere believer in the tenets of our faith, devotedly attached to its principles. Of late years, especially, he had given proof that he felt the solemn obligation of surrendering his interests to the calls of his religion; and every measure proposed, which promised to promote piety, met with his hearty approval and co-operation. We will not advert to his private relation in the bosom of his family circle; enough that he was there beloved, and respected abroad. When he erred, we may freely assert, that it was never from bad intentions, such was the kindliness of disposition which he evinced on all occasions.-But lately he was active among the living, anticipating a happy succession of years. Yet this anticipation, as if in mockery of human calculation, was sadly frustrated; and after a few brief days of illness he sunk calmly, imperceptibly almost, into the embrace of his Maker, surrounded in his last by many friends and dear relatives, who all felt that a valuable man had been taken away from among us. You were witnesses how numbers flocked

together to pay the last honours to his memory, and how universal a burst of sympathy was expressed for those whom he left to mourn over their bereavement. Does it need any farther proof to attest his worth?-Only one thing remains now for me to do; it is to admonish you all not to neglect the correction which you have all received in this sad admonition. Are your lives secure against the approach of death? are you prepared to meet the change that is impending? Prepare yourselves, then, betimes, whilst yet the sun is high above the horizon, for know that his setting is fast approaching. O! vow it here, here in the house of our God, to be true and faithful, faithful to the end, that you may be accepted when your spirit is required back, let the summons come when it may. Tarry not, delay not, O men of Israel! But resolve at once to show your regard for the deceased, whom you wish to honour, and your love for God's word, which you should obey, that you feel the warning that has been addressed you in its full force. Believe me, there is sin among us,-let us not deceive ourselves in regard to our righteousness; and let the evil be removed whilst the grace is yet given us to amend. By this means we shall indeed be chastened and made better; more peace and more light will dwell among us; and when in after years we call to mind the memory of the departed, let us hope that we may be able to say, that many who before were indifferent, have through his decease been awakened to reflection, and been thus made children of salvation through obedience to the law. Then, indeed, will his spirit rejoice over has been wrought, and he will rest in peace, whilst we all shall be participants of the blessings which are destined for the righteous.

* The late Lewis Allen. The above sermon was preached by request at the conclusion of the first month after Mr. A.'s decease.

O Thou, our Father and God! how great and wonderful art Thou. Low before Thee every creature bends; powerless and weak are the mightiest men.-Do Thou, O Lord, send the spirit of thy consolation unto those who mourn, and cause them to understand that it is Thou who afllictest them in mercy. Make even for us the path of life, and when our end has come, O, then, render for us easy the pangs of death, that we may yield our spirit into thy hand, resigned to, and conscious of, thy universal rule in all the world, feeling that indeed Thou art One, the sole God, whom our forefathers, thy servants, adored.-Upon the widow, the orphans, and the relatives of the deceased, we beseech Thee to shed thy grace, and make them strong in hope, teach them to lean upon Thee in truth, and to acknowledge the justice and mercy of thy decree; and cause thy light to be with them in their pilgrimage, that they may devote their heart and soul to Thee, their God and King.-And upon this congregation look down with mercy and forgiveness; and if Thou comest to purify, then let thy mercy prevail, and diminish us not in thy wrath which we have merited by our many transgressions. And O fill the minds of the rulers of this Synagogue with knowledge and the spirit of truth, that they may lead the flock entrusted to their care aright, so that many blessed fruits of piety may spring up under their guidance. But not for our own righteousness, but for the sake of thy Holy Name do Thou this, for we know that we have sinned; yet it is thy wont to forgive and to pardon. Do therefore now as Thou hast ever done, and bless thy people Israel with much might and peace; so that we of this city, and wherever we are scattered, may all live to glorify Thee and to hallow thy name in this life, and be witnesses of thy glory at the time of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Amen!

Kislev 27th, (December 10th,) 5602.

Chapter 21

S. Dr. Lilienthal's Sermon

Dr. Lilienthal’s Sermon, In The Henry Street Synagogue.

New York, Dec. 8, 1845.

Dear Sir:--Thinking that any occurrence of a religious nature in our midst is a fit subject for the pages of your magazine, take the liberty of transmitting to you the following communication. On the 29th ult., Sabbath Toledoth, a sermon in the German language was delivered by the Rev. Dr. M. Lilienthal, (whose arrival to our shores has been noticed in the last Occident,) in the Henry Street Synagogue, in pursuance of an invitation tendered to him by the authorities of that congregation. Coming from so eminent a scholar, and so experienced and tried a labourer in the vineyard of the Lord as Dr. L. is known to be, the Synagogue was crowded to its fullest capacity. After the Torah had been replaced in the ark, the Rev. Dr. ascended the desk, and opened his sermon by an appropriate prayer, in which he expressed the feelings of gratitude to the Almighty Being, by whose providence he was permitted to address, for the first time, his Jewish brethren in this country, and to expound to them the blissful doctrines of our holy faith. In the course of his introductory remarks, the Dr. observed, that, being yet a stranger in our midst, he could not select a fitter subject for his discourse than that religion which has proved a source of comfort to our nation, and filled their bosoms with hope and courage even during the darkest days of Israel’s sufferings. Religion is the cement which keeps together the scattered remnants of Israel, and unites those in harmony and love who, in every other respect, are most distant from each other. He chose his text from Malachi, "Remember ye the law of Moses," &c., and proposed the following three questions:

1. Is there any religion?

2. Which is the true religion?

3. How ought we to act end feel as the professors of that true religion?

Religion, he said, is the acknowledgment of a Supreme Being, who created and sustains every thing, who governs alike the individual affairs of man as the destinies of whole nations, and whose existence reveals itself to every heart in the still but powerful voice of conscience, and in the innate hope of a future existence. The regularity and undeviating order which pervade all nature, the unmistakable rule of a higher power than those on earth, recognisable in the rise and progress of nations in general, and the providential protection of Israel in particular, undeniably prove the existence of a God. And if every man reverts to the history of his own heart, and sees how, in adversity and affliction a hope of better days animates his soul, and sustains his being; how in the bereavement one beloved by him, he instinctively directs his eye on high, fondly hoping there, in the presence of the Almighty Father, once again to meet those who were dear to him on earth, submissively exclaiming, "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken; blessed be the name of the Lord:" he must come to the consoling conclusion that there is a supreme and all-kind Being that shapes our destinies. This truth being established, the question arises, "Which is the true religion?" After

expatiating on the absurd systems of Paganism, which in a great degree have vanished, and reviewing the incongruous and incomprehensible dogmas of the Christian religion, the Rev. Dr. showed the truthfulness of our glorious faith, teaching, as it does, in the most emphatic manner, the great principle of a pure monotheism. The Rev. Dr. here cited the most important of the thirteen articles of Maimonides in illustration of his proposition. "We believe, with a perfect faith, that the Creator, blessed be his name, is not corporeal, nor has he any corporeal qualities; he was, is, and unchangeably will be to all eternity." The words, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One!" as addressed by Moses to our ancestors in the wilderness thousands of years ago, have ever since been our firm belief, and the basis of our unfaltering faith; they have been inscribed on Israel's banner through ages, have been their comfort in prosperity, their shield in adversity, and, in defiance of cruelty and persecution, boldly confessed on the rack, and at the stake. "The Lord our God is One!" is the confession which still lives in the mouth and heart of every true Israelite, with which he rises in the morning and goes to rest at night; it is his companion through his mundane career, and with it his spirit takes its flight when spirit and matter became disconnected by death.

If such is the power of our religion, how ought we to act and feel? The reverend preacher here very impressively exhorted his audience to remain true and faithful to this blessed creed, the inheritance of Jacob; to act up to its spirit and precepts. Let not, he said, the words of our great teacher apply to us, that ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■, in prosperity Israel becomes unmindful of its duty; and that ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■, but in adversity we cling to our law. We have remained faithful through ages of oppression and destitution; let us not desert the standard of our God now, when we are at liberty to worship Him unmolestedly, according to the dictates of our conscience, and when our rights as men are recognised and respected. But, above all, let us live in peace and harmony, and let us endeavour to uphold that unity and concert of action and feeling which always characterized our nation. A people that prays in the morning ■■■ ■■■■, "Bestow peace on us," and supplicates in the evening, ■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■, "A glorious peace give to thy people, Israel, for evermore," ought to act in the sense of these words, in order to deserve that great benediction of the Lord, which concludes, "And he will give thee peace."

Thus, you have, dear sir, a meagre outline of the discourse to which, as I write from memory, it is impossible for me to do full justice. It was delivered with an eloquence and fervour that did not fail to make a deep impression on the minds of the audience, and the effects of which were reflected in many a tearful eye. I could but wish that frequent opportunity to preach would be given to Dr. L., and that his services would be permanently engaged by our community. There is, indeed, a wide field open to his talents, a field which, to a great extent, lies fallow, and requires cultivation. It was always a matter of astonishment to me, how little the necessity of religions instruction is felt by some of our seemingly most prosperous and enlightened congregations. If a Meturgeman (interpreter) was appointed in days of old, when, it may naturally be supposed, the knowledge of our institutions and language was more generally diffused than it is now, I should think that an interpreter of the word of God is much more necessary in our days, in order that the law be not only read, but that its spirit also be explained, and thus its knowledge diffused. The time has gone by when the ancient sage could say: "Let Israel alone, if they are not prophets themselves, they are at least sons of prophets." The law is our inheritance; but its knowledge must be acquired by study, and imparted by instruction.

Yours truly,

J. K. G.

S. Erroneous Doctrines

Erroneous Doctrines. A Sermon, by the Rev. Abraham Rice Spoken on the Burial-Ground at Baltimore, 29th of Ab, 5604. The divine spark, which the Almighty has breathed into the human body, which we commonly call SOUL, and also at times designate by the name of CONSCIENCE, is, being an emanation of the Divinity, like the Deity itself, inextinguishable; and we see in the daily occurrences of life full often that the most worldly man is occasionally compelled by the impulse of his own conscience to reflect on his real destiny,-and is, in the midst of his sensuality and passions, unexpectedly roused from his torpor to reflect on something which can in no manner whatever harmonize with his course of conduct. All this is the effect of conscience, or the soul, which suffers not its high derivation to be extinguished nor forgotten, and therefore makes its heavenly claims felt at the very time when man fancies that he has succeeded in removing heaven, altogether from his mental vision. This is the reason of our assembling this day upon the place where lie those who have returned to their home. Our physical body must have something physical by which it can have manifestly placed before its eyes the evanescence of man, his short time and duration in this world, and his future destiny; and for this purpose no better means can be found than to abide by the cold grave; since here the lowest, most abandoned, and the most yielding to his passions comes to the consideration: “To what end will my acts at last bring me? What will be the result of all my doings?” Here the proud must bend his pride, when he sees that the meanest worm will at length sport in his body, and that every thing human returns to the dust. Here the rich must some to the acknowledgement that his riches can benefit him little or nothing, quietly and motionless must he be lowered into the cold grave by the side of the beggar. Here the doubter and the denier of his God must confess at length that there must exist a future, an unending world; because for this short and terminable life this world, so great and beautiful, cannot have been created. Here, therefore, is the proper place where the pure truths can find the best entrance into our souls; and we have with good reason, therefore, assembled here to spend one hour to speak concerning our heavenly or religious concerns. And for this purpose do I choose two verses from this week’s portion, which we read in our Synagogue. We read in Deuteronomy 16:21-22 :

[redacted]

“Thou shalt not plant unto thyself a grove, nor any tree, near the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make unto thyself. Neither shalt thou set up unto thyself any statue, which the Lord thy God hateth.”

It must naturally strike every one, that if a man is once so lost as to worship idols, he will surely not erect them precisely near the altar of God; for so soon as a man is guilty of idolatry, and denies the unity of God, he will care little for the altar which stood in the precinct of our temple. What could then have been the idea entertained by the law we have quoted? And again the second verse, “Thou shalt not set up unto thee any statue,” which usually led to idolatry, contains almost

precisely the same prohibition as the first. But in every word of our law are hidden the deepest thoughts, and each word leads us to various truths; and this is the case likewise in the present instance, as I will endeavour to explain to you. The Almighty, before whom the future lies equally revealed with the past, knew beforehand what occurrences would happen to his people in the long period between the destruction of the temple and the times of our Messiah. He knew beforehand that men would arise out of our own midst, who would endeavour to impose false doctrines upon the people, and to draw them from the straight path of virtue, adopting in its place false, glittering, and unmeaning words, to denote their new procedure; as Isaiah says, Isaiah 49:17 : “Those who destroy, and they who pull thee down, have come forth from thyself;” and the Omniscient prepared us beforehand for this state of things, and directed us to the way we should enter upon and what course we should pursue. This time, and these occurrences, now lie clearly before our eyes. We learn from the papers that a great pulling down takes place with our brothers in Europe; that even our chief and Rabbins, under cover of the passions, are endeavouring absolutely to force false doctrines upon the people; so that the common man, who cannot think farther than what stands clearly before him, is induced to doubt whether these men will not carry their measures so far, that our holy religion will have to suffer a great change. But for the thinking Israelite all this is nothing uncommon; for him there is no fear; he knows that the religion given by God, will, like God himself, stand unchanged for ever; and that all these events have occurred before this, and that Heaven only smiles over the assumptions of the weak mortals; as David says in his second Psalm: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away from us their cords. He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh, the Lord will hold them in derision.” See, brethren, our king David, who already sleeps in his grave near three thousand years, has already predicted all this in his prophetic spirit. So also Jeremiah, when he says in his Lamentations, (Lamentations 2:14): “Thy prophets have seen for thee vain and foolish things, and they have not laid open thy iniquity to bring back thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and seductive doctrines.” As I have said, we have witnessed these events before this, and I will make this clear and intelligible to you. We had much to endure and to suffer in the days of barbarism and ignorance for the sake of our religion, so that millions were compelled to sacrifice their lives on account of our sacred faith. What did we lose through these trials? The earthly body, for the souls of those departed ascended untouched to their Father in heaven; the barbarians could only destroy the body, but the soul returned beatified to heaven. But now we are to witness a new and refined mode of persecution; that is to say, our enemies wish to destroy the soul, they wish to blind the ignorant masses by false doctrines,-they wish to take from them their heavenly wealth, and give them in its stead human laws adapted to the times and the fashion of the day. This is the aim of the innovations, and the true meaning of the agitations which we now witness, and is therefore properly a persecution of the soul. The God, however, who caused us to be told through his prophet: "“ the Lord change not, and you sons of Jacob shall not be consumed;” and “Fear not, worm of Jacob, men of Israel! I will assist thee, says the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the holy One of Israel;”-the God who caused us to be told through Moses: “And for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God;”-the same God will confound and render to naught all these devices of our opponents.

You will perhaps ask: “What induces these men all at once to disturb with so much violence our holy religion, the inheritance from our fathers?” It is therefore my duty to give you a clear answer to this question. These men see the great abyss which separates us from other nations, and draw thence the conclusion that we can form a friendly alliance with the world only by throwing off our religion, and assimilating to the nations of the earth. They wish, therefore, that we should exchange the heavenly treasure which we have received as a gift from our Father in heaven, for worldly and worthless goods; they wish, so to say, to anticipate the Deity, and to improve the political condition of our brothers at the expense of our religion, as though God, through the faith which He has given us, were the only obstacle why we are not placed on an equality with other nations; and they therefore strive to force upon the people other laws, under the seductive pretence, “We wish only to purify our religion!” Our text therefore admonishes us, “Plant thyself no idolatrous tree near the altar of the Lord;” that is, the Deity has beforehand drawn our attention to the fact, that these men will strive to impose even the worst doctrines upon you under the cloak of religion, and plant for you an idolatrous tree instead of the altar of God. It says farther: “Thou shalt not set up for thyself any monument;” do not imagine that human power is sufficient to give you a high standing like the other nations, to improve your political condition through human means only; no, so long as the Omniscient does not deem the age ripe for our elevation, so long will all human exertions be vain and fruitless labour. How can we, as honest men, undertake to make such an exchange? In order to pass the short period of this life in peace and contentment, would we be willing to sell our eternal rest, our soul? would we be willing to degrade thus the name of Israel? O no! Justly says Isaiah (Isaiah 11:7): “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteous, the people in whose heart my law is; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye terrified at their revilings.”

If even our holy religion prevents us from taking part in many worldly affairs, we should not be led by this circumstance to barter it for something of less value. Alone, as our adored God in heaven, do we stand before the face of the world unshaken in our faith for thousands of years; and alone we thus must remain; and even if mountains tumble into heaps, or valleys be raised, we will remain, and our holy religion will endure undestroyed, notwithstanding the assaults of its enemies.

Perhaps you may ask, with some surprise: “What need we care in this country about the dangers which threaten our brothers on the other side of the ocean?” No, my dear friends, little will you have understood both the object of this movement and the course it will take, if you argue in this manner. Though the great ocean divides us from Europe, the onward flight of such ideas is more rapid than that of the eagle; and whilst we imagine that the fire rages only in a distant country, the sparks scattered from the burning are already kindling a flame in our own dwellings. This consideration it is which moves me to call your attention to the state of things which I have sketched, and how each Jew ought to be on his guard not to listen to seductive words, and how he ought to remain steadfast and unshaken in his belief, though all the goods of the world were offered to him. We have no right to alter one iota in the whole law; for it is not the work of man, that it should require amendment: it is derived from the Almighty, and, like the Almighty, it is unchangeable. The only and legitimate pride which the Jew bears in his heart is, that with us there are no sects,-that the Jew in the East is like the one who lives in the West,-that the religion in the South must be as it is in the North. This unity may be lost through a single ill-advised alteration; every ignorant man would daringly attempt to modify in the religion according to the notions of his feeble intellect; and there would arise a multitude of sects without any parallel. But no! O God, thy

name is one, and thy people Israel will remain one, and never will such wicked attempts succeed; they may be able to seduce away the feeble and vacillating, but the firm and upright will stand unshaken to everlasting.

Never will the real Israelite suffer himself to be drawn away from his religion, or swerve from a part of the same by the offer of worldly possessions. Consider, brethren, what Isaiah says (Isaiah 52:2-3): “Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit down, O Jerusalem! loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have been sold for naught, and without silver shall ye be redeemed.” Here the prophet expresses himself clearly, that we are not to receive our freedom and our worldly prosperity at the expense of religion. Whenever the time of our freedom arrives, it will proceed from the Deity direct; and our holy religion is to be with us in our contest for freedom. Therefore says the same prophet (Isaiah 52:6-7): “Therefore shall my people know my name; therefore-on that day, that I who speak it am present.” Meaning, for this reason, will my people know my name; and the people that know my name will understand how to distinguish between true and false freedom; for on the day when true freedom shall appear, I will, says God, prove myself, who have spoken the promises, as present on earth. And then how “beautiful will be upon the mountains the feet of him who bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” For then will the steps of the messenger of good tidings be wonderful and admirable; because he will speak only of peace and union among all Israel; he will announce prosperity, and proclaim salvation; and such a salvation proceeds only from the Omniscient: but not from froward and ambitious men, who endeavour to pull down the divine structure which has stood for thousands of years.

Remember now, beloved friends, what I have unfolded to you this day, and be firm on the day of danger, since through firmness only, and a true insight in these dangerous agitations, can man be safe, so as not to enter upon the ways of error. And justly and confidently will we wait for the salvation of God until the proper time comes; as says Isaiah farther: “For the Lord goeth before you, and your rearward is the God of Israel.” Amen.

Chapter 23

S. Faith and Practice

Faith And Practice, Being the Eighth* and Last Discourse on the Chapter of the Shemang. By The Rev. D. W. Marks,

Preached at the “West London Synagogue of British Jews,”

on Sabbath (7th Tebeth) Dec. 30, 5604.

[redacted]

“And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hands, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates.”

* The following sermon, which is the only [one] of the series which we have seen, has been placed in our hands by a relative of one of the leading members of the West London Synagogue, no doubt with a view to give to us, and probably to our readers, such a correct idea of the movement of which Mr. Marks is the ostensible leader. The gentlemen composing the Society have felt aggrieved at the various unfounded reports which some persons not sufficiently acquainted with them have thought proper to circulate; and though it was not mentioned that it was expected of us to publish this discourse for the purpose of contradicting these calumnies, we rather believe our so doing now will appear as the most simple manner of accomplishing this result; and we therefore let Mr. Marks speak again to our readers in his own words, which we give verbatim without any alteration from his MS. with the exception of leaving out several Hebrew quotations. Our readers will see how nearly Mr. M. has come to orthodoxy, and how much he must depend upon rabbinical exposition to enable him to study and understand the Scriptures. We trust that before long he will see how wrong he was to commence or at least to countenance a movement which must produce a division of action where in fact so like division of sentiment does exist. We need not say that in giving publicity to this sermon we do not endorse all the sentiments it contains; as our object is merely to let our readers have a proper view of the London movement of which all have heard, and to refute the idea entertained by some that in establishing a new form of worship, the persons engaged in the enterprise had done any thing to approach Christianity. It is one thing to condemn the separation and the new name which has been adopted; but quite another to say that the persons who have acted therein are no longer Jews. We moreover hope that conciliation and kindness may ultimately produce a perfect union, whereas harshness and repulsive action will only widen the breach to an incurable extent. Before closing we cannot help expressing our gratification that Mr. Marks has so unequivocally expressed his respect to our teachers, and his determination to follow their guidance; his reservation amounts to but little-we speak of his principle-and as such we recommend it to the serious consideration of some who have, without any knowledge of the subject, rejected rabbinical authority altogether, and they, we trust, will see how dangerous it is to reject without having something much better to put in practice.-Ed. Oc. The same remarks which I addressed to you, my friends, on the last Sabbath, in reference to the commandment [redacted]

[redacted] equally apply to the two verses now under consideration. The legislator exhorts us to take to heart all the words of the Law, to bind them for a sign upon our hands, to place them as frontlets between our eyes, and to inscribe them upon the door-posts of our houses. The words of our text cannot with propriety be restricted to one or two chapters of the Bible; but must be considered in reference to the Divine Pentateuch in its totality. And because these words admit of a general application, many persons have been led to consider them apart from their strict literality, and to assign to them the same exegesis which they bear in the 17th chapter of Jeremiah. “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the tablet of their heart.” Or in the 3d chapter of the Book of Proverbs: “Let not truth and mercy forsake thee; but bind them about thy neck, and write them upon the tablets of thy heart;” and indeed various other passages may be found in the Bible, where “to write,” “to bind” and “to engrave,” are not used in a literal, but in a figurative sense. On the other hand, our rabbinical writers and profound commentators, whilst admitting the general application of the words of our text, are of opinion that they also refer to the rites of Tephillin and Mezoozoth, which observances (say they) the legislator had in view, when he addressed his flock. They regard the words of Solomon and of Jeremiah (just quoted) in a figurative sense; but they draw a distinction between the phraseology used by the poet, and that employed by the legislator; they hold that whilst the former indulges in metaphors, the latter avoids every kind of figure, and that in laying down laws he is clear and intelligible. They consider this opinion to be likewise strengthened by a passage in the 13th chapter of the Book of Exodus: “And it shall be unto thee for a sign upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thy eyes, in order that the law of the Lord may be in thy mouth,” which they explain (and the explanation is by no means a forced one) “that by the agency of certain outward ceremonies, you may be led to consider, and to perform the law of God.”

Influenced by these considerations, and further by the historical fact, that the rites of Tephillin and Mezoozoth date as far back as the second temple, our post-biblical teachers have enjoined upon us these ceremonies, not that the mere observances will of themselves afford us any spiritual advantage, but that by their agency we may be reminded of, and be led to perform, all the precepts of Moses. When you are about to use your Tephillin (say our pious sages) reflect well that they contain the leading truths of your faith-1st, the existence and the unity of God;* 2dly, the promulgation of the Divine law for the government of the world;† 3dly, an exhortation to devote to God whatever is most dear to you‡ and, 4thly, a command to train your children to follow God and the Mosaic faith;§ and let these reflections induce you to comport yourselves agreeably to the Divine will. When also you regard the Mezoozoth on the door-posts of your houses, let it remind you that the safety of your dwellings depends not upon human inventions, but upon the gracious will of the Eternal. Let it remind you that all the contrivances of man may fail, that a storm may lay your house in ruins, that lightning may burn it, or the flood overwhelm it, and by means of these outward helps or ceremonies, you will be led to think frequently of your Maker, and to regard Him with gratitude and veneration.

*Deuteronomy 6:4 et seq.

†Ib., chap. 11.

‡Exod. chap. 13.

§Ibid.

In this spirit, my friends, do we receive these injunctions, and in this spirit only, do we adopt them. We consider them entirely apart from mystical and cabalistic notions. We attach no importance to them as mere ceremonials; we do not believe that they possess any charms, or that they can of themselves confer upon us any spiritual benefit. Nay more, we do not vouch that tradition assigns to them their correct signification, or transmits to us their proper forms; yet do we join with the rest of our Jewish brethren in adopting these ceremonies, regarding them as means only to a great end, that end being, to keep our minds constantly directed to God and to his law. And this leads us to speak of ceremonials in general, which have all the same tendency, whether commanded by God, or ordained by man; although it well behooves us to draw a wide line of distinction between the binding force of the former, and (comparatively speaking) the less binding force of the latter. During the time we have been engaged in investigating the important chapter of the Shemang, we have had frequent occasions to remark upon the great tenets of Mosaism, which unfold to us a pure and spiritual system of religion, in every way suited to the nature of man, destined to be upon earth for a few years, and then to pass to life everlasting. From these sublime doctrines we are taught, that the purest religion consists in a holy life, that the love of God and of our neighbours is the firmest prop of righteousness; and that to attain to high and pure principles of thought and action, is the noblest worship, and in truth, the only way to know God, and to bring ourselves near to Him. This is the very spirit of the religion of Moses, and in this spirit it was taught to our fathers by the successors of the legislator, the inspired prophets.

Yet such is the character of man, and so prone is he amidst the turmoil of life, to forget his God, and his own dearest interests, that our Almighty Father has been pleased to enjoin upon us what the great Maimonides most properly terms ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ “Laws of Remembrance.” At our going out and our coming in, at our rising up and our lying down, we are charged to perform certain ceremonials which will bring the Holy One to our hearts and to our thoughts. Whoever is well acquainted with human nature, must be sensible that instrumental duties, which are not repugnant to reason, and which give no countenance to superstition, are of great importance to keep alive a sense of religion in the human breast, to disseminate its principles, and to promote its practice in the world. We are all creatures of habit; and it is therefore by the constant use, and the frequent and regular repetition of religious duties, that we are enabled to acquire the habits of a devotional spirit, and the correspondent virtues of piety and benevolence. The spirit of religion appears to us more clearly through the agency of outward observances; whilst the essence itself is preserved within its enclosure.

Thus has God, in goodness and in mercy, been pleased to appoint unto us customs and ordinances calculated to impress our minds and feelings; so that through their performance we may be led to a closer practice of our duties. The primary object of these ceremonials is, to purify our hearts, and to inspire us with a love for virtue and piety; and therefore we call these ceremonials themselves religion, because they are the ties by which we are to become indissolubly bound to God. This truth, Moses himself impresses upon us in his exhortation: “Ye shall observe and perform them, for this shall constitute your wisdom and your intelligence in the eyes of the world, who, when they hear of these observances, shall exclaim, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and intelligent people;’” and in this high estimation all our ceremonies will be held, as long as we keep within the spirit of the law; and as long as we do not permit the outward rites, by which we evince our duty to God, to supersede that duty itself.

But, my friends, as every institution is liable to abuse, and as there is nothing in nature which is not in danger of perversion or of excess, it must not surprise us that mankind should at various times have fallen into the error of attaching more importance to the form than to the essence, and that we of the house of Israel should in this particular instance have erred in common with other mortals. Yet, my hearers, never should we have confounded outward rites with inward religion, which are as wide apart as one pole from the other, if we had been duly mindful of the teachings of Moses, as they have appeared to us, in the development of the chapter of the Shemang. We needed no new revelation as it is pretended, to inform us that God desires inward piety more than outward observances, for of this doctrine Moses and the prophets have furnished us abundant evidence. The legislator represents circumcision itself, the most important and distinguishing rite of our religion-a rite which God commands us to keep for ever at the penalty of ■■■ excision, as of no avail, unless we circumcise the heart as well as the flesh.* ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ "And ye shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart."

* See Dean Greaves on the Pentateuch. The ordination of the Passover, which is commanded unto us as a perpetual observance, at a fixed time of the year, by the same high sanction, and the violation of which is threatened with the same awful punishment, is nevertheless permitted by the Scriptures to be postponed, under peculiar circumstances, from Nissan to the following month. Again, does the Pentateuch inform us, that owing to certain sanitary considerations, the covenant of Abraham was in abeyance during the whole of the forty years' pilgrimage in the desert, and was not resumed until Israel had come to the banks of the Jordan.

I have here selected two of the most important Jewish ceremonies which no God-fearing Israelite can fail to observe, and that too, most strictly and minutely, in order to convince you, that great as these observances are, and ever must be, to Israel, they are not, however, regarded in so stern a manner by the Scriptures as the principles of truth, mercy, and justice; or as the doctrines of the unity of God, and the immortality of the soul, which cannot for a single hour be in abeyance, but must be in operation for ever and ever. Hence we infer that the great moral principles of the Bible are fixed and certain, and that God will never change them; but that ceremonials, however important, are changeable, at the will of God (and of God only), or by the fact of our being placed in such circumstances as to render our performance of them impossible.

Other ceremonies there are, however, neither few nor unimportant, enjoined upon us by our pious ancestors; but which of course are not addressed to us by the same high authority as those of the Bible, and are not therefore so fixed and inviolable in their character. Yet are they entitled to our respect and veneration, recommended as they are by good and great men-the channels of tradition, and the faithful guardians of the Bible-men who patiently endured every torment that tyranny could inflict, and not unfrequently yielded their bodies to the flames, rather than renounce those sublime doctrines of which they considered themselves the guardians.

Many centuries have rolled by since the days of the men of the Talmud; and though subsequent ages may have produced Israelites as pure and as wise: still has no body of men ever been found amongst us so truly devoted to Judaism, and so ready to sacrifice to its principles every worldly advantage. It is meet therefore that the opinions of such men should claim the regard of every Israelite; but it must not be forgotten that they were but men, and being mortal, cannot be expected to have been invariably free from mental error. To place therefore the ordinances of

men, how pious and wise soever they be, upon a level with the laws of God, is to throw discredit upon the perfect wisdom and integrity of the latter. Moreover, these worthy men have never themselves claimed so high a distinction for their enactments; nor did they ever contemplate, that the large majority of the observances which they enacted, in a troublous age, for the safety of Judaism, would outlive the times for the exigencies of which they had been introduced. They knew well the history and the constitution of the Jewish Synagogue, and could never have wished to deprive her of that privilege which she has exercised at all times, that of modifying outward forms derived from human authority which are contrary to the feelings, or at variance with the circumstances, of the time being.

There are three great ceremonials which have never varied, and which no human power can change, the Sabbath and Festivals, the covenant of Abraham, and the distinction of meats; these have ever been considered a part and parcel of our faith. But nothing has been subject to so many variations as the outward observances that relate to public devotion. That which in the days of Moses was considered as the external form of worship, found a great contrast in the days of David and of Solomon. It differed again in the time of the second Temple, when many outward ceremonials used in the first Temple were discontinued. Again did it vary in the days of the “men of the Great Synagogue,” when formularies were first introduced, when independently of the Temple, numerous Synagogues sprung up, and in addition to the sacrifices, liturgies were read. That it again differed after the compilation of the Mishna, must be evident to every one acquainted will the Prayer Book in common use. Again have they varied in modern times; not because men have ceased to respect the opinions of the ancient teachers in Israel, but because the social position of Israel has called for a modification of formularies and of observances which were peculiar to the earlier ages.* * See Dr. Manheimer’s Sermons, vol. 1, pp. 67, 68.

We hazard not much, in saying, that these forms will vary again and again; indeed, mankind will be forced to harmonize then with their social state. The Bible itself contemplates this necessity; for although it enjoins in the strongest manner upon Israel the necessity of public worship, it is quite silent as to the precise mode in which it shall be carried out, or as to the particular liturgy that shall be used; but it leaves these forms to depend altogether upon the social condition of our people. But notwithstanding the ceremonials may be subject to, and from time to time demand, modification, still these changes are not to be made rashly, nor by the inexperienced or the unlettered; but should occupy the consideration of the acknowledged teachers of Israel. If then an authority were to be established of ecclesiastics of unquestioned piety, sound learning, and enlightened views, who would take their stand upon the principle that the laws of God are fixed, and cannot be changed, but that the laws of our ancestors are human enactments, and may, after mature reflection, be made to harmonize with our present condition, and with the existing desire for spiritual improvement, it would become the duty of every Israelite to bow to such an authority. But in the absence of this, and when we see indifferentism on the one hand, and apostacy (the effect of ignorance of the principles of Judaism) on the other hand, threatening to sap the very foundation of our faith, we are imperatively called upon to arouse ourselves to a sense of duty, and to manifest an active zeal for our holy religion. It is then our duty to avail ourselves of the right which the Synagogue confers, and which has at all times been exercised, to form ourselves into a religious communion upon the principles of the Mosaic faith, to make the doctrines of the Pentateuch our guide, to mark at the same time our veneration for our ancestors by adopting their

enactments whenever they tend to carry out the principles of the holy Torah; but not to suffer them to supersede the divine law, nor to stand in the way of true devotion and spiritual advancement.. But whilst we have the full right to introduce such improvements into our Synagogue as our present circumstances may require, (always taking care not to encroach upon the biblical ordinances nor to pass by tradition without the most careful investigation,) we must nevertheless be serious and constant in our outward forms and practices. They are most sacred as auxiliaries to religion, and must therefore possess a fixedness of character; they must not lose aught of their seriousness by being changed from day to day; but our efforts must be directed to preserve them, so that they may command respect and veneration, and so that they may become the means of leading us to the mighty truths and exalted principles of which they are the emblems and the safeguards.

I have now, my friends, endeavoured to explain to you, as fully as the time would permit, the grand principles of our faith, as well as the character and force of the ceremonials of religion, distinguishing between principles and observances, and again between the observances commanded by God, and those recommended by our pious ancestors; and in doing this, I have accomplished all that I proposed from the present series of discourses.

Let us hope, my friends, that these hours, devoted to religious instruction, have not been spent in vain, but that we have all drawn some spiritual advantage from the contemplation of the sacred section which has formed our text. God grant that the duties it enjoins may ever be present to our hearts and our minds; so shall we constantly acknowledge the one true God, self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable,-so shall we love Him, with all our hearts, with all our mind, and all our means; so shall we take to heart the precepts of his holy law, and impress them upon our children, at all times-and so shall we avail ourselves of every outward rite that may bring our minds to the eternal God, and to our important calling here upon earth. And O! may the Lord God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He cause us to walk in his ways, and attach us to his precepts; may He subdue in us every unruly passion, and every unamiable feeling. May He protect us by his merciful providence through every trial and every danger; may He guard our going out and our coming in; may his paternal goodness accompany us through our journey of life; and as we proceed towards the valley of the shadow of death, may He be with us in the hour of decaying humanity; and may He quicken our ebbing life as we press onward to eternity, proclaiming with our latest breath the stirring words of our text, ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■.

Chapter 24

S. Genesis 3:22

Studies on the Bible

No. 1

Genesis 3:22.

■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ Is according to the authorized English version, “Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil.” Mendelssohn translates it in the same manner. This passage always appeared to me very difficult and obscure. The difficulty consists in the term ■■■ ■■■■ “one of us,” which plainly implies a divisible plurality. In consulting the various commentators, I find that Rashi quotes the following remark from the Bereshith Rabbah:-“Behold he is an only one below, (or among the lower creation,) as well as I am an only one above, and in what consists his unity? In knowing good and evil, which is not the case with the brute creation.” Although this remark of Rashi may appear very simple in itself, it yet (in my humble opinion) contains the only true interpretation of the text in question. But in order to arrive at the proper meaning of the above quotation, it is necessary to notice two things; first, according to Rashi’s opinion, there is a great difference between ■■■■■ and ■■■■■ inasmuch as the first means simply one, whereas the other signifies something that is singled out or unique. See for example, Genesis 26:10 : “Will nigh one of the people,” etc. Rashi there remarks, ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ “The peculiar one of the people this is the thing.” Genesis 49:16. ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ “like one of the tribes of Israel.” Rashi there says, “All Israel shall be as one with him, and he shall judge all of them, and he prophesied this on Samson.” The term ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ may also be interpreted “like the peculiar one of the tribes, this is David who issued from Judah.” In short, wherever we meet with the word I find that Rashi invariably interprets it to mean something peculiar, singled out, or (for want of a better expression) unique. 2. Some grammarians contend that the word with a Dahgesh is the is the third person, masc. sing.; and without the Dahgesh is the first person, plural. The word in our text* has the Dahgesh; it can therefore not be the first person. Taking these two points into consideration, we may come to a satisfactory solution by rendering the text in question according to Rashi’s views, this: “Behold man has become as an only one of his own species (namely, in the material world) to know good and evil, (which is not the case with the brute creation;”) the meaning of which is, that since his eating of the tree of knowledge he acquired that distinction. I verily believe that Onkelos intended to convey the same idea in his translation. He renders it, ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■. It appears that Onkelos’s translation has caused as much difficulty as the original. Rabbi Samuel David Luzzato, in his work Oheb Gare, finds fault with some editions where the disjunctive accent (■■■ ■■■■) is placed on ■■■■■. He says “it ought to be placed on ■■■■■;” he therefore understands the Targum thus: Behold man is now an only one in this world, of himself to know good and evil.” But if I were allowed to differ with this most learned of modern critics, I would certainly read it■■■■■ ■■■■■ and translate is, “Behold man has become an only one in this world of his,” (meaning the lower creation.)

* In all our Bibles the word has always the Dahgesh; but our correspondent refers to the opinion of certain grammarians merely, who actually make this distinction. But without this his construction may be the correct one; as, at all events, the third person has always the D.-Ed. Oc.

Since writing the above, I found my opinions substantiated by two very respectable witnesses, namely, Buxtorph's edition, wherein the disjunctive accent is on ■■■■■, and the Polyglott Bible, where not only the accent is on ■■■■■, but the words ■■■■■ ■■■■■ are joined together with a hyphen; and where they give the Latin translation of Onkelos: "Ecce Ada unicus est in seculo ex se, sciens bonu et malu;" from which it will be seen that Onkelos has generally been understood as I stated. Now, Mr. Editor, what I have advanced is merely a suggestion; and if I am wrong I shall be very happy to be corrected by some of your learned correspondents. Should this article prove palatable to your readers, I shall from time to time communicate more of my reflections on the Holy Scriptures, hoping that our erudite men will rouse themselves from their lethargy, and give us all the benefit of their secret meditations.

H.G.

New York, May 9th, 5607.

Chapter 25

S. God Our Benefactor

God Our Benefactor. A Sermon, delivered on Thanksgiving Day, November 27th, 1845, Heshvan, 5606, at the Synagogue Mikve Israel, in Philadelphia.

Father of Israel, Almighty God! vouchsafe in thy holiness to accept the humble offering of thanks which thy creatures bring unto thy name, in the place devoted to thy service. Humble, indeed, is the gift, poor are they who bring it; but what are unto Thee a thousand oxen slain near the altar, rivers of oil brought unto thy sanctuary, mingled with countless masses of meat-offerings? Yes, were all the earth an altar, every inhabitant thereof a priest, to officiate: still would not thy greatness be thereby exalted, and insufficient would be the worship of man. How much more unworthy of acceptance then is our worship: we come with empty hands, with loveless lips, with unconverted hearts; and yet we feel that we are thy debtors, for the breath which we breathe, for the light that rejoices our eyes, for the food which sustains us, for the fountain that quenches our thirst. Were it that thy mercy could be prompted only by our merits, how should we then be without the goodness which every where surrounds us; but Thou waitest not for our service, Thou heapest upon us benefits, in order that we may know thy mercy, and hasten to throw ourselves altogether upon thy unending bounty. Thou drawest thy children unto Thee with the bonds of love, whilst they in their ingratitude turn a deaf ear to thy admonition. O do Thou, Father! aid us against ourselves; teach us to feel that we are only here through Thee, that in Thee only we can live; that with thy protection we are shielded against all ills; but that without thy blessing we are lost amidst prosperity, perishing in the midst of the bloom of youth. And grant that the benefits which we have received, may be deeply impressed on our minds, that the abundant harvest may tell unto us a message of thy being our Benefactor, and the absence of any public calamity impress us with the conviction that thy goodness has watched over this land, and given it security and peace. Do also enlighten us and our rulers, not to rely upon our own strength, and become thereby forgetful of the Source whence all the greatness which we enjoy has flowed. Let us be made conscious of the vanity of human striving to render prosperity permanent, and to avert the coming of the evil which has ever assailed and overthrown all enterprises and states which were not guided by thy wisdom. Let us also entreat Thee to give permanence to the free institutions which we here enjoy; watch, O watch! over the destinies of this land, that never may the sceptre of a tyrant be swayed here, whilst the people remain fit for self-government; and let thy wisdom aid in the councils of the state, that never the equitable boon of civil and religious liberty be denied to any of the inhabitants; so that this favoured land at least, may be left as a refuge for the sons of thy chosen Abraham, whither they can flee when oppression threatens them in other lands of their sojourning. We ask this, O Father! because Thou hast sworn by thy holy name never to cast off thy people; and let us know in this that we have indeed found grace in thy eyes, and that Thou wilt preserve us entire, until the day when Thou wilt do again great things before our eyes, and redeem us a second time, as when Thou didst take us away from Egypt, to be unto thee a people, to proclaim thy glory. And grant that all the mourners for Zion may be comforted by thy return to thy temple, when they shall again behold the crown placed on the head of David’s son thy anointed, the man in whose days Judah

shall be saved and Israel dwell securely. Amen.

Brethren-

We are assembled here this day, not in obedience to a usual duty of our religion, to recite the ordinary set form of prayers in the house of God amidst the congregation of the faithful; but in obedience to the recommendation of the chief magistrate of this commonwealth, who has requested all the religious denominations under his jurisdiction to meet this day in their several places of worship, to return thanks unto the Giver of all good, for the many blessings which this land enjoys, blessings derived only from His bounty. In responding to a call so ample, in a union, of gratitude to the Creator, the children of Israel cannot be wanting; they too feel that they are recipients of goodness, they too feel impelled to come and worship Him who alone is powerful to bless, and to withhold the blessing. Indeed all around us tokens of prosperity greet the eye. The fields have teemed with plenty, and health has been given to the land, and the ravages of the pestilence in its various forms have not been experienced in the past season in any portion of this extensive country. There have, it is true, been partial evils; and death as is usual, has been busy in the haunts of man, to carry away those doomed to fall before his sword; but beyond this, the common lot of all men, there has no tear been shed over the many slain in one day by the ravages of fell disease, of unusual and therefore more fearful forms. And in addition to this, peace has been preserved unto us; and the sound of the deadly artillery has not wakened us out of our slumbers, and foreign foemen have not assailed the towns of the sea border, nor overrun the fields of the west. It is well, therefore, that we pause every now and then, to survey all that we have received, and trace it to the Source whence it has sprung. For how apt is vain-glorious man to imagine, that it is his foresight which has guarded him against evil; that it is his skill in tilling the soil, which has produced plenty; that it is his prudence in diplomacy which has preserved to him the blessings of peace. But little does he thus understand his own position; little is he acquainted with his own want of knowledge and power, if he thus argues. Let him survey the world around him; he will find men as intelligent as himself fail in their enterprises; he will find himself foiled in many a darling wish, for want of the means to carry it into effect; he will discover how constantly he incurs the enmity of others, when he never thought of giving offence; he will see how he often plants, and tends carefully the gradual development of the tender shoot, and has to experience a sudden pang of disappointment, at seeing it sicken, wither, and die. And such a one as he will dare to presume that success is the necessary result of his prudence, skill and exertion? that failure was not to be expected, because his plans had been well laid? But if this applies to single individuals, where a man has all the elements in his own hands, where all the instruments are at once accessible to him: how mach more is this the case in large communities, such as this, diversified by soil and climate, by political institutions, and the character and pursuit of the inhabitants, having different national origins, and professing the most contradictory dogmas of belief and religion? How is it possible for any one to say that success can be looked for as a necessary consequence from any system of industry, or plan of management? It is readily admitted that a correct system of government, and proper combinations of the industrial resources of a country, go very far to render success probable; but beyond probability nothing can be assumed. Look at the state of the northern portion of this vast republic, where the population is yet sparse, and the climate cold and humid; and then at the centre, where immense cities stand as if raised by magic, in a comparatively brief period, teeming with a busy crowd, in the enjoyment of a

mild climate and the refinements of high civilization; and again at the extreme south, where cold is scarcely known, where products are plentifully brought forth, which are required by other sections to carry on their industrial schemes, or to supply their domestic wants; and then contrast the difference in the character of the people, of the labourers which produce the wealth in the cold north, and those who labour, but not for themselves, in the smiling south:-and then say, that it is mere human skill, a well-organized uniform plan which has produced the success which calls forth so much felicitation and boast among the people, over the happiness and prosperity of their republic. There are men elsewhere equally industrious, equally well informed as those who live here. But how fares it with them? Tidings after tidings are brought to us, that their harvest has failed, that the staff of bread has been broken to them, that all the arts of modern cultivation have failed to cause the earth to yield her products, and the tree of the field to give its fruit. Whilst here the sun shone brightly, ripening by his beneficent rays the waving grain, and the blushing fruit of the tree, there was elsewhere a cold and unpropitious season, and deluges of unseasonable rain destroyed the well-founded hopes of the husbandman, and brought confusion into the minds of the counsellors, and terror of famine into the heart of the most indifferent. Ay, it was God's blessing which has been given to us; it was his will to shower his beneficence over this land, in order to give it plenty; to shield it from the calamity which threatens other lands.

It is also his wisdom which inspired the wise founders of the government under which we live, to confer equal rights upon all the inhabitants; which taught them to look for the model of their institutions, not to the feudal ages, where a few were lords, and the many serfs, bondmen tied to the soil, when the judgment of life and death over his menials was surrendered into the hands of the wealthy landed proprietor; but to that holy Book which serves us as the guide of our life. It must not be forgotten that, however it may be disguised by those inimical to Revelation, the early settlers in this country, on fleeing hither from persecution, came strongly imbued with the spirit of the Bible. Perhaps they misunderstood some of its injunctions; for they applied to themselves erroneously the name and destiny of Israel, taught as they had been by persons unacquainted with our interpretation of the word of God; but one thing is certain, they brought with them the stern morality which is enjoined on us, and they carried in their hearts an invincible hatred to tyrannical rulers and their concomitant, an aristocracy of favoured counsellors. They found that the word of God spoke of all men as equals; and this principle became unto them the corner stone of their political superstructure. And after the follies of experimentalists in self-government had exhausted themselves in the intolerance which most enthusiasts feel for those differing from them in politics and religion; and when the light of science taught them the unreasonableness of certain fancies they had at first adopted: there was left as the fruit of their early habits and religious training, a strong love of justice, and an unconquerable opposition to any arbitrary assumption of power. And though all the early inhabitants of the country had not the same education, since even many had been taught from infancy to despise the strict notions of those they called Puritans: still did the unbending character of these and others akin to them in their views so strongly impress itself upon the habits of the whole people, that they easily amalgamated into one homogeneous nation; and what the one portion lacked perhaps in tolerance, was supplied by the amiable and kindly disposition of the other towards all God's creatures; and those who might perhaps have desired to form the new government, upon ideas borrowed from abroad, were overawed by the fierce and just rebuke of those who could imagine no liberty where all freemen had not an equal right. If even then some might doubt the biblical theory that Providence rules the affairs of men through the spirit

of the rulers: no one can gainsay that the principles of liberty here enjoyed, are directly traceable to the revelation of Moses, a revelation which has broken the chains of many nations, and will go on in its mission, prospering in its efforts, until the fear of tyrants and the cause for war shall be removed for ever from the face of the earth. The subject is one well worthy of a religious contemplation on a day set apart as one of general thanksgiving for benefits received from God. Contrast the present position of the Union and its struggle for independence, with the present condition and struggle for liberty in a people claiming a higher distinction for refinement and literature than has ever been enjoyed here. They too weened that it was theirs to strike for freedom; to overthrow the fabric of ages, the pillars of which had become rotten, and the superstructure of which had been rendered tottering and unsightly. But they were without the proper foundation for liberty. They had been trained in monkish superstition; and their nobles were tinctured with gross vices, and many of them despised all the forms which they outwardly practised, and made them not unfrequently the subject of jest and pleasantry. When therefore the oppressed masses claimed the rights and privileges of freemen, which they had so long been deprived of, and when concessions were wrung one by one from the weak hands of the rulers, the people knew not how to use their new-born freedom; they deemed it to be inherent in licentiousness only; the very worship of God was considered as homage unsuited to lovers of liberty, and every one who differed from the arbitrary standard set up by the mob leaders who had assumed the sway, like the scum which rises to the surface of the waters amidst the fury of the tempest, was deemed an enemy of the commonwealth, and suffered confiscation, banishment or death, just as his merciless judges might decree in the name of liberty. There was no element of freedom among the men of that land; they had long dealt in wild speculation on the rights of man; but they had no respect for the earliest record of rational liberty, of obedience to laws regularly enacted, of order in legislation, of a state based upon the acknowledged chieftancy of the great Creator. The consequences which therefore ensued, might easily have been foreseen; one crime brought on the other, one convulsion preceded the other; and when the men of blood had in their mad rage destroyed each other, the exhausted and wearied people sunk into the arms of a most relentless tyranny without a struggle, glorying in the glitter of conquest over foreign foes, till their own land was at length overrun by the very armies over which they had triumphed in a hundred battles. But I am not going to deliver a political lecture; our object can only be to exhibit the power of the word of God over the happiness of mankind, and to employ the reflections thus evoked to attune our hearts to ascribe due glory and praise to the great Being, through whose wisdom guided, the patriots of the revolutionary struggle succeeded in framing a plan of government, the chief excellence whereof is derived from the law of Israel, and which recognises the broad principle of universal equality in the eyes of the law of all its citizens, and maintains the right of each individual to think for himself, on matters of belief and religion, and lays no restriction upon the conduct of all residents, whether citizens or aliens, provided their acts do not interfere with the public welfare, and the protection which each individual can of right claim from the laws.

It was the good providence of a number of Jacob’s descendants to be here at the time the struggle for emancipation took place. Several, attached by habit and that love for order for which Israelites are generally distinguished, adhered in feeling to the fortunes of the mother country; but by far the greater number obeyed the call to arms which their native land or the home of their adoption addressed to them; and many of the ensanguined plains were stained with the blood of Israelites, who, few though they were in number, at that early day, yet shared to the fullest proportion, the

perils and privations of their countrymen. And when peace at length shed her benignant light again over the land, the claims of Israel were recognised by their fellow-citizens of different persuasions, and equally with others they were admitted to the rights for which they had struggled, and this with but few and limited exceptions. There was no distinction recognised in the charter of government which was adopted, after the public mind called for a united administration of the affairs relating to the whole republic, and it was stipulated that no test should be exacted from any man as the prerequisite to his admission to office, or other honourable employment. We are consequently part of the government of the land, we are not merely tolerated; we do not worship in this house by the sufferance of our more numerous neighbours; but because God has vouchsafed unto us enlargement through the wisdom with which his word had inspired the wise men, who were the fathers of the land. We need not therefore look about in dread, in fear of uttering our honest conviction from apprehension of danger from persecution; since there is no man here, since there are no combinations of classes who could legally without subverting the social compact arrogate to themselves the right to question us concerning our thoughts, words and actions, which do not conflict with the political interests and the good morals of the land. For many centuries had we been deemed enemies to the human race; occasionally tolerated, we were indeed; every now and then we were permitted to erect Synagogues to assemble in them for the worship of the Most High. But again was this privilege denied, and we were compelled to quit the country which had afforded us a temporary asylum, plundered of the fruits of industry which we had gathered amidst contumely and degradation. One country, I speak of Holland, having thrown off the iron yoke of Spanish oppression, opened itself to receive our fugitives, who fled from the legal tyranny of Spain, or the lawless violence of a chief of the half-barbarous Cossacks; but unless I err, it was merely the privilege of living unmolested, and of exercising religion freely, which was granted, not political equality. At all events no names of Jewish officers in the service of the United Provinces ever reached me; though there might nevertheless have been instances of the kind. But it is certain that here, in this country, the Jew was never persecuted; no assault was ever made on him for his religion; and here his belief was as much recognised by the organic law as the system of any other section of the community. In other words, no religion whatever was spoken of as the basis of government; and though the members of that virtuous assembly were for the greater part truly devout men, they thought it not incumbent on them to fortify their respective dogmas by constitutional safeguards. They wished to establish a civil government, based upon the soundest principles of morality, and for which speculative religious sanction was not needed, therefore not required.

We will not assert that no religious prejudices exist against us, and that many individuals, if they could, would not gladly restrict us in the rights of liberty of conscience which we enjoy; for alas! under the best government there are always to be found men who envy their neighbours what they possess in common, and though such as these claim the utmost liberty for themselves, they nevertheless see with a jealous eye others claiming the same right for themselves. All I meant to assert is, that the organic law of the country has guaranteed to us the freedom of conscience in its fullest extent; and whilst this constitution endures, which God grant may be for many generations to come, we are safe from molestation from the combined forces of the enemies of Israel and those of equal rights.

Under the protection therefore of the broad shield of political equality, have year after year new accessions been made to the ranks of the followers of Jacob's God. In places where the face of a Jew was a curiosity not many years ago, there are now silently assembling congregations who call themselves servants of the One God. On the margin of the western lakes, where but lately the savage pursued his prey, undisturbed by the presence of the white invader of his solitudes, the great Eternal is invoked in the language of the Land of Canaan, and there where the mighty Mississippi rolls on its unceasing flood into the lap of the ocean, there too they contemplate erecting a habitation for the glory of the Most High God. And they who sought these shores fleeing before unmerited persecution, in want of all things, acquire, by degrees, under the blessing of our Father, the means of placing themselves beyond want, and of extending the helping hand across the great water, to their suffering brethren in the eastern hemisphere. O this land might indeed be made the home of the Jew in his captivity; here indeed he might take deep root, and flourish like the cedars on Lebanon, until it should please the Lord to bring him back to the land which his fathers possessed. But what have we hitherto done? How have we requited the kindness which has been granted to us guilty sinners? In n a portion of the earth could Judaism so develope itself as in this; here we might erect schools, send out men to admonish the distant brethren of their duty; here we might pursue honourable employments, embark in agriculture, and devote ourselves to learning, whilst all the time all our acts should be within the permitted circles in which they are circumscribed by the word of God. But this, unfortunately, has not been our course. Many have became tired of the union with Israel, and have wedded themselves to strangers to our faith; and so glaring has this sinning become, that men who devote themselves to draw us into apostacy, have noticed it in their reports, and asserted, at the same time, that American Jews, with few honourable exceptions, are unbelievers in their own laws. It is time for us to awake from our long sleep; we have too long lain drunk from the intoxication of sudden liberty, to which, for centuries, we had been strangers. Difficulties and trials caused us to seek protection from our heavenly Father; but ease and liberty induced us to value ourselves upon our own wisdom, to trust implicitly to our own means for temporal happiness, forgetful that there is a future, a future full of bitterness if our deeds condemn us before the judgment seat of the everlasting Judge. Had all the Israelites living here exhibited a uniform religious life, been humble in their department towards new-comers, and drawn these to them by the bonds of brotherly affection, how powerful a body of believers would now be found all over this land. But the stranger, upon his arrival, saw the neglect of the Sabbath, the profanation of the holy days, the endearment bestowed upon gentile women who had been married, against our laws, to sons of Israel, the apathy with which Jewish females, who had espoused the stranger, were yet tolerated in our houses; and, if his faith was not firm, which state the defective education so many had received abroad, only too much promoted, he soon followed in the destructive path which others had trodden before, and he became lost to us; or, if left in our ranks, added no strength to our cause, and became, in turn, a stumbling-block to others. It is time that we should remove this reproach from us. Other sects employ all their energy to obtain converts from the others, and to extend what they think the benefits of their systems to all whom they can gain over. But we do not desire this. We only wish to confirm those who are Jews, and educate the younger branches, that they, too, may be faithful. Let me, then, appeal to you who are here to-day, to endeavour to correct the evil as far as this may be in your power. You are one of the oldest congregations in the country, and there are some yet among you who were present, more than sixty-four years ago, when the foundation of this house was laid. Let it be, then, your

study to endeavour to lend a helping hand to establish firmly the structure which our predecessors have raised, that it never may want worshippers who will flock hither to offer up their prayers in sincerity to the God of their fathers. This God who has so bountifully blessed you, who has granted you freedom, who has prospered the work of your hands, has a claim on your gratitude; and how can you show this but in your conduct? how better, than by making this conducive to purity in yourselves, and to cleanse others from iniquity? Ay, every Israelite should be a missionary to his fellows, and each should take due care that, in him and his associates, the name of the God of Jacob be sanctified. Much remains to be done; there need be no fear of our speedily exhausting the field of labour; we require improvement in great and small things; and, if we go on unitedly, and act with deference to each other, and all for a holy end: this will, indeed, become a country where the Jew will have his home, where he may travel through its length and its breadth, and find brothers with whom he can worship, of whose food he may partake, and with whom he has the same hopes, with whom he has one God and Father. This is the only thanks which we can bring to the Lord, to exhibit to the world that we are not unworthy of the bounty which we have received, and that, in the days of freedom, we are as closely united to the One in heaven as when chains and sorrows, with enemies all around us on earth, compelled us to raise our eyes on high, and to ask thence for that aid which the enmity of man denied us on earth.

If we thus act, we have the fullest assurance that the Lord will farther bless us abundantly from his exhaustless stores; and let, then, calamity befall others, we shall be shielded by his mercy, in the words of the inspired writer:

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"In six troubles he will deliver thee, and in the seventh no evil shall touch thee. In famine he will redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. And thou shalt know that there is peace in thy tent, and thou shalt number thy house, and shalt miss not one." Job 5:19-20; Job 5:24.

O, it is a holy thing to have the peace of God in our hearts; we then will ascribe success to the Giver of all that we have; we will look to Him for a continuance of his protection; and, if evil befalls the land, we will seek his mercy to protect us amidst the pangs of famine, amidst the deadly arrows of the pestilence, and the fury of the sword. And if we act so, and deserve all this good, how sweetly will our voice of thanksgiving mingle itself with that of all servants of God, of whatever nation, of whatever faith, who, with us, feel that "it is good to thank the Lord, and to sing praises unto the Most High." And thus will it be proven to all, that Israel is a people deserving of the ancient name of God’s children, when they remain faithful as Abraham was faithful, and uphold firmly the law which was given through Moses as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob. And may peace and good-will from all men be our portion; and may the countenance of the Lord shine unto us to enlighten our darkness, and to lead us safely on the path of life even unto his presence unto eternity. Amen.

Thursday, Heshvan 27, Nov. 27, 5606.

Truth And Peace.

There are not to be found among the virtues which adorn human nature any which so pre-eminently characterize the soul of the righteous, as the devotion to these two principles. The one will accompany him through his every-day actions, no less than in his public deeds; it will stamp whatever he says or does with the seal of as lofty purity, with a singleness of purpose which looks not to the right or the left, to see whether gain or loss is to result from word or deed; whilst the love of peace will ever urge him to forego his own will and to yield becomingly to the wishes of others, if by so doing he can increase the happiness of his fellow-beings. He discovers truth and peace in the word and works of God; and as a follower of the Merciful he aims perpetually to be in a small measure on earth to those who look up to him, what the Creator is to all creation: "Love ye truth and peace," is the admonition of the prophet, and Israelites will be best distinguished as a righteous people, when they never forget the injunction which proceeded from the Source of all wisdom and goodness.

Chapter 26

S. God Rules the World

God Rules The World A Sermon, delivered on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Kislev 9, Nov. 26, 5607.

O God, our Father, who dwellest on high, and whose eyes survey all on earth beneath, we approach thee in humble thankfulness because of the many acts of mercy and truth which Thou hast rendered unto thy servants. In vain were it for us to appeal to our own deeds as justly laying claim to thy bounty; we have done nothing to deserve thy blessings; for the majority of our doings is emptiness, and the days of our life are as nothing before Thee, for all is vanity. But Thou graciously willest to bless; and from the abundance of thy goodness then flows the rich plenty which rejoices the heart of the husbandman; comes the joy which sheds a sweet light over our days on earth springs the health which gives strength and elasticity to our limbs, and issues the wisdom which enlightened our souls. And still we are sinful before thy eyes; we regard with complacency our own conceits, and imagine that of our own understanding we are wise, that of our own feeble industry success crowns our work; and thus we hasten along in pride of heart, and we will not hearken to thy instruction, we heed not to number our days, thereby to bring our hearts to wisdom; but we love what thou hatest, and we pursue with unnatural avidity what thy word has condemned. This has been our course, as it was that of our fathers, and we have lived in thy world without feeling that we are dependent solely on thy bounty, that thy breath hath made us, that thy word can render us again as naught. Be it then thy will, O our Father! to cause wisdom to enter into our souls, so that we may see Thee in all that befalls us, that we may recognise thy overruling providence when prosperity smiles in our dwellings, and also then when the voice of sorrow is heard in our midst, in order that we may subject our souls to thy service, and endeavour to seek for the wisdom which springs so abundantly from thy word, which Thou didst reveal to our fathers.-And let us beseech Thee, Guardian of Israel, to watch over the remnant of thy people that have escaped, and protect them against the evil counsels which the aliens of thy worship may frame against them. Lo! we are powerless; we are exposed to the fury of the ungodly; but in Thee there is power to save, and to arrest the arm of the destroyer. Cause, then, tidings of salvation to be heard in our boundaries, and break speedily the yoke of the gentiles from our necks; so that we may be able to worship Thee in singleness of faith, in peace and security, on that day, when, under the reign of the man Thou wilt send, thy dominion will be established in every place, and thy name be adored as the One who alone is God, who alone is Saviour. Amen!

BRETHREN:- In the affairs of nations as in those of individuals, success is but too often promotive of pride; and those who have seen prosperity following upon their exertions, speedily imagine that they are placed in an elevated position by something inherent in themselves; it is, in their view, the strength of their hand, the plans so well laid by themselves that failure was impossible, and the wisdom which so preeminently distinguishes them, which have naturally brought about the wealth, the prosperity, the renown which they now claim as peculiarly their portion. In seeing one of crowd speaking and acting after this manner, we very correctly ascribe it to an undue and false appreciation of self which no one can share with him, since no other beyond himself can see with

his eyes or experience the same sentiments which animate the actor. But if communities vaunt of their progress, if entire nations forget that they are accountable: the folly, though equally great as in an individual, is not so easily apparent to the observer; so many are engaged in the same exhibition of pride, that but few indeed imagine that the guilt is partly their own; and hence the moralist is little heeded who admonishes his countrymen to ponder well over their acts, and not to arrogate to themselves the power of self-sufficiency which he sees good cause to deplore. When arrogance overpowers the individual, and he forgets that the One above watches all his ways, he speedily lapses into sin; because he forgets to consult the oracles of his God, to learn thence what is demanded of him as a sojourner in the world of the Creator, where all his fellow-beings are permitted to dwell and to enjoy their existence equally with himself, though they be the poorest of the poor, and he the mightiest among the mighty. Just so with nations; when they forget the struggles of their infant state, the dangers and doubts that attended their assuming rank among the families of the earth-how they themselves exclaimed against the oppression of their rulers and the injustice of arbitrary enactments; and then become themselves the oppressors of the weak, the spoilers of the defenseless: we must say, that these nations have grown proud through their success-they forget that an almighty Hand aided them in their righteous quarrel, and that their transgression now will claim its due visitation from the unerring retributive Justice, which is discoverable in the government of the world no less than in the fate of families. And when the ruling powers of states forget their dependence upon the Supreme, the individual members of the community are but too apt to follow the example set them in their private conduct; and with the increase of national pride, sinning in private circles increases also; the love of dominion in the state, produces its concomitant love of aggrandizement, in individuals; and when the rulers forget the law of neighbourly love by assailing adjoining territories or by ruling with arbitrary sway over the dissentients in their own boundaries, private men will speedily follow to exact with rigour from their debtors, or fraudulently to obtain advantage over those whom business compels to have intercourse with them. And because the bonds of morality are loosened, and because accountability is removed from the thoughts as far as possible: dissipation in is various forms will spread abroad, the law of God will be neglected, and individual and public prosperity hasten naturally downward on the path of ruin. But no individual ever rose to distinction, to wealth, or high in wisdom, unless the blessing of Heaven attended his efforts; great standing, riches and learning, are gifts bestowed on the undeserving mortal for the benefit of all who come within the sphere of his action; they are trusts deposited, returnable at the will of the Giver, for the promotion of the good of man and the glory of the Creator. Just as the sun is the centre of light, heat, and power for the vast planetary system which revolves around him within the spheres of his attraction; so is the endowed child of earth the distributor of the good confided to his stewardship, held as this is under the strictest surveillance of his Creator; as David sang: “And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved; Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.” And even thus is it when states are at peace; when their commerce flourishes; when their fields teem with plenty; when their flocks and herds increase on their hills and in their valleys; when the arts thrive; when education is extended; when there is no migration from their towns nor wailing and breaches within their villages: who was it that granted all this? was it the wisdom of their laws? was it the honesty of those in authority? was it the intelligence of the merchant-the skill of the artisan-the valour of the soldier-the bravery of the mariner? or was it the blessing of God which was showered down upon the land, even as the rain drops from

heaven, to refresh the toilsome labour of the hand of man, which otherwise would perish after all the exertion and skill then exhausted in vain? Yes, it is even so; the signs of prosperity which you discover are the evidences of Divine favour, and as such only should they be viewed, and as incentives to employ the bounties of Providence in diffusing general welfare wherever the hand of the governors can be felt for good; in making as light as possible the burdens of the poor; in holding with a strong and even hand the scales of justice; in scattering light and knowledge in the souls of those whom penury and ignorance seem to mark as their own; in breaking the bonds of the oppressed; and what is more than all, since it embraces every thing, by instilling universally the knowledge of the revealed truths of God, and in drawing the indifferent to the service of Heaven, not so much by direct and violent interference in the rights of conscience, as by the rulers carefully shaping their course in accordance with the principles of universal justice, and giving every freedom to teachers of morality to train the minds of their hearers in the way marked out by the Scriptures, the moral principles of which are now so universally acknowledged by all civilized men, however they yet differ upon the nature of the Supreme who rules the world. Herein too we can, as Israelites, contribute all in our power; for in extending the principles of mercy and truth, although they be not directly recognised as appertaining to our religion, it is evident that they are at all events remotely derived therefrom, since only from our Scriptures has mankind obtained that pure standard of excellence which is the boast of modern civilization.

It is, therefore, well in accordance with a deeply-seated religious sentiment, to appoint national days of thanksgiving for benefits received, as also days of fasting and prayer in times of distress. For by this means the God of the Bible is acknowledged in seasons of prosperity as the great benefactor of the state, and as the chief ruler to whom all eyes are directed to give them their food in due season, which his open-handed bounty so mercifully grants unto them. It tells that the people feel that they themselves cannot enforce the blessings; that their own hand is powerless; that Divine favour alone brings to perfection in what they labour. And should calamity oppress the land, and the citizens resort to prayer, the ancient practice of the patriarchs, to ask of the Lord to stay the plague-what does it show? but that they feel within themselves that they are helpless before the poured-out wrath of Heaven; that unless He avert the shafts from the head of impotent mortals they must sink into the grave or be crushed by the evil which threatens their peace. It is then that men feel that there is a Power, the highest and the holiest to direct all their steps; that there is a Helper whose throne is from everlasting, in whose hand it is to give strength and greatness to all. And well says the prophet Jeremiah 10:6-7 :

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“Forasmuch as there is none like thee, O Lord! great art thou, and great is thy name in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of the nations? for unto thee doth it appertain, forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms there is none like thee.” In many passages of the Scriptures the Being whom we adore is called emphatically “The Lord the God of Israel;” this does not however, say that he is aught else than the universal Sovereign. He revealed himself only to our father Abraham, and this one perpetuated, through his pious teaching, the truths he had learned among his own descendants and those who joined themselves to them; and as these men formed a class by themselves, as those who adored but one Deity and that the benevolent universal Father of all, He, the Lord Eternal was naturally called on by them as the Lord, their King,

the God of Israel; not to exclude others from his dominion, but to show that they acknowledged Him alone and desired to be called by his name. In truth then our God is the universal King of the nations; in prosperity and sorrow He is the One who grants blessings or vouchsafes relief; and though nations have gone astray after the conceits of their imaginations, and have formed gods out of trees of the forest, and of gold from Ophir, and of silver dug out of the mines from the bowels of the earth: the day will come when all will acknowledge and discover, “that the gods which have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from beneath these heavens,” when they will cast aside the errors they have learned from their fathers, and worship, as we do, the Lord Eternal, the King of the nations. How soothing must this reflection be to the scattered sons of Israel! Long has the world striven against their creed, and against their hopes. But every step that civilization takes, the deeper a pure morality strikes root in the hearts of men: the more are our practices followed and imitated by those who formerly loved not the Israelites and their ways. We are already enjoying in anticipation the ultimate triumph of holiness, in that the nations have learned to call upon the Almighty, the Bestower of life for his blessing in the hour of distress, and to acknowledge his goodness when they are blessed with plenty, health and peace. If this be done in sincerity; if men assemble this day in the many towns of this far extent of land, and truly feel that they are dependents upon the same One God who spoke at Sinai; if they thereby deem themselves impelled to be kind to the afflicted; to relieve the poor; to clothe the naked; to comfort the mourners; to open the bonds of the oppressed; to cultivate good will and friendship to each other; to guard sacredly the constitutional barriers against the encroachment of arbitrary power; to foster peace, not alone within their own borders but also with neighbouring nations; in short to act towards all men as they would desire these to act towards them: it will be a beautiful vindication of the divine image impressed on the human soul, it will be a powerful proof that the liberties of these States are well established, inasmuch as the great Sovereign who hates iniquity, is here feared by the millions who inhabit the fertile plains and valleys of this vast country, who urge the car of commerce over the heaving oceans and the many rivers which intersect the beautiful domain which has been assigned here by Providence to the industry and enjoyment of a hardy race of men, a domain which stretches from the Atlantic to the silent ocean on the West, and which embraces climates of almost every degree and produces nearly all the things necessary for the comforts and wants of man. But if the worship of thanksgiving be merely performed, because it appears well in the eyes of one another to profess devotion; if the hearts be turned to iniquity; if oppression and injustice are to be defended; if truth is to be neglected: then indeed are the inhabitants of the land but inviting the wrath of offended Justice; because they know their Master and still they rebel against him; for how can an offering of the lips be accepted, whilst that is national and individual sin, which His word, universally known and universally believed in, so emphatically condemns? But let us hope that, not alone for the happiness of ourselves whose lot is cast here, but for the progress of liberty over all the earth, true religiousness, as expounded by virtue and philanthropy, based upon the fear of the King of the Nations, may have struck deep roots in the hearts of the millions that live under the mild sway of the laws which render this Republic the home of the free, the refuge of the oppressed; and that the day set apart for thanksgiving and praise may not bass away, without enkindling anew a firm resolve to deserve in some slight degree, so far as sinful man can contribute by his own acts, the continued mercy of the Creator. A day of thanksgiving, if it deserve to be so called in any, nay the least, sense of the word, should be a check upon national pride, and a safeguard against national crimes which

spring from this polluted source. For what does it mean when an entire state comes to return thanks for plenty, for peace, for health, for liberty? but to acknowledge that each and all of these gifts are not the result of human labour, however we may have contributed to the same as instruments of the Supreme Ruler of the world; or else why return a pretended gratitude which we do not feel? Else why ascribe glory to God for what we feign He has given to us, when we imagine ourselves within our own hearts the architects of our fortune? Else, wherefore will we say that the Lord has caused our mountain to stand firm, when our souls swell with pride and we say within ourselves, Our hands have gotten us all this greatness? And if thus we banish national pride, the acts which flow from an assumed self-sufficiency will naturally not find favour in the national councils, and not have an abiding place in the halls of justice. But equity, and charity, and universal love will characterize the people in their intercourse with one another and in their dealings with foreign nations; and the liberties which now are the equal rights of the humblest of the inhabitants, will descend unimpaired as the heirloom of a wise and virtuous ancestry to many, yea many generations yet to come. So much as regards us Israelites as mere citizens, as equal participators in the government of a country where of right we have an undisputed claim to protection and the pursuit of happiness; for in this capacity we are bound to cherish in conceit with our fellow-citizens of every other persuasion the duties of a good citizen, and endeavour by all means in our power so to aid in the direction of public affairs, that the government may be administered to the advantage of all, and to the injury of none, so far as this is practicable through human agency. We are bound as such not to wink at wrong done by the persons selected to perform the public functions; but to upbraid them in the constitutional and peaceful manner befitting freemen, whenever they become derelict to their trust. Our religion demands this, and places us upon the same platform with our fellow-citizens to act thus faithfully in our franchise, a duty equally great as to defend our liberties when assailed by a foreign foe, with arms in our hands, in a personal conflict of man to man. Still in doing this, we have not yet discharged the peculiar obligation which our suffering religion demands at our hands. Let us beware that we be not misled in our personal safety, that it is any thing within our own power which has struck the shackles from our limbs, which ages of darkness and wo had fastened around them. Let us beware that the pride of security do not infuse the poison of infidelity into us, and we be thus induced to forget the Lord in the day of our prosperity, Him whom we invoked when mankind raged in burning wrath against us and our heavenly law. Let us beware that we imagine not that the acquisition of liberty absolves us of the least obligation which the letter and spirit of the law demands of the sons of Israel. But it will be well for us to remember that all the good which we have lately received, is an additional incentive to farther holiness; and we should reflect, that if our fathers persevered to call on their God and to follow his precepts when all was darkness around them, how much more are we bound by every motive of gratitude to exhibit a consistent course of religion now, and here, where we are as untrammelled as the proudest of the sects in the land, where there is no right or power inherent in any set of men to hinder us in our religious exercises, or to abridge our political immunity and franchise, on account of our speculative opinions on religion, or our positive acts in obedience to what we decry our duty. It need not be mentioned to you that Judaism has in this land the amplest field for its development; since the commonest understanding will perceive this at the first glance of the question. The blessing of Providence, influencing a wise legislation, has removed here from us every hindrance which could be imposed upon our religious life. Let it then be our study to improve the opportunity thus given, and to exhibit

by our conduct that we are worthy the liberty which is ours. Some men may perhaps be foolish enough to imagine, that to live as Jews will detract from their standing in the community, and hence they may transgress merely to be as like non-Israelites as possible outward appearance can do this. But independently of such an excuse being no justification for sin, it is the reverse of truth. Sincerity will always demand respect; and whatever secret dislike some fanatics may have to our religion, none will think the less of those who openly profess their God, and scrupulously obey his laws. In truth, the Israelites are always safest on the path of duty; with the world it will give them respectability, if even this could weigh the least when higher obligations are concerned; and as regards our relation with the mighty King of Nations, it will obtain for us his blessing, which excels all that heart can wish, or the most exalted imagination desire. Let it therefore be our aim to love our Father in all relations of life, in every position in which He may place us. If He sends us prosperity, let us thank “the One who is good and bestows benefits on the undeserving;” and if He sends visitation to try our constancy, let us return our humble prayer, “Blessed be the righteous Judge.” If thus strong be our faith, thus pure our devotion, we shall move onward in holiness; misfortunes will only purify us from guilt, and prosperity will add new lustre to our piety, and render us worthy children of salvation, as servants of the Great God of heaven and earth, who is one and alone, eternal and ever blessed. Amen.

Thursday, Nov. 26, Kislev 7, 5607.

Chapter 27

S. God's Covenant with Israel

God’s Covenant With Israel A Sermon Spoken At Cincinnati On Sabbath Shemoth By The Rev. J. K. Gutheim The first book of Moses, the reading of which we have concluded last Sabbath, closes the history of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the introduction not only to the history of our nation, but also to the universal history of mankind. Beginning with the creation of the world, the sacred historian traces and conspicuously brings to view the genealogy of our parents, and his inspired mind, with unerring purpose, holds up to the gaze of mankind those hallowed pages teeming with thrilling incidents, and important alike to ourselves and to all the children of man. For in Genesis we find recorded not only the origin of the world, which was called into existence by the will of the Almighty, but also the premises on which the subsequent religious and moral development of the human mind is based. The principal part, however, is devoted to the history of the patriarchs, from the period that Abraham went forth from Ur of the Chaldeans, down to the settlement of Jacob in Egypt with his whole family, consisting of seventy souls. With the second book of Moses, Exodus, which we have commenced to-day, a new era begins in the history of our race. “The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them.” Alarmed at such an unprecedented increase, the most cruel and barbarous measures were devised by the Egyptians to destroy the Hebrews, and to obliterate the name of Israel from among the number of nations. The utter subjection under which the Israelites were held by their taskmasters, the galling yoke under which they groaned bid fair to accomplish this end. But how can human devices and human efforts counteract the decrees of heaven? It is true, the descendants of Abraham were doomed to a temporary servitude in a strange land; but it is equally true that they were singled out as “the peculiar people of God,” and that their deliverance promised by the Supreme Ruler of the destinies of nations. When, therefore, the oppression became unendurable, when every vestige of the sacred traditions that were handed down to them from their fathers had well-nigh vanished, and the hope of an unclouded future departed from their bosoms; it was then that the strong hand and outstretched arm of Providence interposed on behalf of the children of Israel so cruelly persecuted. Few are but the words in which Holy Writ announces the Divine determination to rescue the Israelites; but they suggest the most exalted ideas of the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, and of the true position of our people, to every reflecting mind. Let us, therefore, select them as the text of our present discourse; we find then in Exodus 2:24-25 :

[illegible]: [illegible]

“And God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. And God saw the children of Israel, and God knew.” In elucidating this text I shall make the following three propositions:

I. The Divine covenant with Israel is, like God himself, everlasting;

II. Throughout the chequered history of our nation God has remembered this covenant and protected his people; and III. We must look up for protection and salvation to the Holy One of Israel, and put our trust in Him alone.

I.

Among all the nations that ever performed a part in the history of mankind, and have either vanished or are yet active on the stage of the world, there is none whose career is of so all-absorbing an interest as that of the people of Israel. Throughout all stages of our gradual development and increase, throughout all the vicissitudes of our existence from Abraham to the present day, the finger of Providence can be traced. We have outlived the barbarians by whom we were oppressed, we have escaped the persecution of centuries, and, in spite of the scaffold and the stake of the middle ages, and the sneers and contempt of a more recent date, we have spread out to the south and to the north, to the east and to the west, under the protecting shield of God Everlasting; and this day, as of old, we cling to the covenant of our fathers. And well may we do so. For it was not only with the patriarchs that God formed his covenant, but also with their descendants after them to all generations. Such was the assurance given to Abraham, repeated to Isaac and reiterated to Jacob, and in whatever subsequent age the relation of God to his people was touched upon, the covenant with the patriarchs was distinctly referred to. It is ■■■■ ■■■■ "a covenant for ever;" that the Lord is our God, and we are His people, in whose midst the worship of the Holy One should be preserved in its pristine purity.

If we examine the Scriptures we will not find the slightest allusion to any deviation from this established covenant. Our text informs us, "that God heard the groaning of the Israelites, and that He remembered His covenant with Abraham and Isaac and with Jacob." In Leviticus (Leviticus 26:42) where their dispersion is predicted, we read "And I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham I will remember." Again we read: "And I will remember the covenant of their ancestors whom I have brought forth from the land of Egypt, before the eyes of the nations to be their God." I could cite many more passages in corroboration of my proposition; but I think that these are sufficient to show that the covenant as originally established has never, nor ever will be abrogated or superseded by another. Scripture speaks on this subject in terms too plain to be mistaken, and our reason convinces us that whatever emanates from the Eternal, who is equally acquainted with the past, present and future, whatever is by Him designed for a perpetual institution must, without change or alteration, endure for ever. "For God is not man that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" When God first revealed himself to Moses, and appointed him his delegate to the Israelites and to Pharaoh, Moses inquired under what name he should announce Him who had invested him with his important mission. To which he received the an answer, "I am that I am;" and he said, "thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I am' hath sent me unto you." And God said moreover unto Moses, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this my memorial unto all generations." Can any thing be more explicit than these words, "I am?" One, eternal, immutable! This is my name for ever. "The God Of your fathers!" This is my memorial unto all generations.

After these emphatic divine declarations, can we for a moment harbour the fallacious idea that God should have rejected the original covenant with Israel, and substituted a new one in its stead? Can we for a moment suppose that he could so modify and alter it as the adherents of Christianity, by mistaken interpretations and flagrant misconstructions of the Bible would fain make us believe? That, after having on so many occasions revealed and proclaimed Himself as One and Indivisible, Eternal, Immutable and Incorporeal, He should at a subsequent period reveal his Holy Essence and Being as consisting of a plurality of persons in the shape of the Christian trinity? No, our very existence as a distinct people proves the absurdity of such doctrines. “I, the Lord, do not alter, and ye, sons of Jacob, will not cease,” says the prophet Malachi. And thus we cling firmly to the old and true covenant, and worship the One true God, who has created heaven and earth, and sing with the psalmist: “He remembers for ever His covenant, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations; the covenant He made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; which He confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.”

II.

Yes, my hearers, throughout the chequered history of our nation God has remembered His covenant and protected His people. In every age “He saw the children of Israel and had respect for them.” On Him alone, the Rock of Ages, we were dependent in all our heavy trials and afflictions. Almost every nation has had its Pharaoh, from almost every country and clime our cries for enlargement have ascended to heaven. Like the burning bush in the desert of Horeb that was wrapped in flames, and yet not consumed: so were we constantly surrounded and attacked by the fire of malice and hate and persecution, and yet we were not destroyed. We sustained our misfortunes with fortitude, we bore the chastisement for our transgressions with resignation,-still trusting to the mercy of our God, who had promised to be mindful of His covenant; still hoping for the consummation of His promises; still comforted by His holy word, as read from to-day’s Haphtorah, “That Hashem cause them that come of Jacob to take root: and that Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.” (Isaiah 22:6)

You all, my brethren, are I hope sufficiently acquainted with our past history to appreciate the truth of my remarks. You all have, I trust, devoted an occasional hour’s leisure “to look back to the rock whence ye are hewn,” (Isaiah 51:1;) to trace the thread of our eventful history through all the countries whither our destinies have carried us. Is it needful, then, to enumerate the injuries inflicted on us, and the dangers we have escaped? Is it needful to recapitulate the many instances when the sword of destruction was suspended, as it were, by a single hair above our heads? The persecutions of Pharaoh, of Haman, of Hadrian and a host of others; the exile from Spain and the repeated expatriations from almost every other European country in which we had sought shelter; the bloody and sweeping onset of the crusades, in which thousands of our people died the death of martyrs; the continued oppression and tyranny we had to endure, and the reproach and contumely that was attached to our name:-could we have borne all this, survived all this, if God had not remembered His covenant, endowed us with strength to support our trials, and healed the wounds that threatened our life and existence?

Amidst the peace and comfort which we enjoy in this blessed country, amidst the freedom of conscience and thought which we exercise under the protection of its liberal institutions, let us therefore not forget the restrictions under which we once laboured, or the Source whence we

derive these benefits. Deeply indeed are we indebted to the Author of our being, who has thus provided for us an asylum, who has caused in many other countries the voice of humanity to he heard, and has softened the hearts of the rulers to relent in their rigour. And although, in a large portion of the world, Israel is yet far from participating in the rights of man, but is pressed down by a despotical rule: let us hope and pray for better times, when oppression will cease, and the light of happiness and peace illumine the world. For God will surely remember His covenant and protect His people. In the words of Isaiah: “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bore them and He carried them all the days of the world.”

III.

Having thus shown that the Divine covenant with Israel is, like God himself, everlasting; that God has at all times remembered His covenant, and protected His people, I shall now proceed to my third proposition, that we must look up for protection and salvation to the Holy One of Israel, and put our trust in Him alone. In the troubles and cares that mark our pilgrimage through life, in the dependence, weakness and frailty of our nature, we require a stay and prop for support and protection. The child looks up for protection to its more experienced and loving parent; the weak in body or intellect depends on the aid of the strong and wise; the poor is at the mercy of the rich; the aged and decrepit seeks shelter under the fostering care of the vigorous and healthy. But how insufficient is the protection that weak, short-sighted man is able to bestow! Are we not all but children of a moment, to-day here, to-morrow in the grave? Are we not all in the hand of God, who governs the world, protects the weak, and soothes the afflicted? To Him alone, then, who was always our Guide and Protector, and whose bounty extends to all His creatures, let us turn with a sincere heart, and we will truly and effectually be protected. “Happy he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.” And as God is our protector, so he is also the source of our salvation. The desire for happiness is implanted in our nature. To realize it, all our faculties are strained, all our energies exerted. But how often, in our eager pursuit after happiness, surrounded as we are by temptations that lead us but farther from the goal of our desire, do we fail to reach the object which we fondly imagined would satisfy the longing of our heart! How often, when even success crowned our ill-directed efforts, we feel but too keenly that not the possession of this world’s goods, but that pious resignation and cheerful contentment are the criterion of happiness here, a godly conduct the guarantee of our salvation hereafter! From the gloom of frustrated wishes and disappointed hopes which fall to our lot in the course of our journey below, we must look to a brighter sphere, and place our trust on a surer foundation than this world affords.

Whatever, therefore, our station and condition may be, whatever the sorrows that overcloud our mind, let us never despair; but let us put our trust in Him who remembered His covenant, “who saw His children, and had respect for them.” “For God is nigh unto all who call on Him, unto all who call on Him in truth.” In Him we will find protection, in Him we will find salvation. May His blessing rest upon us, may He guide us in His mercy and in His love, now and for ever. Amen!

S. God's Judgments on Earth

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God’s Judgments on Earth A Sermon Delivered in the Synagogue “Shearith Israel” Montreal, During the Prevalence of Asiatic Cholera By the Rev. Abraham de Sola

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“For when thy judgments are on earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”-Isaiah 36:9.

Brethren:- In speaking to you respecting the teachings of Holy Writ, I have considered it my duty to direct your attention, more than once, to the subject of the Divine Providence, and to show you how infinitely merciful, just, and benevolent are its dispensations. And now, when “God’s judgments are on earth”-now, when that fatal epidemic which, some sixteen years back, carried death and desolation into almost every home, both in the old and new world;-now when that fatal scourge has returned to us, has committed the most appalling ravages in many cities and states around us, has carried off before our eyes the young and the old, the feeble, and the strong, and caused us, the survivors, to tremble under thee apprehension of its farther progress: it is surely fitting that we turn our thoughts yet again to the ways of the Most High; inquire whether He is, indeed, vindicating his offended majesty by sending in our midst the dire calamity, and seek, by our prayers, heartfelt humiliation, and proper conduct, to obtain the withdrawal of his dread, but just decree. That we are now peculiarly and imperatively called on to do so, none can doubt. For never did judgment, whether appearing in the angry passions and wars of man, or in the failing and scarcity of the earth’s productions, more clearly show us the uncertainty of this terrestrial life; never did judgment more signally assure us of the truth of the scriptural monition, that we “cannot know what a day may bring forth,” and of the beautiful imagery employed by the inspired David, when he exclaims, in Psalms 103:1-22, “The days of man are as grass; as the blossom of the field, so doth he bloom. For a breath passeth over him and he is not; nor shall his place know him more.”

Ah! my hearers, there may be some amongst you, who, unlike him who now addresses you, have not been deprived by this destructive epidemic, either during its last or its present visitation, of a dear relative or of a cherished friend; yet, there are surely but few of you who have not at some time felt the pangs of unexpected bereavement. It were needless then to remind you how sorrowful, how appalling the sight of one, who but, a few short hours since,* trod this earth in all the pride and joyousness of health and strength, now lying without motion or perception, ay, inanimate and senseless as the very death-couch, whence he shall be taken to return to the ground from which he was formed!

* Of this character was the death of the speaker’s younger brother, Raphael, who fell a victim to the malignancy of the cholera morbus during its fatal ravages in London, (A. M. 5593-1833,) after an illness of only some three or four hours. Departing this life young in years and guiltless of

transgression, his spirit is now partaking of the bliss reserved for the just, (■■■■■■■■■■■).

One, formerly the object of our admiration and love, now that the breath of the pestilence “hath passed over him, and he is not,” presenting to us an object of fear and dread. Painful and dreadful is it to behold the eye, which erst beamed on us with all the fire of intelligence and affection, now fixed, glassy and unmeaning, unable to behold our anguish; the hand which, but a few short hours since, clasped our with all the warmth of friendship and love, now cold, cold, powerless, and immovable; the lips whence issued the sounds to which we were wont to listen with delight, now closed and unresponsive to our cries and lamentations; but far more painful, far more awful than all this, is the consideration that he whose welfare and happiness were as dear to us as our own, has now departed, with but a brief warning, to appear before the throne of the dread Judge of all spirits,-has departed, when he hath had but little time or opportunity to recommend his soul to the merciful consideration of its Almighty Bestower.

O, my beloved brothers and sisters! This is an awful case for contemplation; but I put it to you, nevertheless, as one which is likely to be our own; yes, of the healthiest, and proudest, and best among us. How important and all-absorbing then the duty, how unspeakably great the inducement to withdraw our attention from those trivial mundane matters, which are but too wont exclusively to engage it, and direct our minds and hearts to the righteousness and mercy of God’s ways, and the sinfulness and corruption of our own; to inquire why our Almighty Parent is angered with his children, and how we may hope to induce Him to turn the fierceness of his wrath from us, and finally avert the destructive pestilence. I am assured, my hearers, that you will consider such an inquiry, at this juncture, both timely and welcome, therefore do I propose to show you in the present discourse:

First. That national calamities, whatever their kind or degree, are from God, being nought else but his judgments upon earth.

Secondly. That the sending of these calamities is not only quite consistent with the divine attributes and excellencies, but is rendered necessary by our own disposition and deportment; and then we will inquire,

Thirdly. What should be our conduct pending such calamities, and more especially during the prevalence of the present epidemic. And O may, God grant, in his infinite mercy, that our meditations may tend to his glory, and to our profit, both here and hereafter. Amen.

I. Were it not, my brethren, that we are well aware of the limited capacity of the human intellect, we might be justly surprised to observe in the discourse and writings of the wisest philosophers and greatest geniuses, the use of words and expressions to which the very persons who employ them can attach no definite, correct idea, but have recourse to them to give a vague notion of something equally vague in itself. As one word of this class, let us adduce the term chance. Now of all those who are accustomed to use this word, how few are they who stop to consider what it really means, or, whether it have any meaning at all. If we require any proof of the inferiority and obtuseness of man’s nature and intelligence, we might sufficiently adduce it from the one circumstance upon which we have just remarked. For we observe that, from the earliest ages of the world, man has always sought, naturally and properly enough, to refer by philosophical process all phenomena to certain causes; has generally endeavoured to establish as an indisputable maxim that, an effect

without a cause is an impossibility; and has, when unable to determine the cause of certain effects, even referred these effects to certain occult powers or causes;* and yet, we find him at the same time inculcating by his language an absurdity, at which the human mind always did, and ever will revolt. I say absurdity, and consider it unnecessary to show you at a great length, that it would be so considered in every branch of human knowledge; that the logician, for example, would show you that the idea of arriving at a conclusion in any and every argument by chance is absurd and impossible; that the chemist, again, would tell you that the idea of certain gases being generated and acting by chance is absurd and untrue; and again, that the astronomer would prove to you, that the idea of the revolution or eclipse of any of the planets or their satellites being governed or influenced by chance, would also be absurd and false. And indeed, so in all branches of science.

* Such as attraction of cohesion, elective attraction and repulsion, &c., among the ancients; and among the moderns, attraction and repulsion of magnetism, galvanism, caloric, &c.

If, then, the application of the term chance, to denote an effect without a cause, be scientifically considered an absurdity: when so applied in a religious point of view, it is atheism. For atheism, I need not remind you, my brother Israelites, does not only consist in denying the existence of the Supreme, (blessed for ever be his name,) but, it also consists in maintaining that He does not exercise any superintendence or control over the world, and the creatures it contains. It is chiefly in this latter sense, that our sage teachers apply the term ■■■■■■■■, stigmatizing as such, all who were tainted with this wretched dogma of the benighted followers of the heathen philosopher, the so-called Epicureans.

They also applied the term to those who did not entirely exclude the divine agency in human affairs, but denied it in trifling events or small matters, believing that it was inconsistent with God's majesty and excellence so to exercise it. Our pious Rabbis sought to undeceive such, by reminding them that God in his creations has not formed every object with the like capacities, sizes and perfections; that some of his creations are inferior to others, but that these inferior portions are nevertheless indispensable to the perfection of the whole, even as the smallest wheel, or spring, or tube is indispensable to the completeness of the machines of human contrivance, requiring the same attention and care from the machinist, if he would have it act at all, as the largest and most complicated part thereof. And so in the moral world. The perfection of God consists in the universality of his superintendence and providence. The most trifling events we are taught, and were we capable of unravelling the intricacies of the divine economy we would find, God permits to become necessary to the completion of his all-wise scheme of legislation; we would find that in his all-benevolent providence He permits the continuity of the chain to depend as much upon the small as upon the large links.

Now, my friends, let these considerations be sufficient to show us that such a thing as chance cannot be, and that when we make use of the word, it is merely to veil our ignorance of certain causes which we have in vain endeavoured to discover. There is another term of the class under notice, to which we must now devote a little attention, and that is nature. We are accustomed to talk very learnedly, but with very little sense, and still less piety, of "the operations of nature," "the influence of nature," "the benevolence of nature," and the like; and by thus personifying and bestowing an abstract mystical existence, we put ourselves in danger of forgetting the Operator, in

his operations, and the Creator in his creations. The employment of the term is but seldom suggestive of our heavenly Father; but we are very prone to regard all visitations, and even afflictions similar to that now amongst us, as effects of nature, quite unmindful that the operations of nature are merely the manifestations of Almighty God, the Supreme Creator and Director of all that is. My brethren, as for us, be it our constant aim to avoid falling even into the semblance of so gross and fatal an error. Let us recollect, that the so-styled laws of nature are nought else but the decrees of nature's God, the subordinate causes or means employed by the Almighty Causer of all causes; that not the least of these causes can exist, or the most trifling effect take place, independently of this appointment, and that, consequently, national calamities, (and among such we include the prevailing epidemic,) whatever their kind or degree, are from Him to whom alone adoration is due. For, as saith the prophet Jeremiah,* "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass when the Eternal commandeth it not? Do not both evil and good alike proceed out of the mouth of the Most High?" And again the prophet Amos, "Shall there be evil in a city and the Eternal hath not done it."†

* Lamentations 3:37. † Amos 3:6.

II. In attempting now to show you that the sending of national calamities is not only consistent with the Divine attributes and perfections, but is also rendered necessary by our own conduct and disposition, I do not fear, my brethren, that there is everyone now before me, who, because he or she can assign no reason for the existing calamity, will therefore maintain that none can be assigned. I am confident that there can be none so fatally in error, as to suppose that caprice enters at all into the Divine government. No, we are too well assured ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ that all the ways of the Lord are most benevolent, wise and just, and that if He does keep to himself the reasons for any one of His dispensations, it is to vindicate His supreme sovereignty before the children of men. Our text shows us, however, that the Almighty has not left us in ignorance of the general cause of our suffering, though He may have chosen to do so in respect to special ones.

"When his judgments are on earth," He tells us through the mouth of his prophet Isaiah, "the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness," implying, that such judgments are necessary to recall men from those derelictions and sins which an uninterrupted course of worldly happiness and prosperity may have induced them to commit. The reasonableness and correctness of this view of the case all must be disposed to admit. So viewed, we see displayed the benevolence, mercy, and justice of God; so viewed, we witness a faithfully drawn picture of the insensibility, ingratitude, and corruption of men. And when I remind you how wont we are to receive the daily blessings God so bountifully showers upon us, without being animated by any of those sentiments of gratitude and thankfulness which should be ours, without that gushing forth of our hearts' and souls' best affections, and praises, and adorations, to our heavenly Benefactor; when I remind you that in our prosperity, we are invariable apt to forget God, and to refer our weal rather to our own influence and power in obtaining it, than to His bestowal: when I remind you of these things, you will admit the truth of the view just taken. I observe, again, that the reasons assigned for God's judgments, as conveyed by the words of our text, eminently display the benevolence, mercy, and justice of God; and to show you this in a clearer light, I would ask you to consider for a brief space the great and various events that have lately occurred around you.

Cast a retrospective glance on the state of Europe in particular during the past eighteen months. Behold how revolution has followed revolution, rapid and irresistibly; see how angered and incensed, and frantic multitudes have arisen, overthrown the established state of things, and created a new one. See how this nation has concluded to banish kings and monarchy for ever from amongst them; how quickly that one has followed their example, notwithstanding that he whom they drove from amongst them, was the representative of a class who had been religiously revered by many nations, in many parts of the world, and for many centuries. And to the thinking mind what is the lesson taught by these mighty and sudden changes? It is, that there exists an under current, so to speak, directing the course of human affairs, which is not perceivable to short-sighted men, but which God permits to exist, so that, at the time appointed by Him, events and phenomena shall obtain which by their unexpectedness and general nature, shall make us fully sensible of our own weakness and incompetency to foresee or control them, recall with irresistible force our attention to the Almighty Disposer of all events, cause us to be justly apprehensive at his manifestations and to induce in our minds humble, penitent, and pious sentiments.

Now, let us superadd to this the fact, that there exists an almost universal inclination in our hearts to forget and neglect the service of the Supreme in the sunshine of our prosperity, which inclination, however, as I shall, God willing, endeavour to show you on some other occasion, is not, more than any other moral evil, from the Eternal;* farther let us recollect, that while things pursue their ordinary course, we but seldom permit our thoughts to rise from them to the Power which directs them; that adversity is all-useful, all-valuable, to counteract the pernicious tendencies of prosperity; and then we cannot say that there is no benevolence, no mercy, or no justice in the Divine chastenings; but we shall be constrained to admit that they are as much the just recompense of our own sinful disposition and behaviour, as they are consistent with and demonstrative of the Divine perfection.

* [redacted]

III.

We have now to consider the last topic of discourse proposed, and inquire what should be our conduct during the prevalence of this God’s dread judgment upon earth. This question we shall consider,-first, in respect to ourselves, next, in respect to our fellow-man; and lastly, in respect to our Creator. And now, in respect to ourselves. The all-merciful God, my brethren, requires that we should preserve to the utmost of our ability, the life He has given us. He hath proclaimed a curse against him who taketh the life of his fellow and also uttered his denunciations against him who presumes to shorten, either by violent means or otherwise, the brief space allotted him on earth. Hence it becomes us to adopt every human precaution, and make use of every means and remedy, that may shield us from the attacks of the fell destroyer and stay its farther progress. The members of the medical profession, both in this city and elsewhere, have, with consummate ability, foresight and care, shown us the means by which the ravages of Asiatic cholera may he checked, if not entirely stayed; and these means, being within the reach of all, it becomes us strictly and readily to use.

Other duties which we owe to ourselves being intimately connected with those we owe our God, we will consider presently; let us now see what should be our conduct towards our fellowman. To

Israel, who are so strictly taught and are so religiously observant of the duties of mercy and charity, it were unnecessary to display the peculiar duties now devolving upon them as the ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■; nevertheless, to you, my hearers, who thanks to Divine Providence, have but few needy brothers likely to require your assistance, it may now be proper to recall a passage in that authoritative book, the Yad Hachasakah of the great Moses Maimonides. The Rabbi says, “Our wise men have commanded us in respect even of heathen, that we should visit their sick, bury their dead with the dead of Israel, and maintain the poor even as we would maintain the poor of Israel.”*

* ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ Hilchoth Melachim, cap. 10, § 12.

Now, my friends, what though there be no Hebrew brother requiring your aid, there may be a gentile brother in such need. Go then seek him, assist him to the fullest extent of your power and means, visit his sick couch, tend it carefully, and if the soul is about to free itself from the body, cheer, encourage and sanctify its last moments on earth. Go, do this, notwithstanding that the sufferer dies not with the Shemang Yisrael on his lips; go, do this, the dogmas of your faith and the promptings of your nature alike command you.-We will now address ourselves to the important inquiry, as to what should be our conduct in respect to our Heavenly Father. The wisest of men has said, “In the day of adversity consider;” that is, consider whence, why, and for what purpose, it hath come upon you. We have just seen that our adversity is from Heaven, from Almighty God, who sends it when other and more gentle means fail to awaken us to a sense of our duty; that it has come upon, us in consequence of our sins, and that its design is to induce us to devote a more fitting attention to matters appertaining to our salvation, and so to afford us the means for moral reformation. Our duty is then clear. It is to improve these means to the fullest extent; to “turn to Him that smiteth us,” to acknowledge the justice and mercy of his decrees, and piously determine, as did David, ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■, to throw ourselves on the benevolence of God, since “his mercy is great.” And if such be not our determination, what will and must be the result? Surely that announced by the prophet Isaiah in these words, “Inasmuch as the people turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts: therefore the Eternal will cut off from Israel, head and tail, branch and root, in one day.”*

* Isaiah 9:13. My beloved hearers, let us strenuously and prayerfully exert ourselves to induce the Almighty to avert this dreadful doom from us. For although God be both merciful and gracious, He is also all-just; and although there may appear to many no indications, at present, of so dreadful a fate threatening us, the disastrous inroads of the cholera in our city having been comparatively limited, and the disease just now appearing to have been disarmed of its virulent rage, still who and where is he who shall say we are secure for the future? And, although the medical profession here, fearless of the dangers of infection, constantly and unweariedly toiled, both in mind and body, to stay the farther havoc of the disease, and, let me add, have thereby earned for themselves a reputation most honourable, as well as the gratitude of their fellow-men: still does the question irresistibly present itself, Are we secure? I answer, We are not, my friends, we are not, notwithstanding all the labours of love, and charity, and opulence, and skill; for, “unless the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain.”* * Psalms 127:1-5.

Never let us forget that the efficiency of all second causes is entirely dependent on the blessing of Almighty God; that to lean on the broken reed of human strength and wisdom, would be as foolish as it would be sinful, and that it becomes us, to look for cure and salvation to Him who alone can cure and save. Let us then address to the Eternal our sincere and ardent aspirations, and shed before him our penitent tears. And if we desire that He should have regard to us, let us take care that our deeds correspond with our protestations. For it is only on this condition that God will listen to our prayers. When He commissioned His destroying angel to pass through the land of Egypt, He required of the Israelites an active, practical proof of their obedience. It was not enough that they promised to sprinkle the blood on their door-posts; the neglect of performing God's commands would have brought certain death into their dwellings. My friends, we are just now in a very similar position to that of our ancestors in Egypt. If we discharge, with implicit obedience, God's commands, we need not regard with fear, but with hope and resignation, the danger that threatens us. To the faithful and just man the prospect of dissolution affords no terrors, but rather an object of delightful contemplation. The minister of religion, whose duty it is to tend the last moments of the dying, will tell you that there can be no more edifying or elevating a scene, than the deathbed of the good and pious man.

If, then, our homes present only so many habitations in which the name of God is glorified, and his behests performed with due obedience, we need neither fear nor tremble because the destroying angel passes over them with unsheathed sword. But if they consist of so many temples of Mammon only; of altars, whereupon Sabbath after Sabbath, and new moon after new moon, we sacrifice our holiest and highest interests to the love of gain, and this too in the worst spirit of disobedience: can we then hope to escape, seeing that God is all-just? We cannot, my friends. Oh, then be it our constant aim and employment, to prepare ourselves for that death which, if not this calamity, some other cause, must bring upon us, and perhaps, speedily and unexpectedly; for "we cannot know what a day may bring forth."

Let us remember that God delighteth not in the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn him from his evil way and live; and let us turn from our evil way that we may live, and let us strictly perform all that God hath commanded us in the sacred volume. Then, we can witness the approach of the death-angel without fear or sigh, and can smile and rejoice, even whilst he severs the thread of our mundane life, convinced that we are about inheriting an estate where death and sorrow can find no place, but where God and love alone do reign. Oh, let such be our conviction, such our sentiments at all times, and then shall we have become duly and profitably instructed by the important gracious lessons inculcated by GOD'S JUDGMENTS ON EARTH.

Let us now prayerfully supplicate the throne of grace, and in the language which the patriarchs and prophets of old used, when they interceded for themselves and for Israel.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] <<360>> [illegible]

The following is a free translation of the above prayer:-

Thou great, mighty, and tremendous God! Thou who art a safe shield in the hour of distress, we, thine unworthy servants and objects of thy tender care, approach Thee now in this thy sanctuary, with fear and trembling, yea, with hearts sorely oppressed; for, the pestilence hath gone forth, and is in our midst, and taketh from us both old and young, and there is no power nor ability with us to stay its ravages. Wherefore come we, beseeching Thee to listen to our supplications, and, O, our God, heal us now, we beseech Thee; yea, look down upon us from heaven, thy dwelling-place, hearken to our cries, and deliver us from this thy dread judgment. Spare us, O Lord, this great affliction, and cover us with the shadow of thy wing. Almighty Father, spare us, protect us, deliver

us, we play Thee, for thine hand hath not become shortened.

Everlasting God! who art of infinite wisdom and discernment, who fully knowest all the ways of the children of men, we acknowledge, O Lord, we acknowledge that there is no righteousness in us; that we are a sinful people; that we have transgressed and done abominably; that we have inclined our steps from walking in thy ways; that our trespasses have been manifold; and that the cry of our unrighteousness is so great as to reach unto heaven. And it is because we feel that we have grievously sinned, that we are now ashamed to raise our eyes to Thee, dread Judge, fearing thy just anger and punishment.

We know, O Lord, that if Thou visitest us according to our works, that we are lost; but we depend upon thine infinite mercy and compassion, which, most gracious, God, we implore thee to let prevail over thine attribute of strict justice, and, to this end do we present ourselves before Thee today, with contrite and penitent hearts; for we also know, O Lord our God, that Thou wouldst delight more in our penitence than in our death, and therefore have we determined to turn us from our evil way, and from the violence which is in our hands, that Thou mayest repent of the evil which Thou hast thought to do unto us thy people. Then accept our humiliation, we pray Thee, and grant our prayer. Hasten to heal our wounds and turn the fierceness of thy wrath from the sons of Israel, thy chosen, for thy sake, O Lord, if not for ours.

O regard with favour, the supplications which thine unworthy servant has ventured to present to Thee, on behalf of these, thy children, now standing in thy minor sanctuary, and of all thy people, whenever they be. Lord, deign that our supplications may ascend before Thee as sweet incense, and listen to our prayers with gracious favour. Remove completely from us the pestilence, with which, in the vindication of thy justice and sovereignty, Thou hast been pleased to visit us. Be with all those who attempt to heal the wounds wherewith it doth wound us; and as Thou art the only true and faithful physician, do Thou graciously bestow on them such a spirit of knowledge and discernment, as may enable them to assuage somewhat the pains of the sick bed.

Pardon, O Lord, all those whom the pestilence hath taken suddenly from us; O save them, and take them unto Thee. Continue to show thy loving kindness unto those on whom thou still bestowest the blessing of health; so that the destructive instrument formed against us may not prosper. O give thine angels charge concerning us, to guard us at all times, and speedily bring unto us that day, when “the ransomed of the Lord shall return and some to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; joy and gladness shall they obtain, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Amen.

S. Honor the Aged

Honour the Aged Extracts from a discourse by Dr. Jacob de la Motta.

■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord."-- Leviticus 19:32.

Among the many and various commands conceived by infinite Wisdom, and by Him instituted for mutual observance between the sons of man; among the many wise and beneficent rules for reciprocal advantage laid down by the supreme Judge, and intended as unerring guides to rectitude and worth; and among the truly great and matchless endowments conferred on our species as distinguishing characteristics of human excellence: reverence for the aged holds a conspicuous place, and displays a refinement of intellect, a benevolence of heart and a nobleness of action, that lift the soul beyond its frail tenement, and disclose a brilliant evidence of that elevated feeling which obtains for its possessor an acknowledged superiority of character above all those who are strangers to this beautiful trait in the life of man. For can the imagination conceive an employment more calculated to cast a lustre on human nature than youth and manhood acting as props to tottering, trembling infirmity? Can the mental vision dwell on a picture, which needs no adventitious tints of art to magnify or embellish it, so bright, so lovely, as the tranquil, furrowed countenance of the sage, the seat of placidness, though wrinkled by the lapse of years; bearing the marks of care, yet indicative of piety; bereft of its youthful fulness through the decline towards the grave, yet stamped with the seal of maturity in wisdom and virtue? Can the eye dwell on a more engaging object than the hoary head bleached by the progress of time, and yet exhibiting the protecting hand of Him who alone can abridge or extend our limited earthly career? Who that has a heart responsive to the supplications of suffering humanity, who that is the least given to sensibility, can do otherwise than feel impelled to engage in sustaining the infirm, assisting the disabled, compassionating the wants of the aged, and reverencing the head silvered by the hand of time? Who that for a moment pauses to reflect on our frail condition, and meditates on the sure approach of a helpless and perhaps lone state, can be otherwise than convinced of the force and importance of that injunction which expressly states: "Thou shaft rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man?"

After this brief appeal to the sober judgment-after we have duly considered the various stages which man passes through from infancy to old age; and when we compare the state of our childhood with that of declining years, and regard these two periods as evidencing our weakness and dependence on the assistance of others: can we be at a loss to define the intentions of the Deity when He declared and rigidly enjoined that reverence should be paid to advanced age? Are we not lost in admiration of that beautiful order and symmetry which every where prevail? of that perfect adaptation of all those duties which connect, as it were, in a solid compact, in a continuous chain, the whole human family, which instructs us, whilst it exemplifies the boundless and unmeasured regard the Creator has manifested for the prosperity of his rational creatures? And is

this not one of many facts to prove the excellence of those ordinances that were given to the chosen people of God? and does not each of these teem with universal good, and show conclusively the desire of the Lord to approximate us to as near perfectibility as was his original intention when He called man into existence, and created him to be the lord of, and to have dominion over, all that covereth the earth-that is in the water beneath the earth-or that wingeth its flight in the expanse of the firmament?

While we look back to a period so remote as when it pleased the Almighty to communicate his will to the children of Israel and while we acknowledge and readily admit the magnitude of the observance of this law as expressed in our text : I am convinced it will not be uninteresting to inquire into, and trace the regard paid to this part of Scripture among certain nations, from days of yore to the present time; and I hope it will be conceded, that, where history informs us that the aged were destroyed because of their being a burden and useless, we shall look at such conduct as existing only in the darkest ages of society, when barbarism flourished as the scourge of the nations among which it prevailed; and in order to confine our remarks to the very letter and spirit of our text, I shall only name such conspicuous incidents as tend to testify the correctness of our subject, and exhibit its utility, importance, and transcendent worth.

We shall perceive, that respect for the aged constituted a prominent feature in the polity of several nations, and included within the scope of its acceptation filial duty-than which nothing can obtain for us more effectually prolonged years, happiness, and prosperity. And, in such great estimation was the duty of reverence for parents held, that we find this injunction contained in the ten commandments that were written by God on the two tables given to our prophet Moses on Mount Sinai. On a former occasion I endeavoured to pourtray this reverence, in more glowing colours; and the more I examine the subject, the more am I convinced of its preeminence. Our sacred volumes afford striking illustrations of punishment inflicted for the violation of this essential command, and those conversant with Scripture must call to mind particular events confirmatory of this. Who can forget the awful dispensation of Heaven that overwhelmed the children of Bethel, for mocking the aged Elisha, the prophet of the Most High? Who can forget the tribulation and ruin of the weak and insolent Rehoboam, who despised the counsel, disrespected the opinions, and set at nought the safe and prudent advice of the aged?

If we revert to periods of more recent date, we shall have abundant proof of the correctness and extensive connection that this reverence bears with our veneration for God. When we speak of the Ancient of Days, we carry our allusion to Him and the creation, and we cannot use a more emphatic term to convey an idea of the Creator, and of the antiquity of the One who lived before planets moved within their spheres, or the light of day illumined the earth; and if it be possible to conceive any image or likeness of God, and if it be permitted to symbolize the most venerable appearance of age, I shall be excused in giving you an emblem in a few words, as extracted from a beautiful imagery: "The Ancient of Days did sit-his throne was like the fiery flame; his wheels as burning fire-his garments were white as snow, and his hair like the pure wool." In farther confirmation of the antiquity of this reverence, we find seventy elders chosen from among the Israelites to expound and carry into effect our institutions; and if it was not considered a distinguished honour, as an example to be adopted in cases where confidence and judgment are required, it would not have been a special order, that the elders of the nation should be selected to counsel and direct our people.

Leaving the evidence of this reverence at an epoch when precepts were closely followed by example, and when the greatest respect was bestowed, on whatever appertained to this holy injunction: we shall trace the regard to this observance by succeeding nations.

We are informed, that among the Egyptians reverence for the aged was associated with their primary duties. Persia was not less remarkable; for the laws of that country yielded every thing like priority to the elders. Tracing the honours conferred on old age a little farther, we shall find that Greece and Rome established it as one of the first considerations; and it is among these people we notice the profoundest deference paid to persons in advanced years. Lacedemon also reverenced her elders; and in the words of one who has made considerable research in collecting facts to this end, "Sparta was once declared to be the only nation on earth, where a man could wish to be old." Athens was meek and submissive to revered age. And, when by luxury, says the same writer, the energies of the Republic were paralyzed, this goodly custom still prevailed. One of the greatest men that ever lived, avowed, "that the respect, which is paid to age, forms an infallable criterion to estimate the moral advancement of a people." Facts could be multiplied; but sufficient has been adduced to show in what estimation this reverence was held, originally enjoined in the commands of God. Although the days of patriarchal veneration have in some respects passed away, still, while refinement keeps pace with the expansion of the intellect, and we become more enlightened and observant of those relative duties which dignify and adorn, we need never fear to witness deficiency in respect for the aged. We are not the only people who understand and practise this admired virtue, and it behooves us always to endeavour to discountenance any diminution of its influence. We should therefore take heed to keep constantly in view the beauty and excellence of our text, and while we are impressed by its details, we should proclaim aloud to all, encourage and recommend to all, who fear God, "to rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man."

We could refer to multiplied evidence in manifestation of this reverence for the aged, to establish its pre-eminence in the scale of our moral as well as social duties. Let us then endeavour to define what is comprised or embraced in the meaning of this injunction. "Thou shall rise up before the hoary head" conveys, in application to our social qualities, a degree of respect, a yielding deportment and submission to priority in years, but particularly a precedence in the knowledge of worldly concern, based upon the concession that youth cannot acquire in a limited time the same extensive acquaintance with human nature-with the peculiar traits or dispositions of the human mind-with the same incentives to thought and action-with the proper regard to whatever pertains to the advancement and prosperity of the human family. Nor, does it presuppose the same capability of deciding on important and intricate matters, nor that thorough information on the ultimate tendency of incidents that frequently agitate the mind, and fall into action its best energies. I advance that all these qualifications cannot be admitted to be possessed by youth; and as it requires time to comprehend and mature, to treasure up and to judge of the good from the evil, these seem to be the fair and legitimate deductions why the Almighty enjoined on us, that "Thou shall rise up before the hoary head." Furthermore, it must be admitted that advanced age carries with it generally, knowledge of what cannot be acquired by youth, not only on account of deficiency in maturity of intellect, but, because it requires time and observation to learn a part of those wonderful and intricate operations which nature employs in her works.

There is something in the appearance of the hoary head that imperceptibly excites the finest sensations; and draws forth the keenest commiseration for decrepitude and infirmity. We are never made so sensible of our weak and declining condition, as when such an object is offered to our view; for it at once reminds us of that state we are all approaching. It is when helpless human nature is presented before us, that we truly feel a sympathetic glow for the woes of others. It is then we experience that philanthropic ardour, which adorns and dignifies our actions. It is only on occasions like these, we can be made sensible of the approaching deprivation of that strength, that vigour of intellect, that makes us dependent in manhood on our own resources for protection;-and it is only when we behold the declining of all those energies that once placed the possessor independent in earlier days, that we are enabled to feel our own approaching inability and helplessness, and the deprivation of all those powers on which we rely for safety and prosperity. Who, then, that contrasts the power and efficiency of youth with the powerlessness and inefficiency of old age, can fail to admit, that reverence for the aged does not arise solely from a superiority of attainments, but, because also the energies of life, being paralyzed in advanced years, lead to dependence on youth for support and stay, and for that poorer of defence which becomes withered by age, and which unerringly casts us down the declivity of time, that we may return again to that defenceless unprotected state, which is inseparable from infancy? It would then appear that the wisdom of God which acts prospectively, and according to the natural causes of things, ordained, that there should be two stages of helplessness in our life; and in order somewhat to provide against the ills consequent on infirmity, declared, that thou shalt not only rise up before the hoary head, but "that thou shalt honour the face of the old man;" and to convince us how earnest and imperative this annunciation is held by Him, He accompanied it with these words, "and fear thy God; I am the Lord;" conveying thereby, that he who should disregard this instruction-who should treat with levity this command-who should in the least degree evince indifference to maturity of age-who should withhold aid in furthering and perfecting his will-who should manifest neglect to that state of physical destitution incidental to old age, must apprehend his displeasure; and such as should violate this injunction, have to fear his vengeance; and, therefore, with the intention of enforcing a punishment for this defalcation of duty, He pronounced at the same time, "Fear thy God-I am the the Lord."

"Thou shall honour the face of the old man." The hand of time fixes certain designating marks on the countenance of old age. The wrinkled brow, the furrowed cheek, the sunken eye, the silvery locks, the absence of youthful freshness-all make up those distinguishing lines that point out the ravages that time has made in robbing life of perpetuity. These lines of demarcation, while they pourtray approaching decay of nature, firmly establish the certainty of that limit, pointed out by God as the sure termination of our earthly sojourn, and are a verification of those words which expressly allude to the dissolution of our material part, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

"To honour the face of the old man," would fairly imply from all that we have stated, a decent respect to the admonitions of our elders, who kindly countenance, and graciously look on our efforts to keep in the path of rectitude. The most acceptable meaning of this honour for the face of the aged, must include the utmost attention to the counsel of the aged, as it is presumed to be predicated on previous and superior knowledge, and bestowed for our advantage. Therefore, those who honour the face of their elders, may be considered as receiving instructions for their

benefit. Children cannot be too early instructed in this reverence. It should not be confined to ordinary respect, shown in courteous demeanour; but in rigid attention to the acquired knowledge of our holy religion, of those wholesome lessons, that inculcate good-will and fellowship to our brethren, and to all classes and denominations of rational beings. There is nothing that more firmly establishes the reputation of youth, as attention to the correct opinions of the ancients to whom God has vouchsafed a superiority in wisdom; for it is the direct manifestation of a well-educated and refined mind, and it gives promise of future excellence; and it stamps at once, in indelible characters, claims on the highest departments of refinement; and the individual so endowed must obtain the admiration of all.

Since, then, we have seen, from our primeval state, as a nation, that respect for old age constituted an essential duty;-since in our investigations of this subject we have traced the strict attention paid by succeeding nations to those, who worn down with age, approach by gradual steps to the dissolution of the mortal frame-and, since we, the people to whom this ordinance was first given, continue alive to the necessity of perpetuating this praiseworthy and beneficent observance: let us always keep in mind and engrave on our hearts, so that they may be present at all times, these words, delivered to our forefathers;, and handed down to us for our special guidance, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and. honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God; I am the Lord."

Almighty God, the supreme Architect of the universe-the Lord and only God of Israel, we, thy servants, stand suppliant before the shrine of thy grace, and, with contrite hearts, we implore thy forgiveness for our sins and transgressions. Look down graciously on us, and prosper us in our pious works. Direct our hearts, and dispose us to appear often in this house dedicated to thy service, in which we now offer our prayers. We ask this grace for the remnant of Israel, and for thy people whom Thou hast promised never to forsake.

Almighty Father, the supreme Disposer of events, extend thine infinite goodness and mercy to our people wheresoever dispersed; shed thy benediction on this congregation, and on all congregations assembled this day to praise thy name. Endow us also with a portion of thy divine attributes, that we may pursue and keep the path of righteousness to the honour of thy name, and the exaltation of Israel. Amen.

Charleston, S. C., June, 5603

Chapter 30

S. Israel in Covenant with God

Israel in Covenant With God. A Sermon.

Delivered at Baltimore on Friday Afternoon, the 24th of Elul, 5605, September 26th, 1845, at the Consecration of the New Synagogue.

Brethren And Friends! A good work has this day been accomplished, a new house of prayer rears its fair proportions towards heaven, and it has been set aside, for days to come, unto the service of our God and King, the Holy One of Israel. It has ever, on similar occasions, been the good custom amongst us to have words of earnestness addressed to the assembled brethren, in order that the power of audible sounds may not be wanting to impress upon the mind something to be remembered above and in addition to the imposing service and the psalmody uttered in praise of the Most High, the Guardian of Jacob's sons. The present occasion would therefore be incomplete, if one of the essential elements of our solemn assemblies, were the word of instruction, to be absent from us this day; let me therefore entreat you to give me your kind attention whilst I accomplish the task imposed upon me by your partiality, by laying before you some reflections which well befit the labour which has been completed this day.

Let us take as the text for our contemplation the following from the Parashah of this week, being a portion of the concluding address of our blessed teacher Moses to the people of Israel before his departure from this life. He was speaking to the assembled multitudes that had so long listened to his words of power, and he summed them all up as belonging to the divine covenant, and then added:

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"And not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him who standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and with him who is not here with us this day." Deuteronomy 29:13-14.

Forty years had Israel been in training to become a people unto the Lord, and during all this time they had deeply sinned and frequently rebelled against the Power who had redeemed them from slavery. Stiff-necked in their conduct towards God, they had followed their evil inclinations, and thus transgressed the law whenever a favourable opportunity had presented itself. With all this the prophet knew that the law had taken deep root in the hearts of his followers. He, indeed, was himself doomed to die in the wilderness, in full sight of the lovely land whither he was not to go, because he had not sanctified the will of God at the waters of contention in the wilderness of Zin; he was to leave the people in the yet untried hands of his trusty Joshua; the deeds which had struck terror, wonder and dismay in both sons and enemies of Jacob's house would soon be forgotten, when those who had witnessed them should have passed away from the busy scenes of life; the Israelites were to enter into the midst of refined and powerful idolaters, whose daughters

were fair and whose country was lovely; and they were, what is more than, all, to be left to the self-will of their own hearts, when the conquest should be over, free to form alliances with nations that knew not the worship of the Most High, who bowed down to the host of heaven or the works of their own hands. Nay he foresaw that all these circumstances would work their effects upon his hearers and their descendants; that, in short, the curses which he had pronounced against them would have to be accomplished to the very letter. Yet his hope of better things faltered not; he flung from his soul the gloomy picture of an unhappy future, and he felt conscious that his structure, which in Heaven's name he had reared for so long a time, would never be totally lost to mankind, to Israel; for that, when one generation should have passed away, another and another yet would start up, as from the earth, to proclaim aloud that they are men in covenant with the Lord ONE, the God and Father of Israel. "Not with you alone," that is the people then living and known as the Israelites, "do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him who standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and with him who is not here with us this day." If we consider that Moses spoke to all the Israelites of his day, we shall have no difficulty in ascertaining who the absent ones were who are here referred to. They were the whole seed of Jacob, all who might follow those who came forth from Egypt to the latest generation. The prophet limits not his words to one century, nor to one country; but he ranges over an indefinite period, over an indefinite space, including those who were not then, could not be then, standing in person at the door of the tabernacle, to give in their adhesion by word of mouth to the terms of the covenant proposed to them by the blessed son of Amram, and those who were actually present, and had been cognizant of the great miracles of the Lord, which He had wrought before them in the land of Mitzrayim and the desert, where his mercy had so long protected them and provided for all their wants. Had Moses been an ordinary man, one who spoke merely from analogy, human probability, he could scarcely have ventured to make so bold a declaration; or if he had, it would to a surety not have come to pass. There were at that time too many reasons to apprehend that the polity which he had been the means of revealing to the world would soon fall into oblivion, when the inquirer views the very turbulent disposition of the people, their but recent state of ignorance, and the constant inducements held out to them to break away from a law which grants so few pleasures, but on the contrary imposes many restrictions upon us in almost every stage of life. But he was not a man of every day; he did not reason from probability or analogy; he was instructed from the highest Source of wisdom, and he could therefore not fail of saying the truth even when speaking of that which was to happen; in fact the opposite idea must be inconceivable from the very nature of the case; since He who is the Father of all men, and knows their frame, also penetrates the recesses of futurity with unerring certainty, with a view from which nothing escapes, from which nothing is hidden; and it was his word, his will, which Moses proclaimed, and from Him he received knowledge of the things which were to be. Let us not commit the error then of looking upon our teacher as a mere historian, who relates events which happened under his eye, nor as a successful leader, who glorifies himself for the accomplishment of some mighty achievement; for if he had been only thus, though he had combined in himself the learned writer and the brave general, though his wisdom had become the fundamental law of all civilized states, which in fact it is this day: still he would not demand our implicit faith, our entire surrendering of our judgment to his instruction, since there might be room to doubt whether or not some of the things announced by him might not remain unfulfilled, as, even assuming for him the highest power of penetration incident to human reason, there would still be a certainty that the major part of his speculations

would necessarily be mere assumptions, which might or might not come to pass. We are not then Mosaists, or followers of Moses, nor is ours the Mosaic religion, or Mosaism, which is the new term now used abroad, in the sense which is usually given to systems called after their founders. We indeed call our law the Mosaic law or law of Moses, because the divine inspiration gives it that name, inasmuch as he was the means of making the divine legislation known to his compatriots; still it is not for this reason a system of Moses, a Mosaism, of which Moses was the founder or inventor; no, we are Hebrews, Israelites, followers of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, descendants of those who themselves heard from Sinai, “I am the Lord thy God,” “Thou shalt have no other gods before me;” we are the legitimate successors of those who themselves entered into a voluntary covenant “to obey all the words of the Lord,” and who partook of all the blessings and hardships which accompanied their journey through the desert.

If then we go to examine our religion we must not proceed as though we were entering upon a mere scientific inquiry, at liberty to refuse belief to one, and to correct another part; but we should sit down to this study with fear and trembling, with a mistrust in our own power of comprehension, with a well-founded conviction that the word is true although our understanding of it be imperfect and unsatisfactory to ourselves. We should reflect that it is not Moses who speaks, but the holy spirit of our Creator, who has written the book of the law for our guidance and instruction. For all this we are not prohibited from reasoning on, or investigating the evidences of religion; they are open to our scrutiny, and challenge the strictest investigation; provided, as I said, that we do not enter upon this labour with a reckless defiance of our early training, and bring to the task that humility which becomes and is required for an inquirer after truth. Let us now apply what has premised to the text we have chosen. It is one of a long discourse pronounced at the most solemn moment of existence, that, just preceding the awful hour of death, when the connexion between earthly life and eternity is mysteriously interwoven in the existence of the spirit by its departure from the earth. It is then that man looks back upon all that he has done with an eye different from what it was when expectation and hope stood in our way, calling us hither and thither to pursue some new phantom, some unexpected vista where success smiled in the dim distance. O! it is then that we turn with loathing from the idols to which we clung during our pilgrimage; we them see the nakedness of our unholy desires which would fain rob us of our peace hereafter; we cannot then hide from ourselves the wickedness and falsehood to which we attached ourselves year by year and hour by hour; we feel the ground so to say as sliding from under our feet, and we stretch forth our hands to the God our Saviour, to snatch us up into his embrace, to shield us from the consequences of our misdeeds. It may be, nay it is often the case, that wicked men will die with a falsehood on their lips; they cannot imagine that this life must indeed terminate, they cannot bear, whilst the breath is yet in their nostrils, to forego one iota of their assumed self-importance. But not so is the case with the pure and righteous; they have no part to play, no assumed character to sustain; they therefore attach no importance to fortuitous circumstances in which they may have been placed, but view their past life in all its deformity and error, conceal nothing from themselves for which atonement should be made, and attach not any undue value to their good deeds, any farther than that they calm the conscience; and they trust in the mercy of the Creator that He will perfect what they have left undone in the weakness of fallen human nature. So then it was on one of the last few days of Moses’s life, that he called around him the people of Israel, together with the strangers and the foreign labourers who were among them. He rehearsed briefly, but eloquently, the principal events of the forty years during which he was connected with the administration of

public affairs, and recalled to their mind how frequently they had presumptuously sinned against the Lord. He also repeated certain of the commandments; but more than all, he insisted anew upon the distinctive doctrines of the religion which he had taught so long; and emphatically instructed the people to believe in no association in the godhead, in no thought of a division; for that the Lord, the Eternal, is one and alone, and that He woundeth and healeth, slayeth and bringeth to life again, and that from his power there is none to save us, if He willeth to condemn. And when all this had been accomplished by the teacher, when the conduct of the Hebrews had during his whole connexion with them been the reverse of obedience: he still lays before them again a solemn compact, to answer for the last time, whether they would remain true and faithful to the law, to the Lord, to themselves! The Israelites did assent, and the book of the law was written and completed by the hand of the prophet, and he delivered it to the priests and Levites to place it by the side of the ark of the covenant, that it might be a witness against them in all future generations. There was no wild enthusiasm in Moses's manner; he was calm and collected; he knew his end to be rapidly approaching, whilst neither his sight was dimmed nor his bodily vigour in aught diminished; he stood like the giant of the forest, in the branches of which thousands of the feathered tribe have built their nests, towering upward, unbending, erect, unterrified, whilst around it play the lightnings of heaven, and its branches are tossed by the fury of the tempest, and its leaves are dashed to the earth by the drenching rain. And as his body was strong so was his soul; he felt that death was coming at the command of God to release him from his earthly labours; and hence he spoke at that very time with the same dignity and candour which he had exhibited throughout his long career, and which characterized him chiefly as the great messenger, like whom none has arisen in Israel since his day. In this temper of mind he did not, he could not think of deceiving himself and others by a pretended belief in things of which he was not himself convinced; there is nothing recorded of an agony of soul, of an unwillingness to die, of a forced submission, which wrung from him contradictory declarations; indeed there is no deathscene described in history so full of the vigour of life as that of Moses; he passed from the changeful scene of the earth to a uniformity of happiness in an altered state; and with the most solemn conviction, forced upon himself and his hearers, that he had been a messenger of truth in what he had done and what he had foretold, he announced the permanence of the law and the permanence of Israel.

History has told us then how Israel rose from a nation of slaves to become the conquerors of the beautiful country of Palestine. But history also tells us that the predictions of Moses have been literally fulfilled in all where they have yet been reached by the events which have occurred, especially with reference to the permanence of the law in the line of Jacob; for this is the principal topic of our to-day's discussion. O! how fearful were the delinquencies of our fathers from the day that they entered into the promised land; how did they love their idols; how did they follow the ways of the gentiles; how did they forget the Lord! And what followed? Punishment after punishment came over them and their land, and they ever and anon were made to feel the awful consequences which follow in the wake of sin. But loudly howled the storm of evil within their breast; they forgot the Lord their Redeemer, and would not hearken to the admonition of their prophets; and they braved the denunciations of the law, and the vengeance it threatens against transgression. It is not necessary to dwell upon the end of this sinning; our dispersion at this day proves that the law has established its truth; but it likewise proves, that the blessing of the possession of our religion has also been accomplished. Israel sinned in Palestine, under the rule

of the judges who lived after Joshua; they did each whatever seemed best in their eyes; horrid crimes were perpetrated with unblushing effrontery; still a Samuel arose out of the midst of this chaos, and by the establishment of the schools of the prophets, no doubt his work, re-established the blessed rule of law and good order among the people. Time rolled on, and wicked and foolish kings rebelled against the Lord, and set themselves up idols in Dan and Beersheba and the cities of Judah; the land grew tired of bearing on its surface the sinning generation, and they were cast forth bound with chains of slavery into the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon; yet again was the law restored, and we owe to the ready scribe, the zealous Ezra, the renewal of the covenant between God and his people, when they pledged themselves to walk in the ways which He had prescribed to their fathers. And with this the work did not fail for want of labourers to carry it forward with trusty heart and faithful hands; and when the calamities thickened, and persecution from without at length came to aid the evil inclination within: a new spirit awoke in the people, and they clung to the ark of the Lord with undying attachment in the hours of the greatest peril. Onward has been the march of ages; circumstances have changed with us; new dangers have constantly sprung up to add to the difficulties which necessarily encompass us in the state of our dispersion; over and over again have our enemies predicted our speedy destruction; they have tortured, or slain, or banished us in most countries, and embittered our days in all, by a constant war against our spirits, by exciting prejudice, by spreading calumny and falsehood of all kinds concerning us: still we are here on earth to praise the Lord, still here to bear a living testimony, that we are his witnesses, and that He is God; still we are on earth the legitimate and lineal descendants of the patriarchs of former days, of the early reformers who defied the worshippers of idols to exhibit their power; of the philosophers of primeval ages who kindled the torch of reason by the blazing fire of God’s revelation; and we are here, here on this spot, a small remnant, a fragment of the great house of Jacob, to bear with our lips our assent to the constantly accumulating weight of the constantly renewed confession, that Israel is ever true, will be ever true in its chosen sons, they who are the light of the world, who walk in the fear of the Most High, to uphold the ancient faith unbroken, to believe at all times in the promises of their God, to follow unflinchingly, even through the whelming waves of persecution, the guidance of their Father who is in heaven, though it lead them to the gates of death. And no matter how great and unpardonable were the backslidings of our people, some like these just described were always ready to sanctify the glorious and fearful Name of the God of Israel, and to exhibit in their lives a beautiful illustration of the effects of the saving faith implanted in our hearts upon the conduct of those who yield themselves to its promptings.

It was in this manner that Moses made a covenant with those who were not present with him on that day before the Lord, with those namely, who have ever since succeeded to the name, the lineaments, the obligations of Israel. And ye too, brethren, have by the work which is this day completed, by solemnly dedicating it to the service and name of the Most High God, the Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth,-ye too have by this means entered into that blessed covenant in your mature age, into which you were introduced at your birth by your pious progenitors. Do not imagine, however, that it is merely enough that you have erected a house, as a dwelling for the ark where the law is deposited; that you have finished your task by providing it with every thing needful for worship, whilst the spirit of worship itself is wanting among you. Reflect, that only through the righteousness of the whole people could the temple at Jerusalem become the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that through the same means only, on the part of each congregation, can their houses

of prayer become acceptable in the eyes of the same unchanging Being, who called unto himself Abraham out of Ur in Chaldea. There has not been pointed out to us any new means of becoming acceptable to God; the same requisites are still demanded of us,-faith and obedience; and these are to be pursued through our entire life, on all occasions, in all circumstances. Indeed, what use would a place of worship be, if the worshippers therein assembled there merely from ostentation? from pride? from motives to bear rule over others? Only with contrition, with humility, should the sacred precincts be entered with sorrow for past misdeeds, with hopes in the mercy of our Father, that He would perfect by his spirit, what we have humbly commenced, and that He would heal the wounds which our iniquity may have struck against the peace of our soul. Such worshipping will make us daily better, more pleasing in the eyes of God and man; it will influence our speech, it will influence our actions, it will also purify our thoughts; and the more strongly we have impressed it on our mind, the stronger and holier will grow the plant of righteousness, which will be lustrous with everlasting verdure, and which will preserve an unfading freshness till the end of our days.-Pursue then righteousness in the manner which the law ordains; do not use your own imperfect understanding to reason away what God has commanded; ask rather of your elders, and let them instruct you; inquire of those who are the fathers in Israel, that they may speak unto you; and never, O never! listen to those who would gladly sow dissension in Israel, who would urge their own foolish counsels as the words which the Lord has taught; whereas, they invent deceitful things out of their own hearts, and teach the words which the prophets of God have not spoken. Pursue peace in all your acts and words; seek not to bear unjust rule over each other; endeavour not to become each one the chief in the earthly Synagogue; for it is but a short rule at best, to be soon dropped, though long you wield the staff of authority; but seek on the contrary to act rightly and truly towards each other, bear with each other's weakness and failings, and have one mind, one aim to pursue; thus you will leave this life to be accepted on high, and live unto eternity in the sanctuary of the Lord. But in addition to this individual duty, you have also general obligations to perform. You are members of the house of Israel, surety and pledge that in you there shall always be a defender of the good cause. As such then, let all your deeds have a public bearing, and forego your own advantage, when the public good demands it. Let your exertions for success not blind you to the necessities of others; and never do any act, however it might be legal, which could cast odium upon the fair fame of the house of Israel. Towards the world at large too, you have duties to fulfil. All men are your brethren, though the Hebrew brother claims your first love. All men are children of one God, like you they are endowed with an intelligent spirit. Love them, therefore, cherish them in joy and in sorrow, and sanctify the name of the Lord, by practically proving, how beautiful his religion is which teaches you to be angels of mercy to all who may claim your sympathy, to all who may look up to you for aid and for counsel. The enemies of our faith have always endeavoured to make it appear as though we are by it taught to hate and persecute the nonIsraelites; whereas, it will be your business to prove that the religious Jew asks not the sufferer of what belief he is, he demands not of the widow and orphan, whether they be of the house of Jacob; but he opens his heart, he empties the full hand, in order that the hungry may be fed, the naked be clothed, the needy protected; though their souls know not, their lips breathe not a prayer to God the Eternal.

"Not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath," were the words of Moses. That generation went down to the dust as all other men, and left us of the present day no other inheritance than the name of Israel and the law which they had received. All the other glory and

wealth which they acquired perished before the eyes of the world, and whatever was earthly in their greatness has been destroyed by the tooth of time. The imperishable only alone remains; the immortal, which was immortal in the days of Moses, survives in all its strength, and because it was thus immortal, could he predict that it would never yield before the progress of destruction. Our assembly here to-day proves, that up to our time the prophecy has been upheld, it has become fulfilment, event in the pages of history. And though now the evil hour is come, as some faint hearts believe, which is to prove whether it shall stand longer or not: still let those who fear this evil, look into the hearts of our people, and then let them say whether or not the ancient spirit yet survives, whether or not the same love for religion in the abstract does not live there as ever. Should, however, any danger threaten us through disunion or apostasy, then remember that you are men of the covenant who cannot honestly leave the good cause to suffer for want of valiant defenders. The building in which we have met, is a witness that you have felt the importance of the Lord's covenant, the weight of his law which is implanted in your souls. Take then good heed that those who are not with us this day before the Lord, may arise after you to propagate to yet many distant generations the knowledge which you have received, and let it be your endeavour that the worshippers in this house may all become true and faithful witnesses of the glorious message, the unity of God and the permanence of his religion, which has been proclaimed to you from Sinai, which is the legacy bequeathed by your fathers. In this manner will the spirit of God dwell in this house which you have built, and thus only can it be truly called sacred to the Creator and King. And may He bless you as He blessed Abraham, and be with us all as He was with our forefathers. Amen.

Friday, Sept. 26; Elul 24, 5605.

Chapter 31

S. Israel's Faith and Deeds

Israel’s Faith and Deeds A Sermon for Sabbath Teshuba, 5606.

O Eternal God Our King! hear our supplication, which we pour out in thy sanctuary--in the house where thy children congregate to sanctify thy name. Many are the evils which beset us; and Thou knowest the dangers which accompany us during our pilgrimage in the valley of tears, where scarce a joy blooms, but sorrow lurks in the opening cup of the dazzling flower. How fleeting are our days, and how permanent art Thou; we are here like a shadow that flits swiftly away before the light of the sun; whilst to thy existence there is no end, to thy days no measurable termination. O tale us, then, under the protection of thy power; shield us, by thy spirit, from the attacks of misfortune which constantly threaten us. But if it be thy will to afflict us with any one of the ills to which flesh is subject, because of its mortality: then let us be strengthened, that we may be able to endure submissively and penitently the wounds which we have to bear. Let us feel that it is Thou, O Father! who chastiseth, that it is not in wrath, but in parental love, that we are bruised by thy justice; so that we may be healed through our wounds, and our souls rise upward in the resplendent light of purity and sins forgiven, to become angels before thy throne, messengers of mercy to other mortals yet dwelling in the houses of clay, in their dark hours of tribulation.

O Father, another year is gone, a new year is again commenced, and we stand yet in thy house, renewed in the beauty of holiness, to be a worthy dwelling for thy name. Through difficulties and trials we have been preserved, and we are again permitted to come hither to seek thy presence. Dark looks the past over which we have travelled--its joys are nearly forgotten, its bitterness is too well remembered. Dark frowns the future in its uncertainties and prospective dangers. O grant that the evils of the past may redound to our salvation, and that the apprehended dangers of the future may become means of righteousness and purification, which are to bind us strongly to Thee, to be indissolubly united to thy Spirit in everlasting bliss. And may, in the words of thy prophet, "Thy work be seen upon thy servants, and thy glory upon their children." So shall we be sanctified by thy grace, O God, and so shall this house become a light unto salvation to all who come. hither to pray. And may this year be to us and all Israel a year of blessing and peace, of light and truth. Amen.

Brethren,-- To us it was said by the prophet who had been made the instrument of our redemption:

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"For the portion of the Lord is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."-- Deuteronomy 32:9.

Full of compassion for our degraded state in the bondage of Egypt, did the Lord descend in his glory, to purchase, as it were, unto himself, a people which should be his peculiar portion among the families of the earth; just as in preceding centuries, He had called to his service the shepherd Abraham, imparting to him, out of compassion for the forlorn state of mankind, some of those everlasting truths which are the best guardians of human happiness. By the calling of Abraham, God covenanted that, descended from him, there should always exist a nation, though ever so

small in numbers, that should be specially devoted to profess a belief in the Creator, which should conform to the word of the Bible: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy people;" meaning, that as it is the priests' business to do the work of the temple to which they may be appointed, and to teach to their scholars the peculiar doctrines which appertain unto their system, thus should the Israelites, the sons of Abraham, exist on earth as priests in God's temple, the entire world, to be devoted, to the specialties of the service which might be demanded of them, and to teach the doctrines of their faith, each generation to their successors. The religion was to be thus a privilege, an especial favour, by which its possessors were to be exempt from the curse of ignorance which afflicts other men. We have before exhibited how the calling of Abraham, and the raising from his descendants of a peculiar people, were necessary in the divine economy, and how they have thus far best subserved to become ultimately the means of subjecting all mankind to the truths which the divine revelation contains. And not a light privilege is this. Think, brethren! all the sons of man are the children of God; they have received at his hands life, free will, and intellect; the human face divine marks than to be like yourselves, parts of the last and best work of the creation. Yet they have not been instructed like you. Folly and wickedness, in times past, nay, from the very creation almost, obscured the brilliancy of wisdom and truth, and mankind, by them misled, have adopted various systems of belief, various ideas of a Godhead, various notions on duty; so that error is palpably every where prevalent. Men of intellect, feeling the degradation thus cast upon them, have ever struggled to dispel the mist, to rend the veil which covered the nations; but in vain; the mist still continues to rest upon the weary soul, and the veil of doubt and darkness yet covers the face of the nobles of the earth. Was it not, then, a great thing, that, before our eyes, were revealed the fires of glory that blazed terrifically on Mount Sinai? that we heard the awful thunders which surrounded the majesty of Heaven? and that our ears drank in sounds which yet re-echo there, words which once and for ever broke the chains of darkness, and kindled the everlasting lamp of life in our spirits, and which taught us to know the great God who created without an assistant, who governs without any foreign aid, and who blesses without a mediator? Were these things matter of thankfulness? were they themes for rejoicing to the enlightened searcher for truth? Yea, they were, they are so to this day. Glorify, then, the Lord, you of the house of Jacob; bless his eternal name, ye of the seed of Abraham; for great was his kindness which He displayed over us in his might, and blessed be his name, which abideth in truth for ever. We indeed were taught by those events which no human power could have produced, that there is no god in heaven or on earth, who can do like our God's great works and mighty deeds; and the lesson has sunk deeply into our innermost soul, and the events of thirty and more centuries have not been able to obliterate it from our recollection. And wherever the Israelite may be, he hears a voice whispering in his ear: "There is but one God." When he lays himself down to sleep, there is revealed to his understanding: "But one Being rules thy destinies; protected by Him thou needest not fear evil; His hand is ready to snatch thee from destruction; his mercy will watch over thee whilst thou sleepest, his angels will guard thy head." And when he rises in the morning, the rejoicing light, the hum of the insects, the lowing of the cattle, the busy walks of men, will again admonish him, "That one God has made them all." There is no doubt, no uncertainty in your minds, believing sons of Jacob; your God spoke to you on Horeb; He there took you for his heritage, and ever since you have believed in Him, and have borne your willing testimony to the truth of his revealing. But simple as is the doctrine which constitutes us a people-for it is at last nothing but a single doctrine--"Our God is one;" simple as this is, it has not yet been responded to

by all mankind. The struggle for the cause of truth is not yet over--the warfare against sound reason is not yet accomplished, and we must needs stand by our defences till the time that it may please the Lord God to enlighten others, even as He has enlightened us, and to draw all men unto Him by the uniting bonds of a perfect love, of a confiding trust and single-hearted devotion. Simple is the truth; but as yet the empire of error has not yielded; and though many of the absurdities of gross idolatry have faded away, they have in many cases only been changed for others equally pernicious, though perhaps less absurd. We are not, therefore, at liberty to relax in our vigilance, to sleep, sluggard-like, on our posts; but let us loudly proclaim that we are Israelites, that we have full confidence in the word which has been taught us, and that nothing which men can accomplish shall ever wrest it out of our hands. We are God’s people by our professing the law which God has written; we are therefore his sacred portion from the other children of Adam, who worship not as we do; we who are descendants of Jacob, who laboured long and well-nigh hopelessly in Egypt, at the bidding of cruel masters; and by redeeming us thence, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, the Lord established a claim of gratitude upon us more than upon other men, because, in addition to life, the gift to all, we have obtained the gift of everlasting freedom; and this we can only repay by our endeavouring, in very truth, to be worthy of being called the lot of his inheritance; to be indeed dutiful servants, faithful to our master, who seeks only our own happiness; to be obedient children, unwavering in our attachment to our heavenly Parent, who watches over us when our earthly parents slumber, who provides for all our wants when we are unable to labour, and who enlightens our soul when otherwise it would grope in darkness, in uncertainty and despair.

Though we have been thus true to the belief in God, though we have never altogether fallen off upon the ways of error: still it is proper that every individual Israelite ask himself, from time to time, "Have I so deported myself as becomes a member of the heritage of the Lord? Have I been faithful to my trust? Have I honoured the name of my Maker?" Alas! to such questions of self-examination what can we answer? what can the best of us aver in extenuation when the Lord comes to judge, when the Infinite demands an account of our doings on earth? The law which constitutes us Israelites has been confided to us solely for our own welfare. It must not be lost sight of, that, for himself, our God could well dispense with our service! for, if we sin, we cannot mar his happiness; if we are righteous, what do we add to his glory? And withal this, how have we conducted ourselves from the day of our first institution as a people, from the day that we each took our position as intelligent agents in the ranks of mankind? The truth will force itself upon our conviction, that, as a people, we have ever neglected the obedience due to our Benefactor, and, as individuals, we have not fulfilled the demands which our Father has a right to exact at our hands. There is always one delusive idea which has led so many to destruction; it is, that belief is every thing, acts, ceremonies, or actual obedience nothing. Were it, to discuss this subject as its importance deserves, that a MAN had ordained our laws, it might, perhaps, be pardonable in us to select from our system what we will keep and what we will reject; there might, in that case, be little acts which could safely be neglected, and important deeds which should claim our especial attention. But this is not our case; no man originated our duties, or no human reason invented our belief. In both these branches it is God alike who speaks to his portion, his people. He assigns in both the lot for Jacob his heritage. When he says, "On the first day of the seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation; no manner of work shall ye do; it shall be a day of the sounding of the cornet unto you." He deserves as much attention as when He proclaims himself the Lord Eternal,

who had redeemed us from the iron furnace out of Egypt. In "Thou shalt make thyself fringes on the four corners of thy garment wherewith thou coverest thyself," He expresses as much his absolute will as when He ordains, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." To us one act may appear great, one idea more sublime than the other; but what is our reason that we should confide in it? is our judgment always so certain in mere earthly affairs that we could safely confide our eternal peace to so frail a refuge? How vain is our thinking, how painful our unassisted reflection, our own research in pursuit of physical discoveries in the ordinary affairs of life; how often are we compelled to throw aside all that we have done already as labour lost; and when apparently near the end of our goal, how often are we forced to commence anew, with no better hopes of avoiding failure, the painful toil without which we cannot succeed at all? And still, in matters of religion, our judgment is to be infallible, our own opinion our unerring guide! It requires no argument to prove the fallacy of such reasoning, the very statement of the case is refutation enough of, this pernicious self-delusion. It becomes, therefore, our imperative duty to measure our obligations, not by our reasoning, but by the evident record of the Bible, and the explanation which we have received concerning the same from our forefathers. We must, in short, take for our direction what God has taught, and endeavour to shape our course undeviatingly by this blessed guiding-star, which has been assigned to us to render sure our steps upon the dangerous road of life, and to bring the tossed bark of our national hopes to the secure haven, in its tempestuous voyage upon the treacherous ocean of human events. And let history, both individual and national, speak for us, whether there is not always safety in adhering closely to the observances, and death, yea, death and destruction, in the deviation from the statutes which the Lord has written for our improvement.

It is true that there may be unenlightened men who cling to mere ceremonials, the mere outside of religion, as the spirit thereof, who see nothing in a ceremony but the act itself, whilst the essence, the reason of its institution, is hidden from their eye. But, foolish as these are, they are only guilty of the same folly, which the worldlings commit in neglecting the observances, because they see nothing therein of paramount importance; for these, too, omit to look into the essence of the religion of God. Let us see what did God wish to establish by choosing Israel? a monotheistic race, a people believing in one God, confiding in no other Saviour than the Creator himself, who proclaimed to themselves his law. What was the condition of mankind at that period and since? A constant struggling to destroy this faith, and to build up in its stead a series of errors, all more or less pernicious in their nature, because they hated and yet hate the religion of Israel. For the belief in a simple unity destroys at once all artificial systems of theory: as soon as you have once heard what our religion is, you understand it just as well as the most learned There is an end to fraud, to tyranny over the spirit. This, however, it was precisely what God intended to teach, all his people should alike know Him, as they were all alike bound to serve Him. When, therefore, this religion became known to the world without, it was met at every step by the contempt, the ridicule, and, not rarely, the persecution of by who differed from us. How was it, then, to be preserved intact amidst this unceasing warfare? Was there to be exerted a constant miraculous power to act as an antagonizing principle to the opposition it had to struggle with? How otherwise could the few monotheists be preserved and distinguished among the many who believed, and still believe, in a plurality of gods in some shape or other? The Lord, therefore, chose his own means to perpetuate his religion; he bound it firmly and for ever to certain observances, which should distinguish his followers among mankind as a people peculiarly devoted to his service. So we find with circumcision, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." By the Sabbath: "For it is a sign between me

and the children of Israel for ever." With the prohibited food: "And ye shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am holy, and you shall not defile yourselves on any creeping thing which creepeth on the earth; for I am the Lord who bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God, and you shall be holy, because I am holy." With the fringes it is said: "In order that you may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." We could multiply proofs; but it is enough, with what has been adduced already, to establish, as an incontrovertible fact, that the ceremonial observances have a meaning far above the mere act which is produced by them; they are to revert back on the spirit, render it free from the pollution of the external world, by ever and anon impressing on it the recollection of God, of his miracles, and of his revelation. Observe, brethren, on every occasion wherein Moses, by the order of God, gives a prominent reason for any observance, it is, that we have been bondmen, meaning the act is demanded as an evidence of gratitude, because we have received signal and undeserved benefits from our God and King. The observance, moreover, of the precepts will necessarily make a distinction between us who practise them and those who are not bound thereby. The heathen, the Mahomedan, the Nazarene, can have no interest in keeping the Passover, the Pentecost, the New Year, and the other festivals; they are meaningless to them; they have never been bondmen in Egypt; they never stood at the foot of Sinai to receive a law from the God of heaven; they never had a revealed law to offend against, so that they would have to seek atonement by the humiliation pointed out in the law. To them, therefore, the sound of the cornet is an unharmonious noise; but, to us, it speaks in the voice of a messenger of peace: "Return, ye backsliding children! why will you die, O house of Israel?" To them it would be useless to fast an entire day without bread, without water to pass their lips; but our fathers sinned grievously after receiving the law on Horeb; they speedily departed from the good way, and made, themselves a molten calf to worship the same; it was then that, after many days spent in prayer by the prophet, it was the pleasure of the Most High to stay the just indignation, and to withhold the destruction which had been deserved by the senseless multitude; and to have a constant memorial of the pardoning mercy of God, He instituted the tenth day of the seventh month as a perpetual ordinance, for a fast throughout our generations in all our dwellings. To fast, then, is to acknowledge before the Searcher of hearts that we acknowledge our unworthiness; and our dwelling an entire day in God’s house is a confession that we prize his favour above all other treasures; and we shall then also be reminded of the sublime experience of Israel in all ages, that it was one God who rendered our limbs free from slavery; one God and the same Being who delivered our souls from the bonds of darkness by the publication of his law; and one God and the same Being who, undeserving though we were, blotted out our sins without demanding sacrifice or atonement, and refused thus to exterminate those who had so daringly defied his holy will. This ordinance was to be observed throughout all times, in all places; what is this but to say, that every where there is one and only one God? at all times there is and can only be one revelation? Thus the ideas of the Unity and Revelation went hand in hand, and together they were to bless the heritage of the Lord with abundant light and peace, and render them for ever and aye free from the corruptions of superstition, idolatry, and false belief, those awful plagues of the mind, which have at all times exerted so baneful an influence on the souls of men, and the fate of empires. The few observations just laid before you on one branch of the ceremonies, could easily be extended to all others; the illustrations chosen were merely those that first presented themselves to my mind, without much weighing whether better and stronger ones might not readily be found. So pure is the religion of Heaven, that it requires no eloquent defence

to the thinking; and could only all men be equally instructed, it would assume at once the empire over all souls, and banish in a moment all error from the face of the earth. That this will ultimately result in the course of events, admits of no possible doubt; for God has spoken: "On that day the Lord shall be acknowledged ONE, and his name shall be ONE." It might perhaps then be that the ceremonies, being no longer of the important signification which they were hitherto, could be safely abolished or supplied by others of God's ordaining. But this too is doubtful, and we have no evidence that any changes will ever be made in our religion as regards Israel. At all events now the causes of the institution yet operate; we are to this hour surrounded by those who differ widely from us, whose thoughts of God are not those which the Bible contains, and who reject the law of Israel. If we were then to relax in our observances, if we were to break down the lines of demarcation which separate and surround us: we would at once yield up many of our members to amalgamation with the inimical world at large; we would thus step by step obliterate the heritage of the Lord, and destroy Israel from being his people, his witnesses, the bearers of his unity, unto the end of time. But we are commanded to be faithful; we have met with fearful retribution for neglecting the sacred charge confided to us; what should then be our course? Uphold the system of the ceremonies in all its vigour, and enjoin, by living instruction and faithful practice, upon all the branches of the house of Israel, to be true to the standard of faith which we have received, and not to depart to the right or to the left from the way which the Lord our God has commanded us. Every action, even the smallest, performed in the name, and unto the glory of God, will act as a purification of our heart, it will render it sensitive to the impression of righteousness, and will rivet closer and closer our union with the Father above, who wills to be sanctified in the assemblies of his people. Only thus can we be the heritage of the God of Jacob, when we are faithful ourselves, and draw others after us, the strong and the weak, the wise and the foolish, to come in with us, to enter the sanctuary together, to fall down in humility, to worship with an undivided spirit the ONE who is alone in heaven and earth, who is unchangeable and pure, full of mercy and truth, and whose will called forth the earth, that it stood, and who spread out alone the canopy of heaven.

Brethren! we are standing this day at the commencement of a new year from the creation. A few hours ago we hailed the coming season, and prayed that it might be blessed with abundance from before the God of our fathers. Let us hope that He has heard our prayer, and that the year which we have just commenced may be one of peace and plenty, of righteousness, and acceptability, in which union and good-will may prevail among all our brethren, and they be free from the enmity and attacks of the enemies of their faith. But we also have a duty to perform. We must not expect happiness, either temporal or permanent, without deserving it. Let us then arouse ourselves to additional vigilance; let us lay hold of the law of God, as a firm and only support during our earthly trials, as our only guide to yon realms of happiness, which our Father opens for us beyond the confines of the gloomy grave, which is destined to receive us when our earthly pilgrimage is drawn to a close. Dark indeed will the passage be, if we are without the grace of God; but a joyous awakening will be ours, if we have obtained his forgiveness, if our death has atoned for the wrong we have done.-Be watchful over your conduct; listen to the voice of admonition which is implanted within you; but above all, study the word of truth with unwavering faith, and follow its behests during every day of your life. So shall your prayers be heard on the Day of Atonement, and whenever you humble yourselves before your Father, and He will approvingly accept your repentance, and say by the blessed influence his peace exerts over the soul of man: "I have pardoned, as thou hast spoken." And may the unbought grace of the Lord, which exceeds all

blessings, be ours, now and for ever; and may his holy mime be praised through our humble means, and be to Him alone ascribed the glory, worship, and adoration from all mankind, from eternity to eternity.

Amen.

Wednesday, Elul 29. Oct. 1, 5605.

Chapter 32

S. Judaism and its Doctrines

Judaism and its Doctrines A Sermon

Thy glory, O Lord! is above the heavens, and in all parts of the universe, Thou art the same great, omnipotent Power by whose word all the elements from which the world is framed are kept in union and harmony. In the recesses of the darkest mountain, where the living fire melts solid rocks and hard metals, and whence issues the fiery stream which lays waste forests and subverts cities, and in the fathomless height where roll the sun and the stars as luminaries for endless worlds, Thou art the only guiding light to thy servant, the nature of outward things which Thou hast formed. Yet do we discover thy condescension, unending as Thou art! in that Thou hast ever been mindful of the human race, as those whom Thou hadst destined to bear rule on earth, and hast ever given them light and instruction that they might walk before Thee and be perfect. But especially have we, of the house of Israel, been most signally blessed in our having been called by thy providence to be messengers of thy unity and truth, although we are the smallest of nations, because that Thou hadst loved our forefathers, and because Thou wouldst remember the covenant, which Thou, unending Father! hadst made with the children of the dust. O how can we thank Thee for this signal goodness? What can we do to merit thy grace? But truly we feel that it is not our righteousness which calls down on us thy grace, nor our wisdom by which we are upheld. Yet do Thou perfect what we humbly begin, and establish our work by thy might and wisdom, that all the ends of the earth may see that thy name dwells among us, and that we are Thine, as servants and worshippers, and bearers of thy truth. Amen.

Brethren,

We are Jews, as we all acknowledge; about our individual name among the nations of the earth we are all agreed; we are the Israelites of the Scriptures, the Hebrews of the land of Egypt, and the Jews as known in modern times. But if one comes to inquire of different Jews as to their religious opinions, he will be surprised how many varying views he will find expressed, not indeed as derived from the religion itself, but as coming from the fertile imagination of the various individuals who express them. It is, however, a well-established fact, that Judaism has for centuries been exceedingly uniform in its principal features; not, that freedom of investigation was interdicted, or that honest difference in many views was not allowed; but that the general ideas which make up the sum of a Jewish system of belief were as nearly as possible uniform and universal among all classes, and, we may freely add, individuals of our people. I will not say that many singular notions were not adopted into the general belief of Israelites, derived from their intercourse with the various nations among whom they lived, and that these notions were not counter to a sound reason and even against the evident meaning of the Scriptures; for it would be folly to maintain that we are so superior to all children of men in intellect and intuitive knowledge, as to avoid the contagion of popular errors and superstitions on the one side, or to escape on the other the influence of a philosophy, which rejects everything as unworthy of confidence, for which we have not the actual experience of our senses. The Israelites are men; and therefore it would be

impossible, unless a special miracle were constantly performed for them, that they should remain entirely uninfluenced by what is thought, spoken, and done by those among whom they reside, and whose actions they are compelled to witness daily and hourly, whether they wish to observe them or not. So, then, we may freely say, that we always received an impulse from without either for good or evil, and our character was doubtlessly materially modified, either refined or hardened, either imbued with love for the gentiles or a bitter aversion for them, in the same proportion as they exhibited among themselves progress or otherwise, civilization or rudeness, love or hatred,* towards ourselves. But with these sole limitations, we may boldly assert, that the religious opinions, properly so called, of the Jews, had not undergone the smallest change for many centuries, so far as the records will permit us to decide; since the Scriptures were always the basis of our belief, and since these have not undergone the least change from the moment they were first entrusted to our custody.

* Many enemies of the Jews have been in the habit to hunt up expressions of illiberality which they discover in the Jewish writings, and to exhibit them to the consideration of their readers as the genuine exponents of Jewish feeling towards the gentiles. But it must be a malignant heart which does not discover the real cause for these expressions. What was the whole world to the Jew in the middle ages up to the end of the eighteenth century? what is it to him now in Russia, Prussia, in Austria, and wherever he is found in the greatest numbers? He is treated in a manner that the brute is treated kindlier in the field than he is. All around him are his enemies; the government oppresses him; the people turn from him in disdain; and the preachers, they who profess to preach a religion of peace and good will to man, fan the flame of hatred towards the rejected of their church. Was this not done by Christians of past ages? is the outrage not repeated in the present enlightened period by those who have the most light? It was also practised by heathens and Mahomedans. Whom then had the Jew to love? No one. Whom had he to fear? All mankind. Is it then to be wondered that he in return hated the world? that he should even think that whatever came into his hand through the error of a gentile was lawfully his? was he not plundered openly, and this daily, by prince and peasant? by bishop and layman? Where then should he get his wealth, the means to satisfy the avarice of his tormentors, but by cunning, trick, and circumvention? And yet he remained the noble, the patient, the hopeful Israelite; he continued kind to his persecutors, and loyal to the land of his oppression; and sought no private opportunities to seek revenge, referring his quarrel to God only, asking from Him who said “Mine are vengeance and recompense,” to look upon the rivers of innocent blood that were shed, and to have regard to the tears that flowed in streams down the cheek of the sage and the matron, of the youth and the maiden, of the bridegroom and the bride, in the anguish of their hearts and the constant dread of the sword and rapine which threatened them. And then you wonder that a truce of illiberality is here and there discoverable in the books written under the spur of the agonized spirit which was then so abundantly everywhere! that men, though they were Israelites, could learn to hate their enemies! It strikes one as most curious that Jews should blush to find such expressions in their books; on the contrary, it is only to be wondered that they still could teach “The righteous of the nations of the world are entitled to a share of eternal happiness;” “The Lord does not withhold the reward due to any creature whatever:” were it not that our wise men taught the pure truth in their doctrines, and felt convinced of the ultimate triumph of the truth, as the sincere Hebrew believes now, too, although in many respects his political condition has improved. The main principles of our belief then, are, first, the existence of God, including his unity, eternity, unchangeability,

incorporeality, and sole claim to worship; secondly, the existence of revelation from the God of all nature, including the confidence in the truth of the prophets, especially the great teacher of Israel, Moses, the son of Amram, and the certainty that this revelation is yet in our possession, and that it will not be exchanged and has hitherto not been changed for any other by the Power who bestowed it on us; thirdly, the existence of rewards and punishments, including the inherent power of God to know all that is done in any part of his world by the beings whom He has created; fourthly, the coming of a messenger to be specially deputed by God to fulfill all the promises which have ever been made, respecting the regeneration of mankind, and their being ultimately brought to a true knowledge of the Godhead, by which means much especial happiness is to accrue to the people of Israel; and fifthly, the resurrection of the dead, embracing the spiritual perfection of all the intelligent beings that ever emanated from the creative hand of God, and the perpetual abolition of all imperfections, sufferings, sinful inclinations, and death, from the face of the earth, a state in which righteousness shall be supremely rewarded, and guilt be exhibited in its fullest and most hideous complexions. Now as all these doctrines have been given to us in general terms, no doubt that different persons expounded them in somewhat varying colours, or understood them in different limitations. But despite of the various outward influences which bore upon us; notwithstanding the many changes which came over us during so many centuries ; and the many wanderings and expulsions to which we were subjected during all this time, we clung to our creed with the tenacity of affection, and would not yield a single fragment of an idea connected with it, though for so doing we were promised all that men prize high on earth, and our adherence to it subjected us to all that the world calls hardship, sorrow, and degradation. In former years, no one breathed a doubt against the hope of Israel, against the expected coming of the Messiah to lead Israel again to the holy land, to dwell there in peace and contentment, with God for their King, with the whole world for their confederates, since all were to be subject to the same blessed laws of truth and holiness which we possess. If any one attentively peruses our prayers, those formed in the earliest ages, no less than those composed under the pressure of the terrible persecutions which we had to suffer in Spain and kindred countries, he must be struck with the uniform expectation therein expressed, of a redemption through the son of David, and a restoration of the sacrificial worship at the time of the restoration, when the temple shall again rear its holy presence on Moriah, never more to be destroyed, nor to be defiled by the presence of the unclean and the wicked. Then also he will discover that it formed a part of our liturgy, both in the daily service, and the particular prayers used for the solemn festivals, to entreat the Almighty for a conversion of the world to his law, “that the fear of the Lord might be extended over all his works, and his dread over all that He has created, so that all his works may fear Him, and all creatures may bow down before his glory; so that all may form one band, to perform his will with an upright heart, as we his people know already, that his is the dominion, that might in his hand, and strength in his right hand, and that his name is tremendous over all that He has created.” And again we ask, “that the idols may be utterly destroyed at the speedy coming of the kingdom of God, whereby the world is to be reformed, so that all the children of flesh shall call on his name, and the wicked of the earth he turned towards Him; and that all the inhabitants of the world may know and understand, that unto Him every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall swear fealty; that before Him they shall kneel and fall down prostrate, and ascribe honour to the glory of his holy name, whilst they receive the yoke of his kingdom, and He thus reigns ever them for ever and ever.” I could easily adduce many more passages to show what our forefathers understood by the coming of the redeemer, as

developed in our prayers, the best standard by which to measure the real sentiments of any people which, like us, has written forms by which to address the Throne of Grace. As I have said already, the composition of the prayers extended over a long period of time, probably more than two thousand years; consequently, there is the amplest proof of a uniformity, nay, identity, in the religious opinions of the Jews during all that period, as respects the belief in a redemption. Our fathers knew as well as we do of the existence of Mohammedan and Nazarene creeds; they had seen the various triumphs of the crescent and the cross, and the gradual downfall of the many systems of idolatry which at one time were universal in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the substitution therefore, of the doctrines of the man of Mecca, and him of Nazareth. We had in those days men of great intellect, inferior to none in the present age; we had a Judah the chief, the author of the Mishna; a Rab Ashi, the author of the Talmud; a Saadyah Gaon, one of the first translators of the Scriptures into the vernacular language of the country, which to him was the Arabic; a Judah Hallevy, the prince of poets, and next to David, the sweetest hymnologist; an Aben Ezra, great in all the sciences of his day, a Moses of Cordova, universally known as Maimonides, renowned as philosopher, physician, and Talmudist, and versed in all the lore of his age; a Solomon Yitzchaki famous, for his comments on the Scriptures and Talmud, as the light of the captivity under the name of Rashi; and a host of others, who excelled all their contemporaries in wisdom and knowledge; many of our great teachers were principal officers at the courts of their sovereigns, and at one time, nearly every prince had a Jewish physician, so much were they respected and confided in. But did they for one moment falter in their faith? did they fancy salvation to have proceeded from Mecca or Nazareth? Let their writings testify that they were not misled, and never bowed their pure souls to the inventions of men, but held fast to the standard of the law and the prophets. They saw large empires converted to one system or the other, more rapidly than this takes place in our own days; they beheld the extermination of many idols which bowed and stooped before the advance of new opinions; yet they saw not in this the regeneration of the world; they felt that the sword was yet the arbiter between mankind, and was often unsheathed to aid the triumph of certain religious dogmas, and not rarely wielded to exterminate dissentients from the popular doctrines. They therefore sighed for the day of the Lord, when He will come in his glory to reign alone on earth, when his truth shall be everywhere acknowledged, and his name feared by every one. They forgot not Jerusalem in their prosperity, and though surrounded with honour and ease, they composed many of those elegiac hymns which even now touch a chord of anguish in our heart, as they make us weep over the sanctuary of God, into which the enemy forced his bloody way, and for the sons of Jacob that fell by the sword. These glorious men compromised not their belief by an exposition thereof, to suit either their kind or tyrannical rulers, as the case may have been; at the council-board of royalty they beheld a brighter throne for David erected in the restored Jerusalem, and under the hoofs of the horse of a murderous Arabian,* they beheld the fields of Judah covered with flocks of men, and the streets of the holy city crowded with playful boys and maidens, shouting in the innocent glee of their early years, unterrified by the powers of the adversary, who will exist no more. And when they languished in the dungeon of an Inquisition appointed to exterminate their faith, their beatified vision reveled in the overthrow of that abominable system which required their blood as its sacrifice, and they saw the prison-house levelled to the earth, and its builders and supporters, its judges and executioners cowering in the dust before the Lord’s elect, and they gazed on the priests of heaven, robed in white, and burning with intense devotion to the Father of Israel, again surround the altars, to bring

thereon sacrifice and incense. And when they stood before the burning pile, with the impatient crowd watching in eagerness till the headsman obtained the fearful command to tie the sainted martyrs to the accursed stake, their soul rose above the din and tumult of the world, and superior to death, it conquered all fear and trembling, and they feasted their sight in the assemblage of the thousands of the faithful who will, at the time which is coming, hasten again to the temple of the Lord, to the city where here He will again cause his name to dwell, and whence are to go out the law and the word of God to all sons of men.

* Alluding to the death of R. Judah Hallevy, who went to Jerusalem to visit the Holy City, the downfall of which he had so beautifully and touchingly lamented in his elegies; and then, whilst chaunting barefoot one of his own hymns, an infuriated Arab rode over him, and trod him to death under the hoofs of his horse. Were all these great men deceived? were their hopes but the vision of a night? their fond anticipations but the baseless fabric of a dream, or the fevered fancy of delirium? No, it cannot be; their words bear too much the stamp of sobered earnestness, of deep conviction; and they endured too much ever to have yielded themselves to anything but the certain persuasion that theirs was the faith which emanated from the wisdom of God. And thus armed, they cared not what happened to them; was it life, was it death, was it ease, was it exile, it was of no importance to these devoted servants; they were but fulfilling their destiny, as pointed out to them by the unerring finger of Providence, and they followed cheerfully the heavenly guidance, convinced that in the kingdom of their Father there would be ample reward for them, and all who had trusted on to the last. But these saints now sleep in the dust of the earth, joyfully awaiting their awakening from the grave to an immortal glory, and the fulfillment of their dearest hopes. And there have arisen men in our day, who wish for “no portion in David, and no inheritance in the son of Jesse;” who desire to reduce all our hopes to square with the views of tyrannical rulers, or to please states by their pretended identity of views. These men wish to strike out from our prayers all allusions to the restoration of the sacrifices, or the anticipated return of liberated Israel to their ancient domain. These men look for an ideal kingdom of God, wherein our nation is quietly to expire in the universal prevalence of a purified religion. These men wish not to see Israel restored; they ask for no greater happiness than to be regarded as entitled to a few offices by the respective states, and to be placed on a legal equality with the other citizens. They claim as their country exclusively that wherein they were born, or in which they live; and they imagine, or profess to believe, that the hope of a restoration must clash with our duties as citizens or subjects of the various potentates under whom we live protected, and at peace. Such erroneous opinions are boldly propounded, and diversified under a vast variety of peculiar shadings, to correspond with the peculiar degree of Jewish feeling yet inherent in the respective reformers, as they style themselves. But, if it were true that the belief in a restoration of temple, people, sacrifices, and the kingdom, implied necessarily, hostility to the various states in which we sojourn, it would follow as a matter of course, that our forefathers must have been enemies to all the world, by their pertinacity in adhering to their opinions; and hence our enlightened men, as they love to style themselves, the men of progress and of light, become the most obsequious defenders and apologists of all the cruel oppressors who have so multifariously laboured against our creed, by the slaughter, and banishment, and oppression of those who would not relinquish it at their bidding. To judge from the vehemence which one occasionally sees exhibited when it is hinted that the real belief of the Jew is his national restoration, he would come to the conclusion that a more pernicious doctrine never was entertained by any class of human beings; that it is absolutely a

hideous monster, against the approach of which we ought to guard ourselves by all the contrivances of modern science, and which we must deny with the bold effrontery of confirmed infidelity. But it requires no argument to prove that all this denial of Judaism has its source in the meanest of human failings, and that it is owing either to infidelity, an entire indifference to religion, or an obsequious yielding of conviction for the sake of flattering secular power, to wheedle it out of some tangible benefit, which otherwise would be denied to the professing Jew.

How differently did the great ones of antiquity act! with how much self-devotion and forgetfulness of all personal interest did they acknowledge their convictions, let the consequences be what they might; and it is precisely this love for things of the world which has caused so much destruction among us, and brought about the painful exhibition of open profanity and shameless sinning which so much characterize our age.-I have stated before, that the progress of science all over the world, not among us alone, has produced a great revolution in opinions, and ideas once acquiesced in, and beliefs once firmly entertained have faded before the light of investigation, which proved their unsoundness. So also were many ideas once common among us, superstitious notions I mean, borrowed by degrees from surrounding influences, the silent inroads of which we could not resist, silently dropped as not compatible with reason and religion, and before long they will not be known any more as ever having had a place in the minds of Jews. But the wicked and the thoughtless have taken advantage of this circumstance, and they have dared to treat as an antiquated error whatever stands in their way and opposes their interests, or that which their limited intellect cannot comprehend, and which their vain-glorious philosophy places in the category of impossibilities. But it must be evident to every child even, that if religion is nothing more than a system changeable with every change in refinement and scientific progress or retrogression, it cannot be an emanation from Heaven. It is true that it has been confided to mankind for their use and employment, and hence little matters may change with the times, which fact will be clearly reconcilable with the Mosaic code when correctly viewed. But to assert that time has any legitimate business with principles or great observances, would, as said, destroy religion totally as a safe guide in the path of morals and belief which we all feel the necessity of possessing. If the progress of society in civilization justifies the removal of all that men do not find to accord with their own notions of advance in all things: it follows as a legitimate deduction, that if society retrogrades, which it frequently has done, and may do again, then all the superstitions and cruelties resulting from a perverted view of duty will become again justifiable; in other words, that whatever is done by public assent, this being the standard of social position, is just and proper, be this the folly of the Crusades, the bloody wars of Mohammed and Charlemagne, for the propagation of their creeds, or the wholesale butcheries of the Inquisitions in the faith ordered and recognised as legitimate by the decrees of many Roman pontiffs. But, I imagine, that the wildest claimant for the right of progress will not say that such acts ever were justifiable, and that the most we can assert is that the perpetrators thereof are to be pitied for their blind ignorance, since they could be guilty of heinous crimes in the name of religion.

Religion itself, however, has never justified any act of barbarity, and at all times there were those who inveighed against the deeds which were wrought within their knowledge, by an appeal to that very code in the name of which the outrages were committed. Now, taking this sober and candid view of the question, we must deny any right of appeal to the spirit of the age as a valid excuse to remodel our religion, upon the arbitrary basis thus attempted to be forced upon us. We want

something far more stable than the visionary notion of every one who has skill enough to write a book, or preach a sermon; we want a more permanent support for our light to futurity, than the mad schemes of some disappointed worldling who, because he cannot be a Rabbi among Jews, is ready to become grand inquisitor among their oppressors. But we need not search far for this stable basis, this permanent support, this unfading light; for it is already with us, in those Holy Scriptures which we have in our possession, and which have been watched over with more than maternal solicitude by the Israelites, in all their sorrows, in all their exiles; and what they declare to be right, has ever been our law, has ever formed the matter which we called our belief; and whatever may be alleged to the contrary, the Scriptures alone have always constituted the Jewish religion, and nothing opposed to them can be regarded as of any weight whatever. If this is the truth, and there can hardly be any doubt on that point, it follows that there is a standard, superior to the spirit of any age, which requires no change nor amendment with every discovery or newfangled notion which makes its appearance before the world. Now, upon the basis of Scripture do we rest our belief in a redeemer, not upon the mere imaginings of any eminent man of any age, nor upon the scientific discoveries of a college of learned experimentalists. Look at the prophecies from one end of the Bible to the other, and all speak of a change in the affairs of mankind, and Israel in particular, which has not been witnessed to this hour, and which, nevertheless, the course of events clearly points out as certain to arrive.

I have detained you so long already to-day, that I must omit the discussion of the details for a future occasion; and merely finish at present, with a positive announcement of the restoration, which is found in the Haphtorah of to-day, from Ezekiel 37:1-28. The prophet was ordered to exhibit, by the union of two pieces of wood, which he was to exhibit to the people, the future union of the rival kingdoms of Judah and Ephraim, which both had ceased to exist at the tune the prophecy was spoken. Ephraim now is lost, and the tribes associated with him are not known among us. Judah is scattered, and fills the whole world with his fugitives. And yet we are promised that they shall become one people on the mountains of Israel, under the rule of one king. And then shall they do more be chargeable with sin and transgression; because, when gathering them from all their dwelling-places, God will himself cleanse them from guilt, and they shall be his people. And he says in continuation, Ezekiel 37:24 :

[redacted]

“And my servant David shall be king over them; and one shepherd shall be for them all; and in my judgments they shall walk, and my statutes they shall observe and do them.” This is the future of which the prophet speaks, and this is the Messiah, the king David, the one shepherd whom we are told to expect. Shall we believe in the God who has so long guarded us, or shall we cease to be Jews for worldly gain, or from unbelief? Decide for yourselves, brethren, and sure I am that ultimately enlightened faith will triumph over worldliness, and we shall all march under the same banner which waved over our fathers, and that we shall continue as the people of God, and merit at length his mercy. Amen.

Friday, Tebeth 10th, December 17th, 5608.

Chapter 33

S. Lecture on Haphtorah Lech Lecha

Lecture on Haphtorah Lech Lecha.* Delivered at the West London Synagogue of British Jews, by the Rev. D. W. Marks, Sabbath October 30, 5607 (1846).

* The present lecture is the third of a series in the collection of ■■■■■■■■. The ■■■■■ appointed to be read this afternoon extends, according to the division in the English Bibles, from the 17th verse of the 40th chapter of Isaiah, to the 16th verse (inclusive) of the 41st chapter. But the Haphtorah connecting the five last verses of the 40th chapter, with what follows in the 41st, entirely preserves the sense of the prophecy, which is certainly not the case in the division of chapters adopted in the translations. The passage selected for our text, and which must have impressed our ancestors as bearing some analogy to the portion of the Pentateuch which we have just heard read, is found in Isaiah 41:2-5.

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“Who did raise up the righteous man from the East, who appointed him the path he should tread? who subdued nations at his presence, and gave Him dominion over kings, made them like dust before his sword, and like the driven stubble before his bow? He pursues them, he passes peacefully, no one hath before trodden his path. Who hath performed and accomplished these things, calling the generations from the beginning? It was I, Adonai, the first, and with the last I will be the same.” The prophecy from which I have quoted, is (as will be seen in the sequel) of a similar tendency to that brought under our consideration on the last Sabbath; and has for its object, the consolation of Israel in their misfortunes. It exhorts them to continue steadfast to the intelligent principle propounded by the patriarch Abraham, of the absolute unity of the Godhead; and it promises future prosperity and the choicest spiritual blessings to the descendants of Abraham, if they remain firm to the doctrine which he unfolded; since what God made known through their progenitor to the first generations, He will require to see practised by the last generations. The Haphtorah opens with a commission to the prophet to raise the courage of the broken-hearted Israelites, who, by reason of their prolonged captivity are sunk into despair, believing themselves entirely forsaken by their God.■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ “Wherefore sayest thou, O Jacob, and why speakest thou thus, O Israel, My condition is hidden from the Lord, and my cause is not regarded by my God?” Are you then ignorant of what the Almighty has already performed for Israel, and what He has sworn to accomplish for you in future? Are you not aware that God is eternal, constant, and that His great purposes are unchangeable? ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ “What dost thou not know, hast thou not heard, how that Adonai is the everlasting God?” Think you that He who saved your fathers cannot deliver you, that He who burst asunder your chains in Egypt, cannot in the same miraculous manner unrivet the fetters which now hold you in captivity? Is all the potency of God at an end, is His supreme influence quite spent? No; ■■

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “Neither is He faint or weary,” and whatever sorrows may be now thy portion, whatever trials thou mayest be required to endure, and however thou mayest consider thyself unable to bear up against thy sufferings and thy persecutions: God best knows thy condition and the fitting time to relieve it; for though thy knowledge be confined within a given circle, bearing reference to the present time only, God is eternal, omniscient and omnipresent; yea [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “His supreme understanding is unsearchable.” The prophet intimates that the strongest evidences may be found of God’s watchful providence to the Israelites, in the fact that they have not sunk under their severe persecutions. Never was there a people so tempest-beaten as the Israelites, of whom a vestige of nationality or of identity could be preserved; but in this remarkable instance [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “God has continually reinvigorated the faint, [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] and to those who were infirm He has multiplied force, [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] Though the most robust may sink beneath affliction and become faint, and though chosen youths may stumble and fall: [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] those that place their confidence in the Almighty Lord shall gather new strength [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] they shall put forth fresh feathers like the moulting eagle.” And such has indeed been the condition of the Israelites; for when they have appeared to be stricken down so that they never should rise again, when they have seemed to be extirpated as a people, “they have put forth fresh feathers like the moulting eagle,” and they have verified the divine prophecy, “when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and the floods shall not overwhelm thee, and when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be scorched, and the flame shall not take hold of thee.”*

* Isaiah 43:2.

All nations and peoples [redacted] [redacted] are then summoned to beat witness to God’s miraculous dealings with the Jewish people, from the day that He called Abraham their ancestor to himself, and sent him forth as the herald of divine truth. [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “Let all nations draw near,” and examine closely into my ways with Israel; “then let them pronounce, and let us enter into a solemn debate together.” The Lord is now represented as addressing the several nations, and appealing to them whether they are not satisfied to conviction of the peculiar providence which He has ever manifested towards the Abrahamic race. [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “Who was it that called the righteous Abraham from the East,” and sent him abroad to raise altars where the doctrine of the One God was taught? [redacted] [redacted] “Who appointed him the path that he should tread; [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] Who subdued nations at his presence, and gave him influence over kings,” so that wherever he directed his steps he overthrew the obscene idol-worship of nations, and influenced kings and priests to acknowledge [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “The Eternal Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of Heaven and Earth?” Who was it that so controlled events that Abraham might chase away the errors of a false worship, [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “that he might pass on to perform his mission in peace,” [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] ”in which path no one before had ever trod?”

Prior to the time of Abraham, brute force was the only recognised means by which man could be induced to acquiesce in any purpose desired; but it was reserved for the immortal ancestor of the Hebrews to make known the powerful influence of mind, of reason, of persuasion, of charity and forbearance, in refining the thoughts and softening the hearts of the human race. To Abraham we are indebted for the teaching and the practice of that great Truth, which Israel was at a future period to make manifest to the world: [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] “It is not bodily

strength nor physical force that shall prevail, but the influence of mind." "O ye nations," continued the prophet, speaking in the name of God: ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ "Who hath devised and accomplished things ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ by calling the generations from the beginning." Was it merely the result of accident? No ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ "It was I, Adonai of the first ages ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ and with the last ages I will be the same." The prophet then refers to the manner in which the several nations have leagued themselves together to defeat God's eternal purposes by persecuting the children of Abraham, how ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ "every one assisted his fellow■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ and bade his comrade to be of good courage, ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ how the carver encouraged the smith ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ how he that smoothed with the hammer encouraged him that smote on the anvil ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ saying of the solder it is good." But vain have been, and vain shall be, the efforts of thy persecutors, O my people, saith the Lord ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ "For thou art Israel, my servant; Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my beloved ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ I have led thee by the hand from the extremities of the earth;" I have been watchful of thee at all times ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "Saying unto thee, Thou art my servant;" and I the Lord, faithful to my word and constant to my purpose, will never withdraw my protection from thee. Let nations publish whatever opinions they may, let them say that the Lord who once chose the seed of Abraham has cast them off for people of another creed, let them say that the followers of the doctrines of Moses have been made to give way before the followers of teachings which aim at extinguishing the spark kindled by Abraham, and which blazed forth so vividly at Sinai in the first and second commandments:-thou, O Israel, hast the assurance of thy God ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ Once have I "chosen thee, and I will not reject thee." "Banish then thy fears, O Israel," continues our text; ■■ ■■■ ■■■ "for I am with thee ■■ ■■■■ Be not dismayed ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ for I am thy God." The time shall come when ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ "they that were enraged against thee," on account of thy faith, "shall be ashamed and confounded; ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ they that contend against thee shall become as nothing. Thou shalt seek them and not find them, even the men that strove with thee; ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ for I am Adonai thy God, who doth hold thee fast by thy right hand, ■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ I am He, who saith unto thee, Fear not, for I will help thee." Isaiah concludes this prophecy, and with it the Haphtorah by once more promising the Israelites that though their persecutors shall cease, they themselves whall remain glorious, happy and delighting in the Lord. The passage is so exquisitely poetical, the imagery so choice, and at the same time forcible, and so peculiarly adapted to the ideas of an agricultural nation, to whom it is addressed, that I cannot refrain from giving the two concluding verses in full.

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"Behold, I have destined thee, O Israel, to become, as it were, a thrashing wain; a new corn-drag armed with pointed teeth. Thou shalt thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and reduce the hills to chaff. Thou shalt winnow them, and the wind shall bear them away, and the tempest shall scatter them abroad. But as for thee, (seed of Abraham,) thou shalt rejoice in Adonai, yea, in the Holy One of Israel shalt thou triumph."* * See the version of Dr. Lowth, in loco.

Having thus endeavoured to explain the portion of our Haphtorah for this Sabbath, let us consider how we may profit by the instruction it conveys, and which it avowedly seeks to illustrate in the life of Abraham. The prophet Isaiah declares that when the Almighty chose the patriarch for his servant, He had in view not only the happiness of Abraham himself, but also that of his posterity, of us, brethren, of our children and children's children, and of the whole human race. With Abraham appeared the first light in the annals of the world, and since the day that his name was pronounced, history has never ceased to speak of the destinies of his race. Moreover the prophet adds, that Abraham was selected to publish to the world the tidings of truth; and since truth can admit of no variation, of no change, but must ever be the same, so the God of Abraham requires that we, the descendants of the immortal patriarch, should live in the confession of the same principle of truth, and proclaim it by our lives, by our acts, by our worship, and by our instruction, to all the earth. This prophetic teaching places the Faith of the sons of Abraham on a firm and infallible basis, and renders it infinitely more stable than the physical world, so that it cannot be moved. It teaches us that the Supreme Lord is constant to His purposes, true to His word, and that what He once declares to be divine doctrine, He will never modify or change, or, to employ the words of our text before quoted ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ "What God required of the first generations," when He called Abraham, "the same will He require of the generations at the end of time." True it is, brethren, that the creed of the Hebrews has been more fully developed since the time of Moses, than it could possibly be in the days of Abraham-for the practical illustration of the sublime ethics propounded at Sinai required a nation of men, living under a theocratical form of government, and constantly and visibly superintended by the especial providence of God. Hence it was only needful to prepare Abraham and his immediate descendants for the fulness of Divine Revelation, by keeping alive within them the grand principle of truth, upon which the whole Sinaic scheme was to be based, viz.: The principle of the Essential Unity of the Godhead. God is One and One only, not a compound, but a simple essence; not made up of parts and divisible into persons, but One in such a sense as the plain reason of man can comprehend, a unit, absolutely independent of every created thing-this, this is the Truth which Abraham was chosen to teach, this is the Truth which Isaac and Jacob published at the altar, this is the Truth which they taught in their families, this is the Truth which, the Lord proclaimed at Sinai, and upon which the Theology and the polity of Israel were based, and this is the Truth, which the prophet Isaiah assures us in the Haphtorah of this day, Adonai will require us to feel, to acknowledge and openly teach till the end of time, since "what He demanded of Abraham's generation, He will demand of the last generations of the earth."

You will have remarked, my hearers, that as soon as the prophet has declared the Divine will that we should hold firm to the teachings of Abraham. He proceeds to comfort us in our sufferings, and promises us future glory in happiness. These two facts, so inseparably connected, clearly instruct us that all the hopes of Israel, which the Bible declares will be accomplished, can only be fulfilled by our rigid adherence to the doctrine of the patriarch ■■ ■■■ "The Lord is One." The whole Mosaic system gathers itself into this single point, and the converging lines of all prophetical teaching meet near this one object. For the ■■■■■ (Jew) it is to be the chief thought, the leading idea. According to the words of Moses, the Jew is to hold this doctrine so essentially certain, so fully proven to his convictions, and so far is he to be from permitting anything to disturb his belief on this head, that if he should ever be called upon to admit that God is not One, but two persons or three persons, by reason of any miracle of which he may hear, or which he may himself see,

Moses tells the Jew to refuse the evidence of what another has seen, and in fact to doubt the evidence of what appears miraculous to his own eyes, rather than to deny or qualify in any way the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, the corner stone of Divine Revelation.

If after these prophetic exhortations, the Bible be not of itself sufficient to establish for ever in Israel the doctrine of God's unity, it would be presumptuous of the preacher to suppose himself capable to place this truth in a clearer light. God's unity is perhaps the only dogmatical feature in the Jewish system; because the love that we bear to God is consequent upon the sentiments we form of His essence. Moses first writes ■■ ■■■ "The Bible plainly teaches us that in God's own wise time, all people shall do homage to the doctrine of Abraham, or as it is called by us, the Master Truth of Revelation. The prophet Jeremiah speaks thus to Israel ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ "The Gentiles from the extremities of the earth shall come to your belief, and shall acknowledge that their fathers inherited error." Zechariah, one of the latest prophets, 8:23, speaks the divine message:

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"Thus saith Adonai Zebaoth, in these days ten men out of all nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will follow you, for now we know that God is with you." The prophet Zephaniah declares that the Jews shall ever remain as a nation of witnesses to God's unity; but that in the latter days they shall not stand alone, for God will incline all men ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ "to call upon the name of the Lord and to worship Him with one mind," so that■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "at that time God shall be acknowledged as One, and His name be worshipped as One." And finally, the Prophet Joel speaks the message of the Lord:

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"Then shall ye know, ye nations, how I have dwelt in the midst of Israel, how I am your eternal God, and that there is no other. And never shall my people Israel be put to shame" for the Faith in which they have lived.

Chapter 34

S. Life and Eternity

Life And Eternity An Address Delivered At The Funeral Of Mr. John Moss, Who Departed This Life on Monday, The 5th of April, 5607, and Was Buried on Thursday, the 8th.

Brethren and Friends: When we are assembled, as at this day, over the remains of departed worth, near the last resting-place of a man well known and esteemed in the community of which he was for years an honoured member, thoughts will involuntarily crowd upon the mind, and we will, in the consciousness of human frailty, exclaim with the Psalmist:

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"Who is the man that can live and not see death, and cause his soul to escape from the power of the grave, Selah."-(Psalms 89:49.) From the moment of our birth, our soul will tell us, we are travelling onward to the consummation appointed for us, and everything around us is a pledge that we must return to the dust as we were in the flesh, whilst the spirit will return to God who gave it. Days dawn and they close, they break upon us in health and in sickness, prosperity may be in our dwelling, or we may be oppressed by the weight of adverse fortune; but be they days of joy or sorrow, they cannot be recalled; and with each does, the sand of life ebb in the hour-glass of our earthly existence, and nothing in our power can bring back the moments that are past, and we hasten on toward the end of our days, and we speed hence before we are almost aware that we have lived. And yet we toil as though our labour would be ours for ever; we build as though we imagined our structures would stand unmoved from generation to generation; we heap up as though we fancied that our hold would never relax. And still we see others labour for strangers; we behold their structures fall into rapid decay, and their heaps of treasure given over to the custody of those who came into existence after them. We are amazed at the folly of others for toiling so constantly in vain; but are we wiser? do we ourselves realize our own mortality with the same intensity of feeling which we apply to that of others? I fear not; but that we are so hurried onward by our peculiar avocations, that we lose imperceptibly the knowledge that we are like all other men, mere sojourners on earth like all our fathers have been. Indeed the earth and its pleasures and its glories alone seem to attract us; each one fancies that his neighbour is engaged in the pursuit of vanities: whilst he himself follows in the same career, though perhaps in a different manner. Each one asks for the share of the earth which he claims as his due; but where are they who labour for eternity? who seek to enrich their spirit with the treasures which never decay, with the delights which are never ending? Alas, that we cannot assure ourselves that the number of such wise ones is large, that we cannot meet with many who are thus travelling upward. Ay, it is true we are in the hands of a merciful Father, who will not reject utterly the child of his own creation, who forgives abundantlv, because his mercies are great; but where are they who seek to deserve his favour? where are they who strive to be his ministering angels on earth, to dispense blessings around them, for the reason that they have been blessed themselves? who strive to cause many to depart from sin, because they themselves have received light from above, and knowledge has entered their souls? On the contrary, how apt are we to fancy, in our vain conceit

of self-righteousness, that we have done sufficient in every relation of life, that we have given enough away in charity to the poor, that we have conscientiously discharged our duty in spreading the religion of our God among his creatures, that in short we have fulfilled our duty entirely and truly. Hence we cast not a searching look into our conduct; perhaps we are admonished by various accidents, by a casual word of admonition which reaches our ears, that we are defective, radically sinful in our thoughts and deeds; but we speedily apply the soporific of self-deception to our awkward conscience, we succeed in lulling it again to sleep, and fancy that days, weeks, months, and years will still be ours, that at a future period we shall have more leisure and better opportunities, when we will faithfully labour for heaven, after the demands of the earth are satisfied. But the years we imagine to be in store for us may never be dispensed; our thread of life may be destined to be cut short; and we are then borne hence with all our imperfections unamended, all our sins unatoned for. We fancy that we shall be favoured with the same opportunities, with the same or more extended means to be a blessing to others; but who warrants us that this will be so? Do we not see that health decays in others, so that they are deprived of the power to labour? do we not often witness that the faculties of the wise depart, so that they are not able to afford instruction? do we not often behold riches escaping from the grasp of their possessors, so that they themselves have to depend on the bounty of others? If in pleasures of carnal nature we are anxious to enjoy the moment, because a worldly philosophy teaches us that to-morrow we may die; if in business matters it is the part of prudence not to let the opportunity slip, which favourable circumstances place at our disposal: how much more intent ought we not then to be where it concerns the affairs of eternity? why should I wait to exert myself in the cause of humanity when I have abundant health today, whereas this may not be to-morrow? why shall I omit teaching the law of my God, whilst my faculties are unclouded, when I know not how soon my soul may be dark? why should I close my hand to the needy one, my brother, when I am not assured of a continuance of my days of prosperity?-These are all momentous questions, which cannot force away from the presence of my soul, without incurring the charge of an unwise slothfulness, and an unwillingness to acknowledge my accountability to a higher Power, a Power which is constantly at work in all my concerns, a Power, the watchfulness of which is not withdrawn, no matter where I may be placed, and that I am supervised by an Intelligence which takes cognizance of all my deeds and knows my words and thoughts. And is it not for all that so often witnessed among the sons of man, that their conduct betokens a perfect recklessness of their perishable state? do they heed the admonition which disease, which reverses, which death inculcate, to turn away from the path of worldly vanities to seek refuge in heaven? do they value eternity? do they believe that their soul is to be judged? O it is a fearful thing, that we have to confess that there are many who if they even do not say in their heart, “There is no God,” still act as though to them there was no Supreme, that they themselves alone of all mankind had received a perfect freedom of action, an exemption from visitation for their transgression. But is it well to trust to this security, which nothing in our whole experience permits us to assume as ours? Yea, our house has stood, unmoved for many summers; the snows of a hundred winters shall have descended on our fields, and their fruitfulness not been diminished; but is is this eternity? are we therefore removed from judgment? established in the possession of what we covet beyond the reach of contingencies? Let it have been well with us ever so long; let us have enjoyed without interruption: the days of evil will to a certainty overtake us in common with other men, and perhaps when too late we will discover that we have clung to a shadow, grasped with unappeasable

eagerness at vanity, which flitted away and away from our sight, the nearer we imagined we were about securing it unto ourselves for ever.

Especially is such worldliness reprehensible in a child of Israel, in the descendants of those men who were selected as a people of God from amidst other nations, with signs and with mighty wonders. Unbelief must stand rebuked before a perusal of the history of Israel; there is too legibly impressed the finger of Providence, the guidance of our God, who has conducted us through tribulations without number, to bear witness to his divine rule in the world which He created in his superabundant goodness. And for what was this selection made? was it that we should live at ease? in the enjoyment of all earthly things unrestrained and unrestricted? The very reverse is the case; we received the laws that we might live by doing them, and we were promised blessing if we would abstain from what God had declared unto us to be unclean; our pleasures were circumscribed, and our days of labour were diminished, in order that we might obtain the approbation of the Lord by yielding obedience to his voice. To judge, therefore from the evident tenor of Judaism, it was to be a religion for exalting the standard of humanity, to teach an erring world to seek for happiness in things not pertaining to earth, since in all matters of this nature we were hemmed round with prohibitions which attach not to the followers of other systems; and accordingly we find that the holy men of the Bible always regarded the favour of their God, to be obtained through obedience, as their highest good, they could and did arise superior to the trials of life, and contemplated their end as an approach to their Creator, as a return of a child, after a long journey, to the hospitable home of its parent. And in truth is it not our Father's house to which we are journeying? and whilst thus on our road, are we not also in His dominions, shone on by His sun, warmed by His heat, refreshed by His light, fed from His abundant store-house? Yes, labour and toil, think and reflect, and what are you without Him? Can you cause a single blade of grass to grow without His helping hand? And yet how very often do you brave his wrath, by refusing to walk in the way He bids you to go! you will strive incessantly to make yourselves great on the earth, without heeding whether you labour within the circle set unto you by the gracious permission of your God; He in His goodness points out the road to salvation, whereas so many hurry away in their waywardness, and heed not the blessed voice which resounds to them in so many ways to return to the safe enclosure whilst life is spared, and they are permitted to earn beatitude through their own acts of obedience. Yes, again and again is this call renewed; as we read in Job 33:1-33, "If he prayeth to God, He will be gracious to him, and he will see his face in joy, and render unto man his righteousness. If he hath acted harshly against men, and he saith, I have sinned and perverted righteousness, and it hath not profited me: He redeemeth his soul from going into the pit, and his life will see the light. Behold, all these things God worketh twice, thrice with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to shine in the light of life." The light of the land of life, the bond in which the spirit of the righteous is bound up with the Creator, is the ultimate aim of the religion which he imparted to us from the beginning; for that we are told to be obedient, for that we are told to return if we have sinned. No earthly prosperity, you will easily observe, is promised if we amend our course; but that our soul may be redeemed from corruption to shine in the light of true life, a life where the canker worm destroys not the fruits, where no mildew or rot destroys the harvest. And what is all earthly greatness to this glorious end, where the righteous who induced many to seek their God will shine, according to the prophecy of Daniel, like the stars for evermore? where, though all will be blessed, those will be most exalted who have spread according to the gifts imparted to them the kingdom of God! And who is incapable of acting in the premises? where is

the humble brother who cannot lead the humble to prostrate themselves at the footstool of grace? The field is indeed ample, the harvest promises the utmost abundance, and the reward is equally certain, even to the extent of the power of Him who asks to follow Him in his ways, to be merciful as He is merciful, to be gracious as He is gracious, to extend truth and righteousness even as He acts towards all his creatures, none of whom are too high to be reached by his power, none of whom are too humble to receive his paternal regard.

These are some of the reflections which have forced themselves upon my mind whilst I was requested to accompany, with a few words, the remains of the departed Israelite which we have just borne to the grave. He had through his conduct obtained the esteem of the citizens of our community, who frequently sought for his advice in public emergencies, and claimed his participation in deeds of charity in the many cases when distress fell upon those who could not help themselves. In our own congregation, he always took an active part, and without saying of the dead a single word of praise beyond the strictest truth, or flattering the living by ascribing to him a merit not justly due, I must say that he was ever proud of being a Jew, and his last wish was that he might be interred as a son of Israel. Let us hope that his descendants, who are numerous in our midst, may be animated by a true spirit of godliness to imitate their parent's virtues, and to extend the blessings which ample wealth places in their power. Let us hope that they will feel the sacred obligation which rests upon them as Israelites; the duty which is theirs, to honour the memory of their departed progenitor, by a firm adherence to that faith in which they are born, in which he died a firm believer. And upon us all, who are here at this mournful occasion, let it make a lasting impression, that the end of life is death, and that death will bring life if we have lived as becomes servants of the Most High. Thus will this dispensation, which overtook our brother, at the ripe age of more than seventy years, redound to the advantage of all, and we shall be made wiser and better by assembling here upon the field where sleep so many of our nearest and dearest friends, who repose in peace, in life everlasting, according to the will of the Lord of heaven and earth.-And thou, departed spirit, go thou on thy way and arise to unending life amidst the servants of thy God, on the day when He will open the graves of his people and banish death for ever, and wipe away the tear from every face, as He has spoken. Amen.

O Lord our God, the Author of Life, we pray Thee to remember in mercy the spirit of thy departed servant, and grant him heavenly rest in thy presence, with a forgiveness of sin and a pardon of all his transgressions; and let his memorial ascend before thy judgment seat, and say that Thou hast found a ransom; for it is in thy power to save the living and the dead, inasmuch as all the world is Thine, and the graves are open before Thee, and naught can oppose thy will, or say unto Thee, "What dost Thou?" And teach those who now mourn in the bereavement which thy justice has inflicted, to bow with meek submission to thy all-wise decree, and cause them to look up unto Thee for consolation; for Thou alone art our God who comfortest those who are grieved, and raisest up those who are bowed down; and let the event which humbles them be the means to cause them to seek thy favour by an adherence to thy law, that they may be cleansed from iniquity, and become worthy of thy favour, which is life everlasting. May also our prayer ascend unto Thee for the mourners of all thy people Israel; and let it be thy will to cause thy spirit to breathe a hope of better things into their. souls, that they may be strengthened in Thee, and bear with meek submission the ills which have been imposed upon them; so that purified through the fire of tribulation, they may be cleansed from sin, and appear before Thee on the day of their

separation from this life among those whose transgressions are pardoned, whose delinquencies for ever blotted out from the book of remembrance. Do this not for our sakes, but for the sake of thy covenant with our fathers, and for the sake of thy holy name by which we are called. Amen.

Tuesday, Nissan 20th, April 6th, 5607.

Chapter 35

S. Life in Faith

Life in Faith Installation Sermon by the Rev. James K. Gutheim, at Cincinnati, on Sabbath Beshalach, 5606. To express much in few words, is a necessary and at the same time difficult task, which the teacher of the word of God is called upon to fulfill; since for many words, the time is too short, the work too great, and not seldom is the audience unwilling to listen to them; moreover, to interpret the precepts and truths which comprise our eternal salvation, in all their sublimity and grandeur, the language of man is too poor, too deficient, too incompetent. And how various must be the effect the words of the preacher are to produce! He has to convince the mind, and to soothe the heart; it is his province to encourage the believing, to strengthen the wavering, to reclaim the backslider, to convince the skeptic, to console the afflicted. But how much more difficult is this task, when a comparative stranger addresses for the first time a congregation in behalf of this holy cause. Ought he not to choose and select and search for the right words, in which to pour out his heart and spirit, to make his discourse a theme of reflection, and a source of gratification to his hearers? My friends! in such a position do I now stand before you. Personally unknown to the large majority of these who are here congregated in the presence of God, I have received the honourable call, to preach to you his holy law. Aware as I am of the magnitude of the undertaking; diffident as I feel in my humble capacities, chiefly on account of its being the first time I have the honour to address by word of mouth a congregation of my coreligionists in the English language; I yet joyfully respond to the invitation tendered to me, in the firm consciousness that, where such a solicitude for our holy religion has manifested itself, I can hope that my effort will be judged with indulgence and charity. But can it be wondered at that I felt some embarrassment how and wherewith to fill out this holy hour, in order that the spirit and the heart of my hearers be engaged and edified? And I opened the book of truth, and I explored its divine treasures, and I asked our sages what text to choose which would correspond with my task: to impart to the Israelite, in few words, the knowledge of his destiny on earth? I find an answer in the Talmud:

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Then came Habakkuk and comprised the whole faith in one fundamental doctrine, saying: Behold his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just liveth in his faith. In this passage of the Talmud it is shown how every succeeding prophet endeavoured to simplify the word of God, to condense the precepts of religion into one focus, the blessed rays of which should illumine and invigorate our whole life. Thus did David, thus Isaiah, thus Michah, until Habakkuk came and reduced the simple truth to a single point, and God-inspired, he exclaimed: **[redacted]**! "The just liveth in his faith!" Could we find a more beautiful answer to our question than these words of the prophet? When the patriarch of old, our father Abraham, received from the, Lord the promise that his descendants should be as many as the stars on heaven, Scripture tells us, "And he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness." When the children of Israel were groaning under the yoke of Pharaoh, and received the first message from the Lord that He was mindful of his covenant, and that he would liberate them from bondage, Scripture tells us:

"And the people believed!" And when, as we read in to-day's Parashah, their liberation was accomplished under the most miraculous circumstances, Scripture again tells us: "And they believed in the Lord and in Moses his servant!" In all these important incidents in the life and history of our forefathers, "Faith" was sincerely manifested by them; could we then employ this hour more usefully, more advantageously, than to make "Life in Faith" the theme of our reflection? Let us therefore, for the better understanding of our subject, consider life I. In our Domestic Circle;

II. In our Calling; how it will exhibit itself, if we, like the just, live in faith in all our pursuits, in all our actions; and if we live in faith, wherever we stand, wherever we sit, wherever we walk. May the Lord grant us his countenance and his blessing in this hour of devotion. Amen.

I.

"The just liveth in his faith!" Where, brethren, do we spend a greater portion of the days allotted to us on earth, than at home, in the family circle? Ushered into this life, the first streak of the light of day beaming upon him, it is the house that receives the helpless infant born of woman, that offers him protection, and retains him in his youth, the spring-time of life. When fatigued and worn out by continued exertions, the man leaves his laborious pursuit, his toilsome occupation, to seek repose after the labour and trouble of the day, it is the house, the home, that offers him a place of recreation to recruit his courage, to gather new strength for renewed toil. And when the sand of life is nearly run out, and his days are drawing to a close, it is again the house that opens to him its doors, offering the last shelter from his great pilgrimage. Should we not, therefore, do every thing in our power to render the place, where we breathe, where we move so long, as beautiful, as agreeable, and as useful as we can? "The just lives in his faith!" What else imparts to domestic life that which it needs, than faith in God? It affords aliment for spirit and heart. It is the light which chases away darkness; "For virtue is the lamp, and the torah (meaning faith) is the light." It is the food to satisfy our hunger; "For man does not live by bread only; but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of the Lord doth man live." It is love and peace, the pillars and permanent supporters of the house, the bond which unites together in one beautiful whole, all the inmates of the house.

"Behold," begin the words of our text, "his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him," meaning: the soul of the unbeliever will never be happy. Infidelity is darkness, is war, and leads to perdition. The just lives (■■■■) in his faith. Whatever he thinks, whatever he feels, whatever he speaks, whatever he does, whatever he undertakes, all gives clear evidence of his faith in God. and his holy Law. "Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear evil"-"the Lord is with me, I have no fear!" This is his motto throughout his life. Is it therefore your wish and desire to make your houses the abodes of light and of contentment, of love and of happiness, then must you establish religion in your houses, and introduce faith, as the moving and all-pervading principle. Yes, faith must be living in your houses and regulate all your actions, and you must instil this faith into the tender minds, and cause it to be living in the hearts of those who owe you their existence, your children, that they in their turn may live in faith, to your delight, to the honour of God, and to the glory of our blessed religion.

For, answer me, fathers! answer me, mothers! do you know sweeter domestic pleasures, sublimer enjoyments, purer happiness, than to live in the circle of your children in the faith of the Lord? When thy daily occupation, O father! to satisfy life's wants, has engaged thy attention and energies

for the whole day; when thy enterprises and exertions have only met with difficulties and obstacles; when thy efforts prove abortive, thy wishes remain unrealized, and thy hopes are frustrated, leaving a vacancy in thy heart; when thy confidant betrays, thy friend deceives thee, and he, whom thou hast made happy, repays thee with ingratitude, full of disappointment and disgust thou wouldst exclaim, "What profit has man from all his labour?" and then returnest to the beloved domestic circle, thy dear children, for whom thou hast toiled and struggled, joyfully meet thee, and surround thee with their uplifted arms, and salute thee with cheerful words, and exultingly pronounce the word "Father," in their childish, innocent, glee:-should not this fill thy soul with heavenly joys? Should not thy blood flow quicker, and thy heart beat louder at such a reception? Shouldst thou not thus find reward and compensation for all the troubles and vexations thou hast experienced during the day, and imagine thyself in a paradise, in the midst of which is planted the tree of faith, the tree of life, beautiful to behold, and fair to look upon? Yes, it is such scenes that expand the heart, if thou hast but confidence in thy Maker, and they will cause thee to offer praise and, thanks to Him who dispenses all these blessings.-Mother! When care for the health of thy children chases away night's sweet slumbers from thy eyes; when trials of various kinds embitter thy life; when thy husband's anxious and care-worn countenance fills thy bosom with apprehension and fear; when sickness, when distress visit thee or those that are dear to thy heart, and it is thy lot to empty the cup of affliction to the dregs:-and then in a quiet hour after thy troubles and sorrows have ceased, the dear beings for whom thou hast suffered and struggled, gather around thee one by one, and this one says, how it loves thee, and that one, how it lives for thee, and the name "mother," sounds from their truthful lips and touches the very soul,-should not this be reward for all thou hast suffered,-a cheering and invigorating draught to thy maternal heart, which is panting or love and sympathy, if the heart is but true to thy Father in heaven? And how many such instances of domestic felicity, of which time only permits me to give one picture, could I enumerate, if,-and only then-if the tree of knowledge, of the good and excellent-if faith have taken root in our house, and grows, and blossoms, and bears fruit. And with right may we then apply to our homes the prophetic words: "How beautiful are thy tents, oh Jacob, thy dwelling, oh Israel!" But many may ask, Do we not all profess the faith in one God, and yet we are strangers to this domestic felicity? Answer: "The just lives in his faith!" The entire life, the whole public and private life of man, must be in accordance with his faith, if it is to prove to him a source of happiness. To profess a truth does not yet argue that we act up to it; to be convinced of a truth does not yet argue that we act so that its effects are visible in our life. But to do this the prophet urges when he proclaims to us in the name of the Lord: "The just lives in his faith." Whatever lives, must be an active and useful link of the whole living creation-and our faith, therefore, must be manifested in our activity and usefulness, if we wish to live in its spirit.■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ "Not study is the principal, but the deed; which means: not faith alone will make us happy, but to live in faith.

Whoever, therefore, thinks that religion has not secured his happiness, nor realized his expectations, has not living faith, and he is not living in the faith. Do you complain, parents, that your children have not become such as you once hoped they would be? that they even repay you with ingratitude? then do I pray you add to your complaint the question: "Have we lived in faith? Have we given them examples of a religious life? Was our life, that is, our thoughts and actions, the catechism, which gave answers to their queries? Is our diary of life enriched with inscriptions, which suffering humanity has composed for us in gratitude, which our brothers and sisters whom

we have succoured and relieved from distress and want, have written and dedicated to us?" Oh! if you should be unfortunate enough to have no affirmative answers to these questions, then must you accuse, if you have cause to do so, not your children, that they are not such as you hoped they would be; not your religion, that it did not realize your expectations;-but yourselves, your life, that it was not one truth, in concert and harmony, with your faith.

All our energies, therefore, should be employed, to bring about such a happy consummation to our own honour, and to the benefit of the rising generation. For, there is nothing more sublime than the life of the just in his faith in God; nothing more beautiful than true Israelites, who faithfully adhere to, and sacredly perform the duties of our divine religion; nothing higher than Jews who not only meditate on God; pray to Him; but who live and act in his word and in his spirit; in whose soul God dwells; in whose works God is seen; in whose dwelling God is ever present; in whose joys God is first and last; in whose sorrows God is looked to to aid and to comfort. If such as these live in a proud, egotistical age-they do not waver; are they attacked by misfortunes-they do not despair; if vice is ready to allure them into its net-they do not follow; if no alternative is left them but to choose between sin and death-they do not hesitate, they surrender life and save the soul's life; their virtue they cannot betray, their faith they cannot renounce; their God they cannot forsake, with whom they are united, to whom they are devoted.

Oh! that such unshakeable faith may pervade our domestic circles, our whole life; our houses would then be rendered the abode of the highest felicity, and our godly sentiments be reflected in our calling. This brings us to the second point of our discourse.

II.

"The just liveth in his faith!" To live, means, as we have shown, to act. And that occupation in which we are engaged, either by force of circumstances or own inclination, we style our calling. And a calling is the lot of every one, into whom was breathed the immortal spirit of God. "Man is born to labour," says an inspired man of old. But how our calling manifests itself, how it works, to promote or to impede the welfare of our fellow-men; how it answers the high and noble destiny of our being,-that is the point which we ought to ascertain. But our calling apparently takes a twofold direction, for us in particular, and for others in general. I say, apparently; for in fact we only provide for ourselves by the solicitude and care shown for others. But how to reconcile this apparently twofold calling and to bring it to an harmonious accord-that is the problem which we are to solve, and which is indicated in the words of our text, "The just liveth in his faith." Which is the right calling enjoined to us by these words? ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ "Which is. the right way," we can ask with the Rabbi, "man should choose for himself?" Let us answer with his words: ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ "That which glorifies him; who follows it!" To glorify, to crown our life we are only able, if we walk in the path of justice and love, as prescribed by our holy religion, and impart to all our actions the impress of these virtues. This is the key to the solution of the problem which our calling requires of us. "Justice, justice thou shalt pursue, in order that thou mayest live!" Justice-what do you understand under this term? If your conduct always corresponds with your dignity as men, and with your duty as Israelites, then you act justly; if you never undertake any thing that is prohibited by our revealed religion, or by your conscience-then you act justly; if, as soon as religion calls, your inward voice admonishes, you do not listen to any other voices, and may they sound ever so sweetly and temptingly, and act in this manner under all

circumstances, whether in the presence of witnesses or not, whether it is to your profit or loss-then you act justly. If you leave to every man what is his own, and do not injure any one in word or deed-then you act justly, you are called just, you live in the right path, in the right calling,-you live in the faith of the Lord of justice.

Love is the second spring which moves the just in his conduct. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the highest moral commandment we have received from our divine Legislator. Love, therefore, is a part of our calling. What do we understand under this word? A warm interest for all that ennobles mankind; a sincere solicitude for their welfare, and an earnest desire to assist in promoting this welfare, by word and deed-that is love The most powerful feeling implanted in the human heart is love. And we must thoroughly feel the condition of our fellowmen, if we wish to ameliorate it. Our heart and our soul must be filled and animated by this heavenly flame. Our love and charity, therefore, must not be limited to handsome words; we must not promise much and perform little; not outwardly appear active and zealous, whilst inwardly we are dormant and idle; we must not have many words and few deeds! The love enjoined by our religion knows no distinction of station, of creed, of nationality, and wherever we are called upon to act in its spirit, we dare not ask: "Who art thou? My brother or not? My co-religionist or not?" Our love must not be limited to the small circle in which we live; but it must embrace the whole human family, and be spontaneously practised, wherever the welfare of the individual, or of the whole can be promoted and secured. And how delightfully and happily do we glide through life, if we conform to this precept. In the circle, where love reigns, every one must feel contented, the heart will be free the mind disenthralled. In a family, where love is the uniting bond, the parents know no higher bliss than to live in the midst of their children, and the children dream of no sweeter joys than to be near their parents, to pour out their sorrows on the bosom of those who gave them life, to vent their feelings of joy on the neck of those who were the guardians of their infant years. In a congregation where love prevails, all have but one end in view; one thought, one wish inspires every heart, to effect the most glorious, the most lasting good, to their own honour, and to the benefit of posterity.

Such, my hearers, is the conduct of the just. He walks in the faith of God. Yes, to walk in this faith, is our calling, our calling as men, as Jews; to live in this faith, to have it, as it were, for our constant companion through life, not to think without it, not to feel without it, not to act without it-that is our duty, if we, like the just, wish to live in the true faith.

Walk then in faith, oh fathers and mothers, all ye who wish to vindicate the glory of our religion before the eyes of an admiring world, you who would perpetuate this heavenly trust in the hearts and minds of your children, that they may tread in your footsteps, and prove worthy descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; walk in this faith, oh ye heads of families, who, even in the midst of treasures and riches, are harassed by troubles and cares, who wish to pursue your earthly career with honour, and to carry with you to the grave the name of honest, pious, and just men,-live in this faith, and your exertions will be blessed and your wishes accomplished. Walk in this faith, youths and maidens of Israel! on the narrow and slippery path of virtue-hold fast to your religion, and you will be secure against vice and disgrace. The poor who walks in faith, behold him-with what resignation he bears his lot; for, should He who supplies food for the beast, and gives to the young ravens what they cry for, forget man? This is the consolation that sustains him, the spice of his frugal meal. The old man who has walked with God in faith, when he is but a few steps from, the grave, has no fears. Joyfully he looks back on his past career, where the good he has

accomplished shines forth brightly; and it animates and cheers his heart, when the lamp of life is faintly and dimly flickering in its socket; and with composure and resignation he awaits the hour that calls him to the presence of his Maker. The dying who has walked in faith, observe him-how tranquilly he departs, how he gathers those that are dear to him, around his couch; and he can say with truth, "I know that my Saviour lives. To thy hand I recommend my spirit; thou wilt redeem me, God of truth!" This is his valedictory; this the hope that sustains him in his last moments, and makes him look forward with joy to the blissful regions above.

Such, my friends, is the life of the just, from the cradle to the grave. Would! that we also may lead such a life in our houses, in our calling. Life in faith should animate parents and children, old and young, rich and poor. Life in faith should inspire our schools and our Synagogues, our instructors and our scholars, our preachers and our congregations. Then, yes then, shall we have found the way to our happiness and welfare; and "then will the Lord open for us the door in which the just enter;" and the gory of God will be vindicated by his chosen people; and the time will be hastened, when all nations shall speak one language, and when One God-the Holy One of Israel-will be acknowledged, of whom it is said: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." Amen!

Chapter 36

S. Love Thy Neighbor

Love Thy Neighbour.

Extracts from a discourse By Dr. Jacob de la Motta.

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"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not revenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord."- Leviticus 19:17-18. To manifest good-will towards our fellow-beings-to regard with love our brethren of the house of Israel-to extend to them the hand of fellowship, and commiserate their hapless condition-to vindicate their wrongs, and to reprove them in a becoming manner, are acts which bespeak in us the observance of some of the best divine ordinances and display respect for the instruction and words of our text. The fact has never been attempted to be questioned, impeached or denied, that there is a peculiar character and tone given to the performance of all kind offices, which enlist our best affections in favour of our fellow-creatures; and, there is an endearing something in the manner and demeanour,-in the fulfillment of those moral duties, that expands the mind, warms the heart, and excites the noblest principles of humanity. Who, that is possessed of common-place observation-who that is endowed with feelings sensibly alive to the heavenly attribute of commiseration-can be insensible to the performance of those pleasing duties, which have the tendency to better the condition, assuage the afflictions, relieve the wants, and protect the characters of his brothers, and save from destruction objects of his own stamp, the very prototypes of himself? From such reflections are we frequently called to contemplate the conduct of some individuals who have unfortunately fallen in the labyrinth of indiscretion, and who have waged, in these particulars, open warfare with the human family. This too frequently and unhappily arises from the worst feelings,-from the ebullition of an easily excited and irascible temper, or from misguided judgment that runs counter to the dictates of reason. It is from a disregard for these excellent qualities of the heart, which should at all times be properly cultivated. It is from the frequent evidence of a dereliction from those noble characteristics of the mind, those conspicuous traits that render one man estimable in the eyes of another, and worthy the countenance of his Maker. Lamentable to state, we are too often called upon to behold flagrant deviations from the repeated injunctions of the Almighty, who instructed us to love each other, to exercise a reciprocity of good feeling, and with mutual dependence to make us the superior of his creation. It is only, then, by reverting to and properly estimating the words of Scripture, that we can avoid these improprieties: and it is only by denouncing such conduct when perceptible in others, that we can advance our moral and social virtues.

Let us, then, consider the force and magnitude of our text, and endeavour to ascertain, as briefly as this day’s service will permit, what is comprehended in the several injunctions in relation to our

duties to each other. First, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart." The very term hate conveys a repugnance to that meekness and moderation which God originally intended should constitute prominent traits in the character of man. The entertainment of hatred leads to the subversion of the best principles of the heart, thereby transmuting the finest into the basest qualities, and rendering the soul, the seat of all excellence, the receptacle for the blackest turpitude. It may be reasonably inferred, that the apprehended derangement and deterioration of what was intended to be good and exalting in the human character, led an all-wise Providence to lay it down in clear terms, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart."

Such is the influence,-such the predominance, and such the controlling power of this execrable trait, that, when once discovered, it makes the possessor despicable in the world, odious to society, and unacceptable to God. What, then, can equal this perverse passion? It occasions the most annoying perturbation, deranges the whole frame, entails the greatest misery, and ultimately results in complete discomfort. It incurs vengeance from above, and punishment on earth. Who that is familiar with the history of Cain and Abel-who that has looked into their individual dispositions as recorded in Holy Writ, will hesitate to declare that the death of Abel was produced by hatred? Envious of his brother's superior acquirements, jealous of the preferment manifested, Cain admitted the destroying passion hatred to revel in his breast; and soon it attained an ascendancy that led to the greatest excesses, incurring the wrath of God, and curses on himself and posterity. Sacred history records instances of deep-rooted hatred producing baleful injuries. The conduct of Joseph's brethren is a striking exemplification; but, as in similar circumstances that are daily presented to our observation, the Almighty averted the effects of the blackest designs, and was the instrument of changing hatred to love. Mark the conduct of Joseph when he recognized his brethren; instead of desiring to be avenged for injury previously received, he, with all the exalted meekness of a great and good man, received with forgiveness to his bosom the very persons whose hatred had caused them to conceive the perpetration of a most sinful act, which would have terminated in his death, but for the interposition of Him whose searching eye alone can penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart. This event presents an exemplification of the Scriptural doctrine, that evil designs, the result of hatred, can be frustrated by providential care, and made to terminate in good, when it is the least expected by the agents and the sufferers. The records of ages past relate many instances of this odious principle; some of the best men have been sacrificed by its agency. The fairest flower has been obscured, tranquility made to yield to disturbance, and happiness displaced by misery. Who, that suffers the imagination to roam among the variegated fields which our chequered life affords, can fail to perceive at a glance, the proneness of human nature to display that disposition which subverts all that is great and calculated to embellish and dignify our being? I cannot be too urgent in my solicitations to you, my brethren, to discountenance such conduct. Discard such feelings; entertain not such a degrading, debasing passion; pause and deliberate on its excess acid dangers. Would! that your humble brother who addresses you possessed the command of language to speak the true sentiments of the heart, the honest dictates of the mind: would! that his persuasive powers could interest and find ready access to the convictions of the transgressor. He would say to those whose listening ear may beat present directed to him, that hatred in its course has no bounds to satisfy a revengeful, ruthless spirit. It overleaps every avenue leading to morality, and exercises the basest means to demoralize all objects within the sphere of its influence. It seeks all opportunities for defaming the purest character, and for casting a stain where spotless virtue is known to exist. It resorts to device

and tergiversation to carry a particular point; it lies in ambush, like the serpent, to seize on the prey unsuspicious of its movements, and to the extent of its power it inflicts the deadly wound. It puts on at times the most specious appearance, the better to delude, and, like the fabled Janus, bears a double front, and its ways are the passport for infamy. Why should we proceed? what injury has hatred not committed? what enormities has it not been guilty of? No device, no subtlety has been wanting to aid its vileness. Think, then, what most be the situation of that being who becomes the unfortunate victim of its monstrous powers. Who can escape, who can be secured from its shafts? To what a surprising extent has it not advanced? At one period, subterfuge and odious falsehood are used to give it the garb of plausibility, at another, it is known to enter the hospitable mansion, there to commence its depredations; there to vilify the unoffending inmates, and with an adder's tongue to diffuse poison on whomsoever it touches. What can equal the force of its depravity? It, in the language of the bard causes "the soul to shrink within itself, and makes loathsome the spring of all reflection. What an imperious mandate, that directed us to divest ourselves of hatred towards our brethren! And what can equal the attributes of Him, who, in order to fit us for his boundless blessings, and to cause us to obtain a seat in his kingdom of glory, pronounced through our great prophet Moses, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart," sternly enjoining on the children of Israel to live together in peace and harmony, as members of one family?

We approach now to the consideration of that part of our text which says, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Such is the nature of man, and such the frailties that too frequently accompany his actions while gliding down the stream of life, that reproof and good counsel may at times divert him from carrying out erroneous impressions, and save him from falling into the pitfalls of sin. The Almighty knew his proneness to indulge in the pursuit of error, and foresaw that by a misguided judgment he would be led into the vortex of destructive prejudice; and in order to lessen, or check this evil, he strictly ordered that man should rebuke his neighbour, and not suffer sin to rest on his head; inasmuch as timely and becoming admonition would restrain improper action, and the interposition of good counsel would have its beneficial tendency. Again, man naturally aspires to promotion and preferment, and these have been considered highly laudable when virtuous pursuits result in their attainment. But, who will deny that there are those, who, jealous and envious of commendable and merited distinction, stickle at nothing to frustrate the best intention, to destroy the best reputation, sully the prospects of honesty and uprightness, and occasion distress and commotion among the most meritorious? The utility of rebuking under such circumstances cannot be questioned. It becomes, then, an absolute duty to respect this command of God, by timely disclosing the folly, and pointing out the futility of attempting to injure our brother or neighbour. By interposing our efforts we may protect him from error, and not suffer sin to approach him. Reproof and proper advice likewise frequently save the thoughtless from falling into improprieties, and from the indulgence of feelings that degrade and debase human nature. We often fancy that we have suffered an injury though no cause for offence has been given, and allow this to influence our mind; and imaginary wrongs, arising from supposed injuries, lead to the most extravagant ideas, and often result in open hostility against the unoffending. How sinful to conceive an injury, when there is no ground even for suspicion? and how essential to avoid this error is it to consider well previously the result of such indulgence in others, when in our power to prevent it. There are those who from the best motives exert themselves to improve the general constitution of society, by ministering the best advice, and inculcating good-will and fellowship to the whole human family; while there are others who are

engaged constantly in exciting petty feelings; in creating jealousy, originating slanders, weakening confidence, and aspersing the fairest characters. Indubitable proof of such human turpitude can be produced. How essential, then, the observance of that command which instructs us to rebuke our neighbour and not suffer sin upon him.

Lastly, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. I am the Lord." To bear anger or ill-will against another, is of all principles the most degrading. It is calculated to diminish a man in his own estimation, if he reflects, he is doing an injury to his fellow-creature. God never intended we should be hostile to each other. He never sent us into existence to be a scourge to our species, or to entertain enmity. To bear ill-will bespeaks a wretched state of existence, evidences great barbarity. To behold a fellow-mortal writhing under mental torture, to see him oppressed with trouble and disquiet, and to delight in such a scene, is the manifestation of savageness that excites the greatest abhorrence. What gratification can be produced in deranging the tranquility of another? what delight to soil a spotless reputation? what satisfaction can be conveyed in being instrumental in opposing the prosperity and advancement of one of the house of Israel? Was it intended that one class or one individual should float on the stream of prosperity, and others should sink and be finally lost? Does it afford pleasure to see our neighbour about to fall in disgrace, and can we gaze on his downfall with apathy and cold indifference? who can be so obdurate as not to extend willingly a helping hand for his salvation? How much more noble and dignified is it to exalt than to oppress! The encouragement of hatred, may be compared to the fostering a viper that is certain to infuse a poison; no age, sex, or condition, can escape its destructive influence. Yet like iniquity, it may triumph for a while; yet its reign can be of but short duration. Remorse must follow, and with it contrition with all its concomitants.

There is One above, who watches our actions and searches our thoughts. It is He alone who is capable of frustrating the brightest hope, not frail deluded man-it is He alone who can avenge the oppressor’s wrong doings, and save the unsuspicious from the snares of the designing. Let black-hearted enmity stalk uninterruptedly, there is One who is able to oppose the stately march, and can enervate the greatest power, and vice can therefore never hope to triumph ultimately, nor unjust authority hope to prevail in the end. How ennobling, therefore, how worthy the conduct of the good man, who shuns hatred as he would a pestilence, and views the despoiler of character as a scourge to society! He bears no grudge against his people, he loves his neighbours; his heart is the receptacle of those philanthropic emotions which are intended always to be excited in the cause of an injured fellow-creature; his ear is ever attentive to his wrongs, he delights in his prosperity; he is seen actively employed in devising means to obtain the regard and esteem of his associates; he covets not their good name; he envies not their growing greatness; he places no stumbling-blocks in their way, to mar their progress in the path of preferment; his imagination is not perpetually engaged in engendering reports to the injury of any one; he is above low device, and is never seen busily engaged in traducing characters that have stood the test of scrutiny, and defied reproach. No! despising all unrighteous principles, he presents in himself a picture of all that is moral, virtuous, and commendable. But above all, he evinces his respect for the command of his God, who expressly lays it down, that "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but that thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Be it, then, our care to discountenance those who are regardless of this command, and let it be our constant study to love

our brethren, and not oppress them. So shall we meet the reward due to virtuous principles and meritorious actions. So shall we, while gliding down the stream of life, meet no obstruction in our progress to that place, the abode of the righteous, and the heaven of all excellence.

Almighty God! The supreme judge and disposer of all! Extend thine infinite goodness and mercy to our people wheresoever dispersed. Bestow thy protection to the man of thy creation, of all sects and creeds; shed thy benediction on this congregation, and on all congregations assembled this day to praise thy great name. Endow us with a portion of thy divine attributes, that we may keep in the path of righteousness to the honour of thy name, and the exaltation of the house of Israel. Amen!

S. Moses and Jethro

Specimens of German Preachers.

Moses and Jethro. A Sermon on Exodus 18:1-27. by Dr. Gottholt Salomon, Preacher at the Temple at Hamburg, Delivered in 1842.

"When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt; then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back. And her two sons, of which the name of the one was Gershom; (for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land;) and the name of the other was Eliezer; (for the God of my father, said he, was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:) and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: and he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him: and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father- in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God: And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: when they have a matter, they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt

be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons; the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. And Moses let his father-in-law depart: and he went his way into his own land."-Exodus xviii. This narration, beloved brothers, is as simple as it is instructive, to such a degree does it appertain to human life from several points of view, and it teaches man, and it teaches the Israelite that which is good and which God demands of him. It directs the attention of our spirit to two great men,-to one who was a messenger of God in Israel,-and to a priest who served in a pagan worship-to Moses and Jethro. And we are taught four things, the observance of which Scripture in our to-day's Parashah is to impress upon our heart.* And let us pray that the divine word may become to us a light and guide. Amen!

* The weekly portion of the law read in the Synagogue is so called; that of the prophets is called Haphtorah.

I.

"Suffer yourselves to be led from the remarkable festive hours in your life unto God and things divine. To this we must direct our attention first."

Moses and Jethro celebrate in our text just such a festive hour. After a long separation, they see each other again and what a meeting! a most joyful, a most gratifying one! Moses has overcome innumerable dangers, and his name, in connexion with the wonderful deeds wrought by him, in the face of day, with the aid of God, has penetrated to all nations: his greatness and his fame have become immortal. Jethro brings back to him the beloved wife from whom he has been long separated, the children from whose society he has been long severed, and with them he recalls to him the dearest, the holiest recollections. (Exodus 18:3-4.)

How full is the heart of both! and how does the mouth overflow with that of which the heart is full! What have they not to tell, to communicate to each other ! (Exodus 18:8) What do they not feel, what do they not think and speak of all in this hour! And how do all these feelings, and thoughts, and words disclose themselves-in a looking up to God! They sink down before the Lord-to the Lord is ascribed the praise and the glory; to the Lord they consecrate burnt and peace-offerings; before the Lord they pour forth the prayer of their overflowing hearts. (Exodus 18:9-12)

We also, dearly beloved, have no lack of festive hours in our lives. When you (we must not lose sight of our text in the least) when you return after a long separation, to your home, for which you have painfully longed, when after a fatiguing and perilous journey you come back to your kindred, and find again the wife, the husband, the father, the mother, the sister, the brother, the friend, and tears become the interpreters of your sensations and thoughts; or when your children return from amidst strangers among whom they have prepared themselves for their calling, well in body and soul, in the possession of a childlike heart and the ancestral faith, these most precious of treasures, which they have preserved inviolate; or, when you, hovering between fear and hope, watch at the sick bed of a beloved being, observing his features, attentive to his oppressed breathing-and when then suddenly the skilful physician pronounces the decisive words, "The danger is past, the loved sufferer is given to you anew, you may anew rejoice at possessing him!"

or when you press to your loud beating heart a first child, or a first grandchild, and you possess in the little stranger one bond the more which binds you to life; or when you have finally overcome the last difficulty which stood in the way of an important undertaking, or a great and favourite scheme of your life, and your eye turns upon a friendly and less shrouded future:-then are these your remarkable festive hours, such as Moses and Jethro experienced them; they fill your eyes, too, with tears of joy, and your hearts with pleasing sensations. Be they many or few, frequently or sparingly scattered through our life, they ought to guide us, as Moses and Jethro were guided, unto God and things divine. They ought to attune our hearts to return thanks to God. God sends them into fatiguing, exhausting every-day life, that they may shine therein like luminous points, and that life may not become too uniform in scenery and colouring, and be thus rendered a burden to ourselves. Joy, however, shall by its appearing not merely belong to the dust, not alone to a fleeting enjoyment; but it shall be holy rejoicing, a rejoicing in God, through which the sensual man is spiritualized; and the table becomes an altar, the meal a sacrificial repast before God, ■■■■ ■■■■■ as our text expresses it.

Moreover we shall employ these hours, like Moses and Jethro, for open communication and the pouring forth of the heart. And whereas at such periods the heart feels deeper, and the mind sees clearer, and the powers of the soul and the sentiments are brightened and more elevated: we shall again, as Moses and Jethro, apply and use hours as they did for sage reflection and consultation on important affairs, for instance, how domestic life may be ennobled; how the education of the children be improved; how the affairs of the congregation may be placed on a better footing; for then have these remarkable festive hours guided us to a higher elevation, and made us better and wiser; they have led us to God, and we have been rendered more familiar with divine things.

II.

"Live true to thy calling, but so that thou mayest live long for its furtherance."

Each of us knows that by the word "calling" is meant a fixed state of action, in which we employ our powers for the benefit and use of human and civil society, no less for the welfare of others than of the individual himself. But how we are to labour in our calling, how we shall best employ our powers, this is indicated to us in Scripture, in the narrative of Moses and Jethro.

Look upon Moses! On yesterday he beholds again, after a separation of many years, after laborious exertions, his dear father, his wife, his children; to-day already, you find him in the midst of the business of his calling; "on the following day," say the Scriptures, "he sat to judge the people." However full his heart might be, from the joyful meeting, however loudly his heart might beat for the loved souls just restored to him, it is fuller yet, it beats louder yet for his calling. And how does Moses labour in his calling? Uninterruptedly "from morning till evening." The calling does not alone fill the whole heart, but fills up also the whole time. He permits himself no empty intervals from labour. Each hour is filled up with another duty; perseveringly he pursues the labours of his calling; he devotes to them his entire soul. This is one thing we have to learn. Whatever calling, brethren, we may have chosen, as soon as we have made a selection, and declared ourselves for the same, it is obligatory on us to labour for it entirely, and to live for it alone; the sweetest pleasures, the highest enjoyments, must not seduce us to rob our calling of this or that hour, or to condense the labours and duties incident thereto, that is, to abridge, to lessen them; because we ought to find the sweetest pleasures, the highest enjoyment in our calling itself, which is a direct

command of God to man, a daily worship, just in the light as Moses viewed it. And if we reflect, beloved brethren, that a considerable portion of life must have passed away, when we have fairly entered on our calling; and if we reflect farther how much time of our already so limited existence is moreover consumed by the necessary requirements for the sustaining of life, which cannot remain unattended to; and if we finally reflect, how often sickness, natural weakness, the infirmities of old age, prevent us from accomplishing the duties of our calling: we shall surely, unless our conscience is too much blunted, not have the disposition to squander the time which is remaining to us after these considerable deductions; but we shall deem it no more than right and reasonable to devote ourselves entirely to our calling, in wherever God has placed us, and wherever he has assigned to us a sphere of action; be this in the troubled world or in the quietness of home; be it in a palace or in a hut; be it upon the chair of instruction or of judgment; as artizan or mechanic; as a man of erudition or of business; as husband or wife,-our calling should be to us the most important thing, and as such we ought to devote to it our whole life.

Nevertheless live in such a manner in the pursuit of your vocation that you may be able to live long for it; and this we learn from Jethro. "The thing thou doest is not good; thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee; for this thing is too heavy for thee, thou art not able to perform it alone;" thus spoke Jethro to Moses, and you know the advice which he gave him, which he closes with these words: "If thou wilt do this thing, and God command it thee, then wilt thou be able to endure, and also all this people will go to their place in peace." For just as God has set a limit to our life and the duration of our days, so also has He limited our powers: and no one has ever yet transcended these limits with impunity. A short and eventful life is certainly preferable to a long and uneventful one, and the wise and pious effects more in ten years, nay, more in one year, and labours more blissfully, than the fool and godless in a long series of years. Nevertheless, a truly wise, a truly pious man, has never yet unduly strained his powers, and purposely endeavoured to consume himself.

If one knows how to economize with the energies of life which his time allows him, he can to a surety do much in a few years, nay, effect great things, and he will have no cause whatever to complain of the shortness of life. But we ought constantly to think of the word of Jethro, ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ "Then wilt thou be able to endure, and also all this people will go to their place in peace." Thou, my hearer, must live in such a manner in the pursuit of thy calling, that thou mayest be able to endure, that thou mayest not, in contradiction to the will of God, consume and exhaust before the proper time the powers to thee vouchsafed, that thou mayest not be lost before the proper time to thy calling, and fade away unto the grave.

■■■■■ ■■■, "thou must* endure," thou must remain, thou must remain in thy position, thou must withstand the most untoward occurrences! "And the people also will be benefitted thereby," adds Jethro; according to the method and manner in which thou pursuest thy calling, the people, for whom thou art called to labour, must likewise be able to prosper, and feel themselves happy: thou must endure for them, remain a long time.

* The double sense of the future in Hebrew, meaning both the simple future and the imperative.-Ed. Oc.

O, brethren! ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■, the above word of wisdom has Jethro addressed to all of us. For do we but live for ourselves alone? Should we live for ourselves only? ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■

■■■ ("When I am for myself, what am I?") For how many souls dost thou provide, thou honest teacher of youth, or teacher of the people, through thy industry and thy striving! For how many families provides the busy hand, the ever-active spirit of the careful merchant! Unto how many children and grandchildren art thou provider, prop, friend, and counsellor, thou worthy father or grandfather ; thou mother or grandmother! how greatly would the home, which thou guidest, fall into decay, how forsaken and bereaved would the little ones be, for whom to live is thy calling, if thou wert to consume thyself before thy time has come, and labour more assiduously than thy powers will permit thee! No, in the pursuit of your calling you are bound to think especially of those for whom you live; and guided by the hand of piety and wisdom live in such a manner, that you may be able to live a long time for the benefit of your calling.

III.

"Greatness and humility are always united in the truly wise."

Jethro imparts his counsel to his son-in-law, as to how he should live for himself and the people, and Moses follows the advice. Moses the man of God, the trusted by God, the mediator between God and Israel (Deuteronomy 5:5); the prophet, the proclaimer of the one and only God, accepts the advice imparted to him by a nonIsraelite, a heathenish priest. But for this very reason do our illustrious ancients apply to Moses the name of the wise, and refer to him the proverb of Solomon, ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "But the wise listen to advice."

What humility! and with what greatness is it united. Indeed, I know not which is the mother, which the daughter; whether humility brings forth greatness, or greatness humility; but this much I do know, that, in order to possess and to exercise true humility, one must be truly great-morally great-since little souls know absolutely nothing of the exalted virtue of humility.

Whoever possesses moral greatness, thinks, in the performance of important acts, nowise on his own self, does not in any manner feel disturbed whether perchance his own self might not be placed in the shade, if but one voice, but one merit be accorded to others. Therefore also does he consult with and listen to others.

Whoever possesses moral greatness, cares for the good cause which it behooves him to promote, not for his own fame, not for his own honour; God’s praise, God’s glory, these are objects which he lays to heart. He therefore also asks and follows the counsel of those by whose means the praise and glory of God may be extended. "If thou doest this, and God command it thee," were the words of Jethro.

Whoever possesses moral greatness, is sedulous for the truth, not for appearance; righteousness and the fear of God are to become more at home among mankind; through whom this takes place is of no importance, provided only it does take place. Therefore does he call to his counsel the good and the nobleminded, and he appreciates duly their advice; therefore was the noble-minded Moses so much moved by the words of Jethro: "Choose able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness;" because how much that is good and useful cannot men effect, in whom all such exalted virtues are united!

Where, however, moral greatness is wanting, there egotism will show itself openly, an egotism which desires only what is advantageous to one’s self, and seeks only one’s own interest; where

moral greatness is wanting, there pride will puff itself into importance, a pride which seems to understand every thing better than another; where moral greatness is wanting, there the soul is full of ambition, which longs for high-sounding praise and flattery; how could and would such a one share his incense and his laurels with another? Every thing, therefore, is conducted according to his own will, even if houses of God, and schools, and congregations should be ruined thereby!

Jethro is a heathenish priest, and the greatest prophet in Israel follows his advice, preserves the words as though they were gold and precious metal, preserves them-in the holy Scriptures.* This is a humility which belongs only to great souls. We may, therefore, assume that we have above all in our Parashah† of today a measure of true greatness, and we are certified that we are bound to listen to wisdom, whether it come out of the mouth of the Israelite, or non-Israelite. The truth belongs to God, and whoever teaches us the same, even if he be a heathenish priest, is a servant of the living God. (Compare Treatise ■"■, vol. iii., and Maimonides on ■■■■■ ■■■■■ chapter 13. § 3.) But we learn also a second and more important doctrine: if you require men, be it for the foundation of schools or the support of our houses of God, or the promotion of other concerns of the congregation or of mankind, you should look after them, learn to know them well. If they believe that they alone are in possession of wisdom and learning, if they look down in their vanity upon others, and refuse to accept reasonable advice, let them pass on, you lose nothing by not having them; choose for yourselves persons with a modest mind, persons who walk in humility before God; who regard, more the will of God than their own; choose such as these, for they work beneficially, they devote their powers and capacities, their days and years, to their calling, and desire no other acknowledgment than that of their own conscience, and know of no other approbation than the approbation of God, and the being pleasing in the eyes of God.

* According to the saying ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ "Jethro was called Jether (the one who adds), because he was the means of adding one section to the law."

† Section.

IV.

"Coming and parting border very closely on one another."

Only a short time had Moses been in the society of his father-in-law, when fate, which bid one go to the right, the other to the left, separated them anew. (Exodus 18:27.)

Just so is it in our own life; coming and parting border very upon one another. And it is not merely the all-separating death that steps in between the loving and the loved, but innumerable circumstances and duties demand in an imperious tone that those, who have scarcely met and seen one another, should soon separate again. But this arrangement also is derived from a higher Hand, it is intended to effect in hart that our love for our friends should ever become more sincere and heartfelt.

Let us endeavour to enjoy and to detain the hours-they are only hours-which we are permitted to spend in the circle of hove and friendship. Let us strive to enchain them, I may say, to perpetuate them, by thinking, working, living, while they last, for one another and then work and live thus, that, when we dismiss the object of our affection, as Moses did Jethro, and he returns to his land, to his home, or if we be the dismissed, they who return, no reproaches of any kind for neglected,

delayed duties, may disturb the tranquillity of our soul. No! we ought to be able to say unto ourselves at parting, whilst bidding farewell: We have completely tasted and enjoyed the short, but eventful, festive hours which Heaven had vouchsafed to us; our being and living together were of a holy and divine nature, and we have thereby been rendered happy and blessed. Oh how beneficently must the effect of this doctrine, the truth that our coming and parting border so closely on each other, be upon our narrow, our narrowest circle! What a blessing must the love of parents for their children, and of children for their parents become, if they mutually place it as manifest before their mind, that they have received but fleeting hours for the exercise of love. How must this thought spur on the parents to labour for the welfare of their children with the utmost solicitude, and to establish it as firmly as possible; for in this alone can genuine and true love be displayed. How must this thought stimulate the children, even the giddy and the most unreflecting, to sweeten the short pilgrimage of the guides of their life, to become their pride and their joy. What a blessing will the thought that "coming and parting border so closely on one another," be, if it admonishes brothers and relatives to live with and near each other, not to live far apart and indifferent to each other’s fate, and to remove every thing which may have placed enmity between them, or what the loveless world may have placed between them, envy, jealousy, calumny, or what other names the serpents may bear which are in the habit of forcing themselves into the paradise of love. O how greatly must the thought of coming and parting incite you all, brothers and sisters, to lay to heart the word of Scripture, which is a word of the truest love: "How good and lovely is it when brethren dwell together in unity, for there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life unto everlasting," there will be understood what is life unto everlasting. And may such a blessing and such a happy life be your portion, beloved brethren, may our to-day’s lecture help to contribute to this result. It will, it must happen, if the festive hours in your life guide you unto God; if you live wholly and fully in the pursuit of your calling in such a manner that you may be able to live long for the same; if you walk humbly before God, and, as it accords with wisdom and true greatness, you do not despise the counsel of tried souls; if you finally take it to heart that coming and parting border very closely on one another; and you employ, for this reason, the hours which God permits you to spend in the circle of loved friends, wisely and conscientiously for your own happiness and blessing, and the happiness and blessing of others. Amen.

Chapter 38

S. Motives of Thankfulness

Motives of Thankfulness. A Sermon, Pronounced at the Synagogue Mikveh Israel, at Philadelphia, on Thanksgiving Day, Kislev 28th, (Dec. 21st,) 5604. From the rising of the sun even to his setting, let thy name, O our God, be praised; and let all flesh acknowledge thy goodness and thy mercy, wherewith thou governest thy world. All that exists is fed and maintained by thy bounty, because from Thee all creatures spring; and it is thy power which makes all great, and which strengthens all. It is thus that in every age, and in every clime, they who fear Thee have experienced this consoling truth, that Thou art the Guardian who watchest over the fate of men; and in prosperity they looked to Thee to continue unto them the blessings which their deeds had not deserved; and in their affliction they raised to Thee their eyes and their heart, that Thou, in thy mercy, mightest redeem them from the evil which rested heavily upon them. And in accordance with this pious feeling, behold us here before thy throne this day, to acknowledge by our presence and our words, our gratitude for the many favours which Thou hast showered on this land in the past year. The fields have teemed with plenty, and the product has repaid the labourer’s toil; the granaries are filled to overflowing; and hills and valleys have rejoiced under the magnificent harvest which thy mercy had provided for the sons of man. And peace has smiled over all this country, and in all its extent every man has sat under the shadow of his roof, and the sound of war has not terrified him, nor brought alarm to the bosom of his wife and little ones; and equitable laws have held out their strong protection over the high and the low, and none but the evil-doers have had cause to fear the sword of justice which hung suspended over their heads. All this, and more, have we received; and we truly feel that it is not our wisdom and our strength that have brought all this blessing unto us; but that it was thy gracious kindness which has given us enlargement. Be it then thy will to fill our hearts with thankfulness, that we may be fully impressed with the weight of obligation which rests upon us; that we may be preserved from sin, and continue for years and years to come, to be the recipients of the same grace which we have received the past year. In order that our souls may sing thy praise, now and for ever. Amen!

Brethren! On an occasion, when our forefather Jacob felt both grateful for past favours, and looked with anxiety to the future, he thus addressed the Deity who had watched over him during his long and weary pilgrimage in foreign lands:

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"I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands."- Genesis 32:11.

If our pious ancestor, who had in person received from the august presence of the Most High the assurance of his protection, found in himself no meritorious acts which could have deserved the mercies and the truth which had been bestowed on him, because of the covenant with Abraham and Isaac which was confirmed to him when he slept at the place which he designated, as the "house of God:" how much more must we feel humbled because of all the goodness which had

been meted out to us since the first day of our being! It is well, therefore, that we, both as citizens of this commonwealth, and as Israelites, unite with the other inhabitants of this state, to return thanks, all that we have to give to the Lord, for the many favours which his providence has so bountifully bestowed upon us all in so marked a manner; at the same time, that we institute an inquiry into our actions, to see whether or not our conduct is in accordance with the sentiment of gratitude which we profess to feel. First, as citizens, I said, that we ought to be thankful. If ever country, other than the blessed commonwealth of Israel, had especial cause for glorifying the most holy Name, it is surely the republic of the United States of America. It is a country which extends from the Atlantic to the great ocean of the West, and from the thunders of the Niagara, where the perpetual bow is reflected by the rays of the sun, unto where the "father of rivers" mingles its waters with the floods of the Mexican gulf. And wherever in this wide domain civilization has pitched her tent, there too liberty has taken up her abode. Here and there some remnant of barbarous laws yet remains; prejudice has as yet in a few places the dominion over sober reason and truth; but in general, wherever waves the flag of the Union, there too is liberty of person,-there too is security of property; and what is dearer still to the heart of the lover of truth, sweeter to the soul of the Israelite, there too is liberty of conscience; there man can call on his God in the manner his parents have taught him; there he can believe what his conscience permits him, without suffering political disqualifications for his peculiar religious acts, without being subjected to pains and penalties by an inquisition into the state of his religious opinions. And should not Israel’s sons love this land? should they not defend it in time of need foremost among its stoutest defenders? Are they not sons of the soil? members of the government? citizens of the republic? Do they not worship as their conscience teaches them? Do they not erect houses of prayer wherever they desire, and call unmolested on the One All-Father, who thrones in heaven, in strains of a distant land, in words of a former age? Ay, and they worship even thus; and where is the adversary who dares to molest them in their constitutional rights? who can abridge in this their unalienable privilege of citizenship? Indeed this is cause of thankfulness, and this blessing comes from God; for He, "who turneth the hearts of kings like water," having compassion on the long sufferings of his people in the lands of their captivity, filled with wisdom the hearts of those who framed the fundamental laws of this country, that they struck off the chains from the captives of centuries, and bid the reason enlightened by the wisdom of God know of no chains save the bonds of religion, of no fetters save the commands of the Most High. Still, with the severance of state from religion, with the annihilation of hypocrisy in order to obtain court favour, the state of morals has not degenerated below the standard of the old world; and though we hear of deeds of violence and of fraud which are a disgrace to human nature,-though there are perhaps national foibles which are not chargeable to other countries: it is not saying any more than the simple truth to aver, that as a whole people the inhabitants of this land have no more crimes to answer for than other nations, and that the state of sinfulness we witness only proves man in no state of society is otherwise than prone to evil, and violates the laws of holiness from the perverseness of his disposition, and not rarely from a defective education. This is not the place, nor is to-day the time, to enlarge upon this point; but it opens for the reflecting mind a vast field of inquiry, which will yield also ample fruits if taken in connexion with religion, especially that system to which we Hebrews are attached. Nor has the state suffered from not being supported by a paid hierarchy, and richly endowed religious establishments. On the contrary, the experiment of free institutions on a large scale in an extensive country, with every variety of climate, with an almost entire diversity of interests among

its millions of inhabitants, has proved entirely successful, although no church was leagued with the civil power to support it against the turbulence of the popular masses. What is more, though the timid stand trembling in doubt because of the obscure future, and imagine that the dissensions naturally belonging to a popular government will at length disrupt this vast confederacy, and place petty sovereigns at the head of its disjointed members, because they believe that man is not fit for self-government: the philanthropist, guided by the wholesome truths which the Bible so plentifully offers, in government no less than religion, can see no ground for this fear of the timid; and he beholds only the downfall of the constitution in a state of voluptuousness and imbecility like that which overwhelmed ancient Rome, when its love for liberty had been choked by the influx of useless wealth, produced by useless conquests; and if this should unfortunately be the state of the people, it would be a just punishment for them that they be cursed by Providence with the possession of royal heads and their natural companions, a favoured patrician caste, and a pampered regal church. In the mean time, it is a gift from on high that the liberties of this land are established on a foundation, to say the least, as sure as that of any regal government, and the absolute equality which each citizen enjoys, is a cause of thankfulness to the Giver of all good. But independently of these theoretical blessings, which the mere creature of pleasure and the lover of gain may not value, perhaps, there are tangible objects of enjoyment which have been conferred on this land. It is not many years ago that a spirit of daring and reckless speculation pervaded all classes and stations. Men wanted to grow rich, not by the slow process of accumulating little to little, each the fruit of honest industry and legitimate earning; but by quickly amassing where nothing had been invested, and by suddenly reaping a large harvest where nothing had been sown. It was then that a blight fell upon the land; the merchant saw his speculations fail; the supposed wealth was reduced to its nothingness; and the very soil seemed to mourn over the degeneracy of the people; and the husbandman found his harvest deficient; and this vast extent of country, which in other seasons might well be styled the granary of the world, became in its turn indebted to foreign lands for the bread which we ate, and for the seed which was entrusted to the earth at the time of ploughing. The people had confided too much in their own strength; they had been prosperous for many years, and had grown presumptuous by a reliance on their own resources. It was therefore, doubtless, as we must judge in analogy with the history of the world, that mercantile reverses and scanty crops were sent as providential dispensations, in order to prove to the community, by their own experience, that "If the Lord do not build the house, the builders thereof labour in vain;" and thus it was that when the curse did fall, all the precautions of human foresight were turned to naught, and the boldest in the day of prosperity, became timid and alarmed in the hour of peril; and nearly all enterprise was abandoned, as though no more days of success would dawn upon the earth. And in the homes of the poor there was sorrow; the many who depend upon the labour of their hands for the bread they daily eat were turned out of their workshops, because those for whom they wrought had no use for their labour; and in compulsory idleness was many a willing workman compelled to waste away the precious time. Soon the little hoard of better days was exhausted; and ghastly want then visited the houses of many who by labour had always hitherto earned a moderate support, and who only needed employment now to place them beyond the reach of absolute want. But who has chronicled the miseries of the poor? who will tell us how great were the struggles and the inward strife before the once independent artisan could submit to ask for alms from his wealthy neighbour, or before he took up the wandering staff, and turned his back upon the home of his childhood, to seek for bread in the

distant wilds? Still, amidst all this prostration of enterprise, the mercy of the Lord was distinctly visible, if man would but regard things with a believer's eye; for the earth again was rendered fruitful, and an immense increase followed on scanty harvests of former years; and many poor could thus purchase abundant food with diminished means of subsistence. More yet has been witnessed. After the evil of commercial distrust had prevailed for a while, confidence has been measurably restored; and the renewed activity in every branch of industry, and the increased demand for labourers to supply the deficiency which a long inaction had produced, prove that the Lord has again visited the land to cause the light of prosperity to cheer up the spirit of those who have felt the weight of the storm, which prostrated so many who deemed themselves secured by their own wisdom against the assaults of adversity.

But, to turn from present advantages, and from occurrences which have taken place under our own eye, let us cast our view back for a space of less than three centuries, and see what America then was. The country had been just discovered by the adventurous Europeans, and on a few spots, favourably situated with regard to climate and the beauty of the landscape, colonies had been planted by bloodstained Spain, in order to conquer the aborigines of the soil, to deprive them of the gold they possessed. I will not detain you with a recital of the murders and cruelties these insatiable bigots were guilty of to glut their unhallowed thirst for unlawful acquisitions; how they nearly depopulated whole islands by forcing the enervated natives to labour in the mines whence they had to extract the shining metal; but I will merely revert to the arrival, on the northern part of the new world, of a different race of men, who came hither to escape from the persecutions they had to endure in their native England for the religious opinions they entertained. Two hundred years ago the idea of toleration was something revolting to the European statesman, and whoever differed from the religion of the state was subject to pains and penalties for his daring. And whether it was a king of England who excluded the Catholic, the Quaker, and the Presbyterian from a free practice of their religion in his state; whether it was the king of France who banished the Protestant Huguenots from his kingdom; whether it was the ruler of Spain who drove away all dissentients by one fell decree from his dominions, and tortured millions because they dared to differ from the doctrines of the Catholic church: it was all the same, wherever one turned his look, and there was no liberty of conscience, save in the small republic which had conquered its independence from the cruel sway of Spain: I refer to Holland. It was, therefore, to the northern part of this continent that the English dissenters looked for a home where they might entertain their religious opinions unmolested; and colonists of different sentiments came hither from time to time to establish communities under the protection of the powerful ruler of Great Britain. It is not our province this day to point out the errors of many of the early settlers; how they, who had fled from persecution for opinions' sake, themselves became persecutors in their new homes of those who differed from them; for it was not to be expected that in times of illiberality men would learn to bear with the opinions of others, though they themselves had felt the iron weight of unjust power. A few communities, however, there were in which the rights of a free conscience were early recognized; and surprising enough, a Catholic noble, who founded the neighbouring state to the south of us, at a time when the head of his church encouraged the burning of heretics, was perhaps the first* who recognized even here the right of every man to worship God without being molested by the arm of civil power. I need not mention the benevolent founder of this commonwealth** in which we live, and by recommendation of the Governor of which we have consecrated this day as one of thanksgiving, whose natural kindness of heart and statesmanlike foresight inspired him to invite to

his colony every man who felt himself oppressed in his native land, and who preferred a life of freedom in the words of the new world, to fetters on the mind and shackles on his limbs in the old. Enough; hardy enterprise, guided by freedom, led into the thickest of the forest thousands of hardy pioneers, and speedily beautiful towns arose on the sea shore and on the margin of rivers; the wily savage retired before the civilized white man, and woods which formerly supported but a handful of vagabond hunters, were soon made to yield food and afford ample shelter for thousands of an industrious and thriving population. And now, wander abroad, and behold the immense arms of streams that embrace this land; survey its lakes, miniature oceans in their dimensions; traverse its bays and its inlets; survey its hundreds of harbours; and see the ships that go to every land, that arrive from every clime, bearing away the surplus products this country affords, and bringing the luxuries and necessaries collected from all the world; and reflect that in all the length and breadth of the republic there are peace and plenty: and then say whether you do not recognize causes of gratitude, or do you believe that human wisdom has built up all this greatness? That it is mere human enterprise that has effected all this? O believe it not, that mortals, when unassisted by divine aid, can command success! Powerless is the arm that labours without God, useless is the mind that travails without providential assistance. O believe it! For religion and experience both do teach the lesson, that it is the Lord who disposes of the fate of nations as of individuals, and that it is his goodness which exalts a people, that it is his power which breaks down its proud exaltation when the inhabitants become presumptuous in their success, and yield themselves captives to base desire, and go astray of the imaginings after their heart. Is it not, then, true, that as citizens of this republic we have great cause for thankfulness to the Lord of all, because He has so bountifully blessed the land with liberty-with peace-with plenty-with health? And shall we not unite in praising his holy name because "He is good, and his mercy endureth for ever?"

* Yet Lord Baltimore also excluded Jews from an equality in the colony of Maryland, which all Christian sects enjoyed. It was only within the last few years that two succeeding legislatures of the now state of Maryland passed the bill removing the Jews' disabilities, by which the state constitution was amended, and our people were placed upon a perfect equality with all the other citizens of that state. North Carolina and Massachusetts have not yet abrogated the Jewish civil disabilities from the codes. Still, this does not affect our right to worship unmolested, to hold property, and to exercise any lawful pursuit; for, thanks to the general enlightenment of the people, and the principles of free institutions, no abridgement of personal rights could ever be tolerated in this country.

** William Penn. But as Israelites we have additional motives for gratitude. O, long and weary have been our wanderings! From the day that we were driven from our own land, when the legions of the "benevolent Titus," as false historians term the barbarous conqueror, destroyed all that was dear and holy in Israel, it seemed as though all mankind had declared war against the remnant that had escaped from the famine, and the sword, and the pestilence, and the tooth of wild beasts, which had all combined their destructive efforts at the siege and after the conquest of Jerusalem. We were not permitted to stay near the ruins of our temple and of our homes; the captives were not suffered to weep on their former soil over the downfall of their glory; yes, we were scourged and plucked out of our land; and still, what country would consent to receive us? Whilst paganism yet ruled the Roman empire, we were the scorn of the heathens, and were exposed to all the persecutions which their ignorant hatred of divine truths prompted them to invent. And when the

Nazarene faith became the religion of the state, our situation was not less deplorable; for every species of insult, and cruelty, and oppression was constantly resorted to in order to embitter our lives and make us fear with trembling for the morrow. Had we been brigands, murderers, conspirators against the tyrants who oppressed us, there might have been excuses framed for this scandalous outrage of the rights of humanity witnessed in the hardships we had to endure. But no such crimes were ever laid to our charge; unless it might be that absurd calumny which was often invented at the eve of some new persecution, that we murdered an innocent child of gentile parentage to use its blood at the celebration of our Passover feast. It was no use for us to urge that such an act was contrary to our very religion, in honour of which this crime was said to have been committed; our enemies knew its falsity; but they could not prove by any true means that we were injurious to the state, not even to the church which rested for its support upon the belief in a plurality in the godhead; and yet they thirsted for our blood, they thirsted for our supposed wealth; and they hence inflamed the popular mind by an invented discovery of an enormity at which our souls revolted; and they thus slew without mercy, and they plundered without remorse, and banished without repining those who in their features bore the marks of their descent from the scorned race, or who professed by their acts their belief in the hated unity of God. It was, in truth, this belief which our adversaries hated; it was this principle, which contradicted their proclaimed views of truth, that aroused their ire; and still it was the idea of the Most High and his attributes which had descended to us from the days of Abraham; and it was the watchword which resounded from every son of Jacob, from every daughter of Israel, when they laid themselves down to sleep and when they rose up; when they met in their assemblies of prayer, on their days of solemn thanksgiving; nay, at the very moment when their ruthless persecutors shook the lighted torch to consume then alive, or bared the glittering sword to strike off their heads, or held the noose to tie them to the ignominious gibbet because they belonged to the proscribed Jewish race. 1t makes one sick to revert to the horrors of those times; it is almost incredible that such things have been; that no mercy took possession of the breast of those who professed to teach a religion of love. But not with bodily oppression were the adversaries satisfied; they had found means to torture the soul also. Tender children were torn from the arms of parents who longed for them all the day; not to be sold into slavery, for that would have been a comparative mercy, but that they might be educated in a religion the followers of which oppressed the parents for their belief,-in a religion which their progenitors resisted even unto death. In short, the sons of Israel were persecuted in every land, and their religion was proscribed wherever its members were found; and only here and there a limited toleration was granted as the price of a burdensome contribution, to be resumed at the caprice or the pressing necessity of their tyrants for farther exactions. O, melancholy has been our lot, and but dim recollections are preserved in history to mark the sorrows which for eighteen hundred years have befallen our people; the world was ashamed to leave records of the wrong that was heaped upon the unresisting and helpless remnant, whose story was written in blood, and whose fate was remembered only in the tears and complaints of the sufferers. And imagine not that our persecutors are wearied of their task at this very day; O, no! they do not slay any more with the sword, they light not the cruel stake to amuse men and women of royal blood with the sufferings of unbelieving Jews; but they continue to heap disqualifications of various kinds upon us, in order to drive us from our faith, or to diminish our numbers in case we will not yield. This is no idle figure of speech! Would to mercy that the picture were one of fiction, and that Israel had peace! But truth compels us to assert that in many countries of Europe, there especially where the

greater part of Israel dwells, laws have been contrived, which if not repealed, will in the course of nature either diminish the Jewish population, or at least prevent the natural increase which in time of peace always takes place. Singular as it may appear in this country, where every citizen has the right to judge for himself whether he shall marry or not, it is nevertheless true, that in some provinces only a certain number of Jews can be allowed to marry, and this restricted population is confined to narrow limits, beyond which no one is permitted to dwell; and should any one violate these laws, he is dealt with as a malefactor against some wise enactment. But what need is there to prove the injustice which is rendered to us? Have we not cause to complain even in countries comparatively liberal, that the rights of citizenship are denied to professing Jews, whilst the door of preferment is opened wide to apostates who sell their birthright for a paltry office, merely that they may bask in the sunshine of a worthless court-favour?

All this proves (and I could have added much more, were it not that I fear to detain you too long,) that as Israelites we have an additional cause for thanksgiving that it has pleased our almighty Father to assign to us this land as an asylum from oppression, where we may mingle with the other citizens as their equals in constitutional rights, as their equals in love of country and devotion to its institutions and laws. This is emphatically the land where Israelites in their captivity can dwell securely, whilst its liberties remain uninjured by popular violence or by tyrannical usurpation; here the spirit of Judaism can shine forth, (as far as this can be out of the limits of the holy land, and without the temple whose rebuilding we hope for,) without let or hindrance from the malign influence of political disqualifications; and here can we devote our energies to our moral and physical improvement, without dread of molestation from the other inhabitants.

And, indeed, the moral influence of religious freedom in America has already been felt in other countries: for in France and Belgium no inequality is recognized any more for the sake of speculative opinions; Holland, true to its ancient liberties, has maintained the rights of its numerous Israelitish citizens; and England, though she has not yet removed the inequality among her people at home, has equalized in her colonies the Jew with the other inhabitants; and soon may she extend this justice to all who claim the right of serving their native land in peace and in war, though they are of the ancient faith of Moses. But let us cast a look upon ourselves, and see whether we have acted in accordance with the motives of gratitude which rest upon us. God indeed has been most merciful towards us; but we must stand humbled when He comes to judge us according to our deeds. We have been blessed individually and nationally; as citizens and as Israelites; but we have done but little to prove that we feel that it is from God we have been blessed. Merit we have none to entitle us to all the kindness and the truth which the Lord has shown to us who ought to be his servants; but, on the contrary, we have often rebelled against the majesty of Heaven, and have vexed his holy spirit by our backsliding. Many a one has crossed the Atlantic with his staff for his patrimony; many a one has set out in life with but a small share of worldly goods; and still he has seen his stores increase daily, and wealth pour in upon him, far more than he counted upon, far more than he needs for the supply of all his wants. Like Jacob, his wealth can be divided in two bands, and if one be lost, the other would be enough to answer all his reasonable desires. But, unlike Jacob, he has violated the law of Jacob’s God in acquiring it; unlike the patriarch, he thinks not of the Lord in the day of his prosperity, he prays not to Him in the day of his affliction. It is mournful that we should have to portray thus the conduct of Jews, of those whose very descent, whose very sufferings ought to distinguish them as the devoted servants of

the Lord, as the true followers of his law. But what is the use of deceiving ourselves?

We cannot be called a religious community, neither in this city nor elsewhere. Let us not be offended in hearing the truth spoken; on the contrary, let us meet the issue like reasonable men, as beings accountable to an all-seeing Eye for their conduct. My words may be plain; but, brethren, honeyed speeches come not with a good grace from a faithful preacher; he owes truth to his flock, he owes truth to his Maker. In the name of Him whose words are our law, I appeal to you, I beseech you, to take a calm view of events passing daily around you. I ask you, is the Sabbath solemnly kept every week as the day of delight in the Lord, as a time of reunion in his courts? or do Israelites seek on that holy day their desires pursue their business, and are absent from the house of prayer? Answer me, is the name of the Lord daily invoked in all the houses where we dwell, as was the good custom of ancient Israel? Speak, do you live in spiritual fellowship with your brothers? do you wish for union with them? does or does not forbidden food stand on your tables? are or are not the eyes of the observers offended by the viands which they see offered to them in your abodes? "Yes," I hear you say, "we are charitable, we never let the hungry go away unfed, and when we see the naked, we clothe him: Is not this true religion? Do we not thus honour the Lord?" Undoubtedly; and I have often had cause to rejoice over the prompt relief which has been extended to the unfortunate, whether native or stranger, whether Israelite or gentile, who claimed your aid; and doubtlessly God in his goodness has watched your deeds, and will not withhold his recompense. I speak not of this city only; but of all other Jewish communities over the extent of the land, for charity is their peculiar characteristic. Still, thus you observe but one of the commandments; whereas the Lord demands of his servants an entire surrender of the will, that they may "walk before Him and become perfect." Do you say, that six days' time does not suffice for your labour? that you cannot devote to rest the days which our religion demands? Let me beseech you to reflect, that many of our forefathers, when all did rest on the weekly Sabbath, actually acquired large possessions, which they transmitted to their children; the blessing of the Lord of the Sabbath was with them, and they prospered in their undertakings. In modern times, we have with pain been compelled to witness many a day of rest disregarded; but have our possessions become enlarged through this means? is there a greater degree of solid prosperity among us according to our increased numbers than in former times? Assuredly not; and those whose years allow them, to speak with knowledge will, I am sure, bear me out in the assertion that as a community we are not richer than under the ancient strict observance of the Sabbath. And ever were it otherwise, still this would be no argument for offending against the commands of the Lord. We have been greatly blessed in the enjoyment of so many mercies, which we have not deserved; our own hearts, therefore, should yearn to return thanks to the Lord; and how can we better thank Him than by obeying his precepts implicitly, whether our advantage be secured thereby or not? For how soon must all glory fade, and how soon will the hoarded wealth be left to new possessors, who neither toiled for it nor will remember in gratitude the one who left it behind. And who would not value the joys of a holy life, which sought the glory of God above all things, in order that the spirit might be fitted for a purer world, where all cares will be gratified by the Father? where all will be fed by his delights? And why, again, will we, for the sake of carnal joys, of mere animal appetites, trifle away our share of futurity, which to us can only be given as servants of the Lord after the standard of Israel's sacred inheritance, the law of Sinai? Salvation is the portion of all righteous gentiles, as we are taught, though they obey not the law which was not given to them. But, I repeat it, Jews are not thus securing the happiness of their souls; they must acquire it

through obedience to the law, and this, obedience in all things, even unto the end.-And this is the country where we can be Israelites in truth. Here no one can molest us in our observances; it is here, therefore, that we should display obedience in all its bearings, and distinguish ourselves in our conversation and acts as true followers of the ancient fellowship of Jacob. In this all can join; whether we are rich or poor, whether we drew our first breath on this side of the ocean or thousands of miles beyond it; for we all are children of one stock, inheritors of the same birthright, servants of the same God by the same revelation. Let no one, then, be wanting to show the due obedience to the ancient legacy, and let him purify himself, and help others to become pure likewise. If, then, this day of thanksgiving has been, under Providence, the means of awakening a new feeling of religiousness among our congregation, how happy will be the recollections its future recurrence will call forth; it will be a new link to bind us to those political institutions under which the inhabitants are accustomed to look towards the God whom the Bible revealed (although they all do not worship Him as the One Eternal) as the Source of all blessings, as the Being to whom all our thanks are due. And O! God of truth, bless in thy mercy the liberties of this land, give them permanency and abiding strength; preserve the constitution which secures equal rights to all; and inspire the hearts of the authorities and the people with wisdom, that they may deal justly and truly towards each other and all the nations of the earth; that peace may dwell within these borders, and the sound of strife not be heard within their limits. Shed on us also, the children of thy covenant, the spirit of meekness and piety, that we may subdue our hearts to thy service, in order that we may, enjoying liberty of conscience, and unswayed by fear of persecution, devote our hearts to thy service, to adore thy ever-blessed Name in sincerity and truth-even unto that hour when thy salvation shall be displayed before all nations through the redeemer whom Thou wilt send, as Thou hast spoken through thy prophets. Amen!

Thursday, Kislev 28th, (December 21st,) 5604.

Chapter 39

S. On Atonement and Acceptance

On Atonement and Acceptance. A Sermon.

O Father of Mercy! by thy benevolence spared, we are again permitted to enter thy courts, and another year has commenced unto us, that we may again be witnesses of thy truth and glory, which fill the world. Yet have we often sinned in thy presence, and done the evil in thy sight, rebelling against thy will, unmindful of thy holy command. And now we come before thy presence, asking of Thee forgiveness, pardon, and atonement; we crave the suspension of thy wrath and of thy indignation which we have incurred by our sinful deeds. But what excuse can we offer to thy omniscience? Can we allege aught that will avail as a justification in thy tribunal? Alas! we have known thy ways and have wilfully departed from them; we have been taught thy precepts, but our souls have refused to be obedient to their behest. And the record of our transgressions testifies against us, and our iniquity is before our eyes no less than it is known to Thee, to whom all the deeds of man are laid open. Yet, O Father and King! do not cast us out because of our sins, do not forsake thy rebellious children, but forgive according to thy great mercy, as Thou hast borne with our people from Egypt even until now. And let the world be taught that thy faith is yet entire with the sons of thy servants; and let these be made conscious, how great is thy goodness with which Thou watchest over them. Let us also feel the working of thy spirit, that many may be cleansed from iniquity and become repentant seekers of thy goodness, that through them those who are now obdurate may be led to fall down and worship, and to abominate the evil of their ways which is now the idol of their hearts. And through this shall we know that thy presence dwells indeed among us, when we see righteousness spread, and mercy prevail all around us, when many come to pray to whom thy worship is now a stranger, when those fear thee who now follow the path of sin. And let thus the coming Day of Atonement be to us a season of thy renewed love, and be an earnest to us that our spirits have been purified in thy judgment, and that we all have been numbered among those to whom Thou imputest no iniquity, whose transgressions Thou hast forgiven. Amen!

Brethren,

Much had Israel sinned, and the decree of destruction and banishment went forth against them, and the land, which was fertile and smiling in beauty was to be stripped of its fertility and rendered desolate to the eyes of all beholders because of the sins of its inhabitants. The men were doomed to wander forth, and the women were decreed to wear the chains of slavery instead of the ornaments of gold and jewels which were wont to decorate their beautiful limbs; all because the law of the Lord had been neglected, and because the warnings of the pious seers, who had been sent to admonish their brethren, had not been listened to, in the manner becoming messages from the Lord of spirits. Still, amidst all the dreadful denunciations which in those evil days of transgression fell from prophetic lips, there are interspersed words of consolation, which, even at this distant day, fall upon the believing ear like the dewdrops upon the thirsting flower in the calm stillness of the summer night. You know of Jeremiah, brethren; he was the man who more than all

others was the messenger of wo and destruction; still even he has consolation in his messages, and speaks of happy changes which are impending, whenever the men of Judah return from their transgression. He knew the dread decree, at that day irrevocable, that Jerusalem must fall,-fall under the irresistible blows of the conquering nations that went to battle under the great Nebuchadnezzar's lead; fall, because the measure of her iniquity was nearly full to overflowing; but he too saw glorious gleams of light breaking forth athwart the bloom of the impending night, and he beheld Jerusalem redeemed, Zion restored, although under his very eye the men of Chaldea were battering down the lofty walls, and overthrowing fort and tower, and entering the sanctuary with fire and sword, slaying the men without remorse, and the women without pity; dashing, in their fury, the suckling against the rock, and making the tearful mother the sport for their insatiable swords. And still Jeremiah beheld, through all this sorrow a glorious future, a future cloudless as the summer sky in his own lovely Palestine, glorious as the brilliant moon when she rises in splendour above the quiet sleeping landscape, in the midst of the glittering array of the stars of heaven. Ay, it was the returning light of the countenance of the Lord which dawned upon his far-reaching vision; but it was a light to be purchased by the people themselves; for they who had forfeited the favour of the Most High, were themselves to repurchase it by a change of conduct, by a return to obedience. It was this double change, the wickedness of Israel into righteousness, and of the divine wrath into mercy and everlasting favour, which stood prominent before Jeremiah's mental eye, and thus he spoke:

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"O return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings! Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art our God."- Jeremiah 3:22. The verse just quoted is composed of two parts, namely, the address of the Holy Spirit admonishing the people to repent, and their reply to the mission of mercy. "O return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings." Meaning, "however often and grievously you may have offended, however laden with built may be your spirit, however far you may have strayed from the righteous way: come nevertheless freely to the fold of your Father; I am ready to receive you; and if your transgressions have been manifold, I am able to forgive them all, to wipe out all your iniquity from the book of memorial." In this blessed message we have the entire scheme of repentance unfolded clearly and unequivocally to our admiration, and we behold God the same merciful Being to sinners, which He is to those who have never sinned. Were it that no remedy existed for transgressers, that every sin demanded the absolute condemnation of the offender, how lost would be the whole human family, how utterly hopeless all longing for salvation, which fills the heart of man! "There is no man on earth so righteous who does act well, that he sinneth not;" where then would be those in whom the Lord would detect no guilt? where those who could escape from the torments which are the portion of those who have forgot their God? There would be but one step to despair and utter recklessness on the one side; "We are lost beyond redemption for the smallest evil we have committed," would be the desperate reflection of those who have fallen; "it is useless for us to look back with regret upon what is past; let us then pluck the roses whilst they bloom, let us dash heedlessly into the whirlpool of dissipation to drown sorrow in the brimming winecup, for fear lest the evil hour should reach us before we have tasted our fill;" and on the other, gloomy despondency would follow upon the smallest deviation from right, and the sinner would, in anticipation of the fatal doom that is

impending, pass his days in dread of the certain and coming evil. Would this be mercy? could for this end life and reason have been given? And still there can be no line drawn which would separate the consequence of one transgression from that of another. All sinning is a departure from the will of God; every wilful transgression is a rejection of the divine guidance which we have received; consequently, if there were no remedy for sin, every deviation would amount to a forfeiture of mercy, would consign us to destruction, without the possibility of a recovery. They, who know how good the Lord is, will at once recognise the incompatibility of such views with the mercy discoverable in all creation, with the paternal kindness which beams forth from every page of the written word of God. But not such is the spirit of the religion we have received; it breathes forth judgments and retributions; it tells us of a Judge and an Avenger, but it also speaks of mercy and indulgence, of a Father and Saviour. There is judgment for all acts of man, there is retribution for every deed; there is a Judge who sees all that is done; there is an Avenger who metes out the merited doom to those who refuse mercy; but there is mercy even to the sinner, there is indulgence granted that retribution follow not immediately on transgression; there is our Father who waiteth patiently to see whether his children will not listen to his call and come again to his embrace, and there is a Saviour, even our God and Father, who though both Judge and Avenger will readily forgive all, even the long obdurate, if they will only claim his mercy, which is extended to all, from the beginning of all things, even unto this day. Let us be fully impressed with this consoling idea, when we discover that our way has been the road of perdition. That the same Being who punishes, rewards us also, that the same God forgives who is wrathful to sinners, and that we have received the means and choice to obtain either reward or punishment; that we are free to act, and when regretting what has passed, free to come back to the place from which we started, and that there is no insurmountable obstacle opposed to us from any external source, why we could not be as good as we desire to be, as good as any of those whom we consider pious and good.

“Return, ye backsliding children,” is the exclamation of the Lord, unto Israel as a nation, unto Israelites as individuals. All are included in the duties which we owe to God, and all are to be comforted with the promise “I will heal your backslidings.” As a people have we sinned, and as a people should we return; ever since the time we went forth from Egypt, have we striven against the Holy Spirit which guided us; we would not submit to the laws which were laid before us, and we wandered away upon the path of error, till we have become scattered among the gentiles. And deep have been the wounds which our apostasy has caused us! Go to East, you find Jacob’s obdurate sons in dread of the tyrant who makes bitter their life; look to the West, they there too are found a by-word to the nations among whom they live; “sinning Israelites” is their name, because they have forsaken the covenant; in the ice-covered countries of the North they too are found, loaded with the same contumely which they meet with in the land once their own; and far in the regions of the South, you will encounter descendants of the same ancestry bearing their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers. Because the common parents of this people in the days of their prosperity went astray from the law and withdrew themselves from the service of the Lord; and He permitted thre wounds, which the offended religion demanded, to be struck by the gentiles who trod down Judah’s glory as the wild beasts tread down the produce of the vineyard; and to this day the wounds are not healed, because not yet has Israel returned from the dominion of transgression. Still our wounds are not incurable; for the great Physician has promised: “I will heal their backsliding;” and this hope sustains us amidst all our calamities, calamities which our sins

have justly merited, and which will draw us at length to seek for healing from the hands of Him who has power to bind up our sores and to staunch the bleeding wounds. Indeed in the Lord is Israel's salvation; and whenever we seek it as one man, whenever we claim it as a union of brothers, the remedy will not be withheld, and the ransomed of the Lord will return from the lands of their captivity, and dwell in the places which are now waste and desolate, as in the days of old, under Shepherds whom the Lord will raise up, under teachers who will truly instruct the people in the ways of the Everlasting Lord. To the individual Israelites too, the call is addressed: "Return, ye backsliding children." So soon as you have become conscious that your course of life is not in consonance with the line of duty marked out for you in the law; so soon as your conscience is awakened to compare your own deeds, the result of your own counsels, with the revealed word of God; so soon as your brothers tell you to beware of the consequences of your conduct; so soon as you find that sin has a dwelling-place in your heart: you should pause in your way and return to the path which the Lord has marked out for you, fearlessly, prayerfully, confident of being received in favour. O say not, erring brother! "My backslidings are many, how shall I return? what merits have I to plead in extenuation of my guilt? who is to plead for me before my offended Judge?" Never fear; come only with confidence, with prayer, with humility, and thy Father will be ready with his mercy to shield thee from the consequences of thy own deeds; seek for no merit, neither in thyself nor in any other being, when thou comest to pray; thy own sense of degradation and self-abasement for leaving no righteousness in thy possession, will be sufficient to make thy God listen to thy prayer; and thy humility when thou comest to kneel before the Lord because thou FEELEST thyself sinful, will be all-sufficient, to plead before the dread Judge in the hour when He comes to winnow the chaff from the wheat, to purge mankind from those who pollute the world by the iniquity of their deeds.

Only consider, brethren! that to us there has never been revealed any other idea than individual responsibility and the unbought mercy of God; on the one side we are told: "The soul that sinneth shall die," since the father is not to suffer for the sins of the son, nor the son for the sins of the father; and on the other hand we are told: "For the Lord thy God is a merciful God," and "He being merciful forgiveth iniquity and will not destroy, and poureth not forth all his wrath." The evident meaning of these verses is, that whatever evil man does will fall upon him only; there can be no transfer of responsibility on the one side, nor any assumption of guilt on the other. I am not to suffer for the wrong of any other man, nor can the highest being take upon himself my punishment to free me from iniquity. God does not punish merely to punish, which would evidently be the case if needs some one would be compelled to be punished for any sin before it can be atoned for. God recompenses evil with retribution, either for reformation of the offender, or the improvement of others; we may assert at once, for both objects combined. Now assume that one who is guiltless should bear the consequences of another's iniquity, how is such proceeding to amend the criminal, or influence to good those who witness the punishment? Evidently as a means of amendment, the party suffering being innocent, it would fail of effecting the least, and as an example to others it could to a certainty not operate, since the only idea which can reconcile us to see punishment inflicted is that we honestly believe that the sufferer has deserved his fate. So then, it is the Bible doctrine, that the soul that sinneth alone shall die; but not absolutely without retrieve, without remedy; for the Lord is not inexorable, He is ready to pardon if we but come forward to claim his mercy; for He will forgive us when we seek Him with all our heart, and with all our soul-that is, if we abhor our conduct, and endeavour to regain his favour by a newly-awakened

devotion to his worship, by a faithful conformity to his holy will. In other words, the state of sin is one of death; the way of repentance is the return to life, life in the presence of the Lord, whose are the souls of the living and the dead.

There is a remarkable degree of expressiveness in the idea: “Return, ye backsliding children;” the sinner is not beyond the call of the voice of Heaven; nothing that he does places him beyond the pale of divine cognizance, of the Creator’s watchfulness; and wherever he may place himself, there is constantly a whispering in his ear, in the social hours of night, in the pleasant converse of the evening, in the daily time of labour, whether alone in the solitude of the student’s chamber, on the bed of sickness, or amidst the brilliant throng who surround the monarch on his throne-be he the great or the humble-every where he hears the whispering of Goodness reverberating in his ear “Return, return.”-“Come back, erring child,” says the Spirit; “Come back to the Father’s embrace,” says the invisible Guardian; and will we hear? will we follow? Alas! how loving is our God, how forgiving is our Father! but we are obdurate, we feel not that we have offended, that the fruits of our transgression are ripening to our sorrow! Oh! that we would but once listen; how speedily would we then follow the guidance of the Lord, which has never yet failed, how glorious would be our end, when now we are hurrying on to destruction. And then, the Lord calls us his children; his children, though we have been backsliders! and do we not feel sorrowful at the thought that so much love has been, as it were, almost lost upon us ingrates? that blessings, that indulgence, have failed to rivet the bond which in youth bound us to our Father? that we left the road which as children we were taught to travel, though now our reason is enlightened and the labours of our hands have been blessed with an ample increase beyond our expectations? beyond our deserts? But so is man; forgetful of his God, he lives as though he were independent of all beyond himself, trusting in his strength, confident in his own wisdom. Yet let him beware; sunshine lasts not for ever, security does not endure for many days; the hours of trial will approach, despite of his unwillingness to acknowledge the power of the Supreme Disposer of events; and as an Israelite we tell him, that his religion claims him as a servant of God, and that as such he is bound to seek the forgiveness of his Father in heaven by the very means through which Abraham found favour, by faith and obedience; and that through these means he will be accepted, though his deeds have been formerly in opposition to his duty. For we have received the amplest assurance, that we will be forgiven if we alter our wicked course, and return to the path from which we swerved; for our Father is there, even at the diverging roads of life, to take back to his fold whoever repents and returns from transgression in Jacob, as He has promised us through his servants the prophets.

Having thus analyzed the first part of our text, we must elucidate rapidly the other portion, which is: “Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art our God.” Whoever has studied the history of our people must have observed that much as we have sinned, often as we have been given to idolatry, many as have been our apostacies, even to this day, it cannot be said that we have ever renounced entirely the worship of the Most High. Through all the awful scenes which were witnessed in Palestine during the first and second temples, amidst the horrors of Nebuchadnezzar’s sieges and Titus’s slaughters; during all the butcheries of Hadrian and the massacres of the crusaders; when thousands upon thousands perished with famine and exhaustion in their banishment from Spain and our expulsion from other lands of civilized barbarians, the name of the Lord ONE was the venerated object for whose salvation we yearned in our inmost heart. Had our deeds only equalled our faith, had the belief which we ever felt only influenced us to remain obedient to the every will of

God: what a happy commonwealth would we have formed, how beautifully would have stood before the world in spiritual no less than temporal excellence the kingdom of priests for which we were destined. But, we must confess to our shame, that we refused to listen, and the evil, which we yet endure, came upon us in all its overwhelming horrors and fury, and the land of Israel was rendered desolate and was bereft of its rightful inhabitants. Had we been obedient, our Messiah would long since have come to sit upon the throne of David for ever, and to his kingdom there would have been no end; the world would have been redeemed, and we would have been happy as the acknowledged favourites of God, the branch of his planting, the work of his hands through which He is glorified. Nevertheless have we not fallen off altogether; we are smitten, affected with the curse of disobedience, marred in our countenance more than other men; there is neither comeliness nor glory in us that gentiles should desire our society; but with all this we are not placed beyond the reach of redemption, we are children of Israel, recognizable by our descent, by our conduct, by our belief, by the sign of the covenant which we bear in our flesh. Let our sons and daughters leave us, and who sees not the child of Israel marked in their face? Let them swear fealty to another creed, and does not their inward conviction belie the falsehood which they utter with their tongues ? Let them put on the emblems which belong to dissenting religions, and how galling do not the very ornaments which deck them rest on their bosom? Yes we are children of ONE God, and let us differ in many points of observance; let us differ upon points of creed; let us be reformers or adherents of ancient usages; let us come from the far East, or the most distant West: the exclamation Adonay Echad is the universal watchword of the whole household of Jacob; in this all join, from this none are excluded. And go where you will, watch the Jew dying on the frozen snow in a rencontre with Russia’s armies, or led forth to perish by fire for the sake of his faith in ancient Spain; or follow him in the crowd who worship in the house of God at the close of a Day of Atonement, or even in the social circle where friend meets with friend: every where it is the same sublime thought which animates all; it is the unity of God, the saving power of the Father of all.

Long indeed has our holy religion struggled with the obduracy of our hearts; long has she striven in vain for an absolute victory; but conquered she has never been. She has had to hide her face because of the assault of adverse circumstances which opposed her progress; but she has marched onward, slow indeed, though not less sure of victory. The house of Israel has not yet returned with a firm heart to the Lord, or else it would not have fallen to the lot of the humble individual who addresses you now, to call you to repentance. But to doubt of the ultimate result, of the happy issue of this contest of truth against error, would be to despair of the justice and truth of God. Many may fall off, and leave the fold where Israel is received; but there will always be enough, though they be few, to bear aloft the banner which is to wave as the signal for a regenerated world.-The world will be regenerated, and with the rest of mankind, Israel will not be lost, the star of Jacob will not set for ever to be blotted out from under the heaven. But without repentance neither can our nation nor individuals be accepted; it is, therefore, but reasonable to conclude that at a time sooner or later, but a time sure to arrive, the houses of Israel and of Judah will unite to call as one man on the Lord their God, and that then his wrath will be turned aside and He will have mercy on his land and his people. It will be at that day that the call of the Spirit: “Return, ye backsliding children” will be answered by the repentant voice of the newly-redeemed nation: “Behold we come unto thee, for Thou art our God;” long since we have heard the call which thy mercy addressed to us, long we have refused to hear, long we have loved our idols better than

Thee, long we have preferred following the inclination of our hearts to obeying thy law. But now we feel the unworthiness of our conduct, we are ashamed of our backsliding, and we are here come back to thy embrace, for Thou art as ever our God. And let history be witness, let thy own wisdom testify, whether we have ever been totally lost to thy worship; and we are again in thy presence to follow thy guidance as in the day when we went out from Egypt; for then Thou wert alone, “no stranger god was with Thee,” and now again Thou alone hast redeemed us, unaided by any other power, from the grasp of sin, from the tyranny of cruel oppressions. This is the idea which Jeremiah held out in his dark days, when foolish idolatry was the practice of the men and women of Israel. Then their power was broken, and they felt the truth of the word of God. Changes innumerable have since passed over Israel; and still the name of the Lord is the tower of strength to which we cling in all our sorrows. Is it not then a holy consolation which we justly experience amidst all our trials? a confidence which cannot be shaken, that nothing can destroy the structure of our faith?-And this noble thought should then urge every sinner to come forward and purify himself according to the law of God, to forsake the iniquity in his hands, and to render his soul free from the taint of deadly sin, seeing that for thousands of years the religion of Israel has proved its efficacy, knowing that the God who proclaimed it is sure to punish those who neglect its precepts.-Let us, brethren, feel the full force of this consideration, let us all, who have experienced the woful weight of transgression, come to the foot of the throne of Mercy to ask for healing, for that balm which has never yet failed of restoring the health which had been destroyed by indulgence in transgression and sin. And how goodly will it be when the Lord, at our appearing in his presence, grants us his approbation, and says mercifully: “I will heal your backsliding.” O! such a moment of bliss far outweighs all joys of existence, and such a lot can only be accorded to those who have not sinned, or those who have sincerely repented of every sin they have committed. Sinless none of us can claim to be; but repentant all can become; the door is open wide to all who may wish to enter, and the Hand is stretched forth to draw up from the depth of the pool of sin all who desire to be washed by the water of purification. This is the spirit of godliness which is never exhausted; it flows for ever, even from the first hour of the creation till the consummation of every thing. It is ours, if we claim it, it is for all men who desire it; let it then be our endeavour to profit by the approaching Day of Atonement; to let it make a deep and lasting impression on the minds of all; that we may leave the house of God purified and improved, better men, better Israelites, better servants of the Lord than when we entered to pray. So that, be our days cut short in the bloom of youth, or prolonged to a green old age, we may be fit for the kingdom of heaven, to dwell joyfully among the saints, till the day of the resurrection, when all that is mortal will become endued with everlasting life, when death shall be swallowed up for ever, and no tear of sorrow bedew any more the cheek of the sons of man. Amen.

Friday, Tishry 7th, September 20th, 5606.

S. On Education

Specimens of German Preachers

No. II. On Education. A Sermon for Shebuoth, by Dr. Ludwig Philippson, Rabbi of Magdeburg.

Beneficent Father of the sons of man! "Behold children are a heritage of the Lord, offspring a glorious reward." (Psalms 127:3.) Truly, as Thou hast placed our children in our arms, on our heart, as pledges, as entrusted, invaluable possessions, as a sweet weight, a dear burden, difficult to be borne, yet so gladly borne, not willingly yielded for any price, so dreadfully painful to lose:-do Thou Father, help us, teach us how to guide them in the right path, that they may walk in the light of thy countenance, that they may become an ornament to our neck, a crown to our head, to honour Thee, to be a blessing to man, and to us, their fathers and mothers, a pride, a happiness, that we may constantly take them joyfully to our arms, and they close our eyes in sincere love at the end of cur days. Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Israel! As often as we unite on this day for worship, on the festival of the revealed God, our view is of itself directed to the terrors of yon desert, where our fathers were assembled at the foot of Sinai, to listen to the word, the commands of the Lord. The thought is too great ever to be forgotten. Above-the thunder-cloud of the Lord, below-millions of awestruck men, between-the smoking, quaking mountain, and above all the Lord’s voice, which caused the doctrines of right and virtue to sink unto everlasting into the hearts of mankind. Yea, the very idea is divine! And what did the Lord desire? To educate a great people to a knowledge of divine things, to justice, to religion. Therefore did He them draw forth out of the dark country of superstition and slavery, to render them free from the bonds of error and dependence, as a child is drawn out of the dark domain of unconsciousness, out of the region of sleepiness to the light of day and freedom. Therefore did he lead them forth into the wilderness, that they might be alone, separate during their time of instruction from a contact with the vicious, sunken nations, just as we shieldingly guard our children from the evils and vices of the world. He fed them there with a peculiar species of food, as we do to our children as long as they are infants. He led them through the wilderness for forty years, till they acquired the power to enter into an independent life, just as we kekp our children with us till they reach manhood’s years; in the wilderness He taught them doctrines and justice, truth and virtue, knowledge of divine things and piety, just as we would gladly impress them upon our children, and lay them, if we could, in their open heart. And after they had become grown up and strong, He caused them to enter the land of contest, to become manly in the battles for their country, and assisted them in the struggles for that land, till they could live and act as an independent people. So also do we parents let our youth and maidens enter into life, to meet its struggles and fatigues, and we surrender to them our wealth and possessions, that their tasks may be less than ours has been, till they become men and women in their own position, at their own fireside. But even in this also the parallel holds true; often did Israel fall off from the only God, often did Israel go astray from off the road which had been taught to them, and did not always fulfil the hopes which they had awakened:-and how often do not parents behold the same thing with a torn

heart in their grown up children? for they too fall off from the right path, and the father's eye and the mother's heart see the danger and the destruction and cannot help;-■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked," "we hoped for grapes and find wild grapes." But I have already, beloved friends, touched upon the very subject to which I meant to lead you. The education of the people of Israel, the principal day and centre of which we celebrate this day, I intended, should lead me to speak of the education of the Israelitish child. But why should I speak to you of this subject to-day? Is not to-day the feast of the first fruits? But where can we find more precious first fruits which we could bring to the altar of the Lord than our children, his blessing and our joy? Is not to-day the feast of our confession of faith? And how can we better lay our confession before the only God than in our children? And is not this a period when all nature is rearing and educating its offspring? And do I not stand now under a canopy* of boughs and flowers? And what are the evergreen boughs of our life, and what are our most fragrant flowers, if not our children?

* It is the custom to decorate the synagogues on the Feast of Weeks with greens and flowers, as alluded to above.-Ed. Oc.

Let me therefore speak to-day concerning the education of the Israelitish children, and earnestly supply answers to the following three questions:

How ought they to be educated?

For what end ought they to be educated?

In what spirit ought they to be educated?

And behold, the truest aim of education is expressed by the prophet in the Haphtorah of to-day (Ezekiel 1:12):

"They went every one straight forward; whither the spirit was to go, thy went, and they turned not when they went."

I. My friends! how should education be conducted?-nay, is education at all requisite? If we take counsel of past experience, the effect of education may at times appear very questionable. We behold children educated in the most excellent manner deviate from the road marked out to them which they had already entered upon; in other words, that a good education produces bad fruits. We on the contrary behold children greatly neglected become excellent and distinguished men; or, that a bad education produces good fruits. But this is not the way of considering the subject, brethren. The prophet says: "Whither the spirit was to go they went, and they turned not when they went." A word is this of deep import. The direction a man has once received he never forsakes again, or it never leaves him. Let us rather ask, what would have become of the first mentioned, if in addition they had received withal a bad education? May not the good impressions which they received in their youth withhold them from the worst deeds? May not often with all their wickedness appear unto them the shadows of their noble-spirited parents counselling better things?-Or how might not the others have bean advanced if they in addition had withal received a good education? How much easier might it not have been for them to take their upward flight, and how much farther might they not have risen? Yes, the traces of a good education will ever remain visible in the degenerate, and preserve him from sinking entirely; the traces of a rude education

will ever adhere to the one who has risen beyond it, and can never be entirely obliterated! Yes, parents, there exists no more valuable gift, no nobler possession, no more useful and richer present which you can bestow upon your children than a good education! The spirit of man in childhood is like wax, which receives every impression, but like iron for after life retaining fast and for ever all impressions it has received. But how should education be constituted in order to be good? It must, in the first instance, be an education of carefulness, of constant watching; the parental eye must constantly be awake over the child; and if it is said from God towards us, his children-(Psalms 121:4): "Behold He slumbers not, He sleeps not," it ought to be the same from parents towards their children. Is it sufficient if you leave your children to strangers, or send them even among strangers to grow up among strangers? If so, they will remain strangers to you and paternal care. No, neither business, nor avocation can serve as excuse; the first work of parents must be to educate their children, and they themselves must educate them. For to a stranger's heart the child appeals but negligently, he layours for pay, and he cannot confer on him what is the second requisite of a good education, an education of love and affection. Oh, how soft is the touch of the hand of the father or mother to the heart of the child, how gratefully is the child penetrated by the exertions of the parents, how readily do all the blossoms of the young soul open themselves under the loving rays of the paternal eyes, to which it turns as the sunflower does to the daystar of our planet. Who protects the child from every rude blast? The mother's love. Who guards the child against the worm that secretly gnaws up the root? The father's love. But this love must at the same time be the true love; education must therefore be thirdly-an education wherein mildness and severity are united. Whoever educates his child with and full of indulgence and imagination renders him effeminate and self-willed. Whoever educates his child with and full of repelling severity and coldness renders him unsociable and headstrong. Whoever makes a plaything of his child at one moment and then breaks out in fits of fury like a thunder-storm, renders him uncertain and wavering. On the contrary, love and severity must go hand in hand, at the right time and according to a judicious plan; out of the midst of mildness severity must ever be discernible, and in severity the child should perceive the traits of mildness. The good actions must be rewarded, faults must be punished; but the punishment must appear to the child as a necessary result, and the reward as an immediate consequence of his actions. Education therefore must proceed from the father and mother at the same time, that the earnestness of the one may be intimately united with the mildness of the other, that the education should neither be feminine nor morose. Finally, and fourthly, education should be an education of a good example. For a good example is the soul of education. There are, ye parents, no more attentive observers of your conduct than your children, there are no severer judges, but at the same time, no more ready imitators. Take especial care; and if ye sin, do not show it to the children; if you commit an act of injustice let them not see it; if disunion is between you, let them not become aware of it. Only go before them with an example of mercy, and righteousness, and piety, and they will follow. For they go whither the spirit is directed to go, and they depart not therefrom. And was not this the education which the Lord vouchsafed to Israel with so much care, since the pillar of cloud did not depart during the day nor the pillar of fire by night, so lovingly, since He bore them on eagles' wings, so mildly yet so severely, since He punished them for their misdeeds, and favoured them when they repented, with an example to us so truly in accordance with his divine goodness, for■■■■ ■■■■ "his countenance went before them?" Let your countenance then go before your children, that they may follow on the right path. Behold, then will, as the Psalmist says, "thy children be as olive-plants around thy table."

II. With love, care, mildness and severity therefore should we educate our children. But for what end? in reference to what object shall we educate them? what direction shall we give them that they may follow it? When the Lord educated the people of Israel He gave them the divine code of justice and mercy, and the law of sanctification. The first instructed Israel concerning their acts towards their fellow-men, the latter concerning their conduct towards the Lord. And thus is man given to two directions; and has built up to himself two worlds, the one the existing human world, the other the inward and higher world of the spirit. And for both must our children be educated. First for the earth. To whom is it more necessary that the growing generation should become a sterling class of men, than Israel? Scarcely as yet acknowledged, scarcely yet somewhat tolerated* and yet much restricted in society, our children ought to be able to maintain an honourable position through the power of mind, firmness, worth, pre-eminence, and to obtain constantly more esteem-a more enlarged field from our opponents.

* The learned divine of course alludes to the situation of the Jews in Germany and many other European countries.-Ed. Oc.

Yes! a man who is laborious, active, productive among mankind is a glorious phenomenon. But how can education conduce to this result? When it is in the first place an education of order, of the severest, surest order. Order is a divine attribute, for only through means of it can God’s world exist. Order stamps the character of health and usefulness upon body and soul. Order is the foundation of temperance, and conquers the passions. Children must be accustomed from their earliest infancy to a careful order in time and space, in their person and possessions; and in this very point there is witnessed the most frequently a lamentable neglect. To form, however, a useful character there is necessary as a second requisite an education of perfection. From early infancy the child should be made to do nothing by halves, but to do every thing fully and completely. Whatever has been commenced ought to be finished, he must not be permitted to remain standing still half ways. Only in this manner can unskilfulness in any craft be avoided, and thus only can one become master in any pursuit, whatever it may be. Let the boy choose or be compelled to choose whatever branch it may be, let it be his endeavour to perfect himself therein and become ruler there of as of his proper province. And thirdly, education must be also one of earnestness. Away with every frivolity, with every species of trifling in education-an education which cannot initiate and force the child too early into the vanities of the world, there where light enjoyments and dancing play the first part of life! Away with that effeminacy of education which would prepare for the child nothing but a succession of pleasures, as though he entered the circle of the human family for no other purpose; an education which cannot make the child acquainted at too early an age with all the enjoyments of life, and which calls forth nothing but degeneracy and the desire to enjoy. The child should be early taught by experience, that life is something earnest and difficult; he must early learn how to govern himself, how to dispense with many things, how to conquer his desires. Leave to himself the task of pursuing his plays and amusements, for he is a child, and understands these matters better than you, and will be most pleased with things of his own invention. Finally, and fourthly, education should be one of refinement and nobleness of mind; for in every situation one can be refined and noble-minded, and thus ennoble himself and be a joy to others. But not in mere bowing and in graceful words consists the refinement and nobleness recommended to you, but in disposition and behaviour, in demeanour and conduct. This therefore renders man what he should be, and ripe for intercourse with mankind at large:-when he observes

order and perfection, earnestness and refinement. But is this enough? No, farther yet does the province of education extend itself before our view; it should rear man also for the inner, the spiritual world. In the first place the mind should be awakened to a free, living activity; superstition and terror should be avoided, that the spiritual eye may be enabled to survey every thing with a clear vision, that man may demand an account and obtain the reason of all that takes place. Then however, must the feelings of the child be awakened and formed, for these at last are the noblest part of man; his sensations should be directed towards the good and noble, that he may learn early to love the good and to abominate the evil, next conscience, this guardian of the paradise of the human heart, must be awakened to pronounce a loud, independent sentence over himself, that the child may betimes be made aware of the judge inherent in his own heart, to listen to his voice, to attend to his reproof and his approbation, and to mark his warning and his inciting. In this manner ought you to use your children betimes, not merely to live without but also to live within themselves, and to yield themselves to a contemplation of their inward man. Only through an equal cultivation of the mind, the feelings and conscience, does man in reality become an entire man, who governs himself and the world, who is a king in his own kingdom. And if you have succeeded in this through your education, then will your children follow in this direction, not depart therefrom, but pursue their onward course.

III.

Yes, education, beloved friends, is a difficult, a great work and nevertheless I have not yet led you to its highest pinnacle-to RELIGION, to religious education. But if you were to ask me for the third requisition: "In what spirit shall our children be educated?" what else could I answer you, except in the spirit of the Israelitish religion, in Israelitish piety? Religion must be the basis of education, or else it is valueless and a useless fragment. Religion must be the spiritual influence which covers, the spiritual bond which unites the whole system of education, or else the whole will one day fall to pieces and vanish into nothing. For since in religion alone all the virtues, whatever is beautiful and immortal, have their root, how could these be transplanted into the soul of youth without religion? And if Israel has been educated by God himself to be a people of religion, as the bearer of religion, of religious knowledge, how could our youth solve this problem, this divine task, without the aid of religion? But in truth, in nothing is our age so vacillating, so careless, so uncertain, as precisely in religious education. Most parents are only careful that their children be instructed in the arts and sciences of the world, but religious knowledge they postpone to the last. The frequenting of the school where religion is taught is a burden to the parents, which they postpone as far as possible, and then abridge as soon as possible.

How often do I hear children say in the name of their parents: "I have too many things to learn for my general school, I cannot find time to get the religious lesson;" and this from children of such parents as profess to observe the true religion of Israel! And then, what can the school alone accomplish? The home must effect the principal thing in the department of religion. It may be left to the teacher alone to inculcate worldly knowledge; but religion must be visibly displayed at home before the children; love and respect for religion must be made daily and hourly manifest at home to the children, and be in word and deeds the evident traits of parents if they are to take root in the minds of the younger portions of the household.

How then ought the Israelitish religious education to be constituted? First, how ought it not to be? In the first place, it must not be an education to produce a mere religious lip-worship. Judaism requires not the like, and our times are not suited in anywise for the same. So long as children stand in fear of the father's rod, they may follow it up; but then they seize the first opportunity to free themselves from it; religion has taken no root in them. But much more injurious is that altogether irreligious education which imparts to the child nothing of religion, of prayer, of worship, and of the law; or that species, which lets children grow up in such ignorance that they learn perhaps for the first time from the opprobrious epithets of other children that they are Jews. How confounded must then such children be! They feel no bond which unites them to our religion, and they are nevertheless bound to the name.-There are also many parents who let their children be instructed as much in Christianity as in Judaism, and let them attend at school during those hours when instruction in the Christian religion is imparted. Against such a course, all religion, all reason exclaims. What shall the children look upon as right? What shall they believe? With how much laxity, with how much levity, how speedily, will the children cast off all religion? In all this lies hidden a deep religious corruption. The child must be early penetrated by the breath of religion, early, at the first dawning of his consciousness, already must he obtain an experience of God, must learn to love, to be grateful to Him; and this love and gratitude must be strengthened through regular hours of prayer, which first should be short, and then constantly increase in length; but should never be omitted, as being the most important business of the day. He must learn to obey this God as the supreme Wisdom, and to follow his law he must he taught to consider as the highest aim of life. He must live in constant connexion with this omnipresent God, and regard Him as the attentive Observer, as an indulgent Judge of error, as the strict Judge of sin, and as the merciful Father of his creatures. And with the increase of years he must learn to acknowledge the only one God, and be instructed in his holy revealed word, and regard religion as a positive reality whether it be in divine worship, the law, or the practice of piety. And as he has been educated as man, he must now be educated to become a Jew. He must be informed of Israel's eventful history, learn to understand Israel's high destiny, to comprehend Israel's exalted possession in the word and law of the Lord, and how and in what Israel's religion differs from the systems of others, and how highly exalted it is above all human knowledge, and how it animates the true Israelite, strengthens, renders him firm, and conducts him to everlasting felicity. In this atmosphere should the Israelitish child be educated, be animated by this spirit, and then will he follow it to whithersoever it is turned, and not depart therefrom.

I turn myself now to you, you elder fathers and mothers, have you thus educated your children? and should they not have become all you would wish, are you free from all blame? Can you perhaps retrieve something yet of the work left undone? Of you, younger father's and mothers, I ask, do you educate your children in the manner indicated? do you give them such a direction that they can freely pursue it? I testify against you today that you are responsible for your acts to God, the religion of Israel, nay to your own children, that none of these may one day say over your graves, "They have corrupted me, on them is the guilt of my faulty life." And you also who one day hope to be fathers and mothers, if you desire to be worthy of this high calling, prepare yourselves for it and learn to fulfil its duties in the best manner possible.

Parents! it is an immortal soul, a divine breath which is surrendered to your keeping in every child: take the utmost care of the heavenly scion; the joy and sorrow of your child, nay the joy and

sorrow of distant generations depend upon your proper appreciation of your duty,-fulfil it, and ascribe to the Lord the glory due fo rhis mercy. Amen.

Chapter 41

S. On Miracles - Part 1

On Miracles* A SERMON

*The above is the third lecture on the subject of miracles, and is given before its predecessors by the advice of a friend, in whose judgment in literary matters the editor has every cause to confide; the others, should they be desired, may be given hereafter.

Everlasting God, and eternal Father! accept, we beseech Thee, the humble offering of thanks which thy creatures offer up in thy presence. Non-existing without thy will, powerless without thy aid, what avail unto Thee our acts? what injury can result to Thee, O Most Holy, from our deeds? Yet Thou abidest in the hearts of the lowly and humble, as thy revealed word benignantly teaches, and Thou listenest with favour to the simple supplication which the lisping infant addresses unto Thee. Let it be, then, thy will to receive us also this day in favour and mercy, and let the abundance of the blessing of thy peace be poured out over us and all Israel, thy people. Amen!

BRETHREN!

We have in the preceding lectures shown that the unlimited power of God renders it possible for Him to exercise his pleasure without the least regard to that which in any but the Creator would be beset by insurmountable difficulties. Man, we stated, works with pre-existing materials; God produces the materials likewise. Man is bound within the limits of divine arrangement; he cannot displace the smallest particle of the immense system in which he exists, and of which he is a minutely small integral portion; whilst God is the Maker of this system, and has no one superior to himself to circumscribe his will within the limits of laws and space. A miracle, therefore, if it should not conflict with the designs of the Lord, or, rather, if He chooses to work one by his own immediate power or suffer any spiritual or corporeal creature to effect the same, is within the range of possibility; and its having occurred is then rendered probable, or, in other words, we believe that it has occurred, if the evidence be sufficient to produce the conviction of its truth to our minds, or if the effect stated to have been brought about, and which we know from circumstances to have occurred, be such that ordinary everyday causes could have produced it but imperfectly or not at all, as the case may be. We will now, therefore, define what the Bible calls ■■■ or wonderful unnatural occurrence, that it seems to designate an effect produced by the power reserved to the Creator alone, to effect changes in the ordinary course of events; which take place to impress a certain truth or some powerful conviction upon the minds of intelligent beings, or at least arrest their attention.

Let us consider the nature of man. He finds himself placed upon earth with an intellect vastly superior to every other creature around him. He soon feels this importance swelling high in his bosom, and straightway he thinks of schemes of aggrandizement, and perchance sees unlooked-for success crown his efforts. Thoughts which were dear to him, in an humbler sphere, in the days when his mind had not reached its great development, are now discarded as unfit for one so great in wealth, so renowned in wisdom; and he enters new paths of life, he invents new

schemes of thoughts and feelings at variance with the early lessons of infancy. But just as an individual throws off the lessons of early years, just as prosperity and success induce him to regard himself as superior: so also are entire nations affected by the whisperings of pride which follow the path of success and civilization; and with every step in advance, entire communities have at all times been found to regard with more or less contempt the ideas which were formerly cherished as true and unanswerable, and have also introduced changes in their conduct which were far from improvements. With individuals so acting there are within the power of God the terrors of disease, of mental sufferings, of deprivation of wealth, of death of the beloved, to recall the wanderers to the path of righteousness, to remind them that their course is not one of wisdom, and to admonish them, whilst it is yet time, to retrace their evil steps. With nations, too, there are national punishments which the Almighty wields to correct the crying evils which have been committed by an entire body politic; since He lets his voice be heard in the alarum of the war trumpet; causes his might to be seen in the scanty yield of the fruits of the earth; in the raging pestilence, which slays its thousands and its ten thousands and terrifies those who live in sinful security by bidding the ground to heave beneath their feet, and reel to and fro like a man that is drunk with wine.

We will not now inquire how much of truly miraculous power is directly displayed in all of these apparently natural occurrences; we will not now claim that the very periodical visits of war, of famine, and of pestilence, are such proofs that the Lord is superior to the laws of nature, which in themselves are unable to produce these results; but we will assume the position, that it may in the providence of God be necessary to produce an effect without resorting to terrible warning, or to bless one part of a people whilst the other is punished. For instance, when the Israelites dwelt in Egypt, the scourge of the pestilence, by which an indiscriminate slaughter of all the inhabitants would, in the course of nature, have taken place, could not have answered as a retribution towards the oppressors, inasmuch as the oppressed would have shared the same fate. How then should the Lord act? As he did; by discriminating between the guilty and the innocent, by protecting these whilst the others suffered. Not that the plague was not a thing in the course of nature made the recurrence of it a miracle, but that it spared the property of the Israelites, whilst that of the Egyptians was surrendered to the destroyer.

Now it cannot be denied that these astounding events happen frequently, that the power of the Lord is held out to protect those who deserve his mercy; by we pass them by; we discover nothing wonderful or extraordinary in them; and far from improving our minds, they leave us uninstructed and unwise. One event, therefore, would have produced no conviction in the Egyptians; frequent repetitions of the lesson were requisite; till the obduracy of human reasoning had to yield to the overpowering conviction, that the demands of Moses were the veritable injunctions of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, who, by the deeds then and thus wrought, was pleased to demonstrate his almighty power, exerted, let it be understood, to preserve the truth of his promise, to break the chains of the unjustly enslaved, and to prove the universal truth, which was true from the beginning, and will be true to all eternity, that there is but one God, one Creator, one Savior, who was, who is, and who ever will be; before whom no creative power existed, and after whom there will be none; and with whom there is neither an associate nor a delegate to share in the smallest degree the government of the universe. And these are the words of the Bible in reference to this subject:

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. Go thee unto Pharaoh in the morning, and thou shalt say unto him, the Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; and behold, hitherto thou wouldst not hear. Thus saith the Lord, By this thou shalt know that I am the Lord, behold, I will smite with the rod which is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood." (Exodus 7:14-17)

Again: "And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Assume glory over me, for what time I shall entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain only in the river? And he said, For to-morrow; and he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto our God." (Exodus 8:9-10) Farther: "And the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the Finger of God." (Ibid. 19)

Again we read: "And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no wild beasts shall be there, that thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth." (Ibid. 22.) In another passage we read: "But for this reason have I suffered thee to remain, in order to show thee my power; and that my name may be declared through all the earth." (Ibid. ix. 16.) It was then also that Pharaoh for a moment felt humbled, and he sent for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them: "I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." (Ibid. 27.)

It is also said: "And I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and I will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against al the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment; I am the Lord." (Exodus 12:12)

These few brief extracts, which will be more amply confirmed by reading them in connection with their contexts, give us at one view a clear understanding of the object of the miracles related to us as having been performed in Egypt, and it was, what we have always contended for, the fulfillment of the divine intention to establish one people on earth as the depositary of his laws, and the exhibition of himself as the sole Deity to whom worship is due from all creatures. We have before shown, that in the ordinary course of events, by the usual influence of human feelings, the king of Egypt could not have been induced to dismiss a multitude of slaves, who built his pyramids, erected his temples, dug his canals, labored in his fields, and whose intelligence well fitted them for those works where something more than mere brute force was requisite for their execution. Should his benevolence have been appealed to, his cupidity would have checked the first dawning of kindness for that enslaved race. To an appeal for justice he would have answered, that they who had been bondmen for centuries had no claims to more than mere existence, which they were fortunate enough to receive as a bounty from his royal favor. If reminded of the desperation of men reduced to extremities, who, when willing to be free, might by one great effort break asunder their chains, and wreak their vengeance in rivers of blood upon their oppressors: he would have scorned the threat; have appealed to his hundreds of thousands of warriors, all ready to perish at his nod; have pointed to the many brave swords anxious to leap from their scabbards in defense of the sacred majesty of Egypt, and have exultingly asserted that they who had been so long slaves, and subjected to all manner of ill treatment, could not desire the boon of liberty, and would be unfit to use it becomingly, even should it be conceded to them from his undeserved bounty. And farther, had he been merely informed that it was a decree of a mighty Deity who wished to protect the

slavish race whom he valued so low, whom he regarded as outcasts from humanity, it cannot be otherwise than as the Bible teaches us, that he would not have regarded in the least such a demand, backed by what he must naturally have thought an unwarranted assumption of a divine prerogative, falsely assumed for the God in whose name he was appealed to, by the daring rebel who ventured to enter the royal palace with such unheard of audacity, with such a monstrous request, addressed to the highest monarchical power in the known world, in favor of the meanest slavish people.

Here then was a case where discriminating justice could not send a universal, uniform punishment over the land, which, not merely that it would, without the intervention of the very miraculous power of which we have been speaking, have afflicted the Israelites equally with the Egyptians, would have assuredly been regarded by Pharaoh, his people, and his slaves also, as one of those terrible visitations which occasionally devastate the earth; and it would thus have entirely failed of being regarded as a warning, and consequently it could not have effected the liberation of Israel.

Let us view the many calamitous occurrences of modern times; the terrible wars; the visitation of new pestilential diseases; the frightful conflagrations; the destructions by flood and storms; the general commercial bankruptcy which has destroyed the fortunes of thousands of families all over the earth, that thought themselves secure against the assaults of adversity: let us, I say, view them in their proper light; are they not all manifestations of divine wrath? and yet who heeds the warning that is addressed thereby to all alike? does not every one think that they are but natural events, and have no bearing whatever upon the moral world?

Even should a preacher, in imitation of the ancient prophets, be bold enough to denounce the sins of the age, and apply these disasters to the case of his hearers, and tell them: "It is partly for your sins that the Lord has afflicted the land; repent, that the divine wrath may be diverted from you; return to the ways of righteousness, lest you perish in your iniquity;" --who is there among us that would listen to the words of such a holy man? Would we not look upon him as a mad enthusiast, who applies the ordinary events of life to a purpose for which they have no analogy? And yet modern times are in possession of far greater knowledge of divine truths than were the Egyptians of olden days; especially are the sons of Israel more enlightened in the true knowledge of God’s providence, and of his judgments, and of his mercies, inasmuch as they possess the key which opens for them the portals of true wisdom, namely, the holy law, the pure emanation of the most high God. And shall we believe that mere ordinary calamities could have softened Pharaoh’s heart? Could have taught his people to revere the everlasting Shield of Abraham? Could have impressed upon the sons of Jacob that they must be holy to a God different from the deities their masters worshipped, when no such knowledge could have come to them in the way of nature, and when, moreover, they suffered from the same evils which befell their masters, arguing from the point that miracles are either impossible, or that the occasion did not call for their being performed?

I leave it to you, beloved brethren, to answer for yourselves these questions, which, rejecting the possibility of miracles, would give replies which bear absurdity upon their very face. For if no miracles had been performed, no knowledge of a system different from Egyptian mythology could have suddenly dawned upon the Israelites; and even could such a thing have come into existence it could never have caused Pharaoh to consent to the dismissal of sixty myriads of able-bodied

slaves, as we have said already. The miracles, therefore, recorded in the book of Exodus, (and these are the principal ones which the Bible contains, and are, perhaps, solely the foundations of doctrines of the Jewish church,) were necessary, first to discriminate between those who deserved punishment and those who did not, whilst merely ordinary calamities could not have answered the purpose which Providence had evidently in view with the children of Israel; and, secondly, since the Lord designed to bless his people with a special gift, more valuable than aught else besides, this is to say, the possession of a religion founded upon truth, and immovably uniform in its happy effects upon society in all times and ages, to use such means, to exhibit such attestations, as would best conduce to render the effect permanent, and to impress the new truths upon the minds of so many human beings at one and the same time, that no subsequent miracle should be needed to retain a due knowledge of the law thus publicly and solemnly announced in the minds of the children of man.

We have enlarged before on the necessity of miracles; consequently there is no occasion to dwell on the mere probability of them any longer today. We will therefore turn at once to the question; "Why was it that the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt was considered of that paramount importance, as to justify the exhibition of so many miracles in their behalf?" To this we will give the following answer. At a time when the world was nearly overrun by idolatry, the true light of divine wisdom, which emanated directly from the Lord as a gift to the first progenitors of the human family, had not become totally extinct; but it burned brightly in the heart of one at least who dreaded not to avow his conviction before the world fearless of dangers which might result to him from his public confession of unpopular opinions. This wise man delivered the truths he professed to his descendants, of whom he lived to see the third generation, and then descended to the grave honored as the luminary of the world by many nations, and to this day his name is revered among idolatrous people, who honor his example and his virtues, without knowing from whom they are derived. His immediate descendants and their families became by degrees mingled among the inhabitants of various lands; but the truths which Abraham had taught remained not long remembered except by a few who were faithful; and soon the rank falsehoods of superstition, in which a heathen world was sunk, overshadowed the beauties of the divine revelation which had been offered alike to all sons of Adam. The name of the Lord was not known among those who lived in the fairest portions of the earth; and from the rising of the sun to his setting ascended the smoke of sacrifice, which was incense of abomination to the God of Israel. In this deplorable state of mankind, of which all history bears the amplest evidence, the light of truth had need to be rekindled; and rekindled it was, as we are certified in the holy Scriptures. We acknowledge that the Lord has many ways to accomplish his purposes; it is not for us to say, how He is to effect his will; but without discussing whether he employed the best means or called in the most fitting agents, it is sufficient for us to know, that from the many means and the innumerable agents at his command He chose to establish a people as the means of effecting the reformation of the earth, and these agents He selected from the descendants of Abraham, the friend of the Lord in times of the darkest idolatry. Whatever may be urged against the unworthiness of the Israelites in olden days, and against the many fearful backslidings of the Jews, their successors, at the present time, is nothing to the matter; for any other people might in all probability have become equally rebellious, if not more so than our own nation has shown itself. Only this point of view must be kept before us, that the miraculous redemption of the children of Israel had for its object the establishment of truths, which required an astounding exhibition of the divine power to render them for ever after

unable to be forgotten.

Having brought our inquiry to this sole point of any importance to the general inquirer after truth, we have at once an answer to the question: "What is the object of miracles?" It is, namely, the establishment, or confirmation rather, of a fact or series of facts, commonly called truths, in the minds of those persons before whom these wonderful events take place. But please to observe, brethren, any fact attested by a miracle is not true because of the performance of the miracle, but it is true because of the intrinsic nature of itself which constitutes it an undoubted fact or a truth; the miracle makes it only evident to the comprehension of the spectators, under the conviction that the person who is enabled to perform it must needs speak the truth, always supposing that there is no deception or collusion in the performance which he offers as an attestation of the truth of that which, he avers.

Now what is the nature of a truth? This also we have illustrated on a former occasion, and we stated it to be a fact which cannot be otherwise, or an idea of which the reverse cannot be true. If now a miracle has been wrought to attest a certain fact and to exhibit it as of divine origin, and as approved of by the wonder-working power of the Creator, effected through the agency of one of his holy ministers whom he sends from time to time to instruct and improve mankind: the truth of the fact has been permanently established, not alone for the time being when the miracle takes place, but also for all future times. Understand well, brethren, for it is a material point in the doctrines of our blessed religion, which contradistinguishes it from all other creeds. We just now said, that a truth is not a truth because of the miracle which attests it; but simply from its own intrinsic nature. But this self-evident proposition can be carried yet farther; it is this, that any truth must be always a truth, or what is the same, no circumstances can have any bearing upon its being so under any imaginable view of the question, no matter how slight, or how important this change may seem to all mankind combined.

Let us apply this test to the doctrines which the miracles in Egypt and the wilderness were to confirm or establish. We used above the words "new truths," not however as though these truths then only became such, but as being either then first promulgated or at least generally diffused among the children of man at that time inhabiting the earth. We have already recited, at the commencement of today’s lecture, several texts which clearly indicate that it was deemed necessary to establish the unlimited, almighty power, of the Lord, and to prove the nothingness of all the various deities, falsely so called, which were worshipped in Egypt. What did the miracles do in this point of view? They taught Pharaoh and his people something which they did not believe, which nevertheless was true; they believed in, or professed to believe in (it is all the same to us in our present inquiry) an innumerable quantity of tutelary powers, which they represented under various visible shapes, and which images were placed in every part of their extensive country. When notified, let us assume, for the first time, that a Deity, announcing himself under a name which they had never known, demanded of them a sacrifice which it was galling to their pride to make, and which materially conflicted with their interests: they refused compliance, and they did not yield till sore experience had proved to them, that, though the name of the God in whose name Moses spoke was new to them, He was nevertheless supreme over all, able to accomplish his omnipotent will in all He desired. In this way the Egyptians confessed themselves converts, to the belief in the omnipotence of the Creator. But had the Lord not been omnipotent, the miracles could not have constituted Him endowed with this attribute. Yet He is omnipotent, He was so from the

beginning and He must necessarily continue so for ever and ever.

Suppose now a miracle were to be performed, or a story should come down to us related as an historical fact, that at some period a miracle had been performed, by a person who thereby meant to prove that the Lord had parted with his attribute of universal power, would we be able to believe, such an attestation? For our parts, as Israelites, we would maintain, be the prodigy ever so great, the truth of its being performed ever so undoubted, that we would steadfastly reject the evidence thus offered, and support in our thoughts and our words our unshaken belief in the unvarying power of the Lord. For that God is omnipotent, that He is a perfect unity; that He is alone, without any associate, is true from the very nature of his being; and if we were by any possibility in doubt of this, the revelation of the Bible would have removed this doubt. Well, then, what does a miracle prove as such? merely that it has been performed, that an astonishing event has taken place. But has this attestation destroyed in the least the order of nature? has it in the least deprived the blessed Infinity of any power? By no means; miracles, even those wrought actually by God, are extra-natural, and yet destroy not nature; and as all power to work such extra-natural things comes from Him alone, it cannot diminish his ability to work his will, otherwise called his omnipotence, nor can it invest, independently of the actual delegation from the Lord himself, any being whatever with independent ability to do any thing in contravention of the glory and greatness of the Most High.

Nay, more; the revelation of God is the declaration of his will and wisdom. Its announcement was, as we have seen, attested by a public manifestation of prodigies and unheard of wonders. For what was this gift so solemnly attested? Simply to mark it with that seal of divine approbation, the like of which has never yet been given to any other event, save the creation alone. We maintain, therefore, that it cannot be abrogated by any means whatever (of which probably more hereafter), at all events that for its repeal it would require a similar, if not superior public manifestation; than accompanied its first promulgation. We therefore insist upon this point, as the main support for our continuance to uphold the ancient law of Moses in the midst of all the difficulties which have attended its observance, that no means whatever have yet been employed by the Giver of this law to alter, revoke, or annul any part, the minutest even, of the whole system which He confided to our safe keeping; and, moreover, that no miracle, be it ever so well attested, nay more, were it at this very instant effected in. the midst of us, and that we were convinced by the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears that there were no deception in the case, can absolve us from the obedience which we as the descendants or successors (for the proselytes too are equally with the sons of Israel children of the law and covenant) owe to the legislation of Sinai; and that consequently all such miracles, admitting as we said that they are real, are not the. attestations which, the Lord will receive as an excuse for our forsaking the religion which He himself, and himself alone, announced to its as that system to which we should remain everlastingly true and faithful. It cannot be that the Lord should mean, all along supposing that a miracle is indeed shown, to contradict by a single fact, or a series of facts, taking place necessarily before a comparatively small number of spectators, that which He deemed of sufficient importance to bring a whole people together in the wilderness, and to proclaim it then and there in the hearing of every man, woman,, and child assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Let us look a little deeper into the case before we close this subject for the present; and excuse me, brethren, if you should find a repetition of what has been said already. That the Lord created the world alone, without aid, without associate, without a division in his own essence was, it is true,

the doctrine taught to the. Israelites; but we have said, and said truly, that it was an announcement merely of the everlasting truth of God's existence and unity. Understand, unity means a oneness, without separation of parts, without division into separate individuals. A doctrine; believed in by many intelligent, wise, and good men, asserts that at a time subsequent to the promulgation of the Law, there appeared on earth a personage who claimed to be a part of the godhead, or, at least, to be the mediator, whom, as it is averred, the prophets had announced, (though we expect neither a divine being nor a mediator for Messiah,) and that he attested the truth of his claim by many wonderful exhibitions of miraculous power, even to the raising of the dead convulsing in his own dying moments the whole country where he died, and afterwards rising alive from his sepulchre before his ascent to Heaven to become the mediator and the judge of mankind. We cannot, today, enter into an extensive examination of the subject; we will, therefore, merely ask: Can the performance of all these miracles make true what common sense and the Bible declare as not true? How can the fact that any person raises a dead man unto life establish the falsity as a fact that he is a part of the Deity; or that he is appointed to the formerly unknown dignity of interceder between God and man ? Could the unity of God be abrogated by a mere miracle? Could his omnipotence to save sinners, to hear prayer, to assist the distressed, be in the least abridged by the destruction of all nature? by the calling into existence of a new world ? Not for such a purpose were the miracles of the Bible wrought; they took place to glorify the Creator before his works; not to, elevate creatures to an even rank with Him; and, consequently, as believers in the Bible; we cannot admit that any number of miracles can attest to that which is not true from the very nature of the terms.

Farther. The word of God as revealed in the Law is either divine or not. We, as believers, assume the affirmative, and all other believers in prophecy admit the same. What does this require? Simply that the Bible is the everlasting truth, and this not because miracles attended its bestowal, but simply because it contains the necessary truths which God thought proper to teach the world. These truths would have been such without a miracle; and, consequently, no miracle can make them otherwise. So it says: "Thou shalt have no other god before my face." Does this prohibition appeal for its truth to the earthquake which shook the mountain of Horeb when the Lord proclaimed it ?

Again : "Thou shalt not bear the name of the Lord thy God in vain," Was the same miracle requisite to constitute it an everlasting point of the moral law? Also: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh is the day of rest." Did the miraculous proclamation of this precept alone render it binding, or was it founded upon a mote firm basis than the evanescent exhibition of a most astounding occurrence?--We could multiply questions of this kind at pleasure, but it needs not; enough, the precepts as well as doctrines depend only on themselves, the latter as necessary deductions from the existence of a spiritual God, the former as the institutions derived from this God, who, being supremely wise cannot be so capricious, as to order acts to be done, which He in a short time would cease to regard with pleasure, or would institute others either altogether new or at least not in consonance with his first legislation.--Here, however, we are met again by persons of a different persuasion, no doubt as honest as we are ourselves, and as sincere in their belief as we can claim to be; they say, that miracles have been wrought to prove that the old covenant has been abolished, and new laws have been substituted in its stead. Could miracles, any thing less than a public legislation, effect

such a result we might pause for proofs that such miracles were at one time or the other actually performed; but we need not be so cautious; no where in the Bible is it asserted as a doctrine that any event can do away with what the law institutes as an everlasting ordinance; consequently the performance of many miracles, even to raising the dead and dividing the waters of the great ocean, could not do away with the observance of the Sabbath, the prohibition of image worship or the joining of an adjunct in the service which we offer to the Lord. No, as He is one, everlastingly, unchangeably, and uniformly, in all times and under all circumstances, so must his law be unchangeable, everlasting, uniform; and every miracle, even should one actually be permitted by his omniscience for a wise purpose, will not authorize us to forsake the path which He has taught us to tread. This doctrine is clearly pointed out in the book of Deuteronomy, the beginning of the thirteenth chapter: “If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." And then continues the text:

[redacted]

“After the Lord your God shall ye walk, and Him shall ye fear, and his commandments shall ye keep, and to his voice shall ye hearken, and Him shall ye serve, and to Him shall ye cleave."

Here, as usual, in the Bible, is the doctrinal point too self-evident to need any extended explanation; and the words bear out clearly the points of faith which I thought it my duty to teach you in the last lectures, including the one I have been permitted to lay before you this day, that miracles are the instruments of the Lord to work conviction upon the minds of people of truths already existing, or to effect certain purposes which He deems of sufficient importance for Him to subvert for a time or permanently the laws of nature; but that no miraculous attestation can in the least alter any religious or moral truth, or do away with any precept of the Bible whatever; and that should a miracle be permitted which would claim to be an attestation of an opposite doctrine, its evidence must be rejected as contrary to the plain instruction of the Lord, conveyed to us in his blessed book. One more observation, and I have done. Although a spurious miracle is spoken of in our text, there is no particle of evidence that any such was ever wrought, although should it be so, it would not and ought not to weigh in the least as evidence against any part of the Bible just as we have received it. Therefore, sons of Israel, therefore, daughters of Zion! be ever alive to your duty, to the glorious privilege of being the chosen messengers of God’s mercy; and let no allurement, no show of great deeds, call you away from the path which was pointed out to you, and which surely leads onward to salvation, yea, as surely as there is one, sole God and Saviour who has created the universe, and who has given us the soul which lives within us!

O God of truth and mercy! We thank Thee for the grace of the law of light which Thou hast bestowed on us. Give firmness to our resolves, that we remain faithful; and let much good result to all mankind from the perseverance of thy people Israel, who have always been true, even under sin, to be sealed by thy covenant, and to walk in the light of that truth which springs from thy own pure essence. And may the words of our mouth, and the meditation of our heart, be acceptable

before Thee, O our Rock and Redeemer! Amen.

Veadar 1st, 5603.

March 3d, 1843

Chapter 42

S. On Miracles - Part 2

On Miracles. A Sermon.*

* This sermon is the first of a short series of four lectures on miracles, of which the one in the first number of the Occident <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume1/april1843/on_miracles.html> was the third. We probably may give the other two hereafter.

O Thou! who appearedst unto thy messenger in the flaming bush, which though lucent with fire was not consumed, we acknowledge thy power and greatness as did our fathers whom Thou didst call unto thy service. And now, unworthy though we be of thy mercy, we come before Thee to seek thy undeserved favour, because that Thou didst swear to preserve us when thy justice would visit our iniquities. Do Thou therefore unto us even according to the prophetic vision which Moses beheld when he was first called to become thy messenger of grace and justice; and let us be unconsumed, our numbers undiminished, whilst the flaming fire of tribulation purifies us of our impurities, whilst the stains of sin are cleansed by the fiery ordeal of the wrath which our transgressions provoke. Cause us thus to feel thy chastening rule, O Thou! who art the God of nations, and Arbiter of the fate of man; the everlasting One, who speaketh and fulfilleth; who commandeth and every thing springeth into being; who slayeth and there is no one to hinder Him; who showeth mercy and forgiveness, and there is no one to say, “What doest Thou?” And let thy name be glorified through us, the children of Israel, and cause many nations to behold thy mercy in thy return to Zion, the city of our desires. Amen.

BRETHREN, In my last address I laid before you the three principal articles on which our religious system is founded. These were, briefly, the belief in the existence of God, the existence of a revelation, and the existence of accountability, or a righteous scheme of rewards and punishments. We may say with perfect truth, that without admitting the whole of these three, there can be no religion; for we would not submit to its restraints if there were no Head and Chief, capable through his wisdom and power to direct our will; we could not obey Him if there were no prescribed rule which we could follow out in our course of conduct; and lastly, many, if not all, of us would not follow the dictates of an acknowledged Supreme even, if we did not dread his power, or looked up to Him for a favourable judgment of our deeds. Man may aver that he would practise what he terms virtue, even if there were no God, from motives of general benevolence to his species; exercise justice and mercy, though there were no precepts to direct him, as being most consonant with the refined feelings of human nature, and lastly, be good and righteous from no motives of reward, from no fear of punishment, but only because the good man must naturally love the good and eschew the evil, simply because of their intrinsic qualities, and because the inherent loveliness of virtue and the natural deformity of vice carry with them their own reward and punishment, as the case may be. Such reasoning would hold good, were man that perfect being which this theory would require him to be; were he in a state of nature benevolent, generous, docile, obedient, honest, chaste, and sober; were he, when tempted, always averse to practising

vice, though there were no fear of bodily injury to prevent him. But experience proves, that man is only capable of a high degree of perfection, not perfect, however, in his natural state; that even with instruction he may feel drawn towards benevolence and generosity, and be capable of becoming docile, honest, chaste, and sober, and yet be the very reverse in his conduct; and that lastly the abstract love of virtue is no safeguard against the desire for indulgence, if opportunity, unchecked by outward restraint, tempt the weak son of earth to taste of the dangerous fruits of self-indulgence. Without, therefore, enlarging at present on these points, we will re-assert what we started with, that without God, revelation, and retribution, no virtue, deserving of the name, can have any existence, no matter what the unthinking may say to the contrary.

Besides, however, these necessary truths, there are others which might have been otherwise, but which have become incorporated with religion, either as historical events, or as the promises of the spirit of God, which both must be admitted as true, the first class, as things which have actually taken place, the second, as certain to occur; since the Being from whom they emanate is infallible, and cannot therefore predict or promise any thing which will not ultimately be fulfilled.

Historical facts, which serve as the basis of doctrines connected with our religion, are solely and alone to be looked for in Scripture, which of itself bears internal evidence of its truth, and is itself an historical fact, or traditional truth of religion. In the same manner the prophetic truths, as we aptly term the promises of God, are also contained in the same vehicle of faith; and consequently such only are to be admitted into the articles of our religion, as are substantially borne out by internal consistency, and supported by the words of the Bible, in their evident and common sense meaning. This belief in the history and prediction of the Bible becomes the duty of every Israelite; although this acquiescence in facts and promises would presuppose our admission of a state of things differing materially from every-day life, in other words, the truth of miracles and a change of nature as we see it organized by means of our bodily organs.

It is true that revelation, or the Biblical record, contains also the commandment of the acknowledgment of the Deity as a part of divine legislation; nevertheless this command did not establish the existence of God as a new fact which did not exist before, but merely recited this existence as a truth which had existed already from the beginning, and which the sound common sense of man must admit as a matter of necessity more than of belief. God’s existence is not established by the precept; but the precept was given because of his existence being the basis, the starting point, upon which all good acts are founded, and from which all virtuous resolves must proceed. So also that there are acts which are pleasing to God is, as we have said, a prerequisite for religion; and if the record now contains such general directions as are evidently conducive to the general prosperity of society and the well-being of individuals, we must say, that these laws or facts of revelation are not only true because they are commanded, but also because the human mind requires such directions to satisfy its craving for what is in itself good and beautiful. But there are other facts recorded, and other commandments given, which need not necessarily be so, and which might have been otherwise if God had so ordained it; and though the latter are necessary now to a correct religious life, human reasoning would not have discovered them by unaided research; and they therefore do not, and many of them cannot, appeal to our reason as a ground for believing the first and obeying the latter.

But, although the details of the Scriptures are not necessary truths, they are manifestations of the will of the Lord, who in this manner declared what He chose to decree as evil, and what He wished to command as good. In the same manner, though the flood, for instance, was not a necessary consequence of the deeds of the Antediluvians, as another punishment equally efficacious might have been dispensed, its occurrence has rendered it an historical fact, recorded in the Bible, and thus it has become a matter on which we are not at liberty to doubt or to offer any speculations of our own, inconsistent with the text of the sacred volume. The same holds good with almost every fact of which we have any account in the Bible. Yet it has to be observed, that all the occurrences which are related to us, although of their truth there can and ought to be no doubt on the mind of a believer, are not of themselves articles of faith, or that kind of facts which has a bearing on our course of conduct. In fact the greater number is merely recorded as having occurred in the course of the transactions which the Lord was pleased to permit being done, and all such acts are only surprising or claiming our attention, as they are of uncommon magnitude, or out of the ordinary course of events with which our experience has rendered us familiar. It would evidently consume a great deal of time to glance even at all the facts of Scripture, and to argue their reasonableness; we will therefore only take up a few in connexion with some brief remarks on the miraculous power.

Perhaps no one fact of Scripture has given more cause of exultation to the unbeliever, than the improbability of miracles, especially as they do not occur before our eyes in our own days. But let us look into the nature of any miracle recounted in the Bible; take for instance the first mission of Moses, when he beheld a bush flaming in fire without being consumed, and it will strike you, that the object of the appearance was not of a trifling kind, not merely performed to show off an extraordinary power before an astonished audience: but to introduce some great and important event in history, which had an important bearing union the affairs of mankind in general, or at least to teach a true and wholesome lesson to the people before whom the transaction took place. To infer the probability of such an occurrence, we should consider who caused the same to happen, and what gives to general events, of which we are informed, an air of plausibility? To commence with the latter part of our proposition:-we say that we believe any event to have happened, no matter how grand the effect said to have been produced, if we can suppose that the means and strength of the agents were equal to the effect said to have been produced. Let us take an example from an occurrence not now very rare, but which was utterly unheard of within less than the age of many persons yet living, that of a man ascending high above the earth in a machine of peculiar construction. Were we to be told that the aëronaut accomplished this feat by means of a heavy iron structure, and of complicated contrivance, we would, with our present impressions, pronounce the thing impossible and untrue. [Bear in mind this was written 60 years before the Wright Brothers' first flight, and more than a century before the 747 and the Space Shuttle.--Webmaster.] But if we were to be informed that he employed an air-tight silken bag, filled with a well-known fluid, many times lighter than the air we breathe, and which will therefore float in the atmosphere, just as lighter substances will float on the surface of the water, though partly immersed therein, and that he was conveyed in this voyage in a frail car attached by ropes to the airfilled silken bag: they who are familiar with the laws of nature, as laid open by the late discoveries in science, would pronounce the relation not alone probable, but true likewise, although no ocular demonstration had made the thing manifest to their outward sensual organs. But suppose that before the discovery of the existence of the different gases had been

demonstrated, and their respective specific weights had been determined, one had proposed to accomplish a voyage in the air, he would have been pronounced as attempting impossibilities; or should he have succeeded, by a natural process known to him only, he would have risked an accusation of witchcraft, which would have been fatal to him from the ignorance of those who witnessed his miraculous exhibition. Of course there are many hundred instances which, at one time actually impossible from the want of the proper knowledge of producing them, have become of late matters of common notoriety, to such a degree that we cease to regard them with wonder. I will notice one single fact only, bearing strongly upon our discussion. Before the art of printing was invented, books could only be multiplied by the slow process of transcribing each letter separately, one at a time. Just about four hundred years ado the inventive genius of man was led upon the idea of contriving the multiplying of transcripts by machinery of very simple construction; and so wonderful were the cheapness at which books were offered, and the rapidity with which they were multiplied by those who did not at once make public their mode of accomplishing this astonishing work, considered, that the art was ascribed to supernatural agency and demoniacal power, by those whose ignorance caused them to doubt the possibility of man to accomplish that which in our day is too generally diffused to excite the smallest attention. This is the case where a mere mortal is the agent; impossibilities to some are pastime to others; and what one age fails to realise, becomes in a succeeding one matter of every-day occurence.-Now let us ascend from man to his Maker. What is God, regarded as Master of the world? All-powerful. What do we call all-powerful? That He is able to do whatever He pleases, every thing which is beyond the power of accomplishment by the greatest of men, nay, even of all men combined.What is nature? The organization of things in every state of existence in all the extent of creation, from the commencement to the end, as God has ordained them, and as they were arranged by Him; just in such a manner as seed best adapted to the ends of his wisdom.-Can God change nature? Certainly; nature adds nothing to his power and greatness, since He alone ordained it; there is moreover no other power to interfere with Him in his judgment and the execution of his almighty pleasure; consequently nature as an entire, and as constituted of an infinite number of details, becomes of itself subject to the immediate control of its sovereign Lord, and He can consequently change, alter, or subvert it, if his designs require such change. Indeed were miraculous power claimed by any other than the Creator, we might freely say that it would be an impossibility; because a miracle is contrary to the course of nature, or that surprising system of organization established by the Supreme Wisdom. But when the Creator himself comes to instruct, to govern, to restrain, to control, to reward, to punish,-what, we ask, is to prevent Him from working a miracle? Ay, He changes nature! but is the new arrangement any thing more wonderful than the ordinary course of events? When there was darkness upon the face of the deep, and the Lord spoke, “Let there be light,” was the instantaneous burst of the flood of brilliancy which rejoiced the face of creation, till then buried beneath ages of gloom and desolation, any less wonderful than the change of the waters of Egypt’s river into stagnant blood? or the sudden burst of hail, rain, and fire which whelmed that hapless country with despair and dread because of the sin of its ruler and inhabitants?-Some indeed have of late years endeavoured to render the Bible more credible, by explaining all, or nearly all, the miracles recorded there by the ordinary laws of nature. In this they certainly do not act wisely and scarcely honestly. The Bible claims for God the power of doing what He deems best; it teaches that he empowered man, acting under his special guidance, to work astonishing things at different periods of the history of the world; it tells us as facts that such

events did happen: and it is therefore not proper that we at this late day should attempt to do away with the evident meaning of Scripture by substituting our own fancies in its stead. It is certainly true that in several instances the miracles are within the range of the laws of nature; for instance, the locusts which devoured every thing in Egypt, the destruction by a sort of earthquake of Korah and his fellow conspirators; but in all cases we shall see that it is not so much the event as the promptness of the occurrence, which is dwelt upon as a sign or evidence of the truth of that which it was intended to verify. It does not derogate from the dignity of the Lord that He called in the aid of nature as it is already constituted, as little as He is restrained by the non-existence of the thing he wishes to produce, which his creative power has to call into being, before his will can be accomplished.

We are too apt to think of the immaculate Sovereign as we would think of a mortal; in using the terms wonderful-impossible,-we fancy that we have expressed something too great for every being, the Supreme no less than ourselves. But when we say that any thing is impossible for us, we only say that with our present capacities and powers we cannot accomplish the act mentioned; but this does not say, that another is equally weak with ourselves, or that we also, with an increase of energy, proceeding from any source, either by the march of discovery, or an augmented experience elaborated by our own mind, might not be able to accomplish the thing conceived impossible.-Now grant that not one miracle in the Bible should ever be within the scope of human possibility, it does not restrict in the least its being done by divine possibility. The acts of God are not limited by our will, nor restrained by our power; it is enough that He wishes to do strange things, and they are done. He created the sea and the dry land; and when He means to let the waters flow over delightful valleys and fruitful mountains, or to convert the ocean into fertile fields, the change must take place, and desolation speeds onward at his nod, or prosperity hastens hither by the King’s command. The word “impossibility” is not applicable to the Deity; whatever exists is in being through his sufferance only, and it is only existing because He has made it as it is. When now He finds it consonant with his wisdom, of which fact He is the sole judge, He can so change nature for the time being as to produce the intended effect, or He can work counter to the ordinary course of events without deranging the same. Every source of events, and every thought in the moral, with every cause in the material world, are alike within his view and knowledge; consequently He can arrange events in one spot of the creation without in the least affecting the other parts. So then if a miracle be confessedly a breach of the laws of nature, it is a breach produced by the great Architect himself, who, whilst effecting it, has the mastery over all nature, so as not to injure or derange the other portions, nor to break up the harmony which governs every sphere in the most distant orbit.

It is said by some who, whilst professing an intimate knowledge with the laws of nature, doubt the truth of the Bible history, that the recurrence of a miracle would subvert the course of nature, and that consequently God would not, if He could, permit any such to take place.-But such an objection has no force if we carefully consider what we have advanced, already. Were it that God, having once fixed certain laws for the government of the universe, had retired, to use a human phrase, from the active rule of things, and left it altogether to these unalterable laws of his own institution: then indeed might it be said that He would not suffer any miracle to occur for fear of disturbing the universal harmony of creation.-Yet both reason and religion teach us a different idea of the Supreme; He not alone founded the structure of the universe, but continues to superintend it by his

wisdom and direct overruling providence; He is not wearied with watching, nor fatigued by his exertions; He is not overtasked in his labours, nor inadequate to the part which He has assumed; He is the same as from the beginning, and knows not sleep nor slumber, and might, wisdom, and goodness are yet his characteristics as in the days of old. Now imagine a case where a great event is yet buried deep in the recesses of time; the welfare of a large portion of sentient beings, either on our globe or in one of the many other worlds which compose our Master's kingdom, should require a chain of events to bring the desired occurrence to pass; and imagine farther that the ordinary course of things would be inadequate to bring it forth at all, or not with sufficient effectiveness:-we would ask, why should the Lord not abrogate for the time the laws of nature and make himself manifest as the Ruler of events by the recurrence of an astounding thing, one beyond the laws of nature, to accomplish? We have already proved that to God there is nothing impossible; and his having left nature endued with such harmonious laws only places it beyond the power of creatures to arrest, alter, or destroy in the smallest particular; but to the Maker himself it must be evidently as easy to act counter to his own institutions, if He desires, it, as it was in the first instance, to institute those laws of wonderful harmony, to which the thousands of suns, with their millions of planets; to which on earth all the minerals, all the mountains, all the valleys;-all the plants with their immense variety of flowers and fruits;-all the animals, they who range the forest, they who live in peace with man and are obedient to his word; the birds that sing amid the leafy branches, and the fishes that sport in the sea;-all mankind, from the sage whose lips drop the honey of wisdom, to the nursling in its mother's arms, bow in silent submission, acknowledging all their Maker's power.

Already, in the early part of the history of man, we find an instance of unbelief recorded in one from whom such ought not to have been looked for. I allude to the announcement to Sarah, that at the expiration of a year she should be the happy mother of a son, with whom the Lord would establish his covenant. She affected to consider the fulfilment impossible, having reached the age of near ninety in her childless state. But the Lord reproved Abraham for the unbelief of his wife, in these words "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, when I am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed, I will return unto thee, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." (Genesis 18:13-14.) This occurrence will serve us as an illustration for many other miracles. All that was needed to accomplish the prediction was to restore the youth of Sarah, which she thought unlikely to occur. But from the child with which God meant to bless Abraham it was intended to raise up a people that should become the light of the world; moreover it was deemed necessary that its mother too should be one who had a due knowledge of divine things, fittingly to educate the son who should become the successor to the covenant of Abraham with God. However the superficial may view the subject, it has had the most important bearing upon man, that Abraham and his son Isaac were true worshippers in the time of general idolatry. Hence the birth of Isaac was thought worthy to be attended by a miracle, in order to signalize more emphatically the sacred calling for which he vas destined, to transmit. the blessing of true religion to the latest descendants of Adam.

Now let us go down in our inquiries to later generations, and we will be surprised at the actually small number of prodigies recorded in the Bible. Were it then that this book should not be a true record, the authors thereof would have introduced necessarily many attestations of their truth, and would thus have recorded many wonders as proofs of their authenticity, if they once had claimed

them to be within the range of divine economy. But from the time of Noah to the mission of Moses there are but few indications of supernatural occurrences, with the exception of the confusion of tongues, the destruction of Sodom, and the manifestation of prophecy to various pious persons. When, however, we come to the time of the redemption of Israel, we see a more evident display of the divine power before the eyes of mankind. Why is this?-Let us attempt an answer. The promise which had been given when the birth of Isaac was first announced, had now ripened to a fulfilment. The descendants of Abraham had increased, though in servitude, and become a numerous nation, distinct and separate, despite of their being the fellow countrymen of a people of a different origin and a peculiar mode of thinking.-But the promise of the Lord had to be fulfilled, since He is the God of truth, in whom there is no deception; yet He found his people oppressed, slaves to those who regarded not his name, nor feared his power. How then, we ask, was the promise to be kept? Should the Lord, by his almighty influence, so work upon the heart of the king of Egypt and his people as to cause the liberation of Israel without their having any outward cause to discover the potency of Him who had thus influenced them; or should there be such manifestation of divine might that, though unwilling, the oppressors would have to acknowledge that the Creator was too mighty for mortals, exalted above the strength of man and the idols which he had made for his worship?-Either action would have been a miracle; the first, though inward, no less wonderful than the second, for man is too tenacious of power, too greedy for his own interest, ever to relinquish his hold from a free accord over the rights of others, especially if, as was the case in Egypt, the governing class thought themselves far superior to those they held in bondage. Yet if this inward influence alone had been exerted, the effect would have been only very transient upon the minds of the Egyptians, and quite unfelt by the Israelites, despite of their being thus the recipients of the Lord's bounty; they would have ascribed their freedom to an act of grace on the part of their masters, and would probably have little valued a boon so easily obtained. But the course indicated in the Bible was decidedly more calculated to produce a lasting effect, and one much more likely to reduce such a man as the arbitrary king of Egypt to obedience. He was told that the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, demanded of him to let his people go free. He answered insolently: "I know not the Lord, and also Israel I will not let go." It was then that the Most High deemed it necessary to show the manifestation of his power which we find narrated in the first chapters of Exodus, till Pharaoh was compelled to acknowledge the omnipotence of the Protector of Abraham's sons. During the time that these miracles transpired, there was no cessation of the powers of nature, except as it regarded the bodies of the Egyptians themselves, for to the Israelites there was neither the plague of the pestilence, nor injury from the wild beasts, nor death from the hailstones, nor darkness in their dwellings; but all the afflictions were special creations to warn and punish those whom it was necessary thus to reduce to obedience to the divine commands. This will explain to us the first two verses of the tenth chapter of Exodus, which speak as follows:

[illegible]

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, for I have caused to be heavy his heart and the heart of his servants, for the sake that I might do these my signs in the midst of them. And for the sake that thou mightest tell in the ears of thy son and of thy son's son that which I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

We have explained on a former occasion what is to be understood by the word hardening or making heavy the heart of Pharaoh, and stated it to be nothing else than what we see every day among sinful men, who do not open their souls to divine admonition, and remain callous to the wrathful dispensations which others around them consider as sufficient to open their eyes to the erroneousness of their course. We then stated that the Lord must not be supposed as active in preventing Pharaoh's repentance, but as not compelling him to pay obedience before the chain of events had produced the necessary conviction on his mind. We have now merely to apply the miraculous part to our today's discussion. It has been stated before that, like their masters, the Israelites had learned to pay divine honours to idols; witness the many murmurings mentioned during their travels in the wilderness. Now let us not forget what we have insisted on in several previous lectures, that the ultimate salvation of all mankind was to be brought about by the education of the seed of Abraham as the Lord's peculiar people. They had therefore need to be purified of their reverence for the superstitions of Egypt, no less than to be cautioned against the pernicious practices unblushingly perpetrated in that unhappy land, which, amid a high state of civilization, was prostrated beneath the sway of idolatrous priests, the coadjutors of despotism, who enslaved the minds as much as the sovereigns the bodies of the people. But when the Israelites beheld the destruction which reached alike the people, the king, the priests, and their idols, they could not help feeling that the power of the God who humbled all that were held up to them as objects of reverence, must be vast, infinite, immeasurable; that He who arrested nature at his mere word, who made the winds his messengers, and the flaming fire his servants; who covered the heavens with darkness, and sent the angel of death unerringly into every house to slay the oldest of every family from the prince down to the captive slave, must in truth be the Lord, the Creator, the sovereign of the universe, He who builds up and destroys, who revives and slays, and there is no one to snatch or save from his hands. This it was that should be told to the descendants of Israel, namely, that their God is the Most High, who abideth unto everlasting, unchangingly holy, wise, and pure, great beyond human conception, all-powerful in the execution of his will, cognizant of nature, and changing its laws whenever He wills a change to take place; but who is true to his word, to repay the obedience of the fathers unto their children, and who is ever at hand to hear the prayer of the oppressed, and to save the weak and humble from the hand of him who is stronger than they are; who is the God of truth, in whom there is no evil, no falsehood, who shields from the arrows of life all those who put their trust in Him! Be it now thy will, O our Father and God, to open our eyes unto the knowledge of thy ways, and fill us with understanding to study with humility the word of salvation which thy wisdom has written down for our instruction; subdue in us the pride of human reason which refuses to be taught by thy word, and cause thy law to be engraven on our hearts, that we may observe its precepts, and speak of the great deeds Thou hast wrought for us, and through us for all the world, to those who are to come after us. Let thus thy name be sanctified through our humble efforts, and let us feel the assurance that Thou art with us whenever we assemble in this house, which we have built unto thy glory, to offer up our prayer at the foot of thy mercy-seat, and to proclaim aloud our abiding trust in the truth of thy law which Thou hast imparted to us as the best heritage of the congregation of Jacob thy servant.-May this be ever thy will, and may thy abundant blessing be poured out over all Israel thy people! Amen.

Fri. Jan. 6. Shebat 5, 5603.

Chapter 43

S. On Miracles - Part 3

On Miracles. A Sermon.

How glorious, O Lord! is thy testimony; how exalted the truth which Thou hast revealed to us. All the works of man have crumbled before thy messenger of decay, the flight of time over this changeable world; and empires no less than moral systems have one by one yielded to those which came springing up after them in the march of events. But thy word and thy law have stood unmoved, firm as the source from which they have sprung; fresh and youthful amidst the hoariness and decay which have overwhelmed all else besides. Be it therefore thy will to let this great truth be deeply impressed upon our minds, that we may make it the foundation of our life, and the sure support of. our hopes of a happy future. In order that our souls, redeemed from the jaws of perdition, in which sink they who are strangers to thy ways, may sing thy praises for everlasting, O, Eternal One, our God. Amen.

Brethren, In the course of the inquiry which we lately instituted into the doctrines of the Jewish religion, we stated, that we must admit as one of them the possibility for God to work his will in whatever He pleases, though to do this, He would necessarily have to act against the usual course of nature. We also stated, that nature herself is a miracle, or an effect of God’s will, to produce which nothing impelled Him but his own pleasure; and that therefore it requires no greater creative powers to introduce temporary changes or permanent alterations in the regular course of things, than to institute the same in the first instance. That God is the Creator, admits of no doubt, or else He would and could be no object of adoration. That God is the Preserver of things, follows from the very nature of the terms, or else there must be a second, to whom would in that case be transferred the preservation of the universe, who, however, would of necessity have to be independent of the Creator; for if the preserving power were not independent, God the Creator would be, what He is in truth, the Preserver as well as the Creator: and we have already shown, that the harmony every where observable, and the perfect accordance of cause and effect, in the material world no less than in the history of the mind, as far as this can be elucidated in the affairs of mankind, tend to prove that there is but one will, one spirit; hence there must be but one power, one ruler, and there can be no second, independent, coëxisting being to share, much less to dispute, the superintendence and government of all objects and things that have their existence by the Supreme Creator’s will. This will give us, then, what we claimed for God-the perfect and absolute power to do whatever He deems best, without any control or hindrance, not only from any extraneous power, but from the laws of organization as by Him instituted, inasmuch as they are depending upon his gracious pleasure for their continuance in existence, but are by no means necessary to his happiness, nor can they contribute the smallest item to his greatness and power, farther than to prove to the sentient beings whom He has formed, that He is in truth the Lord of lords, and the King of kings, the Creator of all spirits, and the Author of all that is in the heavens above, on the earth below, and in the waters beneath the earth. In the instance of a skilful mechanician who has contrived a cunningly devised fabric, with the joints, screws, levers, and wheels of which he is necessarily perfectly acquainted, we will readily believe that he may be able

to introduce some alteration which, so far from injuring the machine, will render it more simple and effective; as we will admit that the one who produced a thing so lifelike and wonderful is thereby not presented from carrying the fruits of his invention yet farther into the regions of discovery, which are totally inaccessible to ordinary minds. It would not be considered a mark of wisdom in any one to say that he did not believe the artist could alter his machine, because there appeared to him no reason for this alteration, and because he conceived that it was as perfect as it could be; for, admitting the objection to be true, still that does not abridge the power of the master to do with his handiwork what he may think best, and to alter it in any manner he may deem fitting in his superior experience and knowledge. Now extend this simple position to the Supreme Architect, who not only shaped the world, but created it from nothing; who not only works with preexisting materials, but also calls them into being; who is not only endowed with inventive faculties like a man is, which proceed from a superior source, but who is himself the Source of wisdom and understanding. And of Him shall it be said that his power is so circumscribed by his own rules, that it is impossible that such a change should be wrought by Him in the magnificent fabric which his widsom has built? The perfection of nature merely proves the greater perfection of its Creator; not that He is unable to construct a better one, one yet more wonderful, more free from evil, more allied in purity to his own pure essence. And what does his holy word teach us? Simply this, that step by step He organized nature, and is gradually perfecting what He has made. At first He spoke, and matter started forth in a vast expanse, of which the human mind cannot conceive the end. It was yet rude and unformed, for the will was merely to create a mass of throbs, elements, vast powers, terrific in strength, but as yet unorganized, without determined individuality. Again He spoke, and globes separated in wonderful array in the different regions of space, revolving each around a centre, all obedient to one directing will; but there was no life, no light, no verdure, in all their extent. Again He spoke, and there was light, springing from his own mighty being, to illumine and to rejoice the face of nature; and from then until now, there was evening and there was morning in each sphere, according to its own proper position in God’s world, and the blessing of light has not been withheld in its due season from the many globes that thirst for its presence. Again the word went forth, and the atmosphere of life-sustaining air was cast around our world at least, and no doubt round many another likewise, to become the sustainer of animated beings that were to dwell upon the same thereafter; and from the beginning till now, the mixture of respirable gases has been so nicely balanced, so scattered far and wide without stint or scanty measure, that every spot has always been supplied with a due portion for all that dwell there; and this stream has always been every where of the same healthy proportions, unless disturbed by causes for which nature, as such, cannot be considered responsible.-Scarcely were light and air provided, when a separation of the elements took place, the aqueous parts were collected into vast receivers, and formed oceans, lakes, and rivers; whilst the solid parts stood forth, as mountains that pierce the clouds, as sloping hills, as pleasant valleys, as rolling plains, and as shelving beaches. And then suddenly sprung forth, from the soil fitted for culture, many thousand plants, herbs, and trees, bearing fruit and seed, all calculated to subserve the use of creatures of a higher order, to be thereafter created, and all adapted by various wonderful contrivances to propagate their species, some by seeds, some by layers, some by roots, and some by other methods, known best and most admired and most dwelt upon with rapture by those who have penetrated into the mysteries of the great book of knowledge which nature every where unfolds.-The orbs next, which are capable of illuminating by the light which radiates from them, were assigned to dispense their

invaluable treasures to the bodies which are opaque in their substance, and which therefore need to receive this precious gift from others more blessed than themselves.

Now behold the new creation standing bright in its Maker's presence; the brilliant sun flies on in his course, sending forth rays of glorious effulgence to gladden and to fructify the kingdoms assigned to him by his Creator; and beneath his influence stand erect the lofty cedars on Lebanon, waving to and fro their gloomy tops, as the invisible spirit of the wind passes through them on his mysterious message to purify the heated atmosphere; see in the valleys, how brightly, glowingly, stands the blushing rose, or the snow-white lily, or lies concealed amid the verdant turf the modest violet, or scents the gale the cinnamon tree in the farther India, or spreads over the rosy sea the fragrant breath of the sweet shrubs of the happy Araby, or smiles the perfumed carnation in the fair fields of Asia; whilst the gaudy piony, the coral honeysuckle, the tinted pansy, or the simple daisy, each contribute to deck the landscape with an additional trait of loveliness. Behold in yon wide plains the mellow sea of ripening corn, bending in graceful waves to the gentle breeze which sways them like the billows of the yielding ocean; and the blushing fruits concealed almost under the dark green leaves which shade them from the heat of the mid-day sun; and listen to the dull, gentle heaving of the sea, as it dashes against the newly formed strand, gifted with fearful power when it rises into wrathful spray urged by the stormy blast, but now playful, placid, bright, harmless, like an infant giant unconscious of his strength. And lo! when the sun has set, how sweetly beams the host of stars in their new state of innocence, and the silvery moon sailing in her own deep blue heaven, the image of purity and truth:-and say, is not the scene beautiful, soothing, enchanting in the extreme? And yet there is no life, nothing-nothing-that moves of a free accord from the spot on which it stands. Nevertheless, the creation is thus far finished; there is organization, and there are laws; there are causes implanted in nature which must produce their effects; and consequently there is a species of perfection already attained, and. there are beings who feel the impulse of their Maker's will. But say, were God's powers exhausted when he had proceeded thus far? was He withheld from doing more, as soon as the suns, the planets, the elementary powers, the light, the atmosphere, the sea, the land, and vegetation had been finished? or was it a reasonable objection to his farther action, that enough had been done, and wisely done? Both investigation into nature and the history of Holy Writ teach us quite another lesson; for as soon as the earth had become fitted for the habitation of a different order of beings, they were called forth to the light of day, and soon the voiceless forests were filled with the song of many a feathered minstrel; birds of gay plumage flitted among the groves of the sunny south; the gaudy parrot chatted amid the branches of the orange and the palm; and the changeable humming-bird sipped the honey from the open flowers which invited his restless wings to hover over them; and the merry water-fowls sailed majestically down the northern rivers, whilst the shores resounded with the sweet voice of the dusky nightingale. In the seas was planted the mighty whale, who sported mirthfully and fearlessly on the face of the deep, whilst he lashed into spray the dark green waters assigned to him for his habitation; the rivers were alive with the children of the finny tribes, which rejoiced as they glided swiftly, undisturbed in the element which sustains their life and gives them shelter. Insects, too, in myriads, drilled along on busy wings, reflecting the bright light in their many gaudy colours, and sought from the inward call of nature the home which was provided for each in the bosom of the earth, on the face of the waters, or the many fruit-trees, shrubs, and flowers which every where stood ready for their reception. But there were yet wanting some more beings, that, uniting more energy than falls to the lot of insects, birds,

and fishes, should have their habitation on the face of the earth itself.-Again stood the glory of God anew revealed in the many beautiful creatures that sprung at his creative word into life and being. They too sought out the homes which were suited to each, where best their natural development could be carried to the utmost perfection, where a due portion of heat, and the proper sustenance were provided, by the bountiful hand of their Creator. The arid fields of Africa beheld the tawny lion and the lioness watching with anxious care and fearful strength their tender young. The sagacious elephant reared his towering form amid the deep shady woods of the tropical land, secure and careless because of the might of his limbs and the invincible power which had been imparted to his matchless frame. The spotted tiger and the beautiful leopard ranged the forests and jungles of the eastern countries, whilst the graceful gazelle and the swift-footed deer fled with unapproachable speed over the extended plains. Here behold the heavy heavy hippopotamus, dividing the flood of the sparkling Ganges, or the torrents of the river of Egypt, whilst on the shores of many streams grazed the peaceful ox, and lowed in the green pasture the useful cow, regarding with maternal solicitude her new-born calf. In the sands of Arabia you might see the prancing steed rushing on with resistless speed, and pawing the soil, that you would fancy the earth to shake beneath; there ranged the wild ass, hurrying on in his wild career, free and untrammelled as the air he snuffed in with his extended nostrils; there, too, browsed on the hardy shrubs of the desert the patient camel, regardless alike by his habits of abstinence, and power of endurance, of the gnawings of hunger and the burning of thirst. On the grassy plains skipped joyfully the harmless sheep, and the horned goat, and over the Alpine precipices wended their way the daring chamois as they leaped from crag to crag in their unapproachable solitude, whither naught ascends but the strong-winged eagle, or the mighty condor. And there where the cold offered a fitting habitation, stalked abroad the shaggy bear, or showed itself the stately reindeer; every where was life:-every where stood before the light of the sun the beautiful works of the great Creator.-If we thus view the Lord as the Author of the earth only, we shall find cause enough to admire his power and his infinite ability to work his will, seeing that the effects produced thereby are so varied and surprising in their organization. But this is not all; the system of nature in which we live is of immense extent, no man has yet measured its greatness, no man will ever understand its astonishing structure. And wherever there is any part of God’s creation, and this is all that our imagination can grasp, there must be the same tokens of power and goodness which are discoverable on earth; for knowing as we do how good the Almighty is to the inhabitants of the terrestrial globe, we cannot imagine that there should be so many worlds which we can see nightly, with our eyes, revolving in the immensity of space which we cannot discover the end of, which should all be surrendered to dreary desolation without atmosphere, vegetation, and life. But if it even were so, that all else in creation but our own earth were desolate and dreary, there would still be enough to satisfy the most incredulous mind of the ability of God to work his will in all He desires. Look at the various countries which chequer the face of the globe; examine the variety of climates, and temperatures, and vegetables, and animals which are assigned to each; reflect on the peculiarities of the sea-breeze which renders the tropical sea-coasts habitable to the white race of man, and the brilliant northern or southern lights which illumine and break the dreariness of the winter in the hither latitudes; consider the peculiar adaptedness of the polar animals, or those living in rigorous climates, by the additional coat of thick white fur which every year defends them against the cold of the frozen season, or which teaches them to hide themselves in a living state of suspended animation in the depth of caverns, or in hollow trees, or in sandy banks where they

pass away the mouths when ice and snow cover the ground in a happy forgetfulness of the storm which rages without, and which would prove fatal to their existence; and then turn to the astonishing organization of the different human races, who are all best calculated by their physical, and not unfrequently by their mental developments, for the very countries where we find them placed in a state of nature; moreover, reflect upon this peculiar fact, that a race originally living in one sort of climate, is materially changed in one or two generations if transplanted to one of a different degree of heat, so as to render it in a great degree better fitted to bear the especial hardships which it has to encounter in its new home; nay more, let us ponder upon the astonishing truth, that the same man when quitting his own country for one at a distance from his own often becomes acclimated, and in a manner physically changed in order to render him a fit inhabitant of the place which he has chosen for his residence:-consider all these facts, end you must acknowledge that there is enough on this earth to make you stand astonished at the power of the Creator. For there is evidence of design and forethought in all this; the very exceptions we meet with to these general rules, prove that nature as an inert uniform agent cannot cause them; or else there could be no exceptions; but the exertions of a Power so eminently beneficent, so nearly universally uniform in its working, demonstrates it to be one of intelligence, and of living, active, all-pervading wisdom, which is not limited in its strength, not defined by any outward agency. But we are leaving our subject. We wanted to portray merely the wisdom and power of God as displayed in his creation, and to exhibit Him as working miracles in every thing which meets our view. We stated that the creation was a miracle, and we may freely rest satisfied with the rapid view we have taken of its origin and its causes.-At every step which nature took in advance under the creative commands of the Lord, He might have rested if so it had pleased his wisdom; He needed not to have added one more miracle to those already wrought before; but He willed it otherwise; and as the world was more blessed with creatures of beauty, power, and usefulness, at each successive period of the formation of the universe, his wisdom, his glory, his goodness, his might, were rendered more evident for the intelligent beings whom He designed to frame as the crowning work of his creation.-We traced the earth as divided into sea and land; as surrounded with an atmosphere of living air, as illuminated and warmed by mighty worlds which shine by day, or appear at night; we beheld it decked with plants of a thousand different kinds; we saw it peopled, with many living things which have their home in the air, on the land, or in the water; but there was yet no animal so like the divine majesty of the Author of all, as to utter its thoughts in words, to reflect in a continuous train of reasoning, to feel the weight of responsibility, and to choose from free reasoning between good and evil.-The thought to create such a one ascended, if we may so express ourselves, before the Lord; and straightway the thought became will; the will went forth into the creative word; the dust of the earth assumed the shape of the human form; the breath of divine life was breathed into the mortal clay, and man stood there a creature of the earth fired by a soul of unending endurance, whilst nature holds sway, whilst the existence of the universe is suffered to continue by the will of its Maker. How wonderful is this creature! how fearfully great is this body of ours! how surprisingly sublime the soul which lives within us! Well might David exclaim, when feeling the great power of the Lord as displayed in his works, and especially in the formation of the human body: “I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.” (Psalms 139:14.) In truth, the more you investigate, the various combinations of bones, of muscles, of veins, of ligatures, of sinews, of channels, of viscera, of fluids composing the human body, the more will you be

surprised at the extraordinary adaptation of each part to the ends of its formation; and it is not an ignoble study to trace the developments and uses of every particular part of our body, especially if the student rises from his study with a deeper reverence for his God, with a profounder humility for his Creator. Men of research have argued from the economy of animal life the existence of design in the creation; they have proved that so wonderful a mechanism could not, by any possibility, be the effect of chance; and truly is it so! if the beautiful flower displays in its shape, its colour, its odour, the undeniable goodness of God, the animal frame no less demands of us to acknowledge that He who so contrived each part to answer in the best manner the object for which it was required, who repeats the same arrangement in so many millions of creatures from age to age, from generation to generation, cannot be otherwise than wise and intelligent, able to work his will, and designing all He does for a special and useful object. So much with regard to the body. Put is the soul less wonderful? No, no! it is this which constitutes the essence of man, which gives him dominion over the other creatures. Regard well the gradual development of the mind of an infant, and the instinct of the inferior animals; and how surprisingly great will the difference strike you. The animal soon attains the full growth of its body, and equally speedily all the few which are within its reach. But the human infant grows slowly, and as slowly does its intellect increase in intensity and comprehensiveness; it has much to learn, and therefore the age of childhood is long continued, that it may not be diverted by the cares of seeking a livelihood which fall to the share of brutes, from attending to its mental cultivation. There may appear, at first sight, some degree of hardship in this state of weakness; but it leads to the great results which every where appear to demonstrate, that subordination, obedience, and gratitude, are the means of government which the Lord designs for the world. It is thus that the weakness of the child renders it necessarily subordinate to its parents; it next is the source of the child’s obedience to the wholesome counsels of its wise benefactors and progenitors; and at length influences it with feelings of gratitude for the many favours conferred unceasingly and uncomplainingly, and induces it to follow now willingly from a free choice, the lessons of wisdom which it has learned in early infancy in this manner We shall discover by a careful inquiry, that, provided the mind be not too overtasked at the very outset, and that our research be confined within the ample bounds which God has set for its exercise, man can acquire an astonishing number of facts and ideas; and not alone this, but can enlarge upon what he has received, and add greatly to the general stock of knowledge by the elucidation of new truths, and the careful analysis of previously known ideas in almost every branch of knowledge. It is barely necessary to advert to the power of speech, which so surprisingly marks the human species, whereby one communicates the nicest shades of thoughts which agitate him to the comprehension of others; or to the faculty of informing one another by written characters of things done in the absence of those we wish to instruct, and by which we know what has passed in former ages, and by means of which we treasure up our thoughts for future generations. All these are powers peculiarly appertaining to mind, wherein matter, as far as we understand it, can exercise but little if any agency, any farther than that a corrupt and diseased body is not a fit instrument for the soul to effect therewith its objects and purposes.

It will thus be seen, that as we view each successive act of the Creator, from the formation of the rude mass of the material world to the communicating of spirit to man, we must come to the conclusion that his ability to work his will is unlimited in extent, and unconfined to any period of time; seeing that in every epoch of creation, whether this mighty event, lasted six days only, as the simple words of the Bible would seem to indicate, or whether it lasted for many centuries, as the

philosophers assert, and which is not altogether contradicted by Scripture, his power was exercised to add to creatures already existing others equally or more wonderful, and all proceeding, as their predecessors had done before, from his will solely, without there being the least force, necessity, or inducement from any other source whatever to influence his will or to urge on his action. When therefore the whole earth had been finished, and it was peopled in every part thereof with things of life, things of growth, and those which are not increasing as animals and plants do; when man had been placed there to rule over every thing beneath him in the scale of being: the miraculous power of the Lord did not thereby cease and become extinct. On the contrary, we would derogate from his dignity, deny his omnipotence, even doubt of his being, were we to assert that with the creation of the material world, the whole of God's will was accomplished. No, He is yet almighty, and will continue to be so to the end of all creation; and when every thing shall have ceased to be, if so this be his ultimate will, then will He yet be, without tell this wonderful organization, King, God, Almighty, able to reproduce the same or another world, as soon as He deems it best to do so. Upon this we rest our belief in the truth of miracles. With the creation of Adam, the work of creation was not complete. True, the material world had received an organization, which, for all that we know, may be final; but the spirit was yet to progress, just as the soul of a child advances under the guidance of parents and teachers. But the teacher of the world needs to be the Lord himself, who himself must instruct, himself educate, himself correct the works of his hands. We, therefore, are satisfied that He actually has left the world at large in a state of infancy, and from age to age He permits improvements and new developments to take place which were unknown before that time. And are these discoveries not in a measure wonderful, even somewhat miraculous, when we consider the immense influence they have from time to time upon the whole framework of society at large? It was, therefore, that when the world had so far progressed as to be ready in a small degree for the reception of the law which God had ordained from the beginning (for we maintain that every principle of the moral law was, from the necessity of the case, always unalterably in the mind of the Lord), He revealed himself by new creations, by changing things already existing, by infusing new powers into objects otherwise inert or inefficient, to demonstrate his almighty power, and to effect his unalterable will, to teach mankind the truths of his omnipotence, and to induce them to look upon Him with hope and confidence. So was the rod of Moses no more in itself than another branch of a tree on which man leans for support. But wielded by the prophet in obedience to the command of God, it assumed the shape of a devouring serpent, it converted the waters of the Nile into blood, it changed the dust of the earth into noxious vermin; it produced hail and thunder in Egypt, it divided the sea for the passage of the Israelites, it brought forth water from the flinty rock, and at length was sanctified by a repetition of the same event in the last year of the seer's life. All this was done, all the miracles exhibited during that fruitful period of great events were performed, that the world might become prepared through Israel, the children of Abraham, for the reception of the law of God; this important step in the gradual progress of the human mind required a powerful impulse; and this is best explained in the miracles recorded as having been wrought to bring this truth home to the people of Israel, that the law they were to receive must indeed be the veritable gift of the Lord, seeing that He alone could effect the acts, contrary to the course of nature, which occurred before their eyes. Does any one of you believe that it was a mere idle parade of wonderful power which was the object of the miracles? He would certainly be in error; for we find explicitly stated in the first appearance of the divine prophecy to Moses, as the result of all that he saw: "And this shall be a token unto thee that

I have sent thee; when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." (Exodus 3:12.) This evidently means that all the miracles would be as naught, were it not for the public proclamation of the law, which had already for centuries been inscribed in the presence of God, as the Rabbins figuratively say, with black upon white fire, so pure are its words, so sacred its ordinances! as a gift of the Lord to the children of man.

We will therefore maintain that the miracles were necessary accompaniments of this wonderful exhibition; it was the creation of a new mind, the divine wisdom of the law, which the Lord purposed; and this event, in itself as wonderful as the formation of the universe, in fact, itself a suspension of the law of nature, since mortals became cognisant in a direct manner of the intentions of God, which is unattainable in the ordinary course of events, was preceded, accompanied, followed by the works of nature feeling likewise the presence of the Supreme, more immediately than at other periods of history.-Was the object worthy of this divine manifestation?-Yes, truly it was; God meant to teach the world, and his works became terrified, to use the Bible phrase, at his presence, the laws of nature relaxed in their hold, when the Sovereign himself assumed the rule in his glory and might. And so sings Asaph, the man who knew the service of the Lord, and spoke forth his thoughts from a worshipping heart:

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"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, what god is so great as God! Thou art the God that doest wonders, thou hast declared thy strength among the nations. Thou least redeemed with thy arm thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph-Selah.-The waters saw thee, O God! the waters saw thee: they were afraid; also the depth was troubled."- Psalms 76:14-17.

Without a public manifestation of the Lord, the world would not have accepted the law, notwithstanding its truth and holiness; the miracles were, therefore, the most natural means to effect the great end of Providence. Well might the earth shake, lightnings play athwart the gloom, the thunder roll in terrific echoes along the crags of Sinai; well might the fire shoot heavenward from the peaceful Horeb's peak; well might nature stand affrighted at the awful Presence; for there were combined all the elements of power and grandeur.-And truly the manifestation was not in vain; the miracles were indeed transient, for now Sinai sleeps quietly, a pasture for the flocks of the desert; the Red Sea admits not now the passage of a mighty host; the vision of the prophet no more enlightens the mind of Israel's sons. Yet the law remains, the desired creation of the light of the soul was effected, established for ever; equally so with the grand chains of the Andes mountains, which stand as the frame of the earth; that she may never be moved. And if storms assail the holy legacy, if furious onsets of adversity threaten danger to its upholders: thy fury will in vain exhaust itself, the danger will pass, and leave the troubled sky more serene, more unclouded than before.-And though now the miracles have ceased among us, the time will come when the farther developments of the will of the Lord will render again familiar his presence among us, when all the earth shall see that the word of the God of Jacob is true, abiding among us for ever.

Bless, O bless, our Father! thy children, as Thou hast blest their fathers who feared Thee; let thy countenance shine unto them, and fill their souls with the abundance of peace which is ever before thee; and let thy light be their joy and support in every stage of their lives. And when adversity

comes nigh unto their dwellings, do Thou, O Lord! interpose thy protecting hand, and cover with the panoply of thy shield those who seek refuge under the shadow of thy wings. May this be thy will. Amen.

Friday, Feb. 3, 1843. Adar, 5603.

Chapter 44

S. On Repentance

On Repentance. A Sermon, by the Rev. J. K. Gutheim, of Cincinnati, Delivered on Sabbath Shubah September 26, 1846, Tishry 6, 5607.

Brethren: To speak of repentance is becoming to us in this holy season; to make repentance the subject of our serious reflections, in order to be able to distinguish between true and false repentance, is proper for us on this “Sabbath of repentance.” And lo! the true spirit of repentance is indicated in the words of our text, chosen from the Prophet Isaiah 13:7 :

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“Let the wicked forsake his way and the man of unrighteousness his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” May the God of mercy lend us his countenance, and enlighten our understanding in this hour of devotion, in order that we may become fully conscious of the true repentance which ought to pervade our being, and by means of which we may find pardon and forgiveness before his throne of justice. Amen. The most fatal position in which man can be placed is disunion with himself. But an inward conflict must arise, if we aspire to improvement and perfection, and yet suffer ourselves to remain unimproved and imperfect; if we evince a desire for the good, and yet practise evil. All sin, all transgression, brings man into collision and disunion with himself. For what is sin? Sin is every thought, every word, every action, against the better conviction that dwells in our soul. The sorrow arising from this, the anxiety which immediately follows every bad action, the displeasure with ourselves, the inward contempt for our degradation, the mortification we feel on account of our separation from the Most Holy, from God and his Law-this is repentance. The better and wiser man experiences the feeling of repentance most frequently, but also most deeply. The depraved and callous mortal, who, like the brutes, is carried away, as it were, instinctively, by the impulse of the moment; who is bent on satisfying his carnal appetites and passions, without devoting one moment to serious reflection, experiences this feeling bu rarely, and then but superficially. But how comes it, that only the wiser and better man experiences the feeling of repentance most frequently? Because he knows better how he ought to think and to act in order to become come perfect; because he feels more keenly every violation of his inward conviction, than the depraved and callous; because his love to God and his Holy Law, his knowledge of the relation, dignity, and destiny of man are more deeply and indelibly rooted in his soul, than in that of the unthinking mortal. In like manner we see that a good child, loving its father and its mother with great tenderness, will repent any offence committed against its beloved parents by disobedience or otherwise, far more quickly and more heartily, than the indifferent and callous child in whose breast there are cherished but few tender emotions towards its benefactors.

Feelings of true repentance we find exemplified in the several penitential Psalms of King David. With a contrite heart he confesses his errors; in the most glowing expressions he gives vent to his heartfelt grief, prays for forgiveness, and promises amendment. Thus he says in the 51st Psalm,

“Create in me, oh God, a clean heart, and a right spirit renew within me,” meaning: Restore to me the tranquillity of my conscience. Conscience is the uncompromising inward judge and accuser, that arraigns man for his evil deeds before God, before himself, and also (for his internal anxiety betrays itself outwardly) before his fellowmen. Our religion has wisely ordained a season for repentance. From the first to the tenth of this month we remove, as it were, from our houses to the “dwelling of the Lord.” It is our duty to pass in review our former conduct, and to direct our attention to our spiritual welfare, in order to become fully aware of our imperfections and our unworthiness. We are to endeavour to set our minds at peace with ourselves, with our neighbours, and with our Creator, by making every atonement in our power. The Day of Atonement closes our sanctification. But wo to him, whose repentance requires a special admonition, and is, therefore, deferred to this special season! He knows not the true, deep repentance, which the better man experiences. Genuine repentance, that is: heartfelt displeasure with our impure thoughts, with our censurable conduct; deep sorrow for our sinful deeds, does not wait for the arrival of the Day of Atone ment. No, if our repentance be sincere, we will feel it as soon as we become aware that we have sinned, and earnestly endeavour to mend our course. But by persevering in our sinful career, and deferring our repentance to the Days of Penitence, thinking it sufficient for the welfare of our souls to participate in an ostentatious display of religious ceremonies, is but hypocrisy, and can be productive of no permanent good. Before the Omniscient we offer this in vain. And yet we see many an Israelite enter the house of God, approach to worship the Most High, who feels no contrition in his heart, no compunction for his evil deeds, but mechanically repeats the prayers for forgiveness of iniquity and the general confessions of sin, and thereby hopes to satisfy eternal Justice, and sufficiently to deserve forgiveness for his transgressions. Still more lamentable is the practice of those who believe that after the Day of Atonement all their sins are cancelled, and on the strength of this belief, and in the hope of the same chance of obtaining pardon on any future Yom Kippur, which returns at each revolving year, they continue their life of sin and corruption, indulging in their unhallowed desires and vicious propensities, and pandering to their passions, as they were wont to do previous to the Day of Atonement. Can this be true repentance? If men are blind enough to presume to make, as it were, the Most Holy the aider of their wickedness, the protector of their selfishness and evil doings, can this be an excuse for their indulgence in things prohibited by the law of our God? No, their repentance is sinful, like their whole life. It does not pave for them the way to mercy and forgiveness, as our wise men teach; “He that says, I will sin and repent, I will sin and repent, will not reach the state of repentance; he that says, I will sin, and the Day of Atonement shall atone for my sin, will not obtain pardon on the Day of Atonement.” We cannot propitiate the Deity by a well-constructed period, by beautifully sounding words; God requires truth, spirit, and deed. He wills not the outward display of penance, but a soul full of repentance, and a life in conformity with our better conviction. As the prophet Isaiah saith: “Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Surely, this is the fast that I have chosen:-Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and break ye every yoke. Surely, deal thy bread to the hungry, and the poor that are cast out bring to thy house; when thou seest the naked cover him, and do not hide thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.” (Isaiah 58:5-8.)

Again, true, sincere repentance arises from the humiliating perception of the difference that subsists between our actions and our conviction; it arises frorn an earnest longing after holiness and perfection; it arises from our love to justice and our love to God-but not from a fear of punishment. Suppose even that all our sins would remain unpunished, we ought, nevertheless, to abhor them; because they are a degradation to ourselves, and contradictions against God. Suppose even that we should never be called to an account for our impure thoughts and evil acts, we ought, nevertheless to detest them; because we thereby render ourselves odious to ourselves, to our fellow-men, and to God. Whoever, therefore, repents from fear, cannot be inspired by true repentance; he would act far more wickedly if he did not dread the punishment. His professions, therefore, are a mere semblance, but not the substance of truth, not caused by an inherent love for the good, but are the offspring of fear. The effect, therefore, will be but momentary and transient.

But, if our repentance is caused by our love for virtue, by a love to our Father in heaven, then will we feel it daily and hourly, whenever our conscience tells us, Thou hast done wrong. We will never do a wrong deal deliberately; but only in rashness or ignorance. For how can he who hates evil, premeditate it? And if a man ever loved his religion and his God, how can he, consistently with himself, disregard the promptings of his better judgment? It is true, that even the best and wisest men can and do err, “for there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not;” and we are thus not free from error. But the better we are, the more quickly and keenly will our repentance follow. And it is only from such a repentance, springing from the proper source, and pervading our whole being, that we can expect forgiveness for our sins. It is in vain to affect such a feeling of repentance. It is in vain to appear in dissembled grief and tears, in a state of mind that in reality does not exist, in order to secure the grace of God. By acting thus we deceive ourselves, but we can never deceive the Omniscient Father of the universe, who searches the innermost recesses of our heart. The grief for our sinful conduct must be spontaneous, sincere and heartfelt. A feeling of this kind, arising from the depth of our soul, is in itself a punishment, and cannot fail to exert its influence in improving our conduct. For whoever is sorry for his misdeeds, will not perpetrate them again. He will be on his guard in future. The change of his nature for the better will be manifested by him in all his thoughts, wishes, and acts; he will be anxious to make amends for his previous misconduct. He will become holier, and will shape the line of his conduct according to the dictates of his conscience. There will spring up in his bosom that self-conscious contentment which is the reward of virtue, and which males itself known by the heavenly spark within us, by the still small voice of an approving conscience, Thou hast found grace in the eyes of God. And this is the end and object of repentance; for our penitential exercises, fasting and prayer, are but the means; but the abandonment of our sinful course and our moral improvement, are the aim of true repentance. Therefore the prophet exclaims: “Let the wicked forsake his way and the man of unrighteousness his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon hirn, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Deep-seated repentance exalts our being. As the man who in the hour of danger acquires a giant’s strength to save himself, so shall we acquire a giant’s strength to extricate ourselves from the meshes of sin, the more imminent the danger that threatens our spiritual welfare, and the deeper the repentance for our unworthiness. It is but a sign of indifferent repentance, if we still persist in the same faults which we allege to have repented for. Whoever yet yields to the promptings of his passions, and unscrupulously gratifies his evil inclinations; whoever yet finds all manner of

excuses for dishonest acts which he may secretly and therefore with impunity, perpetrate; whoever yet feels a delight in vexing and embittering the life of his neighbour; whoever yet, to realize the object of his ambition, resorts to dishonourable intrigues; whoever yet acts indecorously in the house of worship, and, instead of the awe and devotion, with which he ought to be inspired in the presence of God, renders his worship a mockery; whoever yet violates the Sabbath and holy seasons of the Lord, by following his daily avocations; whoever yet, in short, notwithstanding his professions and his alleged claim to the title of a good and pious Jew, deliberately violates the most sublime precepts of our moral code, and disregards the most sacred commandments of our blessed religion; can certainly not say, that he has ever repented of his sins, nor hope for pardon and forgiveness. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the man of unrighteousness his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord and he will have mercy upon him.” Our moral and religious improvement, then, is the criterion of true repentance. But how can we atone for our past conduct? Will the religious exercises of these Days of Repentance and of the Day of Atonement be sufficient to appease our conscience for past errors? Can we annul a wrong done to our neighbour, can we neutralize the effects of an injury done to his person, character, or property, by a prayer, heartfelt and sincere though it may be, offered up to God? Our sages answer these questions: “Sins between man and his Creator can be atoned for, if properly repented on the Day of Atonement, but sins between man and his neighbour cannot be atoned for on that day, nor can we hope for forgiveness thereof, unless we have conciliated our neighbour and redressed the injury done to him.” In reciting the prescribed prayer and confessions, the catalogue of sins to which human weakness is liable, does not our memory occasionally revert to an offence we have actually committed against our fellow-man? does not our conscience smite us for having neglected to redress it? Does not our inward monitor accuse us for having injured our brother in his interests and property, without having yet made an adequate restitution? Does it not strike us that on many an occasion we have insulted him and caused him pain and trouble, without our having yet endeavoured to make amends for our uncharitable conduct, by pouring the balm of conciliation into the wound we have inflicted? Have we, perhaps, originated or been instrumental in spreading, false reports that tend to detract from the good name of our neighbour? Let us not for a moment entertain the fallacious idea, that moral offences of this kind are less sinful, because, perhaps, they do not always cause a palpable material injury to our wronged brother. Evil speaking or slander is, according to one of our wise and learned writers, a greater moral offence than even murder itself; for, says he, with an admirable shrewdness of distinction, when you take a man’s life, you take only what he must, at one time or the other, have lost; but when you take a man’s reputation, you take that which might otherwise have retained for ever. Nay, what is yet more important, your offence in the one is bounded and definite. Murder cannot travel beyond the grave-the deed imposes at once a boundary to its own effects; but in slander, the tomb itself does not limit the malice of your wrong: your calumny may pass onward to posterity, and continue generation after generation, to blacken the memory of your victim.

Yes, brethren, let us relinquish our sinful course, our unrighteous thoughts, and let us return to the Lord, by making peace with our Creator, with ourselves, and with our fellow-men. From time immemorial it has been a sacred custom among us, to banish, in this season, every difference that may subsist between ourselves and our neighbour, to make a restitution for every injury, to sue for forgiveness where we have offended, and to grant it when requested. A sacred and noble custom! It disencumbers our spirits, whilst it fosters among us feelings of brotherly love. When thus, whilst

every discord is vanished and has given place to kindly and charitable feelings; when thus we shall congregate on the day of Kippur, and prostrate ourselves before the holy shrine of the Lord, asking for his pardon and countenance, whilst our hearts are beating in unison; when thus we shall return to the Lord, He will have mercy upon us; when thus we shall return to our God, He will abundantly pardon.

Yes, brethren, let us repent while there is yet time. The next hour may yet belong to us, the next week, the next month; but perhaps, not the next year. Many a being dear to our heart has, in the past year, quitted its earthly abode; many a soul, to whom we were knitted with indissoluble bonds of affection, has been torn from our bleeding heart, and returned to her eternal home; ay, even the former occupant of many a seat in this place of worship, has been summoned to join the praises of the Almighty Father of the Universe, in the blissful regions above. Whilst thus we are mourning for awhile for those who have departed, let us honour their memory by imitating and perpetuating every virtue of which they were possessed; whilst thus our common destiny impresses itself upon our mind, let us seriously direct our attention to our eternal welfare. Let us not delay, but let us “seek the Lord while he may be found, let us call upon him while he is near.” (Isaiah 55:6.) Let us speedily return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon us, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Amen.

Chapter 45

S. Our Religious Teachers

Our Religious Teachers.

(A Sermon.)

O exalted and holy One who dwellest on high, and art with the humble and contrite of spirit, to revive the heart of those who are bowed down, and to quicken the spirit of the lowly! Teach us to feel thy greatness and to be guided through thy wisdom. For well do we know, that when we are prosperous we ascribe the victory to our own hands, forgetful of Him who assists us in our labours. If we are toiling in vain, we imagine ourselves overlooked and neglected by the Bounty which prospers our neighbour's house. And in all cases we are jealous of our equals, envious of our superiors, as though the success of others could injure our happiness or mar our peace of mind. And still we receive thy blessing! We eat from the table which Thou hast spread so bountifully, so luxuriantly for all living; we live in thy beneficence which is scattered over the earth and the sky, over the dry land and the wastes of waters. And as a people too we have often forgotten this, and have fallen off upon the ways of evil, casting thy commands behind our backs. Do therefore aid us through thy all-powerful spirit to accomplish the work which thy revelation has began, to let us see the wisdom of thy word, that it may render us wise and intelligent, willing to serve Thee, O Father, in whatever sphere Thou assignest to us; mindful of the miracles which Thou wroughtest in the desert, and warned by the punishment which overwhelmed those who rebelled against Thee and thy servant; so that in all things we may be faithful, and always act as Israelites, the servants whom Thou hast chosen to proclaim thy name. Amen.

Brethren! Our wise men, the Rabbins, who were always anxious to found a strict and consistent morality, no less than a rigid observance of the ceremonies, upon the text of the Bible, have left us in their writings many beautiful moral doctrines, which when observed, will add dignity and worth to a religious character, and tend to render the practice of the divine precepts as honourable in the eyes of the world as it is meritorious in the sight of the Lord. So much has been said of rabbinical authority, with such a sneer at times have sciolists treated men whose shoe-strings they are not worthy to loosen, that one who did not know better might suppose, that all they had ever taught was fraught with mischief and folly. This age is one, emphatically speaking, of pulling down. Every day some newfangled notion is propounded, some singular thought broached and propagated with all the zeal of sectarianism, and with the intolerance with which ultra liberalists always regard those who refuse to admit their theories before they have been proved correct. Let it then not surprise you that so many systematic attacks are made upon the remains of our ancient learning, by persons whose greatest pleasure it is to decry what they do not understand, and to despise every thing ancient, as though every day must bring forth a new system of wisdom and government, as though every thing which has come down to us from former years were all conceived in folly and darkness. With all the well-known illiberality of innovators, it is nevertheless remarkable to witness among some Israelites such a haste for innovation, such a rage for destroying. Let them but consider for a moment who were those teachers who guided our people,

from Moses to our day, and surely they, the most ultra of them, must feel a profound veneration for men who pursued so unwaveringly, amidst so many disappointments, the duties to which they had devoted themselves. In the days of the Bible there surely was no profit connected with the teaching of the holy word; nay, there was danger from the ungodly, that in their wrath, they might might down those who uttered reproof to them, and testified against their wickedness. During the continuance of the second temple, to how many persecutions were not the scribes and wise men exposed from factious enemies at home, and bloodthirsty invaders from without! And since our glory fell, what have not our teachers had to endure from all who hated Israel, and endeavoured to blot out their name from the page of the world's history! Indeed, we can scarcely designate a single period of long duration, when the study and teaching of God's law brought any worldly ease and tangible gain. No, we must come to the conclusion, that it was a serious pursuit with the great mass of the teachers, that they went forth with the word of instruction upon their lips; it was a solemn conviction that they were benefiting their fellow-men by their labours, which not rarely exposed them to all the hardships of a campaign without the glory of worldly conquest. We should therefore be careful how we listen to those whose unacquaintance with the circumstances of the times in which some of our books were written induces them to cast censure upon their writers, and who not alone condemn the authors of what they think ideas unfit for the present age, so boastfully called that of enlightenment, but those likewise whose works and whose savings are to this day the themes which engage the most learned and refined in their elucidation. I am not the panegyrist of ancient abuses, nor of errors which may among many good things have come down to us; but surely it is no evidence of narrow-mindedness nor of an opposition to improvement, to be unwilling to admit the soundness of new views till they have something more to recommend them than the mere novelty or the daring with which they are propounded. It admits of no question that so much good has resulted to our nation from the labours of their great teachers, such as Simon the Just, Hillel, Rabban Gamliel, Jochanan son of Zaccai, Rabbi Judah the chief, Samuel, Rab Ashi, Saadiah Gaon, Yarchi [Rashi], Aben Ezra, Maimonides, and a bright galaxy of innumerable others, that no one can be otherwise than safe in following them in the way they have pointed out, whilst on the other hand there is the greatest danger to enlist one's self under the banner of some of our modern guides, who in their mode of instruction, as I have said already, endeavour to unsettle and to pull down every thing, and fail to build up and to establish any thing useful instead. There can be no safety in a system which only denies former views, and we ought to avoid it as we would shun an evident sin. There is therefore every reason to mistrust our innovators, who under the pretence of reforming Judaism, have introduced, or endeavour to introduce, ideas and rules of conduct contrary to our received opinions. They are perhaps proud of their attainments in science, which however confer on them no claims to become reformers in religion. They say perhaps with truth that the ancients were not deeply learned in worldly matters. But this fact does not weaken the authority of the latter in the light of religious teachers, in which we have always been taught to regard them. It is the misfortune of modern times that their enlightenment has been too sudden; the darkness preceding them had been of such long continuance, that the light which was shed upon them, from so many new and formerly inaccessible sources, has blinded those who were accustomed to the feeble glimmer of the little scientific knowledge that came to them from the by-roads of science. Our people had been restricted for centuries to the study of their own books, few knew any thing of the "Greek branches of wisdom," and what is more, valued them too little, looking perhaps upon them as inimical to a

religious life. How far their fears have been justified, let the bitter example of modern dereliction testify. Jews are not enemies to science; but truth compels us to say, that many who have made the arts and sciences their study, have done but little honour to Judaism. Many have through apostasy entered upon public offices, whilst without their dangerous acquirements they would have remained honest though humble Israelites. Many have studied the sciences, become proficients in the healing art; and their lives, though they yet profess the Jewish religion in name, are but a miserable exponent of the fruits of their learning. These and many others seem to say by their public acts, if not by their private thoughts: “We are now in possession of a talisman unknown to those uninitiated in the mysteries of sciences; we are removed from the bond of obedience, and we revel freely in the liberty of an enlightened conscience.” How little there is in all such things to make a sincere Jew fall in love with a pursuit which is so destructive in others, I need not impress upon your minds. And if the few who studied philosophy, so to say, by stealth in the dark ages showed an equal disregard of religion with the modern professors, and doctors, and public functionaries, it is no wonder that the lovers of religion discountenanced such dangerous acquirements.

I know well enough that there is no connexion between irreligion and the sciences; no one need tell me, that the deeper one looks into the book of nature the higher will rise his veneration for God; there is no occasion to assure me, that the Jew must become the more strongly wedded to his faith when he enters upon the study of history, and discovers how grievously his forefathers suffered for the faith they have handed clown to him, and how many persecutions they cheerfully braved only to be permitted to breathe their last breath as Jews, even if this was at the burning stake. I know all this, and so know the blessed teachers who to this day honestly proclaim the law as they have received it. But it is nevertheless true that the sudden change has been to, alas! too many, like the food placed before a famished person, who devours eagerly more than his feeble digestion will bear, and who suffers in consequence excruciating pains, or perhaps death, from his unguarded imprudence. Just so was it with us; the universities were opened again to receive us, and we could learn Latin and Greek, mathematics and history; and we seized with the eagerness of a protracted abstinence upon the long denied indulgence; but we lost sight of the fact that these things were merely additions to the divine wisdom, and the weak in faith substituted what they learned in the schools for the light of revelation. At first there was a little struggle between ancient ideas and the free notions of the age of change which commenced with the French Revolution; but one by one fell into the scepticism of the times, till the evil became festering and infectious in its contact. It is but too true, that with partial profession of religion (we will leave out of sight the downright apostates) many endeavoured to reconcile the freedom of a gentile life with the dictates of our faith. Hence it resulted, that where formerly it was considered requisite, in order to be entitled to the name of a dutiful servant, not to mention that of a pious man, to practise with care every minutia of observance, and to be engaged every day in the study of the Scripture and books treating on religion, it became the new fashion, of even the somewhat religiously inclined, to leave out as much as possible of the routine of duty, to abridge the time of prayer and the amount of devotion hitherto in practice, and to let the reading of secular books supplant the perusal of those of a higher order. Nay, many began to draw their mental nourishment from works written to ridicule religion, and to cast a shadow of doubt upon all that is sacred. Such a course might perhaps have operated injuriously only on the few who fell off from the right path, had the infection continued merely in the minds of those who had no influence on the public; but at length even some of our

leaders joined what is commonly termed the modern movement, and they endeavoured to profit by the confusion of the times, in place of manfully withstanding the baleful desire for daring innovation. Now a new system commenced; new words were coined to throw odium on the past; and we were entertained with such terms as “Scientific Development of Judaism,” “Mosaism,” “Progress,” “The Light of the Nineteenth Century,” and whatever other terms of the like import were invented or misapplied to the circumstances of the case; until it is no longer possible, for those who are sincere in their adherence to the law of God, to keep silence amidst the storm of unhallowed feelings which the evil-minded have evoked. Let me state now, once for all, that I too, together with many eminent men, whose humble follower I scarcely deserve to be called, am fully aware of the corruption which had crept in among us during centuries of oppression; I know that a system of superstition was perfected upon the mystical notions of the middle ages, notions which are an excrescence on, not a part of our religion; I know that useless penance, and long abstinence, and frequent fastings, were recommended as meritorious acts. All this is true; and therefore no reasonable person could well have found fault, had the attacks of the modern new lights been directed only against such matters. But this would not satisfy their towering ambition; three hundred years before Popery had had its reformers and opponents,-men who, whether from ambition or sincerity, it matters not, attacked, and in a partial degree overthrew, in many countries, the political power of the pontiff who claims to this day his authority as the viceregent of Heaven. And now our modern Jewish leaders would needs be each a Luther, a Melancthon, a Zwingli, or a Calvin; they must needs contest the tradition of the fathers, as the Nazarene reformers did with the early doctors of their church. To gain eclat, something had to be done to attract the multitude; and whoever is acquainted with human nature, knows as well as I can tell him, that no one is so likely to be listened to, as he who steps forward as the reformer of abuses, as the man who ostensibly contends against the slavery of opinions. Still our reformers forgot one thing. The Roman power was one of political existence; it rested with an iron weight upon the conscience and will of its followers to no greater degree than upon those who had to live in the lands where it had control; in addition to which its missionaries traversed Europe, Asia and Africa, and began to extend to the continent and islands of America the influence and dogmas of the head of their church. To disobey was at the peril of property, of liberty, and of life; heresy, as it was called, and infidelity, as they viewed it, which included our faith, were mortal crimes, and subjected the offender to the pains and penalties of an inquisitorial tribunal. And when at length the shameless bargain with indulgences was openly exhibited, by which means the church stipulated a remission of sins for a certain sum of money paid to its priests: it was but rational that a change in the minds of the people should take place, and subject the pretensions of the papal authority to infallibility to the test of reason.

Yet where can the lover of change find any thing analogous in our wise men and teachers? Political power they never had; patronage, either great or small, was never in their possession; wealth is foreign to their hands;-what is there then to object to their exercise of a power which is merely founded on the attachment of an oppressed people to a fraternity of leaders, who, amidst all the sufferings they had to endure, were ever found in their midst, encouraging the wavering, comforting the strong, and enduring the same hardship, the same cruel fate, which overwhelmed the meanest among our race? Did not such conduct deserve all the respect which it received? and did not the people find their devotion to such leaders amply repaid by the instruction they at all times obtained from them in the things which the Lord had ordained? And where does any one find

a loftier, a purer morality than breathes throughout the rabbinical writings which have come down to us? You may, perhaps, here and there discover a trace of illiberality, not in keeping with the refinement of our own age; but revert back to the time when these works were composed, when the name of Jew was an incentive to insult, maltreatment, and to robbery; and then reflect well that the Rabbis were men as we all are: and you will require no apology if the agony of despair wrung, at times, from them expressions of illiberality to which they never would have assented of their own accord.

Nevertheless they taught even in those days lessons of toleration of the highest order, such for instance: “The righteous of the nations of the world have a share in the world to come;” “The Lord withholds not the reward of any creature,” and many of a like import: and these are the men whom modern reformers wish to stigmatize as unwise and illiberal zealots! These the men whom we are called upon to disown as our guides! And what, after all, do the reformers chiefly aim at? I think the greatest clamour is raised against the mode of worship, as practised at the Synagogue, which, it is alleged, is not in consonance with the demands of the times. Granted that there are abuses, and these every body feels; against these, however, the ancient teachers also exclaimed. The disorder at times observable in our places of worship is in direct contravention with the dictates of our sages, who teach: “Man should not stand up to pray except with a heavy head,” i. e. devotional meekness; again, “Know before whom thou standest;”-they denounce as impious the least conversation in the Synagogue, especially during certain portions of the service; whilst the law is read in public they prohibit prayer even to be recited, although one should have come too late to the place of worship. What more would you wish to add to these directions? You may amplify, but the substance is there before you; act up to it, and our Synagogues will be as well regulated as the most fastidious can desire. All we need is for our people to value what has been handed down to them in this respect, and we may safely affirm, that decorum and devotion will be the ruling traits of our public meetings.-Again, an objection is made to the time of the service, which, according to our tradition, is for the reading of the Shemang before the expiration of the third hour of the day, that is, according to the calculation of modern time, nine o’clock in the morning. Now this has been found too early for convenience, and every effort is made to postpone the commencement of the service to a more suitable hour. But why should we not hasten to devote the early hours of the Sabbath to worship? Is not the whole day holy unto the Lord? is it not his gift that it is sanctified unto his service? Then it is the length of the service, next the too great uniformity, or the repetitions of the Amidah and Kaddish; when in truth, the whole time consumed by the prayers on the usual Sabbaths does not occupy more than one hour, or, at most, an hour and a half. True, if we do not feel earnest in the service, any time is too long, but this is what we need, a feeling of devotion which will carry us to the Synagogue and let us spend our time there in full contemplation of the great Being in whose presence we have appeared. The Amidah then is a prayer for the things we need collectively and individually; it is a prayer which comprises every thing which man can ask of his God; the congregation therefore should first, after assenting to the acknowledgment of the divine kingdom in the Shemang, recite it to themselves, that each one for himself and for all may petition the divine Presence to bless him and Israel collectively with all the goodness which we need at his hands. Then let the representative of the congregation, their appointed minister, pronounce aloud, as one of the people for all, as the representative for his constituents, the same petition for grace, and let each and all assent to every petition or affirmation by the unanimous Amen which records, as we said on a former occasion, the concurrence of the assembled brethren

in the truth of our religion. Yes, let them in heart and soul listen devoutly to the Minister's words, let them comprise the whole of our household in their aspirations; and, when the Kedusha is inserted, let them tremblingly sanctify the Lord, who appeared to his prophet in the midst of his heavenly servants, who, like Israel do on earth; sanctify on high his holy Name, with a love, a unison, a fervour which only the pure souls of the saints can attain. There may, however, be some few repetitions of certain portions of of the ritual, which are not of much moment; but surely it is not worth while to commence a violent agitation, simply to remove these. They are to a certainty perfectly harmless, and whether repeated or left out, will neither lengthen the service too much, nor abbreviate it materially.-Some also find the reading of the law too long, and wish to leave out the portion from the prophets, which we read on every Sabbath and festival.-Again, I do not see upon what system this is to be effected. According to my view, and every dispassionate person must agree wth it, the reading of the entire law once every year, is of the utmost moment to all Israelites. Every one is not learned, every one has not the leisure to pursue an even simply biblical study with much profit during the days of labour. To such, as just described, the public proclamation of the law, once during the year, must be of the utmost value; the whole law, it must not be forgotten, is the code which God prescribed to us; no part thereof has been abrogated, although portions of it are no longer practicable in our present state of dispersion and banishment. Still the precepts, even those not now practicable, are all of interest to us; they are our life, our proof that we are God's chosen children. By all means then, let us not withhold the bread of life from our brethren; let us continue to proclaim it in all their dwellings; it is our constitution, our magna carta, our bill of rights, our declaration of independence: and let it be proclaimed where we are in bondage, where we are members of the sovereign people, that in it we live, in it will we die! O it is a glorious gift, this law of God! It is the wisdom of wisdoms, it is the light of lights! Let Israel bend the head when the book is elevated, let them raise their hearts when its words are read; therein they find the road which leads on to heaven, there the herb of life which snatches the soul from death! Ay, every year let it be read aloud in all our congregations; let not one of its precious words be omitted, let not a syllable fail to sink deeply into the ear; and we need not a better monitor to guide us aright, not a better incentive to induce us to inquire "what the Lord has taught concerning us."-But what of the Haphtorah? Is it not an addition to the service, a useless lengthening of our stay in the Synagogue? Is it not a substitution, introduced during a time of persecution, instead of the weekly portion of the law? Although the latter question is undoubtedly in consonance with the facts, we cannot admit that it is a useless addition to the service, or that we had better shorten our sojourn at the Synagogue by so much as is occupied therewith. Let us see what the prophets were. They were men sent out from amidst the people to teach and to admonish them in accordance with the word of the law revealed to Moses. They again confirmed what had been given on Sinai, and amplified the instruction by their denunciation of the sins they saw perpetrated around them, and added the consolations which from time to time they were sent to proclaim in the hearing of Israel. In other words, the prophetic writings are a commentary written by inspiration upon the body of laws embraced in the Torah; and whatever is spoken by the seers of our people, will find its echo in the books of Moses. Why then should we not read the portions which so clearly correspond with the law from the books of the prophets! do they not tend to confirm in the souls of the worshippers the faith in the truth and uprightness of their adored Father? Who can read unmoved the address of Moses to the people, just before his death, in connexion with the terrible introduction to the book of Isaiah, in which he sketches the backsliding

of his contemporaries, which he could not prevent, against which he denounced the coming doom? Needs it that I multiply instances to prove what does not in truth require proof? No! I will leave the subject to your own reflection, confident that you yourselves can find parallels enough to finish the argument without my aid. But let us return to our sages and their opponents. The Rabbis have, in accordance with the right inherent in the teachers selected by the people, from time to time introduced ordinances, as fences to the law, that men might not inadvertently break the vital commandments. They proceeded upon this principle, that there can be no injury in omitting to enjoy the things permitted, if by this means we guard ourselves against sin. Strictly speaking, nothing has been added to the law, they only defined the extent of the precepts, both the affirmative and negative kinds. There can be no doubt of the existence of a tradition, or a received manner of observing the precepts which the law contains. That all the sayings of the expounders of the law are absolutely traditional I will not maintain, nor is this the opinion of our teachers. But whether the ordinances are traditional or instituted for safety's sake, they have become so intimately interwoven with the life of our nation, that they cannot be disrupted without giving a severe and useless shock to our national existence. One thing is evident, that the system of the Talmud is one of great uniformity, or rather I should say, it was one of great uniformity. Whatever occurred in the domestic or social life of our people, was strictly adjudged by our shiefs to the best of their capacity and understanding of the case, according to the decisions of the wise men. There could be no thought of sectarianism, while the means of arriving at a satisfactory solution were always at hand. Local customs were always permitted, the freedom of establishing congregations on such principles of government as pleased the majority in each was never contested, so long as the usual officers, a civil president, treasurer, and directors, on the one, and the Rabbi, reader, teacher, and the subordinate officers, on the other side, were chosen. So also the form of prayer, or Minhag, was not interfered with, provided as before the main principles of the worship, which are alike in all, were adhered to. Thus it was for many centuries, and there was therefore a perfect unity in the church of Israel, with the exception of a small body of literalists, or Karaites, who nevertheless have a mode of interpretation, necessarily traditional, though doubtlessly it deviates from ours. And thus it might have always continued, had not, within late years, a number of ignorant fanatics in the first instance endeavoured to establish a mode of life of an ascetic and extravagant nature, and to introduce the same in their worship; and in the next an equally unwise class sprung up who will judge every thing according to philosophical rules. The former are known as the Hassidim or Zoharites, the second as the reformers. There can be no doubt, but that the ascetics will not long continue in their extravagant manner, but will gradually return to the bosom of our community to which they belong. But the second class, or the reformers, seem to disdain any thing except their own views: they have drunk of wisdom, still the stream is polluted by the worldliness which they have imbibed under their gentile masters, and teachers; they come to cut down, and to level the obstructions which a life of enjoyment finds in our law and the teaching of our instructers. Some of them are every where, though not formidable in their numbers as yet, secretly working to sap the foundations of our system. I know well enough, that they allege that they mean to restore, to fortify; but their words are contradictory; they may perhaps be honest, but wherever they have appeared up to this moment, the course of religion has been backward, if we take the biblical observances as a criterion.

Instances could be produced; but in a public lecture it is not fit to mention persons and places, even should my sense of propriety not check me from so doing. Still from what I have seen in print,

I cannot hesitate saying, that so is the case, that wherever the reform mania has penetrated there also is the spirit of religiousness greatly weakened. Yet spite of themselves the reformers have rendered a great service to our blessed cause. In former years our learned men were content to write for the learned, because they knew that many felt a desire for instruction in the things pertaining to the law. But in the course of time many were left uninformed, a fatal error undoubtedly. Now the agitators have awakened inquiry, and the means of information have become greatly increased. The torpor so long resting upon our masses is vanishing, and "to-morrow the Lord will make known who is his, and who is holy him will be bring near to himself." Yes, the Lord who assisted Moses in his ardent mission of liberating the souls of his brethren from the degradation of slavery, will still, is still watching over us with paternal care. The cup of disunion is bitter indeed, bitter the dregs which it presents to our lips. But what was Moses's situation when he was unjustly assailed with the words:

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"For the whole congregation, are all of them holy, and in their midst is the Lord; and why then will you raise yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"- Numbers 16:3.

Fearful indeed was the assault which threatened from the preeminence of the malcontents to overwhelm all which had been built so recently with so much labour and wisdom. Ay, the same thing takes place again in our day. Men of wisdom assail the righteous, they revile them for having assumed an undue authority over the congregation of Israel; and like Korah, their object is not the welfare of the people, but the destruction of the divinely appointed leaders. But as the Lord saved his servant from that severest of all trials, so let us hope that his spirit will again guide us to overcome the difficulties which now beset our way. Disunion has been threatened; but let us go on firmly, piously, in the task of scattering information and knowledge among those who need instruction; and the indifference and the love for change which now are witnessed will yield before the power of the word of God, and the triumph of righteousness will again be witnessed now as on the day when the righteous Moses was vindicated as the faithful servant of God, by the display of miracles, when all the people felt, that the Lord was their God, and his word true, and that his messenger was true. May the light of the Lord be our guide, and his blessing our shield, now and for ever. Amen.

Tamuz 4, (June 21,) 5604.

S. Reflection on Pentecost

Reflections on the Pentecost. A Sermon.

O God! who knowest all that passes within thy world, from whom none of our deeds is hidden, let us pray Thee to strengthen us in thy knowledge, and cause us to be guided by thy fear; so that we may never trespass against thy will, though no human eye be directed unto us or our doings. Yea, let us be made conscious that Thou, Father! art ever present, ever watchful and cognizant of our acts, ever ready to visit with retribution our backsliding, but also ever ready to approve of all the good we do, and to hallow by thy blessing whatever is undertaken in the furtherance of the glory of thy kingdom, and the prosperity of mankind, those whom Thou didst create in thy image, in thy divine likeness. Full often, however, does our mind wander after the things that are not good, and we are allured after the imaginings of our heart, and the unhallowed desires of our eyes; let us, therefore, pray Thee to implant deeply within us the perception of the beauties of thy religion, that we may at once crush the tempter when he rises up in rebellion, against thy will, and to overcome successfully the opportunities to sin which our heedlessness so often seeks in the vain fancy that we of ourselves are able to overcome iniquity and to pursue what is good. But it is Thou only who givest us light, it is thy law only which can guide us securely; let us then feel the truth and force of thy revelation, that we may follow Thee in all Thou biddest us to do, and that we may feel our entire dependence on thy blessing and instruction, as did our fathers when they stood affrighted at thy glory on the day of the gathering at Horeb, when Thos camest to institute them as thy people, and to teach them thy Wisdom and knowledge. Amen!

Brethren:

After the ten commandments had been proclaimed in the hearing of the whole people of Israel, they started back from the presence of the great glory that blazed on Sinai, and they stood afar off. It was then that the prophet assured them of their safety, for that only to prove their innermost soul, and to render them permanent servants of the Lord had He come, in order that his fear might be upon their faces, so that they might not sin. And in conformity with this assurance on the part of the prophet, did God himself address through him the people, as follows:

[illegible]:

“You yourselves have seen that from heaven have I spoken with you. You shall not make [aught] with me; gods of silver and gods of gold you shall not make unto yourselves.”- Exodus 20:19-20. The divine Majesty had displayed a part of his glory, had proved to mortals that there are joys other than those arising from carnal enjoyments; and had made them experience delights and knowledge differing from any thing before attained by them; and all this was done that they might be convinced that it was the Creator who spoke audibly to their ears, that it was not a mortal being who had made himself heard in their presence; for there were more than two millions, consisting of men, women, and children, descendants of Jacob and the sons of the stranger, who had united

themselves to the covenant of God; and still all heard the same words, as all saw the same fire, in the same moment and with one accord, in a manner utterly unattainable were the speaker one like themselves, were the sounds merely the effect of mortal organization. Yea, the fire blazed, and the earth quaked, the mountain shook, and the trumpet was exceedingly loud; every thing was overpowering, crushing with its unheard-of force; and still there arose above the din and roar of the elements, despite of the terror which each one felt for his safety, a clear and distinct voce, which spoke in words ample and clear, “I am the Lord thy God;” no son of man whose power is limited, no one born of woman who is destined to die; but the everlasting one who was from the beginning, before the hills were conceived and before the mountains were brought forth, who is now in the same strength, vigour, and intellect, powerful alone among all that is fleeting, intelligent alone among all that is subject to infirmity and decay, and who will ever be, yea, when this earth shall have worn out in its revolutions in its prescribed orbit, when the stars shall have become dimmed and shorn of their lustre; when nature herself shall have served the purpose of her formation; yea, He who even then, and for ever thereafter, will be the same which He is now, one, alone, great, wise, good, and indivisible. This the people heard, and they felt that no one but the Eternal could thus address them all, could thus remove the veil from every eye, and light up an imperishable fire in their souls; and they stood ready to lend a willing ear to the other precepts which the Most High might prescribe for their guidance. Now observe, brethren, the great distinctness and force of the first commandment, which enjoins us to believe in the existence of the Godhead. There is no laboured definition attempted to say how the Holy One is constituted; it even describes him not as endowed with any of the attributes which are so eminently his own, which so peculiarly render Him the object of our adoration; but we are simply referred to the miracles and power which He had displayed unto ourselves. “I am the Lord thy God who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.” We had been taught by the display of the mercy and greatness of God in Egypt, that He was not only superior to the vanities which our oppressors adored, but that He was unfettered by the powers implanted in the organization of outward matter, which we call, for distinction’s sake, “the laws of nature;” and thus we are merely exhorted to acknowledge the Deity whom our own convictions had forced us to acknowledge as our God; as Moses also said in his song, “ This is my God, and I will glorify Him; the God of my father, and I will extol Him.” Yea, the announcement from Sinai was only a response to the previous conviction of every Israelitish heart; and thus it struck a chord which still vibrates in unison with the current of our life, as the descendents of those ransomed of the Lord, who listened to his voice which gushed forth in awful sublimity from the cloud-capped pinnacle of sacred Horeb. But observe how utterly at variance with the presumed plurality of the godhead, which so many believe to exist, are the words of the Decalogue. The very first word is “I am,” Hebrew ■■■■; there is no conceivable construction which can transform it into any idea but a single, individual, sole speaker; the same indeed who before that day, when sending Moses on his mission of redemption, had declared himself to be “I will be the one who I will be;” and “thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I WILL BE has sent me unto you.” ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ And why “I will be?” Because at every moment of conceivable time it will be correct to say of God that he will yet be, that there will be no end to his existence, no change in his essence. For were it at all possible that He could cease to be, the appellation “I will be” would not apply to him at the moment. Whereas, He himself told Moses, “This is my name for ever, and this my memorial from generation to generation.” And were it possible that there could be any change in his existence, that He could be endowed with a power

at any future period which He did not possess at the beginning, his memorial, or the manner of invoking Him by his adorers, would necessarily change. But how did Moses and the saints of ancient days invoke Him? how was his memorial borne aloft on their pure-inspired lips? Even as the God Eternal, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; and how constituted? as the Adonay Echad, the Eternal, who alone is ONE; as the same, and by the same appellation which He had applied to himself in the multitude of visions with which He blessed his early servants. Farther, we are told: “I am the Lord thy God, I, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.” Again here is the singular number applied; but one Eternal revealed himself to Abraham, the same and but the one who then spoke on Sinai; and it was but He alone who spoke of our fathers, “Israel is my son, my first born;” and it was therefore but He alone who effected our redemption. Where, we ask, is the possibility of imagining that a combination in the personality of the Godhead is thought of? where the possibility to fix on a single expression which would render it compatible with the sacred text that a delegation of power was is in contemplation, and a change in the saving mercy of God in the range of possibility? Understand well, brethren, that the Bible must be taken as a whole, one entire system of revelation; you cannot wrench one passage from its connexion, and say, “ It teaches this particular doctrine,” when this is in contradiction with other passages; and though there may be some colour of reason for your new discovery at a first sight, depend upon it that you have misconceived, in your eagerness for new things, the spirit, if not the palpable meaning of the text. If, now, you weigh well the few passages just quoted, without going any farther into the long list which can easily be added, they will clearly demonstrate that, as far as the book of Exodus is concerned, it teaches precisely what we find in the book of Genesis, and that the ideas of Adam, Noah, and our own immediate fathers, were precisely the same with those which Moses received in his revelation. This much we can insist upon as uncontrovertibly true, that no one will discover any contradiction in the announcement to Abraham, “I am El Shadday, walk before me and be perfect,” and the first precept of the Decalogue, “I am the Lord thy God:” nor between the promise to Jacob, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac,” and the one given to Moses, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God, of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” It is only by impressing in early childhood the mind with views essentially differing from ours, that one can be brought to acquiesce in their correctness; and when this has been done, there will be no difficulty in finding means to reconcile the most emphatic expressions of Scripture to views altogether different from what they ostensibly say;-hence should any one bring up, in his advocacy of foreign principles, reasons professedly drawn from the Bible, you should not be surprised at the startling boldness with which error endeavours to uphold itself; but meet him calmly and dispassionately, with the words which declare that the Lord changes not, that He is as He always was and ever will be, the Lord ONE, the God who created the world, the God who chose Abraham as his servant; the same God who spoke to us on Sinai, in his own majesty, without mediator or messenger; and the same God, at last, who, in his own time, will redeem the world from error, and cause his name to be invoked by all mankind, even as He now is by the sons of Jacob, who have for his glory so long borne the contumely of the world, the hatred of the ungodly.

Let us once more revert to the ideas of the Patriarchs, on the subject the dearest to them, to the propagation of which their lives were devoted; I mean their love for their faith: and how do we find them appealing to the Deity? Evidently in a direct manner, asking of Him the grace and favour which He alone could bestow. Abraham asked of Him to distinguish between the guilty and

innocent at the threatened destruction of the cities of the plain, as also when he petitioned for favour towards his son Ishmael. In sending out Eleazer to obtain a wife for his son, he speaks of the God before whom he had walked, and expresses his belief that he would send his angel before him, and enable him to accomplish his mission. Isaac, when he blessed his son, also speaks directly: “And may the God Shadday bless thee.” Jacob only knew the God of his father, and in his name he exhorts his children to obedience, and on Him did he rely for aid in the day of his distress. Let any one show to us in all the passages referring to these favourites of God, that they know any thing of a mediatorial power; that they had any conception of a combination of personages to whom worship is due: and it will then be time enough to discuss whether or not there is a misconception of the terms employed. But as far as known to me, there is not a single phrase in any translation of the Hebrew, much less in the original text itself, which can be tortured into such an assumption; on the contrary, the constant use of the same word, the uniform allusion to the greatness and power of the same eternal sole God, ever reappearing when we could expect it to be mentioned; all absence of mention of an intermediate agent between God and man, whose merits alone, as is alleged, can reconcile us to heaven, must be enough to convince Israelites, at least, that the view under question is anti-Jewish no more than anti-Scriptural, and, what is the same, contrary. to the truth as revealed to us from our heavenly Father; He has made Himself known to us by the mouth of many prophets, as the holy ONE of Israel and his Redeemer; as such He was ever invoked among our assemblies; and, if we at all understand the mission of the sons of Jacob, it is their vocation to uphold this great idea of the plenary power of one Creator and Redeemer, as a beacon to the other nations, that they may ultimately come and seek shelter under the same overshadowing wings of Providence, under which we have found protection from our first institution, as a people until this very hour; and with his blessing we will still continue to bear aloft the banner of our hope, inscribed with the motto of the dying Hebrew, ■’ ■■■, and in every stage of life, amid storm or sunshine, we will acknowledge none but Him, and invoke alone his name, and bow only to the great and adorable Being who alone stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth.

Let us now revert to our text: “You yourselves have seen that from heaven have I spoken with you.” Whatever doubts may have accompanied your witnessing the work of your redemption, whatever fear there may have remained that you were deceived, perhaps, by the occurrence of mere striking coincidences, without their being the especial work of Providence, must now yield to the force of conviction which the public proclamation of the law has had on your understanding. Human agency could not have reached you all at one time; and yet it is but a moment, as it were, since you came to the foot of Sinai; the day on which you had assembled has not yet waned, and behold, everlasting truths have been everlastingly fixed in your very being as Israelites. Other nations are so by the possession of one common country, or one protecting government. But you are rendered one, through the instrumentality of what you have heard; and be this mission then for ever yours, to know me only, your God, in whatever place you may be, in whatever position you may be found; and in whatever place I may permit you to mention my name, there I will come, and there I will bless you. But you must never presume to associate any thing or being in my glory; you have not felt any helping hand in Egypt save my own; therefore you shall not ask favour and protection from any one besides me, since there is no inherent power in any creature, and all existing things are so by my will; I alone know the secrets of the heart, to me alone are revealed the thoughts of all my creatures; do not therefore come to me by means of foreign aid, but at once

appeal for protection to my bounty, since this alone is all-sufficient for the whole mass of creatures, from the highest to the lowest. The truth which you have learnt this day is to abide with you for ever; this day you have as a people heard the voice of the Almighty directly speaking to your ears; the evidence of this is in your possession; your eyes saw, your ears heard; never before was such mercy vouchsafed to any people; heed not therefore any overtures which others, professing to speak in my name, may address to you; nought but a similar manifestation can gainsay what has been revealed before you; and as I change not, so be you true and faithful, unwavering and firm to the truth which cannot be changed. Do not even represent the unseen Deity by any arbitrary figure which you may imagine to represent Him to your outward senses; there is no possibility of picturing the ideal greatness of the One who pervades all with his spirit; no precious metal can hallow the unrighteous design, no skill of the sculptor can sanctify the daring rebellion against your King. This in brief is the explanation which the connexion between the verses of our text seems naturally to require; it bases the acknowledgment of the Deity as the sole sovereign upon what the people had themselves seen and heard; no other argument is appealed to, no other reason is assigned for the faith demanded of them. If, then, we are asked, in our intercourse with the world, to forsake what we have so long guarded, and to join ourselves to the masses who profess to understand the words of the Scripture better than we their first recipients; we will answer, that we have been placed as sentinels over the watchtower of religion, with the double-edged sword of revealed truth in our hands, our quiver filled by the arrows of wisdom, which are drawn from the law. We have been placed upon this custody to time without end, till the day that the Master of our life himself shall come and absolve us from our duty. This He has never yet done; and day follows on day, and year on year, and still we discover the same goodness which guided the world in the beginning; and though the fires of Sinai are now quenched, and its thunders stilled, the effect which they witnessed, the proclamation of the word, is still with us in that holy law which is treasured up in yonder ark. We only ever knew one God and one revelation. For the sake of acknowledging the one, and following the other, the waters of tribulation have often passed over our heads, and nations have leagued together to tear us from our adherence to our sacred trust. But hitherto all their efforts have been in vain, and we assemble as yet at this distant day in many a town, and many a land, to worship the Lord God of Israel, in the manner which He himself was pleased to appoint for us; and the truth, though often assailed, has never yet wanted true and undaunted defenders. Let us then instruct our children and those who are not firm in their devotion to the Lord, to love Him beyond all, and to swear unwavering fealty to the religion which He has proclaimed. There is yet no other god but He; there has arisen no saviour who can shield us from his wrath; He has acquired no attribute which was not his from the beginning: and hence we can admit of no articles of faith which we did not receive when the law was given from Sinai; whilst at the same time the are bound to adhere to all the precepts which we find it in our power to accomplish, and to abstain from whatever the will of our Father has interdicted to us. It matters not whether the deviation be gross idolatry or erroneous ideas of the nature of the Godhead; for we are enjoined in twofold things; “To make nothing as God besides the Holy One, nor to represent him under images of silver and gold.” Hence should the seduction come under whatever guise it may, we are equally bound to reject it, and to abide true, in singleness of faith and unshaken hope, to that standard of excellence which was unfurled before our fathers from the summit of Horeb, and which we have borne as the token of our allegiance ever since, though often sinning against the wisdom which was imparted to us as our heritage. And let us entreat our Father that He will

vouchsafe to render us quick in the knowledge of his word, and make us worthy to receive his renewed favour, when his servant, the son of David, shall again raise the divine banner as the signal of our freedom from earthly bondage, and our perpetual adherence to the kingdom of heaven. Amen. May 29, Sivan 4, 5606.

Chapter 47

S. Reflections on Atonement

Reflections on Atonement. A Sermon For Sabbath Teshubah, 5610.

Conscious of our guiltiness, we approach Thee, O our God and King! to throw ourselves on thy mercy, that Thou wouldst deign to blot out our iniquity and to remove our transgressions from before thy presence. Day by day hast Thou waited for our return with penitence; but we have stood afar, and would not listen to thy admonition; and we are even this day laden with sin; and whilst we crave thy pardon, do our deeds testify against us. Yet hear us, O Holy One! and let our troubles not be esteemed light before Thee, and extend to us thy helping hand, to lift us up from the depths into which we have sunk through the evil which rests like a weighty load upon us. And do Thou hear, Father! when we invoke thy aid, though we ourselves be unworthy of favour, in behalf of all thy erring children, and grant that Thou mayest lead them back unto thy mansions by gentle admonition and by paternal chastisement; but pour not out over them the fury of thy anger; for who can stand before Thee when thy wrath rebukes the world?-and why should the strangers to thy worship say that Thou hast cast off the children of thy servants, whom Thou chosest from all nations to be thine? Oh pardon, therefore, and forgive; and when our iniquities testify against us, remember thy everlasting mercies, which far exceed our guiltiness, and remove our sins, making them vanish like the misty cloud; because pardon is with Thee, and Thou willest that the guilty one should not die, but live to earn thy favour by repentance and an amended course of life. Do this, because of thy covenant with our fathers, and for the sake of thy glorious and mighty name, which dwells with us. Amen.

BRETHREN:-

It is recommended by our teachers that those who have the word of God with them should address the people on the subject of repentance on the Sabbath between the New Year and the Fast of the Atonement. In compliance, therefore, with this recommendation, which has almost become a law in Israel, I mean to lay before you this day some considerations having reference to the subject of repentance. Often as it has been discussed, in every age and every clime,-presented, as it has been, in a thousand different lights and under various diverging doctrines, some of which, if admitted, would subvert the foundation of Judaism,-yes, much as has been said of the possibility of a man’s making his peace with Heaven, there remains yet much to be urged; and whilst mankind continue to forget the laws of God, it is but proper that they should be reminded that they ought to retrieve their moral delinquency, simply because God gave them the power and the means to accomplish this task, and that a refusal to repent is an addition to their already heavy burden of iniquity.

Whatever may be said by other religions about the beauty of their doctrines, and the assuaging power they have to calm the disturbed mind and to lift it up from the slough of despondence and despair: Judaism knows no superior in these essential elements of mental purification. It is true that it enjoins duties and obligations, the neglect or transgression of which will draw down on the offender the punishment denounced in the Bible against sinners; but this does not prove that it

must therefore fail to bring peace to the inward man in a less degree than is accomplished by a system which enjoins no duties, which causes all salvation to depend on a faith in a doctrine which no one has yet correctly expounded, and which is capable of no rational and satisfactory exposition.

There may be many persons who can take up such a religion and profess to believe in its entire truth and efficacy, who fancy that in this blind yielding to an ill-defined dogma they have found peace and the assurance of a forgiveness of all their sins, and a certainty that nothing obstructs their onward march to celestial felicity, the moment that they have acquired this unnatural belief, and incorporated it with their being. But let us not blind ourselves by the appeals which such as these may address to us, that we should cast off our own religion of faith and deeds, or that it is not holier, truer, more founded in reason and Scripture a thousand fold than is anything which they can advance.

All religious systems demand an acknowledgment of a Supreme Power, to whom the creatures are responsible for their conduct. Responsibility, however, presupposes duty; for without that, we can incur no indebtedness. Now if we have duties to perform, it means that without accomplishing them we have incurred guilt, no matter how strong and earnest our faith or belief may be in the one who is the author of the system of duties. Nay, the very presupposition of justification by faith makes faith itself a duty, paramount though it be represented to all others; for if it be absolutely necessary to salvation that we believe in a certain series of doctrines, the absence of this belief will insure our condemnation. If we thus sift the idea of a justification by other means than a submission to the dictates of active religion, we shall discover that the mode of obedience to duty is changed, not, however, that the necessity thereof is removed. Consequently the differences between Judaism and other creeds is but a consideration as to the nature and amount of duties to be observed, since all are agreed in fact, if not in words, that they are requisite; and having established this much, it is only necessary to ascertain from the most reliable sources what is demanded of us in the premises. This consideration brings us at once to the records of Scripture; because all the religions of civilized men take this as a foundation, and all endeavour to prove themselves correct by arguments drawn from this source. But what is the evident sense of the Bible? Is it that mere faith is demanded?-or are duties of various kinds therein specified? Strange, however, as it may appear to those who know not the truth, there is nevertheless not a single expression in all the books of Moses which can even be tortured to mean that there exists any method whatever to obtain the divine favour, except by an obedience to the revealed words of God before we have yet transgressed them, or a return to obedience with repentance, and a thorough regret, in case we have neglected the teaching of the Lord. To oppose this with any show of argument, a flat assertion is often made that deeds are of no importance, since all men fall far short of a full measure of obedience, wherefore all are under condemnation in not accomplishing all which the law demands; whence they infer farther, that there is yet another power capable of assuming our guilt, if we place confidence, faith, or trust in his ability to relieve us from the wrath of our heavenly Father.

Many loud assertions are made in this connexion, that Judaism is a religion of forms, since it cannot assure its votaries a full pardon by anything it teaches, and that, on the contrary, the faith of our opponents is full of such assurances, and therefore better calculated to assuage the spirit in sickness and death. But the whole of this is an error.

First, deeds are of importance, or else God would not have enjoined them; He is not a capricious tyrant, to ask of us what He afterwards will not value or estimate. Consequently we must say that the performance of every duty will have its beneficial results, and be of advantage to the soul of the one who practises it.

Secondly, in admitting that all men fall far short of a full measure of obedience, we only acknowledge what the Bible already teaches, that the heart of man is prone to evil. Nevertheless, we see that God declared, in Gen. viii. 21, that He would not thenceforth curse the earth, as He had then done, for the sake of man; wherefore we are authorized to assert that, notwithstanding man's dereliction, he will not be condemned, provided only that he has faithfully and honestly observed and done all in the line of his duty that was accessible to him, according to his means and opportunities; and that even an occasional sin, or a direct contradiction to God's laws, will be leniently regarded, provided it proceed not from a rebellious spirit, and is not repeated till it becomes a habit. And thirdly, if it be at all true, or even possible that there is a power, other than our God, to assume our guilt, or, in other words, to shield us from the debt of accountability to the Deity, it follows that this power must have an independent existence, able to do something to the Creator which He could not do himself; or, in other words, a second and separate God; for in no other sense could there be an assumption of which the Lord could not or would not pardon without such an intervention.

How, now, does this contrast with the fundamental truth, not of Judaism alone, but of the entire Bible? Evidently in direct contradiction; for what is the first assertion in Genesis? "In the beginning God created." Only one creative being is represented as producing the whole,-only one will as presiding over the entire organization of matter and mind which is found in all creation. The same idea is reiterated in the Decalogue, where it is said that we shall observe the Sabbath as a sign that we acknowledge the creation of all things to have taken place in a period of definite time by the Lord God,-the same One who spoke to Abraham, "I am the Lord; who brought thee out from Ur in Chaldea,"-the same One who blessed Isaac on Mount Moriah, and appeared to Jacob in the vision at Beth El.

Again was the belief in one universal, all-pervading principle repeated, when Moses thus spoke to assembled Israel: "Hear O Israel, the Eternal Lord our God is the Lord one," meaning, is alone, solely, and absolutely without addition or division, the One who is all-powerful, and exists for ever. I know well enough that those who deny Israel's hope of salvation have carried meanings into these passages which they have not in their literal acceptation, and which would never have been imagined to exist, had it not been that new doctrines had been broached, which cunning men sought to force upon the attention of our people, by making it appear that they were in some sort of consonance, or at least not in direct conflict with our Scriptures.

How little they have succeeded in this, let our being here this day before the Lord prove to the satisfaction of the most skeptical. What has not been done to aid the scriptural proofs by the potentates of the earth! What cruelties, what briberies, what persuasions have not been resorted to, to make the wrong appear the better reason! But what has it availed all? We have rejected the idea, foreign to our faith, that the Lord is incapable of pardoning, that we must seek for another who does not exist, to screen us from the fiery arrows of Him who slays and brings to life again, in whose right hand there is salvation, and with whom dwells the eternal light; and we have

assembled here in his presence, to ask of Him that forgiveness, that pardon, that indulgence which He has promised to those who repent of their errors, and pray of Him that atonement which will render the spirit acceptable in his mansions. In what, now, does Judaism fail of comforting the soul? in giving an assurance of a renewed acceptability? In nothing, let us answer, which any other religion can legitimately impart; for since all assume that man is sinful, and that sin can only be removed by divine favour, no matter how obtained, and as there can be no evidence in the mind of any rational being that his guilt has been removed, unless each one assumes to himself an especial revelation, to which absurd length indeed many have proceeded: it follows that we have in our religion just as many elements of favour with God as any other system can possibly produce to a mind not overclouded by fanaticism or blinded by the grossest ignorance. For we too hold that man is sinful, and that he requires the divine guidance to teach him the way of truth; but we believe that this requisite knowledge has been imparted to him in the books of revelation; wherefore he has the means of uniting himself to God by acts of obedience, daily and hourly performed in the pursuit of his duty, nay, in the prosecution of his business, for every act of common honesty and fair dealing-every deed of benevolence and charity-every kind word spoken to the afflicted and sorrowing-every friendly salutation which causes pleasure to a fellow-man-all, all are acts in the fulfillment of duty, and by all and by each a man earns a portion of divine favour. For it is not the mighty acts of heroism, of a public display of an ardent faith and devotion, by which the great leaders whom the Lord raises up from time to time as the lights to their fellowmen, are distinguished, which is asked of the masses who are animated with a living soul; because they are not called upon so to serve the Lord, their calling is at the domestic fireside, in the open field, in the workshop of the artisan, the busy mart of commerce, or the other various employments with which the sons of man are busied their space on earth; and if they in each are mindful of the duty which has been prescribed to them, they will earn the favour of God, and be decreed to everlasting life, because in all their walk they trusted in Him, though no human tribunal would adjudge them to have accomplished great things, to have been felt beyond the humble roof of their domicile; for to our God, the high and the low are alike, and He alone can properly measure, weigh, and appreciate every little deed, every fleeting thought, every passing word. And should a man have been false to his mission-if he have been deceitful in his worship-rebellious in misfortune-proud in prosperity-arrogant under success, or faint-hearted under sorrows-let him have strayed ever so far from the line of duty as indicated in our religion, he is bidden not to despair of mercy, but to return from his evil way, ask of the Most High to forgive his transgressions, and wait patiently, cheerfully, to see the issue of things, in the full assurance that that only will happen which is the most conducive to his eternal welfare. Does any system of belief do more? can it actually secure a man against the recompense of his crimes at the hands of the Judge of all? who is there bold enough to assert that all sin, all transgression can be atoned for, can be completely wiped out by a faith in a redeemer? and unless it can go this whole length, of the complete eradication of every stain of sin caused even by murder, incest, and idolatry, there is no use in this newly-invented addition to the scheme of repentance; because it leaves the sinner precisely where he stands under the Mosaic dispensation. And suppose there be no exceptions, what horrid prospects do you open to a community! Men of a fanatical spirit will, as they have actually done in history, commit the grossest outrages, under a full faith of pardon through a blood that, as they allege, was shed for them; and they will thus coolly glory in crimes which make the blood curdle, and cause the hair to stand on an end. This is no exaggeration; this is no air-drawn picture, but the result of sober inquiry; the

wonder only is that transgressions are not more frequent, when you find so easy a method to disburden you from them. But our religion teaches us no such a plenary extinguishment of moral indebtedness; no such an easy riddance of responsibility for whatever we may have done. We are accountable, though repentant, and no regret can of right wipe out any consequence of our wrong-doing, which we, by our own acts, can repair. Therefore teach our wise men: “For sins between God and man the Kippur day will make an atonement; but for sins between one man and his neighbour, the Kippur day will not make an atonement, till he have satisfied his neighbour.”

Because, how can a man enter the house of God with lips burning with fervid devotion, with many words of praise and thanksgiving on his tongue, while in his house he harbours the plunder of the poor and helpless, whilst the orphan cries to Heaven for the vineyard unlawfully withheld, or the field in the possession of the powerful oppressor? In every consideration does Judaism present itself as the effort of the highest reason, as the most enlightened progress; and it assures the returning sinner of pardon and favour in no greater degree than it does the righteous who has never sinned. But when we have made a true faith in God’s mercy our own, when we are fully impressed with the conviction that all his ways are just: we shall do good because it pleases the Creator, and if we have sinned, we shall return from evil, because He counsels us to do so. In neither case, however, can we come to bargain with him for so much reward for so much obedience, or for so much pardon for so sincere a repentance.

No, brothers in Israel! in this manner would all our piety, would all our penance only be demanding a return, when perhaps, there is nothing due to us; when, perhaps, we are barely entitled to escape from some condign punishment which we have incurred under the strict rule of justice.

“But what mental satisfaction does our religion then confer?” I hear you ask. I will tell you: It teaches us that all is from the Lord, that nothing, ever so great, nothing ever so little occurs, but it has proceeded from his ordaining; that prosperity is not scattered abroad at random, without design or foresight, but with the strictest eye to the general good, although we be not able to distinguish between the undeserving and the meritorious, and not capable of seeing what connexion such a one’s success has with the whole economy of the world. So also is no evil sent without its powerful reason; it is requisite, or else it would not be. And then, again, if we examine ourselves occasionally, we shall discover that want of success, disease, sorrow, and disappointment of all sorts, are not so much providential inflictions as the result of our own folly; we rush upon danger with both our eyes open; we discard the rules of prudence; we indulge to a point far beyond the strength of our frame to sustain, and then we wonder that we are poor, disappointed, or afflicted.

Must the course of nature be suspended that we may escape the consequences of our own misdeeds, when nothing but rashness or obstinacy was the cause of our affliction? So, also, when sickness invades our home, when our body is racked by pain, our brain filled with unendurable fire, the man who knows how to lean on God, will submit without murmur, and wait with cheerful submission the moment when the decree of his restoration shall go forth. Because, is he not in the power of the same who fashioned him, body and soul, before he had yet seen the light of the world? and has not our Father many messengers to do his bidding-to bring healing and cure to the aching frame if He deem a recovery necessary? And in case it be the will of the Most High that the hand of death shall not be stayed, that the soul shall be severed from the body, and the flesh

return to the dust as it was, and the spirit go back to the Fountain whence it sprung: does not the believer know, that though he walk in the valley of the shadow of death he need not fear evil, because his God is near him to guide him with his justice and his mercy to green pastures of undying verdure, and lead him by water-brooks of unfailing streams? And this God never dies, is never wearied, and his wealth is inexhaustible; wherefore, He can always bless; He can always protect; He can always remunerate whatever faith, whatever virtue, whatever mercy, man has made his own during his existence on earth. And what more can we ask? are our deeds of any value to the Lord? do we increase his or our happiness by our virtue and piety? is not all the reward of good deeds for ourselves? can we ever do enough to repay Him for the many favours He bestows on us, without ceasing, from our coming into the world till our departure hence?

Now, brethren, this was always the firm reliance and unfailing trust of the men of Israel from the beginning; this enabled Abraham to offer his son on the altar; this nerved Isaac to be bound a willing sacrifice to his Maker; this consoled Jacob during his long and weary pilgrimage, and made him trust in God, despite of his fearful trials; thus armed, Moses went before Pharaoh, though he had fled from his wrath; thus feeling did King David acknowledge the justice of the chastisement which his sin had called down on him; and thus convinced, not to add any more examples, Daniel resolved to remain faithful to the minutest precept of his religion, though he was a captive in Nebuchadnezzar's palace, and subject to the caprice of him and other rulers. And was it not also this beautiful faith, which is willing to sacrifice all without stipulating for any reward, which upheld our fathers amidst all their trials? Yea, in the dungeon arose to them the star of hope; on the broad ocean which they traversed from servitude to slavery they were guided by the cynosure of God's law; and amidst the terrors of a violent death there whispered to them a voice which never deceives, "Well done, ye faithful, the Father of mercy has accepted you and your deeds." And shall we of the present day be less trustful in God? shall we ask for more than his word has revealed to us? And say, where is the new light which is better, the promises which are more faithful than those of the Bible? Appeal to history; search all the records, and you will find no predictions which have stood the test of ages like those of Moses, none which have not been falsified by the unceasing course of events, except it be the foretellings of the messengers whom God sent to instruct and warn his people.

And, therefore, if we have sinned, if we have, true to human nature, been faithless in our mission, then let us not abandon the path of duty which is laid before us, but let us heed the words of the prophet who says:

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"Come, let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and will heal us he hath struck, and will bind up our wound."- Hosea 6:1.

Come, says he, to every one, let us return together; let all who feel the wound of a bruised spirit, of a contrite heart, repair to the presence of God, who is ready to receive all who may return, and He will heal every bruise which his justice has struck, and bind up every wound which unerring wisdom was bound to inflict. Twice or thrice though we have sinned, though we have incurred spiritual death: still will He again and again breathe new life into us, that we may in the end stand regenerated before Him, and shine in the brilliancy of eternal life which is the reward of those who heed his call, who obey and return, because it is the voice of their Father who promises them

mercy, because they grasp that almighty Hand which is stretched forth to snatch sinners from destruction, and blesses all who trust in his mercy. Let us, then, heed the call, and live eternally, even as the Lord hath spoken. Amen.

Tishry 5th, September 21, 5610.

Chapter 48

S. Religious Education

Religious Education By the Rev. J. K. Gutheim Delivered at Cincinnati, Sabbath Tetzaveh, 5607, (27 Feb. 1847.)

Brethren- A new member has this day been added to our community; a son of Israel has, by a sacred rite, graduated as Bar Mitzvah. He has attained the age which, from time immemorial, was considered the period of religions maturity, and is henceforward amenable to the laws and ordinances of our Holy Religion.

Simple and unostentatious as the manner is in which this act is performed, it nevertheless constitutes an epoch in our life; and the day on which we have been, for the first time, called up to the Torah to bless the Lord for the inestimable boon which He has bestowed on us in the Revelation of his Holy Word-that day is written, with indelible characters, on the tablets of our heart. Who is there among us that does not revert, with feelings of deep emotion, to that hallowed hour when he was permitted to read the Revealed Word of the living God to an assembled congregation? that does not cherish a fond remembrance of the heartfelt congratulations of beloved parents, relatives, and friends, who in their care and solicitude, were anxious to make that day one of holy rejoicing? Years may have passed between the day, when with a bright eye we gazed into an unclouded future, and the present one that recalls it to our memory,-years may have intervened, marked by trials and sufferings, years of disappointment, sorrow, and trouble; the boy may have grown up to a man; time and the struggle of life may have left their impress on the furrowed brow; the hands that then blessed us may have mouldered in the grave; the kind and loving souls that then watched over us, and prayed for us, may have closed their career on earth and returned to their eternal home; yet amidst all the changes that have taken place within or without us, the day of our Bar Mitzvah shines forth like a luminous point, and refreshes our heart with sacred recollections of the past. With a holy delight we dwell on the innocent pursuits of our boyhood’s career; with fond regret we look back to the dear home of our childhood, and to the school where our intellectual faculties were cultivated and the principles of our holy religion instilled into our mind. Such are the reminiscences which the day of our Bar Mitzvah awakens in our bosom, and of which we cannot fail to be forcibly struck whenever we witness this religious act. And purer still, holier still will be this feeling, if in an advanced age we can look back to that important day over a series of well-spent years; if our retrospect is marred by no frowning prominence that is calculated to awaken pangs of compunction in our breast; if we can lay the hand on our heart and say to ourselves, “Ever since I acted as a free and responsible agent, I have endeavoured to shun vice and to practise virtue, I have been true to my religion, true to my God, ‘who has implanted in me eternal life.’”

If such, my brethren, are the reflections to which a day like this give rise, ought you not to make it your special study, so to train your children, that when they have become responsible for their acts, they are also capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, true and false? must it not be your highest aim so to equip them for their journey through life, that in their intercourse with the

world they may be able to draw from the store of wholesome knowledge, with which they have been providentially provided, and to carry out those sound principles, which, at an early age, were inculcated into their hearts? For the happiness or misery of your children, in after life, will mainly depend on the education they have received in their youth. To speak, therefore, on education, let us devote the present hour. Let us examine I. How ought we to educate our children?

II. For what purpose ought we to educate them? In answering these two questions, I have selected my text from one of the compositions of the Royal Philosopher, Proverbs 22:6.

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“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

I. The necessity of providing our youth with a good education must be manifest to every one, to the educated as well as to the uneducated. To the educated-for these cannot be but sensible of the manifold advantages they themselves derive from it; and to the uneducated-for these must be keenly alive to that position of intellectual inferiority, in which a neglected or defective education has left them. Both these classes of society will, therefore, and must agree, that by the proper cultivation, alone, of those excellent faculties, with which an all-wise God has endowed us, will man occupy that exalted rank in the scale of created beings assigned him by his Creator. The success and prosperity in the various walks of life, the temporal and eternal happiness, can only be fully realized by means of a wholesome, sound, and judicious education. The knowledge imparted to the youthful mind shines in refulgent lustre throughout our career on earth, and is chiefly instrumental in the formation of our character, the development of our sentiments, and the consolidation of our views. However much our intercourse with the world, and the peculiar circumstances in which we may be placed tend to modify our way of thinking and acting, the impressions received in our youth will cling to the mind, and can never be totally effaced.

“To train, therefore, the child in the way he should go,” is a duty that must be recognised by all who are solicitous to insure the well-being of their children. Indeed it is an obligation that equals in its importance the intensity of the love which parents bear towards their offspring. But how shall this education be conducted? How far shall it extend? What shall it embrace? What shall it exclude? These are questions which must naturally suggest themselves to the anxious parent. Is it enough to qualify our youth for their future vocation in life? Is it enough to let them pass through a course of study that will enrich their minds with the ample stores of learning and knowledge that are at our command-to adorn them with all the accomplishments our enlightened age affords and requires-to elicit their mental powers, and urge them on to the pinnacle of art and science? Necessary and beneficial as all this may be, education must not stop here. We must not only educate the mind, but also the heart. No anomaly must be allowed to exist between the intellectual and moral parts of our nature. The development of both must progress in the same ratio; and whilst our attention is bestowed on the capacities of the mind, the latent germs of morality that are slumbering in the heart must be roused, that they may grow and blossom and bear ennobling fruit.

It is the property of a good education to radiate on every side, to take deep root in the heart as well as in the mind. Care must, therefore, be taken not as to how much it should exclude, but how much it should embrace; at the table of education the food must not be stinted, nor the number and claims of the guests be limited. We must endeavour to provide education, wholesome,

appropriate, extensive, fitted for the real wants of all sections of our community in this free country. We must have in view not the past but the present, and more truly the future; he who labours for the present only loses his labour; whilst he is working, the present slips from under his hands. We have to see in the child the future man, and our aim must be to make him master, not of his faculties only, but also of his passions; to give him knowledge, and with knowledge virtue, so that in his future capacity of husband, parent and citizen, in every path in which he may hereafter have to walk, education may render the individual good and happy, and society prosperous and permanent. The first, best and most effective educators are the parents themselves. In the discharge of your duty you must be guided by love and earnestness, and act with care and caution, discretion and self-command. You must educate your children by word and example. There are no nicer judges, no keener listeners and observers of your words and actions than your children. And whereas man, before his reasoning faculties are fully developed, is, emphatically, an imitative creature, it cannot fail that your children, with whom you are in constant intercourse, and who look up to you for protection, counsel, and the solution of many a problem that presents itself to their untutored minds,-it cannot fail that they will readily adopt our views, and copy your habits. It becomes, therefore, necessary, to show them a good example; to teach them, practically, every virtue which humanity prescribes and religion inculcates; to practise before their eyes deeds of benevolence, charity, fidelity, modesty, honesty and truth, and thus leave nothing but good impressions on their minds. There is a saying of the wise king, “The just man walks in his integrity; his children are happy after him.”-(Proverbs 25:7.) The whole life of the just is an illustration of his pious feelings and noble principles; his children will observe him, will imitate him, will follow his precepts, and tread in his footsteps, and will therefore be happy after him. A principal part of education is assigned to the teacher; and in order to render his efforts effective, it is absolutely necessary that harmony should exist between school and house, teacher and parents. Nothing can be more detrimental to a good education than doubts entertained on the competency and honesty of the teacher on the part of the parents, and expressed in the presence of their children. The fostering of a refractory spirit in the latter, a great obstacle for the teacher in the execution of his arduous duties, is the immediate result. Confidence is the powerful talisman, which at all times should he, religiously preserved. Teacher and parents have to assist each other; shoulder to shoulder they must assiduously and untiringly work for the welfare of the rising generation entrusted to their care. The best instruction will fail, if parents do not act in a corresponding spirit; the moral structure will never be brought to perfection, If that part which has caused so much care and trouble in rearing at school, is carelessly pulled down at home. If children, as the saying is, are a blessing of Heaven, the parents should act towards them in such a manner that they in reality may prove a blessing to them and to mankind; that in their future career through life we may point to them, exclaiming:■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ “Blessed he who begat such, blessed he who educated them.”

II.

“But for what purpose shall you educate your children?” This, our second question, is easily answered. They must be educated for the purpose of becoming good Israelites, which name signifies champions in the cause of God. This is the highest and noblest aim we must endeavour to accomplish.

It is a case of very frequent occurrence, that parents who are most careful in providing for their children an education that makes them capable, in a worldly point of view, of occupying with honour any station in life, utterly lose sight of their spiritual welfare, by withholding from them a proper knowledge of the tenets of our holy religion. The divine commandments ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ "Thou shalt inculcate these laws to thy children," and ■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ "You shall teach them to your children," are disregarded, and hence the religious indifference that pervades our community. More especially, however, is this culpable neglect displayed with regard to females, whose defective religious instruction leaves them almost in entire ignorance of the principal features of our creed. To make, therefore, education subservient to the grand purpose of training good Israelites, religion must form its basis and its keystone, and, thus constituted, it must not be confined to one portion of our community, but must embrace every class and both sexes. Being the half of human society, the half of our life-in some cases more than half-in the domestic, in the youthful portion of our existence, woman claims a larger share than man. The domestic circle is her special domain. What is the characterizing, creative, stimulating, directing portion of each man's little history, but the span between the cradle and maturity? And this is in the hands of woman. It is in these softest years that the gentlest hand makes the most lasting impression; it is in these holiest times that the purest seeds are scattered,-the truest antidotes against the pains of after years and the corruptions of a more mature existence. No education descends more thoroughly into the whole nature of man. But to educate, the educator herself must first be educated. Not charity only, but knowledge, but wisdom, but virtue, but religion, must begin at home. It is, therefore, necessary that to these guardians and consolers of humanity, power, love and faith should be early given; the power of knowledge, that not unsuccessfully they may know when to warn for, to detect, to expose, and to conquer evil; the persuasion of love, that they may have those balms more sweetening than that of the poet, which take away all its bitterness from the cup of life; the faith of our divine religion, that they may direct our gaze to the regions of eternity. If we would really teach men, our duty is of a necessity first to teach women. No one who has reflected on the organization of society, but will at once see this; he will recognise in a moment how deeply, how beautifully, how wisely the whole is interwoven; the character of woman determining her influence, her influence determining the whole frame of society, and her character the product of her education, as that again is the result of her organization and teaching.

If we look around us and perceive the prejudices that are yet entertained against our race by other nations, we must become still more alive to the necessity of educating the growing generation in such a manner that they may form a sterling clsss of men who, by their knowledge, pre-eminence, worth, and their love and zeal for the ancient religion of their fathers, will conquer those degrading relics of a barbarous age; who, as "champions in the cause of God," will vindicate the excellence of our sacred creed, and cause our traducers to exclaim, as in the days of yore, "Truly this is a wise and understanding people!" It is for this great purpose that you must educate your children, and they will grow up to be your pride and joy, and secure their own lasting benefit.

Parents!-the weal or wo of your children lies in your hand; your natural impulse will decide for the former. But mistake not the means by which their happiness can be effected. Act towards them that they may have no reason to exclaim over your graves, "They have spoiled me! they have been the cause of an ill-spent life!" but that they may cherish your memory throughout their lives with the deepest feelings of affection and gratitude in the innermost core of their hearts. Train them

up by words and example in the way they should walk, and when they are old they will not depart from it.-May our Heavenly Father, in his unbounded love for all his children, bless our exertions; may He enlighten our minds to comprehend his holy law; may he incline our hearts to follow its precepts in spirit and truth, and may He be gracious unto us now, and for ever. Amen.

Chapter 49

S. Rev. Mr. Rosenfeld's Address

Rev. Mr. Rosenfeld’s Address At Charleston

Note.-We have received the subjoined Address, delivered by the Rev. Jacob Rosenfeld, at the laying of the corner stone of the new Synagogue at Charleston, as noticed in our last; and now have the gratification of spreading the same before our readers.

Brethren,

We have assembled here this day for a very solemn and holy purpose, viz.: to lay the corner stone of a building to be erected and dedicated to the Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We have congregated to erect the pillar which is to be the house of God, where the remnant of Israel shall worship Him, as did our ancestors of old. It is a solemn occasion, my brethren, of such great importance to us, that I cannot omit making few remarks relative to it. I said, of great importance, because it is calculated to establish our congregation on a firm and lasting basis; and, more so, because it will be the means of re-establishing that ancient and genuine mode of worship which has ever constituted an infrangible bond of unity among the descendants of Jacob. The Lord, although He declared that He will hear our prayers, in whatever place we may offer them, found it necessary that Israel should erect Him a sanctuary, in order to establish a regular mode of worship. Exodus 38:5 :-■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ “And they shall make unto me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them.”

After the departure of our ancestors from Egypt, where they had lived in the midst of idolatry, and had no true conception of the invisible Author of their deliverance, the Lord promised them, “to send his angel before them to guard them in their way.” The chosen people of God were not sufficiently purified from idolatry as to make it desirable that His divine presence should dwell among them. But after having had so many proofs of the greatness and unbounded goodness of God, in the miracles wrought before their eyes; and after they were instructed in the sublime tenets of our holy Law, and they began to have a better conception of the Most High, and His divine attributes, and appreciate His goodness: then did He command them to build a Tabernacle.■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ “And they shall make unto Me a sanctuary.” My brethren, behold the extraordinary condescension of the Almighty! He whom the universe cannot contain, whose glory filleth the heaven, and whose footstool is the earth,-He, the great “I AM,” commanded frail mortals to build a dwelling-place, that He might rest among His chosen people. Oh, how exceedingly gracious did the Lord act towards our ancestors! how gloriously did He accomplish His promise to Abraham, in thus manifesting His affection for his descendants, by putting it in their power to become a holy nation, and causing His divine majesty to dwell among them. But, my brethren, not the building of wood and stone was to be the sanctuary of God; not the tabernacle made by human hands was to constitute His dwellingplace among them. No, that was only an auxiliary to the real sanctuary, the human heart, that is the real abode of God: that is the real sanctuary which the Lord desired Israel to erect, that He might dwell within them. And now, my friends, in erecting this building before us, we have the same object in view. Here His praises

shall be sung, and our thanks and supplications ascend to the throne of the Most High. This house is designed to be a house of worship for the remnant of Israel; there to worship Him as in the days of yore, in the holy tongue, in which He revealed His divine will to His servants the prophets. A house where the children of the covenant shall hear His holy law expounded in purity, and where His divine presence shall promote union among His people. A house where you, my brethren, who were sufferers by the division of your former congregation, will become reconciled to those who have wronged you, throw the unhappy past into oblivion, and pray to God to forgive them. In short, in this house you shall preserve the mode of worship established by our ancient sages, untouched; and no reformer shall dare attempt to overstep its landmarks. Brethren, the stone which we are about laying, whereupon this Synagogue is to be erected, is, in fact, the “stone which the builders have rejected.” Orthodoxy is its name! True orthodoxy shall be the foundation of this place, dedicated to the service of the Lord by the remnant of His people. True adherence to our holy religion in its ancient form shall be our motto and guide, while within its sacred walls we supplicate God’s mercy and forgiveness, and prostrate ourselves before Him in the dust. Orthodoxy shall be taught here in its true spirit, unsullied by its abuses, to guide us while abroad, mingling with the world in our daily avocations. In short, the stone which has been scornfully rejected, shall become the corner stone of true Judaism, shining resplendently throughout our happy country, and future generations will bless the names of those who were zealous in this sacred cause.

Several of our pious brethren who were devoted to our holy religion have not survived the unhappy contest; their departed souls are, perhaps, hovering around us, in heavenly bliss, at this solemn moment. May they find rest in their heavenly abode, and may their children not forsake the true path which they have trodden before them. Many are there in our midst whose hoary locks and dim eyes betray that their sand of life has nearly run out; perhaps, soon, and they will have to appear before the throne of judgment. Let us pray for the prolongation of their lives among us, that they may see the completion of this building, and worship therein Him, by whose name it shall be called, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I conclude, my brethren, in the fervent hope, that you will all contribute your mite towards the speedy completion of this Synagogue, that the Lord may rest in our midst and bless us. Amen.

Almighty God, who art the essence of truth and righteousness, how great are thy mercies which Thou dost extend to the children of the dust, and how tenderly dost Thou watch over them and their actions. Oh, Lord, insignificant as our good deeds may be, when compared to thy indescribable goodness towards us, Thou art always willing to reward us for them in thy abundant grace. And if we, in the pride of our heart transgress against Thee, and violate thy holy law: Thou, oh Father! destroyest not, but awaitest our repentance; yet even if Thou chastisest thy sinning children, we perceive in it thy abundant goodness, for it only tends to purify us, frail and perishable as we are, from sin and wickedness, that we might return to Thee in repentance. Thus, Oh Lord, didst Thou chastise our ancestors, and didst scatter them over the face of the earth, in order that they should become purified of sin in the furnace of tribulation, and that the iron rod of fanaticism should test their faith, and cause them to cleave to Thee, and thy holy law, which they had violated. Oh, merciful Father! do Thou act towards us according to thy indescribable goodness, and send us thy divine blessing towards the erection of this house, which shall be called by thy holy and blessed name. Thou knowest we are bereft of our country, and we must sing praises in a strange land; we have now no Jerusalem, no temple, no high priest, and no burnt offering for thy

worship. But, oh Lord! Thou despisest not a repentant heart, therefore wilt Thou hear our prayers which we will offer up to Thee within the walls of the house, to be erected on this foundation. Look down favourably upon us, and this our work, and grant, we beseech Thee, that all of us may see its completion, and worship Thee therein with devotion and faith. Merciful God! our hearts overflow with gratitude, that Thou hast thus far favoured our undertaking, and we pray Thee, not to withdraw thy divine assistance from us. Bless, oh Lord! our venerable brother, who is laying this corner stone; mayest Thou prolong his life, that he enjoy the fruit of his noble exertion, and pious zeal in this holy cause. Bless, oh God, this congregation, with peace, unity, and prosperity. Bless our beloved city and fellow-citizens; our beloved country, and all those who contribute to its welfare. Bless the workmen of this house, and all those who contribute to its erection. Thou our God and Father, in Thee we put our trust, Thou art our only hope and salvation! Amen.

Chapter 50

S. Sabbath Nachamu

Sabbath Nachamu A Sermon delivered in the Shaar Hashamayim, of New York, by Rabbi Lilienthal, Dr. Ph.

Thine, O Lord, are greatness and power, praise, victory, and majesty; and as thy name is now glorified and sanctified amongst us thy people Israel, so will it one day be glorified, praised, acknowledged, and adored by all the children of men. This is our joy in our faith; this is our pride in the knowledge of Thee which thy religion has given us; this is our consolation in the days of our sorrow and affliction, and our hope when they are ended; and this is the sublime idea connected with the festivity of this day's Sabbath. O do Thou grant in thy mercy, O our Father! that we may not be compelled to ask in the anxiety of our spirit, ■■ ■■■ ■■, "How long yet, O Lord?" But may it be thy will to fulfil the words of promise which Thou hast spoken, that thy sanctuary shall be a sanctuary for all the nations, when all mankind shall praise Thee with one voice, with one heart, and with one mind, Thee, our Father, our Lord, and our King.-Amen. Amen.

Beloved Congregation,-

What is the "Sabbath of Consolation," ■■■ ■■■■, which we celebrate to-day? Some one will answer, "A good Sabbath." True. But what idea is connected with it? what is the meaning of the term itself? Ask the large majority of Jews, and their only answer will be, "Our parents and grandfathers called it so;" and they merely follow the example of their pious ancestors, without knowing any reason for so doing. Others, who are better instructed, answer: "This Sabbath is called the Sabbath of Consolation, because the Lord will have again mercy on Zion, his holy city, restore it to its former splendour, and the mourning of the third of Tishry, of the tenth of Tebeth, of the seventeenth of Tamuz, and of the ninth of Ab shall then cease." Though this answer is correct in every particular, there is, nevertheless, a third party who will exclaim: "What do you want with your Zion, and what with your Jewish state? we live here so happily and contentedly, we enjoy so much liberty, have so many privileges, that we do not feel any desire for a return to Jerusalem; and truly if it were not for the fast of the ninth of Ab, nobody would think any more of Jerusalem, and all would be forgotten." Am I not correct in my statement? You, yourselves, brethren, have had to listen to such words; and is not, then, this picture of Israel a true one? and is not Israel torn into factions? There are some who live as Jews, have a Jewish heart, and would not for any consideration live in another manner; but do they know why they are Jews? In what consists the glory of the Jewish religion? in what the pre-eminent sublimity of the Jewish confession of faith? By no means; they go to the Synagogue, they keep their house and their table in accordance with the law, they give away their money in charity; but this is all which is comprised in their Judaism; and, therefore, do we witness so much apathy in their conduct; therefore do we discover so little energy, so little desire for the accomplishment of any great and glorious deed. Another party consists of those who do not care the least for the whole Jewish religion; for religion is the last idea that has any interest for them; business, business, and only business, is the rallying cry of their life, and a higher and nobler thought is not known, not even perceived by them, and only becomes

an object of derision, if others should be bold enough to express it in their presence. To counteract such carelessness and such frivolity as just described, were the festivals instituted, and among them the day we now celebrate. They are intended to bring before our view the greatness of our faith, the glory of our destiny, and the eternal truth of the divine promises, in order that we may be edified through them, and be strengthened and inspired with love for our religion, and to feel and to labour for its preservation and diffusion among us. The “Sabbath of Consolation” brings before our mind the idea and the importance of the kingdom of the Messiah, the kingdom in which the Jews shall be rewarded by a state of honour and glory, for all their sufferings and trials, in which the truth of our faith shall be acknowledged and accepted by all the world; in which there shall not be any more a Synagogue or a Church, but in which all nations shall call aloud with one voice: “Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Verily, this is a word of consolation, a Sabbath of Consolation for all who understand the mourning and exile of Israel. That this word may penetrate deeply into your heart, inspire your mind, and strengthen your faith, let us institute an inquiry into the following points:

What is the mourning of Israel?

What is the consolation of Israel? and What ideas ought this consolation to awaken in us? Our text will be found in this day’s Haphtorah, Isaiah 40:9-11.

“O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”-And may the Lord grant a speedy fulfillment, even according to his blessed word, to this joyful announcement.-Amen.

I.

Why, brethren, were the Israelites chosen by the Lord in preference to all other nations? why did the Lord deliver the sons of Jacob with an outstretched arm from Egyptian bondage, and tell them: “I bore you on eagle’s wings, and brought you to me?” For no other reason than to teach them the great doctrine: “There is a God, One and Alone, a spiritual, a holy, an eternal, and a perfect Being; He is the Lord, and there is no one else besides Him;” in order to give to them a moral code, the basis of which is, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” and “thy neighbour” comprises every one, whatever be his creed-his station; for every one who has the image of God stamped on his face, is a child of God, and He is the good and gracious Parent of all; a code, which teaches us as one of its distinguishing features,[redacted] “The pious of all creeds shall participate in the glory of everlasting happiness.” In this manner were revealed at that time those heavenly truths which are contained in our law; in this manner was at that time proclaimed on earth the law of love and toleration, and set up as the goal which mankind have to reach in order to attain their highest perfection. And what was the destiny of Israel after this law was revealed and promulgated to them? The answer we have in the words of Scripture: “This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt

therefore keep and do them with all thine heart and with all thy soul. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day, to be his peculiar people, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments." This is Israel's destiny, to keep as a sacred trust the truths which we have learned in the Shemang concerning the One God, the ■■■■ whom we adore, to be the bearers thereof through all ages and times, in order to unite all nations ultimately under the standard of our faith, that they may be induced to accept the doctrine of the Torah, and may acknowledge with us, that "the Lord is ONE and his name is ONE."

It is indeed a great and holy destiny, and he who understands it clearly, will say with David: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot; the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." Alas! that so few understand it; alas! that the multitude should say in their folly: "What difference does it make whether a man belong to this or that religion? there are good and honest persons among all persuasions." But I ask them, "Does it not produce a difference in your own life whether you be deemed honest and true, or be considered in a false light and wrongfully judged?" O well do you know how deeply calumny wounds you; how much mischief is daily caused by false reports and lying tongues; but how much more should you be concerned to be correctly judged, where this concerns the eternal truths of Heaven, and where the happiness and future well-being of mankind are at stake! How many millions have the heathen murdered, and murder to this very day, as sacrifices to their idols of gold and silver, which they make unto themselves and adore? Yea, at this very day the women of India take new-born infants, carry them up into a mountain, and dash them to pieces on a rock, as an acceptable offering to the sun.

How many thousands of men have not Christians sacrificed on the altar of their deity! How many did there not fall during the crusades, when the watchword was, "Before we conquer the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, let us extirpate every one who is not a true believer in Christianity;" and thus thousands were massacred and destroyed in honour of their cross! How many thousands suffered death by the hands of the Spanish Inquisition, on the rack, on the gibbet, or at the burning stake, because they would not believe that the Roman pontiff's power was of divine appointment! Eight hundred thousand Jews had to leave Spain; they were driven forth mercilessly into exile, without knowing whither to direct their steps, and a majority perished on the road before they obtained a place of refuge; and everywhere could be witnessed the horrid acts of reeking auto-da-fes, where they burned alive men and women in honour of their god.

How many hundred thousands fell during the thirty years' war, when European nations quarreled about the comparative superiority of the Catholic and Protestant creeds? how many fields were then laid waste? how many cities were rendered desolate? how many wealthy and opulent citizens were reduced to poverty, and driven from their homes, in the useless contest, to prove by the sword the unmeaning doctrine of the spiritual or actual presence of their deity in the bread and wine which are the sacrifice of their church? O when you reflect on these terrible sacrifices, brought to various systems of error, can you still believe that it matters not whether one believes in the truth or not? On the contrary, you will have to acknowledge that it is a holy object, a great destiny, which the Israelitish people has to accomplish; it is to liberate nations from their idle and erroneous thoughts, and to bring them back to the simple and only Truth of the Existence of One God, from which mankind have strayed in the process of time. O 'tis this idea which fills with heavenly joys the heart of the philanthropist, which inspires the Hebrew's breast with gratitude and

love, so that he falls down in the dust before God, his Father and his Only Redeemer, exclaiming with Jacob: “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou halt showed unto thy servant.”

Yes, we are blessed, in having been constituted the receivers of the truth; and thrice happy, that it is our duty to proclaim it aloud before all the world. But, brethren, has Israel met with worldly prosperity in the pursuit of its destiny? Has it been thus far successful, as a nation, whilst proclaiming the truth? Behold, and see, doubt arising in our mind, and sorrow seizing on our innermost soul; for what has Israel not had to suffer for its faith, and for the principle of its holy creed? Has Israel not been excluded, during eighteen hundred long years, from all rights of man, all benefits of civilization? been persecuted, and tortured, and banished, as though its faith were an injury to mankind? Have we not been debarred of every sympathy, as though we were not men, and children of the same heavenly Father, who created all, and only because we adored God as one and undivided, and would not believe in the trinity, which the Christians teach? Did we not ourselves, we who are here assembled this day, quit our homes, our parents, our kin, and our friends, because we are Jews, and would only live as Jews, which privilege was denied to us in our native land? And then, have we as a nation attained our aim? Do we know why we have had to suffer and bear all this? Is the God of the Jews, is the holy Torah acknowledged? or are they cast aside, equally as we are the rejected of mankind? Do not other creeds flourish more luxuriantly and triumphantly than our faith? O it makes the tears start from their fountain, the bleeding heart aches at this reflection in sorrow and anguish, and cries out in the bitterness of despair, ■■ ■■■ ■■ “How long yet, O Lord?”

II. But hear the words of the, Lord, ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, O Jerusalem that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice in strength, lift it up, and be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.” Is not Christianity, spread though it is over the whole globe, divided into numerous sects? Do we not see, both here and on the eastern continent, daily new divisions arising, with new opinions, thus proving clearly that men do not feel satisfied within the limits of the ancient landmarks, that they perceive here and there an error and a falsehood, which cannot stand the scrutiny of an investigating mind, and they lay thus aside one opinion after the other, to approach nearer and nearer unto the truth, to ascend the ladder of truth, on the top of which our father Jacob already saw the only one and true God? Let us see farther, whether Christianity has fulfilled its promises or not. It professes that the founder of the Christian religion came into the world to raise mankind from their fallen state of sin and corruption, and to destroy all sin with his blood. But has not sin, up to this very hour, universal sway, and drags along its victims, as of old, to destruction: in the words of the Scriptures, ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ “The desire of the heart of man is evil from his youth?” It promised to bring about a kingdom of love and peace; but how many nations have been immolated on its altars? How many wars have been waged in its behalf? and how, under its rule, is the state of human society undermined in old and decrepit Europe, foreboding daily, terrible catastrophes and furious revolutions? No, Christianity cannot be the ultimate religion of mankind; its only destiny is to destroy the idols of heathenism, to bestow on the world at large the beneficent idea of a spiritual Deity, and to end at length its separate existence, by lapsing into the Mosaic revelation. This is the consolation shadowed forth by this Sabbath: this is the joy and the hope of the festival of this day,

and this hope will be accomplished in the victory and splendour of the truth; for it is the word of God, “and the word of our God will stand for ever.” Has not every word which the Lord has promised in his holy book, the Torah, been accomplished? God said to Abraham: “I will give this land to thy seed;” and Israel obtained possession of it, and even in our own day, all nations regard it as the inheritance of Jacob, and as the land of Israel: as the residence of God, whence the truth shall emanate unto all the world. God threatened us with heavy curses, which should overtake and reach us, even unto the destruction of our state, in case of our disobedience; and has not this prophecy been literally fulfilled in every particular? Has Israel not drained the cup of bitterness and of suffering to the very dregs? Can it then be possible, that the words of joy, and the promised blessings, shall not meet their ultimate accomplishment?

O my brethren, even Bileam already exclaimed, “God is not a man, that he should lie; or a son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it; or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” No, the words of the prophets will prove their truth, in being fulfilled; and what Isaiah promised will become accomplished: “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear;” and fulfilled shall be also the words of Zephaniah: “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent;” also the promises of Zachariah: “And many nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day, and they shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee;” also the other words of Isaiah: “And I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in mine house of prayer; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people;” and it shall also be accomplished what the royal Psalmist sang: “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.” But let us not in the mean time grow faint-hearted at the slowness of the fulfillment. It is the will of Providence, that mankind shall, from their own free will, laboriously toil upward to that height, whereon the Lord has placed us by his revelation. And already is the night waning, and the dawn of approaching day grows brighter and brighter; and the time will come, when all nations shall exclaim, “The Israelites are the people of the Lord, and we acted wrongfully towards them; let us therefore acknowledge the injustice of which we have been guilty, and let us join the kingdom of love and truth.” Do you now, brethren, understand the joy foreshadowed by the festival which we celebrate this day? Do you hear in your soul the joyful news of such a consolation? Do you know which is Israel’s pride and glory? which is Israel’s joy and victory? O truly, Israel’s victory is the triumph of truth, and it will surely come to pass.

III.

But, brethren, since such is the task assigned to us, if such be the nature of the promises which we have received, let us endeavour to trace what we have to do, and how we can best accomplish the duty incumbent on us.

Above all, it is obligatory on you to do the utmost for the glory of our faith, our blessed and beatifying religion. Be not cold and indifferent when your religion is the topic of conversation; be not careless and uninterested when any work is to be done in its behalf; do not let your own private grievances, pitiful bickerings, and narrow views of public policy, be mixed up whenever your actions concern the interests of your religion, by which you would risk your own sanctification on

earth, and the hopes of eternal blessedness in heaven. Labour, purify, and sanctify yourselves, that the faith of your fathers may flourish, that your children may be brought up as Jews, that they may become trustworthy guardians of the inheritance of Jacob, to deliver it pure and undefiled to those who will arise after them; so that the words may be fulfilled which the Lord spoke through Jeremiah: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, which my covenant they brake; but this shall be the covenant: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” And in the same degree that you are bound to be great and glorious in acts relating to your faith, you are also bound to be eminently good in your daily intercourse with the world at large, and not allow yourselves to be excelled in acts of goodness towards all men. The love of a Jew should not be confined to his brothers in faith; the heart of the Jew should not beat with emotion only for those in his own circle, nor should the beneficence of the Jew know of any boundaries. As his destiny is to benefit the whole world, so ought his love, his friendship, and his beneficence, be extended to every son of man. Where something great is to be achieved, there should the name of the Jew adorn the page which is to record it; where the universal good can be promoted, there should the Jew take the lead. In this manner can we sanctify the name of the Holy One, which is to be glorified through us; and thus will be fulfilled the word of the Lord, which says: “Keep ye judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.” O that this might be soon the will of the Lord, our Father in heaven. Amen. Amen.

S. Sermon by Rev. Marks

Sermon By The Rev. D. W. Marks, At London, On The Sabbath Nahamoo.

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"Thus with the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him: I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the doors shall not be closed. I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and rend asunder the bars of iron."- Isaiah 65:1-2.

We devoted the last Sabbath's discourse to the misfortunes of Israel, so clearly predicted by the prophet Isaiah, which broke upon our fathers in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. The text we have selected for this day is also from the book of the same prophet, who not only foresaw the time when the Babylonish captivity would return, but wrote down the very name of the Persian king who would conquer Babylon and restore Israel, at least one hundred years before the monarch was born. Had this prophecy, at the time it fell from the inspired messenger of God, been made known to the Babylonians, they would unquestionably have treated it as improbable, and would have regarded it with unbelief and indifference. If ever there was a city that seemed to bid defiance to any predictions of its fall, that city was Babylon. Well might it have been called in those days impregnable, surrounded as it was by walls above three hundred feet in height, eighty feet in breadth, and, by the lowest computation, forty-eight miles in compass. It had a hundred brazen gates, and immense embankments to restrain the Euphrates, which ran through the midst of the city. It abounded also in every resource for sustaining a long siege; it possessed many fertile fields, and had within its walls provision for twenty years. The prophet bears evidence to its great importance, and calls it "The pride of kingdoms, the beauty and the excellency of the Chaldees." So confident was she in her own strength that she is represented as saying, "I shall be mistress for ever." "I am, and there is none besides me. I shall never sit as a widow; I shall never know the loss of my children." Yet from a nation so mighty, who would hold with an iron grasp the people whom they had conquered and enslaved, God had promised to deliver Israel, at the end of seventy years. It is in reference to this promise, that Isaiah addresses to his brethren the cheering words in the fortieth chapter of his book: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, oh my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and proclaim unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins." The chapter from which I now quote is read to-day as a Haphtorah in all our Synagogues, to remind us of the never-failing goodness of God, and to teach us to receive with gratitude the consolation offered to us, as well as to rely upon the future favour which our heavenly Father has promised to extend to us. This Sabbath coming immediately after the fast, is called ■■■ ■■■■ "The Sabbath of Comfort;" and was for a long time observed with great rejoicings among the Israelites. The rest of the month of Ab is also, from that day, denominated ■■■■ ■■ or "The cheering part of the

month of Ab."

When, brethren, we call to mind the prophetic words embodied in our text, when we unclasp the volume of history, and read how in every particular they have been realized, must not our hearts be lifted up in gratitude and love to that almighty Sovereign, who has been to us a Father and a Guide? and must we not adore the providence of Him who has kept us as the apple of the eye, and who has not permitted us to be consumed, though the bush in which we have been placed has been every where blazing around us? The marvellous manner in which the predictions of the prophetical books have been fulfilled, should also strengthen our faith in the holy Scriptures, and should induce us to continue our trust in God for the accomplishment of all his great purposes, and for the future glory of Israel. As it is our object this day to consider the doctrine of the restoration, an essential part of the Jewish belief: let us endeavour to view our subject by the light of Scripture and of reason; apart from the enthusiasm and speculation with which it has very frequently been considered. It will readily be admitted that the history of Israel differs, in many respects, very widely from that of other people. Whoever reads our annals, and compares facts, must arrive at the conclusion that there are circumstances connected with our preservation and our identity, for which it is not possible to account in an ordinary way. The powerful nations of antiquity which oppressed Israel are no more, and we, the victims of their persecutions, still remain, no longer certainly a nation, but in the full possession of our religion and identity.

Amongst all the Eastern monarchs, Persia alone showed mercy to Israel; although the successors of Cyrus were haughty, voluptuous, and despotic, yet did they always act kindly to Israel; and Persia alone, of all the ancient Eastern monarchies, remains to this day. Here we have an undoubted fact; let others account for it as they may, we, as Israelites, can only regard it as a miracle of God, and as a remarkable accomplishment of prophecy. Wonderful indeed has been the preservation of Israel; but the wonders are less surprising, and less multiplied, when we admit God as their Author, than when we ascribe them to the ordinary course of events. On the one hand, we attribute to God a miracle consistent with his greatness and his holy word; on the other hand, we lay upon chance the necessity of performing an uninterrupted series of miracles.

Let us ask, were there such places as Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria? was there such a kingdom as Judea? Did the Israelites perform any part in the revolutions of these empires, and are there yet upon the earth any traces of the Jewish people? Taking for granted the replies that must necessarily be given; we may farther ask, whether Israel has not been placed in scenes different to those which have at any other time been exhibited to the world, and whether some extraordinary influence has not been apparent in conducting the steps and wielding the destinies of this people? Look at Israel under the dominion of the Pharaohs, at the close of the appointed period, when God had raised up Moses to accomplish the promised deliverance of his people from their land of bondage. In the plagues inflicted upon Egypt, it is true, that visible agents were employed which produced effects correspondent to their natural powers; but their introduction, their degree and their continuance, are plainly subservient to the commands of the Legislator, and this, when it was impossible he should have any natural power to hasten, to limit, or to direct their operations; yet that he exercised such a power every instance proves. Still more decisively to prove that these awful visitations were under the immediate control of God, they were not permitted to affect Israel, though from their nature, nothing intervened to prevent it, and no human power could limit their effects. It must be evident that none of these facts could have been believed

at the time they were said to have taken place, if they had not been real; and if real, they must have been miraculous. We see every element subservient to the command of Moses; he gives notice when they shall begin and when they shall cease their operations; he sets them their bounds, which they must not pass, and while the storm and the pestilence sweep away thousands on every side, they presume not to touch the race of Israel. In all this we cannot fail to discover the plain operation of that Being who alone is the God of nature, whose will controls every element, and directs every event. The same Almighty hand is alike conspicuous during the passage of Israel to the promised land. A nation amounting to some millions of souls, with their numerous cattle, are for forty years supplied with water from a flinty rock, and with a regular supply of manna from heaven; and lest by the constancy and sameness of the supply, they should forget its supernatural origin; they find it regularly altered in conformity to the divine institution of the Sabbath. When at Sinai we find that three days' notice is given of the awful phenomenon of nature that occurred at the moment. Equally signal was the miraculous nature of the punishment inflicted on Korah and his associates. Again, the passage by Joshua over the Jordan was alike miraculous. It was not accidental, or it could not have been foreseen; it was not natural, for the river was at its height, and the waters that had been descending stood on a heap. It was not the effect of art, for any artificial alteration in the channel would have been generally known, and besides, the effect would not have been instantaneous. Seeing, then, how the finger of God directed in an especial manner all the movements of Israel, we are prepared to read of the miracles which attended the Jews in exile, and which ultimately led to their freedom. The return of the Babylonish captivity is not only a proof of the inspiration of the Bible considered as the accomplishment of a prophecy, but is in itself a most miraculous occurrence. At that time slaves were a most important branch of property; they tilled the soil, exercised the different trades, and performed all the work in which the great mass of the people, at the present day, are employed. Hence the great difficulty in ancient times for men who were once enslaved, to gain their liberty. The interests of the state, as well as the rights and properties of individuals were against them. There may be a solitary case of a slave having been liberated, as a reward for his fidelity, or for some distinguished service; but we find no instance under old manners and customs of a large body of slaves having been suddenly set free. The conduct of Cyrus, the Persian monarch, offers to us, therefore, a most uncommon historical fact. When he conquered Babylon, he found them a whole nation of slaves, an immense property, of which so politic a prince as Cyrus must have known the value. Yet does he at once give liberty to the Israelites, and send back a whole people to their own country. It cannot be said that this was a sudden resolution adopted at the moment of victory, or that it was meant to exhibit a generous triumph over the vanquished; for Israel remained in the same state in which they had lived under the Chaldeans, for almost an entire reign under the new empire, until the seventy years of captivity were completed.

Here we have, indeed, a wonderful and indispensable testimony of the truths of the Scripture. It is a point that does not depend upon common proofs, because the occurrence proves itself. No data are here necessary, nothing is required but to believe that Israel was in Babylon, and that Israel returned from it. Their return proves the history, it supposes all that is related, and cannot in any other way be accounted for. How others will account for this extraordinary circumstance,-how they will reconcile the return of the Israelites from captivity, and their re-establishment in their own land, in opposition to so many complicated rights, to so many interests, and to the universal practice of mankind at that period, we know not; but as Israelites we declare "It came from the Lord;" for when

we refer to the chapter of our text, we find the messenger of God declaring, in reference to Cyrus: "I the Lord have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways. He shall build my city, and he shall let my people go, not for a price, not for a bribe, saith the eternal Zebaoth!"

If, brethren, there were no other evidence on record of the divine mission of Isaiah: the fulfillment of this prediction at the stated time and place, and through the very prince mentioned, would of itself be sufficient to establish him as a true prophet of the Lord: Now, the same servant of the Most High speaks to us also, of a second restoration, more glorious even than the first, a restoration at the time that God shall send us his Messiah. At the return of Israel from Babylon, instead of enjoying the fullest extent of liberty, greatness and glory, with which the prophecy abounds, but a comparatively few returned; they only partially possessed their land, and were subsequently enslaved by the Greeks and Romans. The return of the Babylonish captivity was the first restoration, but the great prophecies evidently refer to a second.

"It shall come to pass," speaks Isaiah, "in that day, that the Lord shall put forth his hand a second time to recover the remnants of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, from Pathros, and from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Isles of the sea."

Again, Jeremiah: "But I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them, and I will cause them to dwell in safety."

Again, Amos: "I will plant them in their own land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord."

Also Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built, and the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay waste in the sight of all that passed by, and they shall say, this land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate cities are become fenced and inhabited."

Having, then, the warrant of God himself for a belief in our restoration, let us consult the Scriptures, in order to ascertain the means by which this great event is to be brought about. We have already seen that the history of the children of Israel has been a miracle throughout; and by a great miracle has God promised to lead them back to the land of the patriarchs. "Therefore the days come," saith the Lord, "when it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. But the Lord liveth who hath brought up the children of Israel from the north country, and from all countries whither I have driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land which I have given to their ancestors." This prophecy clearly indicates that something superlatively grand will attend that restoration, for great indeed must it be, when it shall outlive and eclipse the wonders manifested in Egypt.

Yet is this to happen; it is repeated twice in the book of Jeremiah, and in language that cannot admit of a double sense; no forced interpretation can stand in applying it to any past event; for we still continue, in all our prayers, and in all our rites, to call upon our heavenly Father, as the God who brought us out of Egypt.

Thus, brethren, we learn from the volume of Holy Writ that Israel will be restored; but it will be through the immediate and miraculous work of God, and not by the combination of human powers.

It will take place at such a time and in such a manner, and will be attended with such mighty results, that the political relations of every country of the globe will be materially affected, yea, entirely changed. Two practical lessons may be drawn from this, the Scriptural doctrine of Israel's restoration:

First, it should teach those who regard us in our native land as aliens, on account of our peculiar creed, that the Scriptural view of Israel's restoration does not in the remotest degree affect us in any of the duties we, as good and loyal citizens, owe to our country, nor does it in any way prevent us from rendering ourselves useful in the land of our birth. On the contrary, it prompts us to show ourselves worthy of the rewards of industry and talent, and to vie with our compatriots in earning every honour and distinction that can be conferred by our common country.

If Judaism permitted this to Daniel and others in Babylon, where their stay was limited to seventy years, why should it not be accorded to us, who for centuries have been attached to countries by birth and association, who take in them the liveliest interest, and who will seek none other until the time when God shall miraculously change the political constitution of every empire on the globe?

Secondly, this doctrine should teach every descendant of the house of Israel the absolute necessity of keeping strictly within the pale of his faith, and of adhering to every Mosaic institution; since God has promised to restore those only who adhere to his covenant, and preserve their identity. In order to perform this promise, and to place us in a condition to be restored, the ever watchful providence of the Most High has been graciously extended to us in all our trials; the persecutions which we have experienced, far from rooting out our blessed faith, have, through God's loving kindness and truth, tended to keep us more and more distinct in our ritual observances, in our marriages, and in every other particular which (religiously speaking) renders us a nation within a nation. Had this not been the case; had we suffered ourselves to be enticed away from the covenant of Sinai, and from the Mosaic precepts, and had we permitted ourselves to contract marriages without the pale of our community, our restoration would have been morally impossible.

This, my friends, is an opinion not peculiar to Israelites only, but obtains amongst the most learned divines of other creeds; despite however, this plain Scriptural doctrine, there are to be found in this country many hundreds of enthusiasts, who fancy themselves the immediate agents of God for bringing about the salvation of Israel, and who, in the extravagance of absurdity, call upon us to yield up the very principles. and observances of that faith, by means of which, it is evident from the word of God himself, that we shall be restored to Judea.

It is often laid to our charge, that we do not take to heart the consequences of the societies that are forming about us, and that we make no effort to oppose the attempts that are made to convert (as it is called) the sons of Israel. My friends, we do take these things to heart. We deeply lament that, in days of such universal privation and distress, and, as we are informed, of such gross ignorance and crime amongst the labouring population, the vast sums which are annually expended upon an attempt which eighteen centuries have proved to be vain and hopeless, are not directed to a quarter where sorrow might be alleviated, where the hungry might be fed, the naked clothed, and the ignorant and immoral might be led to knowledge and religion. But as regards Judaism itself, we have no fears from such societies: we depend not merely upon the uniform failure of every attempt to turn away from Judaism men of mind and principle, who understand the

articles of their faith; but we rely principally upon the truth of the word of God, that He will ever be a wall round his people, that He will preserve them in their faith and identity as his great witnesses to the end of time.

We meet not, therefore, those vain attempts by controversy, or by virulence; we do not even deign to notice the calumnies which are heaped upon Israel and her adherents. But to all the ravings of enthusiasm, we reply in the words of Scripture, "Take ye counsel, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us." If, indeed, we have cause of fear, it is from the indifference, we must say, criminal indifference, of too many fathers and mothers in Israel, who practise no religion within their dwellings; who bring not their children to the house of God; but who commit their earliest education and their infant years, when impressions are most lasting, to the superintendence of strangers to their faith, who often consider it a merit to turn away the hearts of their young charges from the precepts of Judaism.

Let us hope that better times are dawning upon us; let us hope that every Israelite is now awaking to a sense of his duty to God and his covenant; and let us pray that Israel may every day become more impressed with her great destinies, and her future glory, when peace and happiness shall be universal, when Messiah shall appear upon the earth, and when Israel shall be gathered in glory to the land of promise.

"Then shall the wolf lie down with the lamb, the leopard shall dwell with the kid, the calf, the fatling, and the young lion shall feed together, and an infant shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw as an ox, they shall not hurt or destroy in God’s holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Amen.

Chapter 52

S. Striving for Holiness

Striving For Holiness A Sermon, by the Rev. J. K. Gutheim, of Cincinnati, Delivered in the Elm Street Synagogue, New York, ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■ June 12th, 5607

Brethren,- In responding to your invitation to expound to you the word of the Lord this day, I feel both honoured and gratified. For what greater honour could you confer on me than to allow me to address you in the sacred cause of our religion? What purer source of gratification could you afford me than your desire, evinced on this occasion, to listen to my exposition of our holy law? If there be a subject that is to us of vital, pre-eminent importance, to the full understanding of which we are diligently to employ our mental faculties, to the promotion of which we are to exert our utmost zeal and endeavours, that subject is our holy religion. To labour in its cause is a duty incumbent on every member of the covenant. ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ A mutual pledge exists between all the members of our household; to admonish, to exhort, to instruct, is the province of every Israelite; and happy indeed shall I feel if my feeble words will strike a responsive chord in the bosom of the faithful, revive the slumbering germ of religion in the heart of the wavering, and arouse the minds of all to serious reflection on the sublime doctrines and purposes of our holy faith. To render man a holy being, is the chief object of our divine religion. All the laws, commandments, statutes, and precepts enacted for our guidance, tend towards the accomplishment of this end; every relation in our individual, as well as every station we may occupy in social life, is provided for in the revealed word of God. The law of the Lord speaks to the rich and the poor, to the great and the humble, to the young and the aged, to the rejoiced and the afflicted; and by a strict adherence to its provisions will be acquired those high qualities that constitute the holiness of our being:-purity of heart, nobleness of mind, and sublimity of sentiment. To be holy, in fine, is the loftiest aim, the final, God-pleasing goal, to gain which we are urged on; and in numerous passages of Scripture the observance of the commands of God is declared to be the only condition of our sanctification. Thus we read in today's Sidrah:

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"In order that you remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God."- Numbers 15:40 Let us therefore examine, I. What do we understand under holiness?

II. What are the means towards our becoming holy? and III. What is the end aim of our holiness? May the Lord bless our endeavours, that they redound to the sanctification of his name. Amen.

I.

One of the sublime attributes ascribed to the Most High in Scripture is Holiness. We therefore say, God is all-holy; that is, He is the most perfect Being we are capable of conceiving; in Him, the Lord, there is nothing imperfect, but He is all truth, justice, and goodness. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Zebaoth, the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3.) Thrice holy is the Lord, for He loves virtue and detests vice, and has shown to the weak mortal the way to become holy. "Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God. Observe ye my statutes, and do them, I,

the Lord, sanctify you." (Leviticus 20:7-8.) This is a divine admonition; and the more zealously we devote ourselves to the service of God, the more conscientiously we follow his law, the more firmly we adhere to his precepts, and undeviatingly choose religion as the standard of our thoughts, actions, and words:-the more lasting and permanent will be the character of holiness we thus acquire. But this holiness, shall it otherwise be genuine, must pervade our whole being; its influence must be recognised in all our works. It must be manifested in the dominion we exercise over our earthly passions and desires; in our conforming to the rules of temperance, modesty, and chastity; in the practice of deeds of charity and benevolence;-in a word, in our love for virtue and our aversion against vice, or in doing everything the law recommends as good, and abstaining from everything it denounces as bad. As servants of the Most Holy, we must carefully keep aloof from whatever could pollute our soul and desecrate our service. For in the image of God we are created, to his glory and sanctification we are singled out. "For a holy people art thou unto the Lord thy God, and thee the Lord hath chosen to be unto him a peculiar people from all the nations on the face of the earth." (Deuteronomy 14:2.)

Manifold are the obstacles that in the course of our life impede our progress towards piety and holiness. From our earliest youth we are engaged in a continual struggle. It is the struggle of the higher, spiritual, with the lower, worldly life. The combination of both these antagonistic elements constitutes our nature; and it is entirely depending on the power of our will, if the one or the other shall come out victorious. Virtue and holiness stand to our right, vice and corruption to our left. Could we for a moment hesitate for which to decide? Must we not do everything in our power, spare neither sacrifice nor trouble, in order to ascend step by step in the scale of holiness, so that in the consciousness of leaving faithfully discharged our duty as men and as Israelites, we can, with a quiet conscience, look about us, behind us over the past, and before us into the future? Our striving after holiness must, however, be true and sincere, and we are to be careful to distinguish between appearance and reality. Our godliness and piety are not to consist only in words and outward forms, but must be rooted in the depth of our heart and form the basis of all the transactions of our life. Dissimulation, or hypocrisy, is in itself a vice that brings man in conflict with himself, and makes him contemptible in his own eyes. The hypocrite is even more dangerous than the notorious sinner.* The latter will pass for nothing better than what he really is whilst the former, through dissimulated piety, abuses the confidence of his fellow-man, and bids defiance to the omniscience of. God. The hypocrite harbours within him deceit, cunning, and falsehood; whereas the heart of the truly pious and holy is warmed by sincerity and truth. True piety only can engender holiness,-a sincerely religious conduct only can preserve us therein. Let us therefore inquire, secondly, into the means which religion recommends to our sanctification.

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II. Our text supplies us with an answer: "When you remember and do all my commandments, then you will be holy." In like manner do we read in Leviticus 22:31 : "You shall keep my commandments, and do them; I, the Lord, sanctify you."† The study of the law and the observance of it are enjoined in these words. The means to become holy are, therefore, in our hands, namely, [redacted] the law, the commandments, and good deeds. A sufficient knowledge of our religion is indispensably necessary, in order to appreciate its doctrines and

follow its precepts. Religion is the highest science of our life; and our aim must, therefore, be to become proficient therein, both in theory and in practice. The book of the law must be our guide through life; inasmuch as it teaches us “what the Lord requireth,” and as its enactments, if properly carried out, impart to all our actions the impress of holiness. Who can read its hallowed pages without being struck with the eternal truths they contain?-without acknowledging the pure, monotheistic doctrine they inculcate?-without admiring the sublime morality they enforce?-without recognising the grand, beneficent design of the Almighty, who has destined his revealed word to become, through our agency, the ultimate property of all mankind? Who can peruse the holy record, without becoming aware of the duties he owes to God, to his fellow-men, and to himself? To love and fear the Lord, to observe his Sabbaths and holy seasons as tokens of his omnipotence, to respect and keep inviolate the property, honour, and character of our neighbour, to cling to truth and avoid falsehood; to exercise right and justice without distinction of person, to look upon God as the Author of ■■r being, and the supreme Judge of our actions, to love our neighbour like ourselves, and to abstain from everything that is contrary to the dictates of our conscience and would taint the divine spark that animates our being,-these are the means the Torah recommends for our sanctification,-these are the requisites of our holiness.

† ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ The study of the Law, therefore, is of paramount importance. “Thou shalt meditate on it day and night,” is the command of the Lord.■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ “Important is the study, for it leads to practice;” ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ “we should divide our [study] time by devoting a third to the Bible, a third to the Mishnah, and a third to the Talmud, for ‘the threefold thread cannot easily be rent,’” say our sages. All the persecutions and wrongs we have sustained for twenty centuries could not snap this threefold thread, all the injudicious exertions of innovators of modern times will not snap it. It has been our shield and protection, has prevented a dismemberment of our community in adversity, it will be our pride and delight, will preserve our national and religious integrity in prosperity. But to boast of the mere possession of these holy records is not sufficient. We must endeavour to comprehend their spirit ourselves, we must erect schools and seminaries of learning for the benefit of the rising generation. Then, and only then, will the Torah prove a source of holiness, and will prompt us to observe the commandments (■■■■) it enjoins. The word ■■■■ in its limited sense means our ceremonial laws. In its more comprehensive sense it is the term for every deed acceptable in the eyes of the Lord. I employ it here in its limited sense, and contend that our ceremonial laws are a powerful means towards our becoming holy. There has often been a charge, preferred against us, that we have a religion of ceremonies, and that the Jew looks upon these ceremonies as the principal part of his religion. This accusation, however, is founded in error. We consider religious ceremonies as emblems and symbols of important truths, as memorials of mighty events the Lord has wrought for our fathers. For this purpose they were instituted, for this purpose we cling to them to the present day. These religious memorials are to be our safeguard against temptation and sin, against vice and corruption. Man is but too apt to follow the promptings of his heart, to satisfy the longing of his eyes, and to lose sight of his exalted destiny. Therefore religion prescribes certain forms and ceremonies, which as in the instance of the fringes, “have only to be looked upon to remind the Israelite of all the commandments of the Lord,” and to lead him in the right path, from which he would otherwise have strayed; therefore we say in the usual formula of benediction at the performance of each religious act: ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ “Blessed be the

Lord our God, who has sanctified us through his commandments;" therefore our sages say ■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ "Whoever has fringes on his garments, phylacteries on his head, and a Mezoozah on his door will not easily sin;" and again they quote the wise king, "The threefold thread cannot easily be rent." Abroad and at home we have thus mementos of our God, whose all-seeing eye is ever upon us; we wear a symbol of his omnipotence and holiness near our heart and between our eyes, to hallow our thoughts and desires; we wear the emblem of his law on our breast to be mindful of his will; and the word ■■■ "The Omnipotent," shining forth in bold characters from every door-post of our dwellings, reminds us that we are under the constant vigilance and protection of the Almighty. Is not all this calculated to produce the most salutary effect, to cheer us onward in our course towards holiness and perfection? The Law and Commandments thus united will lead us to ■■■■■ ■■■■■ good, benevolent deeds. The exercise of charity and benevolence as a truly ennobling and sanctifying tendency. Whilst cultivating feelings of love and good-will towards our neighbour, our heart expands in the service of Him of whom the Psalmist,, sings, "He gives food to every creature, for his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalms 136:25.) He provides for every created being, not because they have a claim on his bounty and munificence, "but because his mercy endureth for ever."-"To walk after the Lord our God," (Deuteronomy 13:5,) i.e. to imitate his ways as much as our circumscribed means admit of, we are enjoined in order to become holy. And it is a peculiar characteristic of our race, attributable to the benign influence of our Law, that in prosperity and adversity, love and humanity shone brightly on our banner, and gave the peculiar expression to our features and bearing. When the king of Syria surrendered at discretion to the king of Israel, (Reg. 1:20,) he did so, "because the kings of Israel enjoyed the reputation of being merciful kings." ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ "The children of Israel are modest, merciful, and benevolent," is the adage of a later period. To support the needy, to visit the sick, to bury the dead, to dry the tear of the widow, to be the orphan's father, to pardon and forgive injuries, to be kind and humane towards all creatures-these are the "good deeds" that lead to sanctification. Let, therefore, "the Law, the commandments and good deeds" be your companions through life, and you will reach the haven of your destiny in safety, you will be holy, for (again I say) "this threefold thread cannot easily be rent."

III. But what is the end and aim of our holiness, we ask thirdly?-When the Lord delivered our fathers from Egyptian bondage, when He extricated them from the midst of Egyptian superstition, and proclaimed to them his Holy Law, He at once announced their mission in the words: "And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." From that time we were, for ever, consecrated to his service. A pure creed based on the doctrine of One God, and a mode of worship, unadulterated by any superstitions and incongenial admixture, we were ordered to propagate. ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ We were to be holy, because the Lord who has thus distinguished us is also holy. To Him alone we must cling, Him alone we must fear, to Him alone we must pray, in Him alone confide amidst all the vicissitudes of our existence. By thus sanctifying ourselves in his service, we vindicate the glory of our heavenly Father. It is not for our own benefit alone that the Law has been given us; but for that of the whole human family; hence it is our duty to observe and act up to it in all its parts, in order to show the world its excellence. Yes, by being faithful to our trust, by manifesting the high virtues our religion inculcates, by endeavouring to become holy;-we challenge mankind to imitate our example, and the time will be hastened, when all nations will exclaim, "Let us join the house of Jacob, for the whole congregation are holy, and in

their midst is the Lord." And lastly, the final aim of our holiness is our preparation for that eternal life for which we are all destined. With the close of our career on earth also die all our earthly pleasures, desires, and aspirations. The dust mingles with the dust; but the soul soars on high and returns to the Lord who gave it, and happy we if it reach there in a state of holiness. To prepare ourselves for that life, where nothing reigns but truth, purity and holiness, should be our highest aim. This truth our sages enforce when they say, "This world is, as it were, the antechamber to the world to come; prepare thyself in the antechamber that thou mayest gain admission into the palace." (Aboth 4:21.) Endeavour, then, my hearers, to know the Law; ponder well on the sublime truths it inculcates; keep the commandments it enjoins; and distinguish yourselves in the practice of good and benevolent actions. "Remember and do all the commandments of the Lord, and you will be holy unto your God!" May the Lord in his kindness and in his mercy guide us, may his blessing rest upon us now and for ever. Amen.

Chapter 53

S. Thanksgiving Sermon

A Sermon

Delivered at the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogue, Bevis Marks, on Thursday R. H. Kislev (15th November,) 5610, being the day appointed by Her Majesty as a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God, to acknowledge His great goodness and mercy in removing from us that grievous disease with which many parts of this kingdom have been lately visited. By the Rev. D. A. De Sola, Minister of the above Synagogue.

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as strong, effectual, and heartfelt as it ought to be, to retrace to your memories in a hasty sketch, the scenes of horror and distress the Most Merciful has just now delivered us from,-forever, as we fervently hope.

Few, if any of us have not been appalled by the lament and distress which prevailed in this our city, during the existence of the late pestilence, or, have quite forgotten the care-worn and apprehensive look of friends and acquaintance, the sight of desolated habitations, the closed shops, in those districts, where it raged most fiercely, and the deserted aspect of those localities usually crowded and teeming with life. Then, the tolling of funeral bells, the unusual number of funerals, and the more frequent garb of mourning observed, and yet to be observed in our streets, must have struck the most unthinking and unfeeling mind with awe and fear, and impressed upon him the conviction that “the destroying angel of the Lord” had indeed gone forth, and that as erst over Jerusalem, in the time of David, “his sword” was now stretched over this great metropolis, to carry out God’s judgment over this earth, and to do the will of Him by whom he was sent. But the misery observed in public was subordinate, far inferior, to the suffering within doors, to the direful effects of this visitation, which still are felt, and will for a long time be deeply felt by many. But I will not harrow your feelings by dwelling on the extraordinary and frightful nature of this pestilence, which, baffling all human means, and medical skill, reduced, after a short period of most intense suffering, the strong man to a loathsome corpse, who but a few hours before had exulted in health and youthful vigour, and was perhaps the sole support of a numerous family. Under many a roof of this great metropolis, the bitter wailings are yet heard of the humble widow, whose nightly pillow is moistened with tears. Many are the bereaved husbands who have seen perish their joy and comfort, the mother and careful protectress of their now helpless children. Many are the children who have become orphans, and many are the parents whose darlings have been suddenly snatched away. Suffice it to say, that upwards of 60,000 inhabitants of England have been swept away by this pestilence, in which our own metropolis has suffered more than its proportion, and the effects I have but feebly sketched, may be better conceived in all their appalling magnitude. How truly thankful ought we to be to our Divine Creator and Preserver that He, being merciful, deigned so soon to hear our cry, accept our prayers, and, pardoning our iniquities, would not utterly destroy us; but in wrath remembering mercy, did, in the words of my text, again say to the destroying angel, “It is enough, stay now thine hand.” ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■ In the brief discourse I shall have the honour to address you, I propose to treat, I. On the gratitude and thanksgiving for God’s kind providence due from us as men;

2. As Israelites. And in the third place, endeavour to point out how to render this, our thanksgiving, acceptable to our God, and permanently useful to ourselves.

I. The investigation of the providential rule of God in the world (as far as our humble faculties will permit us to carry them), is the most noble and useful object of our religious inquiries. In proportion as we advance in this study, new proofs of the wisdom and benevolence of our Divine Maker are unfolded to our view, and the proofs of religious truths become more confirmed and established. It is not the least or the advantages we derive from this study, that it explains and proves to us, that even physical evils and partial sufferings are a part, and a necessary part, of the omniscient scheme of Providence in the government of his world, and that the result is the restoration of harmony, and the promotion of the happiness of the whole human race. Even, as stormwinds, thunder and other apparent physical evils, are deprecated and feared by the untaught, because

they only remark the partial evil and damage they occasion, but are viewed by the wiser, as a necessary and providential restoration of the disturbed harmony of nature, and as a general benefit, and preventative of greater evils;-so, also, are diseases and periodical visitations viewed by the intelligent and pious admirer of God's providence, as partial and necessary evils, to prevent still greater, and as a corrective to corruption. They are necessary to rectify our negligence; they are necessary to rouse our apathy; and necessary to show us our utter dependence upon God, and the inadequacy and vanity of our own skill and wisdom effectually to preserve us in the hour of danger. For nothing can be more certain than that the heart of man requires correction. When everything in the world proceeds in a smooth and prosperous way, when our bark constantly glides, ■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ "over the placid stream," and no storms are known or dreaded: we become careless and boastful, our hearts become enervated, and our lusts strengthened. Soon the heart succumbs to temptation and sin, and finally is hardened and exults in the commission thereof. Laxity of principle, engendered by uninterrupted ease, ever leads to immorality of practice. It is then, when our soul's health declines, when the vital powers of human society are endangered, that the bitter draught of adversity and trouble is administered by the most "merciful and faithful Physician," as the best and most salutary medicine to restore the relaxed powers. This awful disease which has just passed over us, has, by the havoc it made-by the affliction it has caused-and by the fears which the instinct of self-preservation has so naturally called forth within us, taught, in energetic terms, lessons we never can or ought to forget. It has not only taught us how helpless and utterly dependent we are on God's providential care, and how vain our skill and precautions, when death stalks around us unseen; but it taught us, moreover, the great lesson of the wisdom of Providence, who makes every evil conducive to our eventual good. In the present instance, the very extent of the calamity and danger, has called forth the exertions of the wisest and most powerful of this country, to devise means, under God's aid, to prevent the recurrence, or at least to mitigate the violence of this and similar evils. By the exertions of sanitary committees, composed of men of zeal and ability, and by the wisdom and aid of the Legislature, the situation, the health and comfort of the poor, will be considerably improved, and placed on a superior footing to what it was a few months ago. Things injurious to the public health, nuisances hitherto overlooked, will be abated. The want of those conveniences indispensably necessary to the maintenance of cleanliness and decency-facts, which the investigations to trace the causes of the great mortality among the poor have brought to light-will, it is hoped, be supplied to them as much as possible. Thus, light breaks forth from darkness, and by the wisdom of Providence permanent good will be evolved from the transitory evil He was pleased to visit us with. Ample causes are these for all the gratitude and thanksgiving we can offer before Divine Throne.

■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■ Praise the Lord, all ye nations,

■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■ Praise him, all ye people;

■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ For great has been his mercy towards us;

■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■ And the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Hallelujah.

II.

I have next to treat of our duty of thanksgiving for God's providence vouchsafed to us as Israelites. :■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ No nation has experienced that providence longer, or in

a more marked and energetic form than our own. In the history of the patriarchs, that of private individuals, or of kings and kingdoms, as related in the Holy Scriptures, in our modern, as well as in our ancient history, the same characteristic of a watchful providential interference shows itself so clearly, on almost every page, that examples would be superfluous, even if the limits of this discourse did not preclude my adducing them. No doubt we have especial cause for gratitude and thanksgiving on this occasion, having been so miraculously preserved, and spared so much of the great affliction and woes which our fellow-citizens and countrymen have experienced. This exemption I cannot, dare not, ascribe to aught else than to the Divine grace, and not to secondary causes,-and far less to any self-assumed, particular righteousness of our own, above that of those who suffered. Accordingly, I should have satisfied myself in rendering our thanks, to admonish you to those acts of religion and virtue, by which we are to merit the benefit of God's future protection. But I think I shall better execute my intention if I read to you a few lines, which have lately met my eves, and offer for your consideration the thoughts they have evoked in my mind.

It is not unknown to you, brethren, that some of the ablest pens have of late been occupied with disquisitions on, and collecting statistics of the late visitation, so as to devise the best human means to protect us from a similar future evil. In one of these, this remarkable passage occurs concerning ourselves:-

"It is a singular circumstance, that throughout the late awful visitation, so few, if any Jews, died of the cholera in London, although the majority of them reside in districts where it committed great ravages.

"Frequent personal ablutions are enjoined by the discipline of the Jewish church. This, together with the temperate habits of the Hebrews generally, may account for the providential exemption from one of the most terrible diseases that afflict mankind."

I have preferred quoting to you the words of this impartial writer to my informing or reminding you of the same facts, (and before I ventured to draw any inferences from them;) because I feel that the acknowledgment of the wholesome and beneficial tendency of these precepts of the Holy Law and those which prescribe various purifications and daily ablutions by a writer who notices the bare fact in a mere statistical view, without premeditation or religious bias, will make more impression on you than if propounded by a Jewish minister upon this occasion.

Having adduced this impartial testimony, let me be permitted to reason thereon. Personal cleanliness and purity of body are, as truly asserted by this writer, held by the Jewish law to be only secondary to purity of mind; and the attainment of the latter is not only considerably promoted by personal cleanliness, but is almost the natural consequence and infallible result thereof. For as our sages remark-

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(Mishna, Treatise Sotah, c. 11.)

"Solicitude is the cause of cleanliness, cleanliness that of purity, purity naturally leads to the avoidance of sin and pollution, and thus man is led to a holy life."

Uncleanliness, on the other hand, they inveigh against, because it corrupts and enervates, and produces the opposite result; for they who through indolence or vice have abandoned themselves to filthy habits, soon forfeit and lose the esteem of others; next, their self-respect, and finally sink into sloth, insensibility to public opinion, and into vice and disease, which finally destroys them. But I must be permitted to pursue this subject a little farther. It is perhaps unknown, not only to the writer I have quoted, but also to a considerable part of my Jewish auditors that besides the frequent washings, ablutions, and precepts of personal cleanliness referred to, the ancient Jewish law, the Mishna and Talmud, abound with laws made to secure, what we at the present day should call “The health of towns, and sanitary regulations.” In the volume of the ■■■■ ■■■■ “Shulchan Aruch,” called “Choshen Mishpat,” and in Orach Chayim Hilchoth Abeluh, in the “Yad Hachasakah of Maimonides,” you will find a number of laws, derived from the Talmud, against the exercise in towns, of various noxious trades, there enumerated, and against private nuisances, which might endanger the public health, or even interfere with the comforts of neighbours. Not only is it there prohibited to establish a Jewish burying-ground within a town, but the minimum distance is there minutely given at which such burying-ground may be permitted to exist. These laws too, be it observed, existed many centuries, I may almost say thousands of years, before anything was heard in the manner it is in the present day, against intramural interments or sanitary laws. So that, my brethren, we cannot be taught anything new upon that subject; we need but follow and carry out, as far as our circumstances may permit, the good and salutary precepts and practices taught us by our holy laws and by the wisdom of our ancestors. The tendency of the strict discharge of our duty in observing the precepts of the law enjoining personal cleanliness is, as already proved, to promote and secure our temporal and present, our spiritual and future happiness. Those who observe it do, as the Mishna expresses itself with respect to other social virtues, enjoy the fruits and interest of their good deeds in this world, whilst the principal remains to a future one.

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I need not therefore add anything to induce you to persevere in the observance of these and other Divine precepts, all having the same aim, our happiness, and each of them having its double reward. If, as it is said, the observance of those precepts promoting cleanliness, the ancestral virtue of sobriety, and our dietary laws, have, through the Almighty’s goodness, had the effect of mitigating or limiting amongst us the baleful influence of the late visitation:-how great then ought to be our gratitude to the Divine Providence, who not only in the time of trouble protected us, as He did our ancestors during the pestilence in Egypt, but who also favoured us with those laws which have been proved to have so beneficial a tendency. The thanksgiving due from us, as Israelites, cannot be better expressed than in the inspired strains of the royal David:

■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ Had the Lord not been on our side,

Now may Israel say,

The waters had overwhelmed us,

The stream had gone over our souls.

But blessed be the Lord,

Who did not deliver us as a prey.

Our help is ever in the name of the Lord,

The creator of heaven and earth. (Psalms 124:1, Psalms 124:4, Psalms 124:6-7)

III.

I have arrived at the last section of my discourse, “How to render this our thanksgiving, acceptable to our God, and useful to ourselves.” It is easy enough to repeat certain prayers or psalms adapted to the occasion; but to limit ourselves to such thanksgivings, is not what the Almighty desires or expects from us. As He himself told us, mere “lip service” is but a mockery and a delusion. This our royal psalmist felt, when, in composing his eloquent hymns of thanksgiving which form our “Hallel,” he asks himself ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■ “How shall I render thanks to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?” and he immediately answers, ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ “I will now pay my vows unto the Lord, in the presence of all his people.” Acts as well as words are necessary; acts of charity, acts of devotion, and acts of personal exertion and sacrifice are required from us at this hour. Divine Providence in his government of the universe, has chosen to work by ordinary agencies, and by certain laws which He himself has established. It therefore follows, that making use of our reason and other faculties which He has granted to us for this very purpose, we must observe these laws, and that it is our duty to remove what obstructs or impedes their beneficial effects. It is, then, our duty, every one according to his power, to assist our poorer brethren, to give them what they have a right to receive from us, and thus prevent, as far as human efforts can, the recurrence or virulence of the late disease. We have too plainly seen that it raged most fiercely and fatally in overcrowded and filthy dwellings, where there was a want of those conveniences which cleanliness, decency, and health so imperiously require, and without which the practice of religion and morality become difficult to the poor; also, where there existed a want of power to purchase wholesome and sufficient nourishment, which so much predisposed to the disease and aggravated its form. Now all these are physical wants, which admit of human power to remedy them. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of all of us to endeavour to furnish it. I said, advisedly, all of us, because it is in the power of all to aid in improving the dwellings and condition of our poorer brethren. Some can assist with money, others with counsel; and all are bound to co-operate to carry out the wholesome measures which no doubt will be taken by the Legislature in this matter. Let no one say, that his power or influence is too limited to do anything useful in removing such an extensive evil, for what is impossible to individuals becomes easy to associated numbers. Those who cannot originate, may assist those who can; and even the evil which cannot be entirely removed, may most often be considerably mitigated. Few things are impossible where the will exists, and when we have once become thoroughly convinced of the truth and necessity of a thing.

Experience has constantly proved that no truth is ever established without it leads to some better knowledge, or to a beneficial act. Now every good act contains within itself the germ of another good act, which is sure, sooner or later, here or hereafter, to bear its good fruit. ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ The quantum of good, therefore, which every person may confer on the world, becomes actually incalculable. Neither are the veriest poor excluded from this merit, and from the reward which accrues from it. However limited their means, provided their inclination is good, they have it in their power to do more good than would be readily believed by those unacquainted with their habits, or overrate the power of money, and are ignorant of the extent and effect of the charity of

the poor to the poor. For even as the dew which, descending unobserved at night, when all are wrapped in slumber, acts more beneficially on the tender plants, than the more abundant supply of moisture supplied by violent rains: so, also, does the unostentatious aid, the kind look, the encouraging word, and above all the assistance which one poor person cordially renders to another in times of affliction and disease, prove in most cases of more consolation and effectual aid than much money bestowed by the wealthy in charity. ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ "Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, sayeth the Lord of Hosts," (Zechariah 4:6) in the spirit of the Most Merciful, in that spirit which He wishes to be imitated by all his creatures to each other, so that all may co-operate to effect the general happiness of the species. The application of what I have endeavoured to prove is easy and obvious, as is also the answer as to how we should render thanks to the Lord for all His benefits towards us. Since His love has been great towards us ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■, we are surely bound to reciprocate the love He first showed unto us. How can we reciprocate it? By our unreserved love and obedience towards Him, ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ (Deuteronomy 6:5); and by obeying His commands to love and assist each other, ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ (Leviticus 10:18).

I have also endeavoured to prove that God's providence renders even evils conducive to our good. The pestilence just passed adds another proof. For if the apprehensions excited by that dreadful visitation should induce a penitent and better life in the survivors,-if the condition of the poor be improved,-if more acts of charity and mutual kindness be shown by poor and rich,- if it should lead to the better observance of the precepts of our holy religion, of its dietary laws, those enjoining cleanliness of body which lead to purity of mind, to the Sabbath not being desecrated, and God's commands not immolated to interest and worldly lucre,-if it should remind men, that our business on earth, in the short span allotted to us, and which in a moment may be cut short, is not confined to the business of this world, and to live for ourselves alone, but to prepare us for a better and eternal existence:-then, assuredly, good, much good, will result even from the past severe visitation. ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■-"The intelligent will observe this, and comprehend the loving kindness of the Lord." (Psalms 107:43)

We have seen that physical evil is unavoidable in the great scheme of the providential rule of the world; therefore, now that this calamity has departed from us, let not the admonitory signs it has given us be lost sight of, and let us be better prepared for the future. The expression of our thanksgiving will be illusive; the prayers we have uttered, the word of God I have announced to you, my humble address, and what I still more rely on, your own reflections, and good resolves, which this solemn occasion have excited, will be of no effect, should they be suffered to pass away with the occasion, and relapsing again into apathy and torpor, the fear this visitation has caused, should be only like a stone dropped into a pool of stagnant water, which but for a moment disturbs it, and then soon returns to its fatal repose. Be assured, my brethren, that when you have, done your duty, God will not forget you in the hour of distress. ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ "He will deliver thee from the fowler's snare, and from the destructive pestilence, which stalketh in darkness, and wasteth at noonday," and though "Thousands fall at thy side, and myriads at thy right hand, yet shall it not approach unto thee," for "our God and refuge" will guard us, when we ourselves are unable to see and avoid the danger. If we resolve to do our duty, and execute our resolve, we will merit and obtain that Divine protection. Then will our thanksgiving be perfect and acceptable, and then may we hope once to render our solemn thanks

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“In the courts of the house of the Lord, in the midst of thee, O, Jerusalem.” Amen.

Chapter 54

S. The Blessing of the Lord

The Blessing of the Lord A Sermon. May the name of the Lord be blessed for ever; for the power and the government are his, and He raiseth up kings, and He casteth down kings, and without Him, nations labour in vain attempts, and if He withholds his protection, all nature stands affrighted and astonished at his presence. This is our God, whom we worship; this is our Father, whom we adore, because He created the world in the beginning, and erected the foundations of the earth on his own mighty will; and when it pleased Him, He descended before his redeemed servants and pointed out to them the way of life, how they might walk in his presence, and obtain his gracious favour by obedience. May it then be his will to plant his love and his fear in our hearts, that we may direct to Him our thoughts, and always consult the inspiration which He vouchsafed to us in his word, before we act or resolve on any course of life; so that we may be supported by his love, and discover his goodness in whatever may be dispensed to us in his wise and righteous judgment. So shall our life pass away in pleasantness and peace, and contentment dwell in our habitations, till we be summoned to the high abode of the pure and holy, who are blessed by the light of the countenance of their Almighty Father, who will shield and uphold them, as those who are precious in his eyes, and whom he will bless with everlasting life. Amen.

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Brethren, In our lesson of to-day, there is given to us the priestly blessing, which the sons of Aaron are to pronounce over the people, and thus invoke for them the aid and countenance of the Great Eternal, whose name be glorified in the mouth of all the living. The words are almost the simplest which could be devised, and they could only have sprung from the spirit of God himself; for human invention would have added other matters-would have amplified, and not appealed in so few words for all that we can ask of our heavenly Father. Yes, even David in his Psalms, when he asked for the same favours, though he too spoke from the spirit that dwelt in him, used, in his sixty-seventh Psalm, many more words to petition the Lord for the favours embraced in the ■■■■ ■■■■■ (Priestly Blessing). It is even thus that we may appeal to the absence of all ornament and amplification in the Mosaic books, to the extreme and severe simplicity which they present when speaking of both precept and doctrine, for an additional testimony of their sacredness and truth; and we may insist that their author was so thoroughly convinced of what he wrote for the instruction of the people, to be the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that he disdained borrowing from the orator and the poet any embellishment which they employ to render their words and thoughts pleasant to their hearers or readers. But, few as the words are, simple as is the construction of the three sentences comprising the blessing, they are of the utmost importance and significance.

Let us refer, as we have done already, to the sixty-seventh Psalm, and we will find the following words:■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ “May God be gracious unto us and bless us; may he cause his face to shine with us. Selah.” But the passage in Numbers

6:24-26, commences, ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ “The Lord bless and preserve thee;” thus using a different phrase from David when speaking of the Deity, nevertheless referring to the same great Being as the Author of all blessings. You may readily imagine that there is a deep design why Moses was bidden to use the term he did, and that it is of high importance to us, even at this late date in the history and progress of mankind, notwithstanding a great change has taken place in the condition of the world since that time. I will endeavour to make myself understood, and beg of you to devote due attention to the perhaps dry definitions which I deem it my duty to give you. When Moses was first commissioned to speak to the Israelites, he asked of God: “Behold, I come to the children of Israel and say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and if they then say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?” This question may appear to you very singular; you may say, perhaps, Would it not be enough for Moses to tell the people that God had deputed him to effect their liberation? and if they would believe him at all, must not this announcement satisfy them? Besides, what is there in the name of God, that should render it of so much importance, as to effect in Moses’ estimation the mission with which he had been sent by the word which had then been, for the first time, revealed to him? But you must reflect that when Moses was addressing the Deity in the above words, there was not that revealed knowledge of the great Adored which is now so widely diffused abroad; everywhere there were associations either of two or three persons, in the idea which men entertained of God, or at least, there were a multitude of real or imaginary beings, who were conceived all to have some divine attribute, that is all to be more powerful than man, and, therefore, claiming his homage. These gods were each known by a particular appellation, under which worship was offered to the same; and as each country had its own peculiar mythology, its own divan of gods, nations might be aptly called the people of the one or the other god or group of gods, of which examples may be found in Scripture, which, however, it would be out of place to detail in this connexion. The earth was thus parcelled out to different tutelary powers, as much as there was a diversity of language, complexion, and manners. Moses, himself, though a descendant of Israel, had imbibed in Egypt a knowledge of the customs and ideas of the people, and of the priests of that land; and there can be no doubt but that the Israelites had universally been deeply tinctured with the superstitions and idolatry that prevailed around them. I need not remind you how apt we are to borrow the views of those who surround us at all sides, and how different appear the Jews of the East and the West, simply because of the people in the midst of whom they live. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that a residence of two hundred and ten years in Egypt, for a very great period of which time we were subject to the arbitrary cruelties of the idolaters, had vitiated whatever knowledge we had derived from the patriarchs of the nature of God; and though Moses may at the time have been free from idolatry himself, (indeed, we ought to entertain the opinion that, as he was chosen the instrument of a great deed, he was meritorious in the sight of God, by being a devoted servant and true believer,) he spoke for and of the people, according to the ideas prevailing at his time, and demanded, therefore, the name of the national God, to report the message with which he had been charged in his name and behalf.

Understand, the liberation of the Israelites was to be effected against the evident will and interest of the Egyptians, consequently, also against the supposed assent of the gods of that country, assuming for them a power to prevent it, as was alleged by their worshippers. It was, therefore, none of the Egyptian deities, in whose name the message could be spoken; perhaps they had been called by the same general appellation* which the Israelites had given to their ancestral God.

But be this as it may, Moses found no distinctive name in his recollection which would inspire that confidence which he considered, and justly so, as the first requisite to the accomplishment of that mission which had been forced upon him to fulfill, unwilling and fearful as he was to return to Egypt.

* The word God, in its various forms, signifies, in European languages, the being or beings to whom worship is rendered, hence it is equally applicable to the Supreme or false divinities. If now, the patriarchs only knew of a term which embraced the idea of power or greatness, as the Almighty, Most High, or God; and if the Egyptians called their gods by names significant of the same idea embraced in these terms: it was evidently nothing distinctive to speak of the God who then spoke to Moses, by any one of the names or attributes of the divinity then known. But the name then revealed in reply to his inquiry was, of all others, the one which had not been invented by man, because not within his finite idea of conceiving, unless it be by the aid of the Lord himself. It is therefore that we may assume, that the name we have received as the expression of God's eternity, is the proper appellation embracing, at the same time, Unity and Eternity, as we say ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "The Eternal is One, and his name is One;" in contradistinction to other ideas which conceive the divine essence to consist of a combination of powers, and consequently not One in name, however great the attributes may be, which are ascribed to the divine nature, thus exhibited in the belief which embraces the idea of a plurality. Some persons think that Jews would not be Jews except out of opposition to other creeds, or because they interpret certain scriptural passages differently from others; but neither of these views is true. We are Jews because we have received a peculiar revelation; and we remain so, not because there is any importance to be attached to the few alleged fulfillments of prophecy; but because any other belief in the nature of the Divinity and the divine legation of the prophets is hostile to the very principles do which we were established as a people, and for the upholding of which, the revelation of Sinai was given to us. We would teach the same doctrines whether there were Mahomedans in the world or not; their presence may compel us to reply to their assumptions; but it does not have any real influence on our peculiar doctrines; they are always true, and always derivable from the same source of information, the Scripture themselves, and them only. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, as he had announced himself, was not angry with Moses for the question which he had put, and in mercy enlightened his ignorance; and in so doing, He did not give him any name which is of arbitrary derivation, as many proper names are, but He employed the future tense of the verb to be, or in other words, He called himself I Will Be, in Hebrew ■■■■, or as given otherwise, in the combination of the future and the present tenses of the root ■■■, with the four letters ■■■■, embracing the idea of "He who was, is, and will be." Jews now consider this revelation of God of himself and his being so sacred that they do not pronounce it as it is written, and it was only used on certain solemn occasions, such as when the high priest made his public confession on the Day of Atonement, or when the priests pronounced the blessings on the people in the temple; at other times, it is pronounced as though it were written ■■■■, equivalent to the English word "Lord." The national God of the Hebrews was not, according to this view, to be known by any name denoting his other attributes, but that expressing his eternity; and as this name is incapable of a plural, at least it is never found in the plural, and is thus referring to One only, and this invariably throughout Scripture: we shall have better means than otherwise of understanding the phrase, which we also owe to Moses, and which constitutes the creed of the Jews, I mean ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." We know that the word ■■■■■ is often used in the plural, either

to signify idols, or the gods of the nations; or angels, as the messengers of God; or at last judges, as the human beings who are placed in authority. The idea divine, does not, therefore, carry in Hebrew, by any means, the same sacred character as it does in English or other modern language; as it is merely an expression of power, either actual or imaginary, and is, in truth, derived from ■■ “power,” “strength,” or “might.” There can, therefore, be false ■■■■■, as ■■■■■ ■■■■■, or not-gods ■■ ■■■■, things having neither power nor being, as they exist merely in their divine idea in the arbitrary assumption of their worshippers; whilst at the same time the term may, with equal propriety, be applied to the Holiest and Highest, the God whom we Worship. And as the form is plural, so may the idea be which we have of the divine nature in its being the source of all power, or the totality of the forces of nature centred in One who directs all; the verb or adjective belonging to it, may, therefore, occasionally be met with in the plural number, not as indicating a multitude or aggregation of persons in the Godhead, but as agreeing in form merely with the substantive expressing the Divine Being. I have spoken of this on a previous occasion, and only refer to it now in combination with the subject before us. We call God, therefore, either ■■, or ■■■■, the universal power, in the singular, or ■■■■■, the aggregation of all imaginable powers in one, in the plural, in contradistinction to the worshipped beings of other people which are un-gods, ■■ ■■■■, or foreign, strange, other gods, ■■■■■ ■■■■■.

It is somewhat singular, let us note in this place, that with suffixes, which answer to the possessive pronouns in English and other languages, we always find the word God construed in the plural, with the exception when applied to the first person singular, which alone derives its form either from the root ■■ or ■■■■■ thus ■■■ or also ■■■■ “my God.” Otherwise we find always the plural suffixes, as ■■■■■ ■■■■■, &c., either when meaning thy [or his] god or gods, either applied to the true God, or idols.

Thus much for the form, to which some erroneous interpreters have attached an importance which it does not deserve, especially as there are other words, such as ■■■■ and ■■■ lord, master, which are always construed with plural suffixes, though but one person is meant; such as ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■ “If his lord should give him a wife,” (Exodus 21:4;) or ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ “The owner thereof not being with it,” (Exodus 22:13) There phrases clearly prove that the plural construction of a word does not necessarily imply a plurality of persons, and it depends entirely on the use and custom of the language, whether this be the Hebrew, or any other tongue; since examples of the kind can be found in all others, at least those with which I am acquainted. But as in fact the true God is, as said, the One embracing all the powers, we may truly call Him the ■■■■■ or the Container and Dispenser of all possible springs of action, the Accumulation of all the forces which sustain and give life to all. It is not that there is a plurality in the person, but, because there is a multitude in the ideas of power which comprise his attributes. But far different is it with the special attribute of eternity, which is in itself perfect, so that no accession or diminution can herein be imagined. God could be the most potent though He lacked any one of the attributes of greatness which we ascribe to Him. But He could not be the Eternal, if He lacked either past, present, or future existence. But as the first Cause, as the Creator, as the Sustainer of things, and under this word I comprehend whatever of physical or spiritual beings or powers may be existing or possible to exist, He must have this continuity of being, to be what He is. There must not be any one or more than one who could have preceded Him, nor must there be one or more than one who will succeed or survive Him; He is the first and the last, as our creed designates the blessed

All-father.

If there were two coexisting powers equally great, there would be no concord in the government of the world, unless they existed at the same place, and had an identity of will, or unless the two would be practically one. If there were, however, two powers not so entirely existing in the same will, then could there not reign that harmony in universal nature of which all investigation gives us the amplest proof. For from the earliest record of history, and this is all we have to govern our ideas in this investigation, we have evidence of the same progression of outward nature; and whatever the chronicles of science hand down to us, amounts to the confirmation of the same idea, that there has been no interruption in the regular course of whatever is subject to our observation, and that nothing has been destroyed or added by any extraneous influence which we can discover. Or in other words, the same eternal Vigilance which created in the beginning, still watches and sustains all; and this, alone, without help or associate. He is comprising within himself all the powers requisite to carry out his plan of government, whilst He exists as such alone, and needs not, and cannot obtain in aught the help or counsel of any being, since all things are not eternal, whereas He existed prior to them all, and will survive them all, in the event of their change or destruction; the period at which this is to occur being again altogether within his knowledge, as the capacity to change or destroy is also entirely and solely within his means and power. So then Moses taught us our faith in the words which we have cited, and which mean accordingly, “The Lord Eternal, whom we call our God, the God Israel, is He who alone is the Eternal.” If the nations worship Him, they worship the “God of Israel;” and if they worship another, then is there no existence for the same, because he is not eternal, and consequently not God. The oneness is the inseparable idea of the eternity of God, and a multitude in this eternity is inconceivable, and consequently not in existence; and because it is requisite that the God of Israel should be eternal, it also follows that He is one, without an associate, as He is without any beginning or end, which we can fix as the commencement and termination of his existence. Now, few as are the words ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ they are justly the watchword of Israel, and simple as they are they can hardly be given by any other words in any other language, and consequently every attempted translation must be far from attaining to the force and sublimity which is contained in the original. We can feel the ardour of holiness mounting up in our soul, when we contemplate the elevation, the power, and the eternity of God; we can imagine how He is alone enthroned in might, how all proceeds from Him, the perennial Stream of all existence; but words fail to convey our thoughts; our mind wanders when we mean to condense what has sprung up in our spirit, and we humbly close the book of inquiry, we repose on the revelation of himself which God has given us, and we say indeed, “O Thou God, who hast created all, Thou art the Eternal! Thou art One, and the sole Eternal.” None but the highest inspiration could so have pictured the Divine Majesty, and none but the Lord Eternal himself could have given the embodiment of what and how He is; that as the one He combines all the power, and that as the other He is unlimited by time, and not controlled by any associate, and that He therefore requires not any aid to effect his supreme will wherever his omniscient gaze penetrates the uttermost end of things.

You will therefore understand that the name of the national God of the Hebrews has no reference whatever to anything connected with the descendants of Abraham; nothing peculiar to this or that people, but only as indicating his eternity, and by consequence his unity. We therefore cannot say “our Eternal,” or the holy Name united with a possessive pronoun, because we have no claim to

Him in that capacity; but by acknowledging Him, and worshipping Him alone He becomes our God, ■■■■■■; and we are by the same means his people, ■■■. But as we said, at the first call of Moses the people were ignorant of his name, and it required therefore a revelation to teach them how they and the whole world stood related to the Being who was about to redeem them. Now, as no name was assigned to Him which would exclude any nation from joining his worship, as no people were able to assume the peculiar name of this God as their own peculiar appellation,* as they remained sons of Israel after their election as before: it necessarily follows, that though the Lord Eternal calls us his people, if we obey his commandments, all nations can become equally identified with Him if they follow the path He has marked out for our instruction.

* Whereas Buddhists, Brahmins, Mahomedans, Christians, derive their name from the supposed founders of their systems. The privilege of Israel consists not in an exemption from any worldly sufferings, but in the possession of a superior system of laws and morals, devised by the Creator himself as the expression of his will to the sons of man. Whoever then glories himself in the Lord, becomes a child of the Lord; and the privilege is one of universal diffusion; and no one is excluded by any insurmountable difficulty, as soon as the message of life is made known to him. It is therefore false, if our opponents assert, that the national God of the Jews is represented by us as one of narrow sentiment, of an exclusive regard for our insignificant tribe, for a people not distinguished for any peculiar noble trait and high endowment. For even admit that our intellect were the lowest of all mankind, it would not affect the question in the least; since our faith is not based upon our peculiar excellence, either moral or physical; but upon the greatness of the Lord, who is supreme in heaven and on earth. But it is not true that we are unfitted for the sphere assigned us; we are a peculiar, hardy, enduring race, rushing like a mighty torrent amidst the waves of human population without mingling with it; distinguishable at all ages by the unmistakable landmarks which define every other nation, and if we regard a pure and unmixed descent, more so than any other people which ever existed. And whether this was a new impression made on our character when we received the law, or whether it was always so: enough, the fact exists, and no one can deny it, as history has stamped an indelible seal on every word which I have just now uttered. But we assert that the Lord is the universal God of all the world, only that we were chosen his instruments, his peculiar servants, or his kingdom of priests, to be devoted, for as long a time as He might deem fitting, to propagate his religion amongst the inhabitants of the world. The Lord is accordingly the term used throughout the books containing the events of Moses' life, with few exceptions, to signify the One who is pre-eminent in his holy attributes, and who alone claims the worship of Israel, not because He is something to them which He is not to other nations, but because He is that in truth which other divinities are not. He is the God of Israel, and called by their name, and they are called by Him, "the people of the Lord," not because we were ignorant, or are so now, of his universal rule, but because other nations did not and do not now receive his word alone as their guide; because they act not as He has written in his law, and because they unite in their prayers ideas which He has not taught, or call on a being or beings other than the Eternal One.-Now all the time that Moses lived, it was his mission to bear testimony, emphatic and uniform, against the vanities of the worship of the gentiles; and he used, therefore, every opportunity to impress the great truth, that "from the Lord is all" upon the people. But in the time of David, the religion had been confirmed, centuries had elapsed, and the code promulgated at Sinai had taken deep root in the heart of the sons of Jacob; and when they spoke of God, surrounded as they were by his blessings in their beautiful land, protected by the

government of the laws of Moses, the word “God” carried with it at once an acknowledgment of the sole Supreme. David, therefore, properly says: “May God be gracious unto us and bless us;” it is no doctrine which the Psalmist teaches, but he merely appeals to his heavenly Sovereign to have a favourable regard on his servants, and to bless them with the light of his countenance, with that everlasting, inward, holy, peace which He bestows on those who serve Him. He for this reason also properly includes all nations in the praise, which all shall offer up, when His kingdom shall be established, and all the families of the earth shall be judged in equity. But Moses was the teacher in every word which he was told to write; he therefore does not use the word “May God bless thee,” but “The Lord bless thee and preserve thee;” or, the One who is alone able to grant a blessing, who alone is able to guard and watch over his creatures, with whom there is no mediator, with whom there is no associate, with whom there is not a second to share his glory, who has no successor to whom to transfer his power. And in this late age the appeal is yet made; it is a sequel to the Shemang Yisrael, or as the revelation of the last was posterior to the Priestly Blessing, it is with it an exposition of the idea embraced in the first precept of the Decalogue, “I am the Lord thy God.” It then means that the God who wrought such stupendous deeds as made the unwilling tyrants let millions of bondmen go free, is the same from whom all blessings proceed, and who is the sole Being, who has any substantive power, unchecked by any other to effect his will in all parts of creation.-Yes, the time is long past since the faithful received this blessing from the one who was trusty in all God’s house; and empires and creeds have since changed and have followed each other upon the ruins of former empires and creeds; and still in the Creator himself there is no change; He is yet the only Eternal who existed in the times of the Son of Amram; and he, this happy mortal, this great Moses, rescued by Providence from the flood of the Nile, to become a prophet, the mouthpiece of his Master, is yet the teacher of the people for whom he was chosen the messenger. Whatever was true in morals then is true now, and no addition has since been made to our stock of moral ideas, nor to our knowledge of the ways of the Most High. Just, then, as we were instructed, so must we proceed, and by the same words by which our predecessors craved for themselves the acknowledged aid and assistance of God, must we continue to implore the blessing of the Lord. It is not that we are hostile to the world; for truth opposed to error is no hostility on the part of truth; but well does error always endeavour to stifle the voice of conviction, for fear of its empire falling, should heaven-born sincerity appeal to the hearts. But let us not heed the storm that ever and anon assails us; we are accustomed to the scorn of the world; and the same merciful Power who has so long sustained us, will farther lead us onward to victory, not by means of the arms of mortal combat, but with the praises of God which are in our mouth, and are that two edged sword which will not be returned to its scabbard, till all the earth be blessed of the Lord, and all the nations submit to the equitable kingdom of God, when his salvation will be made known to all, and his light will shine on all spirits. Amen.

Sivan 8th, June 9th, 5608.

S. The Coming Year

The Coming Year.

(A Sermon at the Conclusion of 5604.*)

* We had purposed continuing this month our “specimens of German Preachers;” but the limited time permitted us by a temporary absence on a journey as far as the Falls of Niagara, and the intervention of the holydays compels us to substitute one of our own late productions preached in the regular course of duty without the remotest thought to its immediate publication. We are not in the habit of making apologies for the defects in our articles; but this time we must beg the reader to excuse the somewhat defective connexion discoverable in this sermon. It was intended as an exhortation for the coming New Year, as thoughts for reflection; and we request therefore that it may be viewed in this light only; and happy shall we be if we could be the instrument of calling upon the pilgrim on the journey of life with a serious “stop traveller,” and make him turn his heart to the way he has gone, and to return to the safe enclosure in the mansion of the Lord where there is hope, and where there is forgiveness for the sinner.

God of righteousness and truth, how abundant is thy goodness which Thou extendest over thy children, how glorious the mercy with which Thou watchest over their actions! When righteous they obtain thy favour, though their deeds be so insignificant, as the deeds or man must ever be; and if in rebellion they arise to gainsay thy will, Thou wilt not destroy, but waitest for their repentance, and warnest them in time that they may return unto Thee. But even in chastisement we behold Thee as the Father of spirits; because Thou purifiest the child of sin in the furnace of tribulation, that he may be purged from transgression and be rendered worthy again of thy favour. O do then act towards us even according to thy goodness of which our fathers have spoken, and which they have ever received at thy hands; send us blessing and prosperity in our labour, that we may not toil in vain and spend our days in fruitless repining and hopes deferred which render the heart faint and desponding; but if success should elevate our heart to value itself unduly and to forget thy holy precepts, then let thy rod fall on us to remind us that we are thy servants, who are bound to obey thy every will, to listen dutifully to thy every word. So that we may always feel that we are under thy august protection and amenable to thy justice, by which knowledge our life will be rendered happy and our souls be made pure, to be fitted to dwell in the secret of thy tabernacle, in a world without sorrow, in a life without death, where the sun never sets and where thy glory ever shines. Amen.

Brethren! A few days more only will elapse before this year will have closed, and when another will dawn upon us with all its uncertainties of joy and sorrow, of light and shadow to which our life is subject. How solemn it is to reflect upon the past, how fearful to think of what is to come! Whoever is among us that has had enjoyments but must feel that his pleasures have not been unmixed, that his brightest day was not unclouded? If even pleasure opened her gladsome receptacle and poured out into his bosom exquisite sensations and brought him some ecstatic moments, was not some pain lingering under the pleasant surface and made itself perceived in the most joyous

hours? There is always in life, as in nature, an under-current which is not perhaps perceptible to the naked eye; to the inattentive observer the surface of the stream may appear as smooth as the tranquil mirror, with not a ripple to disturb the glassy plain; but launch your bark on the silvery tide, and how resistlessly are you forced backward, and each step in advance has to be achieved at the expense of all the exertion you are capable of. Or even if you glide smoothly down with the current, if pleasant gales fill your sails and waft you swiftly to the desired haven: O how often then are sunken rocks hidden in your course; your vessel strikes upon the unknown danger, your sails shake out, as it were, the breeze that erst impelled them, the timbers are riven one by one from the sides of the bark that was to bear you on in safety, and you float alone, forsaken, unaided upon the stormy flood which now foams and boils up around you on all sides. This is life! this its course! The observation, perhaps, is trite, like a thrice told tale; you have heard this before; you have seen it in books written by men of all ages; true, too true; but this is because all men have experienced the same fate, have had to feel the same sensations of sorrow and disappointment; and hence many have expressed what experience has forced upon their consideration. But should we not be told it again by those whom we know ourselves? are we not to be reminded of the truth, as it is the truth, because others have heard the same lesson already? If so the work of the moralist would soon be over, one man indicts a truth, and it would be useless to carry it farther, because the truth had once been spoken. But alas! so perverse is the human heart, so often is it lulled by false security, that the lessons which others have heard do not reach it, unless it has been itself made to test them by experience; and the accumulated wisdom of ages is passed unheeded, as books whose language is not understood, and whose characters are no loner in use among the living. What good is it then to the individual, that moral reflections upon the uncertainty of earthly things have been indulged in before? He too must think upon them, not once, not twice, but every day of his life: for every day he lives he is exposed to the vicissitudes which rob him of pleasure, of friends, of wealth, and of life; and in the very things he had placed his firmest reliance of success, he finds his greatest source of disappointment; and to be induced to reflect in this manner, and to profit thereby in his moral and religious conduct, he ought to be often reminded of the mutability of his fortune and the mortal termination of his earthly existence.-And does not nature herself preach this lesson in all her operations, manifold as they are? Look abroad in the early spring, when the chill of winter is just passing away. Every shrub, every tree, every herb, every flower seems to feel the impulse which the renewed heat imparts to its being, and playfully it opens its leaflets to the warm fanning of the vernal breezes. Anon a rich profusion of white and pinkish blossoms covers every bough along the whole landscape, and with each hour new joys, and new life, and new beauties spring into being. But speedily the blossoms disappear, and the young fruit seems to cleave for protection closely knitted to its parent stem, as if fearing to venture alone upon the path of existence pointed out by the hand of the Creator. Soon, however, it ventures out more boldly, assumes new colours, varying from those of the leaves among which it has hitherto been nestling, and tempts you by the richness of its hue to desire it for yourselves. Thus is summer clad in all the variety of ripening fruit, as before the spring was the time of flowers and blossoms. And now the autumn steals peacefully along; the heats of the preceding season have passed away, the sun has put on a more lovely radiance, which now does not dazzle the eye as when he ruled in all his vigour of renewed strength; the damp of the morning reminds you of the approaching bleak winter, and on every branch and bough the late fruit is ready for your sustenance, ready to be gathered for your winter store. Already the fields are bared of their harvest, and the work of nature seems

now finished; the green leaves change their hue, and the dying colours, in far more beautiful tints, supply the place of the former uniformity; and before all is finished a greater degree of glory seems to be cast over every object. But this too passes away, and stripped is the forest of its loveliness, desolate are the fields, and the gardens present but the naked stalks of that which once was beautiful, and the cold and fierce blast of the snow-storm howls among the naked oaks and the dark gloomy pines; and the rivers that formerly sparkled gaily in the sunlight, and reflected like a mirror the beauty that lined their banks now lie frozen, stiff, and cold, and oppose no barrier to the daring foot that ventures on their surface. Is not this life? a true picture of what we ourselves have been, are, and will be again? We too escape from the bosom of night into being; our strength and intellect bud, open, and blossom; we too are decked out with the beauty of infantile years, with the grace and vigour of maturity; and then come on the weakness and uncertainty of declining years, the hair turns gray, the eye becomes dim, the step falters, and youthful associations are but a thing of memory; and lastly the body sinks into the cold, dark grave, and the clod of the valley rattles hollow upon the lid of the coffin, and we are left to rest till that glorious morning when the graves will be opened to immortality, and the earth will cast forth her dead; for to us too, like to the ice-covered lake or the snow-clad earth the reviving sun of righteousness will arise “with healing in his wings,” when our fetters of death and silence will be broken, and our voice will be tuneful in praises of the Most High on every mountain, in every valley, as are the forests filled with the melody of the feathered tribe when the genial warmth of spring calls them forth from their hiding places where they had passed the death-like months of the inhospitable winter. And do we understand the lesson as it should be understood? or are we indifferent, hardened and unwilling listeners? how do we cling to the present, with what a grasp do we seize what we have acquired, with what energy do we toil to gain what we desire! But what avails it all? Grant that we have accumulated, enjoyed, retained-what has it availed us? has it stilled the longing for more? killed our desire for yet farther acquisition?-How vain is such a supposition! we sigh over the past; the brightest day has never past without its overclouding shadows; we have felt, perhaps, dazzled by the too great brightness, we have been cloyed by too much sweetness. And when we have been uniformly successful, we have felt the want of excitement, and with the stimulant of necessity removed many have fallen into habits of indolence and longed for some pursuit to fill up their vacant hours.-Yes, the past is full of instruction, and teaches us that, be our lot joyous or sorrowful, there is something more than animal pleasures and tangible advantages which is to fill the void in our heart, that there is a craving which is never at rest till we have applied a remedy unconnected with outward circumstances of our existence.

Equally dark is the future. Stand at the brink of life if I may use such an expression, and cast your view into the black abyss that yawns at your feet; and does not your courage fail? do you feel the assurance of perfect safety which vanity occasionally teaches you to display before the world? You look down the sides of the gulf; they appear steep and inaccessible; you cast your eye about for a friendly hand to lead you upon the narrow path which you espy after a long search in the distance; but you seek in vain; you are alone, and still you are hurried on, you must venture on your perilous journey unaided. But you advance at length; the steepness by degrees vanishes; the narrow path is reached, and it is not so narrow as you at first imagined; and the nearer you approach the black abyss, the more it loses its gloom, the clearer becomes the water that fills it to its brim. Nor are you alone any longer as you progress; there are other pilgrims travelling with you on the same journey who have approached by different by-paths the road you are pursuing; and

you are greeted with a friendly smile. as though they had met a long-lost friend. And when as length you stand by the flood which you must pass, since there is no turning back, because the road has become impassable by new obstructions which have sprung up behind you, you find a bridge which you in your onset could not discover, and it invites you to venture over to the land beyond, which lies smiling in the distance, and whence the fragrance of undying flowers comes greeting you, even whilst you hesitate to enter on the new destiny which is before you; and when this bridge, too, is passed, as pass it you must, you can then with complacency look back upon the journey you have accomplished, and think you have travelled well on the road marked out for you.

Thus does the future appal us with its uncertainties and doubts, and thus we look with apprehension upon any event in its commencement. The mystery cannot be solved by reckless daring, nor can the dangers which we may have to encounter be lessened by our denying their existence. But since we must face them, since we must venture on our journey despite of all the difficulties, ought we not to look around to discover something which could cheer us on our lonely way, which could dispel the gloom of solitude, which could render us capable to endure the dangers and hardships which we cannot avoid? We know that our Creator is merciful, or else He would not have arrayed nature in such a garment of beauty as He has done; He must be good, for every thing has enjoyments which it obtains from his undeserved bounty. Should there then be no aid provided for man? nothing to cheer him up, and to carry him forward on his perilous way with safety?-Ay, there is! and it is even the narrow path, as it seems to us in our life's journey, which our bodily eyes discover at a great distance as dark and uninviting. In a word, it is the religion of Israel, which has been bestowed on us as the gift of God, in which we recognize his mercy and his goodness, and which eases for us the perilous journey on which from our very birth we are destined to venture. Were it that we had absolutely speaking no guide, no directing star to point out the way we should go, what would life be worth to us? better far we had never been born, better we had never seen the light of the sun than "to be in such utter darkness lying," as we would be if so miserable, so lost, sp alone. But now name me one situation in life where we are not guided, and that truly, by the grace of the Lord? In childhood we have the command to obey our father and mother; here is a plain direction for us, we cannot go astray, whilst they too obey the same precepts which have been given for our common instruction. And when death has struck down these true friends by our side, and we are absolutely alone and left to our own guidance, then have we the written Word which is to point out the path which we are to walk in. Nothing is left unnoticed, nothing is asked which we cannot accomplish. The duties may appear onerous, the sacrifices unpalatable to our obduracy; but are they impossible? are they impracticable? And to these questions we are compelled to answer with an emphatic negative; for ordinarily there is not a single reason why we cannot be obedient; and but rarely indeed, perhaps not once in a lifetime, is there a case where absolute necessity compels us to forego what we are taught as our duty.

Yet even farther does the efficiency of religion extend itself. It not only teaches us duty; but it inspires us with hope, with confidence, with certainty on the dark path which we are pursuing. It is ever ready to inspire us with courage, with perseverance, with hope; for it teaches us that all which is, is from God, all that happens, happens by his dispensation, and that, as every thing belongs to Him, and is the object of his care and benevolence, every thing must likewise tend to a beneficial purpose, to an ultimately good result. But as our wisdom is not sufficient to discover the connexion of events, as we are surrounded with the the doubts and uncertainties which attach themselves to

our being, we are certified that we must not measure the wisdom of our Maker by our puny measure of intellect, nor to decide upon events by the hasty decision which we may come to under the pressure of difficulties which beset our way. No, the Creator's wisdom is far outreaching what we have received, great as this blessing is; his view penetrates at once into all the chambers and recesses of existence, whilst to us chamber only after chamber is opened, whilst only one recess as it rises up upon the surface of existence is revealed to our eyes at one time. To us therefore a thing may at the moment appear wrong and unjust, because we only see it from our point of view; still let us but wait, and what appeared harsh and unworthy of the Goodness which rules our destiny, becomes an evidence of consummate wisdom and overshadowing mercy, and the links of events when combined present a chain of unsurpassed excellence, though each individual in its disjointed state appeared to our imperfect vision fraught with evil and deformity. It is thus that if we will only allow allow good genius, our inclination for virtue, to prevail over our evil destiny, which is at last nothing but our impulse evil, to draw us upon the narrow and uninviting path of religious trust, of religious hope, of religious duty: life will lose many of its bitter moments, and we will be filled with submission to the divine will, and joy in our lot, where otherwise we would have sunk into despondency and been a prey to gloomy melancholy. And how dreadful is that sensation of loneliness which the man without hope experiences in his pilgrimage! All light is shut out from his path, and the steep defile of existence stretches in unlimited extent before him. There is to him nothing but a rocky desert in prospect, not a green spot for his agonized vision to rest upon. It matters not in this respect with what burden the hopeless one is laden, whether it be the load of empire, the uncounted wealth of Korah, or the toilsome sufferings of the day-labourer-it is all the same; if there is no light within the heart, life is a trackless, gloomy desert, full of dangers and apprehensions which destroy every sensation of pleasure, even whilst we are filled to overflowing with what the world calls happiness. If, however, we have schooled ourselves to know the Lord as He is represented to us in his own word, what do we then experience in all our actions and trials? but that there is a benevolent Father watching over us, that nothing which we do or suffer will escape his cognizance, and that as soon as He may deem it enough the trials will be ended to give place to joy and enlargement, springing from sources over which the malevolence of enemies cannot have any control. Such a hope will sweeten solitude; for our God is near to share the lonely cell, or watch the solitary couch, though this be the couch of sickness; we feel his presence when we labour in the field, or when we toil in the hours of night by the dim candle which flickers fitfully in its socket; we will stand before Him when joy numbers us in her gladsome train, or when the tumultuous shouts of our fellow-men hail us as the exalted of the earth, and whatever is thus bestowed, be it worldly good or evil, will be received as the apportionate lot which has been assigned to us from the Father of wisdom and mercy. For, behold, there is a measure in the hand of the Lord, and He grasps the even scales of justice; and what ever is best for each man, even that is meted out to him; and whoever has well fulfilled his task, will be accepted on High, be his worldly state the humblest or the highest, it matters not, provided only that mercy and righteousness have guided his steps while he performed the pilgrimage of life. So also will retribution seize upon all who have neglected their duty, who wilfully shut out the light that would have shone for them on their path if they had but heeded it; and when they come for their recompense, vainly trusting in the carnal acts of greatness which they have achieved, they will be adjudged to that degradation which their unwilling souls have earned for their disobedience.

Let it be then understood that neither in the past nor in the future can we look with calmness and peace, if we have nothing but earthly greatness and human wisdom for our share. As we have said, the past is always reverted to with mingled feelings of sorrow and pleasure; since there is nothing like unalloyed enjoyment ever experienced on earth. And the future can only open for us a constant succession of sorrows and disappointments, if we have nothing but things of the earth to lean upon for support.-But some one may still say, that he knows that to the less wise than himself there may be danger of sorrow if he deviate from the law, which we have pointed out as the solace of our soul in this earthly life; but that to him, being more greatly endowed, there will be no danger if he even follow his own inclination. To such a one, however, if there be one among us, let us recall the words of Moses, who says of a similar case:

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“When he heareth the words of this curse, he will bless himself in his heart saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.”- Deuteronomy 29:18. To which the prophet then adds, “The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against this man, and all the curses that are written in this book will rest upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven?” This is the warning which we have received; and when has it failed? Whoever of our people that has braved the wrath, has been consumed in the great fire of purgation, which has ever and anon passed over the earth; and there is a certainty that the same result will always be, whilst the same Power bears rule over the earth and its inhabitants. Whoever is of Israel, is bound by the law of Israel, and whoever is instructed, owes allegiance to the same code which we all have been taught to obey. What matters it to our God that we are better, wiser or greater than our neighbours? Does this render us less his creatures, his servants, than we otherwise would be? And what was our distinction bestowed on us for, but to he more useful, more energetic in goodness than we could be, if less endowed? And should such a motive of thankfulness lift us up above the level of mankind, and allow us to be disobedient without the fear of wrath more than our inferior neighbours? Shall additional wealth allow us to work on the Sabbath, when our poor neighbour is in duty bound to rest? Shall our wisdom permit us to despise the word of God, and be gluttons and inebriates, when temperance is enjoined upon the simple man? Shall our beauty be any excuse why we may run not in all the excesses of our desires, when the deformed woud be scoffed for similar wrong doings? Shall our power permit us to die our hands in a brother’s blood, when to every one else human life is sacred? Can we form any reason why the learned in all the sciences may deny his God, and join himself to the worship of the stranger, simply to gain fame and wealth among the enemies of Israel, when such a course would stamp the common man as one derelict in his duty, and an outcast from the household of the blessed seed of Abraham? And whatever other motives of self-congratulation you may discover, they are equally futile as an excuse for sin with those we have just enumerated; and thus, no matter what a man may think of himself, he may be sure of one thing, that there are no valid reasons in existence, which will screen him from the righteous indignation of his justly offended Father. The punishment may be delayed; we are not to suppose that a case is forgotten, because we do not at once see the recompense following the sin; it is not every flash of lightning which scatters destruction, nor is every act necessarily to be punished in a summary manner. It is the mercy of God which waits for amendments; and should then even death

ensue ere the sin have been atoned for, the power of God is not abridged, and it still can seize its victim in the world of spirits where, at length, all the deeds of life will meet with their ultimate perfection, be this for good or for evil.

Let it also be remembered that the ways of the Lord are perfect; and therefore, there is not, there cannot be, any immunity for sin; and whatever excuses we may frame, let us be convinced that they will be sifted and carefully weighed in the tribunal where no human error can creep in to mar the decisions of unerring Justice. Let us then lay hold of religion; let us enter upon the narrow path of faith, which will grow broader and fairer as we advance on it. For then only can we look back upon the past without regret; then only can we contemplate the future without apprehension. Hope is the characteristic of the man who knows the Lord; it has consoled him in past adversity, and it illuminates the dark future as a light to his feet. But this consoling treasure must not be looked for in a worldly philosophy, which represents every thing as governed by unavoidable necessity, but in the records of revelation, where we behold God as the Supervisor and Governor of the deeds of man. It is there we behold Him as absolute Goodness, as the Father of all; and if we then feel that we are with our Father, how joyously will we go forward, how gladly will we labour, conscious as we are, that we are guarded and loved, as no mother guards and loves the nursling that sleeps tranquilly on her bosom.

These are a few reflections which naturally spring up at the close of the year; for the man who actually does feel, cannot consistently with true wisdom, let day after day mingle itself with the stream of time, without reflecting that each hour he is approaching closer to the end of his earthly career. And we say it without fear of exaggeration, that be we ever so bold and reckless, we must occasionally come to the thought that we are mortal, and fast hastening to the native earth, whence we have sprung. We know also that our soul is immortal, and that we have concerns more precious than any blessings which we can possess on this earth. Is it not then natural that we cast our thoughts to that which is so important, and inquire what we ought to do to be saved? It is; and as there is salvation provided for all men, as God has revealed himself alike to all Israel in the law which we have received: let us search in the Word, and let us endeavour to be faithful to our duty, unwavering in our hope, that we may be received in favour as servants who have done the will of their Master, as children who have trusted on to the last. And well will it be for us, if we improve properly the commencement of the year which is so soon to be with us, with its blessings and its trials; happy will we be if we have purged ourselves of transgression, and learned a lesson from the past; and glorious will be our lot, if on the day of trial the Lord will not impute iniquity to us, and find no deceit in our spirit.-And may then the Lord have mercy on us all, and inscribe us in the book of life and happiness, and decree our portion with the righteous who have done his will. Amen.

Elul 22d, Sept. 6th, 5604.

Chapter 56

S. The Consolation of Israel

Consolation of Israel. A Sermon.

Guardian of an only people, look down, we beseech Thee, from thy everlasting abode on those who fear thy name and hope for thy salvation. How long; O Lord, shall thy inheritance linger in the stranger's land? how long shall thy servants be subject to those who acknowledge not thy law? how long shall be desolate the land of promise, and waste the cities of Judea? Build, O build the walls of Jerusalem! raise up, O raise up the foundation of thy sacred house, where all Israel may assemble as one man, to adore Thee before the eyes of all the nations, that thy name may be glorified, and thy kingdom be acknowledged by all that have breath, and Thou be called One, as thou art truly the One Creator, the One Redeemer, even from the beginning until the sun shall shine no more, and this creation have vanished away and been renewed by thy will. Amen!

Brethren!

Isaiah, in his fortieth chapter, thus announces the consolation of Israel:

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"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, will say your God. Speak consolation unto the heart of Jerusalem; and call unto her, that her appointed time is fulfilled, that her iniquity is atoned for, because she hath received from the hand of the Lord twofold for all her sins."

Let us endeavour to trace out the probable meaning of the prophet by these words. In every discussion it is first requisite to find out the persons of whom the discourse is, and secondly, what it is that is announced; since it is evident that if we do not know of whom and of what we speak, we can never arrive at a satisfactory and intelligible understanding on any subject.-Isaiah was, as we all know, an Israelite, living in a community of Israelites; his residence was at Jerusalem, near the palace of the kings of Judah, in whose times he lived. He worshipped and spoke in the name of the everlasting God, the acknowledged Divinity of Israel-He who was, who is, and who will be, and announced his message in conformity to the law which was looked upon as the code delivered unto his compatriots as a special gift of Heaven. When the prophet now says: "Comfort ye, my people," he speaks as the messenger of the God whom we just mentioned, that some persons, be they who they may, are to speak words of comfort to the people of whom the prophet himself was one, since these only can be understood from the context under the term "My people," that is, the people of God. But to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding of the idea, he enlarges and amplifies the preceding word "people," by adding, "Speak consolation unto the heart of Jerusalem." Now, where was Jerusalem? evidently in Palestine. What is likely to be personified by it, since the prophet did naturally not mean so many streets and houses composing a city? evidently the persons who lived within these streets and houses composing the outward Jerusalem. Who, again, were they who lived in these streets and houses when Isaiah spoke? the descendants of Jacob whom the Lord had called Israel and Jeshurun, a people yet in existence at

this very day, under the name of Jews, Israelites, or Hebrews. If Isaiah had meant to convey any other nation, he would have defined it by some other name than Jerusalem, for fear of being misunderstood ; but in this instance the prophecy appears so distinct; so free from ambiguity, that a common, sense view can only detect the people spoken of among the inhabitants of the actual Jerusalem in the days of the prophet, who were, as all the world knows, no other than the predecessors of the modern Jews.-We know well enough that persons who arc not: descended from the stock of Israel have alleged that the text alludes to a spiritual Jerusalem, and a spiritual people of God ; but with all their ingenuity they must at last admit, that "my people" is defined by the usual application it receives in other parts of scripture, and that "Jerusalem" is to be explained by the same holy standard.

Now, let us turn to some texts anterior to Isaiah. It was said to Abram (Genesis 12:2) "And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make great thy name, and thou shalt be a blessing." Here a nation is spoken of, through the existence of which Abram, as he was then called, should become a blessing to all the families of the earth. And when Abram was yet childless, at an advanced age, we read (Genesis 15:2-4): "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is my heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This one shall not be thy heir; but he that shall come, forth out of thy own bowels shall be thy heir." Again, on another occasion (Genesis 17:21): "But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this time in the next year." Genesis 21:12 : "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called." To Isaac it was said (Genesis 24:3-4): "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham, thy father; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." When blessing Jacob, his father said (Genesis 28:3-4): "And God Almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with thee." This blessing was confirmed in a vision immediately after to its recipient when he had left his father’s house (Genesis 28:13-14): "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Near the close of Jacob’s life the promise was repeated in the following words (Genesis 44:31): "I am the God, the God of thy father, fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation." So far as regards predictions to the three great ancestors of the Jewish race. First Abraham, he had several sons; still the great nation was to be only from Isaac. Next Isaac, he had two sons; yet the blessing of Abraham was only conferred on Jacob. And lastly, Jacob was promised that all his family should be equally included in the peculiar protection of the Deity, and that all should be a blessing to the nations of the earth.-If we now descend to later times, we shall have some more elucidation of the term "my people." We read in Exodus 3:6, when the Lord sent Moses on his first mission: "Moreover, He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And continues in Exodus 3:7 : "I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters." As if this were not enough, Moses was soon after told (Exodus 4:22-23): "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my first born; and I have said unto

thee, let my son go that he may serve me: and if thou refusest to let him go, behold I will slay thy first born son." Again (Exodus 6:7): " And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be your God." Exodus 7:4 : "But Pharaoh will not hearken unto you, and I will lay my hand on Egypt, and bring forth my armies, my people, the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by means of great judgments." When the redemption here indicated had been accomplished, and God wished to manifest his glory, He sent the following promise to the people of Israel: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." And when they had sinned and worshipped an idol instead of the eternal glory, we nevertheless read (Exodus 32:14): "And the Lord bethought himself of the evil which He had thought to do unto his people." We could multiply texts to exhibit beyond the remotest doubt that throughout the Bible the same class of persons is designated by the terms "my people," "God's children," as by the other terms, "sons of Israel," "children of Jacob," "Jeshurun," "the children of Abraham," "the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." In interpreting, therefore, any passage in which any of these or similar names are found, we must be convinced from the uniformity of the language of Scripture, that the bodily descendants of Israel are understood, and if the event spoken of be one which was to happen to those who were to come after the speaker's immediate time, we must conclude farther that the prophets or writers of the prediction looked forward to lineal descendants from their own contemporary Israelites, who were then designated also as the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, these being respectively the names of the country and the capital where these people lived and dwelt. To understand by Jerusalem in the same manner any thing else than the veritable capital of Palestine, would suppose that there were a standard of explanation different from what the contemporaries of the prophets had. Yet if we search the whole Scriptures, we shall not discover a single trace that the people who inhabited Jerusalem ever dreamed that its name imported any thing beyond their own beautiful city; and when, therefore, something was asserted of this name, they naturally could apply it only to the streets and houses which composed their chief city, or to its inhabitants and their descendants. In this connexion permit me to call your attention to the unfairness of the translators of the Bible in the English language in placing headings over the chapters and pages which are not warranted by the context. Independently of occasional erroneous views of the text which were transfused honestly, we will admit, into their version, though it is singular enough that these errors usually occur where some peculiar doctrine is to be favoured: the learned divines who furnished us with what is styled the common English version undertook, without the remotest shadow of right, to place headings, as they are called, over the commencement of every chapter in the whole Scriptures, which the uninformed are but too apt to take for a translation of a part of the original. Now, the first inspection of the Hebrew Bible presents no superscriptions of the chapters and pages, and this should then satisfy us that the whole of these annotations are without any, even the smallest authority. Yet it is but too true that many an error has been fostered and called into life by these arbitrary annotations of the English translators, who, for reasons best known to themselves, endeavoured to make it appear that the Bible furnished evidence, of one sort or another, for their peculiar religious views. And when any one denies the deduction which the Nazarene world draws from the Bible, because the words of Scripture do not say what is alleged of them: he is referred to the headings, which clearly point out the forced construction. Were it that all our people, men, women, and children, could read the word of God in its original text, this evil would be of small moment; but unfortunately there are thousands who have no knowledge of religion except what they obtain through means of translations furnished by gentiles, a knowledge

highly valuable in itself, and in the absence of more accurate information, ardently to be desired: still it may become cause of error, because people so situated have no means of knowing what is purely scriptural and what is not. A translation conducted throughout by Jews, honest and unbiased in favour of one unscriptural system or the other, might in a measure remedy the evil; yet even here there would be room for error, a defect to which our best intended endeavours are constantly exposed. But now no such Jewish Bible in the English language does exist, though it is to be hoped this evil will not be always a reproach to us; yet whilst it exists we must not omit to caution the unwary against the poison which they may insensibly imbibe from a work which ought to present nothing but the unadulterated word of God. Let it then be understood that no notes, marginal references, or head-lines, are part and parcel of Scripture, but merely the additions of uninspired men, which may or may not be true, and can have, therefore, no farther authority than what probability of the context gives them. When we now inspect an English Bible with its notes and headings, it is quite an argument not only in favour of the truth of Nazarene doctrines in general, but also of one or more peculiar sects in particular, for no other reason than that the translators belonged to these divisions, and found it convenient to give strength to their received notions by the aid of forced constructions. We are not going to enter this day upon a review of the English Bible; but merely to state general facts, and we will rest the proof of what we have advanced upon the general notoriety of its truth. But if we discard the superfluous human additions to the Word, even taking the translation as it stands, the unbiased reader will not find the support in favour of doctrines opposed to Judaism for which a biblical warrant is so lately claimed, since the words themselves, as they read in the translation, do not bear the construction which a forced application, such as is presented in the various notes and comments, has given to them.

What I have just been saying may appear tiresome and irrelevant to our subject; but you will see the propriety, nay, the necessity thereof, if you merely take in your hands the common version upon any Bible text, and especially upon the one we have taken for to-day’s discussion. The heading is in these words: "1. The promulgation of the gospel. 3. The preaching of John Baptist;" and the pages are headed, "The promulgation of the gospel." I refer you to the book itself for the continuation of the contents of the chapter forty of Isaiah according to the Anglican church, and will merely limit myself, for brevity’s sake, to the part quoted. Our text is: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, will say your God. Speak consolation unto the heart of Jerusalem," &c. But what is understood by the gospel? The annunciation of the creed of the gentile Nazarenes, which took place at the eve of the downfall of our home and temple under the assaults of the Romans.

We have exhibited what is meant by "my people;" they were those who were to be comforted, and no other person or persons can be substituted in their place. Now, if the promulgation of the gospel could be meant, which took place not to the Jews, but to their destroyers, the words ought to have been: "Comfort ye the enemies of my people, will say the God who has rejected Israel," since the downfall of Israel by the building up of the gentile world must presuppose that the former are no longer the peculiar and chosen people. Now the prophet speaks in the future, not as the English version has it, "saith," but "will say your God." It evidently means, now, that the comforting, whatever be understood thereby, was not to take place immediately, but at a distant day, a future at least till after the death of the prophet, for he clearly announced a dispersion of the people of God; at least those whom he called so, and saw the partial fulfillment of the denunciation. To this people, sinning at the time of the prophecy, is applied, at a future period, the name of "my people,"

and the Deity calls himself in reference to them, "your God." If, now, the heading of the English Bible could be true at all, it would be requisite that the gospel, a term well enough understood by us at the present day, must have been announced to the Israelites at its first promulgation, and as "comfort" is attached to the message, it needs must have been one which the people received as a consolation and happy tidings from their God. But, nothing of the kind do our opponents allege to have occurred, and I refer to them, because our own history is silent on the subject. The followers of the Nazarene say, that he appeared at a period of great distress among those whom Isaiah calls, in the name of God, "my people," that he and his disciples addressed the identical gospel to them upon every possible occasion, and that neither were the Jews comforted by this message, nor were they continued as "God's people," for they rejected the gospel and its adherents, and their national glory was cast down into the dust, and the goodness of God especially bestowed upon the followers of the gospel, which according to the text ought to have been a comfort to the nation of whom Isaiah was one.-But we contend that, unless there be an error in the definition we have given to the words "my people," and "Jerusalem," the heading of the common version is totally erroneous and untenable, and the pretended accomplishment upon foreign nations totally at variance with the evident signification of the very words employed by the translators of the Bible. Yet this is but one of many misstatements and forced constructions which are daily presented to our acceptance; and despite of their palpable weakness great astonishment is manifested that we Jews should be so blinded as not to see what is not to be seen, and to refuse accepting as fact what common sense compels us to say is neither founded in reason nor consonant with Scripture. The nature of a public address does not permit us to dwell any longer on this part of our subject, and we must turn to the second point of our inquiry: "What is the nature of the announcement which the prophet makes to the people of Israel, whom we have proved to be the intended recipients of the promised blessing?" Let the words speak for themselves. We know that all the threatenings of evil for disobedience unto Israel came through the prophets whom God sent to speak in his name: and now, when a change is announced as impending, the same persons are called upon to speak in a different language; and therefore says the text: When the time shall come for the termination of the sorrows and tribulations which followed each other thick and fast during centuries of transgression, the spirit of God will tell his faithful messengers to speak no longer of woe, and sorrow, and destruction, but to address comfort to the hearts that have mourned so long; to assure them that the punishment was not an evidence of rejection from his grace, but an, earnest that their God was watching their iniquity, and visited them with the rod of correction, in order only that their transgression might be atoned for, agreeably to his attributes of mercy which, whilst guaranteeing leniency and a long withholding of wrath, at the same time warn us not to rely upon long indulgence with the idea of impunity. And should the people say, "We have suffered more than any other nation, we have been scourged for our faith, scorned for our hopes, spurned because we bore the name of Israel:" they will be referred to their terrible sins, to their stubbornness, which would not listen to all the warnings full of love and compassion which were addressed to them during their days of prosperity, morning and evening, by those whose wisdom and deep insight into futurity proved them to have been inspired by the supreme Wisdom, and armed with fortitude by the power of the Almighty; and they will be told that these messengers they scorned, these prophets they slew, these seers they scourged and cast into loathsome dungeons. Was, it not meet then that similar trials should befall the people whilst they remained rebellious? and what more fining instruments could the Lord choose than the arms of the gentiles,

who had not known his name, and had not learned of his law? But with the accomplishment of the deserved retribution, the goodness of the Lord will return and visit Jerusalem with his favour, and its inhabitants and those who sprung from them with his mercy; and this is the comfort which is to be breathed into their hearts, this the trust which is to animate their souls.-And farther says the Spirit: "A voice cries in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make level in the desert a highway for our God."

Needs God a highway for his own purposes? Not He; but they whom He will bring together from the ends of the earth; they will hasten over hills and valleys, through inhabited lands and deserts, over continents and seas, to crowd together into the deserted streets of Jerusalem, into the waste places of Palestine, so that in every city and hamlet of Judea the joyful exclamation will resound: "Here, behold your God!" What does this announcement mean? is it a spiritual thing? a quasi reign of peace? a cessation of strife? the prevalence of liberality? of freedom from religious persecutions from gentile masters? If this had been the intention of the Spirit, He would so have announced it: "Behold, a time will come when you, my people, shall be driven from your land and live strangers in countries not yet known, in islands not yet discovered. You will for many years be hated; your belief in one God will expose you to many persecutions; but you shall not he consumed; for a time will come when no one shall persecute the other for opinion’s sake, peace shall be every where prevailing, and you, children of Israel, shall then live among the nations peacefully and securely, you shall have temples everywhere, and be treated as citizens in every country where you may live; you shall forget Jerusalem, and no longer sigh for its desolation, because the whole world shall be your Palestine, every city your Zion, and every synagogue your temple."

We maintain that were the consolation merely this spiritual restoration, the Bible would have so expressed it; the prophets were not so poor in language, nor the Spirit so short in knowledge, but that there were ample means to have declared the future after the manner we have indicated, as easily as the reverse has been done. It is unfortunate for us, that there are men who are ashamed of the singularity of the Jewish belief, as they have received it from their fathers; they fancy that it is not an evidence of enlightenment to look forward to a Jewish country, to be governed by Jewish laws. They believe that they must bring the sacrifice of their hopes of future glory as an acceptable offering to the countries of their sojourning. But how short-sighted are such men! they gain nothing in the esteem of the gentiles by their denial of their hopes in a glorious restoration, and they draw down the wrath of Heaven for their daring unbelief. Do they really think that an enlightened, liberal man, who is no Israelite, does not see that these new doubts, sprung up in the course of a few years of ease, enjoyed in a few countries where not a twentieth part of all Israel resides, are another exemplification of the truth of Moses, who said, "And Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked?" Do they imagine that it is a blessing to collective Israel that they are scattered all over the world, citizens in a few towns, tolerated in a few more, and spurned in nearly every other place of their sojourn? Do they think that for such a purpose God redeemed us from slavery, wrought so many miracles to preserve us amidst persecutions, that at length we might play, so to say, a secondary part in a state of universal peace, an insignificant handful in every spot amidst the peaceful reign, of liberal principles, of a qualified adoption of the law of Moses? Do they really imagine that the Searcher of hearts sees not the unbelief that is in their spirit, their anxiety to escape from the burthen of religion by their spiritualizing the text of Scripture to suit their notions of truth and futurity? Woe, woe! that such men should be numbered in Israel! woe to the day that they have

raised their head in rebellion against the Lord and his anointed! But their counsel cannot prevail! Israel will rise above these doubts and fears; but in the meantime the affections are estranged, and dissentions are sown in the midst of our families, and divisions, fearful and sinful, fill with dismay the lover of his God and of the welfare of his people. Yet the Lord will protect his flock against this danger too. He who arrested the sword when it flashed in the light of the rising sun, and was not sated with slaughter when the moon slowly ascended in the eastern horizon, will in his infinite mercy avert this cup of sorrow from our lips, and suffer not the harmony of Israel to be broken by means of the artful errors which the unthinking wish to propagate.

No, brethren! the prophets speak of a literal Jerusalem, of bodily assembling of the scattered outcasts of Judah; and they mean these ideas only, or else they would have used different language, which was amply at their command. A spiritual regeneration of the sons of Jacob, and a reign of universal peace (of which more on another occasion) are to a certainty included in the predictions; but this does not say that the accomplishment of these things is not to be effected at the bodily Jerusalem, at the very temple on Moriah, by the very personage whom we hope for, the Messiah David, the son of David ben Yishai from Bethlehem. Ay, we doubt; the day is too far distant for us? we are tired of waiting? But, says Isaiah: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God will stand for ever."

Truly the earth will put on her mantle of green when the early spring wakes nature again into life; the flowers will enamel the meadows, and the blossoms will deck with beauty the trees of the field, when the sun acquires strength in his progress towards summer; but again the storm blows with a hot breath over the landscape, and withered is the grass, and faded is the flower; and man, too, will bloom in infancy, and shoot up into manhood, and bear fruit and prosper in his works; but age creeps over him, his frame sickens, his limbs quiver before the weight of years, and his spirit flies from him, and the sod of the valley covers his frame, and the worm becomes his associate. Yet with all this the WORD of God neither fades nor withers; it sees changes of seasons and of centuries pass along in rapid succession, but it awaits the sure fulfillment which the mind of the Supreme has assigned fur its triumphant establishment, for its indestructible rule over the destinies of man. And has not our history proved to us that God is true and his word abiding for ever? Therefore do we hope, and look forward with prayer and longing to the hour when the glory of God shall appear, and all flesh see that his mouth has spoken it.

Equally erroneous with the spiritualizing of doubting Jews is the view of the Nazarenes who apply the verse "A voice crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord," to the person known in their history as John the Baptist. This is the first time in my lectures that I have ever spoken directly of the characters of the Nazarene faith, but it is unavoidable in our present elucidation of Scripture. He called himself "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," as the Nazarene records say; but this certainly is not a satisfactory fulfillment of the passage under discussion. It is not correct to render the passage "the .voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,' because ■■■ is the nominative to the verb ■■■■ and therefore means, "A voice crieth in the wilderness;" the objective case follows in the words, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" that is, the voice of God, in prophecy, calls out to the, world to make ready a passage for the redeemed and comforted sons of Jerusalem to appear again before their God, to worship Him in their ancient limits as of old; for they only require a highway in the desert to resort to their former dwellingplaces, which are, as the vision continues, to

be filled with worshippers, of whom it can be said, "Behold, here is your God." It is evident that with the voice crying in the wilderness there must be a rebuilding of Judea's cities. But was this the case when John appeared, granting there lived such a man? No; soon after the land became a prey to hosts of enemies that broke down the glory of Israel. And since then?-O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! waste are thy palaces, ruined are thy gates, and thy temple is a desolation! Cities of Judah, cities of Judah! your joy is gone! the grass grows in your avenues, and thorns climb over your sunken habitations! Your water-courses are choked by the sand of the desert, and destruction frowns triumphant over your battlements! Sons of Israel; sons of Israel! ye wander in every land, ye are strangers in every clime! ye are a by-word to the gentiles who know not your God! your heart is heavy, and vain now are your breathings for help that has not come. But rouse thee, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thy God will come in his might! rejoice, ye cities of Judah, for your Restorer has spoken! confide, ye sons of Israel, for your Redeemer comes, his reward is with Him, and his recompense before Him. Long have ye hoped for his coming; long have the wastes desired his salvation; and, behold it has come to pass what He has foretold, and peace dwells within our land, rejoicing and salvation in our palaces.

It is therefore refreshing that in every year, in every land, in every town, they assemble to fast and pray who in their hearts are mourners for Zion; and well do ye act, brothers in exile, brothers in hope, to ask for joy only in the restoration of your holy faith on its ancient foundation, and surely the Lord will reward your confiding trust; and may He give you, and all those who await his coming, glory instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the robe of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness, and may you be called the trees of righteousness, the plantation of the Lord for his glory. Amen.

Aug. 11, 1843.

Ab 15, 5603

Chapter 57

S. The Corner Stone

The Corner Stone. A Sermon, by the Rev. S. M. Isaacs, spoken at the laying of the corner-stone of the Synagogue Shaaray Tefilla. To the Editor of the Occident:-- At the earnest solicitation of a number of your subscribers, I hereby forward the address I delivered at the laying of the corner stone for our new Synagogue in Wooster Street, and, as it may interest your readers, I at the same time forward a descriptive view of the contemplated structure, in order that both may appear in your valuable periodical.

Yours, S. M. Isaacs.

94 Elm Street, Tamuz 15th, 5606.

[illegible]

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and between Shen, calling it Eben Ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.-- 1 Samuel 7:12. My worthy Hearers,--

We have this day performed a pleasing, solemn, and sacred duty; we have placed the corner stone of an edifice, which we are about erecting to the glory of the God of Israel, and for the benefit of his creatures. The occasion which has brought us together, although not in itself a religious work, not being prescribed by any set form of prayer, nor by any stated duty in our formulary, is nevertheless in itself of so devout a character, and pregnant with such great importance to the present generation, and to those hidden in the bosom of futurity, that we would fain hope there is no one among those here assembled, whose heart will not be readily raised to the great and merciful Father of the universe, to the supreme and munificent Disposer of events, to give Him thanks for having witnessed this heart-stirring scene. We know not whether your feelings are duly spiritualized at the ceremony you have witnessed. Oh! that we could reveal to you the state of our own heart; you would require no address to arouse your soul to God; for within its secret recesses you would find recorded, as if engraven with a seraph’s hand, the thanks we owe to our Creator, for having permitted us to live to participate in the solemnities of the day,--the gratitude we feel to our flock, for having selected us to perform the leading duty, and the veneration with which we are impressed for the founders of this great and glorious Republic, for having made civil and religious liberty the keystone of their national arch. When we look back and remember that there was a time when bigotry and superstition fettered the minds of men, when, without any fault on their part, the house of Israel, instead of boldly declaring their principles, were compelled to conceal their faith--when the current of prejudice ran against them, and sought, by sword and fagot, to cause them to renounce a faith dear to their heart’s core--when memory, with reverted eye, looks back at our chequered past, and then contemplates our present halcyon state, beholding men of other faiths assembled to notice our ceremonies, to wish success to our undertakings, and to cheer us in every attempt we make to improve the condition of our people--when these various feelings act upon the mind at all times sensitive to gratitude, must not

the result be a united anthem of thankfulness to the Father of the world? Feeling assured that you all enjoy this holy state of mind, let us devote our time to improve your feeling. The practice of setting stones is not confined to the Synagogue, but has at all times existed to mark special events, and to record acts which might otherwise be effaced from the memory of man. The first corner-stone that ever was laid, we have Scripture to testify, was placed by the Divine Architect of the universe. In chap. 37:6 v. of the book of Job, the following question is put by the Supreme to the Oriental philosopher: "Who laid the corner stone of the earth, when the morning stars sang together, and all the children of God sang for joy?" The Eastern Patriarch Jacob laid the corner stone which, tradition asserts, was the spot where the Temple of the Lord ultimately reared its turrets to the Orient sky, as an ensign to the world. Joshua, just previous to his death, after exhorting Israel to duty, and when they had given their adhesion to the principles he had expounded, "took a great stone, and set it up under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord, and Joshua said, 'This stone shall be a witness unto you, lest you deny the Lord.'" Thus the Prophet Samuel, in the motto we have selected for our address, after taking a retrospective glance at the dreary past, reviewing the wars Israel had with the Philistines, and after having succeeded in bringing her people to the service of God, restoring tranquillity to their border, bringing them to Mizpeh, where there was an altar and a house of prayer, "he took a stone, called the name of it Eben Ezer, saying, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.'" Complying then with this ancient custom, ripened by experience, we have this day adopted the practice for our Synagogue, to be known by the name and title of ■■■■ ■■■■■, or Gates of Prayer; and, although we give no name to stones, yet when the building shall have reared its head in the Occidental Hemisphere, it will speak emphatically, "that hitherto the Lord has indeed helped us." The immediate object of performing the ceremony, cannot be otherwise than beneficial, not for posterity alone, as is usually imagined, but for those here assembled. Youth and inexperience will have a sure guarantee that the seed of Judaism here sown, will blossom and bear fruit in the courts of God; old and withered age will feel assured that the principles acted in through life by them, will be faithfully carried out when they have been gathered to their forefathers. If then such be the impression that the ceremony will leave on the assembled multitude, how overpowering must it be on the humble individual selected to perform the principal custom? Yes, ye patrons and friends! ye fathers and mothers in Israel! be your minds ever so expansive; your hearts ever so generous; your souls ever so beatified, you cannot imagine what our feelings are on the present hallowed occasion. Sympathize with our weakness whilst we endeavour faintly to portray the sentiments now burning within us, and which insist on living utterance; we feel a desire to repay you and your children for your kindness; we swear, here, under the wide expanse of heaven, to be a faithful shepherd to the flock left to our charge; they shall graze on pasturage from which they shall feed ■■■ ■■■■■ and live for ever; their drink shall be from the well-spring of life; from the law of God will we draw water, and proclaim, ■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ "Lo, all ye who are thirsty, go to the water;" we pledge ourselves at all times and seasons to instruct the pure principles of Judaism, contradistinguished from that species of empiricism with which the modern mind would delude you; we feel a religious desire that the humble abilities at our disposal shall be devoted to elevate you religiously and morally to the rank you are destined to occupy amongst the nations of the earth; and when it shall please the Giver of all good to summon us home, the silver trowel you were pleased to present to us, will be left as an heirloom to our children, to satisfy them as they walk through the rugged paths of this existence, that their father's life was not altogether

worthless, but that he must have been of some trifling service, that so distinguished a mark of approbation should have been awarded him by the unanimous desire of the congregation he was fortunate enough to serve. Yes, my hearers, this and similar mementos which we have had of your approval, will go far to animate us on all occasions to serve you and yours, and to disarm death of its terrors. But let us leave this painful subject, as it regards what may be considered a personal matter, and proceed to discuss more important themes. Having now laid the corner stone, it will doubtless be expected that we should speak of the cause that leads us to build a new Synagogue. Where the wound is recent, it is inexpedient to puncture the part, lest it should bleed afresh. We therefore shall be readily excused if we abstain from making any remarks which can in the remotest degree cause a pang here or elsewhere; it must suffice if we assert, that in your late home you were desirous of maintaining three cardinal principles of Synagogue government, Respectability, Order, and Devotion, and that you will all labour to see these flourish in the new habitation you are building for the glory of God. You may well exclaim the prophet of old, "Until now God has helped us." If, for a moment, you reflect that but a twelvemonth has elapsed since but scarcely fifty in numbers, organized to fit up a temporary building in Franklin Street, for divine worship, and together with others who joined your ranks, have been there but a year, having an annual income of $4000: it is but natural that you should have evinced an alacrity to build a structure more suitable for the God of Israel, where there should be fitting accommodations for all whom you may accept to join the standard you have unfurled, and who now seek admission in vain from the crowded state of your present shrine. We must confess that you have in so short a time gone beyond our most ardent expectations, to undertake the Herculean task of building so splendid an edifice. Understand then, my hearers, that your success will mainly depend on carrying out the principles of building for the cause of God and your religion. The Psalmist observes, "If the Lord does not build a house, it is in vain for its builders to toil;" implying that if you are actuated by feelings of vain-glory in the undertaking, you will fail in your enterprise. The sole object of building a religious edifice should be for prayer to God, instruction to man, not for man-worship, for the clod of earth to deify himself, but a place for the earthworm to pour forth his heart’s grief, to seek his God, and to spiritualize his own condition.

Let us then hope that as the corner stone has been laid in peace, peace and harmony will be the distinguishing features of your fabric, that they will be admired above all the architectural beauties which will ornament the building. Order must again be your next object; the world was created in order, "and the Lord in his holy temple! the whole earth must be silent." Those who are elected as wardens and trustees must be the conservators of order, as they are especially appointed guardians of the courts of God; to them is confided the noble task of rendering their communities great and happy. It is to be lamented that this subject should have to be mooted in the present age; and justice to the present efficient officers affords us the opportunity of awarding them our meed of approval, that they have well discharged their duty, rendered comparatively easy from the circumstance that the congregation, being enlightened, require no stimulus to cause them to observe order.

Next, decorum to insure devotion; this must be maintained at all hazards. It is truly painful to state that for years past our Synagogues, with some laudable exceptions, have been left without any one to raise his voice to warn, direct, and guide. Spellbound by apathy on one hand, and soul-ruining superstition on the other, the prophetic monition might aptly be applied to them: "Their

heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty." Powerful indeed must that agency be by whose felicitous influence the dispersed of the flock may be won back to duty, and intellectuality once again shed its cheering light over the House of Israel. This can only be accomplished by expounding the word of God in the vernacular of the country in which we are destined to dwell. Oh, it is heart-rending to reflect on the unspeakable mischief effected by that hateful system which has actually banished the religious teacher from the Synagogue, and sacrilegiously exchanged his functions for the operatic display of profane song and its ignorant concomitants; it is this polity which has taken the enlightened Jew from our midst, and rendered him callous to a system, which, stripped of its weeds, is the finest tree in the world's religious garden. Let then every thing be done to assure the well-thinking Israelite that in the fare we are about erecting, our first care will be that "the small, still voice" may be heard; that the shrine be devoted to its legitimate sphere--prayer, that balm to a troubled heart, that restorative by which the mind becomes improved. Prayer elevates the child of sorrow above the troubles and annoyances of this sublunary existence. It is indeed the anchor upholding the soul, amid the wild raging storms of this probationary life. Prayer does not mean that clamorous vociferation, which makes up in noise what it wants in spirit, which at best is but lip-service, not devotion; prayer, my hearers, is never better felt in all its potent energies, than when the eyes o'erflow with tears, which force their way in copious succession; for they cleanse the soul from sin and pollution. The eye, crystallized by the silent tear, emitted from the depths of the heart, best sees its true spiritual condition, and the heart has a foretaste of heaven. Such tears, too precious to be lost, are converted by the angels of grace into the choicest jewels for the diadem of Sovereign Mercy. "Thou placest these tears in thy casket," says the sweet singer of Israel. But why enlarge on the importance of prayer? What health is to the body--what calmness is to the troubled deep--what serenity is to the day--that is prayer to man.

Having now stated the leading essentials--order and decorum--to secure devotion, let us all co-operate in carrying them into execution; and if any there are who may be opposed to our principles of Synagogue government, let them depart from amongst us. We are about building to the service of God, not for the gratification of carnal feelings; for the welfare of Israel collectively, not for the benefit of individual desires. You have this day commenced a noble pile; have a care that, as it progresses, your hearts and souls be directed to the Father of mercy, in thankfulness that He has given you "strength to do this work;" He has "blessed your basket and store;" He has given you the means to "open wide your hand;" He has prospered your industry; He has put health on your cheeks, peace on your domestic hearth, and wealth in your purse; He has placed you on an equality in political rights with your brethren of another faith; and gratitude lovingly discharged should cause you day by day to watch the progress of the building, until it be completed for the earthworm to make known his wants. Let there be no contention about empty honours; but with one accord join hand and heart to support the fabric you have so laudably begun.

"Until now God hath helped you." You live in a land fair and free, amongst a people who regard you with reverence, because in you they behold living witnesses of the truth of Revelation. The towering eagle bears you on her wing, religiously guarding you against the shafts of malevolence and the arrows of tyranny. You have no Ghetto to enclose you by night, nor Autocrat to alarm you by day; but beneath the broad arch of heaven you may boldly proclaim your faith in one God, and no other; you may proclaim it on the hilltops that the leading articles of your faith are a firm reliance on the God of Abraham, a full belief in the law of Moses, and in the prophetic writings, in future

reward and punishment, in the coming of the Messiah, in your restoration to the land of promise, and in the immortality of the soul. But whilst you at all times maintain your principles, you must at the same time scrupulously avoid giving offence to those of another creed; you must cast no aspersion on them; but, contrariwise, you are bound to respect, nay, to love them; you must in your lives preach and practise that true toleration you claim consistently for yourselves, without in aught compromising your duty, or militating against the orthodoxy of that religion which particularly enjoins you "to seek the peace and welfare of the city wherein you dwell." Whilst thus you act, whilst you feel that you are all children of the same God, that one Father has created you, you will become impressed with the conviction that religion and virtue are the universal blessings of mankind, and that, they ought not to be confined to sect or lineage; but that as our heavenly Father lets the sun shine to illumine the world, even so you acknowledge that virtue and religion ought to unite all mankind in one sacred bond of brotherhood. Whilst thus you feel, whilst thus you act, your future Synagogue will indeed be God's house; but if for a moment you depart from these sacred and well-defined principles, then the Synagogue will lose its utility, and the words of Habakkuk will become strictly applicable: "The stone out of the wall shall cry out for redress, and the rafters out of the beam shall respond to the cry," Why did they build this house? what avail the four walls without the spirit? what imports the edifice, if its legitimate occupant, piety, is not found therein? Let us hope that this monition may never be directed to us, but that we shall at all times act in the true spirit of religion; that, like the material of which the Synagogue will be built, we shall be cemented in union; like columns, let us not only support, but grace the building we are now commencing. Let us act thus, and the God who has hitherto blessed us will aid our future efforts.

Before we conclude this tedious dissertation, we would crave your attention for a few moments. The question has been frequently urged, What system do we intend to pursue as it regards our forms and ceremonies? Do we intend to add to or diminish from that which has withstood the shock of ages? To this interrogation we answer unhesitatingly, that we shall adhere strictly and religiously to that laid down for Synagogue government in Israel's code of laws, as handed down to us from a long list of pious ancestry; to that we shall adhere with scrupulosity; every care will be taken that no inroads be made on the sacred and inviolable; the ceremonial laws, which some consider as irksome or unnecessary, must not be slighted; strictly symbolical, they bring the more prominent features of our sacred faith fully to view, shadowing forth those grand truths which otherwise would most certainly be far beyond vulgar conception or general comprehension; they are indispensable, and their abrogation would endanger our whole religious polity. Notwithstanding, we would not be understood to advocate all ceremonies alike. Alas! their abuse has done much serious mischief; men have vainly made the means the end, blindly observing empty forms, without that correspondent feeling which alone gives life to pious observances. This system we shall endeavour to provide against, by doing all in our power to stem the evil, by giving less to please man, more to exalt our God, by abridging the complimentary offerings, and by distributing the honours of the Synagogue as practised by the Portuguese congregations, and already acted on by ourselves. Our whole system will be as originally pursued by Ezra--prayer and instruction. Regarding the first, we have said sufficient of its importance, and we will merely add, that we shall not detract from its sanctity to attract and please the ear of man. Our whole energies will be devoted to address the God of Heaven, not to captivate the worldling. For this purpose, pulpit oratory will be firmly established. This is no innovation, as some imagine; the Synagogue was originally the place for instruction; and the public streets by the water-gate of Jerusalem bore

evidence of the eloquence of Ezra and other saints of antiquity. We learn from collateral authority, that even in the courts of the Temple, men, women, and children assembled to be instructed in the leading essential doctrines of their faith; and by the efficient discharge of that duty we hope to promote the eternal interests of those committed to our charge, bringing all within the pale under the select and sacred influences of virtue and truth. In conclusion, let us all that are here assembled exercise constant vigilance in walking in the ways and testimonies of God. Judging our houses in equity, guarding well each avenue, we shall co-operate in works of worth like our fathers. The stone which this day has been laid may be emblematic of future glory, when you and I, my hearers, and others who have aided us in this religious enterprise, shall have been called from this transitory state, to render an account at the bar of heaven; when you, my young friends, now smiling with the buoyancy of youth and inexperience, shall have passed your lives in usefulness, and your mortal remains shall have been consigned to the silent dust; when myriads of souls shall have been saved, through the instrumentality of religion, taught within that shrine of which the stone is a silent witness, containing within its bosom the FAITH of Israel, its Pentateuch, and Liturgy, its past chequered state, and its future ripeness in glory. When centuries shall have passed, and the miniature Temple follows the way of all earthly materials, perhaps then some child of the morning, actuated by feelings of curiosity, or animated by a nobler desire, may unclasp the volume of the past, and reawaken bygone scenes, by taking from the heart of a stone the spirit of former days, and as the tear trickles down his cheek at the remembrance of the mutability of human affairs, its course may be impeded by the tear of gratitude, for the noble zeal you have evinced for the welfare of Israel. The few years, then, that are allotted to us on earth, let us devote them to those hallowed purposes--religion to God, peace to man. Every bard fired by genius has sung of the potent and lasting influences of those virtues, by whose enlightened renovation the earth shall be replete with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the caverns of the deep. Then in unison of sentiment we shall utter one language, adopt one resolution, worship one God. The sacred edifice, reared on the ruins of superstition and sin, shall be firmly established on the holy mount, to which all nations shall gather, and the lambent glory of the Eternal God be our everlasting light. May this speedily be accomplished, and let all say Amen.

Chapter 58

S. The Dangers and Defences of Judaism

The Dangers and Defences of Judaism. by Isaac Leeser A Sermon.

How great are thy mercies, O Lord, which Thou bestowest upon all that has life; to the hungry Thou provident food, to the helpless Thou providest salvation, and to the strong Thou grantest their strength, and to those who are in affluence Thou hast been the benefactor through whom they have acquired wealth; and kings by thy sufferance do rule, and dominion appertains to nations through thy bestowal. In truth, from Thee is all which we enjoy, and nothing is granted unto us which Thou hast not ordained. We therefore call on Thee at all times and for whatever we need; we supplicate Thee in our distresses, and are grateful to Thee in our joys, well knowing that Thou art nigh to hear and to bless, to approve and to save. This has ever been the experience which thy servants had in their pilgrimage; it was this which kept them erect in sorrow, which sustained them faithful in prosperity; it was this which has guided thy people Israel from their going out from Egypt even unto this day.-O! do now manifest thy power as Thou hast done of old, and render us conscious of thy greatness and mercy; as were our fathers when thy mighty arm redeemed them from bondage; so that our souls may be made free from the trammels of sin and corruption, and we be enabled to travel onward on the path wherein the righteous have ever walked, to thy glory and our justification. Amen.

Brethren, No doubt you have often reflected on the singular spectacle you must exhibit to the world at large, who see not with your eyes, nor hear with your ears. They are the many, nations great and powerful, intelligent and wise, governed by all kinds of laws, living in every climate and soil; yet they are different from you, and much as they vary from each other, they are all surprised that you should not become like some one of them. Men from among you have been appealed to, time and again, to forsake our standard, because of the hopelessness of our situation; but they have tauntingly replied, “Whom shall we join, since you all claim to be in the only road of salvation, and each one of you insists that he alone is right, and that perdition is the lot of all who differ from his respective dogmas.” Still your opinions of the contradictions around you, and the absolute impossibility possibility you labour under of making a choice among the religions offered to your acceptance, even if you were inclined to forsake Judaism, do not weaken in the least the astonishment of mankind at your existing as you do, a separate and distinct nation, strongly marked in all the walks of life, and tinging as it were the current of human existence with the peculiar colouring which is so entirely your own. Voyagers tell us, that in approaching the mouth of some mighty river, like that stream which gathers in its bosom those floods that sweep down from the western side of the Allegheny mountains, and those that flow in their solitude and distant courses from the eastern declivity of the rocky Andes, they can perceive distinctly the current of the river as it rushes forth far into the deep bed of the fathomless ocean, remaining unmingled with the briny fluid whilst the impetus lasts which the river has acquired in its prolonged course, swallowed up as it is by the waste around, yet distinct and marked in its nature. Even so, Israelites, are you; your state was dissolved; in its downward course it was compelled to mingle with the great mass, the ocean, so to say, of mankind; and yet your characteristic was not; is not

destroyed, and onward you flow amidst the surrounding waves, and you are seen, and felt, and known, as the offspring of that race which took its rise far away in the gloomy days of antiquity, and which has rolled on, like the river, occasionally expanding into a wide lake, shone on by the bright sun of prosperity, then narrowed down by approaching cliffs into a contracted channel, overhung to darkness by trailing shrubs and trees, which almost hide your course; still always flowing on, flowing on, true to your source, diminished perhaps in volume to the outward eye, but flowing in a deeper channel, the same now as from the beginning, and charged with the same waters which you drew from the first spring, the origin of your being, from Ur in Chaldea. Is this not a wonder? something to astonish the world around? And do you feel surprise that you are regarded with suspicion, with little love, by those who differ from you, who understand not your mission, who are ignorant of your modes of thought, and the influences which urge you on?-Still, even the calmest of us are occasionally staggered at the perseverance of the malignity which pursues us, even in this land of liberty, where all religions are alike in the eye of the law, where the constitution knows of no difference between Jew and gentile. The more surprising is all this, since they who differ from us themselves acknowledge, that no more than the river which runs its glorious course over many thousand miles, with its hundreds of tributaries, can with truth be said to have poured forth itself on its blessed mission, have the sons of Israel chosen their own portion; for equally with the powers of nature, which work ceaselessly and without noise in their calling, have they received their appointment to go forth over the face of the human world, to penetrate into every dell, to seek out the remotest peaks of the snowy mountains, to leave there a portion of their fructifying power, a trace of their benign influence upon the life and actions of others. And such are we, harmless in our lives, unoffending towards the state, whether we are free or enslaved; for we say it, and dare to say it boldly, that, though our people are not always free from crimes against the state, as a class they are not found herding with the malefactors, nor have the penal institutions many of them within their walls or surveillance; and withal, if one listens to the clamour concerning us, he would be led to suppose that not alone are our souls doomed to perdition because we are Jews, but every state also is bound for its own political safety to watch that no injury result to it from the presence of the few Jewish inhabitants within its borders. Do I speak the truth? Let history answer; let me appeal to your daily experience; let me call to witness the efforts of sectarian fanatics of all degrees and all ages to root up the vine of Jacob from the field on which the Lord’s own hands have planted it! But what is Judaism? that principle against which the world has warred so long, which has hitherto survived all the storms which have assailed it? What is it?-It is the spirit of light enkindled by the Most High in every age when it pleased Him to make his will known to man; it is the code of peace, which teaches man to love his neighbour, to succour the needy, to aid the sick, to assist the enemy even when he needs our assistance; it is the true conception of the great Creator, which sees in all that exists but one Father, one God, one Ruler, and one Saviour, to whom every thing is known, to whom every thing is possible. Judaism couples these sublime truths, these noble principles of morality, with outward signs, call them if you will symbolical acts, which distinguish its professors, at first sight from other men, which point them out to each other as children of the same original parentage, as followers of the same belief; and this is all that we can expect our ceremonies to effect for us, as a people, and only this, the world without can look to of right in their estimation of our character, and the shaping of their conduct, which they in consequence are justly empowered to assume towards us as a nation and individuals. But what is the offending of which we have been, guilty? why is the world

inimical to us? Simply because we have persevered in our faith ; simply because through good and evil report we have clung to our belief in a pure undivided unity in the Godhead; simply because we have declared our invincible opposition to every system which can put any being alongside of our great Father to worship; simply because we adhere to the observance of the divinely appointed day of rest; because we declare that unclean which the Scriptures have taught us to be those things which the Lord has declared unto us to be an abomination. In not one thing do all these sins against the world as it is affect in the least the prosperity of the commonwealth or the tranquillity of kingdoms; in not one thing do our acts, our thoughts, our hopes, injure the peace or prosperity of any country under the sun; and yet we are looked upon with suspicion, deemed as outcasts from divine favour, avoided by the insolent fanatic as though the leprosy adhered to our flesh, and pitied, in tones of mock compassion, as though we were stricken with mental blindness, by those unwise ones who themselves have barely a glimmer of divine light to aid them in their painful struggle to ascertain which is the right road to salvation among the many singular paths which their system points out to the perplexed traveller. And such as these come to teach us! Such as these endeavour to tell us “Thus has the Lord spoken,” when He has not sent them, and when they promulge what has not entered into his counsels! But do they pity us for the persecution which our brethren have to endure in countries where liberty is yet a theory, and where the will of a despot is the law of the land? Do they offer their aid to disabuse the minds of the prejudiced who combine to our injury? O no! they may perhaps, it is true, profess pity in words; but they will couple their false sympathy with some such expression, “See what the Jews have to endure in punishment for their wilful blindness in not adopting our religion instead of their own.” It is truly grating to the ear to be compelled to listen to such sympathizers, who lament the victim and secretly applaud the tyrant, because he opens in this manner a wide field for their efforts, as they fondly believe, to induce many to forswear Judaism. And these men ask us to come and listen to their harangues in which they denounce our belief; and Jews can be found to go and hear them, and some even profess to be convinced by their appeals, and become-gracious God! apostates to thy law! and they go and swear fealty to a pretended revelation which thy prophets never promulgated in thy name! and they aver to see errors in thy law which require to be amended by a more spiritual legislation, as if there could be aught truer or purer than what Thou didst announce in olden times as the evidence of thy will!

Yes, brethren, we have heard of these doings in our days, of systematic efforts at corrupting our people; but they have generally been directed either to those who desired to profit by the learning in worldly things which they had acquired, when to the professing Jew all offices are closed in illiberal countries; or to those who sought an alliance with the daughter of the stranger, who asked the change of religion as a token of the sincerity of the professed attachment; or, not to mention other cases, where the want of information left the persons, against whom these attempts were directed, an easy prey to any argument which was urged upon the contested points at issue between us and the gentile world. Children even placed at school have been approached by their teachers and friends with appeals on religious subjects, and they have been drawn to churches to hear doctrines laid down adverse to the Jewish belief. That in the latter instance parents have been greatly at fault for exposing their children to such dangerous influences; that no plea of the necessity of a brilliant education, not attainable at home, can justify a father for putting his child away where his principles may, or, to speak more correctly, will surely be endangered; that no mother can ever claim any circumstance likely to occur in ordinary life as an excuse for depriving

her daughter of maternal care and supervision at the period when impressions are most readily received, and when they are but too well calculated to be so strongly impressed as to influence the whole after life-that, in short, the greatest blame is chargeable to parents of every degree and station for leaving their offspring to imbibe such religious sentiments as circumstances may throw in their way, is too self-evident to require any argument. But equally culpable with the negligent parents are all those who do not apply all the means which their talents or circumstances afford them to enlighten the understanding of their fellow-Israelites, and to induce them, by the power of persuasion, and, if possible, by argument, to remain faithful to our standard of religion. Some persons no doubt think, as parents do, for instance, when they, being faithful themselves, admonish their children as they send them forth not to transgress too much, and never to forget that they are Jews, that they discharge their whole duty if they themselves practise their duties, whilst they are perfectly indifferent to the wrong done by others, even should it be occasionally in their power to arrest the evil which they see before their eyes. But let these be told that they are not doing their duty. The gentiles among whom we live understand, or rather practise better the exercise of wholesome influence. If they see one of their people doing what they deem an offence against their system, they endeavour to alarm his conscience; and though we may not altogether approve of the means resorted to, we must acknowledge that they leave nothing untried to impress all their members with their supposed duties. This office is not alone exercised by those who are appointed public teachers, but by many others, females for instance, who never expect to be other than mere humble and uninfluential members of their respective communities. And whenever they believe that they can have any influence over persons not of their persuasion, for instance, to induce them to read a particular book on some doctrinal question, or to listen to a sermon of some powerful controversial preacher, or to witness some exhibition where a strong evidence of the effect of their system can be displayed: you will see them anxious and ready to improve the opportunity, after their own fashion, and endeavouring to say a word in season, which more or less is effective, especially with the weak and inexperienced. But let me impress it on your minds, brethren, that we cannot afford to lose even such as these from our communion, though their adherence add ever so little strength to our cause. They are children of Israel as much as the strongest of us, and are bound by the same law us the wisest among us. If they are ignorant, their ignorance is to be pitied, and you, who are better instructed, should, endeavour to teach them, that they may be able to withstand the appeals of the gentiles, and themselves become defenders of the holy truths that are entrusted to us in the law. If they are weak and worldly, draw them to you by mild persuasion and by those unceasing efforts of an untiring love, which deems no labour too great, no exertion too painful, which may by any degree of possibility confirm the wavering, and bring healing to a soul affected with the dangerous imbecility which knows not its own diseased state. Let us not deceive ourselves that nothing can be done. This woful delusion has been the cause of several families having quitted the household of Israel, not because they were convinced of the truth of gentile doctrines, but simply because they had no intercourse with religious Israelites, and because their mind was absolutely uninformed of the ideas and duties which characterize us from other nations. Besides which considerations it must not be forgotten that so far as the moral effects of such conversions extend, they are to the world at large almost as fatal as if they took place among the really prominent members of our faith. By these means family relations are or should be interrupted, for I hold it to be beneath the dignity of a sincere Israelite to hold any intercourse with an apostate who openly so declares himself; and the triumph of those

who bear no love for our race is equally great, though the changeling be one of the weakest and most worthless among us.-Let us consider that we do not seek to make proselytes ourselves, though for my own part, and I say it with due deference to the opinions of wiser and better men than myself, I cannot see any good reason for being opposed to receiving them if the sincerity of their profession cannot be reasonably doubted, as some of our people, nay the greater majority of them, are. At all events, though there can be no doubt that if we resorted to the means gentiles employ, we could make large accessions to our numbers, it has become the settled policy of our brothers to reject even those who occasionally come forward of their own accord to claim a reception in the family of Jacob. It is evident, therefore, that we must decrease, if we do not take care that the influence from without do not rob us of a portion of our household; and it is also perfectly clear that too many, especially in this country, have formerly been left exposed to a corrupting influence strong enough to warp the judgment, if not equal to debase the reason (I speak in religious topics) altogether. I fear that if we take a calm review of all the incidents in our own lives, I except not even myself, we may find some cause for self-accusation in not having been zealous enough in spreading the kingdom of Heaven, and preventing sin, when this was in our power. I will confess that apostacies are not so frequent, nor have those we heard of been of such a kind that human means could in every case have prevented them; but I speak also of other grave transgressions, and therein I maintain we have not exerted our influence, nor borne a decided enough testimony to awaken and alarm the sinner. Let us take counsel from the gentiles; we can easily avoid their obtrusiveness; there is no occasion to broach the subject of our salvation in season and out of season; but surely there are almost daily opportunities, when we mingle in society, to say or do something which will have a bearing upon our religion and the duties it enjoins. There is no demand for fanaticism, nor need we fear being ridiculed for our zeal. Perfect cheerfulness and appreciation of social pleasures can be combined with our serious conversation; and even in a jesting mood instruction may be conveyed the more striking from the unexpected manner in which has been uttered. But chiefly we must endeavour to place our younger branches under wholesome religious guidance, not to compel them to transgress by leaving them in situations where to live religiously is impossible.

I know well enough that I shall be met with the objection, that in some places it is impossible for parents to educate their children commensurately with their wealth and standing; that their sons have no colleges to go to in their native towns, and that their daughters cannot obtain a sufficient knowledge of music, painting, the elegant sciences and modern and learned languages in their places of residence, distant from the centres of literature and refinement; and I shall be asked, “Are we to sacrifice the education of our children to the ceremonial observances of our religion?” I would answer “decidedly,” if religion or science must be sacrificed, I say, sacrifice science, it is not the staff of life, much as it may embellish it. But there is no occasion to dread such an alternative. As far as my knowledge goes, there are high schools of great distinction in all the larger towns of this country, where Jews are settled in considerable bodies, and in these both male and female children could be educated, whilst they are, at the sane time, domesticated with Jewish families, even if there are no Jewish schools at which the children can be placed at once under the superintendence of the teachers themselves for their mental as well as scientific cultivation. This much to parents who themselves practise in their houses the duties of their faith. But even to those who are indifferent in this great point, great we call it, for it was made the distinguishing mark between Israel and the other nations, we would urge this consideration: at home your children, it is

true, do not live according to the law of Moses, your own example is injurious to their leading a pious life; but still they hear you speak in terms of respect of your belief, and they accompany you at stated periods to the house of God. All therefore is not lost though a great defect does exist. But now you are going to send your son to a distant college, where the regulations of the school compel him to listen habitually to prayers and sermons propounded in the name of a belief more or less hostile to your own; he is constantly plied with arguments, even in the very class-books he uses, to prove that what you believe is false and erroneous. It may be that he has learned something at home, and will thus be able to withstand the appeals to apostasy which the people he lives with and his school companions address to him; but is it possible that he should return home to you after an absence of four years sound in his conviction-unflinching in his attachment to our faith? You may write to him constantly in the most affectionate manner concerning his Jewish birthright (we will assume in every thing the most favourable); he shall also occasionally come to pay you a visit during the vacation; but will all this be enough to counteract the not seeing the Sabbath sanctified, the absence of the Passover and the non-observance of the Day of Atonement? You see I leave out all minor points; but even then how does the question stand? is your conscience at ease? have you discharged your whole duty? Or take your daughter at the age of twelve or fourteen away from home; you have wealth, and she perhaps has beauty and intellect. You are determined that she shall be brilliantly educated, she must shine at all hazards; and you place her at a fashionable boarding-school, where the daughters of the great of the land receive their finishing education. All this you may accomplish; she associates with those whose habits are refined and whose intellect is cultivated; but her soul remains dark to all noble impressions; she has no moral guide, her gentile teacher is not able to prove one; and what she gains in elegance she loses in goodness of heart, in truth and sincerity, those bright ornaments of a virtuous female. But assume on the other hand that her spirit too is to be moulded by her teacher, what becomes of the Jewish female? She is gentilized; and returns after a few years to your roof with any thing but a Jewish heart, and pities you perhaps after the gentile fashion for your blindness in being Jews. At all events it will take labour, and cost you much heart-burning to make your loved child again fond of her religion, easy as its practice may be in your house, and years will perhaps elapse before the simple unity of God will again find a response in her rebellious soul.

There is one thing I have omitted, and that is the excuse occasionally made that a country education is so beneficial to youth, especially the males, as it removes them during their age of susceptibility from the dangerous moral tendencies of a city life; and as in most country college towns few or no Jews reside, it is requisite of course to place them with gentile families or within the walls of the college. But there is a great fallacy in this excuse. If it were that a child after being once removed from the temptations of a city life would never be exposed to them again, the laziness of parents might find some palliation. But the fact is quite the reverse. The college years are scarcely over when the rusticated citizen is thrown with an amazing suddenness in the midst of the dissipation which the large towns so abundantly furnish. He has been restrained for a long period, and now he will compensate himself for the time lost to pleasure. Besides this, it by no means follows that all country places are free from vice and allurement, and it is much to be feared that in a moral point the country is perhaps as corrupt as the city. But grant all in favour of the secluded village, still, as we have said, the college life must end at last; and where is the safety of the candidate at his entrance into the great world? Only in the principles which have been implanted in him, to enjoy whatever good life may offer, but never to indulge to excess or to enjoy

if sin be the consequence. Where then is the danger? It is in the want of moral training, in the not instilling of a deep religious veneration for what is good, and a detestation for what is bad; but this is the province of the father, the duty of the mother; they are to curb the passions in early years; they are to implant the silent monitor; they are to watch that the rank weeds of unbridled license do not choke the holy aspirations for what is good and noble; and if they neglect to do this, if they cannot succeed, can they believe that a paid schoolmaster, who has a hundred boys under his supervision, will or can do that for so many what they fail to or cannot effect in one or two? Can they be so deluded as to imagine that in a school where there are fifty boarders an aged woman and five or six assistants can attend in the least to a proper training of the affections and the intellect, after they have been worn out to weariness with the hearing of recitations for eight hour's during the day, when they themselves acknowledge that one or two girls cannot be managed at home with ample leisure and servants to take from them all the laborious cares of a family?

I have not exhausted the subject, but only given you materials for reflection. Consider, then, that Israel as a people require a union of labourers, who conjointly must aim to establish a holy sentiment of devotion in the hearts of all, and to elevate our character in the eyes of the world; so as to counteract, not by wordly demonstrations, but a silent and effectual effort, the inclination which the worldly minded may wish to instil in many to forsake the standard of our religion. But not mere nominal conformists, only do we want; we need intelligent thinkers, and faithful actors, who can guide others and promote good by their example. Thus can we best exemplify that We are a holy people, and thus can we show in our life how it could happen that despite of our dispersion we have been able to maintain our identity amidst the nations which surround us on all sides. Let us prove that we esteem highly the announcement which God made to Moses:

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"And I will take you unto me for a people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who bring you forth from beneath the burdens of Egypt."- Exodus 6:7. When this promise was made we were marked as the bondmen of Egypt, whose every aspiration was suppressed under the heavy burdens which were laid upon us. But then the Lord became emphatically our God, by giving us his law and separating us from all the world besides. Nations since have warred against our state, overwhelmed our greatness, but we have continued undiminished, though always assailed. And now it is for us, the men of the present generation, to take heed that the blessed stream shall still flow onward, glorious, deep, holy! Be it thus the study of all to aid in what concerns all; and thus only can we be accepted, and thus only can we fulfil our task, which each Israelite has received from his God and Maker. And may He strengthen and guide us safely. Amen.

Shebat 2d, (January 10th,) 5605.

Chapter 59

S. The Dangers of Israel

The Dangers of Israel A Sermon.

God of Israel, the everlasting Father! be with us in our waking hours, and at the time when we are sunk in sleep; protect us by the shadow of thy wings when we are living, and shield our spirits under the throne of thy grace when our task is ended. And watch over us with thy paternal care, and give strength to our virtuous resolves, that we may not stumble in the path of righteousness which we would fain pursue, unless prevented and lured away by the temptations of the world and the inclination to evil inherent to our frame. O holy One! establish thou firmly the work of our hands, and cause that through us thy name may be glorified; teach us to see the errors of our ways, so that we may not profane thy blessed service, whilst our selfish ignorance would vainly influence us to believe ourselves actuated by pious motives. Implant in our heart a firm brotherly love towards all Israel our brethren, and remove from us and from them all manner of malevolence and causeless hatred; and those who presumptuously rise up to disturb the peace of thy household, and who wickedly endeavour to mislead the children of thy adorers from the true path of thy law, confound Thou in thy mercy, that the evil they attempt may not take root in the minds of thy servants; and grant that these as well as all other sinners may speedily discover the perniciousness of their doings, and return unto Thee with a sincere repentance, a repentance of love and truth, to be reunited to Thee and thy pure worship in truth and humility. And spread upon all thy people Israel, wherever be their dwelling, the pavilion of thy peace, and cause them to dwell securely in the midst of the nations whither Thou hast banished them; and preserve them entire as one people, to be ultimately restored to the mountain of Zion where thy glory is again to dwell as in days of old, and as in former years, all obeying one law, worshipping in one manner, servants all with one heart, speaking all with one tongue, adoring all the one, I Thee alone, our Father, God, and Saviour. Amen.

Brethren! We read in Jeremiah 30:7 :

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"It is even a time of trouble unto Jacob, and therefrom he shall be saved."

Let us apply this saying of the great prophet who viewed with his own eyes the downfall of Jerusalem’s glory, a downfall which others had merely predicted, which he, however, had the misfortune to witness as well as to foretell, to the present situation of our people all over the world. It is not to be concealed, that for many years past there has gradually sprung up a feeling of restlessness under ancient rules, and a striving after innovations, which at times threatens the subversion of the ancient landmarks, has been enkindled, which are full of evil portents to our existence as a separate religious community. What compared with this danger were the persecutions of ignorant ages? Then indeed thousands of innocent victims were led forth to the slaughter, and loudly exulted the adversaries of Jacob, as the flames consumed the many noble martyrs who voluntarily surrendered themselves to a painful death, to seal with their life’s blood

their devoted attachment to the law of God. But these slaughters brought no danger to Jacob's faith; for, though many fell off, though many, too feeble or too worldly to choose death, preferred to join themselves to the nations of the earth: still the holy example of the glorious sufferers stimulated the multitude to love the more ardently the religion which their friends had sanctified with their last expiring breath. And the greater the danger was each incurred for the profession of the law of Moses, the greater became the ardour to preserve untouched the holy birthright of Jacob; and with every effort of the enemy the blood of circumcision became a more willing sacrifice, the weekly Sabbath became a more refreshing day of rest, and the acknowledgment of Adonai Echad became more ardently the watchword of the house of Israel in all their dwellings, despite that the enemy stood near, eager to seize every opportunity to wreak his hatred upon the unoffending sons of Abraham.

O noble indeed were those devoted spirits who preserved, amid all the great tribulations they had to encounter, the holy inheritance which was theirs from their forefathers; and noble was their reward, for their unresisting perseverance has at last overcome the malevolence of their opponents, and the name of Israel is now more respected than it has been since the dispersion of our nation, and we are called a people who nobly sustained themselves as the preservators of Heaven's holy gift to the children of man, under such trials and difficulties as would have broken down every other people save it be the descendants of him who went forth at the bidding of his Master, from Ur in Chaldea to be a stranger in a strange land, himself and his descendants, for a period of four hundred years.

It was thus, beloved friends, that the means relied on for our extermination have wrought the opposite effects, and have made dear and precious to us the fruit of the tree of life, which flourished abundantly, nurtured by the blood of those who strove to preserve it from the rude assault of unholy hands, and to seek shelter under its wide-spreading branches. But now and of late we have dwelt in comparative peace; our opponents, despairing of destroying us by the sword, have changed their mode of attack; they open wide their arms to receive us in their fatal embrace, and to make us forget our destiny, whilst we are invited to revel in luxuries and pleasures, even literally, in luxuries and pleasures forbidden by our holy laws, and death-bringing to our national existence.

Now the Jews are called brothers, yea the elder brothers of the new recipients of the law in the manner it was modified to suit a gentile world! But is the Jew as such more loved? or his law more prized? O no, but it is a time of trouble to Jacob, and may God in his wisdom and mercy save him therefrom. The seeming security is a fatal delusion, my brethren! the haters of our name wish to induce us to give up to flattery that which force could never obtain. They therefore pretend to mourn over our blindness, over our literal attachment to the word of the law whilst, they allege, we are unmindful of the spirit and essence of religion. They therefore tell us, that the Jew is unwise to preserve his separate position and his distance from his gentile friends; they wish to make him believe that it is of no moment whether he eat of one sort of food or the other; they tell him, it is of no moment whether he observe the first day of the week or the seventh as devoted to rest and worship; they tell him it is of no moment whether he wed a daughter of the stranger of a maiden from the children of the faithful; they tell him these absurdities and many others; and shall we yield to these advances? or are we to stand idly by and make no effort to counteract the evil which is thus impending? Believe me, that theoretical religion is but a mockery of Judaism.

Ours is not a system of faith merely, it is far more, it is a system of actions which are to regulate our conduct as individuals, as members of the community, as children of the everlasting Father. For so we read in Deuteronomy 6:2-3 : "In order that thou mayest fear the Lord thy God, to observe all his statutes and commandments which I command thee, thou, thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear then, Israel, and observe to do, in order that it may be well with thee, and that ye may greatly multiply, as the Lord the God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in a land flowing with milk and honey." In what then does our religion consist? Surely in actions, in individual piety, in neighbourly love, and in devotion to the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Is there then not danger in listening to the advice of strangers, in even weighing for a moment whether their arguments be of weight or otherwise? For to doubt even of the necessity of our duties as we have received them is incipient treason, and is the next step to rebellion against the Lord! And has it come to this that we, the first inheritors of the law, are to be guided by those who borrowed some of its precepts from us? are Israelites to govern themselves by the erroneous ideas which the gentiles have engrafted upon our simple mode of interpreting Scriptures?

Some may say, that they will take reason for their guide, and apply the light of an enlightened modern philosophy to teach them the proper explanation of the law! But this is the very danger which now threatens the house of Jacob, of which we have been speaking. It is false reasoning to ask: "Why are we to kill our beasts after the prescribed mode of the ancients? why are we not to mingle at the friendly board with our gentile friends? what harm can there arise from my marrying the woman whom I love, although we differ in speculative opinions? what good can the Lord devise by my impoverishing myself by an observance of the festivals and the Sabbath? what good can result from our fasting on certain days to commemorate the destruction of the Jewish empire? for are we not free, not equals in the eyes of the law? are not offices open to us no less than to other citizens? can we not boldly profess our religion? what need is there then to look forward to a restoration to our ancient land, a country which we neither desire nor think equal to the land of civilized nations where we live?" But let us reply to these false positions: The law was given to render us a separate people, in order to make the glory of God known ultimately to all nations of the earth; therefore we were to be separate in our manners and habits no less than in the superior knowledge which was given to us of the UNITY of God. And to prevent our uniting with those by whose opinions ours might become corrupted, by being inmates at their houses and partakers of their food, we were ordered to observe certain formalities with the food we are to take for our sustenance, in order to be even in mere bodily matters reminded of the high destiny which is ours, and of the great goodness of the Creator in selecting us to be the instruments of his grace and love to all the children of men, and to set an insuperable bar to a too close intimacy with persons differing from us in their rule of life. And the fair daughter of the stranger attracts us, and our desire is kindled, and we hasten to sacrifice at her feet our attachments to the law and our parental command. Ay, is this obeying the voice of the Most High? Tell me--can Israel remain a people when her sons swerve from the law drawn away by the ties of unholy kindred? Or say you, we wed not by forswearing, as of old it was wont, the religion of our fathers; but tell me then, does the daughter of the stranger worship with you at the same shrine? does she too bend the knee to the One, who is Israel's God, as to the daughters of our people? or does she teach her children to acknowledge the pure faith, and to pray to none save the Creator, to acknowledge no law save the law which He ordained? or rather will she not endeavour to lead them to her mode of thinking, and

to educate her children in tenets and ceremonies which are and ought ever to be foreign to our people? and say truly will not the evil spread, and bring a canker into our vitals, and destroy the remnant that has escaped the many bitter persecutions and trials we had to encounter? No, brothers of the house of Israel, the gentile blood must not mingle with that of Jacob; for too many of the patriarch's sons and daughters have already been sacrificed to this destructive intercourse, and too many families have already been cut off from the community of the faithful, as our own eyes have seen. The festivals and Sabbaths too we are to deem of no importance: we fear being impoverished by our forsaking our daily toil. But are we believers, are we the descendants of those who followed the guidance of Moses into the trackless wilderness, fed for forty years by God's providence, without ploughing the soil, or reaping a harvest? And did not millions upon millions rest on the Lord's holy days, and yet obtain bread to eat and raiment to put on? and are we to doubt, to hesitate whether it be prudent to obey? to ask, "what is this day more than other days," as once a heathen did of one of our ancient sages? What is this day? Even the day ordained by the Lord, instituted by his providence to bring peace, and rest, and refreshment to the labourer wearied by toil, and to bid the soul rejoice in a renewed love to her Maker. For so we read (Exodus 16:28-29): "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to observe my commandments and my laws? See, that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread for two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out from his place on the seventy day." It is want of faith, a wicked doubting of the goodness and of the truth of God, to suppose that any injury can result from the observance of the holy rest; for He who provided manna for two days to those who came forth from Egypt, can and does send his blessing upon our labours even at this day, and we may truly say with David (Psalms 37:25,) "I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging bread." And admit for a moment that our keeping Sabbath should absolutely deprive us of an opportunity of acquiring a large share of wealth: still then would we be more likely of enjoying the portion of worldly goods which we have lawfully obtained, than we should be in consuming the immense hoard which unlawful striving should have brought. And as regards the notion, that the Creator cares not about the particular day, provided one out of seven is set apart to his service, we must say that such a mode of arguing would be subversive of every thing like positive religion. The Scriptures are emphatic as to the precise period which has been commanded; and even that period, or no other, must we sanctify and set apart as devoted to the service of our Creator.

Then as to the fasts commemorative of our national downfall. O say not that our captivity is ended! we are scattered, not gathered together; we are divided, not united; we are severed, and not yet are Judah and Ephraim one on the mountain of Israel. And say where is the glory of the law which is to enlighten all nations? where is the light of truth which is to guide all the families of the earth? and are our hearts one in the service of the Most High? are there no dissensions in the midst of our scattered communities? has Elijah come, and are the hearts of parents turned to the children, and the hearts of children to their parents? And can Judah awaken her harp to hymns of praise in every land, unawed by the threat of the adversary? Alas! alas! our harps are still hung upon the willows, and the souls of the sons of Jacob are still grieved because of the burning which the Lord has burned. O! yet is desolate the beautiful Jerusalem; yet is captive the daughter of Zion; and over every land her sons are scattered, and they wander from clime to clime to seek rest for their weary foot, and to provide sustenance for their little ones; with anxious care oppressed, scorned not rarely for the sake of their belief, for their unswerving truth and faithfulness to God's ancient

law, they lift their eyes on high and ask for that protection which they so much need from their God, who yet never forsook his people. O! let us then fast and pray to our Creator on the days which are devoted to the memory of our national downfall, and let us not forget in our prosperity those of our brethren who yet languish in sorrow and oppression; and let us in our exultation over the liberty we enjoy not forget, that it is not our own strength of arm nor our wisdom which has furnished us enlargement, but the mercy of the Lord, extended to us not for our righteousness, but only because He is good, and for the sake of the covenant which he swore unto our fathers.

These are some of the views which hastily have presented themselves to my mind in dwelling on the subject of the erroneous ideas which an intercourse with friendly gentiles and the false reasoning of a miscalled improving philosophy, have of late forced upon our observation. I mean not that we should discard all instruction which gentiles may offer us, to discard the light of reason in entering upon religious investigations; but to impress upon your minds, brothers and sisters of the house of Israel! to take the light of our own ancients, the manner of interpretation which has been handed down to us, to abide by the customs which long and well-established usage has sanctioned, in your mode of thinking and in your manner of acting through life. The opposite tendency, to mark out new ways, to fly after new customs, is the danger which threatens the peace and the unity of the house of Jacob. But as great dangers almost,--for I believe this to be the greatest we ever encountered,--have passed over us, without permanently injuring the vineyard of the Lord, the house of Israel; and guided by his mercy let us hope that this cup of bitterness and confusion too will pass away from us, and leave us, as after every danger hitherto, more devoted and more united in the cause of the law of God.

Brethren! stand firm by the arms which the Lord has given you! be firm in the defence of the right! be indifferent to the taunt that you are not sufficiently enlightened, that you fall behind the improvements of the age, of an age clean in its own eyes, yet being unwashed of its filth. Yes, be united and firm in supporting the cause you believe just; and may God prosper in his mercy the right which, we believe, we are firmly pursuing. Only be strong and of good courage, be not terrified nor dismayed; and may the Lord God of Israel be with you and all Israel wherever you go, from now unto eternity. Amen.

Charleston, Shebat 28, 5601

February 19, 1841

S. The Day of Atonement

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The Day of Atonement A Sermon Delivered in the Synagogue Shearith Yisrael, Montreal by the Rev. Abraham De Sola.

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“An everlasting statute shall this be unto you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, also no work at all shall ye do, neither the denizen nor the stranger that sojourneth among you. For on this day ye shall be atoned for, to purify you; even from all your sins before the Eternal shall you be purified.”- Leviticus 16:29-30.

Brethren! The Day of Atonement with all its solemn associations is now before us. Throughout all the dispersions of Israel, men, women and children, alike assemble on this sacred occasion, in humble and devout spirit to confess their sins before the Eternal their God, and to entreat his mercy. Few, very few are they, who on the ■■■ ■■■■ absent themselves from the minor sanctuary. The confirmedly pious,* feel more than ordinarily affected with sentiments of religious dread, respect, and devotion, when crossing on this day the threshold of God’s house. The worldly and profane, also, subdued by its influence, instead of directing their steps their usual course, instead of occupying themselves with a thirsty and endless pursuit after gain, or with debasing and senseless, debauchery, they, ay, even they, “turn from their evil way” to seek the presence of their God, and the welfare of their soul. And the indifferent, the mechanical, they also are not exempt from its mighty influence; the languor, the coldness, which have hitherto accompanied their every act of devotion, now give way to an animated and solemn sense of their duty and responsibility,-they too, pour forth the fervent and heartfelt prayer. And now see these, whose interests and pursuits have been so dissimilar during the past year, see them now all uniting to worship with one heart, and to call with one accord on their common Father! See the parent fold in the embrace of forgiveness and love, the erring child; see the friends, by worldly matters estranged, now reconciled, and reciprocating sentiments of esteem; see the man who in the name of religion withheld from his brother the smile of friendship, now holding forth, in good-will his hand, and admitting that it is God who is to judge. See the impious now devout, the irreverent now respectful. See the injured forgive the injurer, the enemy embrace the enemy, and you see the influence of the Day of Atonement.

* I allude here to the three classes of religionists mentioned by the Talmudist,-(Tract. Rosh Hashana,) as being judged and receiving their doom on the Day of Atonement.

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[redacted]

Why is this, dear brethren? Why should this day address itself more successfully to our better feelings, or to our fears than does the voice of nature, or the teachings of nature's God? Why should it claim and obtain from us greater veneration, why a stricter observance than do other of the divine institutions? Why should it, trumpet-like, make its voice to be heard so distinctly to our slumbering consciences? Why should its very name act as it were a spell to invite us to pious thoughts and deeds? Is it more authoritative in its origin, more important in its influence, or more beneficial in its effects, than are our other days of solemn assembly? These are questions, my hearers, now claiming our most serious attention, and their examination will afford us an employment well becoming the character of this [redacted]. For if you consider to what end this day was instituted, you are reminded in the words of our text, [redacted] that it was that ye shall be atoned for, and purified from all your sins before the Eternal. It needs not much reflection, it need not the assurances of the preacher to convince you that this is the time for meditation and inquiry, and that to permit such a season to pass in heedlessness of thought and conduct, or in the cold utterance of unfelt prayer, can comport but little with its sanctity and importance. Let us then, beloved brethren, show that we properly appreciate the nature and claims of this important and sacred season, by attentively considering, as we should, the question's which have just now presented themselves to us, and let us for their proper elucidation, examine First. What the Day of Atonement teaches us?

Secondly. What it bestows on us? and Thirdly. What it claims of us?

God, the Source of wisdom and enlightenment, do we now invoke, to be with us in our inquiry, to assist us, and to permit the words which we shall utter to tend to the glory and sanctification of his great name, which be blessed for now and ever more. Amen.

I.

1. The Day of Atonement teaches us that as members of the human family we are liable to err, and inclined to sin. That we are disposed to "rend the yoke of heaven's dominion from off our necks," and to "clothe ourselves with sin as with a garment;" that "our hearts devise wicked imaginations," and that "our feet are swift in running to mischief," are truths, brethren, however mortifying, however melancholy, still undeniable truths. That with life and death, with the blessing and the curse, before us, "we have chosen death rather than life," experience has shown to be no less certain. And not experience only. In the very first pages of the world's annals we find the Eternal himself attesting [redacted] "that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."* And centuries after this declaration of a commiserating God was made, and when his revelation, and the long experience of manifold blessings, should have made his chosen, a wise and understanding people, we hear the Eternal again complaining, "My people have done two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."†

* Genesis 8:21.

† Jeremiah 2:13.

But though to err be human, though the desire to choose the bad and reject the good, be sometimes our disposition, it is not wholly characteristic of our species. Our Almighty and Benevolent Creator has imbued us with a principle which is efficacious, if not sufficient, to show us the way which a man should choose unto himself. There is within us a constant panting for the beautiful and benevolent, an ardent desire for the bright and harmonious, which continually impel us to acts of charity and love. But then again, although this may result from our moral capacity, it results as well from our passions and desires, from our material constitution, that we should occasionally, and alas! indeed often, pervert this principle, which is the [redacted] that we should willfully and designedly forfeit the eminence assigned us, and lower ourselves beneath the lowest in creation's scale. The page of history, detailing scenes of corruption, violence, and bloodshed; showing how long and potent has been the reign of anarchy and confusion; and teeming with recitals of the persecutions and sufferings of those sacrificed on the altars of superstition, idolatry and debasing ignorance, bear but too ample and frightful testimony to this melancholy truth. Our Almighty Creator and Parent, who is infinitely just, could surely not abandon us, then, to the guidance of such a principle; one upon which we could so little depend for the attainment of present happiness and future salvation. No! brethren, He called us to Him at Sinai, and there audibly directed us the way which, as responsible agents, we should pursue. It is not necessary for our present inquiry, nor for your satisfaction, my hearers, that I should now adduce those proofs which incontestably establish the authenticity of this revelation. The children of the covenant, which was made not only with their fathers then present, but with those who were not then present, those who yet observe the Day of Atonement to keep it holy, never did, and never can, dispute its truth. For more than three thousand years have they proved it; for more than three thousand years have they discovered and experienced the value, the preciousness of this divine law-inasmuch as when they have observed to perform its dictates, they have in all peace and holiness blessed their God who chose them from all nations, and gave them his law; and that when they have neglected to walk in its ways, the day of sorrow, of confession, and of contrition has arrived, even such a day as is the Yom Hackippurim. And who shall see the congregation of Jacob assembled together on this day-who shall hear the heartfelt confession of gray and tottering old a age, re-echoed by the supplicating and repentant prayer of proud and healthful youth, and not learn, and not admit that few indeed are those who in addressing their Maker on this Day of Atonement can say, "Lord! I have done all Thou hast commanded me,"* "I am innocent, nor is there any iniquity in me."† Would to God, brethren, oh would to God, this were not so; but when we find that it is not two or three, but that it is all of us who pray [redacted], we can no longer blind ourselves to the truth of the first teaching of the Day of Atonement, but with our pious sages, are constrained to admit‡ [redacted], that with the very best of us life is spent in a continual struggle with temptation, and in the endeavour to avoid the crooked paths of sin.

* Ezekiel 7:7.

† Job 23:9.

‡ Bereshith Rabbah, § 9.

But we have said that "the Eternal hath showed us light,"§ by blessing us with the gift of His law; if this be so, then

2. The Day of Atonement teaches us, that although we be frail and erring, we are nevertheless conscious and accountable beings. “Not hidden or far off, not in the heavens, or beyond the sea, but very nigh unto us, is this word that we may perform it.”|| Not obscure, not difficult, is the path which our all-wise Parent advises his children to walk. The way of life recommends itself to our approval and acceptance as much by its extreme straightness and clearness, as by its extreme smoothness and pleasantness. The divine law, in laying down rules for our conduct, in making us acquainted with our vocation, and in conveying to us in God’s own words what He expects from us, appeals more to our inherent sense of benevolence and justice, than to that of dependence and obligation; more to our reason than to our fears. It teaches you, O house of Israel, that in return for your lives and all their enjoyments, “the Eternal requires nought of you but to reverence Him, to love Him, and to serve Him with all your heart, and with all your soul.”¶ And it farther teaches you, that the blessing or the curse shall be yours accordingly as ye shall observe or disobey His injunctions. With your duties thus clearly defined, ye cannot say, “the Eternal hath abandoned us.”** “He hideth himself, and we cannot see Him.”††

§ Psalms 118:27.

|| Deuteronomy 30:12.

¶ Ibid. 10:12.

** Jude 6:13.

†† Job 23:9.

No! brethren, God hath surely spoken, and the confession which in all conviction ye make at this season, that He is the sole Source of your existence, ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■, enforces upon you the performance of all that He hath commanded you. It is true, that even with a full perception of your responsibility, and with a general desire to act in accordance with the revealed will of God, you are liable to slip unwittingly into the wide and luring chasm of sin; but even with this admitted, you shall find that the Guardian of Israel, who is just, and who neither sleepeth nor slumbereth,” hath not been; even here, unmindful of your frail and erring natures; even here, hath He bestowed on you the means of obtaining complete restoration to His favour. He instituted the Yom Kippur, whereon ye might, by withdrawing yourselves from all mundane occupations and pleasures, by afflicting your souls and by seeking His presence, be atoned for, and purified from all your sills before Him. And thus, by making confession of our sins and so admitting our accountability, do we establish the truth of what we have said to be the second teaching of the Day of Atonement.

Yes! brethren, such is the will of our merciful and benevolent Father; such the means He has afforded us to obtain reconciliation. And hath He not also said unto us through the mouth of His prophet:*

“Let the wicked forsake his way,

And the unrighteous man his thoughts;

And let him return unto the Eternal, for He will receive him with compassion;

And unto our God, for He aboundeth in forgiveness.” With this gracious announcement before us, partly foretelling as it does, the blessed results of those religious exercises and sentiments prescribed by this solemn season, we may now proceed to examine our second subject of inquiry, which was to discover what the Day of Atonement bestows on us.

* Isaiah 55:7, Lowth’s version.

II.

1. The Day of Atonement bestows on us the means for reconciliation with the Eternal:-

“Let the wicked forsake his way,

And the unrighteous man his thoughts;

And let him return unto the Eternal, for He will receive him with compassion;

And unto our God, for tie aboundeth in forgiveness.”

Brethren, in these sublime words, he who has been justly styled the angel-tongued prophet, displays to us in the most forcible and beautiful manner, the surpassing mercy and loving kindness of our Almighty Father. Notwithstanding that “we have trespassed and dealt treacherously,” notwithstanding that we have returned ingratitude for mercy, disobedience for kindness, and evil for good, still does our infinite gracious Parent suffer his attribute of mercy to prevail over his attribute of strict justice; still is He willing to restore again to his favour his rebellious and ungrateful children. And the same blissful assurance, my hearers, does our text now convey to you. It tells you, that although the Eternal is a just and jealous God, and although from the very commencement of your vocation as his chosen, “from the days of atonement which have passed, until this same Day of Atonement which now cometh upon us for peace,” ye have in very stiff-neckedness and perversion vexed your benevolent Parent, and sinned against your gracious God: still has He supplied the means which, while they militate not against his perfect justice, will enable you once more to reach the Source of living waters, once more to approach the Fountain of salvation. If, teaches our text, you shall afflict your souls on this sacred day; if ye shall attentively consider the crooked paths you have chosen unto yourselves, and will compare them with the ways of pleasantness which your God has vouchsafed to direct you; if ye shall hereby become conscious of your backslidings; if ye shall confess them before your offended God, seek his forgiveness, and in true repentance determine for the rest of your days to walk with your Maker, “with a perfect heart and desiring soul:” then shall they be atoned for, and then shall ye be purified from all your sins before the Eternal. And only thus, my brethren, with these sentiments alone are you to regard the ordinance of Kippur; by such a course of conduct alone, is this day observed to hallow it. For

“Behold, saith the Eternal, ye fast for strife and contention;

And to smite with the fist the poor.

Wherefore fast ye unto me in this manner;

To make your voice to be heard on high?

Is such then the fast which I choose;

That a man should afflict his soul for a day?

Is it, that he should bow down his head like a bulrush;

And spread sackcloth and ashes for his couch?

Shall this be called a fast,

And a day acceptable to the Eternal?

Is not this the fast which I choose

To dissolve the bands of wickedness * * *

* * * Then shalt thou call, and the Eternal shall answer;

Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Lo, I am here!"* * Isaiah 58:4; Isaiah 58:6; Isaiah 58:9.

Moreover, brethren, it has been universally received by the house of Israel, that "he who shall wilflully transgress against God's law, premeditating repentance, shall again premeditate sin and repentance, and so continue, is not permitted from on high to become penitent, and that he who sins and says Yom Kippur shall atone, for such an one, Yom Kippur does not atone."†

[illegible]‡ And who shall deny the reasonableness and justice of this doctrine? Recollect, brethren, that God trieth the reins, to give unto every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing."§ Shall we then meditate evil, and shall not God search it out, when "He knoweth the secrets of all hearts?"|| We cannot insult our fellow-creature without exciting his ire, and shall we then offend our Maker and not cause Him to anger? surely no, friends. Far then, far be it from us to do so foolish and evil a thing now. With gratitude alone for our guide we will seek the throne of grace, will find it, and prostrating ourselves before it, will ask our God for forgiveness; and as surely as we ask, so surely will He answer, for let us listen to the blissful theme there celestially chorussed:

"Come on now, my people, and let us plead together, saith the Eternal,

Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;

Though they be red as crimson, they shall be like wool."¶

† Yoma, ch. 8. § 9.

‡ [illegible]. [illegible] ([illegible])

§ Jeremiah 17:10.

|| Psalms 44:21.

¶ Isaiah 1:18.

2. The Day of Atonement bestows on us the means for reconciliation with our fellow-man. How powerfully does the prophet, in the words which I have just read to you, depict the mercy and kindness of the Creator, and how forcibly may they be made to contrast with the rigour and cruelty of the created. Let us receive, or even fancy we receive, an injury or insult, and we generally persecute the offender with the most violent hatred, and punish him with the greatest severity; indeed, it is often that our enmity ceases with our existence only. We forget how slow to anger and abundant in power is our God. We do not recollect how long and how graciously He hath borne with our stiffneckedness, and that “He hath not acted with us according to our sins, nor hath He requited us according to our iniquities.” No! all desire to imitate the Crown of Supreme Excellence is forgotten, and we uniformly abandon ourselves to our worst propensities and passions: to these we sacrifice every duty, every consideration. And yet for the proper use of these means which the Day of Atonement bestows on us, for our own sakes, if not for our brother’s, for our own peace and happiness if not for his, shall we now be solicitous to remove from our midst all feelings of jealousy, enmity, or revenge. We should seek alike our offended and offending brother, and in the embrace of love, should mutually acknowledge that “we have been verily guilty concerning him, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not listen.” And it is only so that we can obtain forgiveness for ourselves. For we cannot supplicate the Most High for mercy, while we refuse it to our fellow-creature; we cannot pray our Father to forgive us, while we will not forgive our brother; nor can we seek or expect reconciliation with the Eternal, while we refuse to be reconciled with those who are liable to err, even as are we ourselves. No! my hearers, the Day of Atonement speaks to us in language than which none can be plainer. It bestows on us the means of universal happiness and brotherhood, leaving it for us to improve these means, and to secure the great end to which they subserve. And now, if our minds be impressed with the extreme value and greatness of the boon this day confers, we shall be qualified for the consideration of the third question proposed,-What the Day of Atonement claims for us?

III.

1. The Day of Atonement claims from us not only a strict and respectful observance for itself, but for all the revealed ordinances of the Eternal. And in making this claim, the Day of Atonement requires of us only that which we must freely and spontaneously accord to the demands of reason. For if, as it has already taught us, we are, though frail, yet accountable beings; if by seeking reconciliation with God, we acknowledge that we have provoked Him to anger; and if, dreading his just wrath, we hasten to appease it by a strict observance of this most sacred and important institution:-reason dictates that it is not by this alone that we can hope to succeed; that it is not by considering this precept important, that one unimportant, not by selecting and performing one of the Eternal enactments, that we shall have observed to do all that He has required of us for the attainment of our salvation. To promote our worldly ease and advantage, we establish degrees of disobedience and sin; but these do not at all exist. No, my brethren, the crime of disobedience is ever of the same black hue, whether it appear in a small or a great matter. Therefore, if God has required of us ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ the performance of all that He hath commanded us in his law, it surely does not become us to respect such of his dictates as may seem good to us, and disregard those which shall appear light in our eyes. True it is, that if we search the sacred page, we shall there find what in our presumptuous and conceited eye may

appear trifling and unimportant, when compared with other of the Divine enactments; but we shall also there find that the Eternal commands us to diminish naught in the observance of his word, lest He break his covenant with us, and bring upon us. the curse. Shall we then set up our judgment in opposition to the will of the Omniscient, or shall we oppose our inclinations to the commands of Almighty God? Can the created array themselves against the Creator? Oh! let us be careful that we act not so foolishly. Let us rather direct our most serious attention to those important truths which by an examination of the questions called forth by this day's observance, we have just elicited. Let us duly weigh and attentively consider them,.and let us determine strictly to follow that course of obedience and amended conduct which they have pointed out to us. Then, dear brethren, will our heavenly Father regard favourably and complacently our prayers and supplications. Thus will our Yom Kippur prove efficacious, and then indeed will it become a season of expiation and forgiveness-[redacted]. And then shall every blessing and happiness be everlastingly ours, since we shall then "be atoned for, and purified from all our sins before the Eternal." To Him who is exalted above all praises, let us now address our supplications:

Most gracious God! Infinite in mercy and pardon! Not with joy, not with confidence, do we now approach Thee, but with fear and trembling, lest Thou shouldst not be willing to accept those adorations which our mouths have indeed uttered, but which our hearts and souls have dictated. O Thou, who art all Benevolent, we implore Thee to be merciful, as Thou hast ever proved unto us, and unto our fathers before us, although we have sinned, although we have transgressed, and although we have been stiff-necked. We beseech Thee, O gracious Father, to remember not in thy wrath, the backslidings of thy children, but in thine infinite kindness do Thou purify us from all our transgressions, so that we may then be worthy of thy continued favour.

Bless, we beseech Thee, the Remnant of Israel, who now stand before Thee in heartfelt contrition and adoration. Bless them, their children, and all who belong unto them, and O Lord, grant unto them, and unto all thy people Israel, that the year which hath now come upon us, may be unto us a year of happiness, a year of love, and a year of obedience to thy law. Father! grant that it be unto us a year of prosperity and of healthfulness. Let not disease enter into our houses, and suffer not death to take from us those we do most fondly cherish. And yet, Most High God, if it shall seem good unto Thee to recall those with whom we do daily and affectionately commune; if it shall seem good unto Thee to exchange their temporal felicity for everlasting bliss:-then do we entreat Thee to bestow on us such a spirit as shall lead us not to question the wisdom of thy dispensations, but to bow resignedly to thy will. We pray unto Thee, O God of mercy! that when Thou dost judge us after death, Thou wilt not visit on us the sins of our earthly life, but wilt permit our spirits to mingle with those who bless and praise thy holy name in blissful chorus. O grant that such be our future portion, and that, whilst on earth, our lives may be passed in the performance of all Thou hast commanded us, so that we may thus be happy and thus be blest. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of the cries and supplications wherewith we this day do seek Thee. Grant it for the sake of thine attributes of benevolence and compassion,-Eternal! Grant it for the sake of thy great Name, and with all our heart, and with all our soul, will we say, Amen.

S. The Destiny of Israel - 1845

The Destiny of Israel. A Sermon.*

* In the course of last August, the editor was induced to visit the Canadas, and whilst at Montreal he complied with the request addressed to him to speak unto the brethren there on the concerns of eternal life. The time allowed him for preparation was limited to about four hours; still he cannot withstand giving the address, such as it is, in the pages of the Occident, as it affords him an opportunity of making public a sort of memento of his presence in Montreal, and to return his thanks to the Israelites of that place, few as they are in number, for the politeness extended to him during his brief sojourn in their city. The days spent with them were few indeed, but the recollection of them will long live in the memory.

O Lord Supreme, who art the Fountain of all grace and goodness, look down, we beseech Thee, upon thy servants the house of Israel, in all the places of their dispersion, to bless them with the abundance of grace and peace from before thy holy throne. Strengthen them in their pilgrimage, that they may walk uprightly in thy presence, and guard their steps that they may not hurry away into the path of sin, where man meets thy indignation. But above all, we pray Thee to teach us to feel our insignificance and unworthiness, that we may be able to subdue the pride and arrogance which cling to human nature, which counsel us to value ourselves above those who like us are thy children, like whom we are servants in thy holy house. Yea, inspire us with that meekness which is the best ornament of thy adorers, which sees in Thee one universal Father, in every man a neighbour, in every Israelite a brother; so that, united heart and hand, we may hasten to promote the spread of thy kingdom, and lead sinners to fall down before the footstool of thy glory; and in this shall we know that Thou art our Lord, and that indeed we have found grace in thy eyes. Do this for thy sake, for we have no merit to deserve this blessing; do this for the sake of thy holy name which is profaned among the nations; and do this also for the sake of the covenant which Thou madest with thy adorers, Abraham; Isaac, and Jacob, who walked before Thee in the days of old, whose seed Thou hast promised to bless, and whom Thou hast redeemed to be unto Thee a peculiar treasure, to proclaim thy glory unto the ends of the earth. Amen.

Brethren, A glorious lot is ours, a blessed task has been imposed on us. Ever since our forefather wandered forth from Ur of the Chaldeans even unto this day, we have stood the representatives of high principles, the defenders of truths, everlasting as the Source from which they sprung. Ask of history what have been the Jews? And you will not be referred to magnificent temples, nor to beautiful works of art, nor to scientific discoveries as the evidence of our existence, but to the code of laws which we have received from the Almighty himself through the hands of his servant Moses. There indeed have been nations more numerous and more powerful than we, nations whose architecture, whose wisdom, whose refinement, whose arts are the themes of all the world of this present day. But they all have been, to speak emphatically, they have been, and now they have passed away from among the families of mankind, and the ploughshare of destruction has passed over their lands, the wand of oblivion over their mighty achievements. But Israel? they have indeed

endured hardships at which the heart recoils when calling them to mind, sorrows have fallen to their portion which harrow up the soul when one recounts them; but with all this we exist, no one can say we merely have been; no, we are, here, there, in every land where freedom and toleration reign, and here, there, and wherever enlightenment has passed over the soil, we are present to proclaim aloud, that we are the servants of one God, followers of one law, a law which came from the Lord, which is the brightest chain which entwines in one holy union the creature that obtains life and asks favours from the highest Source, with the Source whence all, that is, has sprung into being. It is a principle which marks our life, it is a principle which we must uphold; hence we place not our fame upon perishable things, though these be the adamantine rocks of Egypt's pyramids, or the marble statuary which graced the temples of Rome and Hellas, which adorned the mighty structures of a primeval world, and which excites the emulation of after ages; but upon the inspiration which has been entrusted to our charge, a gift which is ours, and which is inseparably connected with our name. - Darkness rested on the face of the mind, as did chaos at the beginning upon the face of the waters, and nations walked in the ignorance of their soul after vanities which are the works of their hands, and called upon gods which are powerless to save. Wherever you turned you beheld the inventions of a disordered intellect enshrined in the hearts of the multitude, and wisdom was fled far from man. It was then that, as at the first creation, God said "Let there be light," and "there was light;" for the earth was blessed by the appearance of Abraham, who feeling the greatness of his Creator's ways, proclaimed to all around him that the works of man's hands are not the beings that can demand his worship, that nothing which springs from matter can be otherwise than perishable and decaying. It was he who first felt, when others who had been taught refused to believe, that there is indeed an Almighty Power who called forth the earth, the sea, the sky, and all that fills them, from the depths of non-existence, and that it is He to whom man should turn in all hours of joy, in all the moments of sorrow, since it is by His will that we are at ease, since it is by His dispensation that we are wounded. It was this teaching which we may aptly style a new creation which characterized the mission of Abraham, it is this instruction which constitutes the structure on which we rest, to which we point as our best, as our only monument which we have erected in the world's history. For, when in the course of events the state which we had established by the labours of centuries, which at one time seemed fated to bid defiance to a united world, fell under the assaults of enemies that overran with fire and sword our beautiful inheritance, all that was perishable in human greatness fell and vanished, just as had vanished Assyria, and Babel, and Persia, and Egypt; the flames seized upon whatever offered food to their devouring fury, and men who had boasted of their unbridled freedom wandered forth in the chains of slavery to bend their necks under the rule of ruthless conquerors, of those who mocked the misfortunes of their captives. Yea, all that the world calls greatness, all that man calls glory fell on that frightful day when the blades of ten thousands of swords gleamed in the hands of Rome's countless legions, when severed heads filled up the streets, O fallen Jerusalem! when thy courts, O sacred Zion! were choked with the scattered limbs of the brave defenders who perished sooner than yield the fane which was the glory of their nation. Yea, on that day fell the power of Judah's sons, on that day sunk the crown of Judah's daughters, and ended was the dominion of those who bore rule in Israel. But precisely that which would have marked the death-hour of every other nation, became the point of revival of our own race: and even whilst the temple's lurid flames yet shot up to the skies before the agonized view of those who had so often worshipped in its precincts, the light of its rebuilt splendour flashed before the hopeful view of those who felt themselves

strengthened by the promised salvation of their God, whose chastisement they had evoked by their manifold sins. And thus while they with awestruck hearts watched in mute despair the progress of the destruction, which henceforward marked them as wanderers and outcasts, their unveiled eye beheld their temple rise again from its ashes in renewed and hitherto unapproached splendour, and their own son of David sitting on his throne, the pillars of which are righteousness and justice, establishing on earth a kingdom which is to stand unto eternity, encircling them with the armour of heavenly protection, and subduing the world by the potent spell of the divine wisdom, which was handed down to their forefathers on Horeb from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly, when truth descended from Heaven and took up its abode among the children of man. The Israelites thus saw their outward symbols fall into the abyss which had swallowed up so many other nations; but they felt that a new life was given them; they felt that now they had to endure privation, contumely, scorn, because they were marked with the seal of the Lord's covenant, because in their features they carried the lineaments of a once renowned now hated ancestry, because by their deeds and their belief they bore a decided testimony against the deeds and opinions which other nations professed. They felt then, that if it was impossible for them to triumph, it was still granted them to suffer all that man could inflict on them for defending the noble truths which were in their safekeeping; and they resolved thus to be patient and submissive to what they considered to have been decreed from Heaven, and they took up the pilgrim's staff which was handed to them, and they glorified in their sorrow the Hand which in mercy had struck and wounded them, in order to recall them from their sinful ways, and to cement, by the blood which was shed freely by the saints, the union which had been loosened in the hours of peace and prosperity.

I need not tell you, brethren, how many sufferings we had to endure for eighteen hundred years, for no other reason, than because we were Jews. History tells the sorrowful tale, how oppression exhausted its malice to invent new inflictions wherewith to crush the spirit of Israel's descendants; how false accusations were constantly brought forward in order to afford some pretext for the cruelties which were heaped upon us; how every honourable pursuit was caused against us, and we were compelled to resort to mean and degrading employments, in order to find the wealth, which was the only thing which at the same time excited the cupidity of our tyrants and afforded us the only opportunity of appeasing their unholy thirst for the life's blood of our best and wisest members. I could detain you for hours, were I to paint for you the agony which met us at every turn during the centuries of darkness which have passed over our heads, and which stain the annals of all those nations almost who profess to follow what they term a religion of peace, of good will among men; but I forbear, I will not descant on what is known to all. All I want to do is to call your attention to the miraculous constancy which was displayed on all occasions, and in every country, and under all circumstances, by our suffering people, and that nothing ever caused them to despair of better times, and that nothing could induce the mass, whatever individuals might do in their agony of despair, to embrace, even in appearance, the opinions of the gentiles, and to sever their connexion with the house of Israel. Let me entreat you to carry your view back to the scenes which were enacted in Palestine, in Egypt, in Spain, in Italy, in France, in England, in Germany, to crush the spirit of our people, and to compel them to renounce their faith or die by the sword, the gibbet, the rack, and the flaming fire; recall for a moment the dungeon filled with those who, like yourselves, were guilty only of worshipping the one God who created heaven and earth; look back upon the ships which fled from Spain's bloodstained coasts, laden with those who were cast forth

in poverty and indigence, for being followers of the God of Jacob.-and then say whether you can otherwise than glow with admiration for the noble martyrs who thus sacrificed all, because they would not, could not, renounce the faith which they had inherited from their fathers. It must strike you, that it must have been a holy thing which fortified their hearts, which could induce the aged sire to bid farewell to the sacred spot where reposed the earthly portion of a beloved wife who had preceded him to the mansions of glory; which could impel the tender maiden, who had been reared in splendour and luxury, whose hands had never toiled, whose feet had scarcely touched the ground, to fling from her the jewels which were to grace her on her bridal day, to venture forth alone amidst brothers who wandered into foreign climes, alone, without him whom she had chosen as the lord of her young affections, because he had forsaken his God in the fear of the sword which the oppressors of Israel wielded,-that it must have been a holy thing which rendered such as these, and many others like them, wanderers upon the wide face of the earth, which armed them with fortitude to endure all the privations, all the toil, which they might have avoided by claiming the new associations which their tyrants offered to their acceptance. Think of this, and then answer to yourselves, whether, with the change of circumstances, with the improvement in our condition, the principles for which our fathers fought and suffered have undergone any, nay the least change; whether the blessed belief in the unity of our gracious Father in heaven is less true now than during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella in the Spanish Peninsula; whether the obligation to be true and faithful in our allegiance to the law of Sinai is of less binding force now than when the persecutions of European kings were braved, and their power defied, in order that we might not transgress voluntarily a single one of its glorious precepts! Surely there has been no change in our relative position to our God; He is precisely the same He ever was; He is as unerring in his wisdom as in the days of yore, and He has never repealed or altered the least of the precepts which he once communicated to us as the expression of his will. Nor has our obligation been removed. We have never received any dispensation to do away with, or to alter any of the commandments; no one can aver that any of our duties have in any wise been removed or diminished; nor can it be alleged that the march of enlightenment has destroyed or abridged the national allegiance which we owe to God, as subjects to their sovereign, as scholars to their teacher, as children to their father. No! God has not changed and we are yet, to this day, to this hour, to this moment, Israelites, children of the same patriarchs, defenders of the same principles, which we were, from the first moment of our institution as a nation, separate in our descent, different in our belief and conduct among the other families of the earth. A wonderful change has, it is true, come over our condition within the recollection of the generation yet living, in the manner with which we are treated by those who differ from us in religious opinions. In many countries the gentiles have learned to respect the Jews, and to appreciate their conduct and principles by a different standard from what they were formerly wont to do. In others again all civil disabilities have been removed; and in the country where my lot has been cast, and in this noble land where you, my beloved brethren, have erected the first house of prayer to the living God, the Lord of hosts, whose name be blessed, the laws know of no distinction between the Israelites and their fellow-citizens, and they are free to go and free to come, to assemble for prayer, to meet for instruction, to, congregate as believers in their own faith, with no one to let or hinder them, with no one to question the legality of their so assembling. In these lands, too, they can act as their law demands of them; there is no disqualification attached to the observance of the Sabbath, there is no government tax for the food which they prepare in accordance with their customs; there is no

exclusion imposed on them for introducing their sons into the covenant of Abraham, for sealing them with the sacred sign of circumcision, the outward token of the covenant between God and Abraham's seed; there is no one can prevent them from erecting houses of prayer, and establishing schools in which to proclaim and teach their religion. There, therefore, we ought all to be zealous to stand firmly in support of the sacred cause entrusted to our charge; there should we show by our every act that we are worthy of the freedom we enjoy, not undeserving of the mercy of the Lord who has given us enlargement from our sorrows! But, alas! in modern times the bonds have been loosened; with the freedom from oppression, our adhesion to the principles of Judaism has become constantly more lax and uncertain; and in modern times men have learned to set themselves above the law, and to interpose their own will and their own interpretation between the doctrines of religion and their observance of them. Besides, with the increase of the tranquillity from without, we have not learned to maintain peace within ourselves. The truth must be spoken; in many communities individuals have obtrusively offered their own sentiments, and if not able to rule according to their own views, have sown dissensions in the midst of our congregations. But, brethren! all this is not well; it is unbecoming to us as men who owe gratitude to our benevolent Father, who has wrought so many great things in our behalf, that we do not emulate and surpass our forefathers in devotion and attachment to the law. They could be obedient only in terror and apprehension. Whilst they commenced the Sabbath, they knew not but that before its termination they might, because of it, be led out to execution; whilst the child was carried forth to be received into the covenant, they knew not but that a cruel death might be impending over the faithful father and the devoted mother. Still they persevered, and acted up to their duties, rejoicingly, with undismayed courage. Yet now, where is our devotion to principles? to those principles which mark our place in the history of mankind? to those blessed monuments upon which we have been labouring unceasingly since the calling of Abraham?-But why should we not rejoice, as did our fathers, at the approach of the holy Sabbath? why should we not welcome its arrival as the heavenly bride which brings peace and rest in her train to those who are weary with labour? whose weekly toil calls them to rest on the Lord's day from their unceasing pursuits? why should we not be sedulous in abstaining from those things which the Lord declares unclean, and render our body holy as the earthly temple of God, by this means consecrating our soul as the habitation of his holy spirit? why should we hesitate in offering our children to be impressed with the sign which is to mark them as servants of God? servants chosen from among men to be the bearers of truth and salvation to the ends of the earth? Why will we endeavour to sow dissensions in our communities, which have suffered, alas! too long from outward pressure, that they require all the healing and care which internal tranquility alone can produce under the blessing of Heaven? What matters it to the individual "who rules," provided the cornmunity be well governed, and the glory of God be promoted by each one acting in unison and harmony? Why will we forget that every one cannot rule? that every one must yield something, if the public is to be truly benefited, if the good cause is to be really promoted, if we sincerely desire to see our religion respected and its precepts obeyed? It is true, that in all this continent, with but one or two exceptions, our congregations are yet small, are, so to say, in their infancy; but for this very reason ought each sincere Israelite to contribute his share of influence; of means, and of personal service, to lay the foundation in such a manner that, in progress of time, the small may become a thousand, and the younger one a great and mighty nation. But two things are required to promote the best interests of our people, especially in America,-union and forbearance. Nothing can be accomplished if each member of

the community acts independently and in opposition to the others; never did any cause prosper under such circumstances, nor can ours do so unless by the especial interposition of the favour of Heaven. It is true, so many dangers have already passed over our heads, that we may freely assert our religion to be in no permanent danger from any thing we can do to injure it. But such a flattering of ourselves will hardly excuse us in our own eyes, not to mention, in the estimation of good men, but especially in the judgment of the Lord, who sees the inward working of our sinful heart. No, we must alter all this, if we have even once acted so; it is no sign of weakness to amend an error, it is no evidence of an unsound judgment to yield if we are convinced of having been to blame in our former conduct. Though it is, therefore, true, that our religion can advance in spite of our own supineness and wrong-doing, though I can bear a cheerful testimony, that despite the misdoing of many individuals, our cause has progressed rapidly within the last ten years on this very continent, nay, if I err not, in this very city: there can be no doubt that it will progress much faster if we all unite for the same end, with one will, with one heart. Shall our religion, beloved brethren, appeal to you in vain for aid, for countenance, shall she always be suffering either from the wounds inflicted by her foes or the treachery of her faithless defenders? is Judaism always to be the suffering cause, never the triumphant? Yea, triumphant or suffering, Judaism will be dear to the souls of those who fear the Lord, whose eye can penetrate into the recesses of futurity, and behold the Messiah on his throne and the knowledge of God spread over all the earth! Judaism will be dear to the true Israelite, whether it is oppressed, or marches in glory over the fallen ruins of systems of error in the Lord's own appointed time. Still let us hope that there are many, many among the sons and daughters of Israel, who are here this day, who are zealous for their God and his law, and who will resolve to unite in acts, to be one in belief, in order to extend among the household of Jacob, the love of the Lord, and the fear of his holy Name, by observing themselves all that their religion asks of them, and to aid all who come under their influence to follow in their footsteps in sincerity and simpleness of heart. Of all the endearing epithets with which we address the Deity none appeals more strongly to the heart than that of Father. He is our Father in heaven. No term is more full of kindness as applied by Him, who is so pure and so holy, than his calling us his children. Of our own accord we could never have assumed the title of God's children; still, in the record of his will, written by his servant Moses, God addresses us as such in the following words, which we find in the commencement of the fourteenth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy:- ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■

"Ye are children to the Lord your God;" by which we are certified that we are objects of especial care to our Creator, who, in order to render us proper subjects of his kingdom, has sanctified us by his commandments that we might walk before Him and be perfect, as He spoke to Abraham. If we all, as individual Israelites, are especially the children of the Most High, chosen to be the bearers of his glorious standard of truth and faith before the sons of man, it follows as a necessary consequence that we all ought to regard each other as brothers in faith, in hopes, in duty, and are therefore bound by the ties of love to walk together in due affection, and to aid each other in the attainment of the utmost perfection of which our nature is capable in this state of probation and sin. Perfection, absolute and unconditional is not asked, our Father knows our frame, knows that we are dust. He requires only that we do all which lies in our power; but we also must not expect too much of one another; we must bear with each other's failings, and endeavour to improve others by gentle means and brotherly admonition, where we see that a wrong has been done.-Do you feel the full weight of this? beloved hearers! Are you penetrated with your relation to your Maker, with

your relation to all Israel? Remember, God is your Father; it is not to injure you that He gave you a law of duty and precept, but to render you more worthy of his favour and mercy; not to exclude others who may differ from you in religion, but to preserve you each and all as parts of a holy people who are to lead by their presence, silently, but surely, many who do not now believe, to fall down and worship the Holy One of Israel. Remember, too, that all Israelites have received the same mission, from the highest to the least, they are all servants of the Most High, messengers of his mercy. Aid them therefore, in their endeavours to be obedient; encourage the faithful, confirm the wavering, and assist those with advice and instruction who are ignorant of the ways of the Lord. Look upon the Creator as your Father, whose mercies claim your gratitude; regard all the world as your neighbours, whom you, as children of God, are bound to love and serve, no matter what may be their country, what their faith; with all, however, you are bound more to the Israelite, you must act with him, for him; you must endeavour to induce him to be a true and faithful servant in the same cause in which you are engaged, and draw him towards your common Parent by the ties of kindred and of love.-What a delightful picture of union and blessedness presents itself thus to our view! One God our Father! the whole human family the object of our tenderness! the whole house of Israel our fellow-labourers! and each individual guided by those around him unto the gates of righteousness! entering therein by the accomplishment of the good which his God assigned to him in his sphere of action. Do you feel it then to be your task to be thus engaged? are you willing to be Israelites in deed more than in name? If so, which we fervently trust to be your will, resolve from henceforward to devote yourselves to the glorious task of self-regeneration, in order that the glory of the Lord may be spread over the earth, and his precepts be obeyed by all who are with us of the seed of Jacob, the chosen of the Lord, the servant in whom He has found delight. And may the goodness of the Lord guide us unto the light which is undeceiving, and permit us to enter his presence with songs of thanksgiving when our spirits return to his holy throne, when our race is run and our task is ended. May this be his will. Amen.

Montreal, August 9th, Ab 24th, 5604.

Chapter 62

S. The Destiny of Isreal - 1846

The Destiny of Israel. A Sermon Delivered on Sabbath Vayetzay at the Attorney Street Synagogue, N. Y. by the Rev. Dr. M. Lilienthal.

Once again we are assembled before Thee, Oh! our God, and God of our fathers, to listen to thy holy word, to rejoice in thy precepts, and to return our thanks for thy manifold blessings. Yes, great things hast Thou done for thy people Israel, all-kind, omnipotent God, Thou last borne us on eagles' wings, through the tempest of centuries; Thou hast enlightened our dark path with the light of truth, with the torch of pure knowledge; Thou hast in all ages called us thy first-born beloved son, and with hearts full of gratitude we rejoice that Thou art our God and we are thy people, that Thou art our Father and we are thy children. Grant, Oh Lord! that this hour be an hour of sanctification, of devotion, of heartfelt edification; that we may fully understand, how glorious a lot is ours to be called thy people, thy Jewish people; that we may fully appreciate the inestimable value of thy holy law; that we may endeavour to the utmost of our ability to preserve and to diffuse it, in order that the word of the prophet he verified: "If even heaven and earth perish, my covenant with you shall never cease." May this be thy will, Thou our Hope, our Protector, our Comforter, our Father. Amen.

Beloved Brethren- With a moved and grateful heart, I again respond to your call, to expound to you the word of God, to preach to you his holy law. It was to me a happy hour, when I taught the word of God for the first time in this city; the men repaired to the house of God, and listened with devout hearts; the pious mothers hastened to the dwelling of the Lord, and hearkened with a pious and faithful mind; and when I spoke of the holiness of our religion, when I praised the glory of our faith, I saw many a man's heart moved, many a man's eye in tears; and I felt to my unspeakable joy, to my deepest, heartfelt, delight, that that hour was not a lost one, that it was not idly spent, but that it was a holy hour, blessed by God, an hour which will long, long be recalled to memory in the hustle and stir of daily life.

Yes, beloved brethren, I feel that, if the word can penetrate so deeply into the hearts, take so mighty a hold of the minds, these hearts must throb warmly for our faith, that these minds must cling lovingly to the religion inherited from our fathers; I feel that a consciousness of the truth of our divine law must animate your spirits, that you all, all, as many as there are assembled here before the shrine of the Almighty, would do every thing, and suffer every thing for the sake of our religion; that you would desire to penetrate deeper into the word of God, in order to understand, to comprehend, to appreciate, and to reproduce it in life. Oh! thanks to you, my brethren, for this godly disposition which truly ennobles you; for this pious wish, which truly sanctifies you: where such sentiments are prevalent, it is a delightful task to preach the word of God; where such a desire after truth moves the hearts, it is a pleasant duty to co-operate with the inquirer, that the light of faith may shine brighter in our community.

Yes, brethren, to this object we will again devote the present hour of edification; this pride to be Jews, and to remain Jews, we will justify to-day; this joy in our faith we will clearly demonstrate, by

answering the following three questions:

Wherein consists the wonderful preservation of the Jewish People?

Wherein consists the destiny of the Jewish people? and What are we to do to accomplish this destiny?

You are aware with me, that it is a great, holy, and beautiful problem, which we will try to solve to-day, to view the Jewish people in its greatness and importance; you feel with me, your hearts beat in joy and gratitude towards God, in recognising the word "Jew," in its true signification; and you will readily join in the words of our text, which were spoken by our pious mother Leah, at the birth of her fourth son.

[redacted]:

"This time I will thank the Lord; for then she called his name Judah."- Genesis 29:35.

You will readily conceive, that a sermon on the Jewish people, which by all other nations was recognised as the people of God, must be an important one; an unconscious feeling tells you that you ought to be specially thankful, to belong to this people of God. And may the Lord bless this hour with his blessing, which is love and truth. Amen.

I.

"Wherein consists the wonderful preservation of the Jewish people?" You ask first, my hearers; and I ask in return, Which people, as many as the earth has contained from the beginning of history to the present day, could compare itself to the Jewish nation, in all the causes which make the existence of a people possible?

For, if a people is to maintain its existence, the first requisite for it is to possess a fatherland, a country in which it lives by itself, in which it maintains and propagates its customs and habits; a country in which it is exempt from all foreign influence which other nations could bring to bear upon it: a country, the love of which animates every one alike, and for the maintenance of the honour of which the bosom of all inhabitants glows with an intense feeling of patriotism. Then only, yes, then only, can a people maintain its existence. And the Jewish people? [redacted] it was thrust into the wide world; [redacted] like chaff that is scattered before the wind, to the four corners of the earth, the Jew was chased about in all directions; nowhere he found rest for the wearied sole of his foot, nowhere smiled a place where he could repose his aching head; for eighteen hundred years, he was not permitted to call any one country his fatherland, and yet- Judah has outlived the nations by whom he was maltreated, and he flourishes, while his oppressors have vanished.

Again, if a people is to maintain its existence, it must have its own language, in which it thinks, speaks, and feels; in which it records the treasures of its knowledge and experience, the days of its adversity and prosperity; a language in which it sings the great and glorious deeds achieved by its ancestors; a language which, while it cements and unites it as a people, distinguishes it at the same time from other nations. Then, yes, then only, can a people maintain its existence. And the Jewish people? It was forced to speak the tongues of all countries; it learned the languages of all nations; it needs had to converse with the eastern in their eastern, and with the western in their

western tongue; and still Israel has been preserved! Those languages are dead, their sounds have ceased; those nations are swept always while Israel stands in youthful freshness, ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ blooming like the tree planted by the river side.

Again, if any other people is to maintain its existence, it must possess a great history, that the father may relate to the children what mighty and glorious deeds their forefathers have accomplished. And the child listens in eagerness and surprise; the living word inspires anew the youthful heart; new energy, new courage, new perseverances are developed, new heroic deeds achieved, and, like a living spark, enthusiasm is fanned into a brilliant blaze. Yes, with such sentiments, with such courage, with such examples, with such a history of patriots and heroes, a people may preserve itself. And the Jewish people?-Its history is a history of slaves, a record of affliction.■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "They did us evil and afflicted us and laid upon us heavy labour," can be applied to a period of eighteen hundred years, intermitted by very few bright intervals, no heroic deeds and no victories are there to cheer the heart and to invigorate the mind. ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■, "My days are consumed in sorrow and my years in anguish," this is all, all that we have to relate to the children, to our dear children; and yet Israel does exist, and yet Israel has outlived all those nations. Their heroes have mouldered in the earth, their swords are devoured by rust, their victorious banners have been torn into shreds by the tooth of time; for "The king is not saved by the multitude of a host, whilst the eye of the Lord is upon those that fear him," and Israel, powerless Israel, stands preserved and safe.

Again, if any other people is to maintain its existence, it must live in peace, not be subjected to persecution, nor be exposed to the hatred and fanaticism of powerful enemies; then it may slowly acquire prosperity, and continue to live in the march of time. And Israel, my hearers? "On my back have the ploughmen ploughed" already sang the Psalmist; there is not a species of persecution, nor any sort of oppression, the stake and the rack, famine and misery, allurements and false promises, which have not been employed against thee, my own Jewish people! and thou didst bend thy neck, and they beat thee; and thou didst bend thy head and die in thousands of thy sons the martyr’s death for thy religion; and yet, my own Jewish people, thou standest here, and not only here, but even as far as the sun of God illumines the earth, preserved and safe, to the glory of thy God, to the glory of thy faith, to the honour of all those who profess Judaism; and I ask, is not the preservation of such a people a wonderful phenomenon? Might we not exclaim with the Psalmist, "Truly this is from the Lord, wonderful it is in our eyes!" Yes, since none of the causes which are necessary to preserve a people cooperated, neither fatherland nor language, neither history nor peaceful life; and yet, the people, after a lapse of four thousand years, exists in a vigorous and blooming youth, can we do otherwise than acknowledge, "This is a finger of God?"

II.

Surely, beloved brethren, from the hushed silence, which at the present moment pervades this congregation, I am led to think, that you acknowledge in reverential awe the mysterious workings of the Almighty; that new ideas concerning the destiny of your people and the great distinction of being Jews, enter your mind, that you would prostrate yourselves before the all-powerful glory of God, exclaiming: "This time I will thank the Lord, for my name is Judah." But by doing this, does not the second question present itself? "But why has the Lord preserved this people in so miraculous a manner? What is the object, what the end, of this wonderful preservation?"

Oh, my own Jewish people, great as thy history, is also thy destiny, the end of thy preservation. For "thou shalt be unto the Lord a kingdom of priests and a holy nation;" it is thy destiny to be to all other nations the teacher of truth, of morals, and of LAW; it was thy destiny to be the people of the Spirit; and even as the Spirit is immortal and imperishable, so shalt thou also never cease, shall never perish. When the night of darkness yet covered the globe, and infidelity and superstition held the human race in disgraceful bondage, it was then that thou didst receive the Ten Commandments, which to this day adorn the shrine of every Jewish community; it was then that thou didst proclaim the great truth: ■' ■■■■■■ ■' ■■■: "The Lord our God is One!" Thou preachest the doctrine of One God, of a holy, eternal, and purely spiritual Being through the different creeds of all mankind, and they have yet to work and to struggle before they can fully appreciate this great truth, before they have reached the lofty eminence on which thou standest. When idolatry degraded mankind, thy prophet exclaimed: "Shall then the axe glorify itself against him that heweth, therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the stick should shake those that lift it up, as if the staff should lift up him that is not wood?" (Isaiah 10:15.) And when idolatry began to diminish, and a purer knowledge of God began to diffuse itself, thou didst rejoice; but still thou spokest: "How long yet, oh Lord?" how long yet is it to last, until the day will appear of which it is said, "On that day the Lord will be One, and his name One?" the day when all nations will acknowledge: "That the Lord is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, there is none else?" And thus thou standest here, firmly awaiting that great day, and thou proclaimest in the morning: "The Lord our God is One;" and when the stars assume their reign in the firmament, thou again proclaimest: "The Lord our God is One;" and when on the Day of Atonement thou hast reconciled thyself with thy God, the concluding words of thy sanctification are: "The Lord our God is One!" And thus these powerful, glorious words, will continue to reverberate throughout the world, until they will reecho in every zone, and be responded to by every heart; until all minds will acknowledge these words of faith, which the understanding is capable of comprehending, and reason competent to explain; which words thou wert the first to proclaim to mankind; and which to preserve thou art destined.

Oh, it is a great and glorious task to cultivate this truth for mankind; it is a proud feeling to be teacher and guardian of this truth among the nations of the earth; and every one, who is not entirely absorbed in his physical pursuits, but who, like you, aspires to something higher and more spiritual, must look up to God with a grateful heart for being permitted to have a share in this destiny. But it is not only this sublime truth of faith, which thou hast first promulgated: Israel was destined to teach to the nations the only true system of morals. We know nothing of "an only saving church," which excludes others from the heavenly kingdom of God.■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ "The righteous of all nations are participants in the happiness of a future life," is the maxim of our sages. We know nothing of a love which only subsists between coreligionists, professors of one religion, sons of one country; the grand moral precept of our religion is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." When Rabbi Akiba was once asked, which was the principal commandment of the Torah, he answered; ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, is the most comprehensive commandment in the Torah." When once a gentile intended to embrace the Jewish religion, but insisted on learning its principal laws while standing on one foot, Hillel said to him ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■, "whatever thou dislikest omit doing unto thy neighbour. This is the root of our moral law, all other precepts are its ramifications." We know of no distinction between rich

and poor; in our Synagogues, in our communities, in our Jewish festivities, in our ■■■■, every one is considered equal; we know of no distinction between Christian and Jew, where love and charity call our aid into requisition. ■■■■■ ■■■"■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■, "It is the duty of the Jew to visit the sick of the idolaters; and to bury their dead," is taught by our great Maimonides. Wherever there are tears to dry, distressed to be relieved, unfortunate to be saved, afflicted to be consoled and comforted, there we call to our mind the words of the prophet: "It has been told thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord asketh of thee, only to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." And in all these places, nay, in the whole Bible-open it and read it through-the one grand principle is universally inculcated, that every man is our brother, and as such has equal claims on our love and benevolence; and bitterly and perseveringly as we have been persecuted and oppressed, wherever a friendly hand was tendered to us, we willingly forgot whatever we had suffered, whatever wrongs we had been subjected to; with our tears we washed away all our wrongs into oblivion; and challenged mankind, which does not yet comprehend the moral law in all its force, to imitate our example. But great and beautiful as our moral law is, commanding as it does the respect of all mankind through all ages, our civil laws which we preach to the world are not less admirable. The greatest progress in the development of political life, ever made by mankind, we witness in these United States. Free from any overshadowing power which interferes at will with the public interest; free from those prejudices which divide men into castes, and alienate brother from brother, man is permitted to live here as man, enjoying equal rights, equal privileges, being entitled to equal claims, and having to render equal duties. The way to honour and preferment is as accessible to thy child, poor son of Israel, as to that of any other citizen; thy son, poor widow, may aspire to the same post as that of the wealthiest. Unencumbered by heavy taxes, unannoyed by an armed soldiery, unoppressed by despotic rule, man at last is permitted to live for himself, to work for himself, for his improvement, for his perfection, and for the welfare of his fellow-man. The heart rejoices at witnessing this example, the mind is astonished at the rapid and flourishing development of free institutions, and every sincere man must gladly acknowledge, that a new era has, at last, begun to dawn for mankind. And what is my own Jewish people, in reference to this? When yet no nation foresaw such a state of things, and no man dared pronounce it, it was Israel that foretold it, and prayed for it in their supplications to the Deity. Thy law has anticipated, thy prophets have presaged, thy seers have called this time the happiest days of mankind. According to the Pentateuch, no man could renounce his right as man, for with the jubilee every one regained his liberty and his property. Samuel warned the people not to elect a king, and Isaiah said: "And it shall come to pass at the end of days, that he shall judge between nations, and reprove many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn any more war." And Malachi, the last of the prophets, put the keystone into this beautiful structure by saying: "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us all? and why shall we act treacherously one against the other?" Yes, it was thou, my people, that hast first invited mankind to this height, to which the inhabitants of this country aspire; it was thou, that first proclaimedst to mankind liberty and equality; and as thou seest mankind gradually accomplish this destiny, even so thou wilt yet see them embrace all the truths which are entrusted to thy safe-keeping. These truths will become more and more recognised, and will spread more and more widely, and the day approaches, when it will be acknowledged: "Surely this great nation was a wise and understanding people; the faith of this

people has contributed towards the benefit of mankind; the code of this people alone contained the standard of right and truth: yes, the Jewish people has all along been the people of God."

III.

3. But if this be our destiny, to hold up to mankind in our law the greatest religious, moral, and political truths as the goal of their exertions, what are we to do for this law, for this destiny?

Brothers, but a few weeks have I sojourned in your midst; but I have found in you warm hearts for our faith, deep affection for the religion of our fathers; I have witnessed your endeavours to establish this religion on a sure foundation, in order to glorify the word of God, and as Jews, to command respect from all around you. Men came to me and said: "Brother, untoward circumstances have forced us to transgress the commandments of our law, to deviate from the customs of our fathers; but we know that we have done wrong and we confess it with a penitent heart; and we rejoice that God has prospered our exertions, so that we need not to trespass again." Men came to me and said: "Judaism was badly provided for; but, according to the best of our knowledge and will, we have done all to preserve our religion, and to remain true to our faith. We have built Synagogues, and with joyous hearts we exclaim therein, 'The Lord our God is one;' we have founded institutions to preserve our ancient venerable customs, and the Lord has been with us and has assisted us, and still more rapidly and cheerfully the good work progresses." Oh, be ye blessed in the name of the Lord for these excellent beautiful words, to which I have listened with tears of joy; be ye blessed, men and women, fathers and mothers, youths and maidens, for these godly sentiments, which have expanded my heart. I do not admonish you to proceed in this way; I confide in you, I trust in Him, of whom our sages say : ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ "Providence guides man always on the path in which he wishes to walk." Yes, you will walk onward in the path of faith, in the road of our religion, to accomplish your mission as Jews, to do every thing in your power to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your might.

Brothers, but a few weeks have I sojourned in your midst; but I have found you good-hearted, noble-minded, and benevolent in a high degree. On a beautiful festive occasion, dedicated to the poor, I saw the wealthy and the rich, nay, I saw every one bestow his gift, according as the Lord had blessed him; and I learned how much you had done in so short a time; I learned that there are few Christian charitable associations in this country, of which Jews are not members, and to which Jews do not cheerfully contribute. Yes, my hearers, an old proverb says of our people, ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ "The children of Israel are modest, compassionate, and benevolent." I feel grateful to you, my brethren, I feel grateful to you, that you have vindicated so gloriously the noble qualities of our people; that you have shown how religion operates on the Jew, how his moral law forms his heart. I feel grateful to you, that you have so truly sanctified the name of God: and here again, I do not call upon you to proceed; such a call would sound as if I put not full trust in your hearts, or doubted your sentiments. No, you are proud of being Jews, your hearts glow with Jewish affection, and a Jewish heart cannot but be good and benevolent; nay, it will be so, to show the sanctifying influence of the divine law which is ours.

Brothers, I entreat you to preserve these sentiments, to cherish these noble sentiments not only for yourselves, but also to inculcate them into the minds of your children, if you, virtuous fathers, and, pious mothers, wish to educate them to the honour of God; in order that these little ones may

become proud of the name of Jew, that they may fully understand the holiness and dignity of our faith, and that, when you are awaiting in the grave the great day of the Lord, they may be able and willing to tread in your steps, to labour for the honour of our faith, for the glory of our religion, for the accomplishment of our destiny, to educate the whole human race in religious truths, in moral and civil laws. Yes, then the blessing of Jacob will apply to you: "Judah, thy brothers will thank thee!"

Judah! it was thou, who first didst bring us the sublime truths of faith;

Judah! it was thou who first didst teach us a pure system of morals;

Judah! it was thou who first didst recognise and establish the dignity of man.

Yes, Judah, ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ "thy brothers will thank thee;" and the word will be fulfilled, ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ "in thee shall be blessed all the families of the earth." And may it also be thy will, O our Father and our God, to sustain us in our good intentions, to live in thy law; enlighten Thou our spirit, in order that we may comprehend our destiny; incline Thou our hearts, that we may accomplish it in love, and that we may be worthy of thy great blessing, which Thou hast spoken in the words: "The Lord bless thee, and preserve thee; the Lord let his countenance shine upon thee and be gracious to thee; the Lord lift up his countenance unto thee and give thee peace." Amen!

NOTE.-The above sermon of Dr. L., has been translated from the German by one of our correspondents; the translator wishes his name not to be mentioned, and we apologize for him in case our readers should find it somewhat too close an imitation of the original. The German style is so peculiar, and Dr. L. so purely German, that a literal transcript in English is almost impossible. But sure we are that our friends will thank our collaborateur for giving them an opportunity to refresh themselves by the pious and glowing sentiments of the learned and eloquent divine, who no doubt is destined to occupy a brilliant position amongst us. The Hebrew quotations have been retained at the request of Dr. L. himself; but they are translated and marked accordingly. Ed. Oc.

Chapter 63

S. The Echo of the Prophets

An Echo of the Prophets. A Sermon for Sabbath Hol Hammoed Succoth, 5609.

O Thou, whose blessing covers the fields with plenty, and crowns the trees with the swelling fruit, have mercy on thy flock, the people whom Thou hast chosen, and fill their granaries with thy bounty; and let thy plentifulness attend all their labours in the city and the field, and command them success when they go in and when they go out; so that they may not need the aid of flesh of blood, but be fed solely from thy hand: that their food may come in abundance before they need it, and their garments be ready for them in season before they require them. Thus will they be relieved from the slavery of dependence on man, and their mind will be free from the interruption of anxious care for their daily bread, and they will have leisure to devote themselves to thy service, that it may be well with them and their families always, inasmuch as Thou blessest those who fear Thee, and leavest not those unprotected who seek thy aid in the sincerity of their heart. Yea, be with us whilst we sojourn on thy earth, and leave us not without opportunities to earn thy favour in the world to come, in the life without end or shadow, where the righteous live for ever, and bask unceasingly in the holy light of thy countenance, which is the desire of the angels and the holy ones whom Thou hast created. Amen.

Brethren:-

What is our mission as Jews? what is it as men? From a superficial view we might imagine that there existed a difference in the two problems thus presented to us; but if we look deeper into the subject, we will discover that both melt into one, and have the self-same end to be reached in solving them properly. Let us tale a text from the prophet Ezekiel as the basis of our contemplation, on which to establish the superstructure which we desire to see exhibited before us. We read in the section appointed to be read as appropriate for this day, as follows:

[redacted]

“And I will exalt and sanctify myself, and I will be manifested in the sight of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord.”- Ezekiel 38:23.

It is here declared that the Lord intends displaying his power and holiness before the eyes of the masses of mankind who compose the nations, that they may thereby learn to discover that He is indeed the Supreme Ruler, the sole Creator and Preserver of all things, whereas no other power exists besides Him, or can maintain itself in opposition to his decrees. This is the will of God; this is the view of the future which is revealed to us: and though the time may be far distant, it is well defined in the dark recesses of coming events, which are laid open only to Him who sees alike the past, present, and future; whose existence is not bounded by space and time, and who therefore has all possible existence spread out before Him, and nothing escapes his all-seeing eye. But though we cannot see the end of things, we can at least labour to promote its arrival by our feeble human aid. It is true we are mortal-our very breath is drawn in pain and sorrow; we are ignorant of

the consequences of the very steps which we take. Nevertheless, we have a mission, an appointment in the world, which we must and can pursue in accordance with the great plan of the universal Father for the promotion of his kingdom and the establishing of the knowledge of himself, which we are told by his prophets it is his purpose to diffuse among all mankind. To suppose that we are here merely for ourselves, that we can, if we would, stand still in the path of life without regarding the masses around us,-would presuppose that a man could be independent, isolated in life, without sympathy, without influence. But the most cursory observation contradicts this: everybody receives and conveys impressions, and it is questionable whether even an idiot is without some influence on others.

We know not how ideas are excited; we know as little how they are conveyed abroad to others, nor where the starting point is whence new thoughts are carried into the channels formerly overrunning with those of a different or opposite nature; consequently we cannot determine who and what the best instruments are whom the Lord may select to effect his purposes. The Psalmist says: “The stone which the builders despised hath become the chief corner-stone;” and in the same strain may we allege that the humblest individual, only if he be blest by his Sender, can effect that good which the most powerful intellect will fail of attaining. Let us, therefore, be ever so little in our eyes or those of the world, we may still say, without being guilty of arrogance or undue pride, that we have been selected for a wise purpose to be God’s witnesses; and, what is more, we may maintain that our labours will succeed, and that though now the fewest of nations, as we have always been since our first selection, the time will come when we shall become “praised, famed, and glorious, as also a holy people to the Lord our God, as He hath spoken;” since the Almighty’s will never fails of working out its own purposes, let the fulfilment be delayed even so long that men in their blind ignorance say that the time will never arrive; because we know that his are not eyes of flesh, and that He does not work as men work; for all power is his, and time and eternity are before Him alike.

We have now a twofold proposition before us: God wills a universal sanctification of all mankind, and that we shall be his instruments. The first idea is one of vast and far-reaching importance, nothing less than the whole human race being included; the second merely regards the instruments: and who can say of them with justice to the great Master-“Thy labourers are not worthy of thy grace?” Truly may we confess the latter mortifying fact to our shame. We have received a high destiny,-still we have valued more the gewgaws and glitter of the world than the favour of Heaven and the promotion of the objects of our mission! Nevertheless, does not this impeach the wisdom of our God, nor say that his intentions will ultimately prove fruitless. For as He said through his prophet, his word will not return again from the earth without prospering in what He has sent it, as little as the rain and snow fail in fructifying the earth. The question then recurs, What are we to do as God’s missionaries-how act as individual Israelites? Even as the Lord has commanded us in his law; and in doing so we fulfill in the best manner our own calling as members of the divine household, and as messengers of good tidings to all the earth. As individuals we are children of salvation, of a beatitude unspeakably glorious, interminably enduring. To obtain this, we must be active in doing good, courageous in subduing our passions, attentive in learning what the All-father has taught us; and only when we have to the utmost learned our duty, struggled with our baser nature, and wrought well in the task of beneficence and holiness, can we say that we have well-grounded hopes that our God will approve our service, and accept us in his presence,

and place us within his sanctuary as those who have fulfilled his holy behests; who have walked humbly because He is high; who have mastered their passions because He had taught them the right way; and who have laboured for the good of mankind because He who loves all his creatures had so commanded them to be merciful to all those to whom He is merciful. In this individual striving for holiness because our God is holy, there is no selfish egotism, no hating of those who are less righteous; because even they who are far below us in the scale of merit, are nevertheless, not less than we, creatures of the same Creator, amenable to Him, not to us, for the result of their acts, unless by a special legislation He has transferred to us the right of sitting in judgment on their transgressions, or the good of society demands that they should be punished as criminals whose deeds may contravene the general welfare. This latter condition can, however, not affect those acts which may be termed deeds of piety, in which man acts only in relation to God, without thereby doing anything which affects mankind at large. In these, therefore, no man has a right to interfere as avenger of the Most High, unless special permission has been delegated, and then it must be solely because it is commanded, not for man to say that he assumes the right to judge the conscience of his fellow-man. You will therefore observe in our whole law no opinion surrendered to the power of the judges; acts, open deeds only, as being matters of evidence to the eyes and ears, could be investigated by the tribunals, and they could only then condemn when the guilt was so clearly established that the accused himself could not do otherwise than admit the justice of the verdict, without being called upon in the first place to criminate himself by the words of his own mouth. It is accordingly our duty to be as righteous as we can; we must daily endeavour to be active in our persons to do acts of holiness and benevolence, and to improve our mind with such knowledge and contemplations as will bring God present to our soul, by which the fear of Him will become deeper and deeper impressed on our spirit, by which means again we shall learn daily to follow his guidance, because we then shall know that all which He asks of us is for our own happiness, that it may be well with us all the days.

Now as the holy law gives us no other duties to perform as a nation than those which are prescribed to the individual, one thing follows, that as God’s missionaries we have to pursue the same course as we do in character of candidates for salvation. If as the latter we are to endeavour to acquire the utmost attainable perfection, and to love our fellows with a sincere affection, serve them without hopes of reward, and not molest them though they differ from us in conduct and opinion, except with the sole limitation already mentioned:-it follows accordingly that in our position as God’s witnesses, we must be holy in our persons, consistent in our conduct, but at the same time active in serving all whom our acts can at all benefit, and be only courageous in defending the truth when it is assailed, without ever daring to hate mankind, or what is still worse, force them by persecutions and penal laws to adopt our mode of thinking, or to act as we do in obedience to the law which we have received. It may therefore deeply grieve you to see our holy Sabbath universally violated by men; yet you have no right to compel them to rest; the day was given as a sign between the Creator and Israel, that we might thereby acknowledge that we believe in Him as the Originator of the world. Whereas now this command has not been given to the nations of the earth, what is it to us that they know not the rest of the Lord? Let us bless his providence for having pointed out to us the way of light, and let us not hate nor coerce those who have not been so instructed in the duties which were first given to our fathers. Where was the force which the Almighty employed in teaching us the law? Were there not sixty times ten thousand freemen, who accepted voluntarily to serve their eternal Benefactor? Whence then the right to hate and

persecute those who differ from us? But no; the greater the ignorance of the world in matters of holiness, the greater should be our charity towards all. It is only by mercy that God acquired us for his portion; it is only therefore by the same means that hearts can be won by his servants.

“But how is this to be effected?” will be the next question. This is not so easy of solution, because herein the Bible gives us few indications, and examples are not numerous of the intercourse of the prophets with the gentiles, to act as a firm guide in this perplexing matter. That through us all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, as God foretold to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and repeated again through Moses, is not for a moment to be doubted. The idol worship may be rooted ever so deeply; the idol temples may stand ever so firmly; but the one will vanish and the other will be rendered desolate, and all through our agency; because Isaiah says, in his 43d chapter, 21st verse: “This people have I formed for myself; they shall declare my praise.” But whether this is to be effected by our simple presence on earth, or by our ultimately standing forward as missionaries in the glorious work of the regeneration of the world, does not so clearly appear. But from the example of the prophets, with the sole exception of Jonah, we should say that they never acted as actual missionaries to the gentiles; and in his instance, too, it was not to convert the people of Nineveh to the faith of Israel, but to warn them against the violence and injustice which had been committed there, acts against which the simple moral law first given to Noah already energetically bore a testimony of condemnation. Still the mission of Jonah proves not only that the nations of the East in those times knew of the Lord and confided in his prophets,-which was also exemplified in the case when Ben Hadad sent his general to consult the prophet Elisha, who was then at Damascus,-but that the Lord himself has not relinquished caring for the welfare of the nations of the earth, because He has selected our people as his peculiar treasure, and that their salvation is surely within his intentions, and that in his own time they will be all gathered to his fold. But it is also certain that we have not received any special command to preach the law and the testimony to others than Israelites, whilst we were especially exhorted not alone to be faithful each to his trust, but to teach our children that they might learn to fear the Lord. We may therefore deduct from all this that, till a special call shall be made on us, we are to abstain from seeking to convert others to our faith-not to reject those who voluntarily join themselves to the house of Jacob, for ours is a universal house of prayer, and all who wish are welcome to enter hither and adore the Father of mercy. But it would appear only that under the present circumstances of the world we are not to go abroad to seek to make converts to our religion, but to await quietly and hopefully the time of the universal adoption of the yoke of Heaven.

This, however, does not say that our ideas will not spread because of our inactivity; for the reverse we find to be the case, if we will but scan the records of history. The Bible was first ours in the vernacular tongue of our people; and now see how it has been multiplied in the languages of almost every race, partly by the direct action of the fugitives of Jacob, who, in order that the law might not be forgotten by those born in captivity, and to whom the language of Heber is unknown, translated the words into those more familiar to the scattered remnants in the various new homes they had acquired;-partly, however, by the efforts of those who, having borrowed their light from us, and having been refreshed in a minor degree by the fountain through which we exist, now endeavour to scatter the seed yet farther, and to dig yet more channels, that the believers in the laws may be multiplied, and the holy stream be carried yet wider, and wider, and wider over the earth. It is true, they do not do this from any love to our own religion; they have the inventions of

men whom God has not sent, on which they rely for support, and which they wish to propagate along with the word of life. It is also true that they love not Israel, though they acknowledge that we are the first-born of the Lord in the faith. It is also true that they have been the most inveterate foes of Jacob's children, that they have slaughtered thousands on thousands of innocents, whose sole crime was that they loved the Lord with all their soul, and were ready to die sooner than associate in his worship another god who does not exist. All this is true; but at the same time, despite of themselves, they diffuse the very healing balsam through which the ultimate triumph of truth will be accomplished; they carry the word of God over deserts and oceans, and with it the antidote to the very errors they are intent on propagating with so much zeal, with such unwearied perseverance.

I do not exaggerate in the least the blessed effects of the Bible; let the versions thereof be ever so defective, and let the distributors thereof be actuated by ever so selfish motives, and hatred of Israel: they do propagate the truth despite of themselves, and with their errors which they love, and for the furtherance of which they labour so devotedly, they furnish the world that wholesome food which will ultimately invigorate fallen man, so that he will stand regenerated and new-born in the presence of his Maker.

Look back a few centuries, and take up a book of chronicles written by the greatest admirer of papal power, the impiously called vicegerent of a divine being on earth; and then compare the state of knowledge on the subject of the Godhead then and now prevailing; at the time when the precious Scriptures were slowly transcribed by hand, and found only in the recondite Latin or Greek, and accessible only to the recluses or the paid minister of the church of Rome, and now when by the process of typography they are made the property in a hundred dialects of the poorest peasant, and not rarely of the slave even, whilst millions of transcripts to supply the increasing demand are thrown off by the magic power of the vapour of water, but lately made subservient to the will of man in the progress of wonderful invention: and you must confess that the change has been rapid, almost miraculous; because the lowest superstition, the most degrading subservience, have yielded to a progress of enlightenment, and an extension of human rights then believed to be beyond attainment, and merely looked upon as the dreams of enthusiastic philanthropists. This has been the achievement of a three centuries' possession of the Scriptures, of a book preserved by us with jealous care, watched over with more than a maternal fondness, so that no error or interpolation might creep in to dim the bright surface of the divine mirror, in which we see reflected the past and the future, as they are made known by our God; it has stridden in victory over prostrate thrones, it has conquered opinions and doctrines deeply implanted in the hearts of man; and will you say that its power is exhausted, that its last triumph has been achieved? And then again, I pray you, look at our then and present situation. Then we were compelled to hide our knowledge; but few of the bearers of power deigned to inquire of us what the Lord had taught; our philosophy, our religious sciences were despised; but at present the mist is gradually rising; men begin (but only begin) to appreciate our rights; they commence to discover that there is beauty in Israel; they come to ask of us the way of life; they say that salvation is of the Jews. And is all this nothing? Is this the end, the consummation of all that is to come?

They, who believe and profess this, have no knowledge of history, and have no confidence in the word of God. Man never stands still; he is progressing or retrograding; and unless all that has come to pass is merely to vanish and leave the world again to darkness, and oppression, and tyranny, and universal slavery, it must progress to a greater perfection, to a liberation of the mind

by the one standard which the Bible promises-the knowledge of the one God, on that day when He shall be acknowledged as One, and the world will adore the Eternal One alone, and He be called One in the mouth of all flesh, as He is now invoked in the assemblies of Israel. Now errors in politics and religion sow discord and dissensions among mankind; injustice and ignorance as yet inflict their evils on the helpless, and even those who bear rule on earth. But are we to say that no farther change is yet to be wrought? That now all has been accomplished of which man is capable? That the sighs of the oppressed are never to cease? And as regards the Scriptures, they emphatically declare that a new state of things shall be brought about in the first place for Israelites as the possessors of God's word, and then for the gentiles, who are to be brought under the same banner which has so long waved over us.

Now in conclusion we come to the point of Jewish teachers of righteousness to the gentiles. This too the prophet Isaiah foresaw in his second chapter, when he says: "For from Zion shall go forth, the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Consequently it is the intention of the Lord that through our means a direct instruction is to come to pass among the gentiles. But we are nevertheless left in doubt whether they are solely to come as there indicated, to the house of God to be taught, or whether we are to travel over the earth to convert it, in the first instance. Whatever be the ultimate destiny of our race, however, is a mere matter of speculation as far as this point is concerned; should it be time for us to be summoned to the great work, a spirit will be infused into us, irresistible, though strongly resisted, to urge us on to the consummation of our destiny; for the spirit that once spoke through Moses is yet potent and undiminished in vigour. In the mean time it is evidently our duty to sanctify the name of the Lord, to exhibit by a consistent religious conduct the beauties of holiness as imposed on us through obedience to the law; in this way will the world see the fructifying effects of an enlightened religion, free from fanatical zeal, free from mysticism; and men will be drawn aside from error, and strive to obtain wisdom from the word that dwells with us; and thus will we pave the way for God's kingdom, and preach by our silent example eloquent lessons of godliness and truth, and we shall bring near the hoped for days of the Messiah, when the Lord alone will reign in all hearts.-Amen.

Tishry 14th, 5609, October 12th, 1848.

Chapter 64

S. The Essence of our Religion

The Essence of Our Religion. A Sermon by J. K. G.

Father of all beings! Eternal Source of grace and mercy! listen unto us, while we invoke Thee in spirit and in truth. “Open Thou my lips, that my mouth may proclaim thy praise.” Amen. My hearers! So many, so important are the benefits we derive from religion, so all absorbing are its interests, so all powerful is its influence through man’s whole life, that an hour’s reflection on its nature and essence will, I doubt not, be as welcome to you as it is pleasing to me. Who would not draw from the fountain of life, and provide for his happiness here and his salvation hereafter? And such a fountain of life is “religion.” It is a balm, the healing qualities of which are applicable to all wounds. For thy agitated heart, my brother, my sister! agitated by the storms of life, canst thou choose a better remedy than to direct thy view on high, to the Father of light and truth? And does not such a confiding inspire thee with strength, courage, and hope? If the world does not acknowledge thy deserts, should not thy disappointed mind feel content in the thought: “Lo, I also have contributed my mite towards the welfare of mankind! and though not appreciated by my fellow-beings, yet the Omniscient Power that fills the universe will leave nothing unrewarded?” When death snatches away from thee a member of thy family, a beloved father, a dear mother, a brother, a sister, a friend, or a benefactor, shouldst thou not find comfort and consolation in the reflection: “In the heavenly regions beyond the grave, I shall again meet with those dear to my heart, and there live with them for ever and inseparably united?” Hast thou an opportunity of gladdening the poor man’s soul with a charitable gift, of imparting from thy food to the hungry, from thy drink to the thirsty, of supplying the needy with garments, of cheering the disconsolate with words that glow with the warmth of a sympathizing soul, a feeling heart, of defending the weak against his oppressor, of being the orphan’s father, the widow’s prop; and should not thy heart rejoice at the godly deed thou hast consummated? should not thy inward judge be glad when thou endeavourest to imitate Him from whom myriads and myriads of beings receive daily their nourishment, and tokens of his solicitude? If, after having successfully withstood the temptations which unhallowed desires and vehement passions have held out to thee, thou again takest the golden precepts of morality and virtue for thy guide, showing thy adherence to the divine precepts by a pure, exemplary conduct before God and man: should not thy conscience rejoice at the victory thou hast won, which is greater than the conquest of a city? For this conquest over earthly things only requires purity and strength of the soul.

Such, my friends, are the benign results of that heavenly daughter called religion! Should we, therefore, not endeavour to pay her due homage, in order that the Almighty Father may look down upon us with pleasure? Yes, let us devote our whole life to her service, since for such a purpose it has been given us; but first let us reflect and examine:

“Whether the Mosaic Religion, which we profess, does answer all those ends?”

I will take for the text of my present discourse the following from the conclusion of the prophecy of Malachi:

[redacted]

“Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel (with the) statutes and judgments.”

If “religion” is to be firmly established in a pure and bright form, as the faith of a nation, if it is to fulfil its object of educating man as the image of the Supreme Father, representing him as the most excellent being of the whole creation: it must contain those doctrines that teach him in what relation he stands to God, to his equals and to himself. It must unequivocally show him how to form his line of conduct, and what ends he must have in view. It must teach and emphatically convince him that there is but “One God,” who has created and who preserves all; who sustains all in the miraculous manner which we discover every where; and that man, if he has faithfully fulfilled the ends of his creation, is destined to eternal happiness. It must, likewise, be his source of consolation, that he may be able to endure the hardships which may befall him on his path through life, in the name and for the sake of Heaven. Its votaries must exclaim, “unless thy law had been my delight, I should have perished in mine affliction.” (Psalms 119:92.) Let us see, my hearers, whether the law of Moses does provide for these emergencies; whether the rays of that sun, which rose thousands of years ago on Mount Sinai, also called Horeb, does yet warm, revive, comfort, solace and cheer us. The Mosaic Religion makes humanity the duty of man. Through its wise precepts, commandments, and rules on toleration, abstemiousness, temperance, honesty, and truth, through its sublime doctrines on the excellence of man, his lofty calling and dignity, above all other created beings, as the holy Psalmist sings: “Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour; thou madst him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.” (Psalms 8:5-6); through its beautiful precepts to hasten to the aid of our suffering brother and to forgive those who have injured us; through all these precepts our religion is calculated to transform the rude uncivilized man into a refined, and enlightened being, who may feel contented here, and who has the means of preparing himself for eternal happiness. Therefore, says the word of God: “In the image of God he has made man.” (Genesis 9:6.) Not as regards thy bodily construction, but in thy spiritual organization art thou the image of the Most High. He has imparted unto thee a ray of his spirit, a spark which it shall be thy endeavour to watch till it become a bright flame, an essence which thou art to perfect by mature reflection, persevering meditation, and study on the great and wondrous works which present themselves to thy view from sunrise to sunset, and through the hours of the night, on the change of the seasons, and above all, on the wise and inscrutable government of the world which thy Creator makes manifest every where and at all times. The Mosaic Religion contains those doctrines which make man the most fortunate being on earth. Its precepts are true and everlasting. “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever” (Psalms 19:1-14.) And should not the strict observance of the following sentence convince him, that he may be content and happy: “And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:28).

“Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 18:13). Do not deviate from his way either to the right or to the left. Have Him always before thy eyes and in thy heart, and look upon Him as the most holy Being thy imagination is able to conceive. Thou must, in order to strictly

adhere to Him, “love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass” (Psalms 37:5).

Thus you see, my friends! that the Mosaic Religion is calculated to make man happy, if he conforms to the commandments of the Lord, if he considers “virtue” as his guide, the “fear of the Lord” his protecting shield. Therefore does the prophet exclaim-“Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and commandments.” The Mosaic Religion teaches us distinctly the duties we owe to our God, to our neighbours, and to ourselves. Indeed, what should we have known of duties, if it had not taught them to us. Whilst all other nations of antiquity were groping their way in the darkness which ignorance had drawn around them; whilst they offered their worship to Moloch, and indulged in every other kind of heathenish and barbarian practices, which were abominations in the eyes of the Lord: our fathers, as soon as they were constituted a people, were blessed with a code of laws, bearing the divine stamp of truth on its face, a law which has stood the test of time and ages, and the provisions of which will last for ever. As far as civilization extends, its authority is acknowledged, and wherever mankind have entered into social relations, their compact is based on the principles it inculcates. It was therefore with a just pride that the messenger and prophet of the Lord, standing on the threshold of eternity, addressed his people: “Behold I have taught you statutes, and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deuteronomy 4:6-8.) True wisdom and sterling philosophy, not a philosophy which through its corrosive nature saps the very foundation of our existence, and argues away the sublime hopes of our destiny-but that true philosophy of life which elevates man over the paltry dealings of his earthly career, and leads him to contemplate on things indispensable to his well-being hereafter-will be acquired by a diligent application to those sacred pages which contain the word of God. For there we will find our various duties distinctly described. Thus, also, we read in Deuteronomy 10:12-13; “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God, require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good.”

These verses contain the duties we owe to our Maker; and if we search for the duties we owe to our fellow-man, can we find a more beautiful and more sublime commandment than: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?” (Leviticus 19:18.) And does not this commandment comprise all our duties? But should we understand the words “thy neighbour” as referring only to our brother in faith, as many members of other religions have endeavoured to explain it? No, my friends! under the term “thy neighbour,” are meant all who belong to the human family. We have only to refer to Scripture to verify the truth of this proposition.

Whenever Scripture treats of Israelites exclusively, it invariable employs or adds the terms ■■■■ Hebrew, or ■■■ ■■■■■ children of Israel. (Vide Leviticus 21:46; Deuteronomy 15:12, and other places.) But if the subject is a general one, referring to Israelites and non-Israelites, the Scriptures

employ the terms ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ - neighbour - brother - fellow-man. Ought this not to be enough to teach us that it is our duty to love those nations, in whose midst we live, as our brothers? The same is taught by the celebrated Jewish philosopher Maimonides: “On the whole,” he says, “religion enjoins us to be active in our love towards our fellow-men, even towards idolaters. It is our duty also to support their sick and needy, and to bury their dead, equally with those of Israel. For the goodness and mercy of the Lord extends over all his creatures (Psalms 145:1-21), and his law should of right tend in every possible way to promote love and happiness.” (Law of Kings, 10, § 12.)

“Sanctify yourselves and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you. Observe ye my commandments and do them, I am the Lord who sanctifies you.” (Leviticus 20:7; Leviticus 11:44.) Be careful with regard to your soul, in order that she may not be defiled, and that she may reappear pure and stainless before Him, from whose hands she went forth unpolluted. Endeavour to purify her, that you may be holy. But do not, at the same time, forget the body; for our religion tells us that we should spare the temple which God has formed, in order that the spirit may live therein the time which He has allotted to it! Be content with your lot, for “a sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.” (Proverbs 14:30.) Be patient and forbearing; do not arouse your passions and love to walk in humility before the Lord; close the doors of your heart to intemperance; avoid bad company; flee indolence and idleness, and take virtue for your guide! Should we not listen to this friendly invitation of our divine religion? Should it not animate and rejoice us?

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and commandments.”

Yes, my hearers! the Mosaic Religion makes man joyous and happy. It opens unto us delightful prospects beyond the grave. It teaches that the good will be rewarded, and the evil punished; it shows that this world is but the antechamber to the world to come. “O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,” (Psalms 31:19,) exclaims the holy poet. Let this be to us a stimulus to become true adorers of the Lord, in order to be worthy of that eternal good. And could we for a moment harbour the idea that God has doomed this soul, which He has so richly endowed with high faculties, to destruction? No, whatever there is which is from earth, will go back to the earth, and whatever came from heaven, will return to heaven. The departure from this life does not finish our existence; a higher, better, purer life, is in store for us: a life where we shall stand nearer to the Deity, where many things will be explained, that were shrouded here from our view in mist and in darkness, and where the thirst of the wise after wisdom will be more fully satisfied. There all congenial spirits will meet, and be united under the panoply of the eternal Father! There the righteous will no more be afflicted with trials and sufferings; there he will receive the crown due to his merit, and “his soul will be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God.” The Mosaic Religion teaches, that piety does not consist in words, but in good deeds, in good actions. “The study of the law is not the principal, but the observance of it.” (Aboth, i.) Of what avail is wisdom to the wise, if it is not employed for the improvement and welfare of mankind? What is the use of power, if it is not employed in aid and defence of the weak, if, instead to build up, it is used to pull down and destroy? Of what benefit are riches to the rich, if they do not serve for the amelioration of suffering humanity? if they only tend to be a curse to their possessor? To provide for the fatherless and widows, to cheer the mourners, to attend the sick: that is our duty, that is

what our religion requires of us. We ought not to speculate continually how to accumulate property, how to grow richer in treasures, which leave us poorer in contentment! No, we must at times employ our thoughts and energies to discover how to undertake and accomplish some lasting good, which may produce benefit even to future generations. “Charity is one of those things, of which we enjoy the fruit in this world, while the principal remains unimpaired for the next,” say our sages.

It is not in vain that God has given to every man peculiar talents, and assigned him a peculiar position; every one is thus called upon to aid in completing the noble structure of improvement of the human race: the one as architect, the other as journeyman, according to their respective abilities, in order that the name of the Lord may be glorified before the eyes of all the inhabitants of the earth. And it is by such means that all may perceive and acknowledge, that the law of Moses inculcates pure morality and virtue, that it comforts our heart, enlightens our understanding, and exalts our being. Amen.

Chapter 65

S. The Example of Israel

The Example of Israel A Sermon

Father of Israel! we have felt thy providence, we have enjoyed thy bounty, and we are thy chosen servants to fulfil the ends of thy rule on earth, to prepare the world for thy kingdom, and to proclaim the message of salvation, until that happy hour when wickedness shall close its mouth, and thy faith and thy law shall become the watchword of all mankind. O glorious is such a lot! blissful is such a mission! But now Jacob is lowly and Israel degraded, and the nations imagine us stricken with darkness, and our mental vision obscured by the veil of blindness, because we cannot discern truth in their errors, and because we cannot forsake Thee our God, and the teaching of thy law which Thou didst bestow on us. Yet Thou art the One who will raise Jacob though he is now small and humble, and Thou wilt kindle anew the lamp of thy anointed the son of Jesse, that the glory may dwell again in Jerusalem, and much peace may be in her palaces. Yet whilst the ungodly prevail many hearts become faint, and the unwise despair of thy coming to save and to redeem thy heritage. Be it therefore acceptable before Thee to cause us to feel thy worship in our hearts, and guide us by unerring tokens of thy mercy; that we may stand unmoved in the midst of the assault of the stranger, and await in patience thy coming, when the righteous shall rejoice and all the earth be glad in thy salvation. Yea, aid and forsake us not; because we are thy children, thy people whom Thou chose for the sake of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants. Amen.

Brethren: Were it that our nation had not received a permanent mission, it would long since have been abandoned by Providence to seek its fate as other people, become commercial or agricultural, enslaved or independent, warlike or peaceable, civilized or barbarous, as the progress of events might urge it forward, or it might have disappeared altogether from the earth as a distinct race, just as it happened to the Romans and Chaldeans, and many other nations of antiquity, or modern times. But we find that our fate was not such, that we were not left to chance to seek our position in the scale of humanity; but an observer of the course of events will discern without much labour a uniform thread running through our whole history, and this is the religious element, which more than any other people places us before the world as a separate and particular branch among the families of the earth.

It is true that we are a peculiar race through our descent from a common parentage; that our features and visage are bearing a marked contrast to those of other men, so that the Jewish physiognomy is readily distinguishable in by far the larger portion of our members; but this does not, for all that, constitute the characteristic of the Jewish people, and forms barely a mark of their descent from a stock deriving its origin from a distant and foreign land, and is very often shared by nations living under an analogous climate to that which our fathers inhabited. Whatever physical characteristics may be ours, however, could only have been preserved unchanged through a close union among ourselves, and the exclusion of all foreign admixture; for it would have been impossible to maintain, for instance, the peculiar conformation of features which generally denote

the Jew, if he had derived his descent from all sorts of nations, since in that case he would naturally be tinctured by the peculiar marks of other races. But how could such a union be maintained? You may answer, By a prevention of foreign admixture. But it is very evident that however this might have been possible whilst we formed a state of our own in Palestine, with political power and an independent civil government, which might, if it had thought fit, denied the entrance of all foreigners into the state, as did the Chinese lately, and as do the people of Japan to this very day, it would have been entirely impossible as soon as we had lost our nationality, and became intimately mixed up with the people of nearly every state under the sun, which did not disdain to receive our wanderers in its boundaries.

Besides this consideration another one must present itself to our investigation; it is this, that strangers were not precluded from living in Palestine, and what is more, from being received as members of the state, and even of families of Israelites; there were restrictions and conditions under which citizenship in its full extent, and household membership, could be obtained; but they were by no means very difficult of attainment, and the way to a union with Jews was left open to all who chose to become candidates for the same.

Whoever then says that Jews have preserved themselves by their unsociable rejection of all foreign alliance, assigns the effect instead of the cause for the mighty and wonderful moral phenomenon which they present in the records of history; since the causes of their, what many call, unsocial habits have to be sought in the very principle to which they owe their being, and this is, as we have said already, the religion which is theirs. We may freely say that we are physically and mentally differently constituted from any other people; we may say that we repel any approach to foreign alliance; but we may safely deny that it is owing to a hatred of mankind, which induces us to forego voluntarily our identity, or that it is a wish to be singular which governs us in our seclusion; but it is only that we have received a religion as a heavenly deposit, and which in preserving it for us and our descendants, as our fathers guarded it for themselves and us their successors, necessarily compels us to exclude ourselves from a communion with strangers, which could in any way endanger in our hands the possession of our ancestral faith and practice.

Were it indeed, that in the course of events, a system had been evolved in all respects equal or superior to our own, it would have been the height of folly to have continued in a state of separation from the rest of mankind, at a time when we had neither national existence nor a country to call our own; when our glory was all in the past, and our wished-for home barely a deep-seated hope, burning at times brightly, at times faintly, in our bosoms.

What however is it that causes the Israelite, even him who is reckless in religion, and almost unthinking on his God, to start back with horror when contemplating the thought of being lost in his descendants to the household of Jacob? It is the deeply impressed feeling that there is no law true but that proclaimed at Sinai; that there is no god, beside Him who redeemed us from Egypt; and no saviour save the One who has promised to show us mercy and goodness whenever we shall return to Him and seek his favour in sincerity, in contrition, and with humble prayer.

Yes, far may the Israelite go astray; but it will embitter more than anything his dying hour, to reflect on the awful position he is in towards his God and his people when he knows that his children are cut off from the inheritance of the Lord, that they are the uncircumcised of flesh and heart, and worship strange gods, and kneel down at the stranger’s shrine. Whence is this horror? whence this

deep-seated dread at a loss of an inheritance which has no worldly advantages to offer? which only holds out to its possessor days of watching, and not rarely nights of anguish? It is that every son of Jacob feels that he is of right and in truth an inheritor of Divine favour in possessing a knowledge of the Unity of the Godhead, which was announced in a multitude of visions and in the majesty of the thunders of Horeb, to generations after generations; through which means also we obtained an intimate acquaintance with a pure system of morals and rules of worship; than which nothing holier, nothing purer, nothing truer, can be imagined by man, like which nothing equalling it in holiness, purity and truth, was promulgated elsewhere to the children of the dust. Therefore it is that the Israelite fears losing his right in the universal God, that he dreads being cut off from the inheritance in the blessings which are promised to our race, should his children and their descendants, in whom the ultimate hope of the world ought to be of right accomplished, not be numbered among the seed of Abraham, but be mingled up with those who invoke gods that cannot save, or believe in prophets whom the Lord has not sent. And how can such a one expect to rejoice in the salvation of the God of Israel, should his descendants have been among the persecutors of the faithful, and have been among those who make heavy our burden during our captivity? if by his own voluntary act, in joining himself or permitting his immediate children to join themselves to the sons and daughters of the strangers, he has deliberately removed himself from the household of Jacob? No, he cannot rejoice, neither in anticipation nor in the accomplishment of the return of the Lord to Zion in mercy and glory; and he has no right, no inheritance in the goodness and the abundance of spiritual greatness which shall be ours in the end of days, when truth shall triumph, and when falsehood will vanish before the dazzling light of the divine reason which will then illuminate the human mind. Our race, I need not tell you, you know it, has passed through trials the severest which any other ever encountered; it has been tried in the sunshine of prosperity, and in the crucible of poverty; it has been tempted in the days of national splendour, and its constancy tested in the degradation of abject slavery and oppressions without number; it has suffered all the vicissitudes of tyrannical rulers, the wrath of man, the hatred of the whole human family; again, however, it has been courted by words of flattery, which sound fair to the ear, but break the faith to the deceived heart; it has been attracted by bribes and promises of all sorts: and nevertheless it has not ceased to be a distinct branch of the human family, though there is no doubt that many strangers to our ancestry have by degrees been joined to us, and learned to swear by the name of Him who dwells on high. And in all these trials many have fallen off from the parent branch; they were either allured by the freedom of gentile manners, the absence of the burden of the law which they saw in others, or they were terrified by the sorrows which they had to endure, and sought for enlargement by denying their God and Saviour, and forswearing their allegiance to his laws. I called your attention on a previous occasion to the remarkable diminution to which we were subject, first by the slaughter of millions at the destruction of the temple, and afterwards by the constant persecutions and legal murders by which it was endeavoured to exterminate us. I do not remind you of this to enkindle in your hearts a hatred of those not believing as we do; but to impress on you, in all sincerity, that the world and its allurements offer no safety to Israel.

You may be told that you are loved for the fathers' sake; that you are admired because you had always the law in your custody; but never believe that for these benefits to mankind conferred by your religion, this religion is loved by those who have not embraced it. The world and its followers look on you with a jealous eye, and they would think no labour nor effort in vain, which would

induce you to surrender it, and if you would but be persuaded to become like other men, and be no longer distinctive sons of Israel. The very fires of persecution were kindled and blazed, not, as they said, to punish our bodies, but to fit our souls for heaven; and though the stake is not now invoked to effect this end, other means are not left untried to produce the same result. Ours is a constant state of warfare with all around; and we must therefore be constantly watchful that the holy citadel which we are appointed to guard, suffer no injury from any inimical surprise, let the danger come from whatever quarter it may. But in so guarding, so watching your treasure, there is no need that you should hate those on whom the fight has not yet dawned; you are within the safe enclosure; you can walk with security, surrounded as you are by the walls erected around you by divine wisdom; you can therefore well forgive the wrong done you in the ignorance of the proud and the prosperous; and if vengeance is to be meted out for the innocent blood which has been shed, await in silence the coming events, and your God will act for you, and his thunders will not sleep when it is requisite for the benefit of all that they should be awakened, and when his holy arm is to be bared for warfare against the ungodly, before the eyes of nations. Of one thing be assured, and hold fast to it as a priceless truth, that the Lord of all spirits does not look with indifference upon you and your fate; He watches, on the contrary, over your destinies, and directs everything so that it may best contribute to your preservation, the happiness of the world, and the furtherance of his glory among mankind. You are his instruments; you are but as the clay in the hands of the potter; He moulds you to answer to his wise purposes; wherefore you should never presume to rise up in rebellion against Him, and ask Him, “Wherefore dost Thou afflict us?” Were it that uniform prosperity, a uniform security, a uniform state of peace were the best for your spiritual development, it would all be accorded to you, even as your soul desires. The very reverse of it, however, clearly proves, that as yet you have not reached that state of perfection, or that at least the world has not yet progressed far enough, to establish the peace of Israel; that as yet the struggle for truth has to be waged by you, either actively or in a suffering state; and that hence you must acquire such thoughts yourselves, and inculcate the like in your children and scholars, that you and they may be enabled to come out of the contest with your faith untouched, and your confidence in the God of your fathers undiminished.

Reflect that you are, by descent or adoption, children of that glorious triumvirate which was commenced in Abraham, which was continued in Isaac, and ended in Jacob, three names glorious and bright amidst the greatest and brightest which the history of the world presents to the admiration of men, and which demand of us to follow them in the same path which has become their glory and their praise. The world boasts of its heroes, its martyrs, its counsellors, its kings, its leaders, its sages; it holds them up to be loved, admired, and followed. And it is right that so mankind should be incited to noble deeds, which scatter a variety over the dull acts of every-day life, which present us something to live for, very different from the ordinary every-day transactions which centre in self, and which often work injury to all beyond the actor himself, and not rarely on him likewise. But have we not also cause to point to our ancient progenitors as the illustrious examples which we should follow, unflinchingly, bravely, fully, without regarding the consequences which may thereby ensue to us? If Abraham believed firmly in the Lord, should we not also believe, yea unto death, though our eyes do not behold the fulfillment of the good predicted? If Isaac could be willing to be bound on the altar, after he had himself with a full knowledge of his father’s intention, carried the fire and the wood for the burnt-offering, without murmuring against the apparently arbitrary and cruel mandate of the Supreme, though he had been designated as the

one after whom Abraham's seed should be called: should we not also be ready to obey in much less onerous commandments, the guidance of that holy Voice which speaks to us through the pages of the blessed Scriptures?

If Jacob could go forth from his father's house, as an exile for the wrong done to his brother, though justified for thus doing by this brother's unworthy contempt of his birthright, which he wickedly sold for a mess of pottage, merely to gratify the cravings of a base appetite; if he could go forth among idolaters and live twenty years away from all the endearing ties which bound him to his beloved mother and revered father, and could he remain himself true and faithful where all around was given to falsehood and error, and rear up his children to love the God of Abraham, and to reverence Him who was the Fear of Isaac; could he remain the favourite of God though the forsaken of man, when he was by day exposed to the scorching rays of the sun on the plains of Mesopotamia, and at night bedewed by the chill, damp, cold mists which often scatter disease and death on the fields which spread along the Tigris and Phrat, and yet always worship Him who appeared to him at Luz, when he slept on the bare ground, with a rock for his pillow, whereas he had been reared in ease and luxury, in the peaceful tent of the patriarch of Beersheba; could Jacob remain true, though for a wise purpose an angel sought to overcome him at the crossing of the Jabbok, in a contest such as no mortal ever before waged, and he yet not falter in his confidence in the Supreme's protection: and should we become faint-hearted at the first blush of trials, at difficulties which a little well-directed energy and perseverance can so readily overcome? should we doubt that a great and glorious destiny is before us, when so much has already been fulfilled, when so much that was barely prophecy in the days of the fathers, has actually been accomplished to the letter? And yet we doubt, we fancy almost, as did the ancient transgressors, that the Lord has forsaken the land; we hesitate in obedience at the first allurement, as though to sin were the legitimate business of man on earth. But if the experience of past ages is worth the least consideration; if the Bible in any way is a proper guide for us to follow: we ought to be ashamed at the littleness of our faith, at the proneness to sin which we display on every occasion. It is indeed unfortunate that we so little understand the teachings of the Scriptures, or that we heed them so little when we do. Not so can Israel be dignified; not so can we attain our proper rank as the favourites of Heaven, as the children of salvation. On the contrary we ought steadily to pursue the course which our fathers followed, and be neither swayed by success on the one side to forget our accountability, nor be urged by untoward events to let go of our innocence and seek for remedies in the intercourse with the world, where no safety can be found for us. When we are successful, let us look up with gratitude to Him who blesses the seasons; and when evil betides us let us resort to prayer to lay our case before God, and He will hear our cry and grant our request, if thereby our happiness can be promoted, and refuse it should our enlargement compromise the salvation of our souls. The example of Jacob should herein teach us a lesson of wisdom and piety. He had by the intervention of Providence escaped the malevolence of his father-in-law, Laban the Aramite, when a new danger threatened him in the approach of his offended brother, with a mighty retinue, for those days, of four hundred warlike men, who followed him. Jacob did not deviate from his course to his paternal home, seeking safety in flight because he had been told to return to the land of his birth, and that the Lord would be with him. Nor did he rely on this promise as doing all for him, because he might justly fear that the errors and sins to which man is liable, might have exposed him or a portion of his household to punishment, through the instrumentality of Esau, since the time that the revelation concerning his homeward journey had been made known to him,

in his late residence. He therefore resorted to prayer as the only refuge for him, and all other afflicted ones in the day of distress, and called on the Lord to protect him in that strait in which he was, not for any merit in himself; because he averred that he was unworthy of all the mercies and the truths which had been bestowed on him; since he passed the river Jordan in his flight from his father's, with a simple staff for his possession, and how he had now returned with two troops of cattle, in which at that time consisted the wealth of the East, together with their necessary attendants, and blessed with a hopeful progeny of twelve God-fearing children. And thus he concluded his prayer,

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"And Thou hast said, I will surely do good with thee, and render thy descendants like the sands of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude."- Genesis 32:13.

Meaning that it was the unbought favour of God, which had so far been fulfilled in the many blessings which he had received, on which alone he relied to protect him from the threatening danger, and he invoked it that any evil, which might be impending, should through this means be averted from reaching the mothers and the children, exposed as they were, without divine aid, to the expected wrath of the long-offended Esau; since Jacob had too much cause to suppose that, from his impulsive nature, he might inflict some grievous injury on those who had not injured him, only because they were connected with his brother by the ties of kindred. It is needless to recapitulate the story of the reconciliation of the brothers, as it is more simply and beautifully told than any one but the sacred historian could do in so few words; enough, the prayer of Jacob was answered, and he and his were spared to live and sanctify the Lord of hosts by their faith and their deeds. And as was the life of Jacob, so has been our existence as a nation. Exiled from the home of our fathers, we have had to mingle with persons and nations of beliefs differing from ours; circumstances have constantly occurred to draw us away unto the path of sin, and to forsake the Lord who had chosen us. Like Jacob too we have been surrounded with perils, and many a time has the persecutor's sword flashed brightly over our heads, and in its descent it was made drunken with the blood of the Lord's saints, of those who lived not for themselves, but for the happiness of mankind. And even when the storm blew loudest, when the waves rose to the most overwhelming height, was the voice of Israel heard invoking the Lord of hosts to remember the covenant and the oath which had secured to the ancients the protection of the Supreme arm, against which all human efforts were in vain. And though notwithstanding our prayers many perished, the religion which they defended, perished not; and their blood in flowing watered the tree of life, so that it bloomed the more freely, and that its shadow became more enlarged, so that many more could refresh themselves by its fruits, and be sheltered under its wide-spreading branches. And it flourishes and lives; and though new insects have sprung up to injure its growth and beauty, they will perish also, but the tree itself will live, and become again renewed after the present danger. For it is this over which the Lord watches; it is this for which He has appointed us its guardians and keepers. But let us not fail in being faithful, and we too shall each be blessed by the Lord of our labours, and He will give us a portion and a name in his sanctuary, a name of glory which shall not perish, and a reward of life which shall never cease. Amen.

Kislev 13, December 8th, 5609.

S. The Fasts

The Fasts. by Isaac Leeser

O God of Israel hear! Father of truth, listen to the words of our prayer; Thou who ever hearest, Thou who ever art attentive to the entreaties of thy children. And if even we are guilty in thy eyes, do not avert thy view from us, do not close up thy ear, but regard us with favour, and forgive our iniquities, and accept our prayer, though it proceed from polluted lips. For where is the one that is pure in thy sight? where the heart that is not laden with guilt? Were it then that Thou wouldst judge only to condemn, all would needs meet the awful doom of thy displeasure. In this confidence do we then approach Thee, not denying our guilt, not hiding our transgressions, but as humble suppliants of mercy which we have rejected, as petitioners for grace which we do not deserve. O hear us, then, in this hour! and let us experience in our inward heart the consolation of thy mercy and thy truth, which guide thy servants securely upon the dark path of life's troubled ocean, which have preserved Israel from the snares which have beset them from their origin as a people. Save us, Father! save us from our own perverseness; save thy heritage from the evil that is in their own souls; purge thy household from those who bring destruction into it, and single out those who are true to thy will as thy peculiar treasure, as the brilliant jewels whose light shineth for ever in the diadem of majesty that encircleth thy glory. Be it also thy will to let the truth of their sinfulness be made manifest to the sinners of Israel, that they may return unto Thee with a pure repentance, a repentance in which there is no love for past iniquity, which abhors the evil which was perpetrated in the days when the soul slumbered darkly, unconverted to thy law, untouched by thy light. So that thy kingdom may be established over us all, and we indeed be called thy people, the first of thy fruit, holy unto thy service. Amen.

Brethren,- In the days when the crown of our head was struck to the ground, at the time that, exhausted with slaughter, sunk fainting the weary sons of Zion, those who had been spared, and they were indeed few from many, felt inwardly that it was not the prowess of the enemy which had prevailed over them, but the weight of their iniquities which paralysed their arm and blunted their sword; and thus they conceived it their duty to humble themselves, before the Judge who had made them conscious of their guilt, and to return to the Father whose favour they had blindly rejected. Now in what did the sin of our forefathers of the first temple consist? It was in chief sensuality which had led them captive; they followed the customs of the heathen, which were interdicted in the law, and their very idolatry was greatly owing to the freedom from restraint which they coveted, that they might be like the other nations around them. Of the correctness of this view, the denunciations of the prophets are the best evidence which we can have, and they speak in eloquent language of the derelictions of the men of those times. When, therefore, the evil which had been threatened did actually befall us: it was at once felt that it was a natural consequence of the long series of Israel's transgressions; just as the convulsions of poison are the natural result of swallowing the substances that are inimical to human existence. That there always was known among us a remedy against the death of the soul, as soon as she found herself stumbling through sin, and this antidote is the system of repentance which was revealed to us, from time to time, by

the prophets of the Lord. These have taught us, not alone that a man should forsake his evil way and return to the Lord, in words and thoughts; but that he should curb within himself the propensities to carnal indulgence, not to mortify the flesh, but to elevate the spirit. And indeed when the flesh becomes weak, and lassitude creeps over the bodily organs, the high enjoyment in things merely of this life is greatly blunted, and the sinkings of a mortal's nature will then impress themselves upon his conviction; and he will feel that the spirit needs some other source of tranquillity than the constant round of enjoyments and pleasurable engagements which are so much prized by the world at large; especially will this be the case if this mortification of the body is done from a premeditated resolve, in order to curb desire, and to avoid causes of sinful temptation. Fasting, therefore, and abstinence from pleasure are proper remedies against the too greedy indulgence in perishable things, against the over-anxiety to live for this life only. In addition to this, when we are engaged in such an act of active penance, we are paying, so to say, in kind for the evil before perpetrated; and, by subduing our desires, we become fit to re-enter the path of righteousness which we have forsaken. But Israel had, at the destruction of Jerusalem, not sinned alone as individuals, for the nation also had violated the law; the roads to Jerusalem were not trod during ages of prosperity by those who hastened up to the house of God to offer there devotion and sacrifices; the mad and frantic orgies of heathen worship had enchained the multitude; and, in addition to this, the courts of justice were converted into tribunals that looked with indifference upon infringements of religion, and did not pronounce judgment to restore to their rights those of the people who were suffering unjustly the tyranny exercised over them by the proud and wealthy, who considered their strong hand all-sufficient for them in their dealings with their fellow-men. When now our fathers awoke from their long mental slumber, and saw how their guilt had destroyed the sanctuary, ruined their cities, overthrown their government, and surrendered multitudes to famine and slaughter: they did not ascribe all this to fortuitous circumstances, to the accidental prevalence of their enemies over them, but to the effects of divine wrath, to the withdrawal of the favour of God, which had thus left them an easy prey to those who devoured them in all their dwellings. Thus admonished, they aroused themselves to thought, they evoked the energy of their mind to reflection, and catered into a covenant with themselves to forego the pleasures of this world, only to be led back to the safe guidance of their blessed but neglected religion. They thus met in their places of dispersion, and poured out their hearts before God, abstained on stated days as one man from carnal enjoyment, and asked, as a community, for mercy, because as a community they had transgressed. And well did they choose to act thus; no matter where the Israelite lived, if alone in the midst of a heathen community, or in the fellowship of numerous believers, on one and the same day he called with his dispersed brethren on the honoured and fearful Name, that He might have compassion of Zion, and visit again his people in mercy. And thus acting, he was reminded that there was something else to live for than the fleeting hour; that the Israelite's resting-place was not the land of his captors, nor this earthly state the final abode of his spirit. He was reminded, when fasting for the misfortunes which befell our fathers in their obduracy, that sinfulness is a state of warfare against the Deity; that long indulgence, the withholding of retribution, is no sign of exemption, no token that the Lord has overlooked to let his violated will be avenged on the transgressor, and that it is best therefore for man to bear the sweet burden of religion in his youth, that he submit whilst it is yet time to listen to the breathings of divine instruction which is preached to him from a thousand sources, all appealing to him to walk in the path of life and earn for himself everlasting salvation. He was reminded when he entered into the

house of prayer, where other sons of Israel wept and mourned for Zion, that he and they had lost a country lovely in its products, blessed by the overshadowing providence of the Creator; that they had lost in the day of strife that for which the patriot's heart beats high-the sovereignty and independence of their native land;-that through this they were compelled to forego the worship of the King in glory in his sanctuary, which He had chosen for the dwelling of his name, and that they were compulsory sojourners far from their loved heritage, and that they could not be united again as one people in any other spot, no matter how large the land, or fertile the soil, except in that small margin of the great ocean which the Lord had given to Abraham. He was reminded, when his soul fainted within him, that the earth one day must fade from his view, that he must then leave what his heart clung to as a legacy to those who laboured not for it, and that of all his toil there will be nothing left to him as his own save the labours of righteousness and the acquisition he may have made in the knowledge of the law of God. And who can aver that a day of penitence, passed with such feelings, which induced man to survey the past, the present, and the future, could have been otherwise than wholesome in its influence? It taught the Israelite to abhor the sin which banished his fathers from their home; it admonished him to regard with kindness those who like him were wanderers over the face of the earth, and it breathed into him hopes to look forward to the restoration of the good things taken from him by the loss of fatherland, and then it bade him look upward unto his Father in heaven as the final rest of his soul, in whose presence all the acts, words, and thoughts of life would ultimately see their final perfection. To those therefore who felt for their religion and its departed glory, the fasts of Israel have always been seasons sacred to the memory of the past, and incentives to hope for the future. And not alone this,-the true believers felt in humbling themselves before God, that in all their trials HE would be with them to preserve them from annihilation. Whenever then calamities thickened around us, when the wrath of man burnt fiercer than the lightnings of heaven: the servants of the Lord forgot not the presence of their Almighty Redeemer, and they resumed the pious course of their fathers, and they went in fasting and prayer unto the house of assembly; and if even in the dungeon, they lifted up there the heart and soul above the cares and sorrows of their existence; and they obtained enlargement; not always, it is true, in a deliverance from earthly sorrows, for many a holy spirit succumbed in the body to the sufferings which passed over us like mighty streams, but in the exaltation which was vouchsafed to them over these very sorrows, in the light which beamed through the bars of their prison-houses, in the fortitude which bade them walk to the burning stake, triumphant in their faith more than the warrior in the day of victory. And thus were the Israelites upheld through ages, when suffering seemed to be the only heirloom bequeathed to them from the heroes of antiquity, when all their ancestral glory was only an additional incentive to heap upon them, the unoffending and unresisting sufferers, the scorn, the hatred of an infuriated world. O, in those days it was a holy thing for the sons of Jacob to dwell with a melancholy pleasure upon the recital of ancient glory; it was then, with hearts overflowing with gratitude, that they reverted back to the days when Israel was a child,-when God loved him for the righteousness of the fathers, the great names of ancient times, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,-when He saw his affliction in the land of Mitzrayim, and sent his messenger Moses to afflict Pharaoh with mighty wonders, to divide for his armies the waters of the Red Sea,-when He sent down his glory to the top of Mount Sinai, to teach his first-born wisdom and truth. Yes, these were themes of a glorious past for suffering believers; in these recollections they could revel,-no stranger could therein disturb their joy; no one alien to the family of Jacob could claim aught in this heavenly delight. And though they might be scorned by the proud and

thoughtless rulers of the earth: they felt that all the light which these enjoyed was first taken from their law; and they could point to deeds of mercy, wrought in their behalf, such as the Creator alone could produce. They possessed also a system of faith and actions which man could never have invented, which could and did spring from the wisdom of God alone. And thus they could well bear with the deprivations of the present, in their constant living in the days of a long past antiquity, an antiquity nevertheless full of youthful vigour, and felt by its acting upon and influencing every age which followed its predecessor, as must be the case with those laws and ordinances which the Lord himself instituted as the unquenchable light of the world. But not the past alone was to them a source of joy and comfort; the future likewise opened to them a brilliant and pleasant destiny. Let other nations enjoy the moment, the glitter of royalty, the applause of triumph of principles or of arms; let associations glorify themselves over the victory which their mind has obtained over the opinions of others; the Israelites had far more to look forward to-a regeneration of the world by their acts and sufferings. True they had no king of their own to lead their armies to battle; they had no share in the government of the world; they were aliens in every land; their principles were a passport to oppression; their learning was contemned, and the portals of the temple of science was shut against them; as unclean, as affected with leprosy, were the gates of cities closed to bar their entrance; but what could all these hardships effect? Could they stifle the spirit of God that breathed hope and consolation in them? No; they felt, that the word of the Lord had gone forth to call unto himself a chosen servant from the seed of Israel, the divinely endowed prince, whom they looked forward to with hope and fear; the chief, unto whom nations should flock to inquire, What has the Lord spoken? who is to rule, not by the potency of human prowess, but by the spirit of God that is to instruct him in all things; and they were insured, from their faith in divine promises, that at his coming there would be an end to warfare and strife; that the idols would utterly be banished from the earth; that errors would be annihilated before the triumphant progress of truth, and that in those days, the religion revealed on Sinai would not be a token of oppression to its professors, but a light unto salvation to all who would seek its wisdom, to each son of man who may come forward to drink of the fountain opened to all lips by the manifestation of the divine power. And they also believed that each one could contribute by his own acts to the speedy approach of this glory; for as all had an equal share in the redemption from Egyptian bondage, and as all were equally present in their ancestors at the annunciation of the law from Horeb: all leave the same interest in and can therefore be equally active for the good which the Lord has spoken of for Israel. Whenever then the stated fasts came round, whether the day was long or short, the faithful assembled, and, in the language of Palestine, they implored the Lord of their fathers to remember them all in his loving kindness, and to restore his glory to his house at Jerusalem, and to bless his people with the light of his countenance, by sending them his messenger of peace, the redeemer, who is to feed them securely on the mountains of the land of Israel. In this manner, have these days of observance, first instituted by the prophets, come down to our own times, full of meaning and high significance, not as periods for a senseless affliction of the body, but as days of commemoration, of repentance, of prayer, and of renewed hope.

Hitherto, brethren, the Lord has been our Shield; and though often passing through the waters of tribulation, we have been preserved to transmit to those who may come after us the recollections of the past, the duties of the present, and the hopes of the future. But some men of the day, who only see what passes before their eyes, who are too worldly to look back upon the past, and have no faith in the future; may say, perhaps, in their presumption, “What need we to afflict ourselves

about long past events? what is unto us the destruction of Jerusalem? what the scattering of Israel? In times indeed when we were scorned, it was well enough to fast and weep; but now our condition is improved-we are now equals with other men; the present is ours as well as the gentiles'; we cannot keep up recollections of past injuries, we wish to forgive, to forget, secure in our rights, careless about the future." There are men who argue thus, if arguing it can be called; worldlings, who see not that such liberty as we enjoy is at best but the gift of Providence, granted us for the time, not the result of a radical change in the history of the world; that persecution in all its horrors may not come again to terrify us in the city, to pursue us in the field. "The present is ours," say these men. Alas! Israel is yet suffering; the present is not ours: would to Mercy it were so. Here, in this land, we are untrammelled in the exercise of our religion; there are no inquiries made by law; "why we believe as we do." But there are many other lands where the Jew is as much a slave as during the times of the crusaders. There is, it is true, a different spirit in the persecutions; it was then the infuriated masses that travelled from city to city to destroy the infidels, the enemies of their religion, as they called us; whereas now no one is capitally punished for his belief; but for all that, there is no freedom for Israel. In many countries we are restricted to filthy, narrow streets, beyond which a Jew cannot dwell; in others we are limited to certain pursuits, whilst all the nobler professions are interdicted to us; in others, the number of those who are permitted to marry is based upon the proportion of married persons who have died, and left the right of protection as an inheritance to their successors; and in others-But what good can result to recount all the sorrows of our people at the present day? Are not our ears constantly pained at hearing the acts of tyranny which are perpetrated in civilized Europe, or barbarous Asia and Africa, by the rulers and people? and where is our power to resist this evil? "The present is ours;" yea, as always, a present of suffering; and wo to those who depend upon the march of intellect to put a stop to these cruelties! Only the good Father, who chastiseth us to be his servants, can end all this anguish. But well is it for us to be so reminded that we are the humble of the earth, that our heart may not wax proud and forget what is due to our God and his law. How many would there be ready to throw off the burdensome duties that confine them within the narrow limits of the law; but they are ever and anon reminded that the blood of Jacob flows in their veins; and with every renewed account of oppression that reaches them, their pride in their name is aroused, they feel that they are brothers of the oppressed, that they have yet an interest in those whom oceans and mountains divide from their sight. But there are other men who are tired of their separate national existence, who feel the name of Jew a disgrace, who would gladly lose their nationality among the nations of the earth for the simple boon of civil liberty. They desire to be known as Frenchmen, Germans, or Englishmen; they wish not to see the restoration of the captives of Israel to the holy land, content to remain in a severed state, "like the fragments of a mighty ship, floating upon the vast ocean." They cannot deny that they were once a people, that they are disjointed members of this former state; but talk to them of a restoration, that these disjointed limbs should form again one homogeneous body: and they will say, with derision, that they desire to see no such restoration. Well might a prophet, in the bitterness of spirit, call out over the degeneracy of his age:

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"Is Israel a servant, or one born to service in the house? why hath he been given to plunder?"-Jeremiah 2:14.

Yes, are we slaves to the world at large? were we born bondmen to every nation under the sun, that we should be always ready to be plundered by whomsoever will stretch forth his hand against us? Is that our aspiration for liberty, that we should be content with the measure of freedom which we can enjoy in each state? I know how to appreciate liberty; my heart too throbs with emotions of thankfulness that I can travel hither and thither, write and speak, worship and pray, govern and be governed, like every freeman in the land. But despite of this, I am an Israelite, and gladly would I see a state restored under God, and by his guidance, where the laws administered would be the biblical laws, where the Jew would not and need not receive his rights as a favour, where there would be no talk of toleration, where there would be no fear of abridgement of privileges, where, in short, the Israelite would be free, not because the stranger grants it, but because his laws, his religion, his faith, constitute him a part and parcel of the state itself. Under the best circumstances, in the freest country under the sun, the Jews are subject to disqualifications, not from the laws of the country, perhaps, but from the circumstances of their religion disqualifying them naturally from participating in all offices, or engaging actively in commerce, upon equal terms with others, if they wish to live in strict conformity to their faith. Every one of you can answer for himself whether this is so or not. It is true, every one is bound to sacrifice his worldly gains when his duty clashes therewith. But there are unfortunately too many who cannot resist temptation, and who yield their spiritual welfare for so much gain or so much distinction. To say, therefore, that a state of restoration is not desirable to us, is asserting that it is preferable to expose us to constant diminutions, to the caprice of nations, and the will of tyrants, to the end of time. Surely such cannot be the will of God; surely this cannot be the hopes which the prophets have inspired us with. We may in the mean time be good citizens, faithful to the laws of the land, where they clash not with the superior obligations we owe to the Bible; but let us never relinquish the hope, that, if not in our own day, still the time may come when the Lord will have mercy on his land, restore his people, rebuild his temples, where we all may worship as freemen, as Israelites, as servants alone of God, as the children of those with whom the Lord made a covenant that He would bless them with his everlasting favour, and that through them and their seed all the earth may be blest.

Let us, then, even the men of this country, and of this age, join with our brothers in lands where oppression yet lies heavily upon them, and fast on the days consecrated to our fallen glory, and not weary with fraying unto Him who is enthroned in heaven that he may not forsake his people, but bless them with the outpouring of his spirit, and guide them unto himself by penance and good deeds, that they may be found worthy in his eyes, and be blessed with all the good which He has promised them through his servants, the prophets, when the walls of Jerusalem are built again, and his spirit dwells anew in his temple between the wings of the cherubim. Amen.

Friday, August 1st, Tamuz 27th, 5605.

S. The Festival Of Chanuckah

The Festival Of Chanuckah A Sermon, delivered by the Chief Rabbi Dr. Lilienthal, and Translated for the Jewish Congregation in Augusta, Ga., by his Brother, S. Lilienthal, M.D.

Holy, holy, holy art thou, Lord Zebaoth, all the earth is full of thy glory. The heavens tell of the greatness of thy name; the earth proclaims the works of thy hands; angels surround joyfully thy throne, and every creature hails Thee in praise and thanksgiving, extolling and acknowledging Thee as our Lord and Father. And also we, thy servants, appear before Thee again on this holy Sabbath eve, to thank Thee, O good God, who art a Saviour to those who are troubled in their distress, and a Physician to the afflicted in their sorrow. Who is among the mighty like thee, our Lord? Thou fightest their fights, and art their shield in battle. The mighty Thou dost deliver into the hands of the weak, the multitude into the hands of a few, the wicked into the hands of the just. “Who is among the mighty like our Lord?” Thus we sing before thee, O Lord, to-day, as we prayed four thousand years ago. O be Thou with us continually, teach us to confide in Thee and thy providence, teach us to give to Thee with a joyful heart ourselves and children, and all who are dear to us; teach us, that we may sacrifice every thing for the sake of thy holy name, which is our pride and our glory, our trophy and our banner; yes, “the Lord is my banner;”-thus we hail Thee; and mayest Thou in thy mercy accept our prayer in the hour of danger and of need, in the hour of triumph and of victory. Amen. My dear friends! Again we meet at the Sabbath of Chanucka, to take a retrospective view in the history of our nation, to edify our souls and our hearts on the miraculous deeds of our forefathers, and to draw from them useful lessons for all the events of our life.

It was a time full of sorrows and tribulations which gave rise to the jubilee of Chanucka. Judaism was at that time divided into two sects: the one rallied round the old banner, adhered steadfast to the old faith and the time-honoured commandments of their God; the other partly leaned to the Grecian school, to Grecian manners, and studied the wise sayings of a Grecian philosophy; and so they lived in continual quarrels, and what they could not settle among themselves, came for arbitration before the courts of their conquerors; and alas! one party brought accusations against the other; accusations which degraded Judaism, tore it in factions, arrayed brother against brother, and endangered the very existence of our religion. But as misfortunes never happen alone, so it was here too. Antiochus Epiphanes ascended the throne of the Syrians, and with the unbending power of a tyrant, he commanded to extinguish the whole Jewish religion, in order to make an end to all external dissensions. The temple in Jerusalem was desecrated everywhere, yea, everywhere, the service of the Lord prohibited. Then the blessings of the priests were not heard any more; the choirs of the Levites were silenced; the schools were closed; and the word of God was not taught any more to the children of Israel. Silence, dreary silence, reigned throughout. Nobody dared to perform the holy covenant of Abraham; the Sabbath day was not kept any more as the day of rest; the holy rolls of the Torah were torn into pieces, trampled upon, and burnt to ashes. The Synagogues were closed, and meetings for the glory of the Lord prohibited by the severest punishment. The sword, the stake, and the gibbet threatened the man who dared to disobey those mandates-and sorrowful and bitter days they were for Israel. Who believed then,

that there could be yet redemption? Who could hope that succour should arise? The streets of Zion were deserted, and the pilgrims for the festivals kept afar. With bitter tears on his cheeks, the angel of Israel sat weeping, and there was none to give him consolation.

How! none to give him consolation? No, my brethren,äðä ìà éðåí åìà éé ùïï ùåîø éùøàì. He sleeps not, and he slumbers not-the Guardian of Israel, and Judah is never forsaken. When trouble was at the highest, when help was the farthest, there arose men in Israel who came to his succour and to his aid, and performed glorious deeds in the name of the Lord.

There lived in a little village a family of priests, the Maccabees, the hoary Mattithias with his five brave sons. At that time their Syrian master had a Jewish altar built, and commanded the old priest to perform sacrifices on it to his false idols. The old man refused, and when another Jew offered himself to perform it at the king's command, he rose in the zeal for his God, and slew him on the spot. The first deed was done. The priest fled with his five sons to the mountains, and called upon all Jews who loved God and lived in his commandments, to follow him. The clarion sounded, and re-echoed in many a stout heart which had not been bold enough to battle single-handed; but the faithful now rallied around Judah-the Maccabee, and he, the most chivalrous and the bravest of the brothers, took the command. The Syrians pursued them; but Judah routed his aggressors on all sides, took one town after the other, and from day to day the force which accompanied him increased in numbers.

Antiochus then sent his generals with twenty-eight thousand men, expert in arms, and used to the battle-field. A proclamation announced a great fair, where the Jews who should be taken captives were to be sold in slavery, to be carried off from the land of their ancestors. The gentiles retook one town after the other, and all seemed lost again. Then Judah threw himself with a lion's courage and a reckless bravery on the Syrians.

îé ëîåê áàìéí ä' "Who is among the mighty like our Lord?" is inscribed on his banner; îëá"é is the battle cry of the struggling Jews, and in the name of the Lord they gained the victory, overthrew the Syrians, scattered their armies, and the proud Syrian who had proclaimed the sale of the vanquished, was compelled to fly, and to save himself in the dress of the poor, despised slave.

Now the wrath of the tyrant was roused, and he took the command himself; the most stringent measures were taken; bribery and corruption used, and nothing left untried. But all failed signally; the Jews stood their ground like one man; the five brothers were animated by one spirit; the king had to give way; his legions were dispersed, his armies destroyed, and after a long and tedious, but victorious campaign, the servants of God regained the holy city, captured the citadel, and to Him who giveth power and victory resounded the songs of their praise, and their joyful hallelujahs. The temple was cleansed, the rubbish cleared away, the sanctuary restored, the altar, the table, and the lamp were brought to their proper place; but when they wanted to light the sacred lamp none of the holy oil, which was burnt in the temple of the Lord, could be found. And see, there was obtained from among the rubbish a small jar, scaled with the seal of the high priest; and this small jar lasted them for eight days to light the lamp of God; and they rejoiced because of his aid, thanked Him for his mercy, and made it a statute in Israel for times to come, to celebrate the Feast of Dedication. And now, my brethren and sisters, to celebrate in the proper way this holy feast, let us ask, "What lesson can we draw for our life from these events?"-for this is the real idea connected with every festival, that we may place clearly before our minds the past events of

history, and to draw from them what suits in our time, and what they are destined to teach us. Therefore let us contemplate the words of the Psalmist:-

àôúçä áîùì ôé àáéòä çéãåú îðé ÷ãí ìîòï éãòå ãåø àçøåï áðéí éåìãå é÷îå åéñôøå ìáðéäí: åéùéîå áàìäéí ëñìí åìà éùëçå îòìié àì åîöåúéå éðöøå:

“I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, and keep his commandments.” And the Lord, who is love and truth, may give us his blessing in this hour, Amen.

I.

“What lesson can we learn from this celebration?” Thus do you ask, my friends, and I answer you: first, we have to sacrifice all and every thing for the holy religion of our fathers. Brethren, how would it stand with our sacred religion, if this family of priests, these glorious Maccabees, had lacked the courage to offer for it every thing that is dear to man, comfort and wealth, life and happiness? Then, no one said, “I have a wife and children, what do I care for the national cause?” Then no one said, “I have my farm and my business to attend to, I cannot quit it for religion’s sake.” Then no one said, “I have trouble enough in my own household, why meddle with other people’s business:” No; faith called, and they forgot all other engagements; the name of the Holy One called, and they forgot all, sacrificed themselves to Him, because they loved Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might. And not only did such a spirit inspire the men, for the same zeal enkindled a bright flame in the pious mothers in Israel. There was a mother, a poor widow, with seven children, whom she had raised by the works of her own hand, in truly maternal love. They were her treasure-her wealth; she had nothing else but her seven children, whom she had herself borne, nursed from a mother’s breast, raised by the labour of her hands, and by many a sleepless night. And this mother with her seven children was summoned before King Antiochus, who ordered them to offer prayers to his false idols; he promised them all that the human heart could desire, if they would obey his commands, and threatened them with the punishment of death, if they dared to disobey. And the first boy, a lovely child of eight years, answered, “Never, never, O king, will I pray to thy false gods.” And the king ordered to have him torn to pieces with red-hot pincers. Fathers and mothers, you who love your children with a never-fading love, you can feel what were the feelings of that mother-how her heart was tormented-how her soul wept, and, embracing for the last time her first-born son, she thanked God for his mercy to have given her such a child-kissed him, who died a martyr’s death. Then her second boy approached, a blooming, innocent child, who did not know yet the sorrows of the world, but had listened to the piercing cries of his brother, and said fearlessly, “King, let me follow my brother.” A mother’s tears were dried up; she had no sighs more, but she blessed her child, and saw him die. And thus died four more. One only, one of seven remained-one who was her only her only consolation, her only hope. “Foolish woman, will you see also this one die?” asked the king. “Mother, poor mother, have you no feelings for your child?” inquired the sorrowing executioner. And she knelt down, the poor desolate widow, and prayed: “God, my God, why is mine this severe trial, this hard and bitter lot? but let thy will be done, let thy holy providence be accomplished;” and pressing the babe to her bleeding heart, and bathing it with her tears, she blessed it with her last and best blessing, and saw it follow the fate of his brothers.

Mothers, do you feel what she sacrificed for her faith? Mothers, do you feel what she did for the Jewish religion?

O, it was a hard lot, a terrible doom, but this deed inspired thousands in Israel, aroused them from their lukewarmness to take arms, to fight courageously; and she, the good mother who bled for thousands, it was who gave back safety and happiness, and whose name was blessed and venerated by a whole nation. From us, thank God! such sacrifices are not any more required; but nevertheless, we are under the same obligation to do every thing for the holy heirloom, bequeathed to us pure and unspotted from a pious ancestry. From you, elders and fathers, it requires to show it by your life, how a Jewish heart acts, how the Jewish faith ennobles man. You, good and pious mothers, prove it by the education of your little ones, that you too belong to the pious mothers in Israel; and from every one of us, as individuals and members of a Jewish society, it is required to leave nothing undone that could give strength to our faith, that it may bloom and bear holy and godly fruits.

II. This is the first doctrine which the Feast of Dedication teaches; it is a weighty and glorious doctrine, but not less weighty is the second: “Confide in the Lord in all the relations of your life.” Very weak indeed was the power of the Maccabees; a few hundreds only stood up against thousands of warriors; how could they hope for success? how be vainglorious enough to think of victory, if they had not had confidence in God, in Him who can help in all conditions of life? O, they knew it, that a Father’s hand watched over them, who forsakes none that confide in Him, and forgets none who rely upon Him. And in this confidence they grew strong, in this confidence they prospered, and in this confidence the Lord assisted them.

O, such a confidence should animate all of you, my friends. When sorrows press upon you, and tribulations surround you, when you are disappointed in your hopes, and the road which you laid out for your pilgrimage through life becomes more and more obstructed, never despair, never cast down the eye; but look up to Him; for He who feeds the ravens will not forsake you. You, my brethren, who fled to this free and harpy land, so as not to forsake your old faith, who would not sell your freedom of soul and of body by apostacy, brethren who left house and home to enjoy your religious rights untrammelled, confide in the Lord, although you may have many things to encounter in a strange land, the Lord will not forsake you, for you have not forsaken Him. And you, my friends, whose good fortune it was to be born on a soil which knows only religion as the guide for life, but not as an oppressor of conscience, show it by your actions that you are the worthy sons of worthy sires; prove to your fellow-citizens, that to be a good citizen you must be also a good Jew; and the Lord in his mercy will sustain you in all situations of your life will be nigh unto you, because you look up to Him as your only Saviour for guidance through life.

III. But if the Lord should not fulfill the wishes of our life, my brother; if we work days, and years, and the balance-sheet shows no improvement; if we would then let sink the hand, and lose all courage to begin anew our daily work: then let the Chanucka festival teach us to persevere courageously, to suffer patiently; for all will yet end well.

Look only, my friends: the Maccabees had fought like lions, battled with courage and zeal, had never swerved to sacrifice all for their holy cause; and when they were near the holy city, after many a hard-fought field, two of the valiant brothers lost their lives in battle; the Syrians were again victorious, retook the cities, gained reinforcements, and a slave-mart was already proclaimed, to

sell the Jews far from their homes. All seemed lost. But did they lose their courage? did they lose their perseverance? or falter in their confidence in the God who alone can and will help? No, my brethren; Judah alone stood now for three, the sorrows for the lost ones gave new courage, the desire for revenge made them perform deeds never dreamed of before, the misfortune itself acted for their welfare, and in Jerusalem, which they conquered, they celebrated their victory.

Thus we have also to act. Inscrutable are the ways of the Lord, inexplicable the ways by which He guides us, and what we consider as a misfortune and a great tribulation, may yet lead to our happiness. Nachum, a pious man, used to say, when misfortune befell him, “Even this is for my happiness, and it will lead to happiness.” Why therefore despair in an unlucky moment? Through life night and day change places. The pain itself, which depresses our spirits, and is gnawing our hearts, is for our salvation, and for the purification of our souls. Fathers, when anxiety tortures your mind, when sickness takes fearful hold on the members of your family; you, poor mothers, who have wept perhaps over the grave of one of your dear little ones; and children who have lost your parents, perhaps at that very hour when you could hope to repay the obligations of your childhood; and you, my friends, who have felt perhaps the bitter sting of disappointment at that very moment when success seemed to crown your wishes: never give up, never despair, all will yet end well. Have you not improved most in the very hours of trial? did they not awaken in you holy feelings? did they not stir up in you a power, unknown and unfelt before? O, these sufferings are such sufferings as an ever-loving Providence has sent us for our trial and for our welfare; they come from a Father, who chastises us because He loves his children. How did Job suffer and yet all ended well! Take David, what severe trials had he not to undergo, and yet the kingdom of Judah became the reward of his patience. Therefore let us also persevere, my friends, persevere amidst trials and tribulations, and success and happiness will also be the crown of our patience.

IV.

One more doctrine, which the Chanucka festival will teach us, is: To live in peace and harmony with one another. The Maccabees could never have gained such victories, the Maccabees could never have performed such deeds of glory, could never have restored the holy temple, could never have confirmed the laws of the Lord, could never have bequeathed to us such a glorious festival, if they had not been animated by the spirit of peace and of harmony. Among them there was no quarrelling for the command, no bickering about small matters, no ill feelings about trifling sacrifices. Every one was willing to do his part, instigated by a pure love for the holy cause; and therefore with small means they were enabled to perform great deeds, and what seemed impossible, was done; for, where peace reigns, there is happiness; where harmony is, there is the blessing of the Lord of peace, and then all succeeds, all prospers.

Dear friends, consider well this great doctrine! Father and mother, who are perhaps not happy yet, and expect better times, which are sure to come; bear your lot in peace, and the worst is endured. Husband, when thou relievest the sufferings of a sick wife with love; wife, when thou easest by a friendly word the tribulations of thy consort, then is your home a home of blessing and of peace. low many families were not ruined, how many families have no lost their hard-gotten earnings, because the man would have his own will, and the wife would not yield her own opinion, because each went his own way, and ruin and desolation came over the once blessed threshold of that family.

O, my friends, I have seen amongst you so many good and beautiful qualities, that I expect nothing else, but a loving and peaceful disposition towards the members of your families; and I am certain, when you meet one another on Friday's holy eve, with the greeting "Peace be with you," that the angels of peace will hasten to you, to bless and to protect you. And to you, my friends, as members of our yet small congregation, let me say: Keep up a spirit of peace and of harmony amongst us. What we have begun for our faith, what we have established for our mutual benefit, though the beginning is small, will prosper and grow; for do you know what the Chanucka lights tell us, where we begin with a single weak light, till the lamp of the Lord is full, and sheds its radiating light over the whole house? However weak, small and trifling the beginning is, it constantly becomes brighter and brighter, till the house of the Lord is resplendent with lustre, when peace and harmony reign every where, and there the light shines on, till it ends like the Chanucka lamp on the last day of the dedication of the altar; so that it may be said that this light is kindled by the fire of Love, which reconciles whole Israel to their God, and sheds lustre on every child of Judah.

O! may the Lord give us his blessing, that such a sanctuary be reared among us, that the knowledge of the Lord and love and contentment may dwell among us; that we may look up with full confidence to our Father in heaven, who is the Dispenser of all gifts, and that He may bless us with His blessing. Amen.

Chapter 68

S. The Healing of Naaman

The Healing of Naaman A Sermon

O Lord our God, almighty and merciful Father! how long wilt thou delay having mercy on Jerusalem, and the outcasts of thy people? Behold! our city is desolate, and but a ruin remains of thy sanctuary; and thy children are scattered over the face of the earth, without a government, without a shepherd, and many of them are lost among the gentiles, through the length of the captivity and are drawn unto sin, because they listen to the overtures of their adversaries, and worship the strange gods which others worship, as though the hope of Israel were lost and extinguished in the whirlpool of eternity. Whereas thou, O living God! art the sole Hope of our race, the God whom alone we will worship; the true Shepherd, who wilt lead us securely, on rich pastures, the Saviour of Jacob, who wilt in mercy send the redeemer to us to reinstate us in our inheritance, to restore thy law to its ancient power over the heart and affairs of man, to banish all false belief, all vanity from the earth, when all who have spirit will truly see thy glory, and call alone on Thee, and worship none beside Thee, on that glorious day when justice and righteousness will rule the earth, and nation will not lift up sword against nation, and mankind no more learn war. And then will our temple again be the dwelling of thy Name, and offerings will be acceptable to Thee as of old, when Thou wilt abide in our midst, to bless us and all the world with thy peace. Amen.

Brethren, In the Haphtorah of to-day, taken from the fourth and fifth chapters of the second book of Kings, is told the history of the leper Naaman, the chief officer of the ruler of Syria, who on being informed that the Israelitish prophet had power not granted to any other man, was prevailed upon to visit Samaria, with the permission of his master, to obtain from the man of God that relief from his incurable disease, which he had hoped for in vain from the remedies of the physicians of his own country and belief. Behold him full of doubts and misgivings on his adventurous journey; a Jewish captive maiden had indeed assured his wife that he should of a certainty be cured by the prophet of Samaria; but it might be the boasting of a captive, who reverted back with regret to her native land, where she had sported in innocent mirth among maidens as gleesome as herself, and whose romantic soul covered everything in her lost home with the mantle of a peculiar holiness not appertaining to other lands. It was merely the desperation of hopelessness, perhaps, which induced the valiant soldier to listen to such a wonderful tale; his own priests, the worshippers of his own gods, had no such power, they claimed not to restore a man from leprosy; and why should such a power be inherent in the men of that people over which he had so often triumphed? And, still he had heard of the mighty God of Israel, of the many great deeds which He had wrought in Egypt and Palestine for his people; and how He was supposed by them to be superior to all gods, and all-sufficient to do of himself whatever might be pleasing to his will. But again he may have thought, if this God be so great why does He not extend his kingdom over all the earth, which the Israelites allege is the work of his creation? Why does he allow other gods to be worshipped when He is God alone? Again he may have supposed that, granted even that God had power, would He heal one like himself who worshipped Him not? who paid his adoration to what must be false in case the idea of the Hebrews with regard to the Deity were true? And observe farther in our

narrative, the general had gone and told the king of Syria of the marvelous story of the maiden; and as potentates of the earth always think their power paramount to all, he at once conceived the idea, that if Naaman could be cured in Samaria it must be through means of the king of Israel, who if even not able to devise the required remedy himself, would to a certainty have the influence with the humble prophet, who had no armed legions to do his will, nor courtiers to flatter his vanity, to do all that he desired. But for once the worshipper of the calves of Jeroboam felt that he had no ability to do the bidding of the Syrian monarch. “Am I a god,” said he, “to slay and to make alive, that he hath sent unto me to cure a man of his leprosy?” and straightways he imagined that it was a device of the Syrian to seek a mere pretext for renewing the ancient hostilities between Aram and Israel. Yes, the idolatrous king of Samaria rent his garments, so agitated was he at the unexpected message, so horrified was he at the presence of the leper who asked to be restored to health. But what earthly kings cannot achieve, what neither wealth nor station can accomplish, is nevertheless within divine possibility. Nor had the Jewish maiden, who first had spoken of the miraculous gifts of Elisha, in common with others acquainted with the ways of God with man, for a moment thought the power inherent in, or attainable by the ruler, but in the man on whom had fallen a twofold share of the spirit of him who ascended to the abodes of the blessed without passing through the gates of death; and as said, it was only the natural error of the idolater of Damascus, who, because he was all-potent with his priests and soothsayers, imagined the same to be the case with all other religions, so that over its followers everywhere the chief of the state had ample control to mould them to his will, to coerce them to do his bidding. But it need not be told you how utterly inapplicable all this is to our religion, which has its source from God, and knows of no authority on earth to which it must render homage, which views all alike who have received life and intellect from the Creator; since even the priests and prophets are not established for their own especial benefit, but that they might render to the people the services which their God conceives will be for the great benefit of all; so that all, whether people or their religious, nay their civil leaders, are included in the one great idea of all being banded to ether to worship the Most High, and promote each other’s greatest happiness. When Elisha therefore had heard that King Joram had rent his garments, he demanded that the Syrian should be sent to him, that he might experience that there was a prophet in Israel, not like the soothsayers of the heathens, who deceived the people by false and pretended revelations, but a true messenger who had received from the Lord the mission to prove the great power of our God, how that He is supreme and alone exalted above all.

Now the Syrian, though suffering from a loathsome disease, had not thereby diminished the least of the pride of his position as leader of the royal army, and he went with his chariots and horses and stood at the door of Elisha’s house, expecting that the prophet should come out to him, lay his hand on the diseased part, call on the name of the Lord, and thus not alone restore him to health, but exhibit to him at once the connexion between the power of God, and the prayer and influence of Elisha. This procedure would have shown Naaman to be a man whose well-being was of importance to the divine economy, and the evident miraculousness of the cure, the solemnity of the prophet’s prayer, in the presence of the chiefs and nobles of Damascus and Samaria, would have been well pleasing to the haughty military commander who came to expect relief, not to look for it in humility. It was therefore with deep chagrin that he received a message merely frorn Elisha, who himself did not deign even to look upon his military visitor, the noise of whose followers, and the tramplings of whose steeds resounded in the street in front of his dwelling. And

what was the message? was any great demand made? any deep medical skill displayed? any immediate miracle to be performed? any public prayer to be offered up? None of all this was done; but Naaman was ordered to go farther to the east till he reached the banks of the sacred Jordan, and in its waters he was to bathe seven times, neither more nor less, when his flesh should again assume a healthy complexion, and he should be cleansed from the contagion. You can easily picture to yourselves the wrath of the proud soldier, at finding his dignity so thoroughly slighted by the holy man of Samaria. So there was to be no prayer even offered up in his behalf; and who could tell why he bid him to go on that errand? was it perhaps to gain time? was it a mere device because he had no power to act in the case? and why not order him to the beautiful rivers of Damascus, to the lovely Amanah, and the clear Pharpar? were they not far superior to the unpretending rivers of Palestine? what virtue could there be in Jordan which his own streams did not possess? But he forgot all the time, that neither he nor any other man had a right to demand that an unusual cure should be wrought in his behalf: that nothing he had done could entitle him to be exhibited before the world as one for whose restoration signs and wonders should be performed, and that at length, if he would do something to deserve the divine mercy, it must be first by submitting himself entirely and unconditionally to the demands of God, as extended to him by his prophet. It was not then that Elisha had not power to cure by prayer; but it was withheld in order to afford Naaman some slight opportunity to render himself worthy of the blessing for which he solicited; he had not yet learned the worship of the Lord, and he became thus familiarized with the sublime truth, that it is obedience which is demanded, if we wish to be pleasing to God, and that as its reward only can mercy be shown to us. Moreover, though bathing seven times in the Jordan made the wonderfulness of the cure no less evident than any other inadequate means to produce a given cause, still was it employing some natural method, some aid from man himself, through which means the divine blessing could be conferred; and again was Naaman thus taught another important lesson, that man must do something of his own, that he must be active in some shape or other, in order to obtain that assistance from above, without which all labour is vain, and against which nothing can avail. After Naaman had therefore turned away in anger, his servants persuaded him not to throw away lightly the promise of divine mercy which the prophet had opened to him. Yes a great thing, the slaying of a thousand steers, the giving away of treasures to any amount, wading through blood of conquered armies, would have appeared insignificant in his sight, if he could only thereby regain his strength; and only the smallness of the trial displeased him even more than the prophet’s own apparent indifference to his suffering. They entreated him then to submit to this little condition; and when thus subdued, lo! he went into the water which he had esteemed so lightly, and barely had the seventh ablution taken place, than his flesh was again like the flesh of a little boy, and he was clean, and the marks of the contagion which had made him shunned, despite of his greatness, were at once removed, in accordance with the conditional promise of the man of God.

Let it be observed that had any priests of falsehood obtained such a triumph over the disease attached to an important personage in the state, it would have been performed under imposing circumstances, with all possible contrivances to lend importance and high sanction to the occasion. Presents too, rich and costly, would have been demanded, not alone received; and the individual actors would have glorified themselves at their unexpected success, for however artfully contrived, there could never be any certainty in any jugglery or trick thus attempted to be consummated. The very absence, however, of Elisha in the present instance, the simplicity of the

remedy, the confident tone of the promise, the entire success of the obedience of Naaman, convinced not alone the subject of the cure but the unbelieving Syrians, as well as the sinning Israelites, that the power of the Lord is indeed the irresistible influence which governs the world, and that hence, unless there be another deity of equal ability to work his will with himself, He must be the sole controller of the whole world; but as all the nations of that day worshipped a multitude of divinities, all of which partook of the nature of finite beings, and were even, according to their priests, under the influence of uncontrollable chance, and since from this consideration they could not predict, nor cause others to predict with certainty what was to occur; and whereas Elisha had clearly pointed out an unusual means to effect a given purpose, and predicted to a certainty all the occurrences as they took place, and this all based upon the will of God: Naaman came justly to the conclusion, that as the God of Elisha had thus proved his ability to effect his purpose, and had so clearly defined how it was to be accomplished, it proved that He must be uncontrolled by any other power, and is in fact the sole God in all the earth. And so say the Scriptures,

[illegible]

“And he returned unto the man of God, he with all his camp, and he came and stood before him, and said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.”

What first he had heard in anger and derision had now proved to him that with God all is possible, and that, however nothing he had done to deserve the mercy shown unto him, it was now made evident unto him, that when God desires to bless, no one can stay Him, and no circumstance, however slight, will be ineffectual to effect his almighty purposes, the moment it is his intention to bless or to punish; and he left Samaria with different feelings from those with which he had entered it, and he resolved henceforward to be a follower of the true God, and when making sacrifices, to do so only unto Him, whose are the majesty and the glory, and the dominion of all the world.

Perhaps it may be asked why so much undeserved kindness was shown to Naaman, especially as nothing farther is said of him in the subsequent passages of the Bible. But without going very deeply into the subject, it would be enough to answer in general terms, that we must apply here also, as on other occasions, the words which the Lord himself taught unto Moses when asking for a knowledge of the ways of God: “And I will be gracious unto him to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on him to whom I will show mercy.”

It is, in other words, the province of our Father alone to determine who is to be blessed, and also to cause it to have a permanent influence on the affairs of the world at large. We may not, indeed, have any knowledge or conception even how any one occurrence, for instance this one of Naaman, may or can affect mankind in general; but for all that there may have been a great necessity in the fearful demoralization of that age, as it was in the preceding one through Elijah’s miracles, to teach the Israelites, as the depositaries of the law-the great truths which Moses had first handed down to the assembled people. Fearful inroads had the various systems of idolatry made upon the simple religion of the Bible; the Israelites had adopted the vagaries of the heathen mythologies, and the observance of the commandments fell daily more in abeyance. It mattered not then so much who the instruments that were made the cause of arresting the total extinction of religion were, as that such were raised up for the wisest of purposes, by the most benevolent of all beings; and that they were so various, from the poor man who had to borrow an axe to chop down

a tree, to the general of Benhadad's army,-from the simple female of Shunem to the valiant king of Israel, only confirmed the more thoroughly the many who yet adhered to the truth, that they would not be forsaken themselves, and that the God whom they adored and the religion which they followed would for ever remain the inheritance of their people, and that nothing done by them within, and nothing done by others from without would ever obliterate the belief in the sole Creator from the hearts of their latest descendants, or let the law perish from out of their mouth.

Whatever God has created is for his glory; and hence those whom He deems so are the most fitting to carry out his benevolent views. If, then, to our apprehension even they are not the most suitable, we ought to be very cautious how we allow ourselves to sin by impugning the wisdom of which we cannot understand the very beginning; and that the actors in these great events appear but once on the scene, is not to assert that they were useless. The example needed was one of a peculiar kind, we may assume; and it having been given, its repetition was not needed, and the actors also required not to be dwelt upon in the future development of the history of the world. The Bible, let it be remembered, was not written for our amusement, or to satisfy our curiosity, but to instruct us in the way of life; and the healing of Naaman is accordingly complete in itself, and teaches the lessons which we have already touched upon, and which we will now recapitulate in a connected form.

First, whatever afflicts us is a divine dispensation: Naaman's disease was evidently within the divine cognizance, and consequently we must not imagine that we are neglected or forsaken of God, if the pleasant current of our days is interrupted, and sickness and its pain invade our domicil.

Secondly, that all our cures are in the hands of Him who afflicts us; consequently we should always hope that we shall be relieved from all our sorrows, so soon as divine mercy deems the end of our trials has arrived.

Thirdly, that we are permitted to use human remedies and natural means to restore ourselves to health; but we must never forget when so applying them, that they can only be efficacious when blessed by God, but that otherwise the skill of the physician is exhausted in vain, and no balm can heal the wound against which the decree has gone forth that it should hasten the sufferer's end.

Fourthly, that in order to obtain the blessing of God, we must relinquish all our preconceived opinions of what we may deem right and proper, but should assiduously endeavour to submit without question and reluctance to what religion teaches us, in order that God may bless us and accomplish the desires of our heart. It was said to Naaman, "Bathe thyself and become cleansed;" and the healing which he obtained was as the immediate consequence of his fulfilling what he had in this respect been told was the will of God.

And, fifthly, that the power of God is unlimited by what we call impossibilities and contradictions; with Him the will and the power are inseparably connected, and no matter what the conditions of the case may be, the ability of the Lord to effect his will is not in the slightest degree abridged. Men speak of impossibilities, because they soon feel the extent of their power; they speak of their not knowing, because they speedily discover the limit which their wisdom can attain; they soon complain of weariness and sleepiness, because their endurance has been tasked to the utmost extent of their ability;-but with God there is no conceivable want of power, not the remotest idea of

a want of mental comprehension, no possibility of weariness and sleep; but He is always in the full enjoyment of strength, a constant source of inexhaustible wisdom, and unflagging endurance and a wakefulness which needs not rest to enable it to stand firm in a new task, to bear with all the hardships which continued toil would require. In short, man is all-dependent, God is self-sufficient; man is powerless, God is omnipotent; man derives his being and whatever comprises it, God is self existence, perfect and happy in himself, and requires nothing beyond Him to add to his perfection and happiness. This is the idea which the Decalogue meant to convey of the Supreme, inasmuch much as it announced Him as the creative power who punishes and rewards, not according to caprice, but according to the merits of the creatures themselves. To enforce this, to render it permanent, were the subsequent events recorded in the Bible contrived,-to rivet faster and faster in the minds of the people their sole dependence on the sole and only Creator. To effect this great and small deeds were wrought; the agents were either pious or sinners, high or humble, Israelites or gentiles; and with all it had for the only object contemplated, to let the world understand that the whole economy of creation is the effect of one Being, who is good and beneficent, willing only to be obeyed, in order that the greatest good may be conferred on the greatest numbers; not that He is injured by what is done in the world, but that his creatures might be rendered as happy as their nature will admit of. It is true that nature is also his, and He call alter it to suit his purposes. But we in our limited knowledge know not what is the best for us and others; we cannot tell how the whole economy is progressing to a point of absolute perfection; we cannot see how the grass grows or the grain ripens; but when we compare the barren field and the burnt up meadow with the state of luxuriance they present in the bright sunlight of summer, we are conscious of the creative progress which has taken place unseen to us, though our annual experience tells us to expect such a result as certain to occur, to a great extent, at least, if not to the self-same degree, in every change of seasons. So is it with the development of the world. A religion was given to us; it has been attested as excellent by the sanctifying influence it has had and still has on those of Israel who submit to its behests; sparks flying, as it were, from the rock on which it is built, shivered, as it has been, by the calamities of a long and still enduring captivity, have kindled a mighty flame all over the face of the globe; the elements are in commotion, there is a chaos in the intellectual world, there are commingled truth and error, light and darkness; but the spirit of God is moving with the swiftness of eagles' wings over the face of the waters, and as the pinions touch the darksome element every now and then, a spirit is awakened, and it says, "There is no God in all the earth but in Israel;" ay, it sinks again into the abyss, and its testimony is hushed amidst the roaring of adverse elements; but still the voice has gone forth, and others will take up the refrain, and new witnesses will be called forth, and new spirits will be awakened, till the whole mass of beings will be ripe for the kingdom of God, as the harvest is ready for the sickle of the harvester; and then will suddenly go forth, as in the beginning, the word "Let there be light," and there will be light, and darkness will fly away from the face of the new creation, and error and superstition and falsehood will be for ever banished from the earth, and the new world will stand resplendent in the new light of God's truth, when the Lord himself will be the universal Sun and Shield, as the lower world emerged from the mass of confused existence on the first day of creation.

Let it not be imagined that the world was entirely lifeless before light was called forth from the darkness; there was the Creator's will breathing on the elements, preparing them for the new functions to which they were destined. So, too, in the moral world. The giving of the Decalogue

was but the beginning of the end; the elements were set in motion by it; it is the spirit of God which floats over the human mind; it prepares all for the final triumph of truth, and it will prevail, no matter how much the wicked may despise the prophetic people, no matter how many may claim to be possessed of the truth, better truth than is in Israel. The leprosy which affects the masses must be removed; Israel, as well as the world, will have to be washed of their uncleanness; but it is faith in God which will effect this. Unwilling or willing, men will seek to throw off their load, the burden of which afflicts them, in this purifying stream; and when they find themselves restored to primitive innocence, their flesh, as it were, rendered like that of a healthful child, they all will go before those who knew the Lord and worshipped Him during the days of tribulation, and say, “Surely there is no God in all the earth but in Israel only, and we will serve Him alone who is Creator, Ruler, and Saviour, who is all in all, the sole God, whose name be blessed for evermore.” Amen.

Nissan 4th, April 7th, 5608.

Chapter 69

S. The Immutability and Justice of God

The Immutability and Justice of God. A Sermon, By the Rev. M. N. Nathan, of Kingston, Jamaica.

Brethren! Psalms 18:31, furnishes the text for elucidation and reflection on the present occasion. May God be with us in this devotional hour, and incline our hearts to his law and testimony. Amen!

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"The way of God is unchangeable, the word of the Lord is tried; He is a shield to all who trust in him." The way of God is unchangeable and perfect, and the word ■■■■ expresses both. Perfection implies impossibility of farther improvement, the highest point of excellence, unattainable by any mortal, incomprehensible to our understanding. The providence of God and his works are eternal, and from the day that He pronounced the latter good, bade the celestial orbs roll on in undeviating regularity, and the earth and sea to bring forth and yield their stores, all which he created and called into existence, has fulfilled and continues to perform its destined purpose. He issued a decree which none should transgress; "To the sea he said, thus far shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." "He commanded the morning, and caused the dayspring to know his place; He alone knoweth where light dwelleth and where is the place of darkness." And who but He understandeth them now? who can improve what his wisdom has designed? who say, This is not good, that might be better such a thing might be amended? Surely not man, that weak, frail creature, who alone, of, all creation, wanders and strays from the path wherein he is directed to walk. Nought has been altered, and, amidst changes and revolutions innumerable, the sun has not ceased to shine, nor have the moon and stars withheld their light; the spheres have continued to revolve, and the seasons to appear and disappear at their appointed periods, refreshing and variegating the verdant face of earth. The unalterable, nature of his ways is farther shown by the testimony which Scripture affords, confirming what daily experience offers to our view. Let man be the subject of our observation. God has proclaimed concerning him, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth, subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and every creature which moveth upon the earth." Which of these words has remained unaccomplished? or, rather, have they not been and continue to be fulfilled, to their utmost extent, daily ministering to the comforts and supplying the wants of the human race? From the first pair created, and, subsequently, from the single family which was saved from the wreck of a sinful and rebellious world, has the face of the globe been overspread, until the number of souls .cam scarcely be ascertained, save by an uncertain mode of computation. Notwithstanding the crimes and perverseness of mankind, the cruel and exterminating wars of mad ambition, persecution and relentless oppression; notwithstanding the sanguinary and ruthless acts of fanaticism, bigotry, and despotism, and the innumerable hosts who have fallen victims to plague, pestilence, and disease: the population of the habitable world has, in spite of all these drawbacks, progressively and wonderfully increased, save in those countries which, once teeming with inhabitants; were doomed to solitude and desolation, and entailed on themselves the vengeance of the outraged majesty of Heaven. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of renowned

Babylon, of warlike Edom, of Tyre, whose princes were merchants, and of many others, serves as an example and warning to deter later generations from pursuing a like career. The dead stillness of that fearful lake, under whose pitchy waters lie engulfed the myriads that once peopled the four cities which it covers, the sterility which reigns over a tract once beautiful to the eye, well watered by the Jordan, chosen by Lot to pasture his numerous flocks when he parted from his kinsman Abraham, and the proud capitals whose vast extent and magnificence were the theme of every tongue, which have not a vestige left, and where no man abideth, testify that God allows not guilt to pass unpunished;-that because his word is unchangeable, man still fills and replenishes the earth, yet the Deity will by no means suffer him to abuse the power wherewith he is entrusted, to pollute the land, and defile it by his wickedness and impiety. God never will fail to humble the pride of nations and their rulers, who seek to domineer over and subjugate their fellow-creatures; he restrains their lust of conquest, and bridles their desire for universal dominion. Yet while ancient empires have been subverted, the monuments of their former glory, the wrecks of their stupendous edifices, hath He suffered to stand, as evidences of his truth and eternity, and the mutable and transitory nature of man, who is exalted to the pinnacle of prosperity, but overthrown when he presumes to step beyond the boundaries appointed by the Supreme; he may scale the summit of fortune’s height with the permission and favour of divine goodness, but falls headlong down the steep the instant these are withdrawn. Again, where barbarism and ignorance once prevailed, there civilisation, refinement, and knowledge have now attained their meridian, because there clarity, kindness, and tolerance dwell; the laws and government are just and merciful, the nations are peaceful and friendly in their intercourse with their fellow-creatures, and therefore are they blessed, their undertakings prosper, and their sway and dominion are enlarged. The population of a country may often be found redundant, owing to legislative defects; but nowhere has the Deity unpeopled a land, in which the principles of benevolence, goodness and religion were upheld. And where shall the spot be found, which the foot of man has pressed, where he has chosen to abide and settle, wherein he has fixed and established communities to become in time powerful and mighty states, whence the wild animals of the wood, savage beasts of the jungle have not retrograded, flying from the face of him who the Almighty said should bear rule over every living thing that exists, whose fear and dread should tame and subdue the fiercest creature? We shall seek in vain for a proof to demonstrate that the divine assurance has not been literally observed. Even our own limited experience, without reference to past history, furnishes abundant evidence. The vast American continent, where primeval forests are daily disappearing before the enterprise and industry of the hardy pioneer and settler, affords a remarkable instance of the truth of the words of Scripture. But wherever the turpitude of man has rendered him unworthy of Heaven’s choicest gifts, and banished him from the place which he desecrated, there desolation prevails, whilst the intractable and fierce tenants of the waste, the lordly lion, the prowling tiger, the venomous serpent, there fix their dwellings, and "doleful creatures howl and cry" in the deserted city, the once fertile plains and valleys, the shady groves, and by the murmuring streams, where formerly "the busy hum of men" resounded, where the cheerful labourer awoke at early dawn, and the toiling mechanic enjoyed the blessings, of a gracious Providence.

If nature, then, continues her course uninterruptedly, if all preserve the same unbroken regularity, if no deviation from those great laws which govern the universe is traceable, if man fails not to reap the fruits of the advantages which the Almighty gave him, and finally if the inspirations of prophecy, the words which the Eternal put in the mouths of his chosen messengers, never failed in

predicting circumstantially the fate of the disobedient: can we withhold acknowledging that the ways of God are perfect and unchangeable, that "He is not man who lies, or the son of man who deceives?" This is universally conceded; for who will deny what the most simple child may discover without the aid of human assistance, when he rises in the morning and beholds the glorious orb of day, when he retires to rest by the light of the silvery moon, when he beholds the incessant routine of the works of the Omnipotent? And while all must admit the unalterable nature, and perfection of the ways of the Deity, no one can remain unconvinced of the truth of the Psalmist's words, "That God is good to all, and that his mercy extendeth over all his works, that the eyes of all look expectantly to Him, that He giveth them their food in its due season, and that his love and compassion are boundless." Shall, then, the justice of the Almighty be arraigned when man is distressed and afflicted? when he feels the chastening hand of his Creator? and because we feel the smart, and are unable to fathom his designs and the depths of his wisdom, murmur when He punishes, or, rather, when He permits the consequences of our wilfulness and wantonness to recoil on ourselves? "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, ands his thoughts than our thoughts." Let man look to himself when judgment overtakes him; search into and examine his actions; when the rains cease to descend in fertilizing showers; when famine stalks through the land,-when the tide of prosperity and success is checked,-when pestilence, which walketh in darkness, assails him, and death snaps asunder the tender ties of love,-anarchy and civil broils keep his mind in anxious fear;-when he rises daily with troubled breast, and lies down at night, not to sleep in conscious security, but to count the hours with gloomy forebodings. Is a land thus afflicted with drought, scarcity and poverty, does disease, tainting the atmosphere with its mephitic breath, infect the healthy current of life, is the beam of the scales of justice kicked rudely by violence, the majesty of the laws contemned, property at the tender mercy of the robber and incendiary, and the peace of society disturbed by the the lawless,-then, while these cannot be mistaken as dire and terrible inflictions, their causes must be sought for among those who experience their effects, and not be attributed to the desire of the beneficent Creator to pain his creatures, whom He would fain crown with all the happiness which He has to provided for those who fear and serve Him in truth and faithfulness. In bestowing whatever could contribute to the joys, the comforts, and wants of life, the Deity, in his wisdom, while He laid down unerring rules for the government of the universe, thought proper to retain in his own hands, without subjecting them to fixed laws, certain invaluable and precious gifts, whose bestowal should assure us of the goodness and favour of our Maker, as their withdrawal would admonish us that we had erred and incurred his displeasure. The chief of these is, the rain of heaven. There are seasons when its descent may be expected, to water and moisten then parched ground, infuse strength into and quicken the growth of vegetation; but its coming is arbitrary and uncertain, unlike day and night, cold and heat, summer and winter, which were ordained never to cease "while the earth remained." We therefore supplicate and pray, especially for this fertilizing blessing, and entreat that it may be granted, hoping for, but unable unable to reckon upon it indubitably. We know that clouds are formed from watery vapours; but it is no easy matter to account for the long continuance of very opaque clouds without dissolving, or to give a reason why the vapours, when they have once begun to condense, do not continue to do so until they at last fall to the ground in the form of rain. Rain, however, ranked foremost among the number of celestial blessings which were promised to Israel before occupying the chosen land of inheritance. "I will give you the rains in their seasons," and the threat to withhold it in the

denunciation "And the heavens above thy head shall be brass, and the earth below thee shall be iron," was foretold as a punishment for transgression. God alone has the keys where it is treasured; at his command alone are the storehouses opened, and their contents diffused over different parts of the earth, either, as is expressed, "for correction or for mercy."- Job 37:13. Wherever the word rain occurs in Scripture, in conjunction with God, it teaches us the undeniable fact that the Lord restraineth its showers, or, benevolently letteth them descend in genial streams. Is then a country deprived for a period by the Almighty of this refreshing fluid,-are its fields parched,-its soil calcined by glowing beat, or, in the beautiful language of the Bible, its rain powder and dust,-do its cattle perish, is the herbage withered, and does gaunt famine threaten with its horrors;-some aggravating cause must exist to call forth such calamities. "If ye will hearken to my commandments, says the Eternal, I will give you the rain of your land in its due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, thy wine, and thine oil." He whose glory is his goodness, whose ways are unchangeable, whose word is tried, who is a shield to those who trust in him, is not wroth from caprice, or manifests his dread and awful power from insufficient or vindictive motives. "He is long-suffering, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." The cause is on earth, not in heaven, the fault lies with man, not with God. some evil agency must be at work in that particular quarter where the deprivation is felt. "I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest, and I caused it to rain upon one city, and suffered it not to rain upon another city, one piece was rained upon, and the piece, whereupon it rained not, withered, so two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied, and yet have ye not returned unto me saith the Lord."- Amos 4:7-8.; Here lies the secret: men wander, following the inclinations of their heart and eyes; they try to weary God as they do each other! Who violates natural duty and moral obligation? who is ungrateful for the favours of his Maker? who prostitutes his heaven-born soul to vice and intemperance? who abuses virtue, whose dictates, if obeyed in a spirit of love and inclination, would ensure him happiness above and below? Who, in the pride of his reason, thinks religion and the precepts it inculcates beneath his notice? Is it not man-ungrateful man? And yet, notwithstanding his backsliding, his iniquities, let him return with grief and sadness, reformed and penitent, acknowledge the justice of the infliction, amend the errors that called it forth, bend the stubborn knee, and soften the flinty heart, and will he not be received? And then if he purge with tears of contrition, remorse and repentance, the "sins red as scarlet," shall they not be washed white as snow by the showers yielded by the beneficence of his Judge, who pardons and forgives?

We need no additional argument to demonstrate the immutability of God’s ways, so apparent, as before remarked, to the humblest mind; let us therefore consider the second portion of our text: "The word of the Lord is tried," to show the justice of the Omnipotent. In our outset on the journey of life, what is there to impede our progress if we guide ourselves by the word of the Lord? Has the Almighty thrown any obstruction in our way? has He not rather furnished us with every requisite to accomplish what we desire to undertake? have we not freedom of will to choose the course we mean to adopt, a range of action for which the whole earth affords scope? are we not at liberty to devise and mature plans for our especial benefit, and gifted with energy of purpose, decision of character, and capacity to comprehend the use of all things destined for our service? We look to every division of the world, and see no obstacle to our career; except what our fellow-man presents. We plough the main, traverse distant and unknown lands, penetrate into the bowels of the earth, explore the mine and force it to yield its useful ores and precious metals, trace with

ingenious skill the wonderful designs of Providence as exhibited in every production of nature, develop her inexhaustible resources and their utility to man, and behold in the system which God displays to us, nothing but what may teach, improve, and render us happy and contented. With conscience as a monitor to warn us when we make a false step, with religion as a guardian angel to admonish us when we deviate from the right path, we may undauntedly brave and conquer every danger or difficulty which prevents us from attaining the summit and goal of our hopes. Whether riches, honours, fame, or knowledge be the prize we are anxious to obtain, success will. attend our efforts provided we are not unmindful of the Author of our life, the Master of our destinies. But does the fortunate in general reflect through whom, by whose goodness, he enjoys the reward of his labour? does not an opposite idea rise uppermost in his mind, and, far from imitating the example which the Almighty displays to his creatures, none of whom are too insignificant to merit his attention, is not the being who erroneously supposes himself the architect of his own fortunes, arrogant and haughty to his less prosperous competitors? He thinks himself released from all obligation to a higher Power, fails in obedience to his Father and Sovereign, which as a child and subject he is bound to yield; but enacts from his inferiors in worldly prospects the deference, the homage which his pride and vanity covet. "Unhappy indeed is that land where wealth is the sole passport to respect, the sole object deemed worthy of attainment." There knowledge languishes; there virtue and honour are valueless, if clad in the garb of poverty, whilst vice is not considered loathsome, provided it be arrayed in rich apparel. There people are found, "whose outward circumstances are gigantic, but who are dwarfs in soul." Ah, could we read with the eye of Omniscience the thoughts of such hearts, the misery which there lies hid, there would be nought to envy, but much to pity and compassionate. "The little that a good man hath is better than the substance of such." It is folly to rail against the rich or their possessions, seeing they are the gifts of God, to be specially employed in his service, to be thankfully enjoyed in meekness and humility; but nothing is more contemptible, more despicable in the eyes of God and man, than the conduct of those who boast and are proud of their wealth, or apply it to their own selfish indulgences and propensities. The faults of the charitable and munificent maybe extenuated; but who will plead for him who regardeth not the poor, or who relieveth them from motives of ostentation to gain the applause of the world? "Wealth, without a judicious application, is food without salt." And can we wonder that the tide of prosperity ebbs, and poverty overflows a land, when servility and homage are rendered to idols of gold, and the knee is not bent to God? Is it surprising that the sources of commercial enterprise fail, when every one seeks to draw from them? that its broad channels are obstructed when every one launches his bark on their waters, because he envies the prosperity and covets the luxuries of his neighbour’s house? "Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may exalt himself on high, that he may be delivered from the power of misfortune."- (Ezekiel.) If the necessary equilibrium between the spiritual and temporal, between the condition of the rich and poor be not maintained; if every one studies to be rich and no one is content with a middle station: distress must, in the natural course of events, ensue, compel the majority to be less immoderate in their desires, and the few, who make so ill a use of their glittering hoards, to part with their acquisitions which corrupt, but do not benefit society; which excite cupidity and murmuring, but do not call forth emulation, content, and blessing. And who holds the scales in equal poise, who will depress the few and raise the many, who lift the poor from the dust, and the needy from the dunghill, but God? Will his justice not remedy the evils of so unequal a distribution? will He permit the proud to retain that which swells

their arrogance and presumption? Thankless heirs shall dissipate it, or the thousand accidents to which worldly wealth is liable shall scatter it among those to whom the Deity shall assign its future possession. When, therefore, the tide of prosperity and success is checked, and ruin threatens, some moral evil will be found of long existence, which, like a cancer, has been spreading in all directions, until its effects are universally felt, and nothing but divine skill can eradicate the corrupting mass.

"The Lord saveth those who are lowly in spirit." He recalled the denunciations uttered by his prophet against the City of Nineveh, when its inhabitants fasted and prayed, and covered themselves with sackcloth as tokens of their contrition. "He lifteth not his hand against the humble, and executeth not judgment against those who repent of their deeds and amend their ways." When, therefore, to blight and a brazen sky, to the gloom in monetary and commercial prospects, pestilence is superadded, and it overtakes at length the devoted land or city, intrudes into the dwellings of the people, and gorges itself with the young, the smiling infant, the blooming child, the graceful youth and modest maiden; when it selects the early buds of promise and hope,-the blossoms of strength and beauty,-what does it indicate? does it not say, as the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God?" What! must there not be wickedness, and sin, and transgression in a place which is no sooner free from one affliction, than another comes in its stead? no sooner are property and substance wasted, than disease, bringing death in its train, enters the abode and carries off the choicest, the loveliest?" "There is no death without sin." Life and death have their due proportions; but when the mortality exceeds the ratio of births; when more go out of the world than come in; when there is scarcely a house "which hath not one dead;" when every eye is suffused with tears, and nearly every family laments the bereavement of some of its members; when the grave, like the horse-leech, cries, "give, give," and petition follows on petition, beseeching the Omnipotent to recall "his destroying angel," to sheathe "his two-edged sword;" when the science of medicine is baffled, and the whole arcana of nature are ransacked for remedies to check the progress of the evil:-will it still be maintained that there is no guilt, no iniquity, no moral delinquency, no spiritual transgression? Are all righteous, all innocent? does no breast harbour evil? does every mind glow with purity, uprightness, and integrity? Is every word holy, every deed just, every thought pious? Does every one love the Lord arid his neighbour? is there no calumny, no deceit, no guile, no ingratitude to God and man? Is there no unmerited hatred, and division of hearts? Does nothing of this exist, and yet the smiter be sent forth to destroy? No, brethren; the love, the mercy, the beneficence and benevolence of our gracious Father are unbounded; He declares, "If thou wilt indeed hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the evil diseases upon thee, which I put upon Egypt, for I, the Lord, am thy healer." His way is immutable, his word is tried, pure as seven times refined silver. If the absence of these sicknesses signifies that man is obedient to the behests of his almighty Sovereign; does not their presence imply that a contrary course has been persevered in and maintained?

"It is better to fall into the hand of the Lord, whose mercies are infinite, than into the power of man," said David, when, in the plenitude of his exaltation, he, the chosen servant of God, fell into sin, and preferred that pestilence should rage, rather than that his people should be punished by famine or the sword of their foes. His subjects had not sinned, they had not incurred the chastening visitations of God. "It is I that have sinned and done evil indeed, but as for these sheep, what have

they done?" "Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me and my father's house, but not on thy people, that they should be plagued,' exclaimed the humbled monarch. And while the pestilence raged, he and his nobles clothed themselves in sackcloth. He was penitent, and by his deep humiliation, sought to appease the Almighty. The people were guiltless; but their king, who dearly loved them, was punished by witnessing their sufferings. He who had been raised for their salvation, was the cause of the loss of so many lives. May we not argue in the same manner, that children have been snatched away, and fallen victims for the misdeeds and errors of parents, that the heart of the parent leas been struck through their innocent offspring, and that the desolating plague selects the young rather than the old, in order that the latter may return unto the Lord, and worship Him in sincerity, acknowledge the justice of the chastisement, and depart from the graves of their loved ones wiser, better, repenting of the past, and upright in intention for the future?

"It is the hand of God, let him do whatsoever He pleaseth," said the high priest Eli, when a child was the instrument chosen to communicate to him the downfall of his house; let us acknowledge the justice of that Hand whose "palm holdeth measureless space, whose finger guideth unnumbered worlds, and directeth their movements." In sorrow and grief let us implore mercy for us and our little ones, that they may be spared; if our heart has been diverted from the service and worship of our heavenly Father, if it has been the slave of worldliness, and abandoned the ways of salvation: let us not cease until every cause, offensive to the Deity, has been removed, until we have put from the midst of us pride, vanity, folly, irreligion, and assumed instead the garb of humility, earnestness, wisdom, and piety, in private as well as in public, in the domestic circle, as in the house of prayer: Is it not unnatural when a child, whom a mother has brought forth in pain and travail, nursed and tended through all the helplessness of infancy, whom a father's toil and labour have helped to sustain, clothe, and educate, upon whom the tenderness and affection of both are lavished,-is it not unnatural, when such a child throws itself into strangers' arms, forsakes its parents and their caresses? and would it not justly excite the jealousy of such parents?

God is jealous of man's love, claims the affection and duty of his children, (Ezekiel 16:42,) but "if we remember not the days of our youth, and fret Him by our improprieties," "He also will recompense our way upon our head." If reliance be fixed on lands and possessions, God will make them valueless by restraining the rain of heaven; if on gain, he will dry up or divert its channels that no more shall flow; if these fail to teach man his duty, he will send plague and pestilence, wailing and weeping shall be heard in every dwelling; and if man still walk contrary, discord and dissension shall prevail, there shall be perpetual fear, the ties which bind society shall be torn asunder, there shall be no respect paid to station or constituted authority, and civil commotion and its attendant horrors shall affright the peaceful, drive sleep from every eye, and slumber from every eyelid.*

* Jamaica was successively visited by fears of drought, ruinous losses in commerce and trade, a dreadful epidemic, and riots attended with bloodshed. In these sad visitations, who have escaped? in these afflictions, who have not suffered? The good and righteous have had their faith, their trust, their sincerity in divine goodness tried and proved; for God testeth by misfortune and adversity the inclinations of those who fear Him, whether they do it from love or from the hope of reward; whilst the wicked, by reverses and calamity, are taught that God is the Judge, who is not blind to their doings, that He readeth their inmost thoughts, that He will bend their stubbornness and perversity, humble their haughty spirit, make them the instruments of their own punishment, and cause them

to drink the dregs of that cup of mixture, which He poureth out over the inhabitants of the earth. Yet will He welcome all, reinstate them in his favour, if they atone for their errors; and every blessing shall descend on those "whose transgression, is forgiven, whose sin is covered, who return unto God and crave his pardon in lowliness and contrition."

"Happy is he who considereth the poor, in the day of trouble, God will deliver him." An onward step in the path of rectitude does he take who relieveth those whom the course of events has reduced to poverty and distress. In the abodes of plenty, sickness, however painful, is alleviated by prompt attention, soothing care and skilful treatment. The parent is nigh to watch, the relation and friend devote themselves to smooth the ruffled pillow, to give the healing draught, to cool the burning brow, to moisten the parched throat; the visitor treads lightly, lest the slumbering patient should be disturbed, and all that care can devise or suggest is practised to restore the sufferer and accelerate his cure. How different is it in the hovel of the indigent! Where shall he procure all these comforts, where shall he seek friends to tend his bedside? They, alas! are poor as himself; they must go forth in the morning and labour for daily bread until evening, when their tired limbs require repose. Who, then, shall help the invalid in his mortal agony? where shall he find the means to aid nature in its struggles with fell disease? He has them not: chill penury, fetid air are in his close and confined cabin; and the unfortunate sufferer expires, never having had a chance of recovery. The laudable and praiseworthy exertions of the faculty are now in full activity; and every minister of religion will follow their example by appealing to the benevolent to aid the indigent, and enable them to obtain those comforts so indispensably necessary in the malady which devastates their homes and destroys their families. When was an appeal ever made to a Jewish heart on behalf of the poor, and the petitioner denied assistance? When did the cry of the afflicted and destitute come into the ears of the ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ "Merciful children of merciful parents," which met not with ready attention? when did the wail of the orphan; the sob of the widow resound, without being quieted by the active consolation and assistance of the charitable? Of all the afflictions to which our common nature is subject, there are few which lay claim to human sympathy more directly than physical disease. Wealth cannot avert it, poverty aggravates it a thousand fold. Many here have felt its anguish, when money could not purchase mitigation of agony, nor grandeur lull the throbs of the burning brain. Ah, let them consider how their pangs might have been augmented, if destitution of means and appliances had been superadded to physical suffering, and then refrain, if they can, from contributing liberally for the succour of those who are still doomed to endure the torture of disease in the miserable huts of poverty and wretchedness. Am I addressing any whom God in his mercy has hitherto exempted from this pestilence? O let them not exult in their health to the exclusion of pity for the sick, nor forget that the next moment may be to them the harbinger of plague and death. Not to enter the abodes of squalor, to behold the deplorable state of privation, the haggard forms of those who surround us by thousands, but to alleviate the suffering which many will not venture to inspect, do I upon this occasion make this humble but zealous appeal. I do not call upon you to visit the bed of sickness on the dwelling of disaster in person, but virtually; for others will be the almoners and distributors of your bounty and beneficence.

Let me, then, implore you to expand your hearts to the cry of the poor, to open wide all that is generous and humane in your bosoms, to bring down upon yourselves the blessing of him that "is ready to perish," to rejoice piously that you possess the means of doing good to others, and to

exult in the privileges which the Almighty has permitted you to enjoy, particularly that whose exercise enjoins universal charity, in that sublime command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and rest assured that if to this you add "prayer and repentance," which with "charity avert the evil decree," He whose way is immutable, whose word is tried, will fulfil the ending of our text, by being "a shield to you who trust in Him." And now, brethren, let us rise, and unitedly address God in prayer, confessing our sins, and entreating his forgiveness.

Eternal God, merciful and, gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, Thou hast given us dominion over the earth, hast crowned us with every blessing, hast given us thy holy law, which hath length of days in its right hand, riches and honour in its left;-Thou hast endowed us with reason and ability to choose between good and evil, that our life might be long on earth, and happiness attend us here and await us hereafter.

How have we requited Thee? We have abused thy benevolence and deserved thy afflictions. What can we say; or how shall we justify ourselves? Thou knowest our iniquities, Thou penetratest our vain thoughts. Our presumption and insincerity are not hidden from thy all-seeing eye; our own acts convict us, and daily is our sin increased, and we harden ourselves therein, unmindful of Thee. O our Shepherd! how have we wandered from Thee, who wouldst lead us into the green pastures of holiness, beside the still waters of piety, and fallen into the pitfalls of error, into the snares and gins of temptation. There is no soundness in our flesh, our bones are filled with pain, and the angel passeth not by our houses, but continueth to destroy. With drought, misfortune, pestilence and anarchy hast Thou justly afflicted us, and our hearts are full of anguish, by reason of the chastening of thy hand. Look down, we beseech Thee, O our Father! pity thy children, exposed as we have been to the punishments wherewith Thou hast visited us, and remove the scourge from us, that plenty may again flow into our granaries, prosperity attend our labours, that health may be in our dwellings, and peace and tranquillity in our city, and throughout the borders of the land.

Father of mercies! who hast declared by the mouth of thy servant David, that Thou wilt deliver him who hath compassion on the poor, endue the hearts of all who are here assembled with commiseration for the sufferings of their afflicted fellow-creatures. Let a double portion of thy pitying spirit rest upon all, and let their sympathy be manifested by the offerings which, with feeling hearts and grateful hands, they shall this day contribute in aid of the sick and afflicted. And do Thou, Parent of mankind, inspire all here assembled with reciprocal charity, that the difference of religious opinion may not deter any from affording that succour which their means enable them to bestow on the wants of the destitute. May all thy servants who stand forth to plead in this holy cause, reap a rich harvest, and do Thou, O God! Render their words persuasive, their arguments convincing, their eloquence irresistible, and their labours triumphant. For our beloved queen, Victoria, her royal consort, and infant children, for our excellent governor and the authorities of the island and city, for all and every community, whether of our own or other denominations, whether here or throughout the world, we implore and crave thy blessing; and may we and they discern the beauty of thy holiness, the mercies of thy providence, the greatness of thy majesty on earth and in heaven. Amen!

Chapter 70

S. The Joys and Sufferings of the Time of the Messiah

Specimens of German Preachers.

No. III.

The Joys and Sufferings of the Time of the Messiah. A Sermon preached at Dessau, on Sabbath Nahamoo,* 5599,

* The Sabbath after the fast of the ninth of Ab, so called from the first words of the fortieth of Isaiah read on that day, commencing with the words Nahamoo Nahamoo Ammie, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.” by Dr. Samuel Hirsch. From this day, brethren, it is becoming to us to preach of the Messiah and of his time. The sufferings which have been threatened to us have been fulfilled, will not the joys too which our heavenly Father hath promised us, be likewise fulfilled? Is not his word like the fructifying rain, like the protecting snow? “And as the rain and the snow fall from heaven, and return not thither, but water the earth and make it fruitful and cause it to bring forth, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; thus does not the word of the Lord return unto him void, but accomplishes what He wills, and prospers for what He has sent it.” (Isaiah 55:10-11.) If the present be ever so comfortless, if pains and afflictions, trouble and dismay, shame and degradation strike us not only as individuals, but what cuts much deeper wounds, as members of the divine covenant with Israel: have confidence and take courage, for “in joy will ye go forth, in peace will ye be guided; the mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap hands. In plate of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and in place of the briar shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be unto the Lord for a name, an everlasting sign, which shall not be cut off." (Isaiah 55:12-13.) To proclaim the Messiah and his time, the time “when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it, because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,” (ib. Matthew:5,) is from this day becoming unto us. The past is completed, and the festivals which recall to our memory its joys and sufferings are over, and we approach, with the divine aid, those festivals which are destined to sanctify the present, and to guide us towards a heavenly futurity; and should we not endeavour to place already, this day, this heavenly future as present before us? We shall soon hear the voice of the Shofar; and should we not feel impelled and admonished to prepare ourselves against that glorious day, “when the great Shofar will be sounded aloud, and they who are lost in the land of Ashur and they who are cast away in the land of Mitzraim, shall come and bow themselves down to the Lord in the holy mountain in Jerusalem?” (Isaiah 27:13.) Soon also will we celebrate the divine day, the Sabbath of Sabbaths, (■■■ ■■■■■) the heavenly gift transmitted to us through Moses, in holy quiet and devotion, when the Lord will purify us from our sins, and we shall stand before Him clean and purified; and should not this remind us of that time “when the iniquity of Israel will be sought for, and it shall not be any more, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, because God will have forgiven all whom He will have left?” (Jeremiah 50:20.) To speak of the Messiah and of our Messianic expectations is proper for us in these times in which we live. What erroneous views and confusion do not prevail with regard to this doctrine in Israel? And how can Israel exist without this doctrine? And how can

we condemn the conduct of our brothers, who renounce their connexion with Israel, who will not be recognized as Israelites, who will not battle in our ranks, not strive with us, are not touched with our sorrow, and deem our joys as childish joys-how can we condemn such a mode of conduct and views like these, which we daily meet with among us, if we yield this doctrine? To preach the Messiah, and to declare in plain terms what doctrines we have on this point, is surely becoming in us at a time when Israel's sons, no less than non-Israelites, pretend to discover in this doctrine grounds of accusation against us; at a time, when Israel's sons are inclined to the senseless notion, that the holding fast on the Messianic hopes of Israel prevents them to choose that civil and moral vocation for which God has endowed them with powers and capacities, and when non-Israelites say, and say again, that this doctrine renders us incapable to love our present fatherland, and to be attached to it with all our soul. For this reason, brethren, will we from this day endeavour, with confidence in the divine assistance, to give, in a series of pulpit lectures, not only our views of the nature and scope of our Messianic hopes, but to prove the necessity of never giving up these hopes, but to endeavour to find in them comfort and consolation for whatever may at any time cause us affliction.

It is, however, impossible to read to you all the sources whence we have to draw our hopes. The entire holy Writ is the source of this belief, the entire holy Writ leads to this belief; besides, the entire holy Writ must remain unintelligible if we do not hold fast to this belief. All the Haphtorahs* from now to the close of the year treat of nothing but this belief, all the prophets are imbued with this belief, refer only to it, and prophesy of nothing else but of this belief. I must therefore beg you earnestly, brethren, to read for yourselves the sources of this faith, at least to read the Haphtorah of each Sabbath section, which from today to the close of the year have been introduced in the Synagogue.

* The sections from the prophets read after the portions of the law. Those from the fast of Ab to the New Year all refer to the hope of the redemption promised to us through. the Messiah. For our first pulpit lecture on this belief which is to depict the joys and sufferings of the time of the Messiah in general, we will take as text our to-day's Haphtorah, and read it therefore entire, but only in our vernacular. It is contained in the fortieth chapter of the prophet Isaiah, and it is in the following words, from the first to the twenty-sixth verse:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her, for her appointed time of slavery is completed, her iniquity pardoned, for she has received from the hand of the Lord twofold for all her sins. A voice calls out: In the wilderness prepare ye a way for the Lord, make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. Thus will be revealed the glory of the Lord, and all flesh together shall see it; for the mouth of God hath spoken it.

"A voice saith, Proclaim, and He saith, What shall I proclaim? All flesh is grass, and all its goodness like the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, when the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it-surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God will stand for ever.

"Upon the high mountain ascend thou, O Zion, that bringest good tidings! lift with might thy voice, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings! lift it up, fear not, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your

God. Behold, the Lord God cometh as a strong one, and his arm will rule for him; behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. Like a shepherd will he seed his flock; in his arm will he gather the lambs, and carry them in his bosom, lead gently those that are with young.

“Who hath measured in the hollow of his hand the waters, and meted out the heavens with the span, and comprehended in a measure the dust of the earth, and weighed in scales the mountains, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel that he should male him understand, and teach him the path of justice, and teach him knowledge, and show him the way of understanding? Behold,-nations are as a drop in the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the islands as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for burnt-offering. All the nations are as nothing before him, as less than nothing and vanity, are they counted to him.

“And to whom will ye liken God ? what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman maketh a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is too poor to give oblations, chooseth a tree that will not rot, he seeketh a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved.

“Will ye not comprehend? will ye not hear? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundation of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth princes to nothing, maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Not yet are they planted, not yet are they sown, not yet hath their stock taken root in the earth: when he bloweth upon them and they wither, and the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble. To whom then will ye liken me, that I should be equal to? saith the holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things. He that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power not one faileth.” And thou, our God and God of our fathers, who hast assisted us in all our necessities, and shielded us against all dangers, assist us also in the future which is impending. Enlighten our eyes that we may not fall into error, improve our heart, that we may willingly the hold of the truth and live in it, and remain faithful to Thee. Amen.

I.

“What are the joys and sufferings of the time of the Messiah?” The joys of this time are beautifully expressed in our text ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■ “Thus will be revealed the glory of the Lord, and all flesh together shall see it, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” The glory of the Lord will be revealed, beloved brethren; this cannot mean, that God will become flesh and be visible with corporeal eyes; for we read in the verse almost immediately following: “To whom will ye liken the Lord? and what likeness, will ye compare unto him?” We read also farther in the text we cited: “To whom, then, will ye liken me, that I should be equal, saith the holy One?” Do we not read in our to-day’s section of the law: “Take especial care, that ye represent not God under the image of any creature, because you have seen no kind of similitude on the day the Lord spoke with you on Horeb from the midst of the fire?” (Deuteronomy 4:15.) And how can we imagine the idea that God, who is ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ “the place of the world” and not the world not his place, who creates the finite and temporal, and bears and preserves the same

but is not borne and preserved by it-that He, the Omnipresent, should so enter into the finite and temporal that we could apply the name of God to the finite and temporal? In the time of the Messiah the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it; that is to say, all flesh will acknowledge and deeply feel, all flesh shall know and reflect upon it in spirit, “that the Lord is God, in the heavens above, and upon earth beneath, and there is none else.” (Deuteronomy 4:39.) In the time of the Messiah all flesh “will be closely united to the Lord our God, and then find in Him the true life,” (Ib. 4); then will all flesh love the alone Existing with all their heart, with all their soul and all their might; then will all flesh say, as it is expressed in our text: “A voice says, Proclaim,” and he saith: “What shall I proclaim?”-“All flesh is grass if it lives not in God, and all its goodness as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, when the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it. Truly the people which has not the Lord as its only God and its all in all, its life and that which prolongs life-truly such a people is like grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but in whomever the word of our God has become quickened unto life, will endure for ever.” God is in heaven above and on the earth beneath there is none else; in heaven, therefore, above, and on the earth beneath, nothing will be seen but divine life; in heaven above and on the earth beneath the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and then we know that through the mouth of the Lord every thing has been called into being. As the heavens do nothing but “proclaiming the glory of the Lord” (Psalms 19:2), thus shall the earth and all the creatures of the earth do nothing but proclaiming the glory of the Lord, and think of nothing but the praise of their Creator, and feel nothing but divine felicity. “All which the holy One, praised be He, has created in the world,” say the Proverbs of the Fathers (Proverbs 6:10), He has created only for his glory; for it is said (Isaiah 43:7) “Every one that is called by my name, I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea I have made him.”-Every thing, therefore, which is created in the world, will at that time redound to the glorification of the Lord, will praise his name, and utter hymns and songs of thanksgiving to his goodness.

Youth, the aim of thy striving, man, the aim of thy life, maiden, the aim of thy longing, mother, the end of thy seeking shall only be the glorification of God; and will in that time make public only the glorification of the Lord. The mouth of the Lord only spoke, and thus didst thou spring into existence; without the word of the Lord which endures for ever, thou wouldst only be withered grass; and whatever thou wouldst effect for thyself and others, and all thy goodness would only be a faded flower. But thou art created in the image of God, and thou art a son of the Lord, and a child of our heavenly Father; thou art able to lead a holy life, for thy heavenly Father is holy; thou art able to banish the desire for sin from thy heart, for with thy God no sin does dwell; thou art able to be a temple unto the Lord, thou art able to coerce thy evil passions, thy evil angel so that ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ he will feel himself compelled to answer AMEN, instead of teaching falsehood, ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ and praise thee before God instead of accusing thee before the Lord. Do, therefore, strive in thy whole life, and in every minute of thy life to remain an image of God, a holy child of thy heavenly Father. Let the Lord be praised through whatever thou doest, through whatever thou hast. Let the mouth of the Lord speak through the greatest and through the least, through the most important and through the most unimportant. For this is the glorification of the Lord, brethren, and only this is the being revealed of his glory, when in reference to God there is nothing small and nothing great any more with us; when through the smallest and through the greatest the mouth of the Lord speaks; when in the smallest and in the greatest God dwells and nothing but God dwells; when in heaven and on earth beatitude is to be

found; when in heaven and on earth we adhere firmly to the Lord our God; when we live in God and He in us, when we love God and He loves us, and we think constantly of the Lord our God. In that beautiful time, brethren, which is promised us as the time of the Messiah, all men shall live humanly, and therefore divinely, ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ "and all idols will totally vanish," (Isaiah 2:18,) not alone the outward idols, but also their causes; not alone the idols which we see, but those too which we harbour in our hearts; not alone the fear of that what is vain, but the love also for the vanities of the earth. Every vanity shall vanish, and the word of our God alone will stand for ever, and through the word of our God every thing will emerge from its nothingness; and because God will then dwell in our heart, and because God only will then be enthroned in our heart, and because our heart will then be a temple consecrated to the Lord: all our wishes also will be divine, all our endeavours will also be to obtain noble objects only, and our goodness will therefore stand for ever. Is not God also upon the earth beneath? And does not every earthly thing serve for his glorification? The use, therefore, of earthly things and the striving after the goods of this earth can also be the worship of God, and be made the means of revealing his glory. "Say not, therefore, Zion, that the Lord hath forsaken thee, that the Eternal One thy God has forgotten thee; but rejoice in the Lord, gladden thy heart in thy God, for he clothes thee with the garments of salvation, and places around thee the mantle of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:10.)

II. But before yon happy time commences, brethren, yon time when ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ "death, the spiritual death which prevails when man does not adhere to the Lord our God, shall cease for ever, before God will wipe the tear from every face," (ib. 25:8): there will appear signs in heaven and on the earth-blood, fire, and clouds of smoke. The sun will be changed to darkness. and the moon be turned to blood, before the day of the Lord cometh, the great and fearful, so we read in Joel 3:3-4. In our text, also, allusion is made to that great and fearful day, "in which all nations shall be gathered to the valley of Jehoshaphat, where God will sit on his throne to judge all nations." (Joel 4:2); that day "on which the Lord will cry from Zion, and lift up his voice from Jerusalem, and heaven and earth will quake," (ib. 16); that day "on which the Lord will judge with pestilence and with blood, and will rain an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and sulphur, upon the enemy, upon Gog of Magog, and upon his hosta, and upon the numerous people that are with him; and thus will the Lord prove himself great and holy, and be known before the eyes of many nations, that they may know that the Lord alone is God." (Ezekiel 38:22-23.) For so we read in our text: "Behold, the Lord God cometh as a strong one, and his arm ruleth for him; behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him."

Often already, brethren, especially in modern times, has our religion been reproached for this belief on the "Sufferings of the Messiah," ■■■■ ■■■■ as the Talmud calls that period of the fearful judgment of all the world. Often already have we been reproached, that we are cruel and revengeful, because we hold fast to the predictions of the prophets, because we believe firmly, "that all shall be ashamed and confounded who have injured us, that all the men shall be rendered as naught who have quarrelled with us, that the storm shall take them up, and the whirlwind scatter them, but that we shall then rejoice in the Lord and praise ourselves in the holy One of Israel." (Isaiah 41:11-16.) Some have said, that only a hard-hearted, unloving, and revengeful people, could believe of God that He could say: "And I will tread them down in my anger, and trample on them in my wrath, and their blood shall be sprinkled on my garment, and all my raiment will I stain: for a day of vengeance is in my heart and the year of my redeemed is come." (Isaiah

63:3-4) But, brethren, were not the Israelites ever styled ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ “merciful children of merciful parents?” And if the merciful ones hold fast to their belief in divine vengeance, such a belief must then needs be one of comfort to them and all who are merciful. Yes, we do believe in that great and fearful day, on that judgment of vengeance and punishment; for the time of the Messiah will be the time when the Lord will wipe away the tear from every face, when the death of the spirit will cease, and this is not possible without that judgment of vengeance and punishment. The Lord only desires the good, brethren: “The Lord desires not the death of the wicked, but that he return from his evil way and live,” (Ezekiel 33:11;) but the Lord will not coerce us to be good, ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ say our wise teachers “Every thing is in the power of Heaven, except the fear of Heaven.” In this respect man is free; it is left to him whether he will fear and love God, or whether he will bow down before the idol, before the work of the creature; whether he wishes to exist unto eternity in the word of our God, which itself will endure forever, or whether the earthly, and the vanities of the earth, withered grass and faded grass, shall fill his heart. But, brethren, this liberty thus granted us, to be or not to be, to live or to die, to yield to truth or falsehood, must not be permitted to frustrate God’s object in the creation of the human race, must not, for all that, be permitted to prevent the good from being acknowledged as the only truth, and the evil as falsehood. With this freedom, it must nevertheless not be denied, that the Lord is God alone, in heaven above and on the earth beneath, there is none else; that all, which is, can only be of God; that all which exists, can receive its existence only from God; that all which perishes, perished only through God.

Sin is not in God, nor with God, nor through God; but it endeavours to be beyond God and without God. Its being can, therefore, only be appearance, shadow, nothingness; and it must therefore be proven as vain and powerless, if it is ever to be overcome, if the truth is ever to hold sole dominion. Therefore, brethren, we behold the eternal law, instituted by God from the beginning, that sin can only bring forth death, that sin always and every where destroys ITSELF. And this law (let us be thankful to God for it) we can trace in the life of individuals, and we firmly believe that it is ruling also in the life of nations. When the individual sins, and be it even in the most secret and the darkest, and the remotest chamber of his house,-God sees him, the curse of Cain pursues him. Never can he say: “Do I know where my brother is? Am I his keeper?” For this is interdicted to him by the voice of his own heart, which calls out to him: Thou knowest where thy brother has been put, for thou hast murdered him. And this voice is the voice of God; it will also encourage the obdurate sinner to level in the desert of his soul a way for our God, for God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he return from his evil way and live. This voice will admonish him, that, whilst he sought happiness beyond God and without God, he could find nothing but withered grass and faded flowers. But when he heeds not this admonishing voice of his conscience, when he perseveres to sin in SECRET, when he will eat at both tables, when he before the world serves God, and in the privacy of his chamber is the slave of his passions: then will God compel him to commit a public sin, as God hardened the heart of sinful Pharaoh; so that the punishment of a public contumely be made the recompense of his deeds, so that the nothingness of sin be made publicly known, and all the world understand, that the word of God alone can stand forever.

Thus also is it in the life of nations, beloved brethren. In the life of nations also, can sin bring only death, and fear of God alone bring life. Here also sin cannot remain concealed, it cannot continue in private to spread the seeds of destruction; but its fruit must be brought to the light of day, and

the ripe products of sin are always called “death and corruption,” “evil and unhappiness,” “withered grass and faded flowers.” Sin hates the good, death hates life, corruption hates salvation, falsehood hates truth; and the sin of the individual, as well as that of entire nations, must reveal this hatred, pregnant with death, in such a manner before the light of day, that it cannot be any longer misunderstood; and this law is the law imposed upon sin by the Lord for our salvation and its destruction, and this is the pit which it digs for itself, and this is the evil which reverts back on its own head. And when will sin be compelled to display this hatred to the good more clearly than at the time when the good shall rule alone? When will it desire to dig a deeper pit for virtue, than at the time when the glory of the Lord is to be revealed before the eyes of all flesh? This divine law, brethren, that sin must exhibit itself as sin, so that it may be recognized in all its hideousness; that sin is to be compelled to show before the light of day what it broods over in the heart, so that its vanity and powerlessness shall no more remain a secret to any one; so that all men may know that, because “it travelleth with iniquity and hath conceived mischief, it can only bring forth falsehood” (Psalms 7:15):-this divine law is ordained for our salvation and its destruction, that it may be acknowledged that all its fury is a poison fang directed against itself, that its war of extermination against the truth can only exterminate itself; and surely the belief in this law cannot be made a matter of reproach against us Israelites. Only he who hates correctly can love correctly; only he who proclaims: ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ “There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,”-only he can make a true and everlasting peace with what is good.

Yes, brethren, let us ever hate the bad, let us hold fast to the belief that God hateth violence, especially when it assumes the cloak of religion, (Isaiah 61:8;) let us hold fast to the belief, that the evil cannot always creep about in secrecy, but that it must openly produce fruits, and that these fruits must be like the mothers, and must ultimately devour the mother and destroy then itself no less than its mother; let us hold fast to the belief, that the evil will be judged on the day of the Lord; that it then will exert all its strength, and yet remain powerless; display all its power, and still appear as vain; let us hold fast to the hope in the joys of the time of the Messiah, the time, when God alone, and nothing but divine things, will be recognizable every where; when God will be ALONE, and his name will be One; when God will rule alone, not merely in heaven above, but also upon the earth beneath, not alone in nature but also in our hearts; when man will not only love God, but love nothing but God; when man will not only serve God, but serve nothing but God, in the works of his hands no less than in the hymns of his mouth; in the thought of the heart no less than in the exertion of the body; in acquisition no less than in enjoyment; in the taking no less than in the giving. This belief, brethren, alone has power to comfort the sufferer, to raise him that is bowed down, to encourage the despairing, to hold up him that is sinking, “to comfort the mourners for Zion, to give them beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, garments of praise instead of a troubled spirit, so that they shall be called ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ “oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified.” Amen.

Note by the Editor.-We give in the above, the first sermon on the Messiah, by the Rabbi of Luxemburgh, and we may hereafter give several more on this subject from this learned divine. We are only deterred from promising the whole series on account of the great length of the different sermons, since the above is, we think, the shortest in the whole collection.

S. The Law of Israel

The Law of Israel. A Sermon. by Isaac Leeser Brethren and Friends! In our daily prayers which were handed down to us from our forefathers occurs the following passage:

[redacted]

"Blessed be our God! who hath created us for his glory, and separated us from those who go astray, and given us a law of truth, and planted eternal life within us." In these words we return our thanks to the Lord for his mercy in having been pleased to call us to his service, and to separate us from the mass of mankind who are in error with regard to religious duties and doctrines, by bestowing on us the law which contains the true principles which He himself declared to be in consonance with his wisdom and best promotive of the happiness of man. The unbeliever and the gentile will doubtlessly smile when they hear us recite these words. They say, that we have no superiority over any other people; on the contrary, that we are inferior to them in the progress we have made in arts and sciences, and that, as far as moral superiority is concerned, we are far behind many of the different sects which are scattered over the world. Though both these positions, by which an inferiority on our part is assumed, admit of ample contradiction, or at least of explanation, we will for the present admit them as true; and still we will maintain that we have cause for thankfulness in the possession of the true law. Were it that worldly greatness, that progress in arts and sciences could alone stamp a nation as powerful and great, then indeed might we feel ashamed of our littleness; but there are other elements of greatness, and these are the heritage of the sons of Jacob.

Thus also should a heathen philosopher from Egypt, a gentile sculptor from Greece, and an idolatrous conqueror from Rome, have heard a Hebrew of olden days express in the words of our ritual his deep sense of obligation for superior enlightenment, they, one and all, would doubtless have in their inmost soul despised the vain arrogant barbarian whose thoughts were not moulded in the refined fashion of the schools of Plato and Aristotle; who could not carve from the rude marble the noble conceptions of Phidias or Praxiteles, and who walked chained to the car of the triumphing warrior who had defeated the armies of Israel, burnt their temple, and destroyed their towns. Still, my friends, who would have been arrogant? the slave--the chained--the despised Hebrew, or the versatile, the vainglorious, and the haughty heathens? True, if we regard with the eye of admiring reverence the works of human genius, the discoveries of the human mind, or the achievements of human warriors on the battlefield as paramount to the sciences of simple life, to the knowledge of "how to live," then indeed were Egyptians, Grecians, Romans on an elevation which we never attained. But if we take a truer view of all these advantages, if we endeavour to convince ourselves that the works of art are but fleeting monuments which, baseless fabrics as they are, vain man erects to perpetuate a name which is destined to oblivion; if we consider, that the halls of Carnac, the cave of Elephanta, the temples of Athens, and the Coliseum at Rome, are all in ruins, sad mementos of what they have been; if we reflect that despite of the researches of

philosophers, of the multifarious systems of Bramins, of Confucius, of the Magi, of the sages of Memphis, of Pythagoras and the later philosophers of Greece, the heathen world had remained uninstructed in the duties of life; if we dwell, with the melancholy which the nothingness of man inspires us with, upon the fact that each conqueror has at last been compelled to give way to a more powerful successor; how the Assyrian, who had overthrown the kingdom of Israel, sunk before Nebuchadnezzar; and his grandson before Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian; how their kingdom fell before the mighty son of Philip of Macedon; that his power gradually decayed after his death, first a prey to contending chiefs, and then swallowed up by the colossus of Rome, which strode triumphant over many a fair land from true shores of the German Sea to the banks of the Euphrates; and that, not to multiply instances, this colossus too fell under the repeated blows of fierce barbarians, whose origin is unknown, and who have also passed into oblivion after their mission was accomplished; if we consider all these things, and that the homes of the Pharaohs, despite the great wisdom of the Egyptians; the halls of the Areopagus, despite of the skill of the Greeks; the throne of the Caesars, despite the valour of the Romans, have passed into the hands of warlike neighbours or savage invaders; that their history, their thoughts, their words are veiled unto us in the mist of antiquity which no research of ours can penetrate, we shall surely not accord to either of them the right of regarding with contempt the pretensions of Israel as the benefactors of mankind; they might indeed smile at the captive who, at the moment of the deepest degradation, when the heart of the bravest fails, who knows that barely are the boastful words spoken ere his head will be struck off to glut the barbarous vengeance of the ruthless conqueror, feels a holy consolation that he is better than his captors; that his system is wiser than their fairest philosophies, and that his religion will survive their states, their nations, their creeds, their very names; who is conscious that the name of Israel will be a blessing to many people, that their light will guide the footsteps of unborn nations, though he must now perish for having dauntlessly defended with the blood-stained blade of a shattered sword, fighting in the last entrenchment, on the last day of the independence of his land, the homes that he loved, the temple where he worshipped; yes, the heathens might smile when the Hebrew blessed his God. for the gift of the law--yet was he justified in this joy, which they could not feel; his was the humility of faith in divine things, their derision, the effect of human arrogance; and the event too, has justified him, and rebuked them; for the cause of Israel, though not yet triumphant, is not rejected by the Lord, whilst our conquerors and our oppressors have one by one been cut off from the land of the living, and have left their names and their lands a by-word and a hissing to succeeding generations. It is not to be denied, that our name also has been converted into a reproach, and that the history of our people has been appealed to as exhibiting the striking effects of the awful visitation which follows upon a forgetfulness of God. But then our beautiful law has been adopted by many wise nations as their rule of life; yea, the remnants of the oppressors, who passed like a devastating storm over our once lovely heritage, have thrown off the rules of life they then pursued, and have in their stead taken a few of our moral precepts, and they thus endeavour to show that they are now the favoured nations of Heaven. But let them boast that they are the children of grace; let them triumph in the supposition, that they are more instructed, more enlightened than the sons of Israel are; still, whence did their religion come? was a new revelation vouchsafed unto them? did another prophet, like unto Moses, indeed come into their benighted lands, and proclaim a special announcement of a new code of laws in the name of the Most High? Our opponents themselves do not claim it; they refer to Moses and the prophets as their instructors; understood to our Moses

and our prophets, to our law and our predictions. How then could the Romans or their heathen contemporaries have had cause to exult over the captive Hebrew? were they not arrogant when they gloried in their victories which did not save their empires from destruction, and their opinions from oblivion? and was not the captive justified for thanking God for the blessing of the law, which, whilst the name of Jew is despised, whilst the people of Jacob are outcasts in every land, outcasts because not governed politically by their own equitable code, holds its dominion over the minds of men more firmly and more widely diffused than when Israel dwelt securely in their own land?

We will therefore not claim to be more instructed in worldly sciences than our gentile friends, which we are not; we will not say, that as a people we are more moral, more honest than they are, which, though surely true in some respects, is not so in others; but this we will say, we are more acquainted with the basis of all truths than they are, we are blessed with a treasure from which, despite of the pride of human opinion, they have been compelled to borrow most of their moral principles, and that whatever they have of their own, independently of this source, is either not practicable or of a very questionable usefulness.

Let us look a little info the matter. Where do we find the origin of the universal precepts of worship and philanthropy, "love God above all, and thy neighbour as thyself," but in the blessed books of Moses? Did he not teach from the very first commencement of his commonwealth, that the love we are to bear to our neighbour, which should respect his rights and the feelings even which the peculiarity of his position might occasion, should be the first principle upon which the superstructure of our whole state polity was to be founded? Perhaps the doubter may be induced to appeal to the penal statutes which appear rigorous to the superficial observer. But are rigorous laws necessarily cruel in their effect upon society? This would be so indeed if it had been left to the judge to execute bodily punishment at his arbitrary will upon a person brought before him with or without cause. Yet we shall not find the practical effect of the law at all of this nature. The law itself defined the offence as well as the punishment, and publicity, credible witnesses and a searching investigation were all required before any punishment could follow upon any crime whatever, great or small, according to the letter of the law; consequently the rigorous enactments could only reach him who boldly and voluntarily exposed himself to their action; and as the statutes were publicly known, and could not be increased by any subsequent legislation, every member of the state had ample opportunity to make himself acquainted with their nature and tendency. In short, it was a regard for the rights of all which induced the denunciation of punishment against him who either had grievously wronged his fellow-being in person, moral standing, or possessions, or had by a scandalous example defied the laws upon which rested the best interests of the commonwealth; or, in other words, the love for the neighbour should be like the love for ourselves; he was to be restrained from injuring us even if he had the inclination; we had a right to expect from him assistance in our need, kindness if we required it, consolation if we were in trouble; whilst we on our part had the same obligation to him, to abstain from injuring him in the least, and to render him all the services in our power which his situation might call for. This, in brief, was the social love demanded by Moses, and is in truth the only sure foundation of a happy republic. If any subsequent code teaches the same, it is tantamount to the Mosaic code; and if it teaches any thing different, it is impracticable, and cannot in truth become the constitution of a free and enlightened people. The love of God above all things is also the very life of our religion. What does the Scripture say: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

with all thy might." Can we love Him more ardently than this precept demands? Is there any other mode by which we can demonstrate our love than by yielding all our energies, all our possessions, nay our, very life in the service of our heavenly Father? He who knows all our thoughts asked no more--He accepts the services of man according to the strength He has endowed him with. What more then could we add thereto?--Is it, perhaps, that we should cease to be human? that we should withdraw ourselves from the walks of life in the seclusion of a cloister? in the caverns of the desert? live with wild beasts, or with men more savage than the brutes of the forest ? that we should shun the intercourse with beings like ourselves, devote our days to fasting, our nights to useless meditations? If this had been requisite, it would have been so taught us; the absence of such ordinances clearly proves that the law contemplated the love of God to be exhibited in the midst of social enjoyment, in the walks of every-day life; we should hold all we possess as subject to his will, even whilst the mirthful laugh is heard in our dwellings, whilst little children play on our knees; whilst youths and maidens stand around their parents to ask for instruction or to share their domestic happiness.--What think you, that such a love of God is something impracticable? something too refined for a mortal to attain? O no! look at the many righteous fathers and mothers of our race from our very origin, from the birth of Abraham to the destruction of our temple and even since: and you will see that their social happiness did not prevent them from following the path of the Lord though it led them to death, to tribulation, or to captivity; yes, they who love the Lord, love also all the beings whom He has created, they feel that they have duties to perform on earth towards those who like themselves bear the image of God; but they feel more deeply yet that to Him who lives to eternity their whole duty is due, and they are therefore prepared to follow the Call of Heaven, like Abraham, to sacrifice, if need be, their only child on whom all their earthly hopes are centred; to go out, like Elijah did, into the wilderness, without provision for the journey in their bags, without a drop of water in their cruets; or to die, like did the many martyrs, in the defence of their faith; preferring to yield their spirits in innocence and truth sooner than accept the bribes and offices of the enlightened barbarians, who, professing to possess a religion of peace and good-will to mankind, doom to the stake and the scaffold those who cannot honestly agree with them in religious opinions. Such a love of God our law teaches, such a love our history proves to have frequently animated its followers. Can any system show a more consistent one? is there in fact any other demanded by the creeds of enlightened men ? Now say, where was this beautiful virtue first taught--in the law of Moses or elsewhere? But one more instance will we cite. Human experience has proved the usefulness, nay the necessity of a day of rest; I do not believe that any people of antiquity had any such institution as a regular weekly recurrence, although among some nations several days of lawless festivity were allowed once a year to their bondmen; ; nor has modern paganism any thing resembling such a weekly respite from toil. Still modern civilized nations all recognize it in one shape or another. Now say, whence was it derived? We acknowledge that priestcraft has succeeded to induce a large proportion of the world to rest on the first day of the week, a day which the Lord has not ordained, which He has not sanctified, nor blessed above all other days. Nevertheless where did the idea spring from to require that the workshops be closed, the labourers be permitted to abstain from constant toil, and even the beasts of burden to rest? Is it not from the law of Moses? Was it not there written, before any where else, that the Lord had been pleased to give rest unto his people Israel on the seventh day of the week, on the holy Sabbath, the day which He had blessed and sanctified, which He had instituted as a sign between Him and Israel for ever, that He had created the heavens and the earth, and all that

is in them in a period of six days?--And where, again we ask, is the revelation which teaches a different lesson? Believe me one thing, and we challenge those who differ from us to the proof, that there is not a tittle of evidence even in their authorities. to prove in so many words that any, Sabbath was ever instituted except the Mosaic or Jewish day of rest; and that there is consequently no reason to glorify any system, because of this blissful ordinance, above the law which Israelites consider their rule of life. But what shall we say concerning the doctrinal part of our faith? If the moral and religious parts are so perfect as our brief exhibit has proved them, the ideal of our belief is not less so. What does it teach of God? That He is the Creator with whom there is no being to share the dominion, without whom there is no god. That He is supreme, over all things; that He is true in his word, faithful in his promises; that He is unchanging in his essence, perfect in his happiness; that He is merciful and forgiving, desiring the welfare of his creatures, and ever intent on giving them opportunities to retrieve the errors which they have committed, and to propitiate their God by an amended line of conduct; that He is the Creator, the Ruler, the Saviour, the Father, the Friend of all that has life, and that everything that is has been framed for a wise, useful, and benevolent purpose. Is this exposition of our doctrines beautiful, animating, consoling? Assuredly it is; for in it we find ourselves the special objects of a wise Providence, who watches over us, and loves and protects us; who desires our happiness, and forsakes us not even when we have wickedly rejected his mercy, but benignantly calls to us by means of the instruments so accessible to his omnipotence to bethink ourselves concerning our deeds, and to come back to his paternal embrace, where we shall find peace without end, blessing without measure.--This is our belief; this is the doctrine of the law of life. But are the doctrines of other systems equally pure, equally simple?--No, they deny the mercy of God to all except to the comparatively few who profess a certain set of ideas; they, some at least, imagine a complication in the person of the Deity, and fancy, and so teach, that there can be no happiness, no peace, no salvation without the intervention of a being neither God nor man, according to some, or, as others have it; by a divine being, who had to become a sacrifice for the sins of man. And if we ask for the proof that the Bible ever inculcated such a doctrine, we are referred to a number of passages which, not one of them, teaches any such doctrine in so many words; on the contrary, all insist that the Divine Being who spoke to Moses is one, sole, eternal, merciful God, who hears prayer, and forgives the sinner who returns from his evil and acts righteously.

If then the gentile or the unbeliever smiles over our arrogance, as it sometimes is termed, in calling ourselves a peculiar people, a favourite race: we will point out to him the many excellencies and beauties which are either derived from our law, and thence transferred to other systems, or which are as yet alone our guides and our doctrines. Well may we then say in the fulness of our gratitude: "Blessed be our God who hath created us for his glory and separated us from those who go astray, and given us a law of truth, and planted eternal life within us!"--Yes, beloved friends, it is the mercy of God alone that has wrought this wonder, that has set Israel apart, blessed with truth, blessed with life, blessed with a law distinct from the multitude of the gentiles, who see a light which they do not know, and hear a voice which they do not understand. May it then be our study to make ourselves familiar with this heavenly treasure, to endeavour to understand it in all its bearings, and to fulfil all the duties which this knowledge demands at our hands. And you,. who are teachers in this blessed undertaking, of the school the happy fruits of which we have beheld this day, remember what it is you have undertaken. You have avowed by your presence and by your labours, that you have a firm belief in Israel’s God, in Israel’s law, in Israel’s hopes. Israel’s

God is the everlasting Father, from whom all that is has sprung into being; Israel's law is that blessed code which He announced to our Fathers as his everlasting will and covenant; Israel's hopes are the bright days of a happy future which in God's own time will dawn upon the world, dispel the mists of darkness, of doubt, of superstition, of unbelief, and establish the kingdom of God over the hearts of all men from sea to sea, and from pole to pole; in which days the Lord will be called one, and one shall be his name: Remember this! hold to this truth firmly! and use your influence, your authority, all the arts of persuasion flowing from a holy enthusiasm, to impress the same belief and hopes on the minds of those who come unto you to drink through your means the waters of the fountain of life which was opened unto us on Mount Sinai; and let your virtuous example prove to your charges that in following your steps they are treading safely and firmly the path that leads to everlasting happiness and salvation.

Parents! you whom the Lord has caused to become fathers and mothers in Israel, to you we look confidently to be the spiritual guides of your offspring. The law says: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and speak of them when thou sittest in thy house; when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Remember this duty; let religion be a frequent subject of conversation in the presence of your children, not the one, God forbid, which should call in question the truths of the law, or throw discredit upon its precepts, but one of encouragement, which should endeavour to explain in a familiar manner the doctrines which have been handed down to us, and the duties which we should observe; and if the proper information is wanting in you; omit no opportunities yourselves to acquire a due knowledge of divine things, under the persuasion that this course is one of the greatest duties which you owe to yourselves, to your children, to your fellow Israelites, and above all, to your God.--But be especially watchful that no act of yours should teach your children to neglect religion, or to despise the religious instruction which they obtain at school or from men who speak to them in the name of the Lord; and thus only can you fulfil the obligation which you admit to rest upon you by desiring that your offspring should be instructed in the word of God.

If all thus combine, if teachers, fathers, and mothers all contribute to make the law of life understood and obeyed: how readily will then the children who are the objects of this holy care respond in their knowledge and their conduct to the wishes of their own immediate friends and all Israel; the blessed truths of revelation will then flourish in their hearts; their deeds will correspond with the spirit which animates them; and they, their teachers, their parents, and they who are their fellows in the only true religion, will rejoice with songs of thanksgiving at the time when the spirits of the blessed will stand to judgment before that adorable, unending, only God who alone in his wisdom separated us from the nations, and planted in our midst the law of life, his truth, his everlasting, unchangeable word. Amen.

Veadar 17th, 5603

March 19th, 1843.

S. The Light

The Light A Sermon, Delivered by the Rev. Dr. Wise, of Albany, at the Synagogue Shaar Hashamayim, in New York, On Sabbath Tetzavveh, March 3d, 5609.

Lord of life, God of truth, who art enthroned in light, from the emanation of which the world is illuminated, Thou who didst cause to beam forth the rays of thy holy light from Horeb's elevated summit, shine upon us also with thy light, let us behold thy brilliant beams, so that we may walk in the light of truth and intelligence before Thee, O Lord of light, "For Thou wilt enkindle my light, and Thou, O Lord God, wilt illuminate my darkness."

Introduction My Friends and Brothers,-

If we open the book of the Covenant, we shall find on its first page the history of the creation, how the Lord called into being with his potent word the innumerable myriads of stars, the sun, the moon, and the earth, and all that is upon them; how He extended the blue vault of Heaven, ornamented with luminous children of God; how He encircled the earth with running streams, and covered it with a flowery carpet; how He called into life all living beings, from the mean worm up to the giant behemoth, front the minute infusoria up to the mighty leviathan, and assigned to each its food and its enjoyments. Still the first creative word was, as we read, ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ "And God said, Let there be light; and it was light." Light is the proud ornament and crown of creation; light is joy, whilst darkness is pain and mourning; light is life, but darkness is the grave and death; light is wisdom, but darkness is ignorance and folly; light is virtue," but darkness is sin and vice; light is truth, but darkness is falsehood and deception; "because the commandment is a light and the law is a lantern," therefore was light the first word of creation. But the first commandment also, the first direction which God gave to our fathers in the desert, when He prescribed to them a form of worship for the Tabernacle, as we read in the beginning of this week's section, was the commandment concerning the light in the house of God; for light is the beginning, the aim, and the crown of the house of God. let us then, brethren, read the commandment respecting the light in the house of God, as we find it written in the holy Scriptures:

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"And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure beaten olive oil for the light, to cause a light to burn always. In the tabernacle of the congregation, without the veil, which is before the testimony, shall Aaron with his sons arrange it from evening to morning before the Lord; it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on behalf of the children of Israel."- Exodus 27:20-21.

"A statute for everlasting unto their congregations," are the words of our text; it therefore refers also to us, and all times, with regard to the light in the house of God; this precept speaks to us also in a voice divine, and we have to reply to three questions, which it naturally presents to our

consideration.

1st. With what shall we illuminate the house of God?

2d. Where shall we kindle the light?

3d. Who is to carry the light into God's consecrated halls?

Before the reply to these questions, I would desire to call the attention of each of you to the thirty-ninth chapter of Shemoth Rabbah, which is the source which is to supply us the answers to our queries. And I hope for God's aid and blessing in this task; yea, remember me, and strengthen me this once, O my God and Father. Amen.

I.

"With what shall we illuminate the house of God?" With a good and noble heart, with a frank and candid mind, with a clear and enlightened understanding, with a God-fearing, God-devoted spirit, for this constitutes the true light, which we shall carry with us before God, in order to illuminate his house; and here, in the house of God, shall this holy flame be ever breathed into life afresh, in order that this light may also shed its lustre abroad in our every-day life; here shall this light be strengthened, in order that we may be beyond its precincts true and good Israelites, good parents, tender spouses, peaceable neighbours, sincere friends, honest and honourable men, patriotic citizens, in short, such true Israelites as is demanded by the word of God from his adorers; in order that the name of Israel may become one synonymous with honour, a name which inspires esteem and love, a name of which every Israelite may be proud; so that the words of the prophet Isaiah may be fulfilled, saying,

"For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and a gross darkness the people; but over thee will the Lord rise, and his glory will be seen over thee. And nations shall walk by thy light, and kings by the brightness of thy shining." (Isaiah 60:2-3.) This is the true [redacted] "pure beaten olive oil for lighting," of which we can say with truth that it is destined "to cause a lamp to burn always," to maintain a permanent, unquenchable light, which shines not merely in the house of God, in the great world, but which is also lovely in the beloved family circle in the midst of thy house, and in the most secret corner of thy heart; which sheds not only its light throughout thy entire life, but which will illuminate even the night of the grave, and will one day beam beautifully around thee before God's judgment throne, "when thy righteousness will go before thee, and the glory of the Lord will be thy reward." With what shall we illuminate the house of God? We must do it with our own light, and not with a borrowed one.

All of you, who are here assembled, know well how we and our fathers were hated, persecuted, and despised in old Europe; that terrible threat which Moses in ancient days pronounced against Israel, in case it should become delinquent against religion, did become verified in fact, fearfully verified; for there has been experienced in very truth: "In the morning, thou wilt say, O, that it were but evening! and at evening thou wilt, say, O, that it were but morning! from the dread of thy heart which thou wilt experience, and from the sight of thy eyes which thou wilt see." So long a time were abuse and contumely heaped on us, that at length many a one of our brothers became actually contemptible and base, whilst others were ashamed to be called by the despised name of Israel, or to participate in the customs of this derided nation. We were debarred from the

enjoyment of the principal civil rights, because we belonged to this contemned religion. It therefore happened that even noble-minded and worthy Israelites, to whom the ancestral belief was dear and precious, whilst daily seeing it more and more falling into disuse or renounced, sought to remove the habits and customs which separated us from the rest of the world, and to introduce in their stead Christian manners, to approach nearer to other classes of mankind. Yes, people forgot themselves so far, as to propose to abolish circumcision, and to transfer the Sabbath to the Sunday; they carried this at length so far that even the most liberal men became terrified, and withdrew from the movement; and they would have carried things still farther, in order to escape the disgrace of exclusion, and to unite with the rest of the world; when lo! the voice of God was heard in the noise of popular tumults, and the pillars of thrones were shaken; the earth beheld it and trembled; and He touched the tops of the mountains, and they smoked, burnt, and were consumed; He threatened, and the depths of the sea were laid open; the hidden forces in the bowels of the earth were set in motion, and they shook off our shame; the hatred of the Jews, and the exclusion; and the wild rage for reform, became silenced, and the Christianizing of the Jewish religion ceased, because the reason for so doing had also ceased. But here, on Columbia's sacred soil, here have these causes never had a commencement; here no hatred of Jews was ever witnessed, no persecution of Jews, no derision of our religion, no contemning of the customs and usages of our fathers; here we dwell in God's freest garden, amidst human brothers, who only despise the worthless, and prosecute only the malefactor; here we need not seek for illumination with a foreign light, to light up the house of God with borrowed beams; here is the land where truth finds her adorers, and will find them still more, the more she is presented plainly and clearly before the eye of the world. We! Why should we desire to shine with a borrowed light? where darkness shall cover the earth, and a gross darkness the people, while over us the Lord will rise, and his glory will be seen over us? When darkness and night, ignorance and paganism, overshadowed the earth, then already was the light of Heaven our property; ours is the oldest and clearest, the true and pure light, a light which shone unto our great king David, when he praised and glorified the Lord of Hosts in spirit-stirring hymns, in magnificent psalms, in heavenly tunes. A light, in which Solomon the wise walked, when he laid down for the world the fruits, the treasures, of his inspired intelligence. A light, for which the incomprehensible Elijah was so zealous in fiery attachment, and for which he ventured his life a thousand times. Do you hear the thundering voice of the power of truth which reverberates from the fearful dome of heaven, melting away in soft, sweet, enchanting tones, till it has acquired a lovely beauty? It is the voice of our royal Isaiah, who walked in our light, proclaiming our truth to the world.

Hast thou seen yon bowed down giant, standing on the ruins of his devastated country? How he proclaims with energy the truth before the great and mighty men of the earth, without trembling, courageously lifting up his head, amidst the sharp swords and the drawn daggers of the enemies? Hast thou heard the mournful sounds of the harp, the melodious notes of grief? Hast thou heard the inspired lament of the greatest heart? It is our Jeremiah, with giant-like mind, sounding his tuneful lyre; it is Hilkiah's great and unhappy son. He, too, walked in our light, he announced our doctrines. Knowest thou all the giant cedars of Lebanon, that lifted up high their heads to the very clouds, overshadowing with their mighty branches the entire world? They had taken root in our soil, they were our sons who walked in our light, proclaiming our truths to the children of man. And should we borrow the light in order to illuminate the house of God, when our treasuries are full of light as the waters cover the sea? Can we forget all these great men whom the Jewish nation has

produced? Call to mind your great teachers of the Mishna and the Talmud, who collected together all the sciences and branches of knowledge of their times; from Greece, Rome, India and from the entire East they brought together the best treasures, viewed them carefully by our light, and laid up what was good and true of them in our own magazines. Can you have forgotten yon great spirits, whom our light enlightened? I put you in mind of Maimonides, Ben Nachman, Aben Ezra, Rabbi Jehudah Hallevi, Don Isaac Aberbanel, and a thousand others; I call to your recollection Mendelssohn, and all his great contemporaries, who all walked in our light, taught our word, and then ask you, need we illuminate the house of God with a borrowed light? No, must you say; ours is the “pure, beaten olive oil for lighting” ours these three thousand years, and wherever shines a light of the truth, it is borrowed from us. And why do we not illuminate with our light? Why do we not fulfill the command of the Lord “to cause a light to burn always?” Why are there still so many Israelites among us who exclaim, “Judaism is in a good position as it is; thus will it attain its proper goal,” although they see that indifference towards Judaism daily increases more and more, that the houses of God are visited by constantly decreasing numbers; that the growing generation is constantly more and more withdrawn from the religious ideas of their fathers?

Why do they so obstinately resist every improvement, though it contemplates ever so much the happiness and elevation of the Jewish religion?-Because, excuse the severity of my words, because ignorance has unduly increased; because the Jewish religion is partly not properly known, and partly misunderstood; and then, is ignorance the bitterest enemy of our religion, for Judaism requires more to be known than to be believed in.

Down with the blinds! and look honestly around you; and only ask of yourselves, how many are there who know what the prophets have said, what our Talmudists have taught, and what our philosophers have proved. But ask even farther among that small portion who know something of all this, even among those who expect with their Mishna study to redeem the world, or to save some departed souls, do ask among them, how many have taken the trouble to look into the depths of the divine word, to comprehend the whole commandment of the Lord: and you will discover that a tithe know something, but that the vast majority of this small portion have learned to read merely the dead letter, and that the spirit of the holy word has remained a stranger to them. Here then is to be found the death of Judaism, here then is the poison plant, which needs must be pulled out with the roots; therefore do I call upon you, O men of Israel! to assemble and to consult, how instruction may be diffused, how the word of truth can be brought home to every son, to every daughter of our people. Come together and take counsel, how the whole structure of Judaism may be united, elevated, and raised on high, yes, to be lifted up and preserved; how we shall do to respond to the command of the Lord, “to cause a light to burn always.” Be all united before God, that this land, as it now shows and teaches all other countries the proper system of state government, and what true liberty is, may also be enabled to teach them the correct system how Judaism may be elevated and preserved, in order “to cause to burn a light always.”

II.

“Where shall we kindle the light of the Lord?” This was our second query; but we shall have a sufficient answer in our text. First, it must be in the tabernacle of the congregation ■■■■ ■■■■; and what the tabernacle was to our forefathers in the desert, that is the Synagogue to us. We must, therefore, kindle the light of the Lord here, in the house of God, urge forward the heavenly

flame, which warms the heart, illuminates the spirit, elevates the soul, and ennobles the feelings; here must be instructed he who thirsts for God's law, that, he may go away from here and know "the way where the light does dwell;" what duty demands of him; what the divine law requires of him. Here is, so to say, the hotbed of the garden of the Lord; hither hastens the unfortunate, the deeply bowed with pain, or he who is filled with grief, to lay his complaint before the throne of the Most Merciful, to pour forth his grief-filled soul before the most loving Father, who dwells in heaven, to petition for grace and assistance, for aid and strength. Here, therefore, must the light of the Lord be kindled, in order that heavenly power may elevate and support the suffering soul; in order that the pious petitioner may leave these consecrated halls strengthened and encouraged, strengthened by a confidence in God, strengthened and encouraged to bear the burden of misfortune, to oppose the storms of the times courageously and trusting in God. Hither hastens the fallen sinner, whose conscience is again awakened, who has found too heavy the burden of transgression, and who wishes to entreat the Most Merciful to heal his wounded heart, to lighten the oppressive burden; here he pours forth his remorse-filled soul, stretches out his own towards the outstretched hand of Mercy; here flow his tears, that the Father may again open to him the gates of the beloved home of the spirit; therefore must be kindled here the light of the Lord, in order that the fallen sinner may be lifted up, and return home edified, returning home to virtue, to religion, to God, healed of his wound, elevated again to the dignity of man. Hither hastens he on whom joy has smiled, whom the world caresses, on whom the stars of fortune have shed their light, whom God has inducted into the chambers of his blessing, his grace, and his love; here he pours forth his thanks-filled heart, before the beneficent Giver of all that is good; here flow the tears of gratitude before the all-good Father, before Him who is the Fountain of grace and love. Hither comes the youthful soul, in order to consecrate to God the first emotions of the heart, to be counted in the sincerity of early love, amidst the angels who chaunt God's glory; to soar upwards on the wings of youthful joy to the choir of the seraphim, to praise God in ardent devotion; therefore must the light of the Lord burn here, and warm and illuminate, so that the soul filled with joy, the youthful, ardent spirit, may not be hindered in its upward flight, and return home without being satisfied, and escape from the path of virtue and the covenant of religion, and that it may not stray into the path of wickedness, and stumble through sin.

Here is a house of God, and therefore, should the light of the Lord be kindled in it; the spirit of God must move therein, so that even the thoughtless and unconcerned may boldly enter into the consecrated halls, stand still, reflect, and exclaim, "How fearful is this place, this is no other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." This signification, this problem of organizing the house of God, is, without dispute, the true and correct one, and alone consonant with religion. Now, if our Synagogue in its present condition responds to this holy demand, if, according to your conviction, the light of the Lord shines therein, then is it according to the intention of our holy religion, then is it everything which it should and could be. But, if this be not the case, then does it become your duty, O men of Israel, you who belong in truth to the Jewish religion, to take due care that it become as it should be; then is it your most sacred duty, to kindle the light of the Lord "in the tabernacle of the congregation," in the house of the Almighty.

"Where shall we kindle the light of the Lord?" "In the tabernacle of the congregation," says our text; but there is, besides the Synagogue, yet another holy tabernacle, a temple for the welfare of mankind, and this is the school. The Synagogue we may call the hotbed in the garden of the Lord,

for the riper age; but for the youthful one, the school stands in the same relation. Do you desire, fathers and mothers, that your children may grow up as good men, as pious Israelites, to be your joy, and contributing to the welfare of mankind? then are you bound to take care that they be educated in such schools, where one can become, at the same time, a good man and a pious Israelite; and such schools are still but few in number, and not a hundredth portion of Jewish children enjoy such an education, as just stated; and even in such schools have we Christian books, where, on nearly every page, Christian principles are conveyed to the child; nay, we have not even a Bible; we must borrow it from the missionaries, who wish to undermine us by this selfsame Bible. Fathers and mothers, what will you say, when at some future day, your own children should deride Judaism? will it be agreeable to you, if, at some future day, your offspring should renounce the name of Israel? And granted that this would not please you, then must you labour with all your might that it shall not take place; then must you act unitedly to oppose the evil, ere it has become too great and inveterate, and defies the hand and skill of the physician. Yes, if you wish to preserve the house of Israel in its future generations, then can you effect it only through union, through the quiet and peaceable harmonious working of all the powers of all the congregations of Israel in this western continent.

“Where shall we kindle the light of the Lord?” ■■■■ ■■■■■

“Without the veil,” says our text. Behind the veil, before the holy law, there was always light, there was no darkness; but the people know not any longer that behind this veil are the tables of the covenant; therefore must the light be placed without the veil, that all may know that it is but a veil; then will the veil be lifted up, and the illuminated tables of the testimony will present themselves to the view. But why use figurative words? I will rather speak in clear, intelligible phrases. The veil signifies the ceremonies, the forms, which we have in our religion: people have accustomed themselves to regard them, and to esteem them so greatly, that they have forgotten to think of God; nay, that many such ceremonialists have forgotten to be honest and upright, disinterested and merciful; they have forgotten the testimony behind the veil; this did others of our brothers see, and learned thereby to contemn the holy religion of Israel.

“The pious people are the worst,” thus did they say, and often with perfect justice; and from this derision, arose that cold indifference for Judaism, and thus have many intelligent and honest men been lost to us, who might have become an ornament to Judaism. Come, therefore, before it is too late, let us kindle the holy light of the Lord without the veil; let us illuminate things before the eyes of the world, showing that forms are but forms, but that behind this veil of forms lies the pure truth, the sole means to insure salvation; behind this veil lies the treasure which God has granted to mankind, for their happiness, for their prosperity; in order that we may recall the lost sons and daughters of Israel; that no more our brothers and sisters may be lost in the crowd of life. It is time, it is high time, that we carry forward the light of the Lord to without the veil. Look at all nations, how they are sedulous, how they send out their missionaries, to make us swerve frorn our faith; and why do they this? because they do not know what Judaism is, and because many thousands actually believe that it is the greatest misfortune to be an Israelite; our religion is decried here by fanatical priests, because our doctrine is unknown to the people. And we-O the folly!-we, whom God has charged to carry his truth into the world, we stand still, look on at our leisure, how God’s word is misunderstood, decried, and profaned! We-O shame!-we, the sons of those who sacrificed for this holy law, their life, their peace, their liberty, their whole happiness on earth, we look on

lazily, how men distort our word, and constitute ourselves the object of compassion and of contempt.

Arouse yourselves, all who have yet sympathy for Judaism. Up! and kindle the light of the Lord before the eyes of the world, that they may understand that they have been deceived by their armies of priests; up! and unfurl the glorious banner of the Lord before the nations of the earth, that the truth may be discerned, that the mist of deception may vanish before the rays of the sun of the eternal light; Up! you who yet love Judaism, assemble yourselves together, and consult how this holy work should be commenced; up! and let us lay the foundation of a free Jewish press, free as the air, which may diffuse every good idea, let it be attainable and intelligible to every man, that we may all be truly instructed concerning the nature and beneficent influence of our religion; that our youth when quitting school may be able to instruct themselves concerning the word of God, and that they may be preserved to Judaism, and become intimately connected therewith; that we may be enabled to defend our faith against the wild assaults of the missionaries; against the decrying and profanation of our holy word; in order that we may show the world “that God is truth and his law is truth;” so that we may be able to fulfill our most sacred task, to cause all the people of the earth to know “that the Lord is the God, there is none else.”

III.

“Who is to carry the light into God’s consecrated halls?” This was the third query which we proposed, and thereto answers our text, “Aaron with his sons shall arrange it before the Lord.” Aaron and his sons were the priests of the nation; the priests, therefore, are bound to kindle the light of the Lord. “For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and instruction shall they seek from his mouth, for he is an angel of the Lord of Hosts.” It is the duty of the priest to point out the way of truth, to teach the will of the Lord, to advise for good and noble purposes, to make level the ways of light, to remove the obstacles from the path of virtue and the fear of God; it is the priest’s sacred duty to step forward in the presence of the whole world, and to speak what God has placed in his mouth, and to act according to his own words and his conviction. Therefore did I summon in the first place the ministers of Israel to lay the foundation stone of the union, elevation and defence of Judaism, for this is the holiest duty of the priests; for “Aaron with his sons shall arrange it before the Lord.”

But, brethren, I have been terribly undeceived; I have discovered that our priests are but shadows; the great majority are men without knowledge, without importance, without influence; and what is still more destructive, without love or regard for Judaism; the great majority of our priests, including the Mishna heroes, have forgotten their duty; they love their place, their bread, their salary more than their duty, they are become but the instruments, the echo of their congregations, and repeat composedly what the bestowers of their bread con over to them, or what they wish them to hear.*

* The censure of Dr. Wise is in a measure unjust. It was not forgetfulness of duty, but inability to act without the consent of their congregations, which we are sure prevented the greater number of ministers from giving their assent to attend the meeting of ministers proposed by Dr. W. It is not in the power of individuals to alter an unfortunate state of things; especially if these persons are without the means of enforcing their views. We have not been sparing in our censure on the supineness of those who have been called to preside over the various congregations; but they are greatly to be excused for doing little or nothing, because the laws of the various communities leave

the minister absolutely without any power, as they assign him duties, but confer no rights. The evil is a great and crying one; it destroys the self-respect of an aspiring mind; but it is the task of time to remedy it, and as so much has been done already in comparison with former years, it is to be hoped that the progress of events may at length confer on the Jewish minister both in Europe and America, that position by which alone he can be rendered truly useful in his calling. But the reform will be gradual only, we despair of a sudden change.-Ed. Oc.

Hushed is the voice, the inspired voice of the prophets of Israel, which proclaimed fearlessly before the kings and princes the word of the Lord; hushed is the divine voice of the prophets who knew how to despise the earth with its goods; to them the truth only and duty were sacred. The ministers of Israel should of right supply the place of the prophets, should teach fearlessly the truth. But, brothers, with a torn heart do I exclaim with the afflicted Jeremiah: “Thy prophets saw for thee falsehood and folly; and did not lay open thy iniquity, to bring thee back from thy error; but they saw for thee false and deceptive visions.”

What you would gladly hear will be spoken before you; what you would not wish to hear, that is wisely passed over with silence. “Thus is it right,” say those Mishna heroes of whom I have spoken; “we have learned to do so from our fathers.” But as great as our Talmudists were, so little are these their successors; they behold Judaism sinking into dust; they see the Sabbath profaned, the house of God empty, our youth neglected, Jewish knowledge forgotten, our religion derided and attacked on all sides; and still they say, “thus is it all right;” because they believe you like to hear this, and they will continue to eat your bread still longer; and, alas! the few better ones they gradually disappear, are contemned, declared heretics; their voices expire without being heard, without effect. Therefore have I ceased to hope anything from the priests of Israel; and, therefore do I come to you who yet love the Jewish religion, who wish to become saved through this faith, who wish that in afterlife your children should also be Israelites, and I call upon you in the name of God and of Israel, to awaken, and to be up and doing; wake up to promote union; wake up in order to elevate, preserve, and defend Judaism. We must have other men to supply the place of our inspired prophets. Up! select men who enjoy your confidence, and let these assemble and consult concerning what should be done, in order that we may become pleasing to God, to preserve the house of the Lord, to diffuse the law of God, and to convince the world that ours is the truth, the light, and ours the word of the Lord. Do not suffer yourselves to be misled, suffer yourselves not to be deceived by those mock heroes, who, armed with their outward ceremonies,* laugh to scorn the progress of the times; who imagine they can obstruct the upward flight of the spirit by means of empty forms; to seize hold of the spokes of the wheels of time as they roll irresistibly along. Do not suffer yourselves to be deceived by those suspicious persons who fancy to discover treason and destruction under every step taken in the march of improvement. Do not allow yourselves to be misled, and lay your hand on the work; and let us elevate Judaism to the height which is its just due; to the respect which it merits; in order that our Synagogue may become a house of God for all men who seek the Lord; in order that our youth may grow up to a ripe age for God and with God.

* We deem proper to say, that Dr. Wise does not inveigh against the use of the ceremonies, for is not the Sabbath a ceremony too? but against the supposed assumption, on the part of some, that mere acts without a spirit of piety are of any avail; we want and need both believing and active Israelites.-Ed. Oc.

Light up the lamp of the Lord in the evening, so that it may give light yet in the morning, that it may also shine for all on that morning when we shall stand as disembodied spirits before the sole God, the most holy One. What can we reply when the most righteous Father asks of us, “Why have you suffered my word to sink down, without doing something to prevent it?” Deeply blushing with shame must we then stand and reply, “Lord, we were too indolent, too timid.” Come, therefore, and let us justify ourselves before our God; let us seek to preserve, to elevate, and to defend the word of salvation. And He, the Father of all, who sits enthroned amidst the cherubim, and still looks down with grace and mercy on those who walk in the dust; He, who has taught to man the word of salvation,-He will not deny us his blessing, his heavenly assistance. He will bless the work of union and the efforts to elevate his faith, that his holy name may be acknowledged and glorified; that his holy light may shine for all the children of man, and that all hearts may be lifted up to Him, and all tongues exclaim ■’ ■■■ ■■■■■■ “The Lord is the God.” Amen.

Chapter 73

S. The Light of the Lord

The Light of the Lord. An Initiation Sermon, Delivered at the Lloyd Street Synagogue, Baltimore, By the Rev. H. Hochheimer, Minister Elect of the Congregation With timidity and fearful hesitation do I approach this holy consecrated place; for I feel deeply the difficulty of the task which I have assumed. But yesterday I arrived, and shall I speak already to-day? Shall I, the stranger, the unknown, proclaim before a congregation, strangers and unknown to me, the holy word in the name of God the Most High? How can I do otherwise than feel timidity and hesitation, since I moreover can truly say with the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:6): “Behold I know not how to speak, for I am but a boy?” And of what shall I speak in the midst of a strange congregation? Shall my theme be morals? Shall it be about private conduct? No; for then you would justly exclaim against me: “This one has merely come as a sojourner; and he will already be judge!” (Genesis 19:9) Besides all, this problem how to reprove was difficult at all times, but it is most difficult in our own day. It is no longer as formerly sufficient for the community to know whether the talents of the preacher are extensive enough, whether his intentions are good; people want also to know beforehand his views, the bent of his mind, so that they may be enabled to judge before he commences whether they can coincide with his views, whether they will be inclined to follow him; and they will not allow themselves to be persuaded by his earnest appeals, though he confutes successfully their own views; since every man believes himself to have discovered the right path; and thus the orator, in the place consecrated to God, becomes as it were an article of merchandize, which is subjected to each one’s taste, and is dependent on the changeful humour of the fashion of the day. And how manifold and various are at the same time the demands made of the preacher, and with perfect truth can the words of the prophet (Hosea 6:11) be applied: “In the house of Israel I beheld confusion;” for never, brethren, were there parties in the bosom of Judaism more in direct opposition to each other, never were their differences more distinctly marked, than at this precise moment of time. Whithersoever we turn our view on the present day we shall witness religious disputes; at least is this the ease in my native land; and all experience teaches that such a poison is contagious, and easily carried even beyond the sea.

There is one party in Israel which will admit nothing as valid which it cannot comprehend with its reason; and the men belonging to this section reject one thing after the other, since they cannot comprehend the most sublime and the holy, which is from its nature so far removed from human ken, that to understand fully the divine things, man must needs be equal to God. These men then desire to investigate the incomprehensible by the light of human reason; and still this light even is so often obscured by the clouds of earthly passions, is driven hither and thither by each puff of wind, that if one side be brightly illuminated, the other is already shrouded in darkness; and thus they will never be able to comprehend the entire of the holy structure in its strength and sublimity.

Another party strives with might and main against every improvement, if it be ever so useful or necessary, or if it be ever so much calculated to elevate our religion. Every abuse inherited from their fathers is sacred to men of this stamp, not because they deem it good, but only because they have inherited it; as though an error were the better for being centuries old, as though an abuse

could gain the least from having grown gray by the lapse of time.

How then shall parties which stand so far asunder be able to approach? How shall peace be made between them? But between the combatants just described, there stands yet another party, which to influence is yet more difficult than either of the first; it is that of the careless or the indifferent. The two other parties of whom we have just been speaking, at least desire to be something; and in case the divine spark of pure truth should illuminate them, in case the holy fire be once kindled in them, they will have to a surety become united for one sacred end; but how can men attain the truth when they feel no desire to attain it? The indifferent, careless about the battle which is fought on the field of religion, lives one day like the other, seeking that which is of the earth. What concern has he with the truth? it offers no enjoyment to his sensuality, and it opens no prospect of interest in hard money; and he looks with risible emotions on the contest before him, perhaps deriding in his heart the folly of the others in spending their time and strength in such a struggle. But O, brethren! this class is the most dangerous of all; it is this which gnaws at the root of Judaism, and prevents it from bearing fruit. These indifferents are like a slow, dangerous poison, and they have brought more evil over Israel, they have rendered the name of Jew more odious to the nations of the earth, than the other two parties ever could have accomplished; for the indifferents are the real enemies of Judaism, and more injurious to it than its most inveterate foes; for through open foes there will arise a contest for truth, and only in contest can the truth sustain the fiery test of its genuineness; only in contest does it display its power; but indifference is dangerous to its peace, it is fatal to its existence.

There is yet a fourth class, comprised within the limits of the first two; it is that of the doubters. These men are very strikingly depicted in the parable of Rabbi Bar Bar Chanah, in which we are told how a frog was swallowed up by a serpent, and this again by a raven. For just like the frog, who at times hides himself in swamps, and mire, and then emerges into the light of the sun, is the case of the doubter. At one time he sinks into the slough of sin, and then come apace bright moments, in which he feels a desire to turn again to divine things; but then comes the serpent of seduction and leads him off upon the path of evil, till sin, dark in its colour as the black raven, completely overpowers him. In this manner, beloved brethren, is Israel divided into different parties, and this difference in religious sentiments is the greatest evil which afflicts our people, is yet more injurious than the separation which took place when Israel and Judah divided themselves into two kingdoms. The greatest praise of our fathers was that they had ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ “One God, one high priest, and one law.” This, however, is no longer applicable to us, for “according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah,” (Jeremiah 2:28) is a complaint that may be uttered even now, for so many as our cities are our reforms, our peculiar ideas of religion. And, nevertheless, there exists but one truth, and this truth must quit the contest triumphant, and all falsehood, all doubt, must succumb; and the more truth is sought by our united exertions, the sooner will it become apparent; the sooner will it be found by us.

Therefore do I deem it to be the duty of every man to seek for this holy end, with all the intelligence which God has given him, and therein I am sure are you all agreed, no matter how each may act for himself. Let us then devote this hour to solve the following questions:

How can we find the truth? By what tokens can we recognise the truth?

How shall we employ the truth?

I think that the solution of these questions can be found in the admonition of Isaiah (Isaiah 2:5): “O house of Jacob, come let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

I. Our sages say truly ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ “The seal of God is the Truth.” The Truth is the most precious, the most brilliant jewel which clearly illuminates all space, and suffers neither doubt, nor deceit, neither hatred nor contention, to grow up near it. Truth is the most costly treasure which man can possess; it is that gift which ennobles the inhabitant of earth, and brings him near to the Most High. But at the same time, it is difficult to be found, is but a rare guest, is almost become a stranger on earth; and not unfounded was the apprehension of Truth, at the creation of the world, as the legend in the Midrash tells us. when saving, “O Lord, do not create the world, for it will be full of deceit. Peace also joined her and said, O create it not, for there will spring up within it hatred and enmity. Then it was that the Creator cast the Truth down upon the earth.”

There is much wisdom in these words of the Midrash; God cast down the Truth, but not Peace; for if Truth flourishes on earth, Peace will never be wanting, and with the reign of Truth, the most beautiful bond of concord will entwine itself around all the inhabitants of the earth. Neither contest nor hatred can rage where Truth prevails; for it is only falsehood, it is only deceit which divides brother from brother, and it is this prolific source of evil which always rises up to oppose Truth and Peace. Let us, then, before anything else, brethren, seek the Truth; let no labour fatigue us, however difficult the search may prove. In the pursuit of gain, we neither mind weather, nor storm, nor rain at times even in this pursuit, we have regard neither for virtue nor religion, neither for our reputation nor our honest name; nay, when gain is before us, we deem it a trifling thing to overcome the greatest difficulties; then are we ready to undermine mountains, and to ransack the depths of the earth to reach the hidden treasures, then man descends to the bottom of the sea to seek precious things there buried; and shall we do less for this noble daughter of Heaven, for this gift of God which enables us to dispense with everything else beside? Surely not.

But, you will ask, “Where shall we find her? man can attain to the bottom of the sea, and enter the depths of the earth; but where can he lay hold of truth?” But truly he can find this also, for sure means are put into his hands to seek her out, namely: the holy commands of God will and ought to serve us as the light to guide us to the spot where this treasure is placed; they are a lamp, which if rightly observed will surely cause us to find the pure light of Truth; a lamp which will guard against the total extinguishment of the taper of our human wisdom, after it has been urged from side to side by the breath of the passing wind.

“Be not wise in thy own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.” (Proverbs 3:7) And now I call upon all of you, Up! and take in your hand the lamp; walk in the commandments of the Lord, and soon will dawn for you a clear and bright light.

Rouse yourselves, ye doubters, and you, also, indifferent ones! Up! rouse yourselves from your usual precious state of inactivity, and seize the lamp of God. You are not usually lazy when there is something to be gained; and here the highest treasure can be won. You are careful, and strive in worldly pursuits, to leave earthly goods as an inheritance to your children; but will you deprive them from mere indolence of the heritage of our fathers, which assisted them so gloriously in trouble and affliction, which fortified them against the assaults of danger and distress? Will you take this away from your children because it may disturb you in your carnal enjoyments? Whatever we have inherited from our fathers, be it ever so small in value, is usually held in high esteem; and

the best ornament you will permit to escape you? O, do it not, for you can give your children nothing which can be put in comparison with it, a gift which will be their support to all eternity. And ye too, who are ready for the combat, who cast aside all which does not suit you in your wisdom, which does not comport with your own notions, do seize the lamp of God, if it be but this once, and on your path also will light then be shed. For tell me, are you so completely satisfied? does not occasionally a doubt obtrude itself whether you really are already in possession of the true light? I confidently believe that my suspicion is correct; for error cannot so strongly have obtained the mastery over you, that you have no place whatever in your heart for the approach of truth. Listen, then, to the inward voice which admonishes you, and lay hold of the lamp, and seek the true light, the pure truth. And lastly, to you, also, who contend for the cause of God, who hold fast to his commandments, who hear me and fancy “Surely he has nothing to say to us; we have the lamp of God in our hand, have constantly made use of it, and never forsaken it,”-to you, also, I have to address a few serious words: Do you all truly observe the commandments of God, because they are the commandments of God? or do you, or at least many of you, observe them because you are used to them, because you have brought up from infancy to act so? Do the words of the prophet suit our case where he says (Isaiah 29:13), “And their fear of me was a precept taught by man?” Do but question yourselves; lay your hand upon your heart and ask: “Do we actually observe everything for God’s sake?” I truly fear greatly that you also cannot answer this inquiry with an open “Yes.” I, therefore, call upon you also, “O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

II. But I hear you say, “If it be true that even those who have had the lamp of God long in their hands, have nevertheless not found the pure truth, that these also walk in the path of falsehood, that they have not been illuminated by the pure light, notwithstanding all their observance of the divine precepts,- how can we hope for success? Surely truth cannot be clearly discerned, and all labour, all anxious search for it must be in vain.” This now brings us to our second question, and the answer is likewise comprised in our text: “Let us walk in the light of the Lord.” When your course of life is enlightened with the divine light, then have you the surest token that you have found the truth, that it has become alive and active in you. When all your acts, all your workings are, like the fire graciously bestowed by God, everywhere scattering beneficence, everywhere diffusing happiness: then can you be tranquil, then is the course of error far distant from you, for “When mercy and truth forsake thee not, then hast thou found grace and favour in the eyes of God and man.” (Proverbs 3:3-4) So also say the words of the humane poet:* “The real ring possesses the wonderful power to make the possessor beloved and agreeable before God and man. By this must you decide, because the false rings will not be able to effect this.” Live, therefore,-act, therefore,-that you may be agreeable to God and man, and then is the problem solved, then is its solution discovered. “When love and truth meet within you, then will virtue and peace kiss each other.” (Psalms 85:11) * Lessing, in his Nathan the Wise. But as yet this golden age has not arrived; peace and virtue do not as yet kiss each other; the brother as yet persecutes his brother, because he happens to think differently from him; he greets him not with terms of love, in order to teach him; but he endeavours to force his opinions on him by the hand of violence. There is no one whose path is refulgent as a guiding light; everything is still obscured through hatred and enmity, and causes that love and truth cannot meet; and herein can you judge in the surest manner that you do not possess the pure truth. Therefore do you take to heart the words of the Psalmist: “Thy words are a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path.” (Psalms 119:106) As the light beams brightly

around you, sow virtue and reap a harvest of love; make your own heart fruitful, that the noble seed of piety may flourish therein; but do this correctly, and in accordance with the word of the Lord, “Acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before your God.”

Yet to walk humbly before God is the main thing, for thereby can the truly enlightened man be known. And again can you judge by this whether you are yet far from the truth, for how few are there who walk in humility! The one who presumes himself enlightened, prides himself that he has succeeded in disregarding the holiest duties, and derides others, who still remain faithful to them, and fancies that they are far beneath him, and that day has dawned on his soul only. The other, however, who is on the opposite extreme, acts not much better; in his heart, too, has pride found a dwelling, and because he dispenses with so many things for the sake of religion, he imagines that he is better, higher than all others. To a surety, dispensing is more difficult than enjoying; to a surety, by dispensing he already proves that he is earnest with religion; but to boast therewith, to be proud of it, diminishes the merit thence arising, and man takes to himself the reward; through the pleasure which he experiences in this pride of feeling. Does not Holy Writ teach us, “Observe and do the commandments, for it is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations?” But if you be proud, where then is your wisdom? “The proud is never wise,” ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ teaches the Talmud. And you, also, ye indifferent ones. and you doubters, too, you to a certainty are not proud of your conduct, the first because the whole is unimportant to them, and the others because they have not strength enough to search for the right. Oh, try it but once, let me admonish you; do it, if not for the sake of heaven, for your own sakes, for the sake of the expected reward. It is true, we should not be religious because of the reward which is thence to result; but as is said by the sages, “By doing good from an improper motive, man is led to practise it from a proper one,” and the promises of God are really great, since we are told that “to observe the divine precepts confers long life and peace,” and these are surely rich returns.

How beautiful, how sublime a spectacle would it present, were Israel no more divided, but united in God,-if it knew but one divine law, but one divine light, and walked in the path of truth. Then would the words of the prophet be verified: “Israel’s light shall become a fire, and his sanctuary a flame, and consumed and burnt shall be the thorns and thistles on one day.” (Isaiah 10:17) Yes, the thorns and thistles, these weeds of an ignoble heart, would vanish in a single day; and how happy will be that time, when this takes place!-and O, that it may come speedily, yea, speedily in our day!

III. The third question, “How are we to employ the pure truth, when we have once obtained possession thereof?” demands now but a few words. I might indeed pass it altogether by, after what has been said, were it not agreeable to the heart to dwell a little longer on this thought, that it may beat higher at the reflection, at the conviction that the time of universal light will come one day. For who would again forsake the pure light, of which the Midrash says, that the Lord has garnered it up for the righteous in the future, because it was too noble to rule in company with darkness, when once he has walked in the same? If man but once breathes the air of heaven, would he not preserve it for ever, for all eternity? In such a state, each one hastens to meet his God with reverential joy, and feels that he has ecstatic bliss.

Hasten, then, brothers and sisters, lay your hand on the work; be not fatigued nor wearied, so that you may hasten the advent of this time. You can do nothing more beautiful, nothing greater, nothing more worthy of yourselves, which could lay the foundation of greater bliss and more

extended felicity. But think not that it is too late for you; for in the striving after wisdom alone, in the striving to promote the good, is already experienced heavenly joy. And were it even not for yourselves, then will you leave it as a holy legacy for your children, who will bless and praise you for it more than for gold and wealth.

Take, therefore, the lamp; walk in the light of God; and the Father, who embraces in love all his children, will also have graciously mercy on us, whether we belong to one party or the other, whether we profess these or the other views, so we but strive honestly after the truth, and seek faithfully to find it. And may God grant that the day may not be far, on which the parties in Israel, which now are in hostile opposition, may offer each other the hand of friendship, and when the brother shall again embrace the brother, the sister the sister, in sincere love. God grant that the day may soon appear on which the house of Jacob may again be united as one great, entire people; yea, God grant this, and that soon may appear for Israel the dawn of that beautiful time, of which it is said: “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health (of spirit) shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of God shall be thy reward.” Amen.

S. The Lord our Guide

The Lord Our Guide. A Sermon, by Isaac Leeser

Lord of all existence, in whose hand is the spirit of all living, remember us in mercy unto a peaceful and happy life, when Thou comest to judge thy children at the dread hour, when all pass before thy judgment seat, to receive their doom for weal or wo, as thou mayest decree in thy unerring wisdom. Look not, O Father! unto the greatness of our transgressions; mete not out unto us the recompense which our misdeeds have deserved; but let thy goodness prevail, and forgive and pardon, as Thou hast borne with our iniquities from our first being until this day. And thus shall thy name be glorified, when they, whom Thou halt redeemed from perdition, shall chaunt thy glory, and rehearse unto generations yet to come the goodness Thou hast manifested; inasmuch as Thou art our God and Saviour, the Holy One of Israel, now and for ever. Amen.

Brethren:

Among the many consolations which are recorded concerning the future of Israel, we discover the following:

[illegible]: [illegible]:

“For not in haste shall you go out, and not in flight shall ye go; for before you goeth the Lord, and your rearward is the God of Israel.”- Isaiah 52:12.

If one were merely to look at the singular changes which have within our recollection come over the nature of religious observance amongst Israelites, and carefully to note the agitation in opinion which now sways many minds, he would be apt to come to the hasty conclusion, that Judaism had seen its best days; that what is left is merely a shadow of its former self; and the signs of life which it exhibits are but the spasmodic actions of the last remnant of vital strength yet inherent in the severed limbs, which, nevertheless, must soon cease, since their separation from the living trunk must soon deprive themselves and it of every vestige of life. Some, therefore, in fear, and others in ill-suppressed joy, look forward to the speedy dissolution of the Jewish community; and already, in anticipation, they see it mixed up with other societies; so that its existence will become a matter of history, as a thing that has been. We cannot deny that there are many events constantly passing before our eyes which are greatly calculated to alarm those anxious for the welfare of their religion; the bonds of our union have become greatly loosened, and many have fallen away from our household, and now profess to love the strangers and their idols; others have thrown off the yoke of the law, retaining merely the name of Jews, whilst violating, in the disregard of the Sabbath, and the laws of personal sanctity, the obligations which the divine code imposes on them; and, at the same time, others, in numbers scarcely ever before known, seek the alliance of the gentiles, and rear up their children in the customs and laws of the various nations; and teach them to inquire of those not belonging to Jacob, “Which is the way of salvation?” as though there were no God in Israel of whom we could inquire. But not alone this; for there are many who, whilst they profess to

be pious, and to venerate the Lord and his word, endeavour to search out new ways, of which our fathers had no knowledge, and to open wide the door of dissension, by withdrawing the confidence of the people from their righteous teachers, who have so long and so faithfully expounded to them the will of their heavenly Father, and have shown them the way they should go, and the deeds they should do. And thus we have seen many departing from our communion; some by the force of ignorance, not knowing how to defend themselves against the assaults of those who make it their business to deprive Jews of their faith; some because they could not withstand, from an indolence of disposition, the temptations which the world at large offered to their acceptance; and others, again, because they wickedly chose their portion with the many, and despised the union with the handful of Israelites, with those who have not earthly distinctions to bestow, nor offices to confer. And thus have we also seen the strict conformity to our laws gradually decaying, till instead, that formerly a transgressor was an object of contempt from his violation of public opinion, no less than his disregard of the divine precepts, a strict conformist now excites in many taunts and ridicule, from his strange adherence to ancestral customs. Is it not so? or say, when in any epoch of our history has there been a greater defection from the ranks of truth? Can you point out a single period, during the times of the bitterest persecutions, when so many have left the Synagogue under one pretext or the other, as report speaks of what takes place in our own day? How is this? Is the air of liberty, the new atmosphere in which we have been permitted to breathe of late, so fatal to Judaism? so much more destructive than banishment, confiscation, public exposure at the pillory, and death by the hand of the common executioner? Could we stand all those dangers; could we wander forth shoeless in the burning sand, or over frozen rivers; could we sell our houses for a little bread, and our vineyard for an ass, a mean beast of burden to carry us and our children away from our native land; could we stand exposed to the taunts of a base, heartless crowd, and disregard their coarse jests and their ribald abuse; could we stretch out our neck to the headsman, and joyfully meet the stroke of death; could we behold, unmoved, tigers in the shape of men kindle the fires which were to consume us; could we attest with unfaltering lips our love to our God, whilst the burning flesh quivered on our bones, when our latest breath was to be drawn in unendurable agony;-and has it come to this, that a little freedom, the boon which the savage enjoys in his wide-spread prairie, or his forest fastness, is to stifle all aspirations for religious purity, as trough, with the removal of political thraldom, all use of faith, all necessity for godliness, had fled for ever? Is God less merciful in times of prosperity than in those of affliction? or is his power more limited now, to punish the transgressor, than in the days that are past? Ay, there is now fearful sinning, and terrible will be the retribution which will overtake the evil-doers; the vengeance sleeps not, the vigilance of eternal justice is not diminished, and before we heed it, the house of the wicked will be struck by the four winds of heaven, and bury in its ruins the sinful father, the sharer of his iniquity, and the offspring who have not been taught the worship of the Lord. This, in truth, must we confidently expect, from the well-known laws of justice which govern the world, that the present apostacy from the path of religion will draw after it the same consequences as in former days; but in the mean time it is truly deplorable that so much wickedness should force itself upon our attention; that with all the disposition, so natural to men, to think well of themselves, we cannot gainsay the lamentable fact, that we have been retrograding instead of advancing in religious improvement, and that thus far the experiment of loosening the bonds of our captivity has far from corresponded with the wishes and hopes of those who, in a greater state of freedom, hoped, nay, confidently expected, that the attachment of Jews to their

religion would become closer and dearer day by day.

Indeed during many years, when for being Israelites we had to endure sorrows almost incredible, which we could have avoided by outwardly conforming to the customs of our oppressors, (since it was ostensibly our religion, not ourselves, they wished to injure,) our longing eyes were turned to Heaven to vouchsafe us only the liberty of worshipping without being molested for the profession of our faith, and to be permitted some honourable pursuit, by which we could obtain a decent livelihood. Surely during the ages of bitter persecution this was nearly all which was asked, almost the only thing hoped for. And the pious ones of those days imagined, that, with the enlargement which they coveted, the number of devoted adherents to the law would greatly increase, and that, were the terror of the weight from without removed, no one of the seed of Jacob would act otherwise than as becomes a child of salvation under the law, and that as dutiful children all would cheerfully give honour and obedience to the Lord of all. And now the prayers of so many saints have been heard; their blood has not flowed in vain, their tears of anguish have been treasured up as a precious sacrifice before the Eternal God; and, we, their descendants, live in comparative security, and we are almost every where free to walk in the paths of the faith revealed through Moses, and in many countries we can, as Jews, participate in the government, and make our voice heard in the national councils, or contend with the mighty in their country's cause on the ensanguined field of battle or the wide expanse of the ocean's billows.

All this has been given to us. But how has experience deceived the hopes of the pious in their dreadful struggle! They who, when their life was, so to say, suspended before their eyes, and they dreaded to breathe aloud in the presence of these tyrants, clung with the ardour of desperation to the religion which sorrows had made dear to them, now shake off the yoke of Heaven, when their profession as Jews would give them rather honour than disgrace, as though they had no longer need to value that which was so precious to them in their affliction. And daily we see, that, men and women who, because they are Jews, were treated with contumely and exclusion from all civil rights, barely reach the shore of countries where they are unrestricted on account of religion, before they display the most thorough neglect of their faith, and excel in sinful indifference, though often better instructed and more piously educated than those whom they find there before them.-Formerly, too, we were debarred from cultivating secular sciences; naught was left us but the development of the wisdom of the divine law; and many sighed for opportunities to dip, so to say, their oars in the flood of sciences, to understand better through this means the mysterious courses of the laws of nature, and their relation to the great concerns of life. Now this too has been granted. But do those who are thus taught fight the good battles of their religion? Are they the valiant defenders, by words and deeds, of their brothers, the Israelites? Ask of the gentile churches, look into their seminaries of learning, take a view of their council-houses, their armies, and their fleets, and you will find there the apostates, who, but for this dangerous acquirement, would have lived as their fathers have done, simple in faith, devoted in their attachment to Israelites and their laws, and would either have suffered in their sufferings or rejoiced in their happiness. And those often who have acquired wealth, to whom the alliances with proud families is opened through the powerful masses of gold they have heaped up, who, but for this, would have been regarded with the same scorn as their humbler brothers, now disdain to let their sons and daughters wed with children of Jacob, but seek to buy them distinctions and empty titles by giving them in marriage to the sons and daughters of the stranger.

They, therefore, who have seen and observed all this, who hear the boast of the enemies of the Jews, that soon Israel will cease to be a people, if the same gentilizing should proceed with a naturally increased ratio, if the internal divisions should continue to multiply with the new accession of causes of strife which develop themselves daily,-they, who in the events before them, imagine they behold a new state of things never before experienced, will naturally imagine, and almost confidently expect, that now the gradual extinction of Israel so long expected, is actually impending; and that whatever of this anticipation cannot, from want of time, be accomplished in the next ten years, will certainly come to pass as an unavoidable thing. Indeed outward circumstances betoken all this as but too likely. But persons must have studied the natural inclination of the Jews, and the records of their history, to small advantage, to let themselves be so easily led away by outward exhibitions. Look, I pray you, in the scriptural records, and you will find precisely what we see this day. In prosperity our forefathers forgot the great Lord of all who had freed them from their oppressors, who had rid their beautiful country of enemies who had often reaped what others had sown, who had gathered the grapes which their owners had carefully tended; and they served Baalim and Ashtaroth, whom they had found impotent to aid them in in their days of distress. Nay, even at a later period, say in the reign of Solomon, when the manifestation of the divine presence in the temple they had just erected proved to the people that the Lord dwelt in their midst: how little did they heed their heavenly King, and how ungrateful were they in spite of all the peace and prosperity that blessed their own Palestine, and the great degree of knowledge which flowed from their schools, and the high civilization and refinement which had taken up their abode in the mountains of Judah, on the plains of Jezreel, on the coasts of the great sea, and the banks of the fertilizing Jordan. Scarcely had the wise king, who himself had been misled by his love for strange women, been gathered to his fathers, than the fell spirit of disunion broke the common bond which had made Israel one people, and Palestine one country. The new king of the rival government set up calves for worship at Beth-el and Dan, and the part of the people separated from the rule of the house of David, was also soon torn away from the path of the national religion. We speak of the evils of the present day; they are fearful indeed; and no lover of truth, no friend of the Mosaic institutions, can either palliate or defend them; but in the extent of forgetfulness of the righteous way the men of antiquity exceeded those of our own age. Now the number of transgressors is large indeed; but at worst it is confined to individuals; but then an entire nation, with few exceptions, at least but few are recorded, followed the course of destruction. Yet there is one thing in which the present renders the evil more permanent than the former period. It is this. During our residence in Palestine, no matter if we sinned, we continued to be Israelites, we were one people on our national soil, and the worship of idols left us still surrounded by our brothers,* and we could return through repentance, and so could our children, to the bosom of the divine legislation. But now this is unfortunately not the case; they who leave the Synagogue, either through apostacy, through the neglect of circumcision, or through intermarriage with gentiles, become part and parcel with the non-Israelites among whom we dwell, and they and their descendants, except under rare circumstances, become strangers, and must remain so, to the worship of the God of Israel; they merge into the nations of the earth, and have neither right nor inheritance in the congregation of Jacob. Here then we have a view of the past and present condition of the sinners in Israel; and any reflecting mind can well measure the dark and bright sides of the picture. One thing no one will be able to deny, that, as in the national sinning during the first temple, before and since, there was a recuperative power by which the people in a greater

or less degree, returned to their own God, though they had so often and so long worshipped the idols of their neighbours or the falsehoods of their own invention, so there are now, compared to the entire mass of Jews, but a very small number who doubt in the fundamental truths of our faith. Nay, of the many who have forsaken us, few indeed have done so from conviction, though this makes their loss to us not the less certain nor more deplorable on their and our account. Still let it not be forgotten, that in the prophetic vision, Daniel already announced more than two thousand three hundred years ago: “Many† shall be purified and made white, and be tried; but the wicked will do wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand; but the wise will understand.” (Daniel 12:10.) Here is a direct announcement that in the trials and purifcations to which the nation of Israel is to be subjected, some there shall be who will be purified and be rendered resplendent in purity by the very means which the world calls evil; whilst the wicked will pursue their course of destruction, contemning the chastisement of the Lord, and thus render themselves permanently outcasts from the communion of the faithful, who will, by constantly dwelling upon the ways of God with man, and tracing always the effect to its cause, see, ultimately, the righteousness of the divine decrees, though in the beginning all appeared doubt and uncertainty; whereas they, who are wicked, will in their worldliness and obduracy of heart, remain strangers to the best of wisdom, and sink into that perdition which they have in truth so ardently coveted, through the perversity of their iniquitous conduct.

*There is no question, but that the Israelites during their sojourn in Palestine, never forgot altogether the service of the Lord; He was under all circumstances their national God, even whilst they incorporated the idols of the heathen in their system of worship. The reader is referred to the history of Elijah’s sacrifice on Carmel, where, he clearly asks the people how long they would hesitate between the Lord and Baal, which evidently proves, that though they ascribed certain propitiatory powers to their Baal, they had not cast off the idea of the God of the Bible as the Supreme Ruler of all. (1 Kings 18:21.) See also the history of the nations brought by Shalmanasser, king of Assyria, to supply the place of the Israelites whom he had led away from their land (2 Kings 17:24-34); it is a curious passage, and will give the inquirer a better idea of the notions of the heathens respecting their love for idols; it is doubtlessly this,-they thought that they could not approach the great Creator without some mediatorial power, which power they represented under a thousand fanciful shapes, all more or less false, all more or less disgusting. This, peculiar idea, of an intermediate agency, is not unknown to the enlightened nations of modern times, and they, like the gentiles of old, forget almost in the worship of their mediator, the superior service which, even according to their own views, is due to the Supreme. Doubtlessly this was the case with the Israelites, and they adored the Lord in conjunction with their follies. The sin is not the less heinous, for we were commanded “You shall make nothing with me;” but as the idea of the power of the Lord was always held up in their minds, the return to Him was at all times easy, whenever they felt, by some calamity which overtook them, that they had offended the Power who alone could save them. Circumcision was not omitted, and probably most of the ceremonial laws were held sacred; although we have evidence that they were frequently violated; but renounced they never were; heathenism is more tolerant than Christianity and Mahommedanism; it allowed all sorts of conjunctions in its systems and practices; whereas they who embrace now the religions of the day, are at once and for ever severed from Judaism; the Sabbath is changed, circumcision is abolished, the Synagogue is given up for the church, the Jewish nation for the world, and the apostates and those who marry out of the pale, become lost to Israel, and they entail upon

themselves and their descendants, “all the consequences of the violated covenant which are written in the book of the law,” (Deuteronomy 29:20,) to as great a degree as the idolators of old.

† This prophecy must not be taken as an expression of fatalism, as though certain persons were predoomed to sin; only that in the course of events transgressions would undoubtedly take place; but that notwithstanding the principle of righteousness would triumph, and the sorrows and tribulations would confirm those who have the fear of the Lord in their heart. It is in fact a blissful promise of the ultimate triumph of virtue, and the assurance that all will tend to a happy end.

Through captivity and the edge of the sword, we were taught in the days of our national existence, that destruction only is the portion of those who forsake the Lord. And in adversity we were instructed that those are not forgotten who firmly place their trust in the Rock of Ages, the everlasting One, to whom appertain the power and the dominion. Israel has thus been tried in the furnace of affliction, and also in the sunshine of prosperity. Unmitigated calamities, unceasing banishment, daily slaughter, would have at length destroyed us, had we remained ever so constant in our attachment to our religion; for the worshippers would have ceased when the people of Israel had all been annihilated. The tribulations, however, were an excellent means to try, to purify, and to make us white. The wicked, who had not the Lord in their heart, started back at the sight of the dark vaults of the noisome dungeon, and they fainted before the sharp edge of the drawn sword; they fell off and became mingled with the oppressors; and from them sprung many who were the bitterest enemies to those of their fathers’ faith. Whilst, in the same times, the martyrs persevered in their righteousness, and proved to the world how the Jew can love his God; how he can prize beyond every possession the hope in the truth of his Father; how he can despise all things of earth, and cast away life, if thus only can he seal his truth and his faith. The defection of the weak is to us a beacon, a warning, pointing out the dangers of the deeds for which these have been cut off from the community of Israel. The heroism of the brave,-brave not in worldly battle, but in a contest in which angels of purity might fittingly have participated, is also a beacon, an incentive, a guiding star, the bright blaze of the lighthouse upon the distant promontory, pointing out to us the track into the safe harbour, where we can anchor with unfailing security, in the haven of righteousness, our storm-tossed bark, when the voyage of life is ended. Again there have broken over us days of greater calm and peace; the world no longer professes to hate the Jews, they are acknowledged as children of a common Father; and every where there are many who speak well of Israel, and who seek to promote our welfare. The race for scientific improvement and far-reaching enterprise is again open to us, and many of us scarcely remember even now the days of sorrow which we fain would hope have passed away. But “Jeshurun has also again grown fat, and he kicks;” many of us are not able to withstand the temptation of prosperity; they feel themselves better, in their own imagination, than their humbler and less enlightened brothers; and thev reach after distinctions which, to Jews, are not easily attainable, and for alliances which remove them from their own friends. But at the same time there are many, and these by far hundredfold greater in number than the others, who glory in their descent and do honour to their name; these discover in the improved state of our political condition no motive for self-gratulation, but one of thankfulness to the Deity, who has looked down upon our affliction, and remembered unto us the covenant with our fathers, that He would not forsake us, nor even leave us because of his great and holy name by which we are called. Let the wicked, then, as is in their nature, leave the fold where all can find so sure a shelter; let them join themselves to the idols

which they love; they are only pursuing the ancient path of transgression; and the house of Israel will be strengthened when those have left it, who brought it no strength by their nominal adherence, but who, on the contrary, were a scandal to all by their irreligious conduct, by their love for the world, by their forgetfulness of Heaven. Who can doubt that we are pursuing our destiny under all circumstances in which we may be placed? that there has been one continued chain of interlinked events from the call of Abraham, through the slavery in Egypt, the conquest of Palestine, our expulsion, persecution, and present period of ease and comparative freedom? Is there not a particular thread running through all these periods? Were there not times when our extinction was more imminent than under present circumstances? Let him gainsay this who has no faith in God; but we, who hope in humility, and trust in unwavering confidence, look upon all that occurs before our eyes as a mere phase in our history, as something to which after-generations will refer and draw thence a lesson as we do to-day from events which to us belong to the past. Israel will not be exterminated, neither by the anger nor the favour of the gentiles; but we shall move onward, retarded, perhaps, at times, but never long, let mankind rage and forge fetters, or devise counsel as they may; we are the messengers of God, and we are urged onward, be we willing or unwilling in our service. Israel now is sinning, great is the breach which the law has suffered; but the people will return to Him who has smitten them, and glory in the Lord, and sanctify themselves in the God of Israel. Generation after generation may sink into the grave, the green turf may rest upon the bosoms of millions who are not vet born unto the house of Jacob, without the coming of the Son of David. But notwithstanding this, let no one despair of the sure coming future; for though we may doubt that which we do not deem probable, the captives shall be let loose and the ransomed shall go to Zion in triumph. And should we, overpowered by fear, despair of the good promised to Jacob then let us reflect that it is not a mortal who announced his will, but our God and Creator; with Him length of days produces no forgetfulness, lapse of years no abatement of strength; and surely He will sustain his people in their wanderings, and protect them against themselves, that they be not lost in the stream of time, which has swept away many and great nations. But to us, lo! a sun is rising in the dim distant East, and his rays shall spread over the face of the earth, and nations shall see the glory of God revealed, and all shall be refreshed by the blessing of truth, which shall be poured out over all flesh. From mountain to mountain the joyful message shall be sent, and in Zion shall be proclaimed “Thy God reigneth,” and from every corner of the earth shall come forth the children of Jacob, they even who, through the sinning of their fathers, have been lost among the gentiles, and they shall bow down before the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem; not one shall be wanting of the priests of the Most High; for before us shall go the Lord, and though this happen far down in the ages of futurity, we need not fear the fulfillment, for our rearward is the God of Israel, who lives for eternity, and to whose name be ascribed glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Elul 6th, August 28th, 5606.

S. The Messiah - A Sermon

The Messiah, A SERMON, By the Rev. Abraham Rice, of Baltimore, on the Sabbath Before Passover, 5602. The Lord be with you all, beloved brethren! To many of you the question must often have been asked, Why did the Almighty deny to the greatest of our prophets, our teacher Moses, that which is precisely of the greatest importance to man? Why did God furnish him with defective organs of speech, as we find recorded that Moses himself replied to God, when he was ordered to carry his first message to King Pharaoh "I am no man of words; I am heavy of speech and heavy of tongue?" Why was a man, of whom the Deity himself testified that he was and should remain the noblest of mortals, as it is said: "And there never arose in Israel again like unto Moses, who knew the Lord face to face," a man who was not alone prophet, but also the leader of an entire nation-why was he above all others crippled in his power of speech? Difficult as this question appears at the first outset, it is easily and truly answered by our great Rabbenu Nissim, in the following manner:

"The goodness of God, which induced him to bestow on his people Israel the holy religion in their possession, endeavoured to cause them to understand by all possible methods, that this religion was delivered them pure and unmixed through Moses, and that nothing having its origin in fraud or deception was contained therein; for this reason the Lord took from Moses, who acted, so to say, as mediator between God and Israel, all the characteristics of a great orator, that no one should say in later times, that Moses had imposed his laws upon the people by his oratorical talents. No, Moses himself testified that he was no orator, and that he spoke with difficulty the very words which the Lord had put in his mouth; for the truth needs not any outward ornament, she cannot resort to deception."

Just so, beloved brethren, is it not my purpose to entertain any one by the splendour of oratory; because this holy place is much too elevated for such an object; our aim is an earnest reflection on religion and its duties; and especially this day do I ask of you a serious thinking, since I am going to speak on a subject which requires much reflection, a subject the most important for all Israelites, namely, the idea of the Messiah and his mission, and the bearing which it has upon religion, inasmuch as in the latest times apostates from our faith have endeavoured to deface this idea with their silly notions which are evidently founded in error.

There are three chief causes why many do not wish to discuss this idea:

Some think that they cannot be good citizens of the states in which they live, as soon as they believe that Messiah will come one day, which belief they fancy is incompatible with the laws of the state. This absurdity has its origin in the non-understanding of the Messiah, as I shall explain hereafter.

Some think, that the belief in the Messiah has nothing to do with religion, and if the Israelites only obey the dictates and duties of their religion, it is a matter of indifference whether they believe in the Messiah or not. These persons are yet more absurd, if possible, than the first class. And The

chief cause of all those which lie at the bottom of the unbelief in the Messiah is, that weak heads endeavour to cast ridicule on whatever their blunted intellect does not permit them to understand. In order to explain the idea of Messiah, we must revert to the origin and establishment of our holy religion. When the time arrived, that we were to be released from our first slavery in Egypt, we read in Exodus 3:12 : "When thou hast brought forth this people from Egypt, ye shall serve God on this mountain." The Lord here declares at once the object of our redemption, that is, that we should serve God; or, in other words, not for the sake of worldly happiness were we released from Egypt, but to receive our religion on Mount Sinai, and to go thence to the promised land, where, in troth, all the commandments could first be properly carried into execution. In another part of Exodus, (19. 3-6,) it is said: "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell unto the children of Israel, You have seen what I have done to Egypt, and that I bore you upon eagles' wings, and brought you unto me. And now if you will hearken unto my voice, and observe my covenant, you shall be unto me a peculiarly beloved people from all nations, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." From the passages here adduced, the rational thinker can already discover, that the object and destiny of Israel are clearly indicated by God himself, that is, as the text expresses it, they should be a priestly kingdom and a holy people; and for this priestly kingdom, and for the promotion of its holiness, God appropriated a particular country, to wit, the promised land. But why precisely this land? Why could Israel not fulfill their religion entirely till they came to the promised land? How can one part of the earth be better than the other? These and similar questions I hear many of you ask; but if you investigate the matter a little deeper, you will find that all these questions resolve themselves into one. To proceed: we find that all the beings existing on the earth are divided into four divisions, namely-the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, and lastly, mankind. We observe in each of these divisions a gradual ascent from the lowest to the highest; in the mineral world, we ascend from the common paving-stone to the rare and precious jewel; in the vegetable world, from the lowest shrub to the lofty cedar; in the animal world, from the smallest worm to the strong, the majestic, the fearless lion; and in man also we find a gradual ascent from the lowest who disregards every thing spiritual, to the noblest of his kind, who lives conformably to the destiny which the Creator has placed before him. If now in these four divisions of beings there exists a gradual progression from the lowest to the best: we may conclude naturally that the earth itself is subject to the same law, and presents a gradual progression from the lowest part to that of the highest in value. Though our weak reason was not able to discover which this best portion is, the all-knowing Creator nevertheless pointed out to us, that the promised land possesses the highest degree of perfection of all the earth, and is the most proper place where holiness and religion can be carried out to the greatest perfection. We therefore read, (Deuteronomy 11:12): "A land that the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." That our religion is intimately connected with the holiness of the place, I will endeavour to prove to you for the sake of greater clearness. Whatever exists can be referred back upon time and space; for whatever is or was is situated in "time," and occurs at a certain spot, which we call "space." Now it was a law in our religion that a certain religious act should be performed at a fixed time and at a fixed place, in order to prove that time and space also are closely connected with religion. The law alluded to is the following: when the people of Israel had come to the promised land, the city of Jerusalem was acknowledged, through prophetic inspiration, as the holiest place in the promised

land; in this city of Jerusalem the holiest spot was chosen to erect thereupon the temple, and in this temple there was again a holiest place, called the holy of holies. Into this holiest place the high priest as the holiest of men was permitted to enter but once a year, on the holiest day, namely, the Day of Atonement, with the offering of incense, as the holiest of all offerings. Here we see, that the Deity has laid it down as law, that the holiest man shall appear on the holiest day, on the holiest spot, with the holiest of offerings, in order that time, space, deed, and man may all combine in the furtherance of the heavenly religion. And this combination is to confirm energetically the idea, that the destiny of the individual Israelite is, like that of his entire nation, to live for his religion; therefore it is said in the text we have adduced "And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests;" every Israelite is bound to lead a priestly life, to be a guide to others less favoured than himself. We have therefore the many ordinances relative to the harvest, the many ordinances relating to the raising of cattle, the many ordinances relating to property and soil, the many laws relating to the assistance of the indigent brethren; in short, the whole life of man, with its various relations, is changed unto us into acts of religion.

Now reflect, my beloved hearers, how great a union and peace would have reigned in the promised land, after our entrance into the same, had we but exercised those laws in their purity. Would not such an example from so mighty a people have necessarily and silently affected all the other nations of the earth? Would it not have necessarily resulted that the fear of God and the idea of his UNITY must have spread over the surface of the whole earth? Would not all erroneous systems of religion have crumbled into ruins under their own weight? So also said Moses (Deuteronomy 4:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:8): "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, as the Lord my God hath commanded me, that you may do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: Observe, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes, and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before ye this day?"

But, just as the education of the individual is divided into three periods, namely, his education as child, his education as youth, and finally the complete education of the man: so is the education of an entire people governed by the same laws. When we came the first time in the promised land, we were, to say, yet in our years of infancy; we saw, indeed, the good which was placed before our eyes, but heeded not the punishment which would follow upon the non-observance of the commandments; the nation, therefore, was also punished, as a whole, in a child-like manner; it was banished from its own hearth; but only for a short time; and after we had lived seventy years in the Babylonian captivity, the promised land was again delivered up to us through divine aid. Now commenced the age of youth of our nation; it knew well the punishment which is to follow upon non-observance of the law; but just as the youth wilt not consent, through levity and passion, to place a bridle on his inclination: so the whole people defiled itself a second time, through levity and passion, until its independence was again lost, and its members were scattered abroad over the surface of the whole globe. And now we stand in the period of the education of the man; and since this education is only attained in individuals through manifold reverses and much experience, our nation must for the same reason encounter many reverses through many centuries upon the whole earth, and acquire experience, till it is ripe to enter again into a state of independence, and to stand before the world as an example for all. And it is even the goodness of

God which has scattered us in the whole world; that at some future day all the earth may acknowledge the UNITY and OMNIPOTENCE of God; for so we read in Micah 5:7 : "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as dew from the Lord and as showers upon the herbs." The whole world will at one time acknowledge that the God of Jacob is the true God, and that the religion of Israel is the true religion; as we are told in Zechariah 8:23 : "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall be in these days, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, yes, they shall take hold of the skirt of a man that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." So likewise says Zephaniah 3:9 : "For then I will turn unto the nations a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, and serve Him with one consent." This is farther, confirmed in Micah 4:2 : "And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for from Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." There are besides these, innumerable passages in the Scriptures which clearly and plainly point out this hopeful, happy time. But, as we have said, this happy time to which our hopes are directed, is to be one in which the beauty of religion is to stand forth in unclouded splendour, in which one grand knowledge of faith will spread every where, so that every one will reach that degree of intelligence, to seek happiness only in one true religion. Not riches, however, nor other worldly goods, are the object or the idea of Messiah; for such happiness is but imaginary and transitory in its nature; and should this be the sole idea of Messiah, to cause us to live quite happily and comfortably: our great men would never have shed so many bitter tears over the tardiness of his coming; because these holy ones did not wish to live at ease or in splendour; the greatness of God and the perfection of his religion were their favourite thoughts, and these ideas they desired so ardently to see diffused abroad in the world. So also we read distinctly in Maimonides: "Our wise men and the prophets did not hope for the days of Messiah, for the sake that they might rule all the world, that they might be masters over the gentiles, nor that these might serve them, nor that they might eat and drink at ease; but that they might be able to study the law and its wisdom undisturbed, that they might pursue piety without let or hindrance, in order that they might reach everlasting happiness. But the King Messiah is to build the temple, gather the outcasts of Israel, and restore the ancient statutes as they were in the beginning."

Behold now, beloved brethren! here you have the idea of Messiah briefly and clearly conveyed; the object is not the amassing of worldly goods, but a heavenly hope it is which causes us to look forward to the coming of the redeemer. If we have now correctly understood the idea of Messiah, the above-mentioned fear, that we cannot be good citizens of the countries where we live if we believe in the coming of the redeemer, must fall to the ground. The idea of Messiah has nothing to do with the state; we can and should do nothing to hasten the time of his coming; all we have to do is to observe our laws in such a manner that it may be the pleasure of the Most High, to hasten the approach of this time. But so long as we live among the gentiles, we are commanded to obey the laws of the respective states. A clear proof of the truth of this position is furnished us by the prophet Jeremiah. When the Israelites lived captives in Babylon, he admonished them in the following words (Jeremiah 24:5): "Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them," &c. Here the prophet pointed out the idea, that so long as Israelites live among the nations, they have to fulfill all the duties towards the state; but they dare on no account give up their hope and faith in Messiah because they serve the state faithfully; for this same prophet, from

whom we just quoted, says Jeremiah 23:5-6): "Behold days are coming, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, who shall rule as a prosperous king, and exercise justice and righteousness in the earth; in. his days shall Judah be saved and Israel dwell securely; and this is his name which they shall call him: The Lord our Righteousness." ’

You see thus, that the same prophet who commanded Israel to become useful citizens of the state, calls their attention likewise to the idea of Messiah; because the Jew as Jew can and should be an upright member of the community, whilst he can and should hold firmly on to the hope of his own nation.

We pass now to the second question: "Whether it belongs to religion to believe in Messiah, or whether it is a matter of indifference?" From what I have just advanced you are almost able, without farther argument, to conclude that the idea of Judaism, without that of the Messiah, is a fallacy, since the perfection of Judaism consists in the perfection of the execution of its laws. Now, every one, who has the least acquaintance with religion, must know; that many of the laws can only be carried into execution when we live in the holy land, and have a temple; and as the Almighty is unchangeable and eternal, even so must be the religion which was given and revealed by Him; as we also actually acknowledge in Yigdal: ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ "God will neither alter nor change his law for any other." It is therefore natural to presume, that a time will arrive when the law will be able to be executed in its fullest extent; as we also say in the same hymn,■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■: "He will send at the end of days our anointed, to redeem those who wait for the accomplishment of his salvation." How can, therefore, any one call himself a Jew without admitting the belief in the Messiah? A Jew without religion is an unmeaning word, and the Jewish religion cannot be carried into execution without this idea of the coming of the redeemer. Take up your prayer books, and read your daily ■■■■ ■■■■ (the eighteen benedictions,) as also the prayers for the different festivals of the year, and you will scarcely find a single page in the whole book where this does not prevail. * * * * *

Maimonides, therefore, maintains with right in his compendium of laws, on the section on Repentance (■■■■■ ■■■■■) where he teaches: "These are (the Jews) who have no portion in the life to come; they who deny the truth of the law, and who deny the coming of the redeemer;" for the Bible itself adverts to this subject so very frequently in the plainest and most direct manner. So is it said in Deuteronomy 30:3 : "And the Lord thy God will restore thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and he will return thee from all nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee." Likewise in Ezekiel 34:24-28, we read: "I will take you from among the heathens, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." Now, I ask you, can this idea be more clearly expressed? As respects, the third point, that weak heads, from levity and caprice, endeavour to ridicule this idea of a redeemer, and advance as a proof of its fallacy that we have already waited these eighteen hundred years without any result for this same Messiah: we have to observe, that it is sheer folly to argue in this manner,

and the acts that spring from such reasoning can boast of but little wisdom. Length of time can only be an objection with us perishable mortals, because a series of years like the above appears long indeed when compared with our existence of seventy years. But with God, who lives for ever and exists to all eternity, we cannot speak of time, because He is elevated above all time, and consequently nothing can be viewed as too long when we speak of Him. His unsearchable wisdom, his all-penetrating view, will in due season point out, when the proper period has arrived, when the idea of the Messiah shall be made known to the world; and we weak, short-sighted sons of man have therefore no cause to doubt of the coming of his oft-promised anointed messenger; but the true Israelite takes as an example the already accomplished predictions, and concludes therefrom, that the nonfulfilled promises will also be ultimately verified by the event; for the God who has led Israel out of Egypt and Babylon will also accomplish for us the third and last promised redemption. * * *

Let us hope, brethren, that you have truly and correctly comprehended this idea so closely connected with our religion; but let us also hope that you will after this resolve to act so that your own age may be found deserving by the universal Father, that He may let his glory be made known on earth. And may mine be the happiness, to have by this address strengthened anew the doubters, and led them to the acknowledgment of the truth. May it please Thee, O heavenly Father, to receive before thy throne the many scalding tears which our holy ones, who long since have lain down to sleep in the dust, have poured out before Thee, and to hasten the time of which our prophet Isaiah spoke when saying: "And thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer the mighty One of Jacob. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, neither wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls ’salvation,’ and thy gates ’praise.’ Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. The little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation; I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time." Yes, O everlasting One, fulfill it speedily, at the appointed time; yes, at the appointed time. Amen.

Chapter 76

S. The Messiah - Part 1

The Messiah Part I. Introduction. The Mission of the People of Israel A Sermon, by Rabbi Isaac Wise, Delivered at Albany, January 30, 5609, A. M.

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“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.”- Isaiah 49:1-26.

Introduction. The Messiah, the anointed of the Lord, the Saviour, the Redeemer of Israel, or by whatever name this supposed personage is, was, or will be called, has been for many centuries the cause of much trouble and dissension between the Israelites and Christians, which resulted in many centuries of affliction upon the house of Israel. Whether he had already come, or is still to come, was the question which caused so much contention on both sides; it is the very axis around which the differences of these two religions have revolved; and, in fact, this question still remains undecided, in the public mind, each party thinking to have the best evidence on its side. Not only Jews and gentiles, but even Jews against each other, were involved in great difficulties about the coming of the Messiah. Some of them thought the Messiah must necessarily be a descendant of King David, who will be anointed by God himself, and gifted with a supernatural power to perform miracles. That he is to assemble all the sons of Israel from pole to pole,-bring them back to their own country, and be their king. That he will restore the temple at Jerusalem, and reorganize the ancient form of divine worship. That he will restore the nation of Israel to their ancient nationality, form them into a moral, wise, and peaceable people, esteemed, and left in peace by all other nations, so that each one may rest safely and securely under his vine and under his fig tree, and serve his God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Other Jews combined a higher mission with the coming of the Messiah and supposed that the resurrection of the dead would follow immediately on his appearance, so that afterwards, earth, and man, and everything pertaining unto them, should have another and more spiritual character. Again, other Jews, of course, having more philosophy than religion, supposed that there never did come, nor will there come any such personage, as generally understood under the Messiah; that every person, promoting correct knowledge about God and man, and the things pertaining to them, every man adding to the common welfare of mankind, to the stock of learning, to the treasure of science, is a Messiah to his fellow-men; that many such Messiahs had come, and many are still to come, in order that the human race may be brought to such an exalted condition as is described by the prophets, when all the different nations on earth will worship but one God, and in one way, when the difficulties existing between Jews and gentiles will be radically removed, and all men will be brothers and sisters, forming one large family, united by their conviction in the existence of one true God. This Messiah question has been disputed by our foremost theologians of the Spanish period. Maimonides, commonly called Rambam, stated the twelfth principle of Judaism to be the belief in the Messiah, which Rabbi Joseph Albo, commonly known as the ■■■ ■■■■■■, firmly contradicted, stating that one may be an Israelite in the very strictest sense of Judaism, without

believing in the coming of a Messiah, since there is no commandment in the Bible to believe so.

Such are the difficulties and differences which exist about this question. Let us spend a little while to search faithfully in the holy Bible, to find out, in truth, what was promised by the divine messengers of God. Let us be guided by faith and sound judgment. Let us address prayerfully the Most High, for His assistance in this contemplation. In order to have a correct view about the Messiah, we must first investigate the very historical source from which this national idea originated; and to this end I must give you, in the first place, a full description of the mission of the people of Israel, as this was written down by Moses and the prophets; and this will constitute the theme of this lecture, being the mere introduction to the course of lectures which I am about to deliver on the Messiah. The Mission Of The People Of Israel. In my last lecture, I stated that our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt in order to receive a divine revelation, containing the true instruction concerning God and his divine attributes; concerning man, his duties, and hopes; concerning the way man should pursue to elevate himself to a higher and more perfect nature-to live happy, and die in a confidence of a better future. This religious code was not given to the house of Israel alone and exclusively; our fathers and we were only made the bearers of this divine word of God's will, and it was made our sacred duty to promulgate our holy possession unto all nations on earth.

Thus we read in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus: "In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day they came unto the wilderness of Sinai; for they had departed from Rephidim, and they came to the desert of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness; and Israel encamped there opposite the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him from the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then shall ye be unto me a peculiar treasure, above all nations; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." In these important words is expressed the mission of Israel, and the sole object of divine revelation. As it becomes the priest's duty to serve his God according to the best of his conviction, and to promulgate his divine knowledge to his fellow-men, so became it Israel's duty to worship the Most High, and to be henceforth the teacher of all nations, to proclaim God's holy name to the whole world; "for mine is the whole earth," saith God. God is the loving Father of all mankind, all the inhabitants of the earth, in all the different climates and zones, in all the various regions and countries, are the beloved objects of his care; to all of them, Israel should bring the divine truth, that they all may hear it and live; to this end, our forefathers were selected from among all nations, to be God's peculiar treasure, to be a sanctified instrument in the benevolent hand of Providence, to be a holy nation through the holy purpose they serve, by purity, morality and piety. But before the Israelites can fulfill their divine mission, they ought to know themselves all the sublime truths of the revealed word, they ought themselves to believe firmly in the divine doctrine, which they should proclaim, to be convinced of its beneficial consequences, to know by experience that it has the power to save man from the snares of vice and impurity, that it redeems from the bondage of fiction and darkness; that it guides man to the brilliant light and truth, into the heavenly garden of morality, purity of mind, and firmness of character; they ought to know, by their own experience, that this law teaches man to live happy in the midst of sore distress, and to die confident in God, in His

mercy and justice; for none can teach a doctrine with love and enthusiasm-at least none can expect sweet fruits of his mental seed-if he teaches what he does not exactly believe in himself; of what he himself has not sufficient evidence; and no evidence is stronger or deeper-rooted in the heart than that which has been obtained through one's own experience. In order to effect such a love, such a zeal and enthusiasm in Israelites-in order to gather the best evidence of the consequences of God's divine law on the field of experience, there were required long ages, many years of practice, many generations had necessarily to pass away, and live in and according to these religious dictates, to experience their blissful influence; for mental prosperity develops itself but slowly, the realization of spiritual principles requires a long process of time; wherefore their progress is almost imperceptible to the eye of the mere observer of passing events. In order to have a field to gather experience, Israel ought to have and actually had a country of their own, where they could fully enjoy their heavenly property; where they had leisure and opportunity to develop their spiritual faculties and their mental capacities in accordance with their religion; where they were at liberty to take such a direction, to pursue such a course as their law required of them; where they could educate and strengthen themselves for their great mission. Therefore, God gave them for their religious instruction a political and civil code, based upon the principles of the purest democracy, independence, personal liberty, and self-government. The mind of the Israelites was not to be engaged with the projects of warfare, nor with the speculations of commerce, neither should it be occupied by the perplexing calculations of natural philosophy, by the combination and figures of mathematics, nor by the lofty propositions of metaphysics; they should rather be a simple agricultural nation, each resting under his vine and under his fig-tree, subsisting on the products of their land, which flowed with milk and honey: they should develop their mind and exercise their mental faculties, in experiencing the blessed consequence of God's word, in comprehending thoroughly the lofty destiny to which all of them were designated by the hand of Providence; to educate themselves in their mode of thinking, feeling, acting, and speaking, to be the teachers of all other nations, to be the priests of the most High, for which their civil law, the situation and oriental products, and even the pleasant climate of their country, were favourable and extremely well adapted; but also to prepare and strengthen themselves to meet all the oppositions, all the hardships, oppressions, and injustice that would befall them in the process of their history, in the fulfillment of their divine mission, if they disobeyed the will of Providence and went astray, if they did not pursue the path which the hand of the Almighty had pointed out to them, and given them the most suitable means to proceed on it; to learn to meet with hardships and oppressions, and still not lose confidence in God and His divine instruction; for it is evident that we Israelites must fulfill our mission; we must realize the will of our God; we must diffuse the shining light of truth which we received from Sinai.

Through all the world; from east to west, from pole to pole, one of two things must happen. Either the Israelites obey the voice of the Lord, live in and exclusively for his sacred faith, and teach the other nations, by the living example of the peace and happiness they enjoy, of the order and prosperity of their own country, of the enlightenment, good morals, and liberty prevailing among all the people, of the brilliant success and glorious development of his history, as Moses clearly enough expressed it:

"Behold I have taught you ordinances and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep, therefore, and do them; for this

is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these ordinances and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people; for what nation is there so great? who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call unto him for? and which nation is there so great, that has ordinances and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" (Deuteronomy 4:1-49) Or, as Isaiah said (Isaiah 42:1-25), "Behold my servant (the people of Israel), upon whom I am leaned, my elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard abroad. A bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench; but he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment into the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith the Lord thy God; he that hath created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which comes out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit unto them that walk therein,-I the Lord have called thee in righteousness; I have taken thee by thy hand; I have formed thee, and set thee to a covenant of people, to a light of nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out the prisoners of the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison-house."

Or, if the Israelites go astray, break the covenant of the Lord,-if they will not pursue the path of virtue and righteousness, turn their minds to vain imaginations and idols, and their hearts to carnal desires, to low passions,-then God will execute judgment, punish the erring people, in order to recall them to the way of virtue and piety, to fit them again to dwell in the heavenly home of the loving Father, to return to their exalted destiny: and if they still refuse, if they will not return, still harden their hearts, shut up their ears not to hear the gracious voice of their Father in heaven,-that then they should be scattered abroad among all nations and tongues around the globe; they should be persecuted, trodden down, hated for their sin, and for the sin of their fathers; but wheresoever they go, they must still take the divine truth along with them, and carry it to all nations around the globe, that all of them may see it, and at last appreciate it.

Thus should Israel be punished, if they refuse to serve the Lord in joyfulness; in the happiness of the heart, from the abundance of all that maketh glad the heart of man. Such is the mission of Israel, and these are the two ways to accomplish it. The path they had to pursue was dependent on themselves solely. Thus it was foretold by Moses and the prophets. In one of the last speeches of Moses, which commences with the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and ends with the thirtieth, these two ways-which Providence has given to Israel to fulfill their sacred mission-are spoken of in forcible and very expressive terms. The address is too long for being recited entire; but I wish that every one would read it, and he will find that I have drawn my remarks from this source. The same is the case with an address of the prophet Isaiah; which begins with the fifteenth verse of the fifty-second chapter, and ends with the fifty-fifth chapter; where the downfall of Israel, the distress, the hardships and sorrows they will experience in the world among opponents, their resurrection, their final triumph, the acknowledgment of truth by all nations, are powerfully described.

Allow me to recite a few verses merely. "If the mountains depart, and the hills be removed, my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that has mercy on thee." (Isaiah 59:10) In respect to the final triumph of truth, and the fulfillment of Israel's mission, the prophet says, in this same address, "Behold thou wilt call a

nation thou didst not know, and a nation that hath not known thee will run to thee; because of the Lord thy God, and for the holy one of Israel, for he has glorified thee." (Leviticus 5:1-19.) To stimulate the people for their mission, even if in the midst of calamities and distress, to assure them of a blessed future as the result of their painful task, the prophet says, farther: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and return not thither, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,-so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall make prosperous him whom I send; for ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." (Leviticus 10:1-20; Leviticus 11:1-47; Leviticus 12:1-8.) You will read in these two addresses, which I particularly recommend to your attention, as in many other chapters of the, Bible, that Israel-the whole nation, and no particular man-was chosen to bring the truth of the Almighty to all the nations on earth, either amidst peace and joy, happy in their own country, if they would obey, and be constantly a holy nation; or amidst pain and grief, in distress and calamity, scattered and persecuted-if they would disobey the word of the Most High-if they would go astray, and forget the holy covenant, the object of their sacred mission. And if you ask me, which part of our sacred faith shall be diffused among all nations? I must answer you, Only the fundamental truths, the principal doctrines, the abstract truths concerning God and his attributes, concerning man, his duties and hopes, shall become the property of all nations on earth. "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Israel, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." (Isaiah 44:5) "And the Lord will be King over all the earth, on that day the Lord will be One and his name One." (Zechariah 14:9) Every knee will then be bent before the Lord, every tongue will glorify and proclaim his holy name, every heart will rejoice in truth, in the glory of our God and as once Israel did on Mount Carmel, so shall once all nations united and combined proclaim: "The Lord is the one and true God, the gracious Father of all men, the kind, benign, and merciful Saviour of all his children; all men are the beloved objects of his care, all men are brethren; we are all but one great family, and God is our Father." To this end should Israel bring all mankind; this is our lofty destiny; this is our glorious banner, which we are to carry from pole to pole; but the ceremonial part of our faith is the exclusive property of Israel; it has never been given unto us to teach it to other nations; but partly to separate our forefathers from paganism, from the altar of idols, which they saw adored in Egypt, and in all the countries round about them; partly to prevent us from being divided and subdivided into an innumerable amount of sects; and partly to stamp us with the signs and tokens of our faith, and of our nationality, that we, if scattered, may remain all over the earth one and the same nation, designed for one destiny; that we may not be swallowed up by the overwhelming multitude of other nations, before all the world shall have accepted our sacred message, until all nations adore with us the ONE and TRUE God-until our mission is fulfilled.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were lost in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord on the holy mount in Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:2) "And in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain at the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the mount of the Lord, and to the house of the God of

Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strange nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; no nation shall lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid, for the Lord of Hosts hath spoken so." (Micah 4:1-13) The common acknowledgment of truth will effect in all men a thorough and genuine fear of God, a general desire to practise justice and mercy, in order to find grace in the sight of the Lord.

Justice and mercy will then make all men brothers, will inspire them to harmony and peace, combine them to form a fraternal union. This is the sublime end of Israel's mission; and before this condition of mankind is brought about, Israel's mission is not at an end, and so long must we uphold our nationality with all the signs and tokens with which God has marked us, with all our biblical ceremonies by which we know each other in all the different parts of the world; but we are not obliged to teach them to the gentiles. Our mission has been and is still misunderstood, or rather not understood at all, by many ignorant or indifferent Israelites, as well as by almost all the Christian interpreters of the Bible. They call it the mission of the Messiah; they ascribe the importance of our nation in history, together with all the instructions and prophecies of the Bible relating to it, to one man, to one son of our nation, whom the Christians adore as a God. But they ought to consider, that the son has not given birth to the nation,-but our nation gave birth to this and all other sons that first taught truth to the world, even to all the pagan world. They ought farther to consider that all the divine truth they possess not only came by our sons, but was taken from our sacred shrine, copied from our code; and every word that strangers have added, every dogma taken from abroad, is but a heresy of idle priests and monks, a mere product of the dark ages of ignorance and superstition. Again, they ought to consider that this mission is still not fulfilled, though the Christian Messiah long ago perished; that this mission was partially fulfilled before that Messiah appeared. Moreover they ought to consider that he brought them no accomplished truth; Martin Luther and many others have reformed his doctrines, and the majority of the people in our present age disbelieve his principal doctrines, and hundreds of reformers have grown up in our present century. They see these difficulties and say: "He will come a second time;" of which there is neither an evidence, nor is there the least ground for the supposition. To prevent the people from returning us their best thanks for the truth they possess, they made him a God; and to him who does not believe in this imaginary deity, they say: "Whosoever believe and be baptized shall be saved; and who believeth not, shall be damned."

Instead of coming and learning the whole truth from us, to seek for the end where they found the beginning, they send their missionaries to us; they are to teach us doctrines which they have taken from abroad; because our own doctrines they can never teach us, for this would be as if the child would say to his mother, I am much wiser than thou art,-as if the branch would say to the tree, I bear more fruits than thou doest. It was, and is still, Israel's mission to promulgate the sacred truth to all nations on earth; to diffuse the bright light that first shone on Sinai's sanctified summit all over the world. The progress of civilization, of science, arts, and enlightenment level the way for this promulgation; the Christian missionaries prepare the heathen to accept, at some future day, the eternal truth from the hand of Israel; the infidelity so tremendously raging in Christianity all over the world, the innumerable sects in which it is broken up, give us the best evidence that the

dogmas of Christianity are not any longer of a satisfactory nature, either to the profound investigator, or to sound common sense: this gives us a satisfactory evidence, that the time is close at hand when they will come and say, Let us ascend the mount of the Lord, let us enter the house of the God of Jacob; for from Zion cometh forth the Law, and the word of God from Jerusalem. And now, my dear friends, after I have given you a full description of the mission of the people of Israel, our own destiny, our problem which we have to solve in the history of mankind, we are enabled to go on with our proposed investigation of the Messiah, which I will do in my next lecture. But let me remind you of all the hardships that our fathers experienced, because of this mission; how they were persecuted with sword and fire, driven like outcasts, like the wild beast of the field from one country to the other, from land to land; how they were bereft of their earthly joys, of their possessions, of their liberty, nay, of their families, of their fathers and mothers, of their wives and children; how thousands of them died the martyr's death; but they kept their heavenly property, their religion, and went confidently from land to land, to slavery, to poverty, to death, and were never tired of their pilgrimage, of their sacred mission: remember this, and the importance of our name in history, and learn to be pure and pious sons of our nation, worthy of our pious ancestors, of our great and important mission; learn from this to be proud of the honourable name of Israel, and act constantly so as to win for it the respect and regard of all men; learn from this to be inspired for our sacred mission, to be pious and pure, moral and virtuous, so as to deserve the glorious name of an Israelite, so as to be actually a priest of God, a representative of his hold word,-that the name of the Lord may be glorified by you, and you be happy and joyful in Him.

Let us conclude with the fifteenth Psalm.

"Lord! Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart; he that beareth no evil words on his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that feat the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, and taketh not reward against the innocent. He that doth these things, shall never be removed."

He will live in the sunshine of God's mercy, in the light of the Father's love. Amen.

Chapter 77

S. The Messiah - Part 2

The Messiah Part II. Development and Opposition A Sermon, by Rabbi Isaac Wise, Delivered at Albany, February 12, 5609.

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“Save thy people, and bless thy inheritance.”- Psalms 28:9.

Brethren:*

* It is necessary to state that the intolerant and fanatical lectures of a minister of the Baptist Church in this city gave rise to this course of lectures. They were delivered before a numerous audience of Jews and Christians. In the first part of our lectures on the Messiah <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume7/jul1849/themission.html>, we spoke of the mission of our people, which is, according to the statements of the bible, “to bring the sacred truth which was first revealed to our fathers to all men;” it is, and was our sacred duty to promulgate the fundamental doctrines, the principal truths of God’s law to all those who seek for them; and this we must do, not through a host of idle priests, monks, and recluses-not through means of Jesuits and missionaries-through hidden and forbidden means, not by means of persecution and cruelty, not with the sword and fire, and Christianity and Mahomedanism have done, and do still, to level the way for their opinions, and doctrines, and dogmas; we are not to promulgate the holy word to the world, as some Christian ministers do, even in our enlightened age, teaching their doctrines by frightening their audience with the curses which they pronounce over those who do not believe them; insulting all the world, and condemning the rest of the human family who do not feel inclined to think with the minister’s brain, to speak with the priest’s tongue, to feel with the Jesuit’s heart, to offer their money for splendid churches and foreign missions, a admire and praise them, when they have appeared on the pulpit as a good actor on the stage. These are not the ways we should teach the holy truth, for God prescribed unto us this method of teaching, “Be ye a holy nation;” holy in your heart and in your soul; be ye the true friends and representatives of virtue and innocence, of good morals and piety; “Be ye perfect with the Lord your God,” obey his voice and do his will; never forget your Father in heaven; look up to Him with a trustful heart in the days of grief and pain, of calamity and distress; for He alone is the Rock of Israel; look up to Him with a heart full of repentance and regret when you have sinned, when yon have followed the desire of the dust, and He surely will forgive your sin, will pardon your iniquity; for he alone is the merciful Father of all; He alone is the salvation of Israel, look up to Him when joy and happiness embrace you, when the bright stars of gladness smile on you from heaven; for He alone is the Bestower of joy and pleasure, to Him alone your thanks are due. Do this, and misfortune and distress will not obtain the mastery over you, and cannot deprive you of the divine strength which our religion bestows; do this, and vice, and sin, and crime, will lose their dominion, they will cease to subdue you, you will not sink from sin to sin, you will not be deprived of the divine image that is enshrined in your heart; do this, and joy, and pleasure, and happiness, will sweeten your life without leading you astray; they will make your heart good and happy without depriving it of the consciousness of belonging to

a better and higher world; do this, and you will be holy, and you will have realized the word of truth, and all the people may see it, and learn to walk in the path of the God of Israel. In this manner must we teach the world what God has taught unto us.

It is evident that the mass of the people that came out of Egypt could not comprehend a pure spiritual religion; if God had taught them the fundamental and principal truth alone, without being imparted through means of forms and ceremonies, they could not have comprehended it, and the following generations of Israel, being constantly surrounded by nations that served idols, that worshipped the handiwork of men, that were overwhelmed with superstition and prejudice, with ignorance and darkness, would have given up a doctrine which can only be understood by a well-educated mind; therefore, God surrounded and imparted the everlasting truth with corresponding forms and ceremonies, which are accessible to all, leading to mental truth. But not all men look into the interior of things-not every person seeks for the source of things;-many, very many, are satisfied with the appearance, with the mere outside, with the shadow of things; many, very many, believe what they see, hear, or feel, and ask never if truth is in their belief, salvation in their religious performance, elevation and holiness in the way they pursue.

We have daily occasion to see people act almost like madmen; you can see them spring and dance, sit and stand, weep and sing, mourn and laugh in turns, and each performs his particular ceremony because of a religious reason; they contradict each other in their different ceremonies; they do not reason and think that their ceremonies mean nothing; but they rather condemn each other, and worship God as if they were paying homage to a man, to some capricious king, as if they were to please a fashionable woman, who wants to see her admirers dressed according to the fashion, according to her own taste. You see people still in our days laying more weight and importance upon the forms than upon the benign spirit, upon the principal objects of religion.

You will, therefore, readily see that ceremonies and forms were, and are still, in some respect, unavoidable to true religion; they invite, attract, and guide to truth; but on the other side, they profane the sanctity of religion, they degrade the divine worship into a mere compendium of blind forms, which are of no effect; they cause the everlasting truth to be hidden, unseen, bereft of its benign influence; therefore, development and progress in harmony with the progress of time, were considered elements inseparable from original Judaism. The more elevated and enlightened the spirit of man is, and the nearer he stands to his God, the less he needs ceremonies and forms to guide him to truth, to stimulate him to worship his God; and to trust in Him, to be a loving father, a tender husband, a peaceable neighbour, an honest dealer, a good citizen, and a friend of humanity, virtue, and morality. When ceremonies and forms have lost their signification, their stimulating power, they appear like worn out garments, like barren branches on a fruitful tree; they become then a heavy burden, which ought to be laid aside, because being useless and burdensome, they tire the religious pilgrim, and cause him at last to stand still, or to go backward on his way to God.

Open the book of history, and you will find that each century is a step in advance on the way of mental development; the spirit of man has advanced from its very cradle to its greatness and ripeness, which is now proved by the civilization, liberty, and order, for which a strong longing is felt over almost all the earth; by the arts and sciences to elevate and solace the life of man. There is only progress in the human spirit! Progress is the life; cessation and retrogression are the death

of the spirit; and in the same proportion as the spirituality of mankind increases, religious ceremonies and forms must decrease; we see the spirit always advancing, always gaining more strength and dominion; and we must judge that at the time when the spirit of mankind will have reached its utmost perfection, when its highest capacities will have been developed, all ceremonies must cease, [redacted]. At that time, when the spirit of man will worship God, the Source of all spirits, when all men will know that God is no man who wants to be honoured by some particular forms-that time is the time of the Messiah; and the man who will finally convince mankind of this doctrine, is the Messiah, not only of the Jews, but of all other nations and tongues also. And if all ceremonies and forms will have ceased to exist, then the fundamental truth of our sacred religion will be universally acknowledged, and Israel's mission is at an end. This is the [redacted] new covenant of Jeremiah.

Let us now open the Bible and see if that what I said is a speculation invented out of my heart, or if it was taught by Moses and the prophets. The principal ceremonies of the Bible, such as sacrifices, temple-service, priesthood, clean and unclean, together with all the particulars pertaining to the same, are wisely bound, to one place-only in the place which God has chosen may these ceremonies be performed, and nowhere else; so when they were commanded, they already bore in themselves their final termination,* when they will be worn out by the process of time and enlightenment. And thus we read in the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy: "And the Lord said unto me, They have done well in what they have spoken. A prophet will I raise up unto them from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I may command him." (Every period is to have a prophet who shall teach the people the development and progress of the sacred word consonantly with the just and reasonable demands of the time.) "And it shall come to pass, that if there be a man who will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (For the work of those prophets shall have the end and aim to make the word of the Lord dear and precious to every heart, perceptible to each mind, cheering on and guiding the traveller on the path of virtue, and promising pardon and salvation to every man.) "But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak,-or who shall speak in the name of other gods-even that prophet shall die." (For the word of God is holy and shall endure forever; nothing can be added to it; it is complete in itself; nothing can be altered in its fundamental structure, for the truth remains for ever unchangeable.) "And if thou shouldst say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? That which the prophet speaketh in in the name of the Lord, and the thing doth not happen nor come to pass," ('being averse to the holy word itself, to human reason and nature,'-Rambam,) that is the word which the Lord hath not spoken; in presumption bath the prophet spoken it; thou shalt not be afraid of him."

These words are the very first source of the Messiah idea. God will cause prophets to arise for every time and generation, who shall strengthen Israel in their faith, who shall always more and more unfurl the banner of truth before the eye of the world; thus shall the true spirit of religion always more and more take hold of Israel's mind, and remove the idols of the nations: fictions, superstition, and prejudice, must at last give way to truth; ceremonies and forms must disappear in proportion as the spirit of religion truly fills the heart; so that at last Jews and gentiles must meet in the spirit of God, in the centre of truth, in the home of God's divine word.

Look farther into the words and the history of our prophets and our nation at large, and you will find that these words were literally fulfilled up to this day, and you will find that all the prophets spoke in this same manner. Never have the prophets rebuked the people because they neglected to perform the ceremonies of old. Isaiah said: “What is unto me the multitude of your sacrifices? saith the Lord. I am sated with the burntofferings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and the blood of bullocks and of sheep, and of he-goats I do not desire. When ye come to appear in my presence, who hath required this of your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more an oblation of deceit; incense of abomination is it unto me-new moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies-I cannot bear misdeed and festive gathering. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they have become a burden unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you, when ye make ever so many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.

Wash yourselves, and make yourselves clean; put away your evil deeds from before my eyes, cease to do evil; learn to do well, seek for justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall become white as the snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” In the same spirit did this inspired son of Israel say, in the 40th chapter: “In the wilderness” (among pagans) “prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert” (superstition and prejudice) “a highway for our God. Every valley” (ignorance and infidelity) “shall be raised, and every mountain and hill” (idolatry, ceremonies, and forms) “shall be made low, and the crooked” (fiction) “shall be made a straight path” (truth), “and the rough places” (fanaticism) “a plain” (love). “And then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it at once that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken” (unto them). In the same spirit did all the prophets speak; and when this spirit will have taken hold on all minds, then is the time of the Messiah, which time

Jeremiah called “God is our righteousness;” and he that will finally unfurl the banner of truth, which Israel has borne for thirty centuries (to the nations), he will be the true Messiah for Israel and the world at large.

II.

It is commonly known to every observer, that the air continually struggles to maintain itself in a state of equilibrium throughout the vast expanse which contains the universe. The same struggle occupies the mind of man; each man seeks to become equal with his fellow-men. He that stands low in human nature, either through ignorance or through vice and corruption, wishes to degrade all men to his own brutal level, and he actually does so in words or thoughts, if actions are beyond his reach. The noble-minded also, the man of dignity, virtue, and scientific education, wishes to impart to others his own knowledge, his morality and convictions, in order to elevate his fellow-men to the high position which he holds in the rank of humanity, so as to come to a state of equilibrium with all mankind. And even the noblest mind wishes only to elevate his fellow-men to his own height, but not higher; he does not wish to be excelled by others. This is one of the great features of the human character, that he can see none above him, that he does not suffer others to excel him, if it is in his power to prevent it.

We find the authenticity of this observation verified in the history of mankind. What we have stated here of individuals, is there realized by nations: barbarian nations, the ignorant inhabitants of

uncivilized countries, exercised all their power and influence to bring all mankind on a level with them, to degrade all who stood above them in civilization and knowledge; and the most favoured, the most cultivated and improved nations were always the most desirable objects of their enmity and destruction. And, on the other side, the most civilized nations have always tried to raise their neighbours to a state of equilibrium with themselves. The more their efforts were rejected, the more their offerings were refused: the more actively did they try again the difficult task, because it is a necessity for man to do so.

I will not enter into particulars; every reader of universal history will find evidence enough in favour of my proposition. I wish now to recall to your mind what I stated in my last lecture, that Providence has prepared two different ways for the people of Israel to fulfill their sacred mission, that is, to communicate the truth to all the world, even the sacred truth, which God himself revealed to our forefathers, for all generations and for all mankind; either Israel must be a holy nation, a pious and virtuous people living exclusively in and for God's holy word, and teach the world, from their happy home, by the living example which they set to the nations on earth: or that, if they disobey the will of God, and forget their holy mission, they must be scattered abroad among all nations for their sin and the sin of their fathers but that, whithersoever they go, they must take God's holy word with them, and show it forth to all nations, that all may see it and at last appreciate it. In both these cases, opposition, enmity, and persecution were unavoidable for the people of Israel; and that we were not utterly destroyed, proves the grace and benignity of God, with which he watched over us and preserved us for our great mission. The Israelites, after accepting the word of God, were the uppermost of all nations on earth; truth, in a religious and moral point of view, was their exclusive property and whilst all the world besides was covered with darkness and obscurity, the Israelites had the pure light of heaven; whilst other nations were ignorant of the simple art to read and write, and being without anything like a code of laws, but living in the savage state of barbarism, crushed and devoured each other in a horrible manner, the Israelites enjoyed the benefit of a written law, the basis of civilization, peace, and happiness, the source of liberty and mental development. It was thus a natural occurrence that all nations should be combined against the Israelites, to throw them down from their high eminence,-that all conquerors directed their steps towards the small country of Palestine, which contained the highest intellectual sources of those ages. The Israelites failed in their duty, and fell at last a prey to their brutal enemies and bloodthirsty foes.

Rome, tyrannical, covetous Rome! Carthage, and Athens, and Jerusalem, the three metropolis of the ancient world, thou didst swallow up to die thyself a shameful death! Israel went now from land to land, from east to west, from pole to pole, having nothing from their beloved home but the word of our God. This word was unto them more than their life, more than all the earth. Whithersoever our exiled forefathers came, they stood in opposition to all the world besides. Israel had lived for many centuries as a free and independent people, under a free government, with wise and humane laws and institutions; but now they met with tyranny and oppression-the sceptre of nations under which also they had to bend their knee. The sons of Israel had carefully gathered the pearls of the orient for many centuries; the philosophy and science of Greece and India, and all the East, were the principal objects of their occupation; they gathered science from all nations, compared it with their religion, and laid up in their treasure then best materials of all countries. Every Israelite studied the law of God, and copied it in writing, so that all of them were educated in the word of God. But now they stood in opposition to nations to whom books were no less strange

than truth; who were as far removed from enlightenment as they were from knowledge; but they were the overwhelming majority, and Israel was compelled to call them lords and masters.

Israel had acknowledged and practised the will of their God and Maker. They were the only people that stood armed with the sacred truth, professing that there is but one only God, who is the Creator, Governor, and Preserver of the world; that man is an immortal image of God, who is appointed to be God's agent on earth, to serve God and mankind, to raise himself to perfection, and to be through this means happy and good. But among the nations among whom they came, they found on one side paganism, with all its absurdities and follies, with all its cruelty and fiction, and on the other side they met with the Christians of that dark age, who had mixed up the dogmas of Judaism, not properly understood, and the tendency of which they had misconceived, with the principal ideas of paganism; they saw them kneeling before crosses of wood and stone, of gold and silver; they saw them worshipping graven images and pictures of all sorts, and adoring vile priests as the representatives and agents of God; then saw our eternal truth polluted in the hands of monks and priests; God was changed into a Jupiter, the father of a son by a mortal woman, and this son was acknowledged as a god, and this god was a man, and died as another man, to become a god, equal to him of whom he was a son.

They heard still greater absurdities: God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (for they are alleged to be an indivisible unity,) died on the cross by the hand of men, to reconcile mankind with God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This trinity sits now at the right hand of the trinity, to plead for mankind before this trinity. They saw still more absurdities; they saw priests and people, who pretended to profess a religion of the purest truth and love, sanction and practise not only the most vile deceit, but commit the most bloody cruelties, inhuman crimes of all descriptions. This is surely the condition of those ages when the Israelites were scattered over the world; and thus did our exiled fathers stand in opposition to the whole world; and the result of this opposition was, as a natural consequence, hatred, condemnation, oppression, persecution, and murder. Our enemies were not satisfied with the cruel violence and endless intolerance with which they treated our forefathers here, but they prolonged their cruelty as far as thoughts could do it, even beyond the grave, and denied us every right to salvation after death. Horrible were the consequences of this opposition! Look yonder, over the sea, at England, France, and Germany, and wherever you set your foot on the ground, it is defiled, polluted by the blood and tears of our fathers and mothers. Wherever your ear listens, wherever the wild storm rages, wherever the hurricanes furiously roar, there the spirits of our slain babes, of our weeping mothers, the spirits of our massacred youth, of our assassinated adults, accuse their cruel murderers before the throne of God. Every page of their history is defiled by our blood; every city in their countries is polluted by the memories of murder and persecution. And why did they persecute so furiously the exiled sons of Israel? Because it is a feature in the nature of man to bring all others to a state of equilibrium with himself; he can see nothing above him: "Do as we do, act as we act, believe as we believe," said the world to Israel, "or we will swallow you up, we will annihilate you." But Israel did not, acted not, and believed not as they did; they understood how to sacrifice the earth for heaven, to resign the joys of this life for a better world. And yet they were not swallowed up, they were not annihilated; for God guarded them; his holy word and promises upheld them in the midst of persecution and death, and God did not suffer to perish his messengers, whom he had charged and chosen to bring his divine truth to the whole world. The time of persecution with fire and sword, the time of barbarism is nearly at an

end; but Israel is still in opposition to the world in respect to religion. We can never believe the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, nor of the Islam; and those who call themselves converted Jews are certainly impostors, that really believe nothing, but but for the sake of money and honours. And though the majority of our Christian brethren do not believe any longer in the absurdities of the dark ages, they cannot yet reach the pure light of truth; custom and priestcraft still depress the public mind, and Christianity is so much intermixed with the elements of paganism, that it paves the way in many reasoning minds to infidelity and atheism. The religious questions are not decided now by the sword, but by words and pens. Still there are priests who are too ignorant to say or write something reasonable and true, and who know of no better way to please their audience and readers than to disgrace and dishonour their pulpit and their pen by insulting the Jews and Judaism, by uttering empty and unprincipled words, for which they have neither proof nor evidence. That ministers do so is no wonder, for ignorant and unprincipled men also seek to get their living in an easy way; but that such preachers can find people that will tolerate their abusive language, is a proof that we are still in opposition to a great part of the world; and the consequences of this opposition are still, though milder and more humane, bringing unhappiness and insult on the house of Israel. This opposition and its horrible consequences were foreseen and foretold by God, through Moses and the prophets. The opposition itself was unavoidable; by the accepting of God's holy word and mission, the Israelites were too far advanced in the progress of mind not to become the object of hatred and persecution to their barbarian neighbours; but if they had lived according to God's divine law, He would have shielded and guarded them, and none would have been able to injure them, as Moses several times said in his last addresses: "Only if thou dost carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe, to do all these commandments which I command thee this day, then the Lord thy God will bless thee, as He hath spoken unto thee, and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow, and thou shalt reign over many nations, but over thee they shall not reign." (See Deuteronomy 15:6; Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Deuteronomy 28:1-14) But they were told that, if they disobeyed the word of God, they should become a prey to their enemies, the helpless objects of hatred and persecution to their opponents, as Moses predicted in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Deuteronomy; but that they should fulfill their sacred mission, even amidst persecution and distress, amidst misery and calamity, the same as if they were surrounded by joy and happiness. But how is it possible with a man to be subjected to persecution, murder, contempt, and hatred, for an idea, for a mere belief, and not to yield to the overwhelming majority?-how to throw off this idea, and live happily with the rest of mankind? This is possible only through a sincere conviction of the truth of such an idea and belief; and this sincere conviction the Israelites brought from their home. This was rendered possible only through the promises of God, that He would always shield and guard us, so that nothing on earth should annihilate the house of Israel; and they who died for their principles, for their convictions, were men worthy of their charge, and they live in the memory of their children and brethren in faith; they were pious, godly men, and have found their reward in a happy home, in a blissful life beyond the grave, in the house of their Father. This firm standing by our religion was only rendered possible through the promises of God that our cause should be triumphant at the end of our severe pilgrimage, as it is said in Leviticus 26:44 : "And for all that, though they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor loathe them, to destroy them utterly, to break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God. But I will remember for their sakes the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, before

the eyes of the nations, to be unto them God. I am the Eternal." (See also Deuteronomy 4:25-32; Deuteronomy 30:1-11) In the very same sense have all the prophets after Moses spoken to Israel. All and each of them brought them word that if they disobeyed the command of the Lord, He would surrender them into the hands of their opponents, and they should be cruelly maltreated, but God would not forsake, them, they should not be utterly destroyed; and at last their cause should be triumphant all over the world; all nations should acknowledge the truth, should appreciate the doctrines which Israel brought unto them, which we have guarded and saved with our own blood, with our life; and he that will finally move mankind to accept, acknowledge, and appreciate this eternal truth, he that will make an end to the bitter opposition which has been for thirty centuries the source of horrible events for the house of Israel, will therefore be the redeemer of Israel, the true messiah, the anointed of the Lord, not only for us, but for all the world besides, inasmuch as he will bring unto them truth, and peace, and happiness, and he will be called in truth the father of happiness, the prince of peace. And until that day comes for Israel and the world at large, we must bear the banner of the Lord as our forefathers have done, fearlessly and valiantly; for our God is with us. The more the spirit of our religion has inspired our heart, and found its way into the mind of others: the more earnestly should we unfurl our sacred banner to the eye of the world, and leave off such customs as have lost their benign influence, and which hide the eternal truth from the eye of the world. The nearer we come to God, and the nearer and closer the nations of the earth approach us the nearer at hand is the time of the Messiah; and when the age will be enlightened enough, sufficiently prepared to receive a Messiah, then the Messiah will be found, and God will send his messenger to unite all the sons of Adam, to combine all the nations into one great family. And until this happy period appears in the history of mankind, we must stand in opposition to the whole world. Be strong, be men in the true sense of the word, and live and die for your principles, for your convictions! Be strong and of good courage, to stand in opposition to a whole world, and say: "Ours is thy truth; we have inherited it of our fathers."

Yea, be strong and of good courage, for virtue, purity, and piety, for God and his holy word. Amen.

* Upon a subject so momentous as the permanence of ceremonial religion, it is but fair to expect that pious and honest men will differ, and no one has, therefore, a right to accuse the other of heresy for the difference in views which they respectively entertain. To say that the ceremonies are to cease at the time of the Messiah, does not say that there will be another law; because it is the TRUTH which is to overspread the earth as the waters cover the sea, and this is the law of which the prophets who made the prediction were themselves adherents; for they knew of no knowledge of the Lord, nor of any system of belief other than that revealed through Moses. But we do deny that, as yet, there has been any progress to authorize any Jew to abridge in the least of the ceremonies, even granting that they were given only for the sake of preventing the Israelites from lapsing gradually into the heathen nations which surrounded them. For the truth of the law is not yet acknowledged by any class of men other than ourselves; consequently, we must endeavour to keep ourselves separate from the dissentients, not by acting unkindly and unsociably towards them, but by acting up to the letter of the prescriptions which we have received, so as to mark us at first sight as sons of Israel. Wherefore we maintain that the whole advance in the sciences, and the whole progress in civilization, have left us precisely where we stood when Moses gave us the law as the ambassador from Heaven, and prohibited and permitted, unclean and clean, festival and Sabbath, fasting and abstinence, circumcision and the

interdict of intermarriage, remain in full force and vigour to this very hour, and until that moment when the Lord, if so He pleases, absolves us himself from the obligations thus imposed. For who else is to absolve us? and what are we to omit, what retain? Is the ceremony of the Sabbath to cease because the electric telegraph is invented? is circumcision to the omitted became the sun is invoked to paint a portrait by the Daguerrian process? or would you abolish the Passover, because of the discoveries in mental philosophy? We could multiply questions, but the above are sufficient to prove the unreasonableness of the idea that ceremonies are useless, and of themselves abrogated by the progress of man. There is, moreover, an occasional retrogression; are ceremonies then to become again necessary? But it strikes us that ceremonies are not an accidental, but a vital part of religion; they are the evidence of obedience from the created to the Creator, which cannot be manifested by the progress of the spirit only. Besides, Judaism could not, hitherto, and cannot now, exist without marking the Israelites, individually and nationally, as a people of a peculiar kind for it is evident that the mere possession of a single truth, we will admit it to be the highest, purest, holiest, and truest, the existence of ONE God, could not be preserved amidst the conflict of ideas which all, more or less, contradict the truth of which we are the appointed custodians. The child of Israel must be reminded by ceremonies, as memorials, that he is not to believe as others do; that he is not to pray as others pray. It is the circumcision of the flesh which is to mark him as a servant of God; it is the Sabbath which is to remind him that he has been commanded to acknowledge the Most high as the Creator of the universe; it is by means of the abstinence from prohibited food that he is to avoid mingling too intimately with those of a different belief; and by Tephillin, Mezuzah, and Zitzith, he is to be reminded perpetually of the precepts which he has received in consequence of his being the chosen servant of God.

It is possible, we know nothing of the contrary at all events, that a time may come when all the world will voluntarily embrace the principle of UNITY as their idea of God, without the intervention of the prince Messiah, or the anointed chief descended from David; in which case the distinctive precepts and peculiar ceremonies would indeed have lost their significance for the time being; but the very first relapse of the world into error would at once compel the faithful to fall back upon all the precepts and ceremonies, and compel them, perhaps, to adopt new and more rigorous measures (■■■■■), in the manner of the Talmudists and Pharisees, to guard against the onward rolling of the waves of superstition and unbelief. Without an assurance, therefore, from the Supreme himself, through an authenticated revelation, through an undoubted prophet, we cannot be sure that the reign of error will be finally over, no matter how much soever appearances may favour the hopeful idea; wherefore, again, it follows that no progress of light and knowledge on earth can authorize us to pretermit a single ceremony which is enjoined on us in Scripture; nor do we conceive that Dr. Wise entertains any view differing from us; and we state all we have done, only to guard against any misconception which the Doctor’s peculiar mode of expressing himself might, perhaps, occasion in the superficial reader. We appeal for proof to his peroration, where he calls on the people to remain firm in opposition to the world; when it is evident that only through ceremonial religion can this diversity of opinion, which embodies the essence of Judaism, be made manifest.

It is another affair, quite, with regard to mere outward ceremonies and customs which the peculiarities of any age may have produced. They originate in circumstances; and, therefore, of right, perish when these have passed away. In this manner some mere human institutions have

lost their significance, and have fallen into disuse, and others of the same kind are likely to follow; but all this does not touch the essential points of religion, those precepts which proceeded from God himself. Judaism knows a progress in non-essentials, and as regards these we may say ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ "Yiphtach in his generation is equal to Samuel in his generation;" but who shall "prohibit for us the dove," or "permit the raven?" Neither Yiphtach nor Samuel, nor even Moses himself, no such authority having been given. (See Baba Metziah, passim, in ■■■■■ ■■■.)

We come now to the assertion of Dr. Wise, that at the same time of the Messiah, all the ceremonies will cease, since then they will have lost signification completely. But we confess, (and hope Dr. W. will excuse us for so frankly differing from him,) that we do not read the Scriptures then as he does. Because ceremonies are assuredly ordained even for the latest generation of Israelites if the words mean what they ostensibly do, and we refer the reader to Genesis 17:9 for the perpetuity of circumcision in the family of Abraham, whatever other nations may be commanded to do; next to Exodus 12:14, with respect to the Passover; then to Exodus 31:13, Exodus 31:16-17, respecting the weekly day of rest to Leviticus 7:36, and Numbers 18:19, for a perpetuity of the priesthood and its institutions; to Leviticus 16:29, Leviticus 16:33, regarding the Day of Atonement; to Leviticus 17:7, with respect to the prohibition of sacrificing to idols; to Leviticus 22:3, regarding other laws for the priests ; to Leviticus 23:1-44 respecting the sacrifice of the omer of barley, the Pentecost, the Day of Atonement, and the feast of Tabernacles; to Numbers 10:8, respecting the trumpets to be blown by the priests on certain occasions; to Numbers 15:14-15, in regard to the uniformity of laws for the native and adopted Israelite; to Numbers 15:21, and Numbers 15:23, in the same chapter, respecting other precepts; and to Numbers 15:38, respecting the Zitzith; to Numbers 19:10, in reference to the waters of purification; and, lastly, respecting the perpetuity of legal justice, to Numbers 35:29. We have, no doubt, omitted several passages of like import, as we merely copy those which we recollect without laborious reference; but we have shown enough that the main portions of the laws were ordained for all the generations of Israel; therefore not to be abolished whilst a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob remains on earth.

We have a few words to say with respect to the sacrifices. They were, as Dr. Wise correctly remarks, entirely bound to the altar, at Jerusalem, as the spot chosen by the Lord to let his name dwell there; with the destruction of the temple, the sacrifices necessarily ceased, (though even here, Rabbi Hirsch Chajes, one of our modern most learned men, maintains that the Jews continued to sacrifice on the ruins of the altar left by Titus, till the final expulsion of our people from, Palestine by Aelian Hadrian, about 130 of the vulgar era, consequently sixty years after the destruction of the temple by the son of Vespasian;) because, without an altar there can be no sacrifice, (see Deuteronomy 12:13-14) But this does not say the institution itself has ceased, and that the whole is not to be restored at some future day. On the contrary, the reverse is taught by the prophets: sec Isaiah 1:1-31; Ezekiel 43:27; Ezekiel 44:15-31; Ezekiel 45:16-25; Ezekiel 46:1-15; Hosea 3:5, (by inference); and Malachi 3:4; wherefore we must expect that at the time of the Messiah, since all the passages quoted refer to no other, the whole of the temple, with its sacrifices, incense, and order of priesthood, will be completely restored. That the world is to be enlightened, does not gainsay in our minds that human nature will not be materially different; ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ "There is no difference

between this and the age of the Messiah, except subjection to government" (universal freedom and peace) is a well-known maxim among many Rabbins; and hence the outward aids to devotion will not be useless even then. Still we do not say that it is impossible that a time may come; when a new creation will render all outward acts unnecessary, when the new heavens and the new earth, of which Isaiah speaks in his sixty-sixth chapter, will be established; indeed, this may be the consummation of the piety of God's servants; but primarily all nations must be brought under the subjugation of the law, in a manner modified to them, as we read in Zechariah 14:1-21, where the Tabernacle festival is described as universal to all the earth; and the same is hinted at in Isaiah 2:3, and Micah 4:2.

So, likewise, we think, that Dr. Wise has overlooked a passage in 1 Kings 19:10, where Elijah rebukes the Israelites for forsaking God's covenant, pulling down his altars, and slaying his prophets, where ceremonies are especially referred to. Besides this, there are other references to the same; Isaiah only says that without piety, sacrifices arc not wanted, they are an abomination if the offerer be sullied with iniquity to God and injustice to man.

We have greatly exceeded the reasonable limits of a note; but we could not avoid giving our opinion on the subject treated by Dr. Wise, it is too monumentous to be dismissed without inquiry, and we merely quote Scripture to fortify our position. No doubt Dr. W. will continue the lectures on the Messiah, and we therefore invite his attention to the ideas which we have thrown out here, more in the light of an independent dissertation, than to rebut what he alleges, as we confess not to understand him as perfectly as we might do. However, we are glad to have an opportunity of treating on the Messiah in our magazine, even controversially; for honest controversy will elicit the truth.-Ed. Oc.

Chapter 78

S. The Mission of Abraham

The Mission Of Abraham. A Sermon. By Rev. J. K. Gutheim, Of Cincinnati. In reading the ancient record of the life and deeds of our fathers, the patriarchs of old; in investigating their spotless characters, as delineated by the sacred writer; in reflecting on their several eventful careers and the miraculous interposition of Providence so visibly displayed in their behalf; in pondering over their glorious mission fraught with bliss and happiness for the whole human race: how exalted must not be the estimation which the memory of those pious men is calculated to excite in the mind of even the philosophical reader of Holy Writ. At a time when mankind worshipped the host of heaven, the elements of nature, or the works of their own hands, mistaking or willfully setting up the creature for the Creator: at such a time of degrading idolatry, the patriarchs proclaimed the existence of the One True God, and, in their words and in their deeds, in their fervent supplications and their unbounded confidence, taught the knowledge of His holy name, and the moral excellence which this knowledge inculcates, to an astounded world. Near four thousand years have elapsed since our progenitor, Abraham, at the behest of the Almighty, went forth from Ur of the Chaldeans, “from beyond the river where, as Joshua tell us, his fathers lived and worshipped other gods.” Yet, even at this distant day, the followers of the Koran, who claim descent from the “father of many nations,” will point out to the inquiring traveller in those sunny climes, the ground which he trod, the groves where he pitched his tent, and the cave where his mortal remains are locked up from the eye of the curious and profane. For, dear and sacred to the Mussulman is every spot with which some incident of the life of the patriarch is associated, and with religious reverence he cherishes the memory of Ishmael’s sire. What emotions, then, must fill our hearts, what thoughts rise in our minds at tracing the course of that great luminary of the East, with whose appearance first dawned the heavenly light of religion? We, the legitimate descendants of Abraham, the inheritors of the divine promises vouchsafed to him, the guardians and propagators of the eternal truths revealed to him, the successors to that glorious mission for the accomplishment of which he was ordered by the Almighty to set out from his broad native plains on the bank of the great river, “unto a land which would be shown to him,”-must we not endeavour fully to comprehend the magnitude of the trust of which we are the favoured repositories, in order to be capable of discharging the obligations embodied in it? Let us, therefore, examine the nature of the Abrahamic mission, and the consequent divine promises, by answering the following three questions:-1. In what did the mission of Abraham consist? 2. What were the divine promises granted to him? and 3. How ought we to act to accomplish this mission, and to be worthy of those divine promises?

We find an appropriate text in this day’s Sidrah, Genesis 18:18-19.

[illegible]:

“And Abraham will become a great and mighty nation, and there will be blessed in him all the nations of the earth. For I know him, that he will command his sons and his house after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and judgment, that the Lord may bring on Abraham what he hath spoken of him.”

I.

If we contemplate the present state and condition of the morals, and draw the line of demarcation between the different nations that inhabit different parts of the globe, how striking is the variety of manners and customs, of social and political relations that meets our observant eyes. Great, however, as this contrast is, in all matters appertaining to the temporal state of man: greater still are the difference and disagreement by which his peculiar religious creed is distinguished from that of his fellow-man. It is true, that wherever civilization has raised its standard,-a civilization founded on a true historical basis-there also the Supreme Father of the Universe is acknowledged. But from what a tissue of absurd doctrines have the various religious systems to be disentangled-to what an extent have their maxims and tenets to be modified, before they body forth that true conception of the Deity and His attributes according to the revelation of the Bible from which they originated; before they fully correspond with the dogmas of our sacred faith in the Divine Unity. Our creed embraces the doctrine of a pure monotheism and a mode of worship, according to which we address our heavenly Father, not by means of a mediator, but in direct manner, convinced as we are that the Almighty has neither equal nor associate, and that He alone is sufficient to govern and maintain the world, which, in His infinite Power, Wisdom, and Benevolence, He alone has created.

Evident and clear as this truth must appear to every thinking man, irresistible as must be the conviction with which it forces itself on the mind of every being endowed with reason, the dominion of error, nevertheless, yields but slowly and procrastinatingly to the benign sway of truth. But ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ truth will as surely accomplish its end, and conquer falsehood, as light dispels darkness. The revelation vouchsafed to Abraham is as important to the whole human race in general as the revelation of Mount Sinai was to the people of Israel in particular. The latter was the revelation of a code of laws for the education and government of a people just then created, and had a particular bearing on the development of its moral, social, and political character. Viewed in its religious nature, it is evidently the corollary of the former, and must be traced back to the revelation of the patriarch as its fountain-head. The knowledge of the Supreme, of which we perceive but rare and fitful glimpses in the ante-Abrahamic age, seemed almost entirely to have been forgotten at the time of Abraham. The whole world bowed down to the worship of innumerable deities and the adoration of graven images; human victims bled on the altars erected to imaginary gods; ignorance and superstition brutalized mankind, and fettered the sublime faculties of their heaven-born spirits. At such a time of prevailing error and gloom, Abraham appeared invested with his heavenly mission. Tradition tells us that, when yet at a very tender age, he had a presentiment of his Creator (■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■). This presentiment, which, in the course of time, became a settled conviction within him, tended towards the development of all those noble qualities, for which the character of Abraham is distinguished. Liberal hospitality, generous self-denial, affection and disinterestedness towards his friends, endurance and resignation in trials, and toleration towards all, gained for him the high esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries, to such a degree that he was styled ■■■■ ■■■■■, a

godly prince, and that even kings entered with him into covenants of friendship. Thus was Abraham a fit messenger to proclaim the name of the all-kind God, who wills the happiness of all his creatures. The mission of Abraham was a mission of peace. He came not to make war on mankind, and, by the fostering of a virulent fanaticism, to tear the son from his father, and to raise brother against brother. “Righteousness and judgment” were, as our text says, the instruments with which error was to be eradicated; a noble and upright conduct the powerful means to convince the unbeliever. This task was distinctly prescribed in the following words addressed to him by the Deity: ■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ “I am God, the Almighty, walk before me and be perfect!” To consider God as the Creator, Governor, and Preserver of the universe, who rules the destinies of empires and of nations; to look upon Him as the source of his being and happiness; to address his prayers to, and put his confidence in, Him alone; to show to the world an example of unwavering faith-the patriarch was thus directed. And what language can afford a more comprehensive sentence than the Divine apothegm, “Walk before me and be perfect?” Does it not comprise all the high-born virtues of which man is capable? But it was not to his age alone that Abraham should proclaim the name of the Holy One, and show the example of true piety and devotion: his mission also should be transmitted as an heir-loom to his descendants and redound to the benefit of future generations. There is no doubt that he endeavoured to preserve the knowledge of the true God in his family; since the Almighty himself testifies in his behalf, saving: “For I know him, that he will command his sons, and his house after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and judgment.”

Having thus given the outline of the mission of Abraham, let us now proceed to answer our second inquiry: “What were the Divine promises granted to him?”

II. The Divine promises vouchsafed to Abraham were of a twofold nature: temporal and spiritual. He received the assurance his descendants should possess the land of Canaan; that they should grow up to be a great and mighty nation, and that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in them. All these promises having been literally fulfilled, they afford undeniable proof of the authenticity of the Bible and the divinity of its origin. As far as the temporal blessings are concerned, there can be no difference of opinion. They are historical facts, and fall as such within the grasp and range of our senses and experience. But far different is it with the spiritual promises, which, however distinctly expressed, through their abstract nature, leave ample scope for perversion and misapplication to suit the views of particular parties. The possession of the land of Canaan was a temporal boon. After the Israelites were released from Egyptian bondage, they journeyed towards the land promised to the patriarch upwards of four hundred years antecedently. There, in a small and secluded portion of the earth, they were to cultivate and to preserve those religious truths first revealed to Abraham, and afterwards corroborated amidst the thunders of Sinai. On the shores of the Jordan, “a kingdom of priests” was thus established, for the worship of the Most High. Whilst all other nations were plunged in gross idolatry, a pure and sublime theism was perpetuated among the descendants of Abraham, and “from Zion went forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,” announcing truth, peace, and salvation to all mankind. The promise to Abraham, that he should become a great and mighty nation, must be taken in a spiritual sense. Politically considered, we never attained to pre-eminence. Even our independence, whilst yet forming a body-politic, was short-lived and precarious. But although we cannot boast of vast and mighty conquests, such as were achieved by other nations of antiquity;

although the continued changes of the political aspect of the world owe little to Hebrew influence: our part in the march of the human mind and the progress of civilization has been most active and striking. Scattered over the wide face of the habitable globe, we carry with us the seeds of that heavenly tree of Divine knowledge, under whose shadow the whole human family is destined one day to find shelter. We are the living witnesses of the living God, or, as Isaiah expresses it, “I am the Lord; ye are witnesses, saith the Lord.” Yes, we testify to the Unity of God, we testify to his Providence, we testify to the Revelation of Himself and His holy will, in order to realize the happiness of mankind. And not until every vestige of the erroneous belief in the plurality of the Godhead is vanished-not until, as we daily pray, all the inhabitants of the earth know and acknowledge, that to the God of the Universe every knee must bow and every tongue swear-not until then will our mission, descended to us from our progenitor Abraham, be accomplished. Not until then will the promise be fulfilled, “that in his seed all the nations, of the earth shall be blessed.”

If such be our glorious destiny, let us thirdly inquire, “How ought we to act to accomplish our mission and be worthy of those Divine promises?”

III.

We find an answer in our text, “For I know him,” says the Lord of Abraham, “that he will command his sons, and his house after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and judgment, that the Lord may bring on Abraham what he hath spoken of him.” By doing righteousness and judgment, by walking before the Lord and being perfect, by showing to our children an example of true godliness and, piety, in a word, by treading in the footsteps of our pious ancestor, we shall realize the object of his mission and hasten the fulfillment of the promises received by him. We are not enjoined to force our belief on those who differ from us. Truth scorns violence and deception, and can only be propagated by means of sincere conviction,■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■, “not with hosts, not with strength, but in the spirit of the Lord.” It is by the purity of our faith and the excellence of our conduct that we must endeavour to vindicate our glorious religion before the eyes of the nations. It is therefore our duty, diligently to study those sacred pages of heavenly wisdom, in order that we may become fully aware “what the Lord requireth of us,” and that we may be enabled to meet and to refute the misinterpretations and erroneous doctrines which the adherents of another creed, grafted on ours, have thought fit to deduce from it. Yes, it is the duty of every Israelite to be acquainted with the history of his fathers; to be fully cognisant if the origin, rise, and development of his religion; to know the statutes and judgments of the Lord, in order to appreciate the dignity of his position among the children of man. Neglect not this study, my brethren! Do not remain in ignorance and darkness, when you have ample opportunity to enlighten your understanding. To whom is the knowledge of the Law more necessary than to the Israelite, whose eternal happiness and hopes are centered in the Word of God, who finds therein a haven for all the doubts and for all the afflictions that may overcloud his mind? But, above all things, do not withhold a thorough religious education from your children. Let them be made fully acquainted with Israel’s history and Israel’s Law, that they may be able to defend their religion against any attack directed against it, and not stand abashed, and confess their ignorance, when questioned on points that involve their eternal welfare. Teach them to walk in the way of the Lord, to practise righteousness and justice, and man will delight in them, and the Lord will bless them. By acting thus, you will accomplish your mission, and be worthy of the

promises inherited from our fathers. May the Lord, our God, be with us, as He has been with our fathers; not leave us nor forsake us: may He incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and to observe His statutes, judgments, and commandments, which He commanded our fathers. “And may he bestow on us His heavenly blessing, which He has taught His servant Moses. The Lord bless thee, &c.”

Chapter 79

S. The Mosaic Polity and Sacrifices

The Mosaic Polity and Sacrifices A Sermon.

God of our fathers, the Eternal Exalted Ruler of the world, look with favour upon the remnant of thy people in all their dwelling-places, and hear their voice from wheresoever their prayer may be offered up unto Thee. From one end of the world to the other mankind acknowledge thy existence; for in the very idols which they frame, they confess themselves subject to a creative power which controls them; yet they all walk not in thy light, and they refuse to receive instruction from the revelation which Thou hast made known. Yet we have received the knowledge of thy truth, and been trained in the faith which Thou didst impart to our fathers, thy servants, and we are thus freed from the bonds of superstition and unbelief, which are the heritage of other men, for which grace we return thanks to thy blessed Name. But let us entreat Thee to let thy glory be made manifest to all the earth, cast down the altars of false worship, and rend asunder the vail which is spread over the gentiles, that they may look upon Thee as Thou hast taught us to do, that they may walk in thy light, which was kindled at Sinai, as we do in obedience to thy decrees. And then shall we live securely in our land, and our sacrifices will again be acceptable to Thee as in former years, and in the days of old, when Thou alone wilt be King over all the earth, and thy name be adored as one, as Thou art indeed the sole Creator, blessed for evermore. Amen!

Brethren:-

Let us speak about the future of our nation in comparison with the past, in order to strengthen ourselves in faith, and to be obedient to the demands which our religion makes on us. There are men among us, I hope they are but few, with all their vehemence and declamation, who say that we are for ever to wander outcast and scorned in foreign lands, and that the commonwealth of Israel sunk to perpetuity into disjointed fragments from the time that disunion among the tribes, in the first instance, and the inroads of foreign conquerors in the second, destroyed the adhesion of the people to the house of David; that our existence is to be merely spiritual, not national, that we are to merge quietly into the nations among which we dwell, and should seek for no other redemption than a general enlightenment of the world, and the universal diffusion of the monotheistic principle of our religion. Two things, however, are acknowledged by the supporters of this theory, the first, that the present state of belief and religion among mankind is not to be permanent, and the second, that we can on no account be permitted to give up our own faith and practices, and thus be lost among the nations, or what is the same thing, though they would wish us to be, and remain incorporated among the various states, we should continue to be Jews in practice, distinguished thus from our fellow-citizens of other persuasions in all that relates to our bearing in reference to worship and the arrangement of our family-concerns.

It would be all very well if we had no prophetic records to refer to as arbiters in the question; but if words mean anything at all, they to a certainty signify that not alone are the two above points to be accomplished, but the national restoration of Israel is also to be effected in a manner best consonant with the wisdom and power of Providence. It is not to be denied by any ingenious

pleading, that God must have had a great object in view by the establishment of the descendant, of Abraham as a peculiar people, living in a country given to them as their property, governed by laws and a polity eminently their own, however they might be in themselves the product of divine revelation; for though no human counsel was called in to perfect the details, the whole was precisely adapted to the character of the people, and the country they inhabited, whereas, it would be almost impossible to predicate the entire legislation for any people other than Israel, and a country materially differing from. Palestine, I refer as to the latter, to the regulation of the festival in connexion with the annual harvesting, and other similar laws. Nor it is not a matter of doubt, but one deducible from the nature of the Divinity, that the divine decrees are based upon the solid foundation of truth, and are not subject to change or abridgment; since the Lord cannot change his opinion through the accession of a new light in the process of time, which was beyond his reach at the beginning of things. Consequently, it follows that the laws regarding Israel as a people must always continue authoritative, if even not executed for a time through circumstances over which they themselves have no control, so that whenever the circumstances inimical to them cease, they may resume their ancient customs and usages, as though no interruption had ever taken place. To presume that this were not so, would be denying the permanence of religion and ascribe vacillation to God, whereas we are constantly told by all prophets that precisely the reverse is the case, if even simple reasoning from philosophically demonstrated premises were insufficient to convince us of this truth. But with the permanence of the particulars of the Mosaic polity is inseparably connected the nationality of the Israelites upon the soil of Palestine, in order that the annual offerings and sacrifices may be brought in their proper season, as we are commanded in the law. Let us instance the festivals of Passover and Pentecost. On the first we are commanded to offer an omerfull of barley, as the first produce of the harvest, and on the latter two loaves of fresh wheaten flour, both as national offerings to the Bestower of fruitfulness and plenty. We need not argue that no country in the regions of cold Europe, or northern America and Asia, nor any situated on the south side of the equator, could enable us to fulfill those particular injunctions at these respective periods; for in the one case the grain ripens at later season, in the other in an opposite part of the year. There are certainly other lands where the harvest is as early as in Palestine; but this much is certain, that our own ancient heritage enabled us to fulfill the injunctions in question without any difficulty, and hence, to say the least, it is not less advantageously situated in this respect than any other land under the sun. This consideration may appear to some a small matter; but in truth it is not so; for it proves that the most consummate wisdom directed the arrangement of the details of the law, so that they should tally faithfully with one another. If now, to resume the argument, our religion is in its nature permanent, and requires at the same time a certain locality for its perfect execution : it follows that a time will come when the people professing this religion shall be enabled to fulfill to the letter all the duties enjoined on them, precisely as they were originally commanded; and since they are now so situated through acts not their own, though they came as an infliction for their sins, that they are not enabled to assemble at the place where the peculiar rites of their faith are to be observed, they will not be held responsible nor accounted as sinful for not fulfilling all those peculiar duties which are bound by an express injunction of the law to the country of Palestine. This being the case, and hardly any believing Israelite will deny our premises, it likewise follows that our redemption from our present state of bondage in some lands, and the subjection to anti-biblical laws in all, cannot be accomplished by a mere civil emancipation; for this would still leave us beyond the possibility of satisfying the demands of our religion. We do

not ask merely to be free from tyrannical rule; but to see the supremacy of our code restored. There may perhaps be a few unbelievers who pretend to say that the pains and penalties of the Mosaic legislation are barbarous, and uncongenial with the progress of all enlightened civilization; but they surely cannot have correctly examined the details of jurisprudence it lays down; nor the great safeguards it throws around all the members of the commonwealth; nor the deep and searching inquiry which constitutes a prominent feature in the arraignment of criminals; nor the responsibility of the witnesses for false charges, even at the risk of their lives; nor the institution of the cities of refuge to prevent the disgraceful scenes of private vengeance, which disfigure modern times even with all their boasted refinement; nor the perfect security of property, both personal and landed estates, to their possessors; nor the inviolability of character, the absence of the branding iron for minor criminals, the public whipping-post, the sale of the maintenance of the poor to the lowest bidder, the venality of a corrupt system of justice, nor, in short, the whole tenor of our legislation proper, so pure in its details, so holy in its principles. The crimes for which death is the forfeit are certainly more numerous than the fancies of modern philanthropists would sanction, if their opinions were to he consulted. Let it, however, not be for forgotten that the penalty of death, denounced in the Mosaic Law, is only against crimes of the gravest character: murder, incest, disobedience against parental authority, wounding or cursing father and mother, rebellion against the chief judicial authority, false accusation where life was at stake, violation of the Sabbath, blasphemy, idolatry, seduction to idolatry, false prophecy, and finally, selling into slavery a fellow Israelite. No one need expose himself to the commission of any of these deeds; consequently any citizen of the state can escape the utmost penalty of the law without any difficulty; none could be seized and condemned by the arbitrary command of any ruler, nor could conviction take place except in open court, upon the clearest and most irrefragable testimony of two men of known probity, upon their parole evidence, given in the presence of the criminal, that they saw him engaged in the crime, and as is said, with warning him of the consequence of his misdeed. Life so hedged round with judicial defenses could not be easily put in jeopardy; and when the doom was, notwithstanding all this, pronounced by a majority of the judges, never less than twenty-three, for this was our practice, of whom thirteen must have been for conviction, the guilt must have been so incontestably proven that the malefactor himself could not have complained of injustice. I know that efforts are now making to banish from the codes all punishments of death for whatever offence, upon the ground that we have no right to take life, since we cannot restore it after taking it away. But have we any more right to deprive a man of his personal liberty, shut him up like a noxious beast for life in the narrow walls of a prison cell, barred out from all intercourse with the world, even the good, save the few that may happen to seek his prison house by special permission of his jailors? A moral discourse is not the most fitting vehicle for the discussion. I only touched upon it incidentally, in connexion with the law of Moses. I must therefore be brief, and answer the query with a single remark. Society, without referring to religion as the basis thereof, has a claim upon each one of its members, that he shall be pledged, with all he possesses, for his good behaviour towards all others; he therefore stakes his property, his liberty and his life, that is, all which he can have, that he will be amenable with them all in case he do anything to the injury of his neighbour individually, or the state in general. Hence if he commits a fraud or theft, his property may be taken from him; if he disturbs the public peace, he may be put under restraint by imprisonment, if a fine previously imposed should have failed to arrest his unlawful behaviour; and lastly, if he deprives another of life, his own earthly existence is the only forfeit which is at all

commensurate with the violence committed; it is not that the dead demands the requital of life with life, but only to place others in security, that murders shall not be committed, and because the state or society at large cannot become of right chargeable with the safe-keeping of a man who has shown such a recklessness of the personal rights of others that his escape or release may expose those who are innocent, and, therefore have a right to protection, to renewed danger from his violent and bloodthirsty disposition. The ridiculous sympathy with criminals of the highest degree, together with the trickery of the law, which will not be satisfied with the most positive proof of guilt, is only calculated to rob society of its security, to arm man against his brother, to seek justice by his own strong hand, since an appeal to courts of miscalled justice fails to redress the grievances of which he complains; besides, it levels all crimes by making them all punishable with the same visitation, the prison being for each and for all the only corrective, and the duration of the confinement, though in some cases called perpetual, is necessarily left to the arbitrary will of extra-judicial authorities, which every state or: commonwealth is compelled to recognise. That society is therefore the best governed, in that community are life, limb, liberty and goods the safest, where each individual is held strictly accountable, and the laws are so administered that the certainty of punishment is always at hand to check the criminal inclinations which will more or less rise up in the minds of most men.

Judged by this standard, the Mosaic polity is of all others the only one which apportions punishment to crime, which in its worst inflictions regards the criminal as a brother, whose misdeeds, if they can be amended with minor visitations, can be atoned for, and he be restored to the bosom of society; whereas, when this is not possible, he must sacrifice his earthly existence for the happiness of others. We could enlarge; but we must forbear for the present; enough we have shown that the permanence of the law, in its civil details, no less than those properly called religious, can be maintained to its fullest extent, should our state be ever restored, and we need not dread the severity of some enactments, even when viewed by the light of an advanced civilization, and the march of discovery, so far superior to what was known at the time when Moses wrote down the statutes which he had received from the Most High. The reasonableness of the sacrifices and offerings, to continue the subject with which we started, is not deducible from human wisdom, but simply we are to abide by them as they are divine decrees. I know well enough that many good men among us and the gentiles have endeavoured to establish their origin in something to which paganism had accustomed our fathers; but such a solution does not seem consonant with the wisdom of God, nor with the fact that offerings are mentioned as already in existence with the immediate children of Adam, consequently they are almost as old as the presence of man on earth. It is enough for us to know that they became incorporated in the Mosaic legislation as a duty appertaining to the temple service on every day in the year, and no reason was assigned other than that they should be, as the Bible terms it, a ■■■ ■■■■ “an agreeable savour” which, so to say, the Lord of all would smell as their smoke ascended, and receive it as a token of obedience of his servants for which He would accept them in favour. Many, not satisfied with viewing sacrifices in the light of a statute, given as a test of obedience, for which, therefore, no other reason can be discovered, have endeavoured to give them a mystical, or with others a typical solution, and arranged thus all to their own satisfaction, and have arrived at length at the conclusion that they have ceased for ever, the object for which they were instituted having been accomplished. But the words of Scripture bear no trace of any such grounds; we are merely told that so should be done to obtain for us atonement; but nothing is hinted of any especial mystery

being connected with a burnt or sin offering, nor that either of them was a type of any event past or future. Consequently, if our position is correct, that the whole scheme was a special ordinance, neither originating in pagan rites, nor terminable by any supposititious fulfillment of their object at the happening of any particular event: it must result as a necessary deduction, that we are not empowered to assume that the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem will not be acceptable again at a time to come; but the rather, that it is absolutely requisite, both from reason and prophecy, that with the restoration of the Jewish people, the sacrifices, with all the other institutions of the priesthood, will be likewise re-established. The law was given to be for ever remembered; years and ages of troubles have passed over it no less than over its possessors; and still it is the study of millions of enlightened spirits, and it has exerted, and continues to do so still, an irresistible power over the march of civilization. Can it then be presumed for a moment that any portion of its contents should be a mere accommodation to circumstances, and the religious enactments especially, only inserted to act as a mere negation to other ideas foreign to its holiness? Consequently the whole of it must be of equal importance, of equal duration, as all its parts are of equal sanctity, and that therefore nothing contained therein but will again be practised whenever the opportunity and occasion may again demand them. As to the possibility of the restoration, it is not necessary to frame any argument. God redeemed us before this from the slavery of Egypt, and again rescued us from the power of Babylon, and both times we journeyed to Palestine, established the worship in the temple, and resisted successfully the foreign foe. Why He should not be enabled to do the same deed again, is beyond my power of imagination to entertain; the unwillingness of the scattered Israelites themselves is the greatest difficulty; but in his good providence He will devise the means, equally as He did when in Egypt the contented slaves said to Moses: “Leave off from us, that we may serve the Egyptians; for we had better serve the Egyptians than perish in the wilderness.” But who heeded their opposition? who regarded the refusal of their tyrant to grant, their freedom? Let sacred history tell, how the reluctant obtained their liberty, and how the unwilling ruler was forced to yield. And now, has the Lord forsaken Israel? Do his thunders sleep? have his lightnings lost their brightness and their fearful force? Look up to the heavens, whether dressed with the brilliance of the day, or clad in the sombre garments of the night; let the seasons speak, whether they do not change in their wonted regularity, and produce plenty or dearth as their Master and ours may decree; ask of the ocean whether his roarings are not controlled by the same mighty Hand that cleft before the ransomed the waters of the Arabian Sea; and then tell me, that the same Force which scattered us cannot gather us again together, that the same Being who broke the power of ruthless rulers, cannot accomplish the same work again, that the God who established his kingdom in the midst of our tribes, who sighed for the galling-bonds of slavery, will not come again to reign triumphantly as the King of Israel and the Chief of the nations. We may be unwilling to go forth; we may prefer the lands of our captivity where we enjoy freedom and security as the boon only of righteous gentiles; but prophecy tells us that we shall nevertheless be sent forward from our exile, again to inhabit the hills and valleys of lovely Palestine, then restored to its fertility, its sweet soil cleansed from the foot of marauding savages that now defile it by their noxious presence. In mute surprise, unbelief will ask in the words of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 66:8), “Who hath heard the like? who hath seen such things? shall a land be made to travail in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? that Zion hath travailed, also brought forth her children?” And we are answered:

[redacted]

“And they shall bring all your brethren out of all nations as an offering unto the Lord, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.” (Isaiah 66:20)

Let, like Pharaoh of old, the rulers of the earth say, “We know not the Lord, nor will we let Israel go free;” let us say, “We will rather be subject to many kings and states than free citizens of Palestine under the government of the Lord’s anointed;” the word which was spoken before the overthrow of our state will be fulfilled, and in one day, like it was at the going forth from Egypt, shall a nation be born, and carried forward to their inheritance, purified from their transgressions, through the long captivity which they had to endure, and the many persecutions they had to encounter for the sake of their faith. The place of assembly will be the holy mountain at Jerusalem, and the polity will be the one which Moses ordained through the command of the Supreme; for we are told that there will be priests and “Levites, to stand before the sanctuary to make atonement for the people.” (Ezekiel 45:17.) And as respects all the world, each man will cast away his follies and idols, and mankind will seek to know the Creator of all heaven and earth, acknowledging that they had hitherto walked in darkness and embraced folly instead of wisdom, falsehood instead of truth. But then, when the son of David reigns in peace and in glory, when the law of God will be inscribed in the hearts of all, and no one lift his sword against his brother, sacrifices will ascend on high from pure and undefiled hands, justice will erect her throne in every spot to decide with equity for high and low, and all flesh will come on every new moon day from month to month, and Sabbath to Sabbath, on the days held sacred by the ordinance of God among the children of Israel, to bow down and to worship at the shrine of the Lord, in fear and in reverence. May this be speedily accomplished and our eyes behold the glory of God. Amen!

Chapter 80

S. The Object of Festivals

The Object of the Festivals, A Sermon By Jacob J. M. Falkenau, of the Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Delivered in the Elm Street Synagogue, New York, on Wednesday, The First Day of Shebuoth, 5605.

Brethren of the House of Israel and all my hearers, may the Lord bless you. When I stand here to address you, my brethren! in a vernacular, which to many of you, is the native tongue-and to me, a few years since, was but strange and unknown; when moreover I reflect that it is on this holy spot that you have been accustomed to hear able production of eloquence and oratory-when finally I am fully aware of my own feebleness and humble capacities:-then surely must I feel discouraged and depressed! were it not for two reasons; first, the confidence I repose in your kind indulgence and friendly dispositions; and secondly, my own wishes and pure intention, that this production may succeed to be, what it should be-a religious discourse-devoted to expose revealed wisdom, heavenly principles, and holy truths, contained in the sacred volume of our Divine Law. The text we have selected is from the chapter to be read tomorrow, the second day of this festival:

[redacted]

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessings of the Lord thy God, which he hath given thee."- Deuteronomy 16:16-17.

After the three holy festivals had been ordained and the special laws of every one individually been described, the above injunction folows, as a conclusion and explanation for their being here repeated (since they had been already instituted in the other volumes of the law) that, notwithstanding the difference of one festival from another, in their precepts and istitutions-there is one great design, equally intended and ordained to be performed on each and all of them: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose."

Though it is a law, the literal fulfillment of which is dependent on time and locality; and though it belongs to those precepts, which were only obligatory at the period when the nation dwelt in the land of their inheritance, and were in possession of the holy temple in Jerusalem-[redacted]-: still there is wisdom, weight, and spirit enough in it, to hold it up as a divine lesson, to be Israel's guide at any period or time, in every state or place, and in all its principles and future significance.

It is a natural cause, that separation of space, change and distance of place, variety of vocations and employments, diversity of faculties and qualifications, difference of situations, characters and dispositions-should induce the mind of men, to adopt different principles, different rules, different doctrines, different feelings and sentiments. It might thus happen, that the stately citizen would

think himself loftier than the rustic husbandman; that the rich and wealthy merchant would arrogate superiority over the poor working mechanic; that the elevated in society, would overpower the inferior class of people;-so that discord, hatred, and malignity might ruin Jacob's household. And to prevent all this; to stop the sources of evil; to impede the perils and dangers of passion; to open the way for calm reasoning and friendly intercourse; to renew the sacred bonds of law and virtue;-and to maintain a peaceful unity, a general love for one another in the house of Israel: does the law in our text ordain,

"Three times in a year, shall ALL thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose."

There is no reason whatever in the bare idea, that only three times in a year man should appear before the Lord-that He can behold man in a certain place only; when of "his majesty the whole earth is full," and "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him." Nor is it left at the disposal of any members to appear at the same place at a different time from each other. But the precept was intended to effect in its real sense and true meaning: a general meeting called by the divine voice by holy command; "a general meeting of all the males of Israel at the place which the Lord chooseth.'" And what a glorious, what a godly meeting! a holy meeting, of a holy people, at a holy place, on a holy day, called by the Holy One, the Lord God of Israel.-How every faithful one of Jacob's sons must have been filled with the purest and sincerest wishes, to walk up in faith, and meet his brother Israelite in the same pilgrimage, animated by the same feelings, sympathizing in the same spirit, each and all recalling to their mind, that the Lord. has vouchsafed the convocation; that it was his wisdom, his mercy, his benevolence which commanded all the males of Israel to appear before Him, that they themselves might appear before one another-that they might see one another-reach the helping hand one to another; deliberate, take counsel, advise with one another; teach, instruct and guide one another, to walk one way before one God, in one law, as one holy people.-The most secluded hermit, the sullen misanthrope, the sordid miser, the selfish brute, the haughty scorner, the proud oppressor, the violent ruffian, the lawless rebel-they ALL had to make the pilgrimage at the same time, to the same spot, to meet and to join with the kindest philanthropist, the most benevolent favourite of God and man, the generous nobleman, the virtuous hero, the meekly resigned, the peaceful friend, and the faithful observer of the laws; no distance of the field of labour; no separation of space; no distinction of character; no difference of qualities; no superior dignity; no highness of rank, should ever be a cause to separate Israel from Israel; to part Jacob's sons; to divide the members of the holy covenant from each other.-To produce mutual affection; friendly intercourse; kind disposition; peace, harmony and unity in the house of Israel, is the very tendency-the real meaning, of the Holy command: "ALL thy males shall appear in the place which He shall choose."

Let us then also be animated with the same devoted feelings; let us be of a pure heart and pious mind, when we appear in this land "in a place which the Lord chooseth," since He vouchsafed to tell us through his prophet Ezekiel: "To be to Israel as a little sanctuary ■■■■ ■■■ in the countries where they shall come."

Let our prayers be in the very spirit they were instituted by our prophets, our holy fathers, and wise men. No daily prayer, no essential and public part of our liturgy is written for the individual only; for the Israelite should not in his daily and public prayers to God pray for himself alone, for his family

or his friends;-but all his prayers, his wishes, his heart and his mind shall be one for all and all for one. The text of our liturgy is generally in the plural term; because we should pray for all and include ourselves in common with all.

Indeed, I wonder, how, it is and has been possible, that feelings of hatred and envy, calumny, discord, opposition and animosity ever could have existed amongst brethren Israelites, united in the same country, the same city, the same congregation, the same house of worship.-I wonder how any one, imbued with an evil mind, can daily in his prayers, repeat the words: “Gather us all together from the four corners of the world,” “unite our hearts in love,” “give us peace and bless us all united as one man;”-when even in the Musaph prayer of this and both the other festivals we pray for the happy restoration of our state, when Israel shall be blessed to fulfil literally the words of our text, to walk up united hand in hand “To the place which He shall choose.”

Now these prayers are not the production of some fantastical modern inventor; they have the sanction as Israel’s standard of devotion more than two thousand years ago; they were composed by that holy body called “the men of the great Synod,” a body of a hundred and twenty of the greatest and wisest, and inspired men; for it counted as members many of our divine prophets.-Even with all the present prevalence of error and denial of religion in some places of Europe, no violent hand, no sacrilegious power has dared to touch the sanctity of this holy standard of Israel’s devotion-equally sacred to every Israelite from one part of the globe to the other, whether adhering to the Portuguese, Polish, or German liturgy. Nor need we to stop here at this period of antiquity; we may trace as far back as our divine law itself. No special form of prayer is specifically prescribed in the book of law, except the one benediction of the priests to the people, and the end of this, the very last expression are the words: “And may He give thee peace.” In imitation, therefore, of this divine text, the very last terms of the very last section in our eighteen benedictions, are the words: “Blessed be thou, Lord, who blesseth his people, Israel, with peace.” Let no son of Jacob, no man of Israel, ever enter the Synagogue, or open the book of prayers, without being in his heart fully penetrated with that love of peace-that spirit of harmony-that high sense of unity, which essentially constitutes all our prayers, and which is the divine will in the sense of our text, that on the three holy festivals all the males of Israel shall meet as one man at the chosen place before God. When we act, and feel, and pray in this way, them may we in another sense apply the next words of the text: “Then shalt thou not appear in vain before God,” for our prayers shall not be in vain, He will hearken to our voice, for “the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth;” He will give strength to our efforts-He will enlighten our minds-He will be our Shield, our Help, our Guide, that we may learn to know the way of righteousness, our duties towards God, towards our fellow-creatures, and towards ourselves, revealed in the laws, the commandments, and the statutes, that lead Israel to eternal happiness, to glory, and salvation. For verily, even when we do strictly observe all our duties in the Synagogue, when the service is really attended in the best order, and the highest decorum, and the most solemn dignity, reign during worship, then, even then, much remains, the most important remains yet to be done, to be practised and performed; since the Synagogue alone is not Judaism, to stand in a holy place, is not the evidence of being a holy people, to sit with demure face and solemn air, is not the fear of God; yea, to sit immovable, without remembering the holy command: “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the wise and learned,” is not obeying the divine will; to beep order and decorum in the Synagogue, is not keeping the holy law, and the

commandments of God. The Israelite, in the time and places of his dispersion, has still to observe three hundred and three score and nine divine commandments, including affirmative and negative precepts; and “to pray to God” is but one of the former, leaving yet three hundred three score and eight more, to be accounted for. It is not within the means, the capacity, the duty of any individual to fulfil them all; some cannot in any way be performed by an individual, and others can only be done correctly by a congregation of persons. It is therefore the duty of every Israelite to unite with his brethren, living with him in one and the same place, and to exert all his efforts to support, maintain, and share in the work of sacred duties, and to participate and sympathize in the holy cause.

But, hitherto, (I must confess,) in this country it has been but too generally considered, that a congregation have done all their duties in the holy cause of the people of God, when a massive building as a Synagogue with its appurtenances, a casher place in the market has been provided for the living, and when a burial-ground has been furnished for the dead. With this, congregations have ever been too much satisfied, as having thus done all that Israel is commanded to do; all that is required for the benefit, welfare, and glory of the members of Jacob’s household. These remarks are intended to say, that it has been so collectively as a body, not individually; for we must neither thoughtlessly forget, nor carelessly and ungratefully disparage the high merits of societies for the promotion of religious education and instruction of the youth; those for the performance and practice of religious duties, and the various different branches of benevolence and charity. But, as we have said before, with regard to a congregation, societies are to be considered individuals, and that the instituting of many of them was left to individuals, and their having never yet been comprehended and considered as indispensable with the whole body, is the very reason, the cause, the impediment, that checks their good intentions, and hinders their course of progression and improvement.

We do not deem it proper to enter into any particulars, but let every one of you, my brethren! make the comparison himself; let him represent to his mind, what great things he has seen or could have seen, in a city numbering more than ten thousand Israelites, on the other side of the Atlantic. We wish you to make that comparison with Europe as it was about a quarter of a century back, in every place, or (in the present times of turbulence) in such places only where the destroying hand of modern infidels, scattering the mental poison of sophistical arrogance, has not reached, violated, or broken down the sanctuary of Israel’s covenant; and after you have compared one with another, you will justly perceive, that and how we could have here in this country, in this city, all that is good and useful, all that promotes religion and science, all that would lead to our salvation, our glory and happiness, here and hereafter. For indeed the settlement, of our brethren in America is not of so late a date, as generally is supposed. When the illustrious rabbi, philosopher, and physician, Menasseh Ben Israel, in behalf of his brethren, our nation, sailed over from Holland to England, and delivered his successful documents to the then reigning Protector Cromwell, he declares and informs us, that at that time, already a period of nearly two hundred years ago, America numbered some of our brethren amongst its inhabitants;-here, in this city, a congregation was formed, a Synagogue built, much more than a century ago; and this very building-our Synagogue-we might call (if I am rightly informed*) the first and oldest in this city, this state, and all the United States-of those conducted according to the German and Polish rites.

* Mr. F. is misinformed in this; as the German Congregation of Philadelphia is at least forty years old-whereas the Elm Street Congregation of New York was established only about eighteen years ago.-Ed. Oc. But when we are conscious that a great deal is yet to be done in the holy cause of our sacred religion, and the knowledge thereof: we, at the same time, must not be unmindful of all the good and the benefits, that have been obtained-especially the stranger coming within our gates should be impressed with the import of this assertion and its true facts. Let me represent to you, my brethren, the sentiments of the brother Israelite, who leaves his native home, coming here to find a better-a liberal home; he confidently expects that he will find it so, and his mind feels easy and satisfied, as to his worldly affairs. But how anxious, how sorrowful, how deeply afflicted must not be the heart and soul of that man, who is really pious-a faithful and true Israelite how dejection, gloom, and sadness will bear hard on his mind and conscience, revolving the momentous thought, the dubious and awful conjecture: “Shall I in that liberal home, also find my religious home? And for those brethren at home, will I see others in the new home, who also will be my brethren? Will I find there the people of God? the law of God? the house of God?” And with all these righteous scruples-with all these pious reflections: let this man come near our sacred shrine-let him approach our holy Synagogue, and all his fears, all his religious panic will vanish at once;-overtaken by joyful surprise his eyes will overflow with admiration and delight at the very ASPECT of the noble structure-at the mere SIGHT of the magnificent building; and with a sincere heart, he will loudly proclaim: “Here is the place my soul wished for; the place of holy service; the house of God, the God of Israel-let me enter it:” and he does enter it. No barrier limits the entrance of the stranger; no vacant seat is denied to his convenience; he joins his brethren; he sees himself kindly received, and beholds the house of God in splendour and brightness-profusely decorated with lamps of the shining metal; the massive portal of the holy ark, garnished with silken drapery richly embroidered; the sacred rolls crowned with pure silver, ornamented with embroidery of gold-all consecrated to glorify the name of the holy One of Israel; all designed to dignify, to exalt the pious devotion, the fervent prayer of the large assembly of intelligent, worthy members of the house of Israel. The hoary head of old age, the high brow of wisdom, the strength of autumnal manhood, the blooming youth, and even in the galleries the fair daughters of Zion-all sympathize and sincerely respond, when the new-comer rises in praise and thanks to Him, who has mercifully guided and protected him in dangers and perils of the foaming ocean, and has graciously brought him in safety to the desired haven;-and the stranger really forgets, that he is a stranger-all calls to his mind, that Israel is but one family; has but one law; one faith; one worship;-he is gratified in witnessing the order and decorum prevailing with many of the attendants; he rejoices at the recital of the prayers, and the correct reading in the sacred roll-and most of all yet, is his pious mind delighted, that there he can pray in the same book, the same style, the same form, those pure and devotional prayers received from a long line of pious forefathers sanctified from age to age, from generation to generation, and from century to century; unaltered by the modern spirit of arrogance, the sophistical doctrines of novelty;-and the stranger deeply impressed in his mind, exhorted, edified and instructed, truly remembers the words of our text: “Thou shalt appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He chooseth, and thou shalt not appear in vain before him.” Nor does the Synagogue comprehend all the benefits he enjoys; there are other things which in their nature offer nothing of display or ostentation; but they are of more intrinsic and vital necessity and importance in the code of our laws. We allude to things belonging to the domestic arrangement of the family; and, amongst others, the stranger finds ample supply of that which we are allowed to

eat, without any tax whatever being levied upon it, an exaction by the government most generally in vogue in the stranger's own country. He also sees a noble institute for the religious and moral education of the youth, the highest duty of every father to his son; and besides these are the deeds of a generous hospitality, and other benefits of equal importance, which every man, in whatever circumstances he may come to his new home, enjoys for nothing, or comparatively nothing; his contributions being left to his own liberality and generosity.

These considerations, therefore, should not fail to strike deeply in the Jewish mind, to take root in the sensitive heart of every stranger, every strict and pious foreigner, when he recalls to his mind his former anguish and anxiety: "Whether he should be able to find but one of all these religious bounties in the western hemisphere, in a strange home, a new world;" when he compares his present situation with the affliction and sorrow he would feel, if indeed his sincere scruples had been realized, if indeed nothing had yet been done in the new world for the holy cause of Israel. If on all this he ponders earnestly and seriously, if he reminds himself that his brethren here assembled have prepared for him "A Religious Home," If he beholds that "B'nai Yeshurun" have done all this: then, overwhelmed with feelings of thanks and gratitude, he will actively join the customary benedictions said on this festival, and he will solemnly and loudly exclaim: "Blessed be the founders of this sacred building: the founders of this congregation. Blessed be those who have at present the trust of its holy management, those who ever had, and those who ever will have it. Blessed be those who are at present, those who ever were, and those who ever will be its worthy members. Blessed be its munificent associations, and all who belong to it."

We are now necessarily led to the end and last verse of our text. The lessons disclosed in the first might bias the feebleminded, and cause him to retreat from one side of the field of error and fall into another. When he has learned that all the males of Israel shall meet at one place: he might also think, that they all must be equal with each other, that there must be no distinction, no rank, no degree, no difference of characters, situations, dispositions, and abilities. And to prevent such notions, equally impracticable as they are immoral-the verse in our text says: "Every man as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee."

It is the divine word, the divine wisdom and providence, the divine prophecy, that the members of the human family never have been, neither are, nor will be of a perfect equality with each other: "Every man as he is able." The English version adds the words "shall give" to the original text: "Every man shall give as he is able." The rich and wealthy man "shall give," he shall freely spend and offer according to his wealth and riches; those of more confined means "shall give" according to their lesser ability; and the command "Every man shall give" indicates the blissful assurance, that however small and trifling, and however different and dissimilar the gifts, every man shall be blessed with some means, to do some good, to make some beneficial offering to the common cause of Israel. It is a wrong-placed delicacy to assert, that it would hurt the feelings of those in narrower circumstances, when the rich man loudly speaks forth his liberal munificence; it is a misconception, rejected alike, both by the spirit and letter of our text: "Every man shall give as he is able." To bring such a notion in practice, would rather become an act of dissimulation on the one hand, and a display of an evil disposition and envious feelings on the other. As we have said before, the Hebrew original has not the words "shall give," but shows by this elliptical expression, all that is thus far explained, and still much more than that; it indicates that in all conditions of life, in every social relation, in all claims of justice and honesty, man should consider himself and

others: “Every man as he is able.”

There shall be amongst the members of Jacob’s household neither arrogance, haughtiness, ostentation, selfishness, and pride on the one, nor animosity, envy, turbulence, disregard of true religiousness, disrespect of wisdom, talents and merits on the other hand-all powers, faculties and abilities are but a boon, a gift from heaven, mercifully bestowed and granted: “according to the blessing the Lord thy God which He hath given thee.”

Before we dismiss our text we deem it proper to address ourselves to that portion of our hearers, who are more intimate in the knowledge of Hebrew grammar and literature, and we bring to their notice that the celebrated German classic and professor, William Gesenius, in the preface of his Hebrew Lexicon, speaking in high terms of the lexicographal authority of the Mishnah and Talmud, still finds reasons for criticism and censure, on three different places.-The parallel verse of our text, ■■■ ■■■■■ “three festivals,” is pointed out as one of those three.-If, however, we dive a little deeper into the structure of the language and knowledge of the Bible, it might be proved by biblical and, grammatical argument that in all three the Mishnah is fully correct-the more yet with regard to the ■■■ ■■■■■ the learned professor has overlooked that the definition he proposes and considers his own original discovery has been long since anticipated by the Talmud itself. To dwell any longer upon and discuss the subject would neither answer the present purpose, nor suit the general taste of my hearers; we have, therefore, to refer this to some other occasion, but think ourselves justified in making this little remark for the salve of truth and in vindication of our holy tradition. In conclusion, my brethren! let us hope that the intentions, the sentiments, the spirit and the lessons of that great and glorious “General meeting” in our text, may ever be before your eyes; let them be deeply imprinted in your mind; write them upon the tablets of your heart; remember them and keep them holy, for they are divine lessons.-It is the heavenly Father who teaches his children-it is the King of kings who watches his people-it is the King of Glory who glories in his nation-it is the Lord of hosts who deigns to invite us worms of the earth to appear before Him; and He will ever graciously look down upon us when we appear with good actions, with a pure mind, and good faith; when we do not appear empty before him; when we learn and know the ways of righteousness, and justice, and law, and virtue; when we think, and feel, and live as brethren-as religious brethren; when we meet, and vote, and act, to elevate, to dignify, to raise and to exalt the name of Yeshurun in the manner we are taught by our great teacher to raise and to exalt if: “For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say: Surely this great nation is a wise end understanding people.” And may the time of redemption speedily approach, and may it be fulfilled what the prophet predicts: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Amen.

Chapter 81

S. The Object of Judaism

The Object of Judaism. A Sermon, Pronounced in the Henry Street Synagogue, New York, On Sabbath Vayishlach, by the Rev. Dr. W. Schlesinger.

Father on high! Creator and Governor of the universe with all its hosts! thy power, thy greatness, thy goodness, and thy wisdom are infinite, as the number of thy years is also innumerable. Yet Thou refusest not to let thy providence rule over us weak and perishing mortals, and not less in the fate of nations than the fortune of individuals the traces of thy wise dispensations are unmistakable. May it be then thy will, O Eternal One, our God! to grant me this day deeply impressive, inspired and inspiring words, that the thoughts which flow like a stream out of my soul, over the narrow bridge of the tongue, into the outer world, may find an echoing chord in the hearts of my hearers, not for the sake of my own honour, but for thy glory and the exaltation of thy holy name. Amen.

Beloved Hearers:-

It is remarked in an old Midrash, which is also quoted by the celebrated expounder of Scripture, Rashi, that the history of our father Jacob has many points of similarity with that of his son Joseph. “The first was hated, so was the other; the first was threatened with danger of life by his brother, and the other was also near being slain by his brothers,” &c. With yet greater right does it appear to us that we shall be able to show that the history of this, our progenitor, is a prefiguration for the greater portion of his descendants, and that it contains, so to say, already the germ of the remarkable sufferings and afflictions of the Jewish people. We may say of Israel, in contradistinction to other nations of the earth, that whereas these employed themselves in hunting, in the trade of war, in the founding of great states, and in the conquest of celebrated kingdoms, the others enjoyed but a brief state of prosperity in the promised land of their heritage; whereas those distinguished themselves in the erection of magnificent works of art, and displayed their inventive genius in all that contributes to the heightening of the enjoyments of life, these, who deserve to be called the exclusively religious nation, employed as a people their time mostly in astute investigations concerning the word of God, and their greatest enjoyment of life consisted in a constant reflecting on the scriptural monuments of the prophets and sages of antiquity.

Jacob was hated by Esau, because he would not, like him, waste his time in the whirl of sensual intoxication, because he lived more for heaven than for earth, and the descendants of Jacob have had the same fate. We read in the holy Scriptures how Jacob, in order to escape the wrath of his brother, had to quit his father’s house, and wander away into a distant land; and the descendants of Jacob have been compelled, not once only to quit the paternal soil, to escape the wrath of their brothers;-nowhere on the earth could they find a resting-place for any length of time, and they had again and again to resort to the wandering staff, accompanied often with the relinquishment of their goods and possessions. In our refined and over-civilized time, the character of which is so different from the beautiful, natural, and patriarchal manners of antiquity, no one is ever comforted through a wonderful and divine vision in a dream, as it happened to our father Jacob in his

wandering; but the man whose spiritual eye is in any small degree capable of appreciating the luminous rays from above, can also now, even in our present situation, perceive the ladder, the foot of which is on earth, the top of which reaches heaven, and on which divine messengers are ascending and descending.

Let us place ourselves a moment in the situation of our ancestor. With empty pockets, supplied only with a wandering staff, he commenced his journey; and how painful must have been to him the sudden parting from his blind father, from the tenderly loving and dearly loved mother. His first night's lodging is not in a comfortable inn, but in an open place, and the hard stone served him instead of a soft pillow. What thoughts may not have agitated the poor forsaken one at his lying down!-to stand alone in God's wide world, without protection against robbers and wild beasts, and without means or prospects to earn a living in future, is a position in no way calculated to excite pleasant and cheerful thoughts and courageous resolves. But the man whom the Scriptures themselves describe as ■■■ ■■, a simple, straightforward, upright, and pious man,-whom no outward circumstances could bow down; and the invisible God, who occupies the highest point in the ladder of the chain of beings, communicated to him in a dream the assurance that a numerous progeny should descend from him, and should be the lords of the soil on which he was then lying, that they should spread over the greatest distance, to all the regions of the world, and that he and his posterity should become a blessing to all the families of the earth. "I myself," said God, "will be with thee, and preserve thee whithersoever thou goest, and I will bring thee back to this land; for I will not forsake thee till I have fulfilled all that I have spoken to thee." Who has the capacity to portray the joyful and happy feelings which overpowered Jacob when he awoke from this glorious dream? What new courage, what bold hopes, what firm reliance must it not have breathed into him! At the same time, however, was he overwhelmed with reverence for the most Exalted and Omnipresent, and he attained to the clear perception that his God is not like the gods of the heathens, bound to one or to several fixed places.

"And he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How fearful is this place! This is no other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And when Jacob arose early in the morning, he took the stone, which he had placed for his pillow, and set it up as a monument, and poured wine and also oil upon it, add he called the name of that place ■■■ ■■, the house of God." The descendants of Jacob have also stood often, in their pilgrimage, solitary and by the world forsaken, not knowing where they could lay down their weary heads; but their Father in heaven, the Protector of the unfortunate, gave them always and everywhere clear proofs of his loving providence. And, wheresoever we may be, we see everywhere how one link of the chain of beings is wonderfully joined to the other. Everywhere we behold the unending ladder which reaches from earth to heaven;-how man is able to elevate himself, step by step, to a higher, better, and more divine degree, and every living being is a servant of God, and is compelled to labour in the accomplishment of the wise intentions of the Most high, whether consciously or unconsciously, and often even in despite of his own will. And in all lands and in every place, where there assemble even but a few or many Jewish families, they always erected a memorial as a token of their revering the SOLE God, and gladly relinquished many an enjoyment, many a comfort, so that they but obtained a house of God, where they could perform their devotions. And the conviction forced itself constantly more and more on them, that wheresoever they approached the Omnipresent with awe and reverence, they also could rely on

the attainment of his blessing, since■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■ “In every place where I shall permit thee to mention my name will I come and bless thee.” And as soon as the Lord had blessed the work of their hands, when the number of their families had increased, they were at once prepared to make yet greater sacrifices, to enlarge the spaces of the house of God, and to give them a heightened splendour.

Let us, brethren, continue a little farther the history of our ancestor. We see how, being strengthened, he lifted up his feet, and went to the land of the children of the east. And behold there was a well in the field, and three flocks of sheep were encamped around it, and a great stone was on the mouth of the well. After a friendly conversation with the shepherds, and after having seen Rachel the shepherdess, the daughter of his uncle, he rolled the stone from, the well, and gave drink to the sheep of Laban. In the same manner has it remained a beautiful and peculiar trait in the family of Jacob to be ready to aid and serve each other in the time of need, and so it will always remain.

Seven full years was Jacob compelled to serve for Rachel, for the beloved of his heart, when he was cheated, and in order to call her his own, he had to serve anew another seven years. And many of you, beloved brethren, surely know, from your own sad experience, how heavy was made the burden of the Jews through many centuries, before they could lead home their Rachel, and how often they found themselves again deceived when they fancied themselves within reach of the fulfillment of their wishes. And when Jacob had at length provided for himself a family, and was richly blessed with children, how difficult was it even then to obtain the deserved reward for his faithful services from his hard-hearted and avaricious relative. Only through his opposing artifice to artifice, and because God evidently caused all his enterprises to succeed, he became master and possessor of numerous flocks and herds, despite of the envy and jealousy of Laban and his sons. In the same manner was it made as difficult as possible to our brothers in faith in most countries, down to the latest times, to obtain a livelihood; but in despite of all unnatural and barbarous laws of senseless possessors of power, did the blessing of God rest on them, and however often they were robbed and plundered, the springs of this blessing carried nevertheless new abundance unto them.

We are told in the section which we read today, how Jacob employed a considerable part of his property to acquire the favour of his persecutor and inimical brother; in the same manner were his descendants innumerable times compelled to give up that what they had slowly acquired with the sweat of their face, to obtain rest from their enemies and persecutors, who nevertheless ought to have entertained for them brotherly feelings in a strict conformity to the prescription of their own religion. Jacob had also to contend and strive with a divine messenger, with an angel in human form, in the dark of night till the break of day; nevertheless, he overcame him, and forced from him his blessing. The angel then said to him, “What is thy name?” and he answered, “Jacob;” to which the other replied, “Not Jacob shalt thou be called any more, but Israel; for thou hast contended with divine beings and with men, and hast prevailed.” And during the long and dark night of the middle ages, Israel had to contend against divine beings and men, and the contest is not ended even now; but this contest, for which the name of the Lord be praised, is not carried on any more at the present day with sword and lance and exercised with the rude power of the larger numbers, but with the weapons of the spirit, with the lightning of thought, with the power of ideas, and Israel will at length triumph when the day dawns, yea, will conquer, as our progenitor once prevailed, and

obtain moreover the blessing of those over whom the conquest is obtained.

Yet several other similarities, and many other points of comparison could we draw from the history of Jacob; but it is time that I leave the field of history to place myself on that of the present time. Behold! it suddenly threatens to grow dark, and night flits along to enshroud my eyes; dark figures I see moving spectre-like before me, and I feel as though I heard the ominous croak of the raven-it is the voice of those who everywhere and at all times appear with the assertion, that there is no safety perceptible in the present condition of Israel. Let us, therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, seek for consolation, strength, revival and edification, in the words of the prophet Ezekiel 37:1-15, which I will now read to you. But thou God of all spirits and all flesh, send us the proper spirit that we may all recognise, that only then when we are penetrated by the spirit of love, and of pure and sincere faith, we are capable of accomplishing the problem of our life, of being Israelites-servants and warriors of God. Amen.

[illegible]

“And the hand of the Lord was upon me, and I was carried out through the spirit of the Lord, and was let down in a valley, and it was full of bones. And he led me about them all around, and behold they were very many on the face of the valley, and they were very dry. And he said to me, O son of man, shall these bones live? and I said, O Lord God, thou alone knowest it. And he said to me, Prophesy concerning these bones, and say to them, O ye dry bones; hear the word of the Lord, Thus saith the Lord God to these bones, Behold I will bring spirit in you, and you shall live. And I will put veins upon you, and I will cause flesh to come upon you, and I will draw skin over you, and I will place a spirit in you and you shall live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. And I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied there came a voice, and there was a storm, and the bones approached each one to its fellow. And I saw, and behold veins were on them, and flesh came, and a skin was drawn over them above, but there was no spirit in them. And he said to me, Prophesy to the spirit, prophesy, O son of man, and say to the spirit, Thus saith the Lord God, From the four sides of heaven borne, O spirit, and breathe on these slain ones, that they may live. And I prophesied as the Lord commanded me, and spirit came into them and they lived, and they stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. And He said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold they say, Our bones are dry and our hope is lost, we are cut off. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I open your graves, and I will bring you up from your graves, my people, and bring you to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, my people, and when I bring you up out of your graves, my people; and I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you upon your land, and you shall know that I am the Lord who have done it, saith the Lord.”

I. The interpretation of this precious prophecy the Lord himself communicated to Ezekiel, in saying “These bones are (represent) the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, we are cut off.” This assertion was not heard only then when the Jewish kingdom was approaching its downfall and total dissolution, for it is also frequently heard even now, from the mouths of many of our brothers both in the new world as well as the old. What wonder then that the professors of another religion try all possible means to make us sick of our belief, and to draw us over to their own? Very frequently, too, they have endeavoured to cut off from us all hope

of life, and have compared Judaism to an old rotten and dilapidated building which threatens to tumble down on all sides, which is full of breaches, crevasses, and rents, wherefore it offers no protection against the weather, against rain and storm. Others again allege, that they feel a lively interest for the eternal truths, the divine ideas of Judaism; whereas they consider the whole system of ceremonial laws as a superfluous addition, which they desire to have cut away root and branch, and this the sooner the better. They are in the habit of representing Judaism under the image of a very old tree which has still some healthy roots, wherefore the stem thereof, possesses still some vigour of life, whilst all the branches and twigs are totally rotten and decayed. With all the love, attachment, and zeal, which I bear in my bosom for the religion of our fathers, for which I will also surrender everything, with all sincerity, till the last breath of my life is drawn, I cannot deny that the outward constitution of Judaism is in such a state of derangement, partly through pressure from without, partly through carelessness from within, through indifference, through misunderstanding, through a want of religious sentiment, and through still many other causes, that we only can reflect with care and apprehension, how this evil, how these injuries can be remedied. A small, a very small part of the mass of nations as we are, scattered besides in all directions, we have among us no union, no chief, no authority; what is prohibited by one is permitted by another; what the one binds the other looseneth, and what one declares to be a principal, the other esteems as a secondary matter; men without moral value and without an accurate knowledge of the sources of our religion obtrude themselves not rarely as leaders, and the people, easily led astray, is for a time deceived by them with false lights; yea, men who openly before the eyes of every one have, times without number, transgressed the most important and sacred commands of religion, not rarely assume the appearance as though they were the true preservers of the ultra-orthodox Judaism, Can therefore any one be blamed for saying, under such circumstances, and when observing such evils, “Our bones are dry, our hope is lost; we are cut off?”

But, brethren, we must not yield ourselves too long to such sorrowful and melancholy contemplations, and not tarry quite too long at the shady side of the picture; but we will rather refresh ourselves and become stronger and more vigorous through the words of the prophet, through the announcement of the divine spirit, which brings new life among the dead bones. And what kind of spirit, brethren, do you think it is which is able to raise again the stiff, rotten, decayed, dry, and dead skeleton?-It is above all the spirit of love. There, where prevails true, pure, noble, and disinterested love, which, by the by, is immeasurably removed from sensual and beastly passion,-there is also true life. It is also for this cause that life and love have in our vernacular kindred sounds; as it is also in the German, the noble language of our fatherland, “Leben,” and “Liebe.” He who says not merely with his lips ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might,” but who is in reality filled with love towards God, must also be happy and content in every situation of life; he may indeed strain every nerve, employ all the powers of his mind to improve his condition by all legally permitted means; but he murmurs and complains not concerning that which is unalterable, concerning the limits within which he is confined; for he feels and knows, that a Supreme Wisdom rules over all, and directs everything for the benefit of the entire mass of beings. Out of love to God he will also take care not to transgress any one precept through which he might draw upon himself the Divine displeasure. He will also for this cause not always think of himself only, not strive to promote solely his own interest; he knows that the love of God is not extended to none but him, but is bestowed likewise on all men and all beings, and that it is the will of God, that all mankind

should love each other as brothers and render mutual assistance to all; as it is written ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ “And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Where true and sincere love has set up her throne in the heart of man, there is the individual easily inclined to defer to others and to forgive their faults. The husband bears patiently and mildly with the peculiarities and humours of the wife of his choice; and endeavours to show her a better course through kind but not by means of impatient words. The wife will bear with patience and yielding the excitement of the husband when he is much busied and overburdened with care, and not try to excite him yet more; and in this manner their union may be called happy and enviable. The children which spring from such a blessed union, grow up prosperously under the honest culture of their parents; their faults will be earnestly corrected and reproved, but not punished with undue rigour; and thus they advance to maturity amidst examples of fear and adoration of God and love for mankind, and obtain, likewise, proper instruction in what is worth knowing; and most especially the religion of their fathers. And thus they will find favour in the eyes of God and men.

Yes, my beloved hearers, this it is what the Scriptures mean in saying, “Behold, I have laid before thee this day the life and the good, the death and the evil; but choose thou life,” &c. Even this day can you all acquire life, if you open your hearts to the dictates of true love; for hatred and envy, wickedness and evil desires are the actual, spiritual, moral death, against which our law so earnestly admonishes us. But in the same measure as Providence has wisely ordained, that though each streamlet which meanders through the meadow, is in itself a pleasant spectacle to the beholder, many streamlets must nevertheless carry their waters into the river, which, thus acquiring a high importance, bears on its bosom sail and steamships, and diffuses commerce, trade, intercourse, and blessing over a whole country; so was it intended that each individual man, and each single family, shall and must unite themselves with a larger mass, with a community, in order to obtain value and importance. And do you know what is the means of union, the bond which keeps any community together and promotes their prosperity? It is again the principle of love. In a community composed of God-fearing, God-devoted and philanthropic members, there it is impossible that wrangling, quarrels, and contentions should prevail; and if such strife accidentally occur, it will be immediately settled quietly with moderation and reflection, on the principles of justice and equity. But the individual Israelite must not regard himself solely as a member of the congregation to which he belongs ; no, he must likewise bear within himself the consciousness that he is destined by God to belong to the whole congregation of Israel, and all mankind on the face of the earth.

If the spirit of true love towards God, the law, and Judaism, has found a place in us, then must all little jealousies between the different Jewish communities vanish; then will the walls of separation which divide and separate them fall to the ground; for they will then see and understand that they have all the selfsame task, the selfsame destiny, to glorify on earth the name of the ONE, the blessed God of our fathers, and that in this no one can have a preference above the other.

Look at this beautiful, great, and noble country, which was but thinly populated as late as the last century. Through what means has it attained, all at once and so suddenly, to such power, to such importance, to such influence, to such splendour? Because great and excellent men have given it a wise and reasonable constitution, an incomparable fundamental law, in respect to which men of the most varied and contradictory views can live near each other in peace, quiet, and concord. And should we Israelites, who are indebted on our being here to this same constitution, not learn

therefrom that we also may attain a quite different importance, a much greater influence, if but once the spirit of contradiction, which moves its wings here and there, be entirely overcome by the spirit of love?

Let us then call out in the words of our text, “From the four quarters of heaven, come, O spirit! thou pure spirit of love, and breathe into our brothers; and the lukewarm, and the cold, and the indifferent, and the narrow-minded, and the apostates; and the dead, shall feel themselves penetrated with a new life, and a great, numerous, uncountable host will then assemble around the banner of Israel.”

II. With the spirit of love must also come, secondly, the spirit of a pure, undefiled faith, which must fill us, if we wish to he Israelites in the full sense of the word. Through the spirit of love we can be, without doubt, good and honest men and worthy citizens, but are nevertheless through this means not yet Israelites; not yet champions in God’s army, who are ready to aid with all their powers in the establishment of the divine kingdom on earth. Only then do we become Israelites, when we believe in the ONE, Eternal, and invisible God, who shares his glory with none other, and gives not his praise to idols,-that the Holy One, praised be He, watches over the acts and omissions of every man, probes his innermost soul; that nothing, absolutely nothing, escapes his omniscience, and that He dispenses reward and punishment in the measure of justice, which is also accompanied at the same time with mercy. These doctrines are embraced in the first two of the ten commandments, which our forefathers heard themselves immediately out of the mouth of the Deity on Mount Sinai. As Israelites we are moreover bound to believe that Moses was the principal among the prophets, and that through him God revealed his holy will, his laws and ordinances. To this day we are obliged to observe the execution of these laws and ordinances, so far as it is within our power; therefore ought every Israelite to busy himself with the study of the law as often as possible, and endeavour to obtain instruction therein from wise and God-fearing men. A principal advantage of Judaism consists therein, that it demands of its professors only obedience towards the decisions of the judges of every period, but not by any means a blind faith in the words of its spiritual teachers; on the contrary, every one should with his own reason, with his own power of penetration, and with unlimited love for the truth, endeavour to impress on himself the doctrines of religion and the prescriptions and the articles of faith. Notwithstanding this, have the pious Israelites always held at all times in honour, and revered as exalted and holy their instructors, their preachers, and Rabbis, so soon as they had convinced themselves that these were penetrated with true fear of God, and esteemed the honour of their faith hither than their own honour and their own interests.

If now the spirit of true and undefiled faith has opened itself a road in our midst, no one will then obstinately insist on prejudices and preconceived opinions, and every man will readily and willingly offer his hand to remove acknowledged abuses. Is it not so, beloved brethren? You have already abolished the sale of the Mitzvote in the house of God, as obnoxious to the superior intelligence of the age, and opposed to the dignity of the sanctuary. You have set a limit to the accumulation of innumerable Misheberachs (offerings), and to a surety the worship has lost nothing in dignity and propriety, but has gained greatly in both respects. Whoever has really a liberal heart, has day by day opportunities to be liberal, and to give charity, and waits not till his name and the amount of his gift are publicly proclaimed in the Synagogue; he willingly dispenses from his superfluous store for the heightening of the splendour of the house of God, without desiring to create public attention for

so doing. A yet more striking proof that you are resolved to pursue the path of a moderate progress, you have displayed therein that you have taken care with all due zeal that the prayers shall be recited in a beautiful and proper form, with solemn quiet and decorum, and that it was a sincere desire of your heart to introduce speedily a regular choir for the chaunting of the requisite prayers. Yes, my friends, this is the effect of the spirit of pure, unadulterated faith, that progress should unfold itself naturally from within to act without, and not to be forced from without upon the religion we profess; and how happy would we be, if it could be said of us all one day, “They believed in the Lord, and in Moses his servant.”

Let us then, my beloved brothers, and you also beloved sisters, whose disposition, by nature inclined to the adoption of religious a sentiments, has so great an influence on the education of children, hold fast to this our holy faith, but let us prove also its presence by acts which correspond with it. Let us especially celebrate our Sabbaths and festivals as holy days consecrated to God, on which men and women, youths and maidens, should flock to the houses holy to the Lord, to become strengthened in the spirit of our holy faith, and to take an example by the life of God-inspired men of antiquity. Forget not that nothing contributed more to the preservation of our law, than the very Sabbaths and festivals on which the people obtained public instruction.

Thus also it is related in the Talmud: “Once upon a time the Israelites were prohibited by the tyrannical government of the Romans to engage in the study of the law. Paphos, son of Judah, came to a place where he found a large mass of people assembled, to whom Rabbi Akiba expounded the law. The former then said to him, Akiba, fearest thou not the government the law of which thou violatest? But R. Akiba answered him, I will tell thee a parable. A fox once took a walk along the bank of a river, in which he discovered a mass of fishes, who swam hither and thither in the greatest confusion. He asked them, What causes this great disturbance among you ? To which they replied, We fear the nets which men have spread against us. I will give you an advice, said the fox; if you desire to be safe, then come and live with me on shore, just as your fathers formerly used to live with mine. What, they exclaimed, art thou the one who is called the most cunning of beasts? thou art not cunning, but the most foolish. If we are not safe here where alone we can live, what can we expect of a place where we are sure to die? Just so is it with us Israelites; if we are not safe when we adhere to our law, of which it is written, It is thy life and the length of thy days, what have we to expect if we forsake it? Soon afterwards Rabbi Akiba was thrown into prison, but Paphos, son of Judah, was also caught and put in the same place of confinement. When R. Akiba saw him he asked Paphos, What has brought thee hither? to which he replied, Happy art thou, R. Akiba, that thou sufferest for the law, and wo is thee, Paphos, that thy suffering proceeds from the vain and worthless things of this world.” The same Rabbi Akiba, when he had been led to the place of execution, and was compelled to yield his spirit amidst the cruel tortures of the minions of tyranny, called out with his expiring breath, “Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God, the Lord is One.” Never would R. Akiba, one of the greatest teachers of our people, have acted counter to the commands of the government, never would he have taken part in the revolt of his fellow-Israelites under the guidance of the celebrated Bar Cochebah against the Romans; never would he have ascended the scaffold; if he had not felt the most absolute conviction, that Israel would sooner or later become again an independent kingdom, and that the Creator of life had destined the human soul to endure for ever.

Let then many of our enlightened brothers in the old world renounce as they may the hope in the second birth of Israel, and the restoration of the temple on the mountains of Zion, because they fear that otherwise they would not be considered to love their present fatherland, or perhaps because they have no desire to see themselves united with their fellows in belief; we nevertheless give full credence to the assurances of our prophets; we believe, that when the time shall come, that no nation will lift up the sword any more against the other, and all revere only the ONE and ETERNAL God: then will all nations also regard it as their most sacred duty to honour especially that people which has suffered, constantly contending for the unity of God, and to distinguish pre-eminently that place, from which the word of the Lord first went forth; “for from Zion shall go out the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Then will the spirit of love and of pure unadulterated faith penetrate all men, and be fulfilled what the prophet promised: “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I open your graves, and bring you up out of your graves, my people, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, my people, and bring you up from your graves, my people; and I will put my spirit in you and you shall live; and I will place you [at rest] in your land, and you shall know that I the Lord have spoken and done it; saith the Lord.” Amen.

S. The Passover - 1846

The Passover. A Sermon, Delivered by H. Stern, at the Portuguese Synagogue at Richmond, Va., on Passover, the 17th of Nissan, 5606, (April 12th, 1846.) To assemble in the house of the Lord is always, and however often repeated, a God-pleasing, holy act; for man, when there, is best enabled to search and prove himself, and turning his view inward, he will discover the wounds of his heart; at that time defects are laid open which hitherto have remained invisible to him, or he discovers a fault which, though called good before the world, can still not be approved of by his alarmed conscience. It is in such an hour that your heart admonishes you of your duty to remember your destiny as men, as Israelites; when you are reminded by your inward monitor: "Knowest thou before whom thou standest? knowest thou thy Creator, why speaks to thee through the voice of conscience?" It is then that you may feel the heavenly revelation, vouchsafed to a determined resolution to sin no more: "Thou art my son, whom I have this day begotten, and thy sins and vices are forgiven." The hours thus spent are the happiest hours, which the house of God alone can grant us, for they point out to us the gate of heaven. Yes, brethren! the house of God is the gate of heaven; for here stands the ladder which leads heavenward, by which the angels of God, the righteous, go upward, and elevate themselves unto God, whereas the unrighteous go down thereby, and fall in the pit of destruction. They fall down therefrom, in order not to hear the word of God which is there announced to them by conscience and from without; and thus they stumble to everlasting, into the abyss of perdition. Not thus, however, is the lot of the congregation of Jacob; not so the portion of the divinely chosen people. So long as houses of God continue to be the glory and ornament of Israel; so long as holy meetings are held therein; so long as we yet exclaim: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! thy dwellings, O Israel!" even so long do we continue to be the portion of the Lord, and we remain Jacob his chosen inheritance. Is it therefore our duty, our calling, to tread the sacred precincts as often as we possibly can do so, in order to approach the loving Father of all existence at the gate of heaven which he has appointed for us; to elevate the spirit to Him through devotion and prayer, and to soften the heart, to purify it, and to change it from one of stone to one of flesh: it is evidently a more imperious duty on the holy festivals which are ordained for us in the holy Scriptures as days of holy convocations, and more especially on this high and solemn festival, which reminds us of the eventful occurrences which happened to our fathers, proclaims to us the great deliverance of Israel, and serves as the foundation of the divine religion. And we stand thus to-day in the holy place, in the house of God, at the gate of heaven, to lift up the spirit in the light of the Lord, to strengthen the heart through his holy word, to sacrifice our own will to the pure and holy will of God, to bend the head before the footstool of his glory, to proclaim God’s power, his wisdom, and his goodness.

O Father! who lovest and carest for all, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who didst appear to Moses on Horeb, and announce to him, "I have heard the prayer of my afflicted people;" hear, O hear, the prayer of all Israel, and the prayer of one of the humblest of thy servants, even my prayer.

O God of mercy and compassion! who didst show unto Moses at Horeb thy ways, so that he might find grace in thy eyes, listen also to my prayer; I petition not for riches, not for length of days, but for a wise heart, to acknowledge Thee, and to know thy ways, and to proclaim this knowledge in Israel; for behold this nation is thy people; in order that I may find grace and favour by Thee, O God! and also in the eyes of men. Amen.

I. When now this day reminds us of great and important events; if this festival is the least of the divinely revealed religion; when through means of this very festival our holy religion obtained an extraordinary advance over all other religions; when no one unclean could lawfully partake of the sacrifice which was offered thereon; when all leaven, become leaven in sin and vice, is refused admittance to its celebration; when all uncircumcised, those of the flesh and the heart, are excluded from participating therein; when, at last, every one whose heart is impure and uncleansed is prohibited from its use, as we are told by our sages ■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ "Every son of the stranger," that is every one whose deeds have become strange to his Father in heaven, by which rule all apostates are not allowed to eat of the Passover sacrifice: we are naturally led to ask the following questions:

1. Is it reasonable to demand of the Israelites of the present day, for whom, to all appearance, nothing, has been left as the result of this liberation from Egypt, to celebrate the festival?*

* The preacher applies here the various questions and instructions in the Passover service quoted from the Scripture. To the first division he applies ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ "What is this service to you?" To the second ■■ ■■■ "What is this?" and to the third ■■■■■ ■■■■ "and thou shalt tell thy son."

2. Or, on the contrary, can such a celebration have yet an application and a useful bearing for us also who are yet here?

3. And if so, what is the meaning and use of this great feast?

It is certainly true, that, in a political point of view, nothing, yea, nothing whatever, is left of this liberation unto Israel; that every thing of earthly greatness which was then given unto them has, in times past, been taken from Israel; that many of our brethren in faith have to bear, in many places, an Egyptian yoke, and that the recollection of the glory of the past, called up by this festival, must draw tears of anguish from those whose prayer of sorrow may ascend to heaven in words like these:

O Father and all-just God, who didst appear to Moses at Horeb, and announce to him, "I have seen the afflictions of my people in Egypt, and their cry have I heard, and resolved to save them," have regard, we pray thee, of our misery also, hear our prayer, and hasten to deliver us.--Yes, brethren! our enemies have been permitted to rob us of our political freedom, of our gold and our silver, and our precious garments; these things indeed they were enabled to take; but our enemies have gained no honour by this plunder, no more than Israel as a nation have lost aught of honour, nay, any thing whatever, for want of the beautiful garments and precious jewels which now deck our adversaries. But true freedom,--the freedom of the spirit, the freedom of religion, the freedom to preach the divine word, the freedom to hear the same, the freedom to confess the divine religion and to exercise it,--this freedom has been left us. No hand of the barbarian can rob us of this; this no one can prevent us from attaining. Israel is free, and will be free to eternity, and were all the

Israelites bound in fetters and chains, they would still be free,--free from idolatry, free from superstition, free from error, inhumanity, and barbarism.

It is for this reason that we have been taught to consider it as a duty to view ourselves in every generation as though we had each individually gone out of Egypt; for in truth the same mercy which was shown to our ancestors has also been conferred on each of us to eternity; because, from the very hour that God called Israel his people, from the hour that Jacob became his heritage, yea, from that very hour did the redemption commence and stand firm, and will continue to stand to all eternity. And so says our form of prayer: "And it is this which has aided our fathers and ourselves; for not one man alone rose up against us to destroy us, but in every generation, and at all times, have enemies risen up to prepare the way for our destruction, but the Holy One, blessed be He, always saves us from their hands."

Thus then has the deliverance of Israel been commenced and continued always and for ever; for God is the Redeemer of Israel as He has promised: "I will be He that I will be,--this is my name for ever, and my memorial for generation and generation."*

* See Rashi to the passage ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ (Exodus 3:14.) "I am with them in their affliction, and I will be with them in future troubles."

How often have not barbarians threatened us with annihilation? how often did they not endeavour to rob us of the most precious treasure, the divine religion which we possess; to snatch from us the holy Torah; to close against us the gate of heaven? but God the Protector of Israel snatched us out of their power. And thus do we find still to this day men in all corners of the earth who call themselves Israelites, who all invoke God with one tongue, teach the word of God in one language, and pour out their heart to God in the sacred dialect of Palestine. Yes, Israel received this freedom through the great redemption from Egypt, and on Sinai; it is an eternal, unalienable freedom; never has a human hand been able to touch--never has the barbarian’s power been able to diminish it; only of the earthly could they deprive us, but the daughter of heaven has remained in our midst. Earthly goods they could destroy; but this heavenly gift is indestructible. And thus if we do persevere in the belief of our fathers, we are truly free. And whatever of political freedom time has taken from us, is already in part, and will once be altogether, restored; and nations are already contending with nations about the political equalization of Israel, and the restoring of our people to the rights of man; whilst they honour its laws as the acknowledged divine and holy religion.

II.

If we now celebrate at this festival the triumph of the religion of God over idolatry and superstition, together will the victory of spiritual freedom over tyranny and barbarism, and the victory of the divine instruction over vanity and error: it is, in addition to the festival of our freedom, that of faith and hope. "The people believed; and they understood that the Lord had seen their affliction, and they bent the head and bowed themselves." Our wise men teach, that the Israelites had rendered themselves deserving of redemption solely through the power of faith. Faith and hope are the pillars of the Mosaic religion, its props and support no less than the sustaining power of our people. Those who know God will trust in Him. Those who love the God of their fathers, will serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing soul. Those who trust in the Lord will be surrounded with his loving kindness. Happy are they who trust in the Lord, for He will be their support; but wo be to

those who do not trust in Him; for what shall strengthen them in the time of trouble, on the day of adversity? Trusting in the Lord alone confers salvation and help; the want of a confiding heart is therefore unpardonable sin, which was not pardoned even when committed by Moses, the greatest of all prophets; as we are told: "Because ye had not faith in me to sanctify me by water before their eyes."

If we survey the history of Israel from its first origin up to the present day, we will see therein the history of faith and that of hope. The history of Israel is entirely different from the history and tradition of other people and nations. The history of other nations gives us accounts of great, important, and remarkable events, their achievements in elegance and greatness; but sins and vices remain often buried amidst silence, or are even covered over with a beautiful mantle which hides their deformity. We often see priests and rulers who were sunk in crime, held up to admiration; whilst the common people, the slaves of these tyrants, remain unnoticed. Not thus is the history of Israel. Its history is that of a divinely chosen people; its tradition is that of Jacob, the beloved of God. If now we examine the history of Israel, we shall discover, that Israel fell and conquered, fell and triumphed again; and always fell through vice, and conquered through the power of trust in God. Abraham walked with God, and remained faithful amidst his temptations, through the power of faith. Isaac became a willing sacrifice, to please God through his death, because he had a perfect faith. Jacob, who had through the greater part of his life to struggle with adversity, was sustained through faith only. The lot of the Israelites in Egypt was surely the most abject of all modes of slavery; and how could the heart of the father sustain itself, when his eye had to behold with bitter anguish how his helpless infant boy was pierced by the Egyptian’s dagger, or cast in the floods of the Nile? How could the Hebrew mother yet place any value on life, when she had to endure such sorrow, such a degradation? But they had faith in the Lord, and animated by this, they called on the God of their fathers, and He resolved to redeem his people.

God accordingly led them, under the guidance of Moses, into the desert, and they followed Him without preparing themselves provision for the way: and thus they proved the strength of their faith. Jeremiah therefore announced to them, in the name of God: "I remember unto thee the righteousness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals; that thou wentest after me in the wilderness, a land that is not sown." A confiding faith was the strength of the Israelites, and they were enabled thereby to accomplish the almost impossible; but when they failed in faith, they sunk into sin and vice, and had therefore to fall into all kinds of evil. When the Israelites were victorious, they conquered only through the power of faith; and this was the case at all times, not alone with the whole nation, but also with every individual Israelite. For the history of Israel is a sacred record; it guides us through all epochs upon the ways of God; it teaches us the power of religion; it lays open vice and the shame and disgrace of sin without regard to persons, and announces the punishment inflicted by God without fear, without reserve. The prophet, on whose head a price had been set, had to announce to the king who had done this, the divine vengeance which was impending; and Moses--the great prophet Moses--how must his heart have bled when he had to write down the confession of his own sin and the punishment which was inflicted in consequence. The highly praised David, the wise Solomon, could not prevent that their sins were recorded in the Scriptures. When therefore with the destruction of the temple Israel ceased, in a political sense, from being a nation, the people learned more and more to know the ways of God. Surrounded and persecuted, without political power, in daily danger of being destroyed by the furious raging of the

tyrant, did they place their trust in God, and He was their Supporter till this very day.

It could, therefore, in no manner whatever, be in the power of their persecutors to blot them from the face of the earth; in the words of the prophet: "Frame counsel and it shall be frustrated, speak the word and it shall not stand; for God is with us."

III.

Faith and hope are twin sisters; where there is faith there too is hope; and where hope has taken up her abode, there faith also abides; and where one is wanting, the other cannot exist. If then religion has taught us faith, if the Holy Scriptures have shown us the power of a confiding trust; then is it requisite that hope too must animate us; and we must feel the hope that the disgrace now resting on Israel shall one day be removed; the hope, that the enemies of Israel shall one day be ashamed of their enmity, and be regarded by the world at large with abhorrence; and lastly, the hope that once Israel shall appear to the world as a divine light, to illumine the earth, to enlighten nations and people, according to the words of the prophet: "Come and let us go in the light of the Lord; for from Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Which God in his mercy grant. Amen.

S. The Passover - 1849

[redacted]

The Passover A Sermon Delivered in the Synagogue Shearith Israel, Montreal, on Passover, 5608. By the Rev. Abraham De Sola

[redacted] When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which the Eternal, our God, hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Eternal brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. (Deuteronomy 6:20-21.)

Brethren,-

O magnify the Lord with me, for He permits us to unite once more to celebrate the solemn ordinance of the Passover. And let us together exalt his name, for He has once more enabled us to assemble on the return of this joyous season, [redacted] to declare that He is most righteous, that his fostering kindness lath not at all abandoned us since we last met to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread in its due season, and that He is infinite in mercy and love, since He has not suffered our numbers to diminish, but has withholden death from entering into our dwellings, and laying his icy hand on the hearts that in love and faithfulness, do beat for us. Return thanks, therefore, to your Almighty Guardian, for his abundant goodness, the more so, in that ye have been graciously kept alive, whilst a most fatal visitation* in its wide and destructive circuit around you, hath sent many a one to an untimely and sorrowful grave; and ascribe ye the glory due to his name, in that your barrel of flour hath not wasted, and your cruise of oil hath not failed, whilst thousands of your fellow-creatures have felt the severe pangs of poverty and hunger.† Do ye, therefore, now praise the Eternal for all these mercies! Praise Him who hath caused all those who rose up against you, to be smitten before your face, who hath protected you, and permitted you to reassemble this day at his holy altar in life and in health. Praise Him who hath blessed you in the city, and in the field, in your basket and in your store, in your goings out and in your comings in. Praise Him who hath spread his pavilion of peace alike over you, your wives, and your little ones and ascribe ye everlasting hallelujahs to Him who forgets not the word which He spake unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, but hath caused us, their children, to be alive, even all of us, this day, so that we may accomplish the purpose for which He chose us from among all people and tongues, to proclaim the unity of his blessed name, and by the strict observance of his Passover, and other institutions, to attest before all the families of the earth his revelation and his truth, and so procure to us and to them everlasting life and bliss.

*The typhus fever.

† Consequent upon the large immigration of the year.

My beloved hearers, it is, doubtless, always good to give thanks unto the Eternal, and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High; and to proclaim his goodness and mercy, is an occupation always fitting and always seasonable. But, as the services of the day here, and the peculiar ceremonies and observances in our houses, do all tend to remind us that the anniversary of our redemption from Mitsrayim has again dawned upon us: does it not occur to you that it now becomes us to speak more particularly of the benevolence and favour of the Almighty, in leading us forth ■■■■ ■■■■■ from the degradation and oppression of our Egyptian servitude? This theme you will not only consider as appropriate for the day's discourse, but as obligatory also, since not only do our sages teach ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ that "it is incumbent on us at this season to converse concerning the exit from Egypt," but the duty is strictly and repeatedly enjoined in the sacred volume also. Our text requires no less from us. Turn we, therefore, with due attention and seriousness to this important subject. When I last spoke to you on the Passover, and by an inquiry into the design of this institution and the manner in which it is to be observed, endeavoured to demonstrate to you its transcendent importance and the blessings its due observance bestows, I said that the ■■■, in the first place, commemorated those most stupendous and most important events, the exit from Egypt, and the commencement of our vocation as the depositaries of God's holy word. I then took occasion, as I do now, to remind you, that since we have been thus particularly favoured, it becomes our bounden duty to be particularly observant of all the teachings of this holy word, to do them. I also endeavoured to show you, that it ill became the descendants of those who were alike bondmen in Egypt, the children of one father, to create any distinction or exclusiveness in their acts of worship; but that equality should be the characteristic in all our religious and devotional rites. Farther, that not only should we hold forth the hand of brotherly love and esteem to him who is called by the name of Israel, but to the gentile also; and that we should love the stranger, since we were strangers in Egypt, and since, in social, if not in religious intercourse, he is as much our brother as is the descendant of Abraham. I remarked, too, that there were many other important reflections, which the observance of the Passover called forth, but which we were unable to pursue then. But, since all who were present on the occasion to which I refer, are spared to assemble yet again in God's house, let us proceed now with these reflections, as forming a fitting subject for our present consideration, and let us attentively and prayerfully continue to inquire-

First. What is the design of the Passover? and

Secondly. What are some of the advantages resulting from its due observance? And now, Almighty Father, in humbleness and reverence would I raise my hands towards thy commandments which I love. O take not the word of truth entirely out of my mouth, but suffer me to show the pleasantness and excellence of thy ways to these thy children, thy creatures, the works of thy hands. Amen.

I.

1. The Passover was designed to implant within us a due sense of the omnipotence, justice, and mercy of our Creator. There is no incident in the history of our ancestors, which, in interest or importance, can at all equal that most astounding event, the exit from Egypt. And there is no subject of inquiry which is calculated to afford a more just or more perfect conception of the being and attributes of the Eternal, than that which contemplates Him as the deliverer of Jacob's house

from a people of a strange tongue. The redemption from Mitsrayim is strikingly illustrative of the divine perfection. It displays to us the Deity as asserting his supremacy over those things, which benighted man had declared objects of worship. It displays Him to us as the omnipotent director and ruler of sea and river, thunder and lightning, hail and fire, earth and vegetation, light and darkness, of man, least, fish, and reptile. And it displays Him to us as proclaiming at once to the proud oppressor and to the humble oppressed, that to the Eternal alone are the greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty, and that He (blessed for ever be his name) shall reign for ever and ever. Amen. In a light no less clear, does it show forth God's justice. It proves to us, in the most satisfactory manner, that "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;"* but that the Deity, in presiding over the affairs of men, directs both wisely and faithfully; that "his justice is as the eternal mounts, his judgment like the profound abyss."† And it assures us of the blessed and consoling truth, that although the heartless oppressor may triumph for a while in his cruelty, and, like the haughty monarch of Egypt, may exclaim in all the pride of successful villainy, "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord!"‡ that this God, Justice is his name, will not fail to manifest himself when the cry of the afflicted is heard, even as He did of old manifest himself on the shores of the Yam Suph.

* Ecclesiastes 9:11.

† Psalms 36:6.

‡ Exodus 5:2.

Therefore, to the modern Pharaoh, to the oppressor, the lordling, and the tyrant, the Passover teaches that there is a retributing One above who neither sleepeth nor slumbereth when the groans of the oppressed, the poor, the widow, or the orphan, are heard around his throne; but that this God, Vengeance is his name, will, at such times, surely shine forth [redacted]. At the same time, therefore, speaketh the Passover to the heart of the unhappy, the broken in spirit, and the afflicted, in a voice, than which none can be more sweet, more cheering, or more consoling. It assures them, that from the day when the first parents of the human family dwelt on this earth, even to the present moment, God hath never permitted the voice of innocent blood to cry to Him from the ground unrequited and unavenged; but, when the unhappy victims of malignant persecution cry loudest in their agony [redacted], then will the mighty right hand of the Eternal be stretched forth, and even then shall they find light, boy, gladness, and honour[redacted]. No less manifestly does the Passover exhibit the Deity as a God of mercy. We cannot repeat that portion of the Hagadah which reminds us that "He brought us forth from bondage to freedom, and from servitude to redemption; He changed our sorrow into joy, our mourning into a feast, and brought us from darkness to a great light,"-we cannot acknowledge this, without acknowledging at the same time that "the Lord is indeed plenteous in mercy."* For how could his mercy have been more signally evinced than in the consoling assurance which He made to enslaved Israel by the mouth of his servant Moses, that they should go forth from their task-masters with a high hand; that notwithstanding four long centuries of bitter servitude, they should go forth from their burdens a free and happy people; that from being the lowest and meanest among nations, they should become the most important and most favoured,-God's own people?

* Psalms 86:5. But what farther proof shall we require to satisfy us that the ■■■■■ ■■■■■ is demonstrative of the divine mercy? what farther proof can we require, when we witness the spirit of God agitating the mighty waters? when we behold his storm-wind lashing the angry billows, and swelling there into walls,-walls firmer than the everlasting rocks,-for it was at the word of the Eternal they stood ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■.* Let us picture to ourselves six hundred thousand men, besides their little ones, and also the mixed multitude, descending into the ocean depths, and pursuing their journey between two liquid mountains which in the ordinary course of nature would have overwhelmed them. Let us view them ascending safely, from the sea-bed, the opposite shores; let us see how instantaneously, then, the upheaved waters descend on their revengeful pursuers, with his “six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, with their captains;” and then let us ask with David, ■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ “Who, being wise, and observing these, things, shall not acknowledge the mercy of the Eternal?”†

* Psalms 107:25.

† Psalms 107:43.

2. The Passover was designed to teach us the importance and necessity of public worship. The institutions of man, whether civil or religious, may be judged by their attendant characteristics. These attendant characteristics, while they afford to the thinking and intelligent a favourable opportunity for abstraction, by which process a true estimate of the institution to which they attach themselves may be obtained, do at the same time afford to the bulk and uninquiring portion of mankind a practical means for ascertaining whether this or that ordinance is conducive to the well being and happiness of the human species, or the contrary. But far be it from us, my hearers, to submit the precepts and behests of our all-wise and infinite Creator to this kind of ratiocination. No! we are neither so foolish nor so presumptuous as to propose any such thing. No! “All those things which the Eternal hath said, those will we perform and hear.” Nevertheless, friends, there are some of God’s precepts, I speak not of those which are termed ■■■■, to which no reasons are assigned; there are, I say, some of the institutions of the Almighty, the beneficialness and excellence of which appearing, so to say, on the very face of them, cannot fail to strike us and call forth our admiration and praise. To illustrate this, let us for a moment cast a glance on some of the characteristics of that most sacred of our convocations, the ■■■ ■■■. When I spoke to you on a former occasion concerning this hallowed institution, I showed you that one of its characteristics was rest, the value and importance of which boon we saw in the comfort and relaxation thereby afforded to the weary mind and body, and the cheering consolation it bore to us, that our vocation here is not merely that of hewers of wood or drawers of water. We found that another of its characteristics was its periodical return, the utility and advantage of which we recognised in the favourable opportunity which it afforded us for uniting together in public worship, and the beneficial influence which this act exercised on the community generally.

Now, for a farther exemplification of our principle, let us turn to the festival which should now be more particularly the subject of our discourse. We discover one of its most striking characteristics to be commemoration-commemoration of that most glorious of all glorious events, the departure from Egypt,-and in this point of view we find it eminently demonstrative of the omnipotence, justice, and mercy of the almighty God of Israel. And if we proceed to notice those rites which are the

peculiar characteristics of the Pesach festival, we shall find that they too are not without their instruction and their value. Let us select one of these as most clearly elucidating the point we have just proposed to prove, to wit, the necessity and importance of public worship. Among the duties which the observance of this festival imposed upon our ancestors when they dwelt in their own land was that which required of them the ■■■■ ■■■, the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. Besides other ceremonies which attended the due performance of this precept, the children of Israel were commanded, “Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee; but it the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to rest his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover, at even, at the going down of the sun, at the anniversary of thy coming forth from Egypt.”* * Deuteronomy 16:5-6.

It requires no deep investigation, brethren, to show us why this command should have been enjoined. When we perceive that it was not addressed to any particular class of persons among the Jewish people, but that all the house of Israel were required to celebrate the Passover together, not singly, not as various individuals, not as various families, but as one individual, as one family, as God’s first born, we at once discover its extent; still let us say what was likely to be the result of such an ordinance, of such an assemblage. In the first place, it clearly proves to us the truth and value of the maxim enunciated by Israel’s sages, that ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ in matters of faith we stand in the character of sureties to one another; for, when with the annual return of the Passover, the Israelites gathered from all quarters to Jerusalem, the holy city (be it rebuilt in our day); when those who in worldly intercourse, were strangers to each other, met for a common purpose; when the blood of the paschal lamb had been shed, and all joined in the same rites, the same ceremonies,-how beautiful, how inspiring, and how glorious must have been the sight! When the sons of Jacob, in that holy place, acknowledged before their God that to Him were their thanks due, since it was He who had delivered them from the oppression of Egypt, ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■,* and when in all conviction and fervour they proclaimed their full belief in the divine authority of the rites they celebrated, ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■■,† who that had eyes to see the important influence which this public assemblage was likely to exercise on their existence as a nation, could refrain from attesting this conviction, and declaring in the words of holy writ, ■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■.‡ And if there was among that assembly one whose mind until then had been agitated by conflicting doubts, whose heart until then had not beat responsive to those of his more zealous brethren, and had not shared as fully as they in the conviction of the divine origin of the institution; if there had been such a one in the assembly, even he could not remain long a cold, a doubting, an indifferent spectator, when he found that it was not une or two who believed the reality of those events which originated the Passover, but that each one of the assembled thousands did testify and declare the same truths, truths which had been preserved by their ancestors, who in uninterrupted succession had received them from those who stood on the miraculously dried bed of the Red Sea!

* Deuteronomy 6:21.

† Ibid. 24.

‡Ibid.

And when these reflections, which a scene such as we have endeavoured to realize was so eminently calculated to create, forced themselves upon his attention, all coldness, all scepticism vanished, and he was to be seen among those who most lowly and reverentially prostrated themselves at God's altar, and who most fervently and devoutly uttered prayers and praises to the Shield of his ancestors. Thus spike the paschal ceremonies to our forefathers of old, brethren, and even thus speak they to us of the present day. When, O children of Israel, you unite on this day in public assembly, and declare your obligations to the Eternal, more particularly for having freed you from a despot's cruel rule, you individually and collectively constitute yourselves what the Almighty intended you should be, the living witnesses of his revelation and truth. Therefore, let not one of you refrain from appearing in a character so glorious, so becoming to you, so peculiarly your own. Peradventure, dear brethren, there be one amongst us, who when he views the peculiar ceremonies with which we celebrate the Passover, may with contemptuous levity exclaim ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■, "What are these, your ceremonies and rites! how can such trifling be acceptable to the Eternal!" To such a one do you now answer, that the Almighty has nevertheless instituted these ceremonies, which, however simple in themselves, have been the great means under God's pleasures of preserving us as a peculiar people through so many ages, and whilst so many other nations have either become fused into surrounding empires, or have disappeared entirely from the world's map. These very ceremonies have satisfied the doubting ones amongst us of the heavenly birth of the festival to which they belong; for impossible would it have been for Moses, (whose memory be revered,) to have introduced observances which would have been pronounced as insufferably irksome, and therefore not practised by our stiff-necked forefathers, who rebelled so repeatedly against all authority, even when it assumed a divine character. We maintain, the ordinance of the Passover would never have been observed by these, unless they had an all-sufficient reason and a most powerful inducement to do so; and they had this all-sufficient reason and inducement: they had been too signally assured, they had too clearly witnessed the wonders, signs, and miracles, which, according to divine intent, called forth the Passover, not to be quite satisfied of its transcendent claims to their regard.

Now display these facts to the doubting one; show him farther treat during more than thirty centuries his fathers, who were doubtless as good and as wise as he, have most rigidly observed the same ordinances; that they have not failed to remove the leaven from their houses, because they considered the command too simple in its character to have originated with the Eternal, but that they have recollected that God has not disdained to create the blade of grass, because He has formed the more beautiful flower and lofty tree; that He has not considered it unworthy his almighty power to produce the shell and the pebble, because He has given being to the rock and the mountain; that He has not considered it beneath his creative power to produce the animalcule, in which the human eye can detect no organs of life, because He has produced that intricate and wonderful piece of mechanism, the human frame. And as in the physical so in the moral world. Shall we maintain, that because the Eternal hath instituted laws and statutes which we consider important, therefore those which to us appear less weighty are in reality so, and that for this reason it would appear improbable they should have emanated from Him? Would it not be most inconsistent, and most presumptuous for us to maintain any such thing? Shall mortal man take upon himself to say to the Creator of heaven and earth, the source and perfection of all wisdom and excellence, "Thou hast well said," or, "Thou hast ill said?" ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ The holy angels above,

seraphim, ophanim, and Hayoth Hakodesh, open not their mouth but to praise all the works of his hand and the words of his mouth; and shall he that is a worm, mortal man, do less? O brethren, far, far from us be such presumptuous and wicked thoughts! Let us all in this our minor sanctuary recount the praises of the Most High, and let us declare in particular what He hath done for us in Egypt before our eyes, so that our conviction of his omnipotence, justice, mercy, and truth, may be imparted to the careless or doubting ones amongst us, so that not only we but those who shall come after us, may, as God's witnesses on earth, be privileged to spread the true knowledge of his holy and blessed name among the children of men, and so that it may be accounted unto us a everlasting righteousness according to the words of God's holy law, [redacted].* * Deuteronomy 6:25.

II.

If now, my hearers, we turn to examine what are some of the advantages resulting from a due observance of the Passover, we shall find one of the most important to be, its disposition to establish amongst us sentiments of amity, concord, and brotherly love. I have already remarked, when I before spoke to you on this subject, that it is in the highest degree incompatible with the object, and opposed to the spirit of the Passover festival, to retain thereon any but sentiments of good-will and esteem, one towards the other, and that we must be as careful to remove [redacted] the leaven of the heart, as we are in putting forth the material leaven from our habitations; and if we have not done this, and if moreover we have not removed from amongst us all feelings of foolish and unworthy pride, that leaven which rises and rises within us until almost the world itself appears too small to contain us, and our fellow-creatures too unworthy to breathe with us the same atmosphere; then do we not properly observe the Passover, then do we derive no advantage from it. I beseech you, brethren, forget not how this same pride has proved the greatest bane, the greatest curse to us nationally; for it was pride which led our ancestors to reject the authority of God and of his servants, and as scripture most expressively saith, "When Jeshurun waxed fat, then did he kick."* But observe the Passover with befitting sentiments, as is required of you, and this bane will for ever disappear from amongst us.

* Deuteronomy 32:15.

We have seen also that the Passover, by reminding us of our servitude in Egypt, does at the same time remind us of our common descent and vocation. From the command that all the congregation of Israel shall observe it, we have found that it is the duty of each of us to promote, as far as in us lies, this general celebration, and that consequently the poor, and houseless Israelite should be as warmly welcomed at our table as those who are its ordinary occupants. Farther, we have seen that although the present constitution of society renders it imperative for one to minister to the wants of the other, for grades and degrees to exist, yet are those of our brethren destined by Providence to dwell with us in a menial capacity, declared by holy writ as being worthy of joining us in the paschal rites, and are, therefore, of as much account in God's sight as the best of us, and for the same reason have as much to pride themselves on as the highest amongst us. But in farther proof, let us proceed now to detail some of the requirements which accompanied the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. Every Israelite was commanded to take to himself a lamb, a lamb to each house; "but," adds Scripture, "if the house be too little for the consumption of the lamb, let him and

his neighbour next unto his house take it with him."* Here again we find that no unneighbourly feelings of exclusion were permitted to exercise their baneful influence, but on the contrary, a spirit of frank, brotherly, and happy intercourse was to prevail; for the one great purpose, they were to forget everything that might possibly interfere with their pleasant communion, and no matter what misunderstanding or animosity existed between the Israelite and his neighbour, all was to give way to the great and passing considerations that they were Israelites, and that they were to celebrate the Passover together. But again, we see these sentiments insisted on, and in this way. If the rich man had been commanded to supply at his own cost the paschal lamb to him who could not afford to provide it for himself, no doubt every one so requiring would have preferred to receive it in this manner, rather than to use his own exertions to procure it, or to join with his neighbour against whom he might entertain feelings of animosity; but the law of God, ever consistent, ever faithful, permitted him but one course. Its unqualified requirement is that in case of necessity "he and his neighbour next unto his house shall take it according to the number of the souls;" and hence, brethren, will we deduce the important and valuable lesson, that no consideration whatever should or can prevent us from uniting together in those matters, upon which the glory and sanctification of God's name is dependent.

* Exodus 12:3-4.

We would fain pursue our reflections on the attendant observances of the Passover, and gladly would we display the all-important, valuable, and cheering truths they teach, but they are by far too numerous and by far too momentous to be dismissed with a cursory glance. Be it sufficient, that we now ponder well on what has already arisen in our minds. Let us recall the gracious deeds which our almighty Father did at this time vouchsafe to enact for us; let us seek Him with grateful voice, with tongues declaring our obligations, and with hearts which, like the paschal lamb of old, shall be without blemish; and as our fathers did eat the Passover of the Lord as if prepared for a journey, even so let us eat this Passover, that we may have before our eyes that long journey which one day we must all undertake, so that reminded of our mortality and nothingness, we may walk with our fellow-travellers in humbleness and charitableness the path of this life, and so that we may thereby become worthy of entering that suite in which oppression, pain, and sorrow can never enter, but where joy the most ecstatic, calm the most serene, and bliss the most complete, shall for ever dwell. That God in his infinite mercy may grant unto all present this portion, let us now pray.

O Lord God! mighty and tremendous, Creator and Preserver of all, in whose sight the strongest and the wisest amongst us are but weak and foolish, we venture now to approach Thee with prayerful voice; we strive to concentrate all our ideas, all our feelings, for the one great and glorious object, to commune with Thee, O great but merciful Father, in humbleness and love. And it is no little matter, O Eternal, for man to present himself before Thee who art his Creator, his God, and to entreat Thee to listen in particular to his words; and there are wrong and foolish feelings of independence, O Lord, which, alas and alas, harden his heart; and there are the stormy passions of his blood, and the obtuse reasonings of his brain, which disqualify his asking thy attention to his prayers. Lord, almighty, gracious, and eternal! we feel indeed our unworthiness to address Thee, we are indeed sensible that our hearts and minds are not in fit state to seek Thee, Source of all purity and excellence, and for this, O our Father, our souls feel unhappy in the day, and for this do we saturate our pillow at night with penitent, scalding tears. Yes, O our God! and in our tears and

in our penitence we then wish that Thou wouldst be pleased to take us unto The, so that they might make atonement for our past evil actions, and so that we might be spared the stormy passions and trials of this life, and so that, no longer clogged by our mortal frame, our souls might soar joyously to join in the hallelujahs with which celestial spirits, pure and free, greet thy presence, O King of glory!

O Lord, and the God of our fathers! when we open our lips to address Thee, we feel at a loss what to say or how to speak. We indeed feel that our heart is full, that it melts and would pour itself a willing oblation on thine altar; we are sensible that our soul seeketh Thee; we are assured of thy supreme excellence; we doubt not the infiniteness of thy mercy; we know that we have much to ask of Thee, much whereof we should repent, much for which we should supplicate Thee, and yet, O our Father, we can neither speak nor say. Do Thou then deign to interpret our hearts, all wise God, and O may they indeed appear pure to thy sight, and may they gain for us thy gracious favour, both for now and everlasting. And if there still remain any leaven of wickedness, of malice to our fellow-men, of harshness to the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, of coveting that which is our neighbours, O Lord God, blot them out for now and evermore, so that we may be children worthy of Thee, and so that thou mayest receive us after death in favour and approval.

God of benevolence and mercy, not for ourselves, not for Israel only do use pray unto Thee, but we entreat thy blessing for all men, even for those who acknowledge not the unity of thy name, even for those who are so far lost to their most important, their eternal interests, as never to seek Thee in any of the houses which have been built for thy worship, even for those who in darkness and superstition bow down themselves to the reptile, the stick, and the stone. Lord God! incline their hearts to thy service, and their minds to thy ways, and let us, the children of Abraham thy beloved, be the instruments, even as Thou, O Eternal, didst promise us, to awaken them from their deep and troubled sleep to the enlightening and cheering realities of thy revelations. To this end, our Father, endow us, we beseech Thee, with due sentiments of obedience, so that we may observe all the convocations of thy instituting, even as we would observe this Passover and to this end vouchsafe, O Lord God, to implant within us such a spirit as shall lead us to perform, duly and faithfully, all the requirements of thy blessed law, so that it may be well with us and with our children after us, so that all the families of the earth may know Thee and acknowledge Thee, and so that all thy creation, above and below, may attest thy Unity, power, and excellence. Amen.

Chapter 84

S. The Past and Present

The Past and Present A Thanksgiving sermon Delivered, Nov. 23, 1848, at Cincinnati, Ohio By the Rev. James K. Gutheim

Brethren-The occasion for which we are assembled here this day, to offer our humble thanks to the Dispenser of all Good, for the manifold blessings we enjoy at His hand, is not peculiar to us as Israelites. The celebration of this day is enjoined by no specific religious precept, distinguished by no special rites and observances, commemorative of no Jewish national event. It is in obedience to the proclamation of the chief magistrate of this state, calling on all religious denominations to assemble at their respective places of worship and render thanks and praise to our Eternal Benefactor, that we have met here this day. The “Thanksgiving Day” is an, old, time-honoured institution of the Puritan fathers, observed as a sacred custom by their descendants throughout the Union;-it is a “day of thanks” for the American people. And do we not form, my brethren, an integral part of this body-politic? Do we not enjoy the precious fruit of the tree of liberty, that has been planted in this soil by the fathers of this country-whose parentage by adoption we also claim,-that affords shelter to millions of happy human beings, irrespective of creed and nationality? Are we not affected in common with our fellow-citizens entertaining religious convictions different from ours, by every event promotive of, or detrimental to the prosperity of this country? If our borders are threatened by foreign foes, our lives and homes too are put in jeopardy; if the authority of the law is disregarded, our peace and security too are at stake; if the crops fail and gaunt famine stalks abroad; if disease and pestilence rage, we too are visited by the affection, we too are the sufferers. Hence it is our duty cheerfully to mingle our voices with the general chorus of praise that is this day ascending from all parts of the Union, to the Supreme Ruler of nations and events, who has bestowed on us his blessings in such a signal manner; hence it becomes us “to enter His gates with thanks, His courts with praise.”

There was a time, my friends, when we were treated as aliens in the various countries that gave us birth; when every privilege and right inseparably connected with the dignity of man, were denied us; when we were excluded from every participation in public celebrations by the people in whose midst we lived. That time, for us at least, is happily past. The law of this country recognises no distinction in favour or to the detriment of any religious denomination. Free as the air of heaven is the mind of man, sacred as the word of the living God is his religious opinion, and no persecution or oppression must check the free exercise of the one, no imposed disqualifications hinder the free expression of the other. And thus “civil disabilities on religious pious grounds” is a term long since unknown in the statute book of any commonwealth of this country. We are Israelites, but we are at the same time American citizens, in the purest and fullest sense of the word; our fate is bound up with that of our common country; and whenever danger is impending, we are, and must be in the foremost ranks to ward it off; we pray for its prosperity, rejoice in its happy progress, and render thanks to the Almighty for the blessing He has vouchsafed to bestow on it. To pursue this course we are admonished by the Prophet Jeremiah, who thus exhorted the exiles of his days:

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“Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried captives, and pray for it unto the Lord; for in the peace thereof will ye have peace.” (Jeremiah 29:7.)

Let us, therefore, my friends, endeavour to become conscious, how deeply we are indebted to our Almighty Father, for permitting us to celebrate this day.

First, By taking a retrospect of the state of probation through which we have passed.

Secondly, by reviewing our present condition; and thirdly, by inquiring into the feeling of gratitude that ought to inspire us in our character as Israelites, and as American citizens. For this purpose I have chosen as text the three closing verses of the prayer of Moses, the ninetieth Psalm.

[redacted]

“Make us glad according to the days, wherein thou hast afflicted us, the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish thou it.”

I. The history of the world is the tribunal of judgment of the world!” says a celebrated German poet. Whatever the deeds of man, whatever the events that occurred in the bosom of the human family, history submits them in its records to posterity to render an impartial verdict. And thus we read, how tribes grew into nations, how they flourished, acted their part for a time, and then disappeared from the stage of the world. Nation was conquered and absorbed by nation, and by a continued process of amalgamation the distinctive boundaries were removed, a more intimate connexion established between the different tribes of the. human family, and a wider range afforded to the human mind. There is no doubt that Providence had assigned a distinct mission, a special branch in the education of the human species, to each particular nation, which they were compelled to accomplish. Of all nations, however, that ever performed a part on the stage of the world, and whose annals testify to their rise, progress, decline, and downfall, the children of Israel take the most prominent stand. Is it for the world-renowned conquests they have achieved; for the great discoveries they have made in science and art; for the extensive commercial intercourse they have established between remote countries and climes, while yet they had an independent political existence?-By no means. Their mission was of a higher standard, involving no less an object than the temporal and spiritual welfare of the human race, based on the truth of religion. For this Divine end they were singled out from the midst of nations by their heavenly Father; for this holy purpose they were protected against utter ruin, and preserved from amalgamation, amidst the crumbling of thrones and the crush of empires, a band of living witnesses of the living God, scattered among all the nations of the earth.

Yet with all this, history is comparatively silent concerning our people, for a space of near eighteen hundred years. And why is this? Can it be said (to employ a known maxim,) that that period of our existence, which furnished least matter for the pen of the historian, comprised our happiest days?

The world knows better; that but a life of tribulation and misery was granted us. The cause of this silence must be sought in the contempt which was entertained towards a poor, down-trodden class of men; in the prevailing ignorance of the spirit, essence, and power of Judaism; in the humiliating shame that would mantle the cheek of the historical writer, and paralyse his hand, whenever he attempted to record the inhuman treatment, to which we were subjected.

Picture to yourselves a people, carried away captives from their native soil by a proud conqueror, dispersed all over the habitable globe, nowhere finding a permanent asylum, chased about from country to country, from the east to the west and back again, from the south to the north and back again, like a deer that is fleeing before its ruthless pursuers; picture to yourselves this people persecuted with the deadliest animosity, with all the torturing appliances human ingenuity could devise; the shafts of prejudice, hatred, and oppression constantly aimed at their devoted heads, excluded from every right man can lay claim to: and you will have some conception of the state of suffering our fathers were made to undergo throughout the medieval age. And all this they had to endure, because they would not renounce the inestimable prize conferred on them from on high; because they would not abjure the heavenly truth, the precious boon inherited from their ancestors, destined as it is to become the property of all mankind. Speak of the courage of the fierce warrior who in the heat of strife, heedless of danger, with boiling blood rushes on to mortal combat:-the only true courage is exhibited by him whose spirit does not quail under the direst affliction, who sustains with fortitude and resignation the perils and sorrows he is unable to avert. Whatever then was the lot of our people in those days “when every head was sick, and every heart ached,” however much the storm raged from without, they retired within themselves, and found peace and consolation in the exercise of those religious duties they were capable of performing, and in the reflections on the Divine promises given in their behalf. They recognised in their heavy trials the chastising hand of a loving Father, and through the thick pervading darkness, the light of hope shone brightly from the distance, promising a happier future. Well may we apply to them,. the words of the English bard:

“Affliction is the good man’s shining scene;

Prosperity conceals his brightest ray:

As night to stars, so lustre gives to man.”

How often and how fervently then must the words of our text have been uttered by our sires: “Make us glad, oh God, according to the days wherein thou past afflicted us; the years we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory upon their children.”

II.

Having in the foregoing attempted to draw a general outline of the state of probation through which we have passed, let us now view our present position.

Towards the close of the last century a change had been effectually wrought in the mind of man. The intolerant spirit of the middle ages was unable to maintain its supremacy against the repeated attacks that had for a long time been directed against it; a political as well as mental revolution changed the civil and social aspect of the world. Separation of church and state, equal rights and equal duties to all men without reference religious creed, were propositions generally

acknowledged in theory and partly acted upon in practice. A new era was thus ushered in on the horizon of mankind.

While a change for the better was thus going on without, activity and new vigorous life began to be manifested in our midst. During the long period of oppression and exclusion, the pursuit of general literature, of arts and sciences, was closed to the Israelite, the Talmud and its commentaries constituting his chief study. In his isolated state this study proved a mighty instrument in preserving his elasticity of mind, and in making him capable of grasping with energy and success the various branches of literature and scientific culture, whenever he would be permitted to do so. The time had now come, when the Israelite too should make his voice heard, and Providence had singled out the than for the occasion. Moses the Third, as he is styled, in juxtaposition with Moses the son of Amram, and Moses the son of Maimon, the immortal Mendelssohn, gave the first impulse towards arousing his brethren from the lethargy into which they had sunk, and making them conscious of the position they ought to occupy. Assisted by a band of noble friends. his efforts were not in vain. His example excited the emulation of the mass; the dust that had accumulated for ages was quickly shaken off, and the Israelite soon became aware of what was required of him under the changed aspect of things. He saw that the mission for which he was chosen would not permit him to be behind the age, but that, on the contrary, it was his duty to forget and forgive the wrongs and injuries heaped upon him, and to conciliate the prejudices that had yet a lingering hold on the minds of many, by taking the lead in every movement by which his fellow-man could be improved and benefited, and by showing that his religion, so far from being a bar to modern civilization, was on the contrary the fountain-head whence all civilization originally flowed. And thus the barrier that had been created between the Israelite and the world, is here completely, there partly removed. In many of the civilized countries of Europe, he is fully emancipated and boldly stands forth in the vindication of his own rights, and those of his fellow-man. Examine the history of the day, look at the fierce struggle that is now agitating a people determined upon severing the fetters, by which despotic rule held them bound, and you will find that the Israelite is no vile spectator, but the champion for the spread and consolidation of liberal principles. Nor is he overlooked. He is preferred to offices of trust and importance, and justifies the confidence reposed in him. Has it not recently happened that in two national assemblies of a country where we suffered the bitterest persecution, two Israelites were elected as vice-presidents by the national representatives? In reviewing these facts, my friends, let us not fall into the error, to ascribe everything to our own exertions, unaided by divine assistance. ■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■ “It is the hand of the Lord, that has accomplished all this.” To Him we are indebted for all the benefits we enjoy. He watched over us when we were beset by danger; He granted us enlargement, when in His inscrutable wisdom He found the time opportune. And so pray we in humility this day: “Make us glad, oh God, according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, the years, wherein we have seen evil; may thy work appear to thy servants, and thy glory upon their children.”

III.

“Thank the Lord, for he is kind, his love endureth for ever.” The love of God is limited to no time, to no people. It is universal, embracing all his children. As the sun shines to all, so the love of God extends over all his creatures. It is this universal love that made known his will to teach man the way he should walk; it is even this universal love, that selected us as humble instruments in His hand, as repositories of those heavenly truths that are destined to become the religion of all

mankind. And why then should we not feel grateful for this on this general day of thanks? Is not the “Thanksgiving Day” itself an imitation of one of our own institutions? It is no stranger in Israel. We therefore hail it as an old friend, and rejoice in its being instrumental of uniting the hearts of millions in praise of our universal Father. But thanks are not to consist in words only. Words are good if they spring from the bottom of our hearts, and impel us to deeds. Sincere thankfulness we can only testify by our works. Do you, therefore, oh Israelites, feel grateful that the Lord has saved you from so many perils and has permitted you to carry out your religious principles without restraint and hindrance: then must you show by your conduct, that the heavenly lessons have not been taught you in vain; then must you endeavour to foster the knowledge of your religion to your utmost extent, and to create for it a firm basis, by erecting and supporting good religious institutions; then must you strive to gain for it the regard and esteem of all, by carrying out the grand moral principles it inculcates, by excelling in everything that is good and noble. Be thankful to the Lord! At no period of existence was our country in a more prosperous condition than at the present. Peace is established without and within our borders, and nothing prevents the industrious citizen from devoting himself to his peaceable pursuits. The soil has yielded its fruit, and the granaries of the husbandman are filled with abundance and plenty. Commerce and mechanical trades are flourishing, and their fruits distributed among all classes of our community. While thus blessed, should our hearts not elate with gratitude? Should we not acknowledge the source whence we derive all these bounties? Should it not be our aim to repay the manifold gifts showered upon us, by cheerfully responding to the calls of suffering humanity, be they near or distant, by sympathizing with the oppressed, by relieving the want of the needy, by performing deeds of love and charity? If these impressions are grafted on our minds by the celebration of this day, and serve as a guide through our daily walks; if thus our whole life becomes an expression of thanks: then indeed will our “thanksgiving” be acceptable before the throne of the Almighty. And the beauty of the Lord our God, will be upon us, and he will establish the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands he established it, now and for ever. Amen.

Chapter 85

S. The Past and the Future

The Past And Future. A Sermon.

O God, who comfortest the mourners, and assuagest the grief of the afflicted! have pity on thy sanctuary which is wasted, on thy holy city which is desolate, and on thy land which is solitary, and on thy people which is scattered in all the earth; so that we may rejoice in the establishment of thy kingdom, and in the reassembling of the outcasts, and the rebuilding of the seat of thy glory: when incense shall again burn on thy altars, and the streets of the joyful city be filled with the worshippers hastening from the ends of the earth to bow themselves down before the residence of thy holy Name; whence light and truth are to shine to all the sons of man, who then will know of no Shepherd but thee, the Guardian of Israel, and when all will call as one man for thy blessing, and long for thy salvation, inasmuch as Thou art the God in heaven above and the earth beneath, there is none else. Amen.

Brethren:- At this season of the year, which has been devoted from the very commencement of our dispersion until now to the commemoration of what we suffered when our sins appealed against us,-when our backsliding demanded almost our extermination,-when it was merely the undeserved mercy of God which permitted a small remnant to escape the pestilence, and the famine, and the sword, which slew our multitudes-at this season of our annual commemoration it is surely fitting to us, as thinking men, to dwell on the past and the future, and to indulge in reflection, be it ever so little, on what we have been and what we may become again. It is illy in accordance with the qualities of rational worshippers to let season after season pass by, and to observe the fasts and ceremonies by rote merely, without permitting them to have any farther, influence on our character; for if this were all that is needed, it is evident from the character and writings of the prophets that they would not have sanctioned burdens in addition to the law on the people. But we know that the fasts were so sanctioned, and that the great council of our nation confirmed them at a later period, and that the people always acquiesced in them, even when they were kindly treated, and they kept alive the commemoration of Jerusalem at the height of earthly prosperity. It is therefore evident that to us also, who live now free from the fear of tyranny, and in the equality under the law which this country enjoys, there must be something significant in the season of mourning for the fall of our ancient state. Let it be then our study to trace some of the causes which should influence us to weep for Jerusalem when our joy is the highest, nor to forget our ancient city when all around us smiles with pleasure and prosperity. My country! O, my country! is the exclamation of the patriot when, exiled from his native land, he recalls on distant shores the paternal roof which he may not hope to see again, because of the tyrant that forbids his return. He dwells with a melancholy pleasure on the hills of his cherished neighbourhood, where as a child he used to play with the companions of his early years. He recalls his innocent sports, his search for the wild berries and fruit of the pleasant valleys which surrounded his father’s cottage, and lives over again in the rapid flight of the imagination the years which have elapsed from his cradled infancy to his now unhappy manhood; and though the stranger’s land be more fruitful than his,-though he now quaffs in the fragrance which scents the gale, odours unknown to his rugged

clime, he will disdain all the allurements of nature and art, and sigh once more to behold the rugged and barren land which he loves because there he drew his first breath-because there repose the bones of his cherished parents, and there are hidden the ashes of one who had vowed to travel with him the varied read of life. Have we not as a nation also some recollections which carry us back to Palestine, and for which no compensation obtained in other lands can repay us? What were we in our ancient land, even when suffering at times the visitation due to our sins? We were under the worst circumstances a united people, having one country, one law, one destiny. When the teachers of righteousness arose among us, they addressed not merely a small isolated congregation, where the voice of admonition is rendered fruitless by the surrounding evil influences, which stifle now among us all appeals to amendment; but they called on a whole people, on an entire race of believers, and they poured forth such strains of eloquence as only such a pulpit as the entrance to the temple could elicit; and they spoke in such terms of entreaty as only they could employ whose whole soul was bound up in the welfare of their nation. And in good truth, it is not to be supposed that, though they failed in arresting the degeneracy of their age, they were not entirely without effect; for they did oppose, and that with success, the entire overthrow of the great fabric of the law; they stemmed the overwhelming torrent of gentile corruption which had seized on the men of Judah and the daughters of Zion; and to them we owe it that we are not lost in the whirlpool of heathenish profligacy, and that there are left those whose mouth swear fealty to the Lord, and in whose hearts his law is implanted to the moment of their death. It was owing to their teaching that we had the myriads of saints who prized nothing but the Creator and his law; who loved Him with the ardent devotion of faithful children; who saw nothing in all the earth but a preparation for a better life; and who hence were enabled to resign all, life itself included, the moment they believed that the sacrifice was demanded by the service of their Maker, whom they were ready to follow through the gates of death into a glorious eternity, so his word bid them advance in that road so beset with terror to common mortals.-And oh! when we lived in our own land, and obeyed our own laws, the villages three times every year poured forth all their male population, and troups followed on troups to hie themselves to the mountains of our Lord, to worship the Father of all in the place chosen as his residence. There came the age-bowed man of a hundred years, leaning on his staff because of the multitude of his days, and by his side skipped the grandchild of the fourth generation; the one once more to see the sanctuary of his God before his departure hence, the other to be there for the first time amidst the faithful multitude; and there came the shepherd who had left his flock in the desert; and the merchant from the seashore, and the farmer from the plains of Jezreel, and the labourer from his work-bench, all eager to testify their reverence for the portion which they had received from the almighty Disposer of events, and none afraid because behind him were left his wealth, and those dear to his heart without his arm to protect, without his vigilance to watch over them; in the full confidence that He who had ordained for them to seek his courts, would not fail in his promise, and not permit the sword to pass through the land, nor suffer the wild beast to injure the unprotected, and to let the rain be given in its due season only, not to come to destroy and to sweep away the labours of those who looked up to Him as their sovereign, their Lord, their God. And if there was a contest between neighbour and neighbour, any unkindness of feeling, any estrangement between brother and brother, where better than at the foot of the altar could peace be restored? Who more fittingly than the priests of God could interpose to arrest enmity and restrain the angry strife?-And between Israelite and Israelite there was no distinction: we knew nothing of a nobility, nothing of privileged classes; all

were servants alike to the Most High, all were equals one to the other. Labour was the lot of all, as all were the sons of mortality; but no one was degraded by the handicraft he pursued; and an exaltation to the offices which the people were empowered to bestow, did not render any one more than one of his brothers, and he was bound by the same laws and regulations which were for the government of the whole state, and there was no immunity for crime which the highest even might have committed. From the sanctuary, therefore, at the very season of the festivals, proceeded then the stream of justice to all the land; and there, when all Israel appeared to worship the Lord, were felt the benefits which result from equitable laws administered for the benefit of all by those who owed their elevation to their brother Israelites, and with them feared the great Head of their common country. In such a state of things no one needed to fear the arm of power, because of the religion he professed; no one needed to plead any excuse for the profession of faith in the One God; because this very belief was the foundation of his personal security, and under it were contrived the laws which governed the land. And whilst our fathers hearkened to the instruction of the Lord, they were blessed with peace and freedom, with civil liberty and domestic tranquillity,-to borrow the words of Scripture: “Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating, drinking, and rejoicing.” “And Judah and Israel dwelt securely each under his own vine and under his fig-tree.” Such a state might have endured up to our own days; we might have expanded to the east, to the west, to the north, and to the south, covering the face of the land with a united, happy, God-fearing race, distinguished for refinement, integrity, knowledge, and the pursuit of peace. Our silent example would have crushed tyranny and misrule, and we would have chased away the worship of idols, and banished superstition and false belief from all the places whither our fame would have reached. But we would be wise above the law; we would be more intelligent and more free than the religion of Heaven permitted us; we set up our judgment above the wisdom of our Creator; we sought license, exemption from restraint; and as we saw the nations of the earth act, so did we endeavour to do likewise. Therefore it occurred, that moral corruption took possession of our commonwealth; our rulers did not govern in the fear of the Lord; falsehood and vanity usurped the places of truth and virtue; and with the increase of personal licentiousness and irreligion, the more we became like the nations in our morals and thoughts: the more had we to lament the decrease of enlightenment and personal freedom; so that at first we were ruled by domestic tyrants, who filled the streets of Jerusalem with blood and carnage, and then we fell an easy prey to foreign invaders, and the temple of the Lord, which we prized for its glory, splendour, and beauty, as a national safeguard, fell in the midst of the crash of our state, and with it vanished our independence, our self-governing power, our isolated position amidst the nations. And from the day that the flames encircled in their fury the dwelling of the great King, the Lord of all the earth, what unspeakable horrors have not passed over our heads. Speak of the sufferings of any people of which history gives us an account-but what are its sorrows compared to ours? What are its trials in comparison with the hard fate of Israel? Have famine, the pestilence, malignant diseases, intestine warfare within, the sword of the foemen without, thinned the ranks of the human family in any age, in any country: we are yet to learn that a parallel to the destruction of human life as witnessed among us, not for one, but for a long series of generations, was ever discovered in the chronicles of another people. But not alone this; for happier were those who died at once, than were those who were reserved for the horrors of persecution, which in a hundred varying forms was applied to us to make us swerve from the Lord. History may well be silent in details of what did befall Israel after their glory fell; for too deep a stain is affixed to human nature

on account of the wanton outrages perpetrated against God's ancient people. Ay, thus they styled us, yea in mockery of our wo; and still they hunted us like a partridge on the mountain, out of mere sport to see the sufferings of the outcasts of Judah. And all this was done out of a false profession of love for our future happiness, as though the Lord had told them, "Go and destroy Israel."

All this our prophets foresaw when they beheld the ruins of our temple, as the natural consequence of our sins; and that with the disruption of our state there would be an end, for a long time, to our happiness and peace. And hence it was proper and consistent with our dependent state on the bounty of God to appoint days of commemoration, which should be observed during the whole period in which the visitation is felt, as days of penance before the Lord, who will not forsake his people, nor cast them off in utter abhorrence. The Israelite, by fasting then on the days set apart in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months, and which are intended to call to mind the progress in our downfall, does not say that he is not a good citizen of the state in which he lives, that he is not ready to contribute his all for its welfare; but that he especially regrets that his own people are not now sovereign in their own land; and that his religion suffers, and its followers endure all the hardships of a conquered people. He can freely mingle the character of a citizen, true to his land, and that of Israelite faithful to his own race; the two do not come in conflict unless there should be an enactment demanding a violation of his duty to God, when nothing can absolve him from his first allegiance, every consideration compelling him to know no man, and no human mandate, when it concerns that which our Father has taught us. And the saints of the Lord always acted so. In all that concerned the state they were strict followers of all the ordinances which affected the other inhabitants; but when a surrender of Judaism was asked, they would at all times be found among those who surrendered their lives rather than be untrue to the Lord of heaven and earth. There were of this kind already in the time before our Bible canon was finally closed,-I speak of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; and after them there were millions found, who embraced death, as an honourable distinction, to die for the faith which their fathers had handed down to them; and though they acquired no great renown on earth, their deeds and sacrifices are recorded there, where no forgetfulness will obliterate their memory. But some may say that the changes which have taken place in our political condition, renders the observance of the fasts of no farther importance. Still if we take a more extensive view of the question than our merely personal benefit, we shall come to a different conclusion. It is not only the political extinction of our state which we regret, but also the little importance which our religion obtains in the eyes of mankind at large. Under the best circumstances in which we are found, it cannot but be observed that we have a great drawback operating against us, when compared with non-Israelites. There is attached to us a great degree of ill-will from the vast majority of mankind, no matter what may be their religious opinions, political views, or country, from no other reason than that we are not of them, but a people different from all through our religion. Tell them, and prove to them, again and again, that our interest in worldly matters is the same with theirs, exhibit a character ever so pure and philanthropic, prove yourselves as elevated as possible above all mean sectarian feelings and exclusive prejudices: still you will never succeed in disarming the world of their prepossession against us. It is after all the Jew that is before them, and they love him not as they love others, though the respective persons differ in the widest manner from each other in all speculative opinions. It is perhaps unaccountable that this has been so among Romans, Grecians, Egyptians, and Persians, who were heathens, and among modern Nazarenes, and Mahomedans; but the fact cannot be denied; and I say, do what you may, cringe to the public as much as you will, and

change your ideas to appearance as often as you please, to gratify the public prejudice, and still your original character will obstinately adhere to you, and you will even as apostates bear the opprobrium which attaches to you as descendants of Jacob.

It is indeed a providential dispensation that this repulsion should exist against us, as it is well calculated to draw the scattered remnants in bonds of love to each other, and to make them fly to a mutual protection as soon as a community of descent becomes revealed to otherwise strange and distant individuals; and that Jew has yet to be born, who, let his conduct be what it may, does not feel deep regret when hearing the oppressions to which we are constantly exposed, in all stages of the progress of society. Let me not be told that I overcharge the picture of the evils of our position. Look at the history of the present day, when nations are awakening to their political vassalage: and still you will discover that in every direction, whilst freedom is accorded to us in law, many enormities are practised against us, resulting from the inveterate prejudice to which we are subject. Whether this will ever be changed, is not within the power of man to determine; but that it exists now, no one can deny. Even take the most favourable view of the case: still the number of us who enjoy a comparative state of freedom is small indeed when viewed against the millions who merely breathe by the sufferance of tyrants and despots, and to whom the horrors of a constant dread of persecution are familiar as matters of daily occurrence. Does this prove that we need not weep for the past, or look with hope to the bright future? I speak of the bright future; because to my mind there is no doubt of its coming. It is not a brighter, freer state, by the sufferance of the powers which now divide the earth among them, which I expect; but that very state of glory of which the prophets speak with one voice, with a unanimity and precision which can leave no doubt on the mind of a believer. It is not that we who hope thus do not sympathize with the progress of freedom, that we do not rejoice whenever a single shackle is removed from the chain which binds Israel, and which enslaves the world at large. May it please our Father to extend freedom more and more, till the name of oppression and tyrant be forgotten. But we hope for something especial, notwithstanding; for a spiritual regeneration of the world, through means of the restored Israelites,-the Israelites, no longer scattered in every corner, ruled over by every tongue and people, but united again under one head, overshadowed by the laws which erst Moses received on Sinai. It is for Zion’s glory that we pray; it is for the temple rebuilt in glory that we turn our eyes to God in prayer. We feel that we are destined to a bright end, that future in which our sun will not set, in which our moon will not wane; that period in which the profession of our faith will not subject us to any loss or suspicion from antagonizing creeds and systems; that era when universal freedom shall spring, not from grants of kings or the tumults of the nations, but from the pure knowledge of the name of the Lord, which shall pervade every breast; when from pure love, a newly kindled affection to the Most High, each man will cease from injuring his neighbour, and from forging fetters to keep him in subjection; when peace and the covenant of mercy will bind heart to heart, and tears of anguish at a brother’s wrong will be shed no more. But till this end comes, it well behooves us to weep for the glory of Israel which has been dimmed, and for the children of our God who have fallen by the sword. Again I say you are not the less attached to the state by so doing; but only by duly honouring your faith, by being deeply imbued with your religious obligations can you be induced to render obedience to the duties which devolve on you as citizens. There is no other appeal, unless it be the threat of physical force, which can otherwise be addressed to you to make you kind to your neighbours of all persuasions, and it is to be hoped that you will have a nobler incentive to do what is demanded from you, and this is a sense of duty; and

this again is founded only on religious conviction. The glory of Israel never yet militated against the peace of the world. If our religion flourishes, if our state is triumphant, it needs not be at the expense and the tears of others; we hope for a kingdom of peace, for a spread of divine truth, to be accomplished without the agency of the sword, or political tyranny. It is mercy which is to rule; it is blissful peace which is to conquer. We are to be the pioneers of the regeneration of man; how? will be shown when the fulfilment draws nigh. In the mean time let us cherish the memory of our fallen state; let us love our religion; let us defend with firmness the legacy which we have obtained; let us also love one another, listen with charity to the cry of distress from all men, but especially of our fellow Israelites; and let our whole conduct be such that it may be a beautiful commentary on the truth of our religion. So shall the word of the prophet be fulfilled, that unrighteousness shall be purged from our midst through the ordeal of fire to which we have been subjected, and then,

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"Zion will be redeemed through justice, and those who return in her through righteousness." (Isaiah 1:27). And thus shall he behold the kingdom of the son of David, when we shall no more weep for our sorrows, but rejoice everlastingly at the renewed mercy of the Lord. Amen.

Friday, August 4th,-Ab 5, 5608.

Note.-The doctrine of the restoration, through a lineal descendant from David, the King Messiah, is to my mind the one most important after the cardinal principles of the belief in God, and the belief in the revelation. The state of mankind is one of warfare; that of Israel one of suffering; and change the ideas as you will, assert what you will, you cannot convince me or any sound reasoning person, that Christianity and civilization, philosophy and progress, have resulted in anything else than leaving the moral world as it was many centuries ago, when the earth was governed by rules less elevated, in the opinion of those who claim everything for modern times. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men," is said to have been the song of angels when the founder of Christianity first saw the light; but has the fulfilment ever taken place up to this moment? has not every step the new religion has made in its progress over the earth, been marked by blood and violence? did not the sword always force the way for the missionaries of glad tidings? yes, even in the present day? Look at Otahiti, Algiers, China, India, yes, the western prairies of America, and how has Christianity penetrated into them? Was it the olive branch of peace, or the prancing war-steed, the thundering cannon, the ship of war, the flashing steel? Let history answer, and the assumption must be confounded without farther argument. Still the prophets speak of a reign of peace, under a leader whom God will raise up as his standard-bearer, (Isaiah 11:9-10;) and shall we think that this will not be? Whence do the flatterers of gentile opinions draw their warrant that the Son of David shall not come? Let them wrest Scripture as they please, but unless they totally deny all religion, the truth of all inspiration, the words of the prophet as they stand without note or comment must compel them to be silent, compel them to confess that they have taught falsely in the name of the Lord. There is but one thing true in the world, and that is the word of God; hence all the innovations of modern times, which teach us to look for the fulfilment of the good to Israel in the progress of liberal ideas, are the essence of error, and departure from God. It may to some look like incivism to hope for a renovation of human society upon a better platform than has yet been witnessed on earth; but irrespective of its being foolish to flatter the present governments by professing an uncalled-for admiration, the very progress of

ideas which these men claim as the highest to be expected political good, presuppose a destruction of the present forms of government. But we have suffered so much under every form of rule, and exclusion among all nations, that our neighbours must be shocked at our hypocrisy when we profess to hope for all the prophets promise us, through their agency. It is absurd to maintain such notions, and they never can gain us, moreover, the favour of the intelligent gentiles. How much nobler will it be then, if we all boldly avow our belief as we have received it, and really act so as to challenge the admiration of mankind by our religious and moral demeanour. Our hopes should inspire us with rectitude, and then only can we look forward to the accomplishment of the good which God has foretold for Israel.

S. The Path of Life

The Path of Life A Sermon

O Thou! whose providence watches over all, let us entreat Thee to guard us in thy goodness, and to hold over us thy protecting arm amidst the contests of the violent, and the assaults of hostile factions. Lo! rumours of strife have reached us, and the remnant of thy people is like a few sheep which have escaped the slaughter only to fall into the power of devouring beasts, with no one to take their part, to snatch them from destruction save Thee, the all-seeing Shepherd. Be it then thy will to have regard to our unprotected state, and be thy arm our protection, thy mercy our shield; and when destruction passes let it not reach us, and when violence wounds and slays, may it not be permitted to invade our domicile; and let us thus behold Thee in the storm of battle, the tumult of intestine warfare, as the One who leaves not unprotected those who confide in Him, and guards well those who have obtained his favour. So shall we live undiminished and unscathed, and so will we arise and bless thy holy Name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise, glorious and exalted for evermore. Amen.

Brethren,

We read in Leviticus 18:5, the following words, which are given as the reason for demanding of us the observance of religious duties:

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“And ye shall observe my statutes and my judgments which a man is to do that he may live through them; I am the Lord.”

Rashi says to this text in his commentaries, “And live through them in the world to come; for if thou wouldst say, It means this world, the question would arise, Is he not at length compelled to die?” Let us look carefully into the requirements of religion and its consequences. Man in his unreligious state, with passions awakened and with physical developments to gratify them, will have, can have, no impediment thrown in his way, from rushing upon any animal enjoyment which may be in his power of tasting; he is free to act, and there is no internal check to withhold him; he is the first and only thought to be regarded in his soul, and he feels nothing, and therefore cares nothing, for the injury he may inflict on others. Divine responsibility has no echo in his heart; he knows not God, and therefore does not fear Him, and all mankind are but to him so many beings present to administer to his pleasure or aggrandizement, and he will accordingly endeavour to mould them so as to fit them to become instruments in the gratification of his ambition or pursuit after pleasure. Hence arise murders, incests, thefts, and all the evils which which man inflicts on man in the prosecution of his selfish gratifications. For man without a God is the enemy to all creatures: he is without responsibility, and therefore the most noxious animal in existence, far more destructive than the unchained lion, exceeding in ferocity the savage tiger, and more insatiable in his thirst for blood than a hungry wolf amidst the defenceless sheep of the pasture. When therefore the

Almighty beheld the weakness of untaught human nature, He vouchsafed to reveal himself from the beginning to the men whom He deemed most fitting to be his messengers, and endowed them with wisdom and knowledge, that they might go abroad and teach truth, and mercy, and justice, to their fellows, in order that thus instructed, society might be bound together by the ties of love and kindness, and all live abstaining from injuring others, and not receiving any injury in return. In short, religion, which is the other term for divine revelation, was to cure man of his savage impulsiveness, and teach him that there are higher enjoyments than the mere gratification of the base passions; that it is a greater pleasure to preserve than to destroy life; that it is a higher satisfaction to have shielded female innocence than to have sacrificed it to the base impulse of unbridled lust; that it confers more lasting delight to the soul not to have taken our neighbour's property, even in our moment of need, than to have enriched ourselves by appropriating by a violent hand or by stealth, that for which we had not laboured, and which had not come into our hands by voluntary gift or inheritance. It is for the correcting therefore of the twofold tendency of humanity, that religion was bestowed; which means that, since we are endowed with an inclination to gratify our impulses and desires, whilst we have at the same time a counter-check within us which cannot satisfy itself about the justness of every intended act, which we at first resolve upon, we have received an especial guide to instruct us when it is safe to proceed to satisfy what our inclination for enjoyment demands for its use, and when we are bound to listen to the admonishing voice which whispers into our ear "Beware."

It were folly to assert that all enjoyment is sinful, that the flesh is always evil, that nothing but mortification of the outward man is proper for one who love his God; for this would at once arraign the goodness of our Creator for endowing us with propensities which could only be satisfied at the expense of what is really and universally just and right. But whatever the Almighty instituted is right; there is nothing in the world, not a propensity in our soul which can be viewed otherwise than beneficent in tendency if only properly applied. It is in all things the measure, and not the quality which constitutes right or wrong, and this measure is religion, or the revealed expression of God's will. We use then the terms "good inclination," ■■■ ■■■■, and "evil propensity," ■■■ ■■■, merely in a relative sense, good and evil so far, as they are limited by the law of God, and evil, entirely so, if they lead us beyond the prescribed bounds which Supreme Wisdom has set to them. When therefore a certain commentator expounds "and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" to mean with both the evil and good propensities, inasmuch as the word "the heart" might have been given in Hebrew with one ■, thus ■■■ instead of two ■■■■, he justly appreciates our relation to the all-wise Creator, and he fully comprehends how there is nothing truly evil in the simple creation which God called into being, till the freedom of will given to man introduced sin into the world, and brought in its train the sorrows and sufferings incident on the altered state, from primitive innocence to a struggle with the vicissitudes thus evoked, and resulting from the misconduct of man. But again, who is there bold enough to assert that even this is altogether unmitigated evil? Who warrants us to maintain that herein too there is not an overruling Providence which guides all to a happy end, and tells the waves of the passions of the human heart, "Thus far and no farther shall you overwhelm the world"? The earth was assigned as the sphere for man to labour, to exert his faculties, and to progress from infancy to a age, collectively no less than individually, till he reach that destination-the end-of which he himself, either as one or as society, has no conception himself. He enters on the stage of life, and so springs a nation, as we did at the foot of Sinai, into being, and he travels on day by day in a state of advancement,

unconscious himself of the steps he is taking in the pursuit of his destiny. Ask the most renowned for that which is great and good, whether he contemplated his elevated position at the outset of his career whether his infancy was marked by any extraordinary development or precocity not equally observable in others much interior to him in after years: and you will be told that he was a child like other children, and sported when they sported, and laughed when they laughed, and that his tears were as ready to start forth at the first pain or disappointment, as in others of his age. And still because he was taught what is right, because he was guided well, because the way was opened to him by providential circumstances, and because he himself subdued the savage heart within him, he has ascended on the path which leads upwards, unconscious to himself, heedless perhaps of the consequences of his own acts and words, till you find him as he is, a blessing to himself, a happiness to others. And yet whilst he lives, he knows not what his end may be, whether he will persevere to the last, and descend to the tomb with the righteousness which he has acquired; and when at length the grave has closed over him, then, and only then, can you speak from experience, that that man has been faithful, and earned, so far as mortals can tell, the approbation of his God. And yet all the trials, all the difficulties, all the evil passions which others encounter, fell to his lot also; no one escapes them; they, like death, are the common lot of humanity. And has the righteous overcome them with triumph; has he been exalted above them even in the eyes of man; have they left his virtue untouched, and placed him in a brighter and holier light before other mortals like himself; nay, have they called forth in him high and noble traits, which otherwise might have lain dormant: who can say that his lot has not been ultimately a happier one, his exaltation more enviable, for the very evils which beset his path, just as the sunlight appears lovelier after a storm, when the envious clouds are chased away by the wind of heaven, after having hidden it from the face of the earth.-And nations are but aggregations of individuals; their fate cannot be surveyed in the lifetime of a single person, and ages may and must succeed each other, ere they arrive at maturity, before they are properly placed on the page of history. We may trace them, their phases, their rise, their progress, and if you will, their fall; but whilst they exist, we cannot say with certainty that they have attained to their end. They may flourish or be subdued; they may rule or be tributary; they may be numerous or reduced they may a few individuals; but still whilst their existence is marked on the stage of life, whilst they are perceived by their characteristics, their features, and their laws, they are present to rise again from their fall, their degradation, their low estate, to stand once more, and, if God will, for ever unshaken, as the light of the world, as the means of happiness for all the rest of mankind; and the very evils through which they had to pass, the extermination almost which threatened them, may render them more fitted to fulfill the destiny for which they were created.

Life is brief; but eternity-who can measure its duration? our place is narrow; but who determine the extent of space, the dwelling of our God-the Holy One who abideth eternally? And still we are a portion of everlasting life, an emanation of the Unlimited in extent and power. He framed us from the dust of the earth, so says the book which He has written; but He also breathed into our nostrils the soul of life, understand “life,” the undying essence which perishes not as the brute that passes away, and the body of which is mingled with the clod of the valley. But with life and the intellect therewith combined, without restraint or check, what would man have been, but the most destructive of all animals; and if one doubts this, let him examine the records of history, and he will read of atrocities which make the blood run cold, and crimes which make the flesh creep, all perpetrated under the unbridled influence of lawless passions. It is possible, that since man was

created in the image of God,-since he has an appreciation of virtue inly implanted in his heart, he might, after long and laborious struggles; at length have arrived at defining some rules by which a government might have been carried on, securing to each man the possession of life and its acquisitions; but even with this concession in favour of the human mind, unaided by God, what effect could this have had on eternity? where would have been the certainty that acts of the nature described had secured us the approbation of God? But it may be safely denied that human reason alone was ever able to frame equitable laws for a general government, or that there ever was a time when some direct communication of the will of God was unknown to mankind; for the sustaining of the first position, we may cite the barbarities of heathen nations, and for the second the biblical evidence that with the cessation of the flood, the Lord revealed to Noah the principles of justice, evidenced in the inviolability of human life so strongly enjoined. But these few laws, were, as can easily be seen, not enough to govern the world when population became denser, and the interests thereby existing more complicated and diversified. We, therefore, may assume that, although not written down, other precepts were ordained; since we find Abraham commended for observing God's charges, commandments, statutes, and laws, which doubtlessly included rules for justice, charity, and obedience to parental authority, or the main pillars which support society. Probably these laws were traditional, handed down by oral precept, as we read of Abraham, "And he built there an altar and proclaimed in the name of the Lord," evidently the duties pertaining to a profession of faith, and it was this especial mark which distinguished Abraham and his household at first, and afterwards his own descendants and their adherents from the rest of the community where they lived; and called down on them the promise of divine protection. But this was not yet the end of Abraham's destiny; he was to receive a still higher life-a brighter existence; and this was accomplished at the revelation of the divine glory at Horeb, when the laws of God were not left any farther to the perishableness of mere tradition, but were given over in the form of a code, civil and religious, to the charge of an entire people, who were appointed to watch over its preservation, because their ancestors had obeyed the will of God in whatever had been demanded of them, and thus obtained the promise of an everlasting covenant from their Maker. Moses was, therefore, justly empowered to tell the people that they should not go after the ordinances of the land of Egypt where they had dwelt, nor follow the practices of the land of Canaan whither they were going; simply because neither were in accordance with the dictates of the Lord, who had not approved of the inventions of fallible men in instituting such absurdities and crimes, and enforcing them as religious duties. But he was told to say: "My laws of justice shall ye observe, and my statutes shall you keep to walk in them: I am the Lord your God," meaning, that the laws we had received were not emanating from a fallible mortal, but from the supreme Source of wisdom and power, whose words are true, and in whose judgment there is no possible room for error or deception. But not alone this; for it is not an arbitrary system which we are to follow; not one which is solely intended to magnify Him, and to render us the subjects of his kingdom; for continues the message, "And ye shall observe my statutes and my judgments, which a man is to do that he may live in them."

Meaning, There are many practices of the gentiles which are hurtful to life, which are subversive of piety, injurious to the welfare of the state; but if you observe the ordinances of the Bible, you will not only escape these dangers, but you will obtain by them life and happiness; and says the commentator, "But how is life to be preserved? has not every man, no matter how good he is, however observant of all the laws, ultimately to pay the forfeit of all mankind? must he not yield his

spirit and return to the earth from which his body has sprung?" He then answers: "The life promised is the future state, where the existence is permanent, where the interruptions which disturb our earthly life are not any more to be dreaded; but if one has once entered therein he will be for ever in the presence of God, and bask in the great light which springs from the mercy of the Creator." The verse, therefore, properly concludes, not with the usual "I am the Lord your God," or the One who has done you so many benefits, and therefore asks this service as a return of grateful feelings, but simply "I am the Lord," or as the Hebrew term is the symbol of the permanence of the Deity, "I am the Everlasting;" thus saying that the reward promised for obedience will be commensurate with the divine existence, and as this is everlasting, so will also be the recompense which obedience will obtain at his hands: not like the riches of the earth, which are acquired in toil and sorrow, and are often taken in the twinkling of an eye; or human glory, which is not rarely purchased with the tears of the orphan and the sobs of the widow, and which at length barely endures for a night; or human power, which leaves a man in the midst of his exaltation a by-word and a reproach to his enemies; but those treasures which require no miser's care to hoard them, which the worm cannot devour nor the moth destroy; that glory which springs from devotion to God and light shed from his own essence, over which others shed no tears, and which excites no sorrow in the breast of aught that lives; that exaltation which is the offspring of acceptability with the Lord, over which no enemies can prevail, and of which not all the powers of the world can deprive the possessor. In short, the state of the righteous who live through the faith and works prescribed to us, will be analogous to the divine existence, which is not marred by bodily suffering and by mental darkness, and which is not interrupted by death, which has not any power or dominion over those who dwell under the shadow of the Lord's protection.

If now they who follow the commandments of God are beset in their travels through life with dangers and difficulties; if they see themselves pursued by the malevolence of their enemies, and scorned by hollow-hearted friends; if they see their efforts followed by disappointment, and their labour exerted in vain; if ill health seems attached to them as an heir-loom from their birth to their grave: they must not repine at the hard lot which is thus assigned them; they should feel that the more they endure here, the more will their virtues be purified, the more will they be cleansed from iniquity, the more will they be rendered fit to come unspotted, freed from the pollution of earthly life, in the presence of Him who is the Holiest and Purest; who is, moreover, the righteous Judge, who never sends any dispensation without a wise motive, and who, being unforgetting, will not let a single deed, a single suffering of theirs pass, without assigning reward for the one and giving them a due recompense for the other, if it was borne in meekness and resignation to his just decrees, He being the perfect God, with whom there is no unrighteousness or iniquity. And as individuals are thus promised life in the law, we as a nation must likewise expect to have existence and permanence through the same means. stated that both nations and individuals have their end, the object for which they were created; that for the individual, we see, is that he is to be rendered truly and permanently happy, without sorrow or pain; that for our nation must be analogous, though not identical, since nationalities, with our means for arriving at a correct judgment, are but existences of the earth, of life in this world, inapplicable to the disembodied state. As human beings living on the earth, in the midst of mortals, then, must we look for our destiny, and as such we must become identified with the living God. But how? can we then see Him and live? when Moses, the prophet of prophets, could not? But the question answers itself, when we look at the first institution of our race as a people. When Abram left Haran by the command of God, he was

told that he should become a blessing to all the families of the earth. He was then but a wanderer, a childless man of the age of seventy-five years, alone, unknown, in the country assigned to him as the future residence of his descendants. Still he went forward on his mission in full confidence of the truth of the word of God, though he could not understand how it was to be accomplished; it spoke of descendants when he was childless; it spoke of blessings, and soon famine compelled him to leave his new home for the land of Egypt; and when at length after the son of promise had been born, and he hoped thus to see the fulfillment of his hopes, he was ordered to bring him for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which the Lord would show him. Nevertheless, amidst all these doubts and trials, he never wavered, he believed in the Lord, who reckoned it to him as righteousness. After him came Isaac, and then Israel, and after a period of more than two hundred years after the mission of Abraham, the whole number of worshippers of the One God, was less than a hundred persons, connected with the family of the patriarch. And still there was no defection, no complaining at the slow fulfillment of the promise, that in them all the earth should be blessed. It was enough that God had promised, and they lived forward to meet the accomplishment, come when it might, though delayed age after age, and century after century. Again peace fled from our race, and we were kept in bondage and held to labour for so long a time, that we were defiled with the idols of Egypt; but hope fled not from the breast of all, and many there were who clung with unshaken faith to God, till the time of the fulfillment, when we as a nation were publicly betrothed and espoused by the great Father of mankind, to be his own, his peculiar treasure, his kingdom of priests, his holy nation. But even then we stood alone, solitary amidst the families of the earth, in the invocation of the Holy Name, which is reverenced among the angels. Yet it was the commencement of the great accomplishment of the covenant with Abraham; seventy males had now increased to sixty myriads, and in the mouth of two millions of human beings was the Lord of heaven invoked as their God and Creator.

We next arrived in Palestine, and increased in power and intelligence, and the fame of our commonwealth spread far over the East and the countries to the South; but still we stood alone, and we had no associates to join us in our testimony against the vanities and idols of mankind. And though our state fell at last a prey to our transgressions, and our iniquities destroyed our sanctuary, the religion, which is ours, did not perish, and survives even now as the glory of the sons of Jacob. O! how did we suffer since the day that Nebuchadnezzar sent the captain of his guards to burn our temple! O how weary were our wanderings since a second time the holy of holies was entered with fire and sword, under the cruellest of all oppressors, the Roman general and his unpitying legions! But for all this, we adhered, few of us at least, to the statutes of the Lord, and thus we live in and through the commandments which we received at Sinai. As yet we have not ceased, as yet our destiny is not accomplished, because our end has not come; nor are all the families of the earth blessed in Abraham and his descendants. But we are hastening to the accomplishment; event crowds on event; falsehood sinks after falsehood; and who can doubt that truth at length will triumph? Who can gainsay that at length the Lord alone will reign on earth? Yea, Abraham, Isaac, Israel, and Moses, faltered not; why then should we falter, when the prospect is so much brighter, the hope so much more likely to be accomplished? So then let us hold fast to the Law, adhere firmly to our God, and invoke in humility his blessing on us and all mankind, and that He may speedily send the Messiah to restore peace on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.

Nissan 26, April 28, 5608.

Chapter 87

S. The Pentecost

The Pentecost A sermon, delivered at the Synagogue Shearith Israel, Montreal, on Pentecost, 5607, by the Rev. Abraham De Sola.

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“On the day of the first-fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto the Eternal, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work.”- Numbers 28:26.

To-day, brethren, we celebrate ■■ ■■■■■■ the festival of Pentecost-a festival which is calculated to arouse within us reflections of a most serious and affecting character. At this season of the first-fruits, we were wont to assemble ourselves together in the place where the Lord God had chosen to place his name, there to rejoice in the bounteous gifts with which on the day of first-fruits ■■■ ■■■■■■■■ we were particularly favoured, Prizing his favour in those days, we strove to retain it, and sought his sanctuary to meet Him in prayerful converse. We were not wont then to question his sacred will-to consider, ere we performed. Our pious sages notice approvingly the reply given by Israel to the divine dicta when conveyed to them by Moses. “All the words which the Eternal hath spoken we will perform and hear.” “They took upon themselves,” remark our commentators upon this passage, “first to perform, then to hear or consider.” And, my friends, it was this inclination to seek their God, to perform and to hear, that was pleasing to the Eternal. It was this proper sense of their vocation, this desire to act as became immortal beings, that found favour in His sight, and caused Him, at this same season of the Pentecost, to confer upon us a boon infinitely more precious than the bestowal of our corn, our wine, and our oil; for they only satisfied the material and grosser cravings of our humanity, whilst this both satisfied and promoted the spiritual and more exalted plantings of our immortality. This precious and surpassing boon, my brethren, was Mattan Torah, the gift of the law. Yes, even as the poet has beautifully sung:

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It was on this glorious day that this peculiar people received the law (their inheritance) by means of the prophet, the man of God.* And in a manner worthy such an inheritance was it bestowed and entered upon. It was the pleasure of the Almighty Donor that Torath Moshe, the Mosaic dispensation, should be as a banner to all the nations of the earth, under which, at a future period to be determined by the Divine wisdom, they should be ranged together in brotherly spirit and love, calling with pure lips upon the name of the true God-that this period should not be an immediate one, but that the religious union of man should be gradual, even as we do daily witness, brethren,† and that its accomplishment should be by means of a Divine revelation to “a nation selected from

among nations." And we, brethren, as the dearly beloved people, even we were to be the lasting witnesses of its truth and the means for its dissemination. Accordingly the words of life were not communicated to one among us, and that, too, in secret, but to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and from Sinai's fiery mount was the Divine Shechinah visible. With their eyes did they see, and with their ears did they hear the terrible lightnings and thunders accompanying THE VOICE which thus proclaimed to the awe-stricken thousands: "I am the Eternal, thy GOD, who have brought thee ford, from the land of Mitsrayim, from the estate of slaves. No other gods shalt thou have!"

* Introduction to the Azharoth, by Rabbi David Ben Elazar Bekodah, Rev. D. A. De Sola's translation.

† I allude more particularly to the fact of thousands of heathens rejecting the absurdities and horrors of idolatry, and adopting the belief and knowledge of a true God, although accompanied with many erroneous and militating doctrines. Yet Rommohun Roy has shown how superior is the human mind to these, when freed from extrinsic influences. See his works.

Thus important, thus interesting are the events originating the Pentecost; thus glorious the reflections which at that sacred season must present themselves more or less vividly to the mind of every member of the house of Jeshurun. Be it now our occupation to pursue these reflections in a manner befitting the sacred occasion, so that by their more deliberate examination we may be enabled properly to comprehend, and thus to appreciate the Feast of Weeks. To this end let us proceed to inquire, first, what is taught us by the institution of the Pentecost? and, secondly, how is the Pentecost properly observed? To this end, also, let us entreat that He who has bestowed on us this and other convocations of holiness, will enable us to perform faithfully all his observances for now and evermore. And let us say Amen!

I. The Pentecost teaches us that which forms the basis of all religious truths, the existence of an Almighty God, the Creator and Ruler of all.-When blessed with the favour of a kind and gracious Father, we dwelt in our own goodly land, one flowing with milk and honey, how joyous a season was the day of first fruits! We were happy then, my brethren, in the possession of that exceeding great love wherewith our God loved us, and in the shadow of Him who is ALMIGHTY did we safely abide. We were then content, happy, and in peace. No fear "lest the earth should not yield her produce, and that we should perish quickly from off the goodly land which the Lord our God gave us," disturbed us then. Scarcity, want, and famine we dreaded not; for our God, who is TRUTH, had promised us that if we would perform His behests He would send us those grateful rains so necessary for vegetation; that He would bestow upon us our corn, our wine, and our oil, and that we should eat and be satisfied. (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)

We listened to the words of the Lord, and performed; we believed, and in believing were convinced. And amply vas our faith rewarded. With the annual arrival of the Passover did nature in every shrub, in every tree, and in every herb, give promise of a bounteous and plentiful harvest; and with the annual arrival of the Pentecost did nature's God demonstrate His bounteousness, His graciousness, and His love, by amply bestowing upon us His gifts, wherewith we might fill our houses, our stores, and our granaries. During seven weeks-the seven weeks between the first of the Passover and the Pentecost-we were wont to gather of the plentiful supply with glad and thankful hearts; the joyous song of the young men and maidens resounding amidst the gathered

heaps of plenty, was re-echoed by the fervent prayer poured forth to the Deity. And this continued till the arrival of that day which God had been pleased to appoint as a time of holy Convocation. We then sought the place in which stood His holy house, there to prostrate ourselves before Him, and by offering the first-fruits unto Him, thus truthfully and gratefully avow our conviction that He alone is the Almighty Creator and Bestower of all gifts, and that from Him alone do all blessings flow.

Such was the lesson taught us by the Pentecost of old. And it is different now, brethren! Can we at this season uninterestingly view the return of vegetation? Can we carelessly observe the gradual growth of the leaf-the development of the bud? Can we, shall we witness all nature smiling around us in bounteous plenty, and not learn, and not feel that it is an almighty Hand that has created and bestowed? Shall we view, shall we learn, and shall we not acknowledge that a return as appropriate and as great as the created can offer the Creator is called for-is expected? Shall we listen to the beautiful chorus of all nature, that chorus which proclaims “the hand that made us is Divine,” and refuse to join in the sacred chaunt? Dare we, brethren, to uplift our voices in any other strain save this? Can we in the folly of our heart say, There is no God; the heavens, the earth, and all their host are not the work of His hands; the operations of nature are fortuitous? Can we say that “light regularly recedes before darkness, and darkness before light,” from chance? that the earth, the stars, and countless systems which science has brought to our view owe their constant and unvariable courses to accident, and that the nature* of their revolutions, which preserves them from annihilation, is also from accident? Is it from accident that the earth, remaining untaxed and dormant during the winter season, an opportunity is afforded whereby she may obtain increased strength, so necessary for her reproductions? Or is it from chance that her productions, and the productions of all nature are so admirably and incontestably adapted to our nature and wants? My friends, God has been pleased to visit thousands of his creatures, living in the European quarter of the world, with a dearth and scarcity of food. All have sought Him to deprecate the calamity and to entreat his mercy. Our brethren of the house of Israel assembled themselves together for the same purpose, and in one of their Synagogues the minister† addressed his flock in words which, as connected with such a visitation, and with our present inquiry, ‘twere well and profitable for us to hear. “Let us be careful,” said he, “that we do not both foolishly and wickedly misapply to this and similar calamities the words accidental events, for truly nothing happens in this world by accident. What we call so is nothing else than that for which we cannot discover a cause. It was well remarked by a wise author that the word accident is the reproach of our vocabulary, inasmuch as it is a term of no real meaning, but only invented to veil our ignorance.”

* The combination of the centripetal and centrifugal forces consequent upon their relative attractions. “‘Tis attraction’s hidden force upon which nature’s law. depends.”

† My respected father, the Rev. D. A. De Sola. See his Discourse, delivered at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, London, on the occasion of the national fast, 7th Nisan, (24th March,) 5607, published at the express desire of the Mahamad.

Let us mark well these words, my hearers, and we shall soon be convinced of their value and truth. They will satisfy us of the truth of the first teaching of the Pentecost, and will cause us, like David, to exclaim: “The heavens, O Eternal, are thine; the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, Thou hast founded them.” (Psalms 89:11.) The Pentecost teaches us that the

God of the Universe has revealed himself to His creatures. Its observance to-day by the remnant of Israel, proves this to us. Israel, the stiff-necked people, whose history shows the justness of this appellation, given to them by their offended God-Israel, who have ever been more ready to question than to perform-to rebel than to obey-to reject than to receive, have, nevertheless, been so convinced of the Divine origin of the Pentecost, that they have ever deemed it worthy their especial reverence as the season of the bestowal of our law. Blind, willfully blind as they have ever been, they have yet admitted the Holy Law to be the sole cause under God of their preservation as a nation. And as an historical truth, who shall say that this is not so? More than thirty centuries have elapsed since the words of salvation were uttered, and the descendants of those who “saw the lightnings, and the thunders, and the noise of the trumpets,” (Exodus 20:18,) the witnesses of God’s revelation, in accordance with his great will, still exist an astonishment to the nations. Punishment has fallen heavily but justly upon them for sinning against their God. But He (blessed be He) is a gracious God, and in the words of our great lawgiver, “Ye who have cleaved unto your God are all of ye alive this day.” That human legislation would have been insufficient for effecting this cannot be doubted by any who, examining the universal page of history, shall follow Israel in their wanderings as exiles from the land of their fathers, and shall observe how, bending almost to prostration under countless and cruel persecutions-mixing with every nation and adopting their civilization and laws, they may yet be distinguished because of their law, as the distinct race, retaining the same worship, rites, and ceremonies in the east, as in the west, in the north as in the south, communicating with all, but amalgamating with none. Who shall observe this and not be convinced “that the hand of the Lord hath done this thing?: That human foresight would be insufficient to provide for a course so chequered as has been that of Israel, is also shown by history. For where be the nationality of Rome or of Greece, where the laws of Solon, of Lycurgus, that boastful theme of profane song? Their origin was human, brethren, therefore have they gone the way of all things earthly. Our law is the law of God, and the law of the Eternal endureth for ever. Vain, fruitless, and wicked, therefore, are the attempts of those who would induce Israel to abandon their everlasting inheritance, and vain, fruitless, and wicked will they ever be; for hath not the Eternal declared, “As for my word which I have placed in thy mouth, it shall not depart from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy offspring, nor from the mouth of thy offspring’s offspring for now and evermore, saith He who is Eternal?” As social beings, as loving all who are good and virtuous in the species, as questioning no other creed or tenets save their own, Israel are, and have ever been willing to hold forth the hand of good fellowship to those who are with themselves the creatures of a common God. In social intercourse with their gentile brothers, they have ever been ready to cooperate, to advise, and to assist; but when this has been used as a means for inducing them to relinquish their simple and pure faith for one which “neither they nor their forefathers have known,” they have sought the Law for counsel, they have performed and heard its dictates, and the result has been, brethren, that “Ye who have cleaved unto the Lord your God are alive all of ye this day.” Glorious should be this reflection for us, my hearers. that spite of contumely and oppression, the house of Jacob have stood their ground firmly and nobly by the fountain which was “in those days and in this season” opened to them. They have drunk deeply and faithfully of its clear and heavenly waters, and therewith have they satisfied themselves. At the forfeit of their lives have they prevented the approach of those who would have disturbed their pureness; but they have not prevented the approach of those who, having thirst for the word of God, have drawn near that they might quench it. They have preserved, but not withheld. They are and must be alive

to the importance, the sacredness of the trust confided to them at Sinai. The reproaches and scorn of the unbeliever they have borne with indifference; for they could not abandon their trust. They have bared their necks to the knife of bigotry; for they could not abandon their trust. But one reply, and that in the words of their forefathers, have they for all:-“All these words which the Eternal, our God, hath commanded us, those will we perform and hear.” Such a proceeding, brethren, will establish the truth of what we have endeavoured to prove-the second great teaching of the Pentecost-and will cause all “which shall hear of these statutes to say, Surely this nation is a wise and understanding people; for what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them as is the Lord their God in all that they call upon him for.” The Pentecost teaches us that the Eternal is infinitely Benevolent, Wise, and Just. If we reflect upon the nature and number of our wants, and how all things visible and invisible are subjected to their satisfaction;-if, when regarding the fruit-tree, the flower bush, and corn-stalk, we reflect that they, with the water that affords their moisture-with the air that supplies their perfume-and with the light that gives them life, were bestowed on us by their and our Creator for our dominion, for the support and healthfulness of our mortality, and if assisted by science we ascertain how they are adapted to our wants: we cannot but remain most sensibly impressed with the Wisdom, Justice, and Benevolence of their almighty Author. At this season of the first-fruits such sentiments must be the sentiments of all. But though it is now that “the earth particularly declareth His glory,” yet, brethren, do we on this sacred day more especially recognise His Infinite Benevolence and Wisdom, since it is the anniversary of that auspicious season whereupon He gave us this Holy Law, which containing, as experience has shown, the wisest and best rules for our conduct as intelligent and immortal beings, secures to us not only the happiness of the day, but the felicity of eternity. His Infinity do we also perceive in that He has not given us sentiments and aspirations which the rest of creation possess not, and withheld from us the means for their indulgence and satisfaction; that He has not “made us little less than God,” and prevented us from qualifying ourselves to act as become such beings. We would longer raise our voice in words of admiration and gratitude, but that the present occasion requires not a farther consideration of this theme; for as God is, so is His goodness everlasting. What we have said has been sufficient to supply us with that knowledge most important for man to know, and we now fervently say with the Psalmist: “Ascribe unto the Eternal, O ye mighty, ascribe unto the Eternal, glory and strength, ascribe unto the Eternal the glory due unto His name, worship the Eternal in the beauty of holiness.” In this spirit, brethren, we shall be anxious and qualified to proceed to the inquiry which we have appropriated as the second head of discourse-How the Pentecost is properly observed?

II Our text enjoins that in order to observe the Feast of Weeks we must offer a new meat-offering to the Eternal when our weeks be out, that it shall be an holy convocation unto us, and that we shall do no servile work thereupon. But, as the beautiful and pathetic lament of our liturgy daily reminds us, “Now, alas! on account of our sins the sanctuary lies desolate and the continual offering hath ceased.” We are, therefore, unable to offer the first-fruits to God as they were wont to be offered on this sacred occasion; but shall we for this reason neglect to observe the Pentecost by such a celebration as we may yet afford, as is yet required of us? Surely not, my brethren. Though the Eternal has deprived us, in his justice, of those means whereby we might observe it as did our forefathers: still has He been graciously pleased to declare that it is not in the sacrifice of calves or of bulls that His soul delighteth.

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Eternal; I am satiated with the burnt-offerings of lambs, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, of he-goats.”

It is not because we seek Him with these things that He will regard us, but “The eye of the Eternal is upon those who fear Him, and upon those who hope for His mercy.” Nor has He declared that He would be with us only in the temple. Recollect, brethren, that in our minor sanctuary He also appears to receive our adorations: and if we are unable to seek Him in the place in which at one period shone the Divine effulgence, we may yet commune with Him, though He be not visibly present in the Synagogue. If we have no altar whereupon to lay the first fruits, and if we cannot bring a new meat-offering, when our weeks be out, of calves or of bulls: we have hearts. And if we fill them with sentiments of gratitude, praise, and piety, towards our God, with love and good-will towards our fellow-beings;-if our new meat-offering be a new resolve when appearing before our Eternal Father on this sacred day, to cleave unto Him, so that we may by means of His revealed word, live in Him for ever;-if it be a new resolve that the past sentiments of dislike, prejudice, or ill-will which we may have entertained for a fellow being, frail, even as we are, brethren, shall now, that our weeks of error be out, give place to those of charity and esteem;-if it be a new and fervent resolve to act according to ALL the dictates of God’s law: then have we brought unto the Eternal’s altar a new meat-offering most fitting, most worthy of Him, even that in which his soul best delighteth. Nor shall we find it a difficult thing for us to form such a new resolve or to procure such an oblation, if we prepare to do so in proper spirit. When God furnished our fathers with those offerings fitting an earthly altar, He also provided them and their latest posterity with those which should be acceptable to Him, even when they no longer possessed the “altar of earth.” When He blessed us with the first-fruit, He also blessed us with the law. If then we be desirous of properly observing the Pentecost, and that its present celebration by the house of Israel should be with such offerings as God would approve, as He expects, is it not obvious whence the oblations are to be procured? Solomon has wisely and truthfully said the law of the Eternal “is a tree of life to all who lay hold upon her, and happy is every one who retaineth her.” What he has wisely and truthfully said, experience has clearly shown, and millions have loudly proclaimed. Let us then lay hold upon this tree of life, and let us examine whether her fruits be sufficiently precious for our purpose. At the season of the Pentecost, Israel was thus commanded by the law of God: “When ye reap the harvest of your land thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger. I am the Eternal your God.” Brethren, all the attributes of the Eternal may be included in one, which is Benevolence,* and here it is enjoined unto us. Can we conceive a recommendation more profitable, a precept more beautiful than that which teaches the created to imitate the Creator, the weak and erring mortal to act as does the Infinite and All-wise God, to vest ourselves with that attribute that so infinitely tends to our perfection, and to assimilate us to Divinity? Are we not now convinced that the fruit of this tree is infinitely precious? Surely, yes, brethren. In the words of one whose conclusion was a conviction afforded by its long and continuous study, let us admit that the word of God indeed excels all things earthly, and ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ “The whole world is not equivalent to the word of God’s law.”† Let us, recollect, farther, that God has himself declared, that man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the month of the Eternal shall man live.‡ Let us then show our appreciation for this inestimable boon, by bestowing on it that care and

study which shall tend to its preservation. Let us by strict observance of the ordinances of the Holy Law, cull from it those first-fruits which are so pleasing to our gracious Father; so shall we be worthy the title of his chosen children, we did at this time receive from Him; so shall it afford us everlasting life, and so shall we have properly observed THE PENTECOST!

* See this ably shown in Abernethy's Attributes, &c.

† Dictum of R. Chiya, Talm. Hieros, in Peah.

‡ Deuteronomy 8:3.

Almighty and most merciful Father! Thou whom all creation proclaims! At this season of the Pentecost we have drawn nigh unto Thee in holy convocation, as Thou hast been pleased to command us. We approach Thee, O Lord, to thank Thee for thy mercy shown in our preservation, and for the bestowal of all those gifts which are necessary for the maintenance of our mortal life. But above all, most merciful Father, do we thank Thee for that surpassing gift, THY SACRED REVELATION, that which hath been our consolation in adversity, our support under grievous affliction. We do all acknowledge before Thee this day, that Thou art infinitely benevolent in having given to thine erring children, that which alone hath enabled them to withstand the temptations which have everywhere surrounded us. We declare before Thee, gracious Father, that it is through thy word alone, that we have been happy; that when sickness and misfortune have visited us, it is from it alone that we have derived consolation and support; and that when we have been happy it has been only because we have observed its precepts. And now, Eternal Father, we entreat Thee with prayerful heart that through it Thou wilt continue to bless these thy people, who now stand assembled before Thee. Cause them to understand that it is to Thy Holy Law that they owe all their happiness in this world, and that it will be through it that they shall possess everlasting bliss in the world after death. Show them that if the child do honour the parent, it is because the parent hath walked in its ways, and that if the parent do love the child, he does so but in obedience to its dictates. Show them that if the wife do love the husband with a faithful love, and if the husband do cherish the wife, that if the sister do love the brother, and the brother protect the sister, it is by thy revealed will that they do so. Show them also, Almighty God, that if they escape the accidents, the violences, and the diseases of this life that it is to thine all-protecting arm that they owe their preservation, and that for this they should observe to do all as Thou hast commanded them. Teach them to think thus, O Father! and thus let them be blessed. Continue to protect with Thy favour both them and Thy servant, and permit us to continue peacefully to assemble in brotherly love and union, to adore Thee in Thine Holy Sanctuary. AMEN AND AMEN!

S. The Plague (Cholera Epidemic of 1849)

The Plague [Cholera pandemic of 1849] An Address Delivered on the Occasion of the Public Day of

Humiliation Proclaimed by the President, on the 3d of August, 5609.

O Thou Hearer of prayers, answer us in thy mercy, for unto Thee, our Father! does all flesh fly for refuge. Let mankind pass on in their stubbornness, unwilling to acknowledge thy power: they will, nevertheless, turn and seek Thee, when they feel thy potent wrath, with none to help them; for then they see that their own arm is weak, and that their idols are vain, and they come, therefore, to crave of Thee, whom they will not recognise in their prosperity, that the evil may be staved and the storm averted.

It is therefore, Almighty God! that this day has been devoted by the ruler of this great people, in whose midst we dwell, as one, of humiliation before Thee; because Thou hast permitted the destroyer to go abroad, coming with terror and armed with resistless force to slay in the city and the field, upon the waves of the ocean and in the distant desert, overleaping boundaries which the fear of man has set unto him, and defying alike the art of the coward and the daring of the brave; and wherever he has appeared, the slain are behind, the dying before him, and there is wailing in the hamlet and weeping in the densely crowded streets of the busy towns where commerce has taken up her dwelling; and the conquering armies and the flying hosts alike stoop before the unseen enemy that strikes down the aged and the young, the matron and the virgin. Who does not see Thee, O God; in this visitation? Who feels not that this evil is from Thee? Who, that has been taught thy ways, does not understand that thus Thou wouldst demonstrate thy power, and chasten thy wickedness of the heart of man? For full well do we know that prosperity renders us proud, and uninterrupted peace but lifts up our heart, and causes it to say, “My own strength of hand has acquired me all this wealth.” But, when we see our prosperity suddenly checked, and our homes made desolate, as it were, in a moment, we then turn aside from our worldliness, and ask, “Whence has this evil come upon us?” Behold us, therefore, here this day, O most merciful Father! to acknowledge, in thy presence, that we are sinful, and have done evil before Thee, and that, for the sins of our own committing, and those of others, Thou hast again visited this hind, and sent sorrow and mourning into the dwellings of its inhabitants. We have also, in accordance with the instruction which we have received in thy revelation, repaired hither to call on thy holy name, to have compassion on the land, and to avert thy anger from us, and to restore us all to wonted health and vigour. For behold all feel the weight of thy indignation, and high and low have experienced the bitterness of the cup of confusion which so many have been made to drink; and all, therefore, whose hearts have been touched by thy power, who have been led to fear Thee through the might of thy outstretched arm, now invoke thy grace to avert, henceforward, the wrath which has been poured out, and to be again favourable to the, land.

Hear us, then, O Almighty Father! hear us! and accept our prayer as an agreeable savour in thy presence; and let us and all mankind be made to feel that Thou alone art able to wound and to

heal, and that there is none that can save from thy hand. Yea, teach us thus to fear Thee, and to remain firm and true, though Thou shouldst deem affliction best for us; yea, were it even that Thou shouldst remove us to another life, cutting short in a moment our brief span of years on the earth. Hear us! O Father! and remove the evil which now afflicts us, and permit us to continue longer on the earth, that we may have time to repair the wrong we have done, and cut us not off in our iniquity. But grant that the solemn warning which we have received may aid us to overcome our evil propensities, and induce us to seek light and instruction from thy word, and to devote unto Thee all our strength-to serve and adore Thee with a perfect heart and a willing soul. So shall we be acceptable before Thee, and know that Thou art our God, the Father of all spirits, who is good and true in his word and promises, and merciful to all, because He delighteth in mercy. Amen!

BRETHREN: On an occasion like the present, when our assembling at the house of God is not in obedience to the usual demands of our religion, but in consequence of the invitation of the chief magistrate of the country [President Zachary Taylor], which only happens on the recurrence of some national calamity, or a national cause of thanksgiving, it is well to reflect on the motive which prompted the constituted chief of the nation to step aside from his usual functions, which concern the temporal government of the country, and to recommend a religious observance, which, in the ordinary routine of events, is not within his province. Indeed, it is not often that such a thing takes place in a commonwealth like this, where the civil government is wisely precluded from an interference in the religious affairs of the people, over which they have conferred no power on their rulers. Consequently, it must be something momentous which can authorize and sanction such a step, and which can obtain so general an acquiescence from nearly all shades of opinions for a proclamation of a general day of prayer as we witness this moment. Perhaps there never was a period in the history of the country when a request emanating from the executive of the Union met with so general a response. And why? Because all feel that there is ample cause for a whole people to call, with a united voice, for mercy and protection, from the only Source whence all that is good proceeds, even the great God of Israel, the Creator and Protector of the universe; and the President of the United States has done well to state that, “at a season when the providence of God has manifested itself in the visitation of a fearful pestilence, which is spreading its ravages throughout the land, it is fitting that a people whose reliance has ever been in His protection should humble themselves before His throne, and, while acknowledging past transgressions, ask a continuance of the Divine mercy.” Yes; God has spoken in tones of rebuke to the earth; and from afar came over the sea the muttering of his wrath; and nation after nation looked with dread on the progress of the destroyer, fearing that its turn would come next, and that the evil would, sooner or later, step over into its boundaries; and one by one fell under the sword: and now, notwithstanding the distance at which we are placed from the birthplace of the cholera, it has a third time overleaped the breadth of the Atlantic ocean, and has spread with more than its former swiftness over the whole surface of the land. We have found it true, as the Psalmist says, that

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“From heaven hast-thou (God) caused us to bear judgment; the earth is affrighted, and is stilled.”-Psalms 75:10. From afar it was heard, as though a voice spoke from heaven, somewhat more than thirty years ago, that a new pestilence-new, at least to the present generation, and but obscurely spoken of in the books of science-had been born in the country fertilized by the magnificent Ganges. It was told us, in fearful whisperings, how men were stricken down as in a

moment, and how conquering armies quailed and fell, in a single night, before the irresistible arm of the unseen destroyer. For a time it rankled at that great distance, in a land well calculated, from its soil and climate, to produce debility and to nourish pestilential vapours. Perhaps no one then thought that it would stride over the ices of the north, and climb the perpendicular walls of snow-capped mountains. But if men thought after this fashion, they were grievously deceived; for gradually it progressed from its native swamps, until it had overspread all Asia, the known parts of Africa, and all Europe; and soon after establishing itself on the western confines of the latter portion of the world, it followed hitherward the track of the voyagers, and spread with desolating violence, in a very brief space of time, through many a degree of latitude; till the whole land groaned under the terrible visitation. Seventeen years it is this very week since we met here, in this house, in obedience to the proclamation of the Governor of this state, to ask for heavenly aid during the first visit of the cholera; the plague was stayed soon after, and we were enabled to rejoice that of those who then worshipped in this place, not one had fallen before the destroyer and when, two years later, the epidemic appeared in a milder form, we again had cause for thankfulness in a renewed exemption from the plague. From that period until lately we had indulged in the vain hope that henceforward we should be spared from the ravages of a disease which had already slain its millions, on the Ganges, the Nile, the Euphrates, the Wolga, and the Mississippi. But no; again the alarm was sounded that the enemy approached anew; and, as vain as had been the efforts of governments to exclude the scourge from their countries-idle as had been the exertions of the most skilful physicians and naturalists to grapple with it and to conquer it at its first irruption-so vain and futile were the renewed efforts and exertions which we lately witnessed, and the stoutest hearts now quail when the news of its presence in a city is noised abroad; and well may we say, in the words of our text, that “when God causes his sentence of judgment to be heard, the earth is affrighted and is hushed,” for man feels now his utter helplessness, and how incapable he is to save himself by his own endeavours. This, therefore, is the cause why the President of the Union has requested all the inhabitants of the land-who are all alike under the sentence of condemnation-“to meet this day in their places of worship, to implore the Almighty, in His own good time, to stay the destroying hand which is now lifted up against us.” And is it not right that we should do so? To whom shall we fly for protection, if not to Him who is emphatically the One who slayeth and bringeth to life, and from whose hand no one can save us? The occasion of our assembling to-day is, accordingly, one of the greatest moment; and it is necessary that we ponder well on the same; and not suffer it to escape us without endeavouring to let it make a lasting impression on our minds, and to influence our actions likewise.

Let us consider. Man is so very apt, in the moment of his prosperity and peace, to consider himself as something superior, that often calamities are to him the source of the greatest blessings, inasmuch as they cause him to reflect on the vanity and transitoriness of sublunary possessions, and to fix his eye on that imperishable world which opens to us a bright future through the midst of the gloom of the portals of death. Ay, death is a gloomy prospect; the bravest of heart, the most devout and resigned to his Maker’s will, may well shudder at the reflection that, before many years, the earth will claim her own in his frame, and dust will again mingle with the dust, and the light of the eyes will be blotted out, and, the brain, the seat of so many thoughts and aspirations, will deprived of the principle which set it in motion, mingle with the clod of the valley, undistinguishable from other dust which surrounds it; and the tongue, which now speaks forth great thoughts and daring ideas, will be stilled, and feel no more. And yet, took at the vast majority

of mankind, and you see them toil for mere worldly things, as though they could toil on for ever; they heap up riches, as though their end would never come; they hunt for pleasure, as though the changing year would always find them in the beauty of youth and the strength of manhood. Is not this the course of man? But look at him again, and you will see that he toiled in vain; the success which first smiled on him only deceived him to rush upon an utter destruction; and him that confided in his wealth you may often see stripped of what he so greatly coveted and so closely guarded; or you will behold the proud beauty speedily changed by disease into an object of loathing, or see him who trusted in his manly vigour crippled in limb and helplessly deformed. Is not this a picture of life? Yet, even let nothing but success, and plenty, and strength, and joy accompany the son of man uninterruptedly from his birth till the highest old age, still what will then be the end? Will not the silver cord be loosened?-will not the bowl be broken at the fountain? Put off the day of evil as long as you will, it must come; it approaches hourly, momentarily; and each word spoken, each syllable uttered, each breath drawn, we have performed a step which brings us nearer and nearer to the grave. No grace, no virtue, no wealth, no vigour, no beauty can snatch us from the open gulf which either looms up in the certain distance or yawns at our feet, ready to swallow us up in its insatiable jaws. All that are born are born to die, all that have life are doomed to the grave; and earth, and air, land water, and fire are pledged to carry out the Creator's will; and thus the end of life is death, and all that is bright on earth is sure to be dimmed by the hand which gathers in the rich harvest which always ripens for the grave. Were it, therefore; that all men would thus reflect, and look upon earth as a place of preparation for another world, constant prosperity would not be a bar to their happiness hereafter. But tell a man, in the day of his success, to think of the future, and it is probable that he will deride you as a gloomy fanatic, who, because the world goes hard with him, because he has no joys himself, would only be too glad to render every one as miserable as he is. "Enjoy the day," "sufficient for the day are the evils thereof," or some other similar saying; will perhaps be the only answer to your well-meant admonition, and you will have cause for grief to see the unthinking hurrying along on their destructive path, notwithstanding that your words bore the lessons of wisdom. But see the worldling again, when the sun of his prosperity is clouded, or when disease invades his domicile, which he was fain to imagine inaccessible to the calamities of other men and you may perhaps find him changed in his estimation of his own importance, and he may perhaps then listen to the breathings of consolation which are found on the path of religion.

Yes, when men are brought to tremble at the majesty of God-yes, when nations have learned that prosperity is not of their own making; will they bow in submission to Him through whose bounty they live, through whose goodness their power is established. It is then that they come to search into their conduct, to see whether or not they have not deserved the misery under which they suffer; whereas a constant stream of success would only have rendered them obdurate, and inspired them with the arrogant assurance that their conduct, their entire course, had been consonant with the laws of mercy and justice. When a calamity then befalls us, we should not arraign the Divine Providence for injustice,-not accuse the Merciful One of caprice, of unmindfulness of our claims to immunity; but we should at once set about examining into our own conduct, and seek for the source of the evil in what we have done or omitted. If a man discovers that gradually afflictions overtake him, he should immediately look over carefully in what he has failed, see whether or not his heart has become proud and rebellious, whether he is yet as entire with his God as he was wont to be. If he then discerns the sin of pride lurking within, if he beholds

the demon of covetousness preying on his vitals, if he detects the spirit of unbelief springing up in his soul, or if he is made conscious that he has not at any time served his God with the true, entire devotion which the Scriptures demand of him, he should unhesitatingly condemn himself, and accept the punishment as a wise chastisement sent to recall him from earth to heaven. He should accordingly stifle the arrogance of pride, though it be but in an incipient state, for only then is it conquerable, before yet the contempt of our species, and the inordinate exaltation of self have degenerated into a passion. He should overcome by all possible efforts the undue desire for worldly possessions; he should apply himself with humble prayer to the study of the word of God, so as to overcome the tendency to scepticism which he has discovered, and lastly, he should make the practice of religion a daily exercise, and contemplate at every hour of the day, at any employment in which he may be engaged, the goodness and mercy of God, how He bestows so many benefits on his creatures, blessing the undeserving even, and not withholding all good from every generation, whether they be virtuous or forgetful of his laws. And should, after all, the calamity not be removed, let him not omit persevering in his altered righteous course; for he may be sure that the evil is calculated for his mental elevation, inasmuch as a renewed prosperity might withdraw him anew from the path of repentance which he has just commenced. But we know from experience that to the righteous a light always springs from darkness, and that, in bearing the evils which beset them in a manner becoming those who love their God, and confide in Him in resigned meekness, they set a beautiful example to the world of the superior efficacy of a pursuit of religion, and they confer a benefit on all by proving that man needs but little to enable him to live in cheerful content, and that even amidst bodily ailments he can glorify his Maker, provided only that he places his trust in Him who never deceives, and whose spirit always is with the afflicted, to aid them in their struggle with the adversities of life. It is thus that what we call evil is to rivet closer the union which connects the creature with the Creator, and is thus calculated to stimulate him to persevere in doing what he is taught to be right, or to return to it in case he should have acted contrary to its dictates. The individual, moreover, can easily scan his whole conduct, if he has independence enough to judge himself without favour, and if he is sufficiently alive to the dictates of duty which revealed religion asks of him; wherefore every admonition he receives, whether it be through words of advice or unforeseen affliction, can be properly received as incentives to an amendment of conduct; wherefore he can be at once held amenable if he refuses to listen, and he may therefore not complain of injustice if the chastening hand is not withdrawn whilst he continues in his obdurate state.

Nations also often sin nationally; that is to say, they are guilty of collective wrongs, for which the whole body politic becomes liable to divine visitation. Now the Almighty has appointed three prominent agents to chastise whole communities, and they have ever proved the scourge of erring man, afflicting perhaps not all, but an indefinite number of the inhabitants of one or more countries. I speak of war, famine, a pestilence, which slay their thousands without destroying, except under rare circumstances, entire communities. But this emphatically proves that a Providence regulates the evils, especially those which proceed on their mission without human intervention. Were it that the pestilence, for instance, should sweep off the population of an entire district, it might be ascribed to some unknown change in the atmosphere, to some organic modification which is hostile to human life. But all the researches of philosophers have hitherto utterly failed to prove that such a change or modification of the atmospheric air which we breathe is the cause of the different pestilences which have ravaged the earth at various times; and they have at length,

though reluctantly, been compelled to acknowledge the mysterious agency of a divine visitation. The sky is often clear, without a spot on the beautiful blue vault which is spread like a tent over us; the sun shines with a brilliant clearness; a pleasant breeze is wafted over the earth and sea; a teeming mantle of green covers with a luxuriant growth the field and meadow;-and yet each breath drawn in such a sky, in such a season, is fraught with death. Nevertheless, all do not die, exposed though they be to the same influences, breathing as they do the same death-loaded atmosphere: and often the robust and healthy sink rapidly before the destroyer, whilst the decrepit and the diseased survive, and perform the last sad rites to those who vainly imagined that they would outlive the others. What does all this teach, but that the pestilence obeys the laws of its Sender, that in the midst of its rages not one is stricken down, on whom is inscribed the sign of life? I would not thereby convey the idea that it is vain to observe rules of prudence in epidemic visitations as useless. Far from it; we must use all the precautions and remedies which experience has recommended as useful; but I would only show that, with all human, care and foresight, which we justly employ as agents placed within our reach by Providence, we at length are dependent on Him only for the success of all remedial agents; inasmuch as so many fall who are well fortified, whilst those are spared who are weak and exposed.

In short, the whole course of history proves that no one can account for the various inflictions of evil which occasionally visit the earth. All cares cannot ward off the plague, if God bids it to go forth. No one can arrest the famine, if the decree from above sends blight and disease on the fruits of man’s labour. No counsels of the wise can altogether prevent the calamities of war, even now, in this enlightened age, when so great a progress has been made in the construction of deadly engines, which renders the contest of nations so much more bloody now than it was ever before, though immense slaughters have signalized the ages of darkness no less than the present. All human foresight is in vain to ward off the instruments of vengeance which the Lord holds in his hands; and let, therefore, no nation, no matter how mighty and enlightened, pass heedlessly by, when either of the great national calamities befall it or its neighbours. Victory itself is but a slight recompense for the calamities of war; a rich return for a superabundant harvest at home cannot compensate the feeling heart for the sufferings which scarcity of food occasions in other lands; and the exemption from bodily ailment is no source of exultation, when we see the grave closing hour after hour upon those we value and hold dear. When Moses now, in addressing the Israelites as a nation, and in this capacity only was the law governing their commonwealth imparted to them, independently of those ordinances which concern the individual only, wished to set before them the practical fruits of obedience, he promised them exemption from war, famine, and unusual mortality. Concerning war, he said: “If you will walk in my statutes, then will I give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.” (Leviticus 25:6.) Concerning plenty, he said: “And I will give your rains in their season, and the earth shall yield her increase; and the tree of the field shall give its fruit. And the threshing season shall reach with you the vintage, and the vintage shall last until seed-time; and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction, and you shall dwell securely in your land.” (Leviticus 26:4-5.) Likewise in Deuteronomy 11:14 is the same idea repeated: “And I will give the rain of your land in its season, the first and the latter rain, and thou shalt gather in thy corn, thy wine, and thy oil.” Besides these, there are several other passages, which it is needless to quote at present as what has been given is sufficient for our purpose. And lastly, concerning sickness, he says: “If thou wilt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do what is just in his eyes, and listen to his commandments, and observe all his statutes, every

sickness which I have inflicted on Egypt I will not inflict on thee; for I am the Lord, thy physician." (Exodus 15:26.) So also: "I will fulfill the number of thy days," (Exodus 23:26,) which refers also to the verse immediately preceding, which is in these words: "If ye serve the Lord your God; then will he bless thy bread and thy water, and I will remove sickness from the midst of thee." For the present, we must be satisfied with these few extracts, which indicate in what manner Moses applied the blessings for obedience to the nation. He spoke to them collectively, not individually; wherefore he set before them national blessings, such as peace, plenty, and health; for spiritual excellencies in a future state cannot affect nations collectively, since they are only imaginable in a bodily existence, as we are on this earth of ours. So, on the other side, the condemnation of the soul of the sinner cannot have any terror for entire communities, for the same reason; wherefore Moses threatened war, famine, and pestilence to affect the Israelites nationally, in case they, as a nation, would rebel against the Lord, whilst he handed over the individual malefactor to the vengeance of the outraged laws of the commonwealth. I refer you to Leviticus 26:1-46, and Deuteronomy 28:1-68 and Deuteronomy 32:1-52, for the effects of a national backsliding. I have detained you already so much to-day, that I will omit the passages which specially bear on our subject, satisfied as I am that you will readily supply the deficiencies by a simple reference to your Bibles.

Understand, however, that though spiritual punishments and rewards are not laid down in so many words, they are nevertheless plainly alluded to in various passages, especially in Leviticus 26:11-12, for the rewards, and verse 30 for the punishments. But enough for our present purpose that we have established by Scriptural authority that the recurrence of every national calamity ought to induce us to seek for the cause in some wrong in which the nation which is especially afflicted, or the whole mass of mankind, may be collectively concerned. We may also assert that a general system of oppression, fraud, licentiousness, or profanity is a national or general wrong, sufficiently great to bring down one of the calamities which afflict the world. It were easy enough to prove, by actual reference to the history of the present age, that it is not a whit better than its predecessors in oppression and wrong inflicted by the stranger on the weaker party. There are occasionally glimpses of sunshine, which would lead one to suppose that a better era was approaching when alas! the illusion is soon and painfully dissipated by the recurrence of some terrible outburst of violence and bloodshed, by a wholesale slaughter of tens of thousands, in the streets, perhaps, of some quiet city, and by other acts of cruel barbarity, which have disfigured the history of the last few months. I will concede that refinement has progressed, that the arts and sciences have advanced to a height formerly unknown; but these are national blessings, not national virtues, and ought to have excited the gratitude of mankind toward their Benefactor; whereas in fact they have presumed on their gifts to question not rarely the providence of Him by whose bounty they were blessed. Do you therefore wonder that the earth has been visited with dreadful disasters?-that blow is struck on blow?-and that one visitation closely follows on the other? Happy indeed will it therefore be if the present calamity induces the masses to think, and to cause them to lay aside strife, injustice, and oppression towards each other, and a rebellious ingratitude to God. In this all men may be guilty or meritorious, as the case may be; and herein all can participate, no matter what their persuasion, or conviction on theoretical religion may be. All civilized men acknowledge but the self-same code of morals, and by that must they be judged, and by this same standard must they collectively and individually probe themselves.

We see how for the last fifty years one evil has followed on the other; we also see that but little progress has been made in the moral improvement of man. On the contrary, we are compelled to acknowledge that in simplicity and truth there has been a great and woeful falling off from a high standard. Is it then not time that each man search in his own heart for any latent evil which he may cherish there? Nations are but collections of individuals; nations must repent, therefore, through their individuals; wherefore each one is called upon to endeavour to do all his duty, and to induce others to do the same.

If this is demanded of all, even those who are not of Israel, how much more is it requisite for us to return to the good old standard of religious conformity, to the simplicity of that faith which characterized our predecessors. Much as we may value the progress of free and liberal opinions, we most also deplore the decay of that high-souled devotion which caused the oppressed Hebrew of former years to find in his faith a home which his country denied him, a hope which nothing could quench, and an abiding trust which nothing could shake. But now, what are we? Worldlings, seekers after pleasure and gain, anxious for a name on earth, though our inheritance in God's house be thereby forfeited. And is this our gratitude? Alas! that truth compels us to acknowledge this guilt. And who knows but that through our misdeeds in part is this evil brought upon the world? Wherefore it is time that we arouse ourselves, in common with the other inhabitants of the country, Let them follow their convictions; let them go each in the light they have received; but let us go in the name of the living God, the everlasting King, who gave us his law to observe as an ever-enduring covenant. But let all, not excepting ourselves, take heed that they do not add the sin of national hypocrisy to their other transgressions; and let them not assemble this day merely to show themselves penitent, without feeling sincerely that they have transgressed. The mere observance of any day is nothing, but it is the spirit alone which sanctifies the evil; and so we are taught in Joel 2:12-13 : "And now also saith the Lord, Return unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and weeping, and mourning, and rend your hearts, and not your garments, and return unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, long-suffering and great in kindness, and repentant of the evil." Let us act thus, and be resolved henceforward to obey the commands of the Lord, and there may be hope that He will arrest the destroyer, and be gracious to us and all the land. Amen.

August 3, Ab 15, 5609.

S. The Revelation at Sinai

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The Revelation at Sinai* Its Possibility and necessity.-A Sermon Delivered in the Synagogue, Shearith Yisrael, Montreal, on Pentecost 5608, by the Rev. Abraham De Sola.

No. I.

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God spake all these words.-(Exodus 20:1-26.)

Brethren! The Pentecost again greets us with its happy return, and its joyous reminiscences, important teachings, and boundless anticipations, will now naturally engage our most serious and attentive consideration. For this festival is not vested with that interest only, which it derives from commemorating the happy period when our fathers occupied the land of promise;-when plenty covered their fields and filled their houses;-when a spirit of subordination, peace, and brotherly union, was deeply implanted in every breast;-when the ■■ ■■■■, the sincere blessing with which the master greeted his labourers, was returned with the ■■■■■■ ■■ which constituted their equally fervent benediction;-when a Ruth gleaned and a Boaz "commanded his young men saying, let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not, and also let fall some of the handfuls on purpose for her;"†- when the sons of Jacob, from far and near, repaired in joyousness of heart, and lightsomeness of spirit to their holy Temple to utter forth their praises and gratitude to the God of the universe, and to place on his altar the first fruits of the bounteous harvest wherewith He (blessed be his name) had crowned their labours in the field.

* The present is one of a series of discourses, intended to illustrate the truth, importance, and value of the Divine revelation to man, as contained in those Sacred Scriptures, which are "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." Written for pulpit delivery, they cannot be expected to present that depth of inquiry, or fullness of detail, which a more elaborate and pretending treatise might possess. The argumentative part will no doubt be found to suffer somewhat from the shape it is necessarily made to assume, since that latitude which seeks and finds for this subject elucidation and support from foreign sources, has been almost entirely denied. But such as they are, and just as they were spoken, I have been induced, at the instance of some valued friends, to offer them, through the pages of the Occident, to the consideration of my co-religionists, as a small but earnest proof of my desire for their spiritual progress and weal, accompanied with a fervent prayer to Almighty God that they may tend, however slightly, to implant his fear and love among them.-

A. D. S.

† Ruth 2:15.

It is not from these associations only that the ■■ ■■■■■■ obtains that surpassing interest and importance which have ever been assigned to it by the house of Israel; no, brethren, this festival becomes more particularly hallowed, and more warmly cherished in our hearts' best affections, from its connection with an event much more glorious in its nature, and much more momentous in its results than any of these. One of the most excellent of our late poets* has said of this season:

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How inspiring, how blissful this assurance, dear brethren. It was at this time, then, that "God drew near to man, and man to God,"-■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ This then is ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■-the joyous season whereon the Deity, having removed the physical darkness which covered the world, came now to dispel by the bright and benignant ray of the law, the mental gloom which the ignorance and superstition of man had engendered, when for the second time "God said let there be light, and there was light," for "the Eternal came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them, He shone forth from Mount Paran, accompanied with myriads of angels, and from his right hand went forth a fiery law,† that fiery law, Israelites, whose light hath burned with undiminished lustre during more than thirty centuries, whose light hath proved a source of comfort and salvation to you in the hour of pain and danger, as it has been one of instruction and advantage to you in the time of prosperity and joy,-■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■.-This, then, is the day when the Eternal vouchsafed to manifest himself to the thousands encompassing Sinai, and when "the voice of God, speaking from amidst the fire," deigned, publicly to convey to trembling man, the expression of his will. This is the day whereon our ancestors amidst the lightning's vivid flash, and the thunder's dreadful roar, did make a solemn covenant with God, to observe ever faithfully all his behests, and this is the day whereon we, their children, have solemnly assembled in this holy place, to ratify the obligation they entered into for us.

* Ephraim Luzatto.

† Deuteronomy 33:2.

Yes, my hearers, for us, and for those who shall come after us, was the Sinaic covenant designed. It was not to be confined to those only who encompassed the fiery mount, but it was to extend to those who were not there present. Nor was it intended to endure during the lifetime of those only, with whom it was sensibly and directly made, but for countless generations after them. And so speaks Moses our master. In the ■■■■ ■■■■ he tells us in the name of God "neither with you only, do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day."* Therefore, brethren, since we are as much concerned and as deeply interested, in this glorious compact as our ancestors, since its duties and obligations extend as fully to us, as to them, it were well, that, even as is the

wont in human agreements, we should closely examine, and diligently study, the nature and requirements of this covenant, so that fully comprehending, we may be enabled strictly to perform them, and so that like our ancestors of old, we may determine that “all those things which the Eternal hath said unto us we will do.”† To this important end it will be necessary that we consider on the present occasion, * Deuteronomy 29:14

† Exodus 19:9 First. The possibility of the Divine revelation afforded at Sinai; and Secondly. Its necessity. And may God, the knowledge of whose holy name we would humbly strive to spread, and whose honour and glorification we would ardently desire to promote;-may He, in his infinite mercy, illumine us with a spirit of understanding; may He guide and assist our meditations and bless our inquiries. Amen.

I. My friends, we have proposed to consider in the first place, the possibility of a divine revelation; not because we think there are any amongst us so foolish as to entertain the slightest doubt thereof; but being convinced that the surest and best means for staying the progress of error no matter where found, is to expose it, and actuated as much by the hope that you may be enabled to follow up the teachings of some of the lights of Israel* on this head, as by an earnest desire to do the fullest possible justice to our subject; we are induced to dwell for a few moments on this theme, so that we may be enabled to present to you, however briefly and imperfectly, what the wise and good amongst us have thought and said on the subject, and so, that when you shall speak of these things to the unenlightened, “they may believe that the Lord God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto you.”† We therefore proceed to observe,

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† Exodus 4:5 1. The possibility of a Divine revelation is shown by the Creator’s Omnipotence. Let us picture to ourselves the parent of the human family, as he stood fresh from his Creator’s hand amidst the blissful bowers of Eden. A reasonable being, and endowed with the powers of observation, he sees himself surrounded by numerous and various objects, which, animate or inanimate, alike claim his attention, and which become agreeable or unpleasing to him, accordingly as they affect his senses. When by the exercise of those powers implanted within him, when by generalization and abstraction, he has discovered the admirable adaptation of these objects to certain uses, when he has observed how “the sun rules by day, and the moon by night,”-how “the gates of the east are opened in wisdom, and the seasons are changed with understanding;”-how the congenial shower restores and enlivens the drooping vegetation;-how “the springs are sent into the valleys, to give drink to every beast of the field”-how “the grass is made to grow for cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may obtain food from the earth,”‡-that food, which he has found to be the staff of life, and which he sees bestowed in abundance around him: in short, when he has discovered the beautiful harmony, connexion, and design, existent in all creation, and when he has farther discovered his own total inability to devise or execute anything which shall at all approach such perfection; we can well imagine the awe, admiration, and reverence, with which he must have been filled, when a full sense of the wisdom and omnipotence of the world’s mighty Architect had taken possession of him, and how like the wisest among those who sprang from him, he must have exclaimed, “It is the Eternal who hath founded the earth by wisdom, and hath established the heavens by understanding.”* ‡ Comp

Psalms 104:1-35.

* Proverbs 3:19 And have not we also thus felt, brethren, when there was nought near us but the works of God, the sun, dispensing light and life to all around, and reflecting a thousand beautiful colours from the brilliant dewdrop, or placid stream; the air, resounding with the lowing of cattle, and the chorus of numberless sweet songsters, whose delightful notes entrance the ear; the earth, covered with its lovely green mantle, here spotted with countless beautiful flowers, whose fragrance is wafted on the refreshing breeze, there varied by the fair meadow or rich cornfield, where fruit and herb are alike beautifully scattered? Have we witnessed all this and refrained from acknowledging that “the heavens recount the glory of God, and the firmament showeth the work of his hands,”† that “the Eternal is great, and his greatness is unsearchable ?”‡

† Psalms 19:2

‡ Psalms 145:3 And when, impressed with this conviction, we have turned to consider ourselves, have we not been impelled to the conclusion that we do but form part of a beautiful whole, and that, as well as the rest of God’s works have their objects to perform, and their ends to fulfil, even so must we have our vocation, a vocation which we feel to be most high, most important, and most glorious-a vocation which must be most high, which must be most important, and which must be most glorious, to comport with the exalted position assigned us in the scale of creation? When farther convinced of this, and when experience has shown us how totally incapable we are of ascertaining, from ourselves, the ultimate design of God in giving us our being: are we not led to inquire again, “whether there is anything too hard for the Eternal,”§ and whether that Omnipotent One who hath given us the power of imparting our wants, sentiments, and wills, to our fellow-men, could not, if He thought fit, convey to us in an extraordinary manner, or otherwise, the expression of his own will or directions, whereby we should become acquainted with those instructions which are indispensably necessary to teach both our relation and duties to Him and to our fellow-creatures?

§ Genesis 18:14.

Moreover, brethren, we are generally unable to trace or explain the origin of our ideas; yet we know that these are most commonly engendered from external causes, and that we frequently permit these causes to influence our sentiments and actions. How can we suppose that the Almighty Causer of these causes should not be able to affect our minds in a different manner, and by a manifestation of himself more clear, extraordinary, and satisfactory than that afforded by the light of his works, “so teach us ordinances and laws which should show the way wherein we must walk and the work that we must do?”* These are questions, my hearers, which we have only to put to ourselves to be convinced of the affirmative of the proposition we are desirous of proving. But:

* Comp Exodus 18:20 2. The possibility of a Divine revelation is not only shown by the Creator’s Omnipotence, but by other of those attributes, which natural, as well as revealed religion, have ascribed to Him. For we cannot suppose that He who “is good to all,”† and whose Benevolence is proclaimed by everything that is, should have abandoned man, the most glorious of all his works, to the unaided exercise of his reason only, for a discovery of those things which it so deeply concerns him to know; nor can we reconcile with the ideas we are taught to entertain of God’s Wisdom the belief, that, while He should have assigned to each and every object in creation some

use and end, He should have sent on earth, a being possessed of such capabilities as man, merely to live and to die; nor will it comport with the notions we have of the Divine Justice, to suppose that God should have declared his will in respect to these, and not in respect to us, that He should have “made a decree which must not be transgressed”‡ by the heavens, the earth, and all that in them is, but should have left us uninstructed and unenlightened. From these considerations alone, might we deem ourselves justified in concluding, that not only is a divine communication possible, but in the highest degree probable, and indeed † Psalms 145:9.

‡ Psalms 146:6

3. The general sense of mankind has, in all ages of the world, been in favour of the possibility of a Divine revelation.-The conviction has always been felt, by saint, by savage, or by sage, that some communication has subsisted between God and man; and no matter how various and conflicting may have been the opinions they entertained of the nature of this revelation, whether they have discovered it in the flight of birds, the entrails of animal, or in any of the other more imposing and direct forms in which the oracular divinations of heathenism may have declared it, they have ever concurred in the one point of belief, that the Deity could, and did, favour certain men, at different times, with a supernatural illumination of his will. The history of the world, showing how the most important undertakings and events, and how the mightiest revolutions which have convulsed it, have resulted from a supposed or real dictation from God to man, amply proves how convinced the human family have ever been of the possibility of such a dictation. But what need we of such testimony, when

4. We Israelites prove in ourselves the possibility of a Divine revelation.-Nay, not only its possibility, but its reality. With the “law which Moses sat before us” in our hand, we exclaim, “God spake all these words,” and none can nor dare gainsay us. With us there is no question as to its possibility. We affirm that the Almighty did really and immediately instruct our ancestors in those rules of conduct which were necessary for their guidance while on earth, that from the Mount Sinai He really did proclaim to them,

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[redacted]* and that we have duly received, and inviolably preserved the instructions, “so that it may be well with us, and with our children after us.” Therefore, brethren, need we say nothing more now on this head, but let us pass on to the second subject of inquiry proposed, which was to show that a divine communication to man was really and indispensably requisite.

* Solomon ben Gabriol in the “Azhroth,”-conclusion to the affirmative precepts.

II.

1. The necessity of a Divine revelation is shown, from the impossibility of man’s obtaining any just conception of the being or nature of God, by the mere exercise of his reason.-When man became conscious that he, the heavens, the earth, and the fullness thereof, were the work of an Infinite Being, whose omnipotence, benevolence, and wisdom, they plainly attested: he became conscious at the same time that “unto God every knee should bend,” and that unto the Creator his adorations and thanksgivings were due. He, therefore, prepared “to proclaim the name of the

Eternal, and to ascribe greatness unto his God;"* but in so doing, he most forcibly proved how faint, how very faint, is the ray of human reason, when it seeks to illumine those "secret things which belong to the Lord." Creation, as we have before said, too clearly taught him in its beautiful harmony and design, as did also his own wonderful conformation and endowments, that their Author must not only be infinite in power, but in wisdom also, and that consequently He must have had some ultimate aim in all his works; but what that ultimate aim could be, limited human comprehension was unable to determine.

* Comp. Deuteronomy 32:3. In the same way were benighted mankind unable to form any correct notion as to the cosmogony of the world; and accordingly we find, that the various views they entertained, on this point, attached to the Deity so many various characters, and were in no small degree the means of originating numerous religious systems. For some, imagining fire to have been the active agent in the world's production, proclaimed the sun, its apparent source, as the only fitting object for adoration; others observing the same properties and powers seemingly possessed by the moon and stars, claimed and obtained for them, their share of man's religious homage; whilst others pointed to the vast and foaming ocean, and willing votaries bent in dread to the mighty spirit of the waters. But man's idolatry and degeneracy did not stop here. The process of deification, once commenced, was farther promoted by the supposed beneficial or hurtful influences possessed by the various objects of nature; and, therefore, there was nothing too insignificant, even to the stick of wood, and nothing too revolting, even to the foul reptile, which man did not honour with the name of god, and before which he would not readily bow down and worship. Now let us not suppose, that the gradual progress of knowledge and civilization would have been sufficient in itself to dispel such midnight darkness without the Divine interposition; for facts and experience show the contrary to be the case; and the Hindoo, who even now worships his three hundred millions of gods, affords awful but convincing testimony to the truth of our assertion, that unless enlightened by divine instruction, men would be utterly incapable of attaining to any just knowledge of the Creator's existence. But not of his existence only, equally unable would they be fully to apprehend any of the Divine excellencies; and thus we see that

2. A Divine revelation was necessary to instruct the human race in God's attributes and perfections.-Brethren, how striking the contrast exhibited in the characters given to the Deity by our happy and blessed faith, and by the various doctrines of heathenism. Whilst our holy law represents Him as a being of long suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, the polytheistic systems display to us their deities as beings, to whom the innocent blood of childhood would prove a pleasing oblation, and who would favourably accept, as an offering of sweet savour, the blackened remains of widows burned at their husband's funeral pile, or the slaughtered carcasses of countless human victims. Indeed, Paganism has almost invariably represented its divinities, as beings of the greatest cruelty and vindictiveness, whose hot anger could only be quenched by human gore. The beautiful teaching, that God "delighteth not in the death of the sinner,"* formed no part of the heathens' religious knowledge, and their notions of God's mercy were exceedingly vague and indistinct, since this was not so clearly shown by the light of nature as his other attributes. Therefore, when, by neglecting God's worship, which an inherent sense taught them was an obligatory duty, they became conscious of having incurred the Divine displeasure, and they turned to their creed for instruction, they found nought but thick darkness, for it was unable to point out to them any means of reconciliation with the Eternal. They knew not that "He being

merciful forgiveth iniquity, and destroyeth not, yea, he frequently turneth away his anger, and awakeneth not all his wrath;" for, the consoling doctrine of the efficacy of repentance and amended conduct, shed not its bright and blessed halo around their path.

* Ezekiel 18:32. In like rnanner, they had but dark and confused notions of the Almighty's justice; for while the goodness of their Creator, as displayed in his works, led them to suppose, that He would be pleased with, and reward, both the services with which they approached him, and their efforts to follow the right and flee the wrong in so far as they were revealed to them: they could not but discover, that while those who led a life of violence and corruption, and attached themselves to evil, frequently flourished, those who were observant of their duties and clave to the good, frequently perished. There then were confusion and darkness again; for they could but indistinctly understand that God's justice and man's free will, rendered a life after death and a state of future reward and punishment indispensably necessary. We find, therefore, that man, in endeavouring to acquire, by the sole use of his reason, a knowledge of the Divine attributes and of religious truth, did "but grope in darkness without light."* The same may we say of his search after moral truths, and with equal warrant affirm, that

* Job 12:15.

3. A Divine revelation was necessary, to afford the human race such a moral system, which, while it would promote the happiness and perfection of the creature, would display, at the same time, the wisdom, and glory of the Creator.-That man, if left to his own guidance only, would be as unable to frame for himself a true or perfect system of morals as of religion, history abundantly proves. Thus we find that both with the ancient and modern followers of Paganism, the one system has always resulted from the other, and the moral character of these unenlightened beings has been formed in no slight degree by the nature, the attributes and worship of their deities. Therefore, we observe bloodshed, suicide, and murder, counted as matters of small moment by those who deemed human sacrifices the most effective means for propitiating their gods; whilst orgies and rites, the most absurd, shameful, and licentious, were introduced and countenanced by those who taught that to such the greatest acceptance would be extended. Whilst some condemned theft as a crime, others upheld it as a virtue; and whilst some denounced parricide or infanticide as most unnatural and reprehensible acts, others recommended them as necessary and praiseworthy deeds. Some devoted all their energies to suppress the prevailing acts of corruption, incest, and gross impurity; whilst others took as much pains to promote and encourage them. And amidst all this darkness, amidst all this horror and confusion, who shall say that light, a revelation, was not needed? Surely not we, my brethren; no, we are too fully conscious of the indispensableness of a divine light, to guide us through the narrow and crooked ways of our pilgrimage on earth, and also to point out for us the straightest and surest way to our blissful abode in futurity, to say like unto this. No, we raise our voices in words of praise and thanksgiving only, inasmuch as a divine revelation being necessary our Heavenly Father did not hide the light of his countenance from us, but in his infinite mercy and brace, did deign to select us from all people, give us his law, and thus plant eternal life within us, [redacted] Then let us bless and glorify the Eternal for this inestimable gift; let us show that we duly appreciate it, by not permitting it to depart from our mouth nor from the mouth of our children, for now and evermore; and finally, let us show our worthiness of this most choice and valuable gift of our God, by studying and executing all that it shall demand of us. And now unto Thee, Gracious Father! do we lift our voice. O, grant, we

beseech Thee, that our hearts may be ever impressed with a due sense of thine infinite mercy and grace, in leading us forth from the darkness and ignorance and superstition, and shedding around our path the light of thy holy law. We pray Thee, O Lord, to receive our sincere and heartfelt thanks, for thy surpassing kindness, in affording us those instructions, laws, and precepts, which have proved as a tree of life to such of us as have laid hold on them. More especially do we praise Thee, O Lord, for the gift of thy blessed word, since it hath taught us those things so necessary for us to know, and which but for Thee we never could have discovered. Accept the praises and adorations wherewith we now approach Thee, most holy God, in return for thine infinite benevolence in drawing near to us at Sinai, and thereby bestowing on us the means for inheriting everlasting happiness and life. O, let the light which thou didst there kindle, continue to shed its cheering brilliancy around us, even until that day when, brighter than the sun which can illume but one half of the globe at once, it shall shine forth refulgent on every family and place in thy world. O Lord, grant this for thine excellency’s sake, and we do say, Amen.

Chapter 90

S. The Revelation on Horeb

The Revelation On Horeb.

(A Sermon For Pentecost, 5604.)

Sovereign of the Universe, whose mercy embraces all that has life! we bow before Thee in humble adoration. If we lift our eye unto the material world, we discover Thee in the works which thy hand has wrought; if we turn our look upon the spirit which dwells within us, we distinguish in it thy creative energy, the Parent of all that exists; and if we raise our view to the wisdom which shines so abundantly from amidst the book which is the direction of our life, we shall have cause for gratitude that it was Thou, O Father! who hast written it for our instruction. Humble and high alike are thy creatures, and the foolish and the wise are alike guided by Thee. How then shall we adore Thee, the Lord of all spirits? How shall fallible man sing thy praises, God of all flesh?-O weak in our strength, fallible in our wisdom, we can only bow in silence and adore thy power, which redeemed our body from thraldom, thy wisdom which taught us thy ways with man, and thy superabundant mercy which has preserved us undestroyed in thy presence. O may it be thy will, this day, and all the days of our existence, to render us truly conscious how much thy power, wisdom and mercy have wrought for us; that our hearts may not rise in rebellion and pride above thy instruction, but devote themselves for ever and aye to be servants in that holy structure of faith and duty which thy voice erected from the summit of Horeb, when thy thunders, and thy lightnings, and thy clouds of glory subdued the will of the children of Israel, whilst the knowledge of Thee, O Lord of truth! Was implanted in the souls of thy adorers. And how abiding has been this holy structure? Centuries have passed since it arose before our eyes; we have at times been obedient, at times rebellious; nations, then unborn, rose up like the grass, and have withered like the flowers of the field; and our race has been scattered and the outward temple destroyed; yet has it, thy Word, stood firm, unmoved, unshaken, and it still abides with us, to be our teacher, our guide, our testimony. Do Thou, O God! therefore uphold what thy wisdom has made; and teach us thy fear that we may glorify thy name and bless thy power, for ever and ever. Amen!

Brethren, Malachi, the last of the prophets, at the close of his book, exclaims as the summing up of his prophetic mission:

[redacted]

“Remember the law of Moses, my servant, to whom I commanded on Horeb, for all Israel, statutes and judgments.” Malachi, 3. 22. The seer only adds the promise of the mission of Elijah to restore peace and to announce the redeemer, whose coming will be salvation to those who will repent, and punishment to those who refuse to believe, when the mouth of prophecy was closed unto the world until the restoration of the glory to Zion, and the return of the dominion to whom it pertained. We may, therefore, boldly assume, that with the last outpouring of his spirit, which renders man wise unto salvation, the God of Israel, who was from eternity, and will ever abide in glory, again

sanctified and confirmed what He had announced on the first Pentecost, the recurrence of which festival we now celebrate, when it was his pleasure to become himself, without the intervention of a messenger, the Teacher and Guide of the people that He had purchased and formed to proclaim his praise. The call is addressed to all Israel, to every one whose lineage or choice makes him one of those who have a share in the heritage of Jacob; and each one of all these is admonished to remember the law-because, in the first place, it was commanded by God; secondly, because with the observance thereof are connected the hope of salvation, and the exemption from the curse which attaches itself by the immutable will of God to disobedience.-And this day of Pentecost is well fitted to induce us to dwell upon the theme, and to refresh our memory with the great doings of the Lord, when He instituted the seed of Abraham a nation before Him, to stand foremost among the families of the earth, as a kingdom of priests and a holy people. It is for this reason that our wise men have instituted the particular portion, embracing the descent on Sinai and the ten commandments, to be read in all our assemblies as the lesson of the day, in order to recall every year, on its anniversary, the great event which contains the seed of all that the Lord will ever do to bring the world under the subjection of the truth, the germ, as it were, of the emancipation of mankind from error at the time when a new energy will be infused in the sons of Adam, who will have been spared, to seek the Lord and his strength.

Ye sons of Israel, remember the law of Moses! When you enter upon the path of life, when you seek your daily bread by the toil of your hands, when the hours of labour follow unceasingly one upon the other, when care is there, and temptation should point out a probable means of enriching yourselves, in contravention to the will of God, at the expense of the rights of others: O, then remember the law of justice, which descended unto you from heaven; lay it as a check upon your spirit, and allow not the tempter to find a response in your heart; but toil on, toil on, amid care, even amid despondency; your God watches you, He beholds your sorrows, and will bless the faithful servants who eschew evil and do good, because they thus deem themselves fulfilling the will of their Maker; and before long the task will be lightened, and you will bless the hour that your religion counselled you to prefer honourable poverty to inglorious ease; and mankind too will accord you the meed of approbation, and be improved by the example of the triumph which you achieved in subduing your evil desires, in subjecting your inclinations to the statutes of the law! But when prosperity is yours, ye favoured ones of the earth! When you see your substance multiply, your children grow up around your table like olive shoots in a fruitful soil; if ease and health crown your manhood, and every thing invites you to pleasure and enjoyment: O then remember the law of Moses, the servant of God, The teacher, too, like yourselves, ye fortunate! was great in worldly things, he was the adopted son of a princess of Egypt; endowed with mind of a high order he might, with his courage and address, have stood foremost, had so it pleased him, amidst the throng of honoured menials who surrounded the great Pharaoh’s throne. But he disdained the pomp and enjoyment of a courtly life; he saw his brothers enslaved, and he could not resist taking part in their sorrow; in his zeal, an agent of the tyrant fell by his hands, and he fled from his native soil to roam alone in foreign lands. Again he rose from the lowly state of a shepherd in the desert, and he issued forth the leader of the house of Israel, after their chains of bondage had been broken; and yet he loved not to rest in idleness, though age now counselled repose; he gave himself up to the glorious task of instructing and remodelling, by the divine aid, an entire people, though they were thankless and constantly forgetful of the good things the Lord had wrought for them through the agency of his servant; and he, therefore, became the means, the instrument of

the noblest monument of divine wisdom being imparted to man; he received, as a gift, the commandments from on High, and they are called, after him, “the Law of Moses;” they were given for Israel and for the world, and the aon of Amram’s name is imperishably interwoven with them in all the lands where the glorious tidings have penetrated. Remember then, in your moments of ease, the law which has descended through Moses: let it admonish you to beware of yielding to the temptation of luxury and sinful enjoyment; peruse its pages, that it may tell you what the law asks of you, and abide strictly by its ordinances and judgments. O think not that your opulence or your station can be any excuse for your neglect of our heavenly faith; you, though blessed, belong to Israel! you, though at ease, are amenable to the God who spoke through Moses! Remember your mortality, remember that the Lord is undying; let you escape from visitation an hundred times, retribution is nigh if you continue to forget, if you indulge in your desires, unmindful of what has been written in the book of the law. O believe not that your station exempts you from duty! What is your greatness when you come hither to pray? What is your strength when you stay at home unwilling to humble yourselves? To-day you are in possession of all you desire, you feel yourselves impelled to quaff the brimming bowl which pleasure presents to your eager lips. But the day wanes and your glory abideth not; and before the cup is drained, the bitterness of wormwood is mingled with the sparkling wine. And still you refuse to remember! Still you are unwilling to hear! O, blind to your danger, you hurry to your own destruction; for behold the Purifier comes, and his hands hold the touchstone of excellence, and He will sift you out as the chaff from the wheat, and leave you to the contempt and destruction which you have so eagerly courted. O fly while it is yet time, before your day passes away, before the wine is dashed from your lips. O come to the word of God, remember the commandments which were proclaimed from Horeb, and be Israelites, distinguished, if you possess superior gifts, by more meekness, by more charity, by more devotion than those whose necessities leave them no time for extended usefulness. Become you the guides to those who are lost, the props to those who need a stay; and let the book of the law be a witness for you, that you have not lived forgetful of your destiny, unworthy of being considered children of the Most High; and remember that, however exalted may be your lot, you can never surpass in worldly greatness even the saints mentioned in the books of the covenant; and yet they were obedient in all things, friends to man, servants unto God; remember this, and be you too obedient to the law promulgated this day, and be in very truth sons of Israel, children of salvation. And ye, oppressed brothers, who live under a tyrant’s sway, ye become desponding because you are scorned for no crime you have committed, but because you are sons of Israel. You are taunted daily with your faith, you are spurned by the rabble, you are insulted by those who hold rule on earth. You feel tired of life, nothing but anguish by day, nothing but sorrow by night appears to be your lot. And now the enemies of the Lord rise up against you, to flatter you, to bribe you to forsake what you have so long cherished; they offer you liberty, they offer you ease, they offer you wealth, they offer you high places and preferment, so you will but renounce your religion, and sit down in communion with the sons of the stranger. And you waver; you are weary of the long scene of strife which the world has imposed on you; you hunger after the fleshpots of modern Egypt, and you feel inclined to embrace the murderous hand which deceit and hypocrisy hold out to you.-But O! beware! remember the law of Moses the servant of God! consider what is there recorded, reflect what this must teach you. You envy now the ease of the gentiles who oppress you; so did our forefathers when they worked day after day in the brickyards of Mitzraim’s ruler; you envy now the power which is removed from Judah; so did ancient Israel when they were slaves unto Egypt in all

manner of work in the field. And what does history teach us on this point? But, that not many days elapsed, when the depth of sorrow was changed into joy, and the tyrant's exaltation turned into sobs and moaning. It is hard to bear the contumely of the world; it is hard to know that we are unjustly spurned from no evil that we have done, only because we bear in our veins blood from a distant lineage, and because our law is one of ancient date. But how dastardly and contemptibly would we act, could we submit to profess opinions which we do not hold, to swear with our lips that we believe as true what our soul loathes, whilst we are uttering the words that sever us outwardly from the community of Israel! How ineffably base not be that wretch who claims the honour of man, to be exalted to some subordinate employment in the state, to be a legislator where his voice is scarcely heard, at the price of being a traitor to his God! How grovelling must be that spirit who, for the sake of so much money, of so many pieces of silver, declares that he no longer has part in Israel's hope, no share in Israel's law, no portion in Israel's God! And such as these present themselves to our view! they call themselves men! converts to a better faith! But O, let us be wise, let nothing induce us to swerve! What matters it to us, when our race is run, that we have been the humble and the trodden down? Each one of our sighs is remembered by the Ancient of days; each one of our tears is treasured up in his secret abode; each one of our prayers is recorded in his book of memorial; and then instead of shame we will be clothed in glory, instead of tears we will be bound with the pearls of undying lustre which spring from the saving effect which deeds of righteousness cause to grow for those who love their God and are true to his word, amidst the years of darkness no less than the hours of gladness.-O all ye oppressed, remember the law of Moses! let the tribulations of the earth draw you closer to Him who can save when man smites, who can protect when the world is ready to destroy. Let it be engraven on your hearts that from amidst the darkness sprung forth the light which enlightens the world; from amidst slavery came forth the people who became the harbingers of freedom to all mankind, just as from the corruption of the seed springs forth the plant which sustains life, just as from the corruption of the body the soul arises unto immortality. Why then will ye falter? why will you despair? The same Power which bore rule at the commencement is yet the Governor of all things; the same Eye that looked over all creation and found that it was very good, to this moment overlooks and watches all the deeds of men, those done before the face of the sun, and those wrought in the darkest secrecy: and the same Voice which thundered on Sinai and proclaimed unto the assembled nation of Israel "I am the Lord thy God," is not silenced to this day, but speaks through the written Word no less than through the varied book of nature which is spread open before the eyes of all living. When, therefore, tyrants frown on you, because you believe in one God, and in one only revealed faith, if they threaten you with all the terrors which their malevolence can invent: do not be dismayed, do not forsake the covenant in which you have been reared, but remember the law of Moses which was announced from Horeb; cling to it as you would to a tower of strength, and forsake it not as though it were your very life, the heart's blood which circulates in your veins. With it you are exposed to ills which try your constancy; how much more would you have to endure were you living without its guidance, were you to stay on the earth with the wrath of God impending over you because you have forsaken the covenant which He made with your fathers.-Remember, then, remember! and be true and faithful servants, even as was Moses who was faithful in all the house of the Lord. And ye too, brethren who mingle with the gentiles as friends, as equals, who have never heard the words of imperious command, who are free to go, free to come, untrammelled in your industry, unfettered in your opinions,-ye who live under the rule of benign laws,-ye too are

sons of Israel, you are a part of the ancient people,-and ye too are bid to remember the law of Moses. Not you feel the bond of slavery which oppression twineth around your brothers' neck; you know not how humbled the unfortunate is who is daily scorned because that he is a Jew; you, therefore, do not, perhaps, experience the deep consolation which springs to the brethren in other lands from the possession of the only treasure which the world cannot deprive them of. Ye mingle, as I said, freely amidst your gentile neighbours, and you see their manners, you observe their customs, and listen to their conversation. However you may feel affected towards them, however kindly you may think of all who bear the human form, you ought to be aware that gentiles, if they are sincere in their religious professions, feel themselves in duty bound to endeavour to make proselytes to their own tenets.-A Jewish maiden, from pure kindness, has stood by the death-bed of her gentile friend; and there the dying girl adjured her by the peace which she felt in parting from this world to seek the same hope in the religion of the gentiles. No opportunity is lost, no solemn occasion is pretermitted to make a strong impression where this is possible. You Israelites, who are weak in your own faith, you among our people who feel not deeply penetrated with the earnestness of religious conviction, and even you who are truly faithful, cannot comprehend the strong hold which the persuasion "that no salvation can be had beyond the limited pale of a particular church" has upon the votaries of the same. They persuade themselves that it is their business to see that no sou1 be lost by their omission to admonish; hence they seize every opportunity to make an impression among those who come near them, they draw the conversation upon matters of religion, and always finish by hoping that the person appealed to will see the error of his way and-join himself to their creed. I can feel the embarrassment of a timid girl in a circle of Nazarenes, alone of the faith of Israel, adjured by a dying friend to forsake the truth and join the vanities of a stranger's belief; since inexperienced persons are but too apt to imagine that sincerity of profession, especially in the solemn moments of death, is a certain token that the opinions entertained are sure and true. In this matter, then, it is requisite to be strong in resistance and not to be drawn aside by one consideration or the other. The opinions of a dying person are no more true than those of one in full health; they are merely an evidence that the sufferer was strongly impressed with their importance, probably because he knew no others, and consequently he gives utterance to them in the last moments of consciousness which are left him, as the strongest consolation he can frame in the dread hour of the change from time to eternity. Surely a person dying is not for this reason a prophet, that his word should bear the seal of infallibility. I respect the sincerity of such a person whose last thoughts confirm the consistency of an entire life; but beyond this they can have no value for any one who is familiar with the workings of the human mind.-But I am wandering too far. All I meant to call your attention to was, that in your intercourse with the world you are constantly brought in contact with different zealots who would move heaven and earth to make one proselyte, especially if this person be one of Jacob's sons or daughters. As I said, no opportunity will be omitted to encompass this result, and in season and out of season the shafts of argument or of ridicule will be levelled against our blessed faith, as though it were to be attacked at all hazards. Some one may smile in his strength against these useless efforts, these harmless arrows shot from bows wielded by weak hands. But, brethren, the persons attacked are not always the learned and strong-minded, they are but too often the weak, the inexperienced, children or minors, whose knowledge is insufficient to cope with the dangerous sophistry which our opponents know so well to employ. To you all, therefore, the prophet speaks: "Remember the law of Moses my servant;" upon all occasions be ready with the law of God in your hearts to offer a

strong, a resistless opposition to the appeals which may be made against your peace; arm your children and scholars with the necessary knowledge that they may be enabled to contend likewise for the truth, in order that through them too the law may be remembered.-Let it be impressed on your minds, that the intercourse with the world not rarely blunts the feelings, and removes the great barrier which at one time previous impressions opposed to the approach of new ideas. The example of others is a most powerful incentive to give up our own views of right, especially if we are not very earnest in our own conduct. The persuasion of our friends, persons whom we esteem for the benevolence of their feelings and the goodness of their hearts, will more or less weigh with the best of us. Reflect on this upon your entrance into the great world, and regulate your conduct accordingly. Let it be your constant aim to oppose a sturdy resistance to any invitation to follow your gentile friends in their amusements, when they are in contradiction to your received instruction. If you are invited, for instance, be present at a ceremony as a witness in which no Israelite should take part, if you are called upon to partake of food which you are taught to be prohibited, if you are asked to attend on the Sabbath assemblies which are a desecration of the day of rest: let no complaisance on your part induce you to participate, and do not excuse yourselves by saying “it is but a trifle.” It is by trifles we begin the road of sin, and we end by great transgressions.-Should you find that the zeal of your neighbours leads them to decry your religion, you ought to forbid the recurrence of such a breach of politeness, and if it be repeated, or at once, avoid the person who is guilty of this treason against your faith. A fair discussion is one thing; a bold appeal to do so great a sin as apostacy quite another. If you are skilled in Scriptures you may freely meet your friendly opponent upon the broad ground which they present to us; but take heed that you resent any direct appeals with becoming firmness. Do not, above all, be ashamed of being Israelites; let the world know, and particularly your proselyting friends, that you are proud of your faith, that you glory in your birthright, that you find the highest consolation in all circumstances of life in the law which Moses received on Horeb. For what have the heathens, Mahomedons and Nazarenes to offer which this law does not contain? Let us ask the latter especially, what change has come over the world that our law should not be true as it was on the day of the descent on Horeb? that should make it inferior to their system every word of which is borrowed from the superabundant spiritual wealth of ours?-Yes! what have they to offer! The law says “the Lord is one;” no, say they, He is three! The law says “God is no man that He should deceive;” no, say they, He has cast you off, you are no longer his people; as though the Holy One could promise a word and not fulfil it. The law says “Ye shall not make unto you the image of any thing to bow down before it;” no, say they, emblems are permitted to remind us of the unseen glory. The law says “Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;” no, say they, the Sabbath is a Jewish ceremony, we will keep in its stead the first day of the week. To be brief, they claim contradictions to the law as a part of religion, and they bid us to place our hope of salvation upon a being of whom the law does not speak, whilst on the contrary it forbids us to worship aught save the great Unseen that spoke on Horeb from amidst the fire. And you gentiles expect to lead us astray by such appeals? can you imagine that the truth of the Lord is so much forgotten that we could doubt of his saving power, his mercy, his unwavering faithfulness? Is it for a plurality in the godhead which does not exist that we are to forsake the standard of Israel? Is it for a new law which was never revealed that we are to take up a belief in a system which is borrowed from our blessed law? Can we imagine that so unfaithful were the promises of the Lord, that He could have rejected us from his grace when He so often assured us that He would be our God for ever? O surely God is true, and his words are

true, and He spoke nothing which is not to endure; He has promised nothing which will not come to pass.

Thus, brethren, you must be always armed; let the world around you be what it may: be you labouring amidst poverty, or revelling in wealth: be you the oppressed for your faith, or the equals of the gentiles around-in every instance remember the law which has been written for your instruction. It has stood unshaken when your own kingdom fell: it has stood triumphant when one by one your oppressors sunk into the gulf of destruction; and by the blessing of God it will stand unshaken when the tyrants who now tread down Israel will be forgotten, and their thrones have become a prey to aliens. “Remember the law of Moses, my servant.” these are the words of Malachi, they are a command, but a prophecy also, and in this sense they mean, that the sons of Israel will ever remember the law, even to the day of the coming of Elijah, who will prepare the way for the Messiah, before cometh the day of the Lord, the great and fearful. How many dangers has the law survived since Malachi spoke? How many millions of its followers have fallen by the sword, the famine, the tooth of wild beasts, the boiling sea, the stake, and the scaffold? How have the sons of Jacob wandered, with no human heart to feel for their sorrows? And still two thousand and more years have elapsed, and the law is untouched, unassailed, nay triumphant over many pestilential errors. Arouse then, Israel, remember your God, remember your future glory, your past shame; remember the law under which you have lived so long, for which you have endured so much. Arouse! And show yourselves children of faith, heirs of salvation. Glorify your God by your words and actions, and swear fidelity to that unsurpassed code which your fathers received on this day as the brightest gift of the Lord. Remain firm in the path of duty, and may the blessing of the Lord of heaven and earth be yours, even according to his great mercy which endureth forever, and according to the word which He hath spoken through his servants the prophets. Amen.

Sivan 5th, May 23rd, 5604.

Chapter 91

S. The Service of God

The Service of God. A Sermon Delivered at Cincinnati, on Sabbath Mishpatim, February, 21, 1846, by the Rev. James K. Gutheim.

Father of all beings! Creator of all things! how great is thy goodness and thy mercy which Thou hast graciously bestowed on thy people Israel! Thou hast been our shield and our protector through all ages, Thou hast liberated us from Egyptian bondage, Thou hast freed us from spiritual thralldom, and hast revealed to us thy blessed law, that we may be able to live according to thy will, and be happy here and hereafter. Oh, how great is the boon which Thou hast bestowed on us on Mount Sinai! how glorious the trust of which we are appointed the guardians! how honourable the preference with which thou hast chosen us, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation!" Grant, then, oh Lord! that we may prove worthy guardians of this sacred trust, that we may cheerfully comply with the precepts of thy holy law, and that we may appreciate and be worthy of our distinction, to be called the chosen people of God! Alas! "that it was through our sins, that we have been exiled from our land," that we have been driven from country to country, like the deer that is fleeing before its ruthless pursuers! Yet, amid all our sufferings, we have been kept true to thy holy word, and the confidence and hope in thy goodness, oh merciful God! "who chastiseth him he loveth," has sustained us in our trials and animated our spirit. Look, then, graciously down upon us, who are here assembled in thy holy presence, and watch over us as Thou ever didst over our forefathers in the days of yore, when a pillar of cloud went before them by day, and a pillar of fire by night. Accept, oh Father! the devout prayers of thy children; enlighten our minds, that we may fully comprehend thy holy law, and be able to serve Thee in spirit and truth; and may thy mercy and goodness mover forsake us in this life, and the life to come. Amen.

Brethren:

Three thousand, six hundred years have elapsed since our forefathers stood near Mount Sinai and received a divine revelation. What a glorious spectacle! A whole people is liberated from cruel bondage in a most wonderful manner, is extricated safely from all the dangers that beset its paths, while its taskmasters are punished; and it is now summoned to receive a code of laws, which is to regulate its religious, social, and moral relations. It does not stand there represented by a select few;--all the people composing the nation are eyewitnesses to the powerful and convincing manifestations of the Almighty, and are stricken with fear and awe by the presence of the Deity. It was no empty pageant to flatter the senses; it was the presence of the glory and power of God, which attended the revelation of his holy law, which convinced our ancestors and induced them to accept it. "We will do all the Lord hath said," was their ready response to the charge of Moses. And how full must their hearts have been with gratitude to the Almighty ! By his mercy they had been rendered a free and independent people; their fetters of slavery were riven asunder; the clouds of ignorance and superstition which then darkened the horizon, were dispersed by the light of truth; and Israel was appointed the teacher of this truth to all the nations of the earth. When the children of Israel were brought forth from Egypt, they were not free from the prejudices and superstitions

which then degraded the human mind; their repeated murmurings and their proneness to worship idols, show but too clearly that it was no easy task, indelibly to impress on their minds the truthfulness and importance of the law. Indeed, it required a series of miracles to curb their obstinate spirit, and to make them susceptible of the blessings in store for them. Divine wisdom ultimately accomplished this end. They were organized into a nation, with the great religious truths, which since then have been acknowledged by the whole civilised world, as their guide, and with a code of civil and moral enactments which, if strictly adhered to, was destined to insure their safety and permanence, and to promote their prosperity and welfare. And admirably were these laws calculated for the government of a people. They form the only true means by which the happiness of mankind can be effected. The spirit of love and charity, of justice and benevolence, of liberty and equality, breathes throughout. And as long as our fathers remained true to this law, and conformed to its precepts, they dwelt in safety and happiness; but so soon as they swerved from the right path, disasters and exile were the natural consequences. God only they should recognise as their king and protector; to Him only they should pay their homage, and Him only they should serve. The manner and mode of this service were distinctly prescribed and repeatedly enjoined. And it behooves us, as Israelites, fully to understand this service, that we may prove worthy of the trust committed to our charge, and of the distinguished name we hear. Let us, therefore, examine I. What constitutes the service of God?

II. In what manner are we to perform this service as Israelites? and III. What benefits will accrue to us from the conscientious performance of this service?

We mean to answer these questions by expounding our text, chosen from to-day's Parashah, Exodus 23:25.

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"And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he will bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."

I.

What constitutes the service of God? is our first question. The service of God? you will ask, my hearers. Does God require our service? Does the Almighty, "who created the heavens, and stretched them out; who spread forth the earth and that which cometh out of it; who giveth breath unto the people upon it, a spirit to them that walk therein" (Isaiah 62:5); who measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, and metes out heaven with the span, and comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance" (Isaiah 60:12); does He require our service? the all-powerful God, the service of powerless, feeble man, who is to-day here, to-morrow in the grave? No; the discharge of our religious and moral obligations may be more properly termed our own service, the service of lean, than the service of God. It is for our own benefit that these obligations are imposed on us. The service of God is designed to impress on the mind of man his destiny on earth, to elicit and to perfect the noble qualities of his nature, and thus to prepare him for the eternal life hereafter. This is the true meaning of the service of God, which it is the duty of man to perform. The modes of worshipping the Deity differ in the same manner and to the same extent as the creeds of the different nations acknowledging a Supreme Being. It is not my present purpose to enter into a disquisition of these different systems of religion;

but the fact that some mode of worship is invariably adopted and adhered to, argues its necessity. Man is but too apt to be engrossed with with his earthly and selfish desires, and to lose sight of his spiritual interests and welfare. Engaged in his usual daily pursuits, he is apt to forsake the God who made him, and to esteem lightly the Rock of his salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:15). But religion steps in as a warning angel, leading him to the right path, and it is in the service of God that his heart becomes pure and his mind exalted. But this service does not only consist in the punctual attendance at the stated times of worship, nor in the regular recitation of the prescribed prayers, nor in the strict adherence to our peculiar ceremonial laws. This, certainly, forms an important part of the service of God, which every true Israelite will endeavour to comply with; but its performance will be useless, nay, it will be a mockery, if the moral part of the service of God, remains unobserved. As beings endowed with reason, we must distinguish the cause from the effect, and the means from the end. It is necessary for us to possess a form of worship, and to attend to the ceremonial part of our religion, as a means to be constantly reminded of our dependence on God; it is necessary for us to hold frequent communion with our heavenly Father, either to give vent to the overcharged feelings of our grateful heart, or to seek solace and strength in the hour of trial. But all this is the means to improve and to perfect our moral condition, to make us better and wiser. "You shall serve the Lord your God," says our text; but your service must be acceptable to Him. But, can it please God, if in offering up our prayers and supplications our heart remains cold and unedified? Can it please God, if we mechanically perform a religious act, without being impressed with its spirit and meaning? When we exclaim the great truth ■■■ ■■■■■ ■' ■■■■■■ ■' ■■■ "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One!" our conviction of the unity of God must be complete, and our readiness to love this one God, who created and rules the universe, with all our heart and all our might, must be sincere, and we must adore Him in meekness and humility. Our service must be a service of love, and not a service of fear. "You are children to the Lord your God," is a dogma of our religion. ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ "Far preferable is the service of him who acts from motives of love than of him who is prompted by fear." Out, service, then, must be rendered willingly and sincerely. ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ "Whoever is not God-fearing and pious, his prayer will not be accepted," say our Rabbis in Berachoth. We cannot appear before God in disguise and dissimulation; for his all-seeing eye searches our innermost thoughts, and sees whether our intentions are pure. When we supplicate for mercy at the throne of justice of the All-High, when we pray for pardon and forgiveness of our sins and errors, our life must be in accordance with these humble declarations. For how can we expect justice from the supreme Judge, if we ourselves act unjustly in our dealings, and unscrupulously wrong our neighbour? how can we pray for mercy, if we do not ourselves perform acts of love and charity towards our fellow-men? In what forcible terms does the prophet Isaiah rebuke Israel: "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" "And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil; learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." These words contain the true way in which we ought to serve God; they indicate the true service acceptable to the Lord; and this leads us to our second question:--In what manner are we to perform this service as Israelites?

II. Our religious rites and observances, and the moral duties our religion requires of us, form our service of God. Let us consider the first branch of this service. It is in the Synagogue, our house of worship, where these rites and observances are principally performed; the Synagogue is dedicated for this sacred purpose, and is, therefore, called the house of God. The Synagogue is the substitute for the holy temple, it is "the lesser sanctuary," which is to remind us of the holy of holies where the Lord dwelt between the cherubim. The Synagogue, my brethren, must be dear to us from many touching reminiscences it conveys to our mind. Is it not, therefore, our duty to enter it with becoming dignity and awe; to deport ourselves, while there, with propriety and decorum; to banish from our minds every profane thought, every unhallowed desire, every worldly passion? "Know before whom thou standest," is the exhortation, conspicuously inscribed on the holy shrine. The Synagogue is the place where we congregate to worship God, to pour out before Him our hearts in prayer and supplication; and it is there where we learn to look on every man as our equal,--for God is no respecter of persons. By Him, the All-just, the rich and the poor, the proud and the humble are judged according to their respective deserts. The Synagogue is the place, where we should learn to act with forbearance and charity towards our neighbours, and where we should cultivate feelings of good-will and toleration, by which we are to be guided in the transactions of our daily life. If we are governed by such sentiments, our mind will be attuned in the right key, and our prayers offered in the right spirit of devotion. It is not the quantity of words which we pour forth that constitute the merit of prayer ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ "Better little with devotion, than much without it;" ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ "Prayer without devotion is like a body without a soul," say our sages. But to manifest sincere devotion, we must understand what we say. Our formula of prayers are composed in the Hebrew language. It is in this language that the house of Israel pour out their hearts and offer homage to their Creator and Protector; it is in this language that our origin and the days of our glory are recorded. The Hebrew language is the tie that unites the scattered remnants of Israel. Join a Jewish congregation in the remotest part of the globe, and you will hear that sacred and elevating language, and you will gladly acknowledge that you are among brethren. The necessity of cultivating and studying this language, therefore, is obvious. The mere reading of a language does not constitute a knowledge of it. And although the sounds of this sacred tongue do never fail to make a salutary impression on the heart of the pious Jew, yet is it not a circumstance deeply to be regretted, that our minds should not understand, and our hearts not feel what we utter with our mouths? Should it not, therefore, be our utmost endeavour thoroughly to understand this language, our pride to use every means in our power to assist and co-operate in imparting a knowledge of it to the young scions of Israel, and thus insure its perpetuity? By doing this, we will be better able to comprehend and appreciate the dogmatical, as well as the ceremonial part of our religion, and better capable of carrying into effect the moral branch of our service. From the numerous pages which contain the moral laws, instituted for the government of mankind, I need only revert to today’s Parashah, which by itself would be sufficient to convince the unbeliever of the excellence of our creed. To love our neighbour as ourselves is the distinguishing feature of our religion; and we spurn any imputation, which ignorance or malice has cast upon us from time to time, that we do not consider non-Israelites as brothers, and that our religion is not a religion of love. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 22:20.) Again "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers yourselves in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9) Does this

relate only to our co-religionists? Again, "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child." (Exodus 22:22) Again, "Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor in his cause." (Exodus 23:6)

Thus are we commanded to exercise justice and charity towards all men, to be truth-loving and upright, "Keep thee far from a false matter." (Exodus 23:7) Truth will accomplish its end, while falsehood will be exposed. "Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Do not slander thy neighbour. By slandering our fellow-man, we rob him of an invaluable property, for which we will never be able to make an adequate restitution. Years has he toiled to maintain an honourable position in society; years has he struggled to keep his name unsullied, his reputation untarnished; years has he buffeted the storm of life, guided by integrity and rectitude, to bequeath to his descendants and to his friends the imperishable legacy of the name of a good, an honest, and pious man; and lo! in steps the slanderer, and with his false tongue, as with a two-edged weapon, he wounds him to the core, and with a breath he deprives him of the well-earned fruit of his exertions. Slander is stigmatized by our Rabbis as one of the most heinous crimes: "Whoever fastens a bad reputation on his neighbour, will not have a snare in the blissful state of our future existence." The grand principle of our moral law is, to do unto our neighbour as we would wish he would do unto us. "Whatever thou dislikest, omit doing unto thy neighbour," is the maxim of the wise Hillel of old. By acting on this rule, we will serve God in the right way, and our service will be acceptable to Him, and redound to our own credit and advantage.

III.

"You shall serve the Lord your God, and he will bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take away sickness from the midst of thee." In the true service of God, all our efforts will prosper; the blessing of God will rest on us, and our hearts will be at peace with ourselves and with the world. By carrying out the moral precepts of our religion, we shall command the respect and esteem of all those who come in contact with us. Our exemplary conduct will excite the emulation of those who are lingering behind, and will arouse their activity and zeal; it will vindicate the glory of our religion, and will cause the name of "Jew" henceforth to be considered, what it really is, an honourable appellation.

"You shall serve the Lord your God" in your houses, in the Synagogue; for it will be for your own lasting good. How beneficial is the effect of prayer on the mind of the pious Israelite! Indeed, there are moments in man’s life, when to be able to pray, is an inestimable blessing. When we are plodding on in the common track, and are hurried away in the mighty current of ambition, or in the hot pursuit after treasures; when through youth or manhood, we imagine we are about accomplishing our final triumph, whilst we are nursing our latest disappointment; when our exertions have prospered, our wishes are realized, and we fancy to have reached the goal of our desires: and then, in a solitary hour of calm reflection, we look back on the course we have run, and anxiously gaze into the dim prospect before us, and a thought of God and eternity strikes our mind, and reverberates through our heart, and the consciousness of our nothingness comes with a crushing weight over our spirit; it is then that we feel the power of prayer. We pray--and our despondency will give place to hope, and the turbulence of our spirit will settle into serenity, and willingly will we then devote our life to the service of God. When our lot is cast among the humble and poor, when all our exertions to ameliorate our condition fail, and regret and despair seize our

hearts: it is then that we feel the power of prayer. We pray--and a heavenly voice bids our bruised spirit to be resigned, and to hope on; for it is God "who blesses our bread, and water." When trials of various kinds embitter our life, and lingering disease throws us on the couch of pain, and paralyses our energies; when all human efforts seem to fail to restore us to our wonted activity, and hope departs from our bosoms: it is then that we feel the benign influence of prayer. We pray--and in this communion with our Father, we imbibe the heavenly balm that allays our pains, the strength which sustains our being and makes us resigned to our lot, "for it is God, who takes away sickness from the midst of thee." And when we are bereft of a being dear to our heart, when the dutiful son and the affectionate daughter bewail the loss of a fond parent who was their best friend on earth; when disconsolate parents follow the untimely bier of a beloved child, in whom they fondly hoped once to see their pride and their prop in their declining age; when grim death severs the ties of conjugal bliss and snatches away a being that has been our true companion for years; when we weep over the loss of a beloved brother, an affectionate sister, a friend or a benefactor; when thus a vacancy is felt in our heart, and grief freezes the living current of our soul, and we feel as if we stood alone on a lonely rock in the wilderness, while all around us is cold and dark: ay, it is then a blessing to be able to pray. From this communion with our heavenly Father we derive the most effective consolation, and with a submissive spirit we exclaim: "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken, blessed be the name of the Lord!" Yes, to be true servants of God, will redound to our benefit both here and hereafter. Our career does not end with this life; our existence does not close, when our mortal remains are deposited in their final resting-place, there to await the great day of judgment. No; another life is in store for us, a life where a just reward will be meted out to us according to our merits; where many things will be explained to us that are now shrouded from our view, and hidden in darkness and mystery; where we will again meet those who were dear to us on earth; where everlasting love and bliss will prevail; where our disencumbered spirit will soar freely onward in its way to perfection; and where a distinction will be made "between him who served God, and him who served him not."

Let us, then, devote our life and energies to the service of God, and may we be sure of his aid and his blessing both here and hereafter. Amen.

Chapter 92

S. The Strength of our Religion

The Strength of Our Religion.

O Lord! who hadst compassion on our fathers, and didst lead them forth with almighty power and an outstretched arm to purchase them unto Thee for a people of thy inheritance, as it is this day, deign to regard us also with thy visitation of mercy and grace, and let our memorial ascend before Thee for our good and our happiness. Look on our fallen state, that we have sunk from the high position of thy favourites, and become a people despised and lowly, as though we were cast off from thy mercy. Yet are we the same descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants, as were those who received thy law when coming out of Egypt, and we are still thy witnesses, testifying of thy glory and thy unity, and still ready to follow Thee whithersoever thy providence may direct our steps.

O Father! hear us then in our dispersion, and let thy light truly and safely guide us; let thy wisdom inspire our mind, let thy word be fixed in our heart, and let our mouth overflow with thy praise. Let us entreat Thee also to build up the breaches of Zion and restore her desolations as aforetime; when we will let incense ascend on thy altars, and lead sacrifices again to the residence of thy glory. Nations then shall drink of the stream which quickens us; people shall imbibe the wisdom which now strengthens our spirit; and thine, O God! shall be the kingdom, and the names of idols shall be abolished from the earth, and truth shall overspread every land, and all shall feel and acknowledge that Thou, O God of Israel! hast created all flesh, hast called forth every spirit, hast given life to all that lives, and art alone in power and glory, uncreated, unequalled, sovereign God, Lord everlasting, Saviour omnipotent, the Father eternal, from ever till time shall be no more. Amen.

Brethren,-

It is now twenty-four years ago since this building was opened, after being rebuilt from the foundation, and dedicated anew to the worship of the God of Jacob. The hymn then pealed for the first time in this house, and the unity of God was proclaimed as the watchword of the congregation assembled within these walls, and they declared themselves thereby as members and confederates of the family of Israel. Of the many who then filled the seats a large proportion have silently sunk into the grave, and their voice is heard no more in our assembly. But the same spirit which induced them to labour in erecting this house, which filled them with joy when they saw it completed, still dwells among us, and we are here to declare on this anniversary again, as on previous similar occasions, that we are of the same brotherhood of faith and hope as were those who erected this house and left it as a legacy to their successors.

Mighty changes have since then passed over the earth; empires have been overthrown; new opinions in religion and politics have made themselves deeply felt; thrones supposed to be immovably fixed have been moved and hurled to the ground; science has achieved new triumphs in the field of discovery and improvement; and all this within the memory of comparatively young

men; and nevertheless with us the change has been light, and has not cast the decay of age over our religion, and we follow the path which our fathers followed, and are again here to call on the name of the Most High, and to speak of his deeds which He wrought in Egypt, and of the signs which He displayed among them, and we still emphatically feel that He is in truth the Lord Eternal, to whom alone we are to direct our prayers, whose law alone we are to consult as our rule of life.

It is indeed but a short time, comparatively speaking, since the consecration of this Synagogue; many of you well recollect the day and the hour when first they heard here the deep notes of devotion from the man they had chosen as their messenger to the Hearer of prayer; they yet recollect the beautiful anthems which re-echoed joyfully from many a tongue joining in praise to the Father of his people; yet in the age of the world it has been a period of unusual activity, and events have crowded each other as they rarely do even in the most turbulent times, and infant ideas have since acquired a giant form, and have filled the earth with their fame. Everything has been anew subjected to a searching inquiry, and what had been defended before and been considered beyond dispute, has again been dragged forward from its repose and probed to its very foundation. The events of the day, however, are the mere exponents of the secret influences which have been at work; and though many may be astonished when viewing the terrible revolutions lately witnessed as isolated facts, the calm inquirer and he who watched the gradual development of the latent mighty thought of popular power, will find nothing very remarkable in the event which was clearly stepping hourly more and more forward, produced as it was by the effervescence of mind which had long since commenced, and to arrest which nothing was capable at all within the power of the civil and religious government of the earth.

Judaism has been assailed likewise amidst all this din and clamour; many predicted that the development of new thoughts would prove fatal to its isolation and to the hold it hitherto had on the mind of its followers; many also have united their exertions to produce a mighty effort to withdraw our members from a union with us, and to offer them all sorts of inducements to surrender their adherence to our faith; many farther have arisen among ourselves, to diffuse strange notions, and to establish views not formerly received among us, and have alleged that new measures must be supported to save a wreck of Jewish principles, and to maintain a remnant of Israel’s descendants. But though so much has been effected, as I have said already, in the demolition of ancient things among other sects, and even the removal of what had been established with so much labour, and blood, and treasure, and wisdom in modern times, Judaism has thus far stood the test of revolution, assault, and faintheartedness with admirable strength and power of resistance, and the enemies without and within have to this day, for which the Lord be thanked, exhausted their labour in vain; and though it is no doubt that many have already swerved, and that others yet will undoubtedly follow the same evil example, there need be no fear of an impending destruction of our people.

Those who only look at the surface may fancy that they see symptoms of decay; because they aver that the changes from oppression to liberty will induce many to yield quietly that religion which they convulsively clasped to their bosom in times when mankind endeavoured to deprive them of it by force; that the more enlarged intercourse with the world will cause a gradual fusion of our nationality amidst the people where we reside by our taking in marriage those differing from us in ancestry and belief, by which means our descendants will be mingled up with others and be no longer distinguishable; that the progress of ideas will sweep away the mutual prejudices

entertained by Jews and gentiles, and that the former will then insensibly drop their peculiarities when the line of separation is reduced to an almost inappreciable thread.

These may be the opinions of indifferent investigators, when looking with surprise at the magnificent panorama of mighty events which are developing themselves daily before their eyes; but if so, they have not well understood the peculiarity of the Jews, nor the characteristics of the gentile world. Great as are modern events, they are not altogether unprecedented; there have been before this times of quiet and enlargement for our people, although they lasted but a brief space; and we have yet to learn that the ease of the present will endure much longer. But even if it should, that does not say that the Jew will for this reason not value his characteristic mission any farther, and yield his religion to the common demand for equality and fraternity, as though this sacrifice were necessary in the new acquisition of liberty.

People forget, perhaps, that religion has no part to play in the mighty and terrible drama which has of late been enacted; at least it has no business to interfere actively and visibly in public affairs. Modern nations have so long made the profession of certain religious dogmas the arbitrary standard of political power, and have made all sorts of privileges dependent on the profession of opinions sanctioned by the state, that they cannot yet see that when they emancipate themselves from this odious tyranny, the sufferers from the long ages of exclusion have nothing to yield when invited to partake now of human rights.

If it be necessary for us to reject any part of our religious views, not to mention the totality of our faith, to be entitled to equality in all things, what, I ask, have we gained by the change over which we rejoice? Tyrants of ancient days, from Nebuchadnezzar down, asked only of us that we should fall down and worship the idol which they had erected; it was only what they called doing a harmless thing which they required; we should only become like them, and then we might have life, wealth, power, pleasure, or whatever we might desire, even the privilege of persecuting our former brothers of Israel. And now shall it be required of us to surrender, for instance, our confident hope in the coming of the son of David, because this belief militates against the idea of a perfection in human wisdom, against the assumption that mere human reason can establish the kingdom of peace, and secure in the best manner the sum total of human happiness? If this be so, then is there no perceptible difference between the tyranny of kings and democracies, or between the intolerance of inquisitors and philosophical dreamers.

If our religion must be destroyed, it cannot make the least difference to the Jew who rules, and what opinions obtain the supremacy; and for that matter, we might prefer one tyrant at a time to the legions of opponents under the present system; for we might ascertain the opinions required of us if a few or one would dictate, but it is impossible so to frame our ideas as to satisfy the vast masses which now rule. But it is freedom which is professed for all; and we too enter into the new state of things, not because we are Jews, but because we are men, and because, whilst we have no right to question any man concerning his religion, and whilst we do not ask of him to modify his opinions to please us, we cannot permit any one to concern himself with what we believe or do in a religious relation, which we have not and cannot surrender to the popular supervision, it being the sacred right of conscience, over which we alone have to watch, and the regulation of which must be left to the law and the customs of Israel, as expounded to us by our religious teachers.

Now it is possible enough, nay, it is well known to be so, that many will prove their worthiness of political liberty by making all sorts of concessions, and by explaining away all the features of our belief which appear perhaps somewhat harsh to non-Israelites. But this is likewise certain, that it will be more in the first commencement of the new participation in political privileges; but that when the thing has become somewhat old by habitual use, the thinking portion of Jews will revert to the instruction of Scripture, and profess anew what is taught there, to the exclusion of all new philosophical speculations. It is also true that prosperity is a severe trial to our people. Persecutions they can face with indomitable courage; they are a brave race, and for endurance and persistency they are unequalled among mankind. In Egypt, in Babylon, in Persia, and in Rome, they remained distinguishable and united among the heathens; and when the Nazarenes and Mahommedans arose successively with new and modified doctrines, some few in comparison to numbers were seduced away from their allegiance, but the vast majority either perished nobly upholding their faith, or lived through poverty, contumely, abhorrence and disgrace, and worshipped their God in humility and the want of every earthly comfort. And when, from time to time, the hand of persecution relaxed its tortures, and when Jews were found the companions of the kings and the nobles, the trusted servants of the crown, or the confidential physicians of pontiffs and priests, they, for this sake, did not, as a class, prove false to their opinions. Again, I say, that some could not bear this prosperity, as others succumbed before and since to the terrors which surrounded them; but they have proved the exceptions, and hence their example need not inspire us with the fear for the future, which some enemies of Israel would uselessly inspire us with. But let me call your attention, brethren, to one remarkable circumstance, and this is the inveterate hatred which has been always felt for the religion of Israel from the earliest history of our people. It was the same in Pharaoh who knew not the Lord, the same in Balak, king of Moab, who misled Israel to sin, the same in the bloody tribunals of the middle ages, and again the same in the societies for the seduction of the Jews from their faith, of which we have heard so much of late years. Pharaoh, Balak, and the Inquisition did, in a measure, succeed in their various ways to work mischief to us, and many of us fell at the different epochs in which the above flourished in their schemes of wickedness. Should, therefore, the enemies of the present age meet with some little success, and obtain occasionally a lukewarm sinner or a hireling renegade to join himself to them, we may be assured, nevertheless, of one thing, that we have lost no strength by this severance from us of an unworthy member; he has gone to those who will overwhelm him with kindness and embraces, whilst we are rid of a traitor, one false to God, false to his brothers, and false to himself. Admit, even, that his conversion should be sincere, so much so as to be above suspicion, then we have lost one who could not defend his ancestral religion, who had no heart for the law of Moses, who understood not the glorious principle of the Unity of God, that glorious principle which will ultimately prevail from one end of the world to the other, as it is solely the true mystery of the creation; since from, the highest planet, the most distant constellation, down to the minutest dust which flits in the sunlight, there is discoverable one uniform gradation, a single and uniform design.

Now it is the repugnance of many to the principle of the Unity as professed by us, which is the key to all the efforts made for our extermination, and to the hope constantly expressed that at last the means have been discovered of effecting it. So whilst there are, I am glad to acknowledge, thousands on thousands who wish to make us free on principles of humanity and justice, there are, perhaps, as many others who acquiesce in the movement solely from an inimical feeling to Judaism. They have seen from history and experience, that persecution and exclusion riveted but

the closer the bonds which unite us to God; so they then deem it a duty to try the opposite extreme, and to see whether or not a perfect equalization of Jews and gentiles will not induce us to forego our identity, and become like them.

It is with us as it was with Samson. We, like him, are asked, “In what does your great strength consist?” But it is not, like him, an outward token, but the inward spirit which constitutes us Jews; yet like Samson’s personal prowess, it depends upon the will of God, and on the condition that we follow the orders which we have received. We must not, therefore, fall asleep on the lap of a false Delilah, of a gentile invitation to yield ourselves captives to the charms of the world, as though a new era had commenced, and vigilance were no longer requisite. For if we do so, we shall be left, for a season, to the tender mercy of our new confederates, and the spirit of God will depart from us, and only after violent sufferings will it revisit us, perhaps to kindle again into life at the very moment only when we are compelled to bid farewell to the earth and its enjoyments.-This is told you, that you may not be disheartened at occasionally hearing of a defection from our ranks. It is deplorable, deeply to be regretted, that an Israelite, the humblest of his tribe, should be false to his faith; but we should regard any apostasy arising from the present state of freedom, even if perpetrated by the greatest and most influential, as nothing fatal or particularly remarkable; since, at all times, there have been sinners and transgressors, and for all that the lamp of Israel has not been quenched. The Scriptures, brethren, are a true record of the past and the future. Other writings may give a faithful narrative of the occurrences which have taken place; we will assume that human information may be able to grapple with facts, though even this is somewhat doubtful, to judge from the ill success which historical investigations have so often met with. But the recesses of the future are absolutely locked up, and inaccessible to human ken. Not so to the eye of God; for this pervades all which will be, and there is no uncertainty to shroud from Him the events which are coming. Nay, they have come already, so He announces them; because there can exist no conformation of events and circumstances to preclude their coming to pass in reality, just as his knowledge has foreseen them. If, therefore, the Scriptures speak of the eternal duration of a precept, we need feel no alarm about its ever ceasing to be respected. Eternal it must be, because it is so stated; abrogated it cannot be, unless it be limited by some other circumstance announced and conditioned by the same authority.

Now it appears from inspection that Judaism, in its peculiar precepts, has received the stamp of eternity from the Author of our being, and hence it is proved indestructible in the wisdom of Providence. You have been told before, but it cannot be too often repeated, that the phraseology of the Bible is not one of accident but of design. Its omissions are of importance as much as what it contains; and its precepts are of that character that they have to be so understood as the words in which they are given convey them to us, not as arbitrary reasoning would perhaps wish to make them. If, then, it is said in the Bible that we shall do so, but not otherwise, we must implicitly follow the commandment, and not reason it away by any fancy of our own, however ingenious it may be. Nor must we be deterred by the assertion of others, that it is not necessary for us so to act, as to place a bar of separation between us and the world; since the law in obedience to which we allege to act, could not have meant it so particularly as we deem it to be. But this much we may safely allege, that as the law is both imperative and prophetic, both relating to conduct and indicating futurity, it teaches this important principle, that its precepts are infallible and not to be repealed, and that, at the same time, they will be always obeyed by the true descendants of Israel, which

term comprises all those who will remain true to the religion of their fathers during all the changes and vicissitudes which have been, and are, impending over us. With this preface let us briefly elucidate the verse 24 of Exodus 12:1-51.

[illegible]

“And you shall observe this thing, as a statute unto thee and unto thy children for ever.” When was this announcement, which, as said, partakes of the nature of prophecy and precept, made? The reading of the context will answer you, At the time that the Israelites were still in Egypt, but expected to be permitted to quit the land of their bondage through the threatened slaughter of the first-born. Freedom was not yet theirs, it was only in anticipation. The taskmasters were subdued, to some extent, by the terrible plagues which had been inflicted on them. They were, nevertheless, still powerful to hold in bondage their slaves who had served them well for near two hundred years; and had the deliverance not taken place, as promised, it would have been utterly impossible for the Israelites to have observed the Passover, of which institution the precept in question speaks, neither then nor to perpetuity, as is here enjoined. But what was the result at the time? The deliverance did take place at the precise hour and in the manner indicated; and ever since the Passover has been observed, both as a national mark of thanksgiving to our great Deliverer, and as a token that we accept Him as our Sovereign and God, and acknowledge no one besides Him as having power in heaven and on earth. Our encounters with adversity of all kinds have been fearful enough to try the strength of our attachment to our Father; and notwithstanding our frequent backslidings, we have not altogether forsaken Him, nor have denied our fealty to Him to adopt a stranger God. And when a man, from our own midst, arose, and proclaimed himself, or was by his followers acknowledged, a part of the godhead, and when mighty nations, unknown when we went out of Egypt, adopted the new system thus introduced on earth, and threatened us with all the terrors which fiendish malice could devise; and when bloody conqueror arose in the plains of Arabia, and announced himself as a prophet of a new message in the name of the Most High, and waged fierce warfare against those who refused to acknowledge him and his mission; and when other inventions of men were offered to us, to forego our testimony to the truth of God’s Unity: we stood firm, if not unshaken; and every spring season, in its annual return, saw us celebrating the Lord’s Passover, even as we were commanded. And what mattered it to us how few there were left who could thus glorify the Lord? Each man felt himself the representative of the Patriarchs, and each woman knew that she bore in herself a lineal descent from the mothers of Israel, those noble matrons who stood side by side with their glorious spouses to proclaim the power of the Creator in periods when darkness overspread the earth, and when the light of truth flickered, at times, like an expiring lamp, being fed only by the efforts of a single family.-This has been our course for a very long period; and the faith which was so firmly rooted, so beautifully upheld, has not been left unfruitful in its effects, and at this day the followers of the God of Jacob are more numerous than they have been probably since the destruction of the temple. They have increased even in the measure men attempted their destruction; and they have survived the perils which all thought would make an end of them. And thus have we been brought to the present period in our history; for though yet persecuted in many countries, we have obtained freedom in many others, and the secular sciences are open for our competition with other men. The period of transition is already nearly past; and though severe blows have been struck by the ungodly against our union, and though some have endeavoured to produce sectarian divisions among us, still we may freely say

that no success has attended these unholy efforts. The newness of freedom may, perhaps, have inspired some of these movements; but we are daily getting more used to it; and before long we shall look round, examine our position, and fall back upon the word of God alone as our standard, and reply to all opponents, in the language of Scripture, that our law, with all its peculiarities, was given to us and our descendants for ever. The time of duration is indefinite; and as no probably period has been fixed, we cannot listen to any appeals which counsel us to adopt any system which dispenses us of the observation of the precepts. Only be ye all of good courage and unwavering in your love for the law of God; be not dismayed at the backsliding of your neighbours or of your own household, should this unfortunately be the case; but adhere firmly, as though on you depended the salvation of Israel, and the permanence of the religion of Sinai. If thus you do, the blandishments of peace, or the storms of war, will pass by you without injuring the word of God which is in your mouth; and you can look with scorn upon the silly effects made to withdraw you from your allegiance; and each recurring year will see you devoted to God, true to the faith which He established on earth; and in early youth, and in extreme age, in times of rest and of persecution, should they dawn again, will He be with you and bless you, even as you desire, until the end of days. Amen.

Fri. Shebat 3d, January 26th, 5609.

S. The Synagogue at Worms and the Two Martyrs

The Synagogue at Worms and the Two Martyrs The Synagogue at Worms is one of the oldest in the world; it is supposed to have been built at the time when the second temple was erected; it is in the rear of a court-yard, around which are stone benches. A door opens from this court, which leads to a small round space, also surrounded with stone benches, in the centre of which is a raised platform, where still remains the seat once occupied by the celebrated Rabbi Salomon Yarchi. From that platform he preached his admirable lessons of piety and goodness; his name is engraved on it, and no one is ever permitted to occupy the seat once filled by that venerated rabbi. An ■ is carved on one of the stones. Those among his pupils that he did not deem prepared to listen to his learned discourses, were thus reminded that they must recommence their studies, even from the first letter of the alphabet. In this Synagogue two lamps are always kept burning; under them is the following inscription: "The perpetual light of the two strangers." These lamps are in memory of two martyrs who sacrificed their own lives to ensure the safety of the Jewish community of Worms. The following is the legendary account of this circumstance: Religious procession through the streets of Worms were of common occurrence in the dark times of the middle ages; times when fanaticism had changed all the noble sentiments of humanity into fury and cruelty; when pity and mercy towards religious dissenters were unfelt, when the fundamental principles of all true religion were unknown.

One day the procession passed through the streets occupied by the Jews; crowds of persons swelled the throng; scarcely had it entered this quarter, when voices were heard proclaiming that the crucifix had been insulted; loud rang the cries for revenge; the guilty trespasser must be given up, that his blood might wipe out the indignity offered to the cross. Seven days were granted to the Jews for the discovery of the guilty person. If he were not delivered up at that time, the lives of all the Israelites at Worms were doomed to expiate his offence. The seventh day (it was also the seventh day of the feast of Passover) came, and fear and agony filled the heart of every Israelite in Worms. On the morning of that day, when the beadle of the Synagogue went as usual to call the people to the house of prayer, he heard loud knocks at the gate, enclosing the Jews' quarters. It was always kept locked during any Jewish or Christian festival. The beadle asked who was there.

"Two Jews, who wish to be admitted," was the reply.

"Who are you, and from whence do you come? Know you not, that whoever enters within our gates this day exposes himself to the fury of an enraged populace? If aid come not from Heaven this day, we all are lost."

"We know it; we know the fearful fate that awaits you; it is to save you from it that we now plead for admittance." The gates were opened, and the two strangers entered; their names, their residence, were a mystery that each alike refused to solve. A few hours passed by, and the infuriated populace, fired with thoughts of vengeance, rushed in among the Jews. Then the two strangers were seen advancing, and with voices that faltered not, thus addressed the excited multitude:

"Spare, oh, spare these people! Sully not your hands with the blood of innocent victims. Let our lives satisfy you. We alone are guilty of the alleged crime. On our heads let the weight of your displeasure fall!" And thus nobly did they perish, though racked by the most cruel tortures. From that day forward, the two lamps that were lighted in their memory have never been extinguished; for ever will they burn, bright symbols of the divine flame that animated the hearts of the two pure men who sacrificed their lives for the safety of those who were strangers to them. Every year, on the seventh day of Passover, prayers for the righteous dead are offered in the Synagogue in memory of these devoted martyrs.

Note by the Editor. The above, which originally appeared in the Israelitish Annals of Dr. Jost, has been translated for us, by one of our correspondents, from Les Archives Israelites. The high antiquity of the Synagogue at Worms, as also that of several others in Germany, is, as will be easily understood, resting rather more on legendary than any actual historical authority. That several of our places of worship in Germany are very old admits of no doubt; probably the Jews arrived in that country immediately after the destruction of the second temple. We would, however, thank our European friends, if this should meet their view, to furnish us directly or through their own journals, some authentic accounts of the different principal Jewish congregations on the Continent of Europe.

Chapter 94

S. The Trial and Condemnation of Jesus - Part 1

The Trial and Condemnation of Jesus. By J. Salvador.

Translated by Henry Goldsmith.

After the above exposition of the administration of justice,* I shall follow the application of it in the most memorable trial in history, namely, that of Jesus of Nazareth. I have already stated the motives which prompt me, and the object I have in view in treating this subject; I have already shown that amongst the Jews no title or rank could protect any one from a decree of accusation. Whether this law was a good one or not, whether the forms were good or bad, I do not now wish to examine. Whether the Jews ought to be pitied for their blindness in not recognising a god in Jesus, or that it is astonishing that a god in person, who wished to be understood as such, was not understood, are questions which I do not wish to inquire into. But since they did not look upon him as any more than a plain citizen, did they try and condemn him according to law and existing forms? This is my question, unequivocally. It is from the evangelists themselves that I shall draw all the facts, without even questioning whether the whole of this history has not been developed afterwards, for the purpose of serving as a form to a new doctrine, or rather to an old one which received a new extension.

* I must here apprise the reader that this article is an extract from Mr. Salvador's very voluminous work entitled, "Histoire des Institutiones de Moise et du peuple Hebreu." This trial is here introduced by way of illustration of the administration of justice amongst the Hebrews.-Note by the Translator.

Jesus descended from rather an unfortunate family; his reputed father perceived that his wife was likely to become a mother, without his being able to account for it. If he had called her legally to an account, she, in the ordinary course of proceedings, would have been condemned (see Deuteronomy 22:23-24), and Jesus, after being declared illegitimate, would never have been allowed a seat in the high-council (see Deuteronomy 23:2). Joseph, however, who, in order not to dishonour his wife, took the resolution to send her away secretly, soon had a dream which consoled him.

Jesus, after having been circumcised, drew up like the generality of men; he was present at the solemnization of the feasts, and displayed at an early age surprising wisdom and sagacity. In the sabbatical assemblies, the Hebrews, who were fond of polemical discussions arising from the interpretation of the law, liked to hear him. But he soon elevated himself to more important pursuits: he rebuked and censured whole cities, particularly Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida (see Matthew 11:21-23). Calling back the times of Isaiah and Jeremiah, he thundered against the chiefs of the people with a vehemence which would intimidate us in our own days (see Matthew 23:1-39.) The people were then pleased to consider him a prophet (Matthew 21:11; Matthew 21:46); he was heard to preach in the villages and in the cities, without encountering any difficulties or obstacles, and he was seen surrounded by disciples, according to the custom of the

learned in those days. However displeased the leaders of the people may have been, they kept silent while he remained within proper bounds. But Jesus, in presenting new ideas, and in giving new forms to ideas already promulgated, speaks of himself as if he were a god, his disciples repeat it, and the sequel of events proves incontestably that they understood him thus.* This was horrible blasphemy in the eyes of the citizens: the law commands them not to attach themselves except to the Eternal, the Sole, the only one; never to believe in gods of flesh and bone resembling man or woman, neither to listen to, nor spare the prophet who should announce a new god, a god whom neither they nor their fathers had any knowledge of, notwithstanding his performing miracles (see Deuteronomy 4:15; Deuteronomy 13:1; Deuteronomy 31:2-3). Jesus in fact having said one day, “For I came from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me,” the Jews, who until then paid attention to him, murmured and said: “Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says ‘I came down from heaven ?’” (John 6:38; John 6:42.) On another occasion the Jews, irritated for the same reason, took stones and threatened him, Jesus then said to them, “Many good works have I showed you from my father, for which of those works do you stone me?” The Jews then answered, “For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God.” (John 10:31-33.)

* The expression “Son of God,” was often used amongst the Jews to denote a man of great wisdom and piety. Jesus, however, did not make use of it in that sense, otherwise it would not have caused such a tremendous sensation. Besides, if any one should pretend to say-in order to make it a subject of accusation against the Jews-that Jesus did not proclaim himself as god in an express manner, he would expose himself to the answer on their part, “Then why do you believe it?” His language was not always clear. It often occurred that his disciples did not understand him. Among his maxims, some of which breathed a spirit of great meekness, there were others which the Hebrews, struck only by their natural signification, considered criminal. “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-inlaw. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me.” (Matthew 10:34-36.) Moreover, if indeed he performed miracles in the presence of some of the people, his answers to questions propounded to him by the learned, were generally of an evasive character. (See Matthew 16:1-4.)*

* In justification of this assertion of the author, let the indulgent reader notice the following passages from John 8:13-18, “The Pharisees, therefore, said unto him, thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the father that sent me beareth witness of me.” Compare this to various passages in the Pentateuch, whenever the Israelites grew rebellious. When they asked for water in the wilderness, where ostensibly there was none, Moses procured it for them through a miracle; when the water was bitter he made it sweet; when they had no bread, God sent them the manna; when they bewailed the want of flesh, quails came up. In short, whenever the people evinced a want of faith, either in God or His

messenger, they were satisfied by some miracle. Mark well! that was after they had already been convinced of the powers of the Almighty, and of the truth of the mission of Moses. Besides, look at the shallowness of Jesus' reasoning, when he speaks of the two witnesses. When Moses said to God, "Behold, they will not believe in me," he might, according to the same logic, have answered, "Thou art one, and say that I sent thee, here are then two witnesses." I am, however, afraid, that such kind of testimony would not be taken in any court of justice.-Note by the Translator. In a political point of view, he created dissension. A great number of persons of bad repute, whom he intended to reform, but who inspired the national council with fear, ranged themselves about him (see Luke 15:1-2). His discourses flattered them, inasmuch as he pronounced anathemas against the rich: "Know," he said unto them, "that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." In this state of things, the council deliberates. Some are of opinion to regard him only as a maniac (see John 10:20); others say that he seeks to deceive the people (John 12:12). Caiphas, whose dignity imposes on him the obligation of defending the letter of the law, observes that those dissensions were likely to become a pretext for the Romans to oppress Judea, and that the interest of the nation ought to preponderate that of an individual. The order is then given to have him arrested. But here let us reflect on a fact of the greatest importance. The senate does mot commence (as is usual in our days in similar cases) by arresting Jesus. No! it commences by giving an order for his arrest after due deliberation. This proceeding is conducted publicly; it is known by all, and by Jesus in particular. No obstacle prevents him from passing the frontiers; his liberty entirely depends upon himself.*

* But it is said, "Jesus would not exile himself, he had long before announced his death as necessary to verify the prophecies." Be it so; but then the prophecies caused his death, and not the Hebrews; for if the Hebrews had been more powerful than the prophecies, and had not condemned him, the latter would have proved false; and if they had been found false, Jesus could not have been God; therefore, following the consequences of the Christian system, there would have been greater cause for complaint, if through their not condemning Jesus, they would have caused the failure of the events announced. We must at least acknowledge that the Hebrews have been placed in a very awkward and singular position. In condemning him they killed God and became Deicides. Had they not condemned him, they would have been still greater Decides; since in falsifying the truth of the prophecies and the words of Jesus, they would have killed the divinity of Jesus himself in a more direct manner.

One of my Christian friends attempted to answer this difficulty very ingeniously. He said, "True! the death of Jesus had been foretold, but nevertheless the Jews were free agents, the action was not forced upon them." To strengthen his argument, he quoted the case of Pharaoh, (whose heart God hardened and still punished him,) as offering, if not a parallel, at least something analogous to the case of Jesus. But however plausible this argument may appear at first sight, it will not stand the test of a careful examination. It is a great error to suppose that God punished Pharaoh for actions over which he had no control, Such mode of judging would be inconsistent with divine justice, nor can we deny that Pharaoh's obstinacy in refusing the Israelites to leave Egypt, was involuntary on his part, for we see it repeated several times, "God hardened his heart," "God strengthened his heart." The punishment which befell him and the Egyptians, was owing to their unlawfully enslaving and afflicting the Israelites. Had Pharaoh consented to let them go at the first summons

of Moses, it would not have exempted him from the fate which awaited him. But God, in order to multiply his wonders and miracles, hardened [Pharoah's] heart. Now, although God foresaw and foretold to Abraham that his seed shall be enslaved in a land not their own, the crime on the part of the Egyptians and Pharaoh, was not the consequence of God's foresight, but His foresight was the consequence of their crime, and did therefore not interfere with their free agency; forasmuch as God is unlimited by space as much is He is unlimited by time; with him there is no past or future. He sees that which is done, doing, and to be done. But according to the Christian system, not only was the death of Jesus foretold, which alone would not have militated against their free agency, but it was absolutely necessary for the purpose of making an atonement prospectively and retrospectively for mankind; whereas the Israelites could have fulfilled their destiny, without having been enslaved in Egypt four hundred years.-Note by the Translator.

S. The Trial and Condemnation of Jesus - Part 2

The Trial and Condemnation of Jesus. By J. Salvador.

Translated by Henry Goldsmith. This is not all; the decree for his arrest was preceded by admonition. Jesus one day having entered the temple, assumed there an authority contrary to the established right; he then preached to the people, and said, That all those who had faith in him could do every thing. “If ye shall say to this mountain, ‘Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea,’ it shall be done.” Then the chief priests and the elders came to him and said, “By what authority doest thou these things? who gave thee this authority?” In the mean time some perfidious person reveals the place of his retirement; the guards, authorized by the high priest and the elders, seize him. One of his disciples, putting himself in open revolt, cuts off an ear of one of the guards, and draws upon himself the censure of this master. As soon as Jesus is arrested, the enthusiasm of the Apostles is extinguished; they all abandon him. (See Mark 14:50, and Matthew 16:56.) He is conducted before the high council, where the priests sustain the accusation. The witnesses make their depositions, and they must have been numerous, since the facts with which he was charged passed in presence of all the people. The two witnesses whom Matthew and Mark accuse of falsity, report a discourse, which John alleges to be true, in relation to the power which Jesus attributed to himself. (See Matthew 26:60-61; Mark 14:58; John 2:19.)* Finally, the high priest addresses himself to the accused, and says, “I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus answered in the affirmative, adding, “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.” At these words Caiphas tore his garments as a sign of mourning, for having heard the profanation of the name of God. “You have heard it,” he says. The council deliberates. The question agitating the people was already. “Has Jesus made himself God?” The senate, then judging that Jesus, son of Joseph, born at Bethlehem, had profaned the name of God in usurping it for himself, who was only a plain citizen, applied to him the law on blasphemy; (Deuteronomy 13:1-18, and Deuteronomy 18:20;) according to which, “any prophet, even if he performs miracles, must be punished if he speaks of a god unknown to the Hebrews and to their fathers.” The extreme penalty of the law is then pronounced. As regards the maltreatment which followed the sentence, it is contrary to the spirit of the Hebrew law; nor is it natural to suppose that a senate, composed of the most respectable persons in the nation, should have permitted such an outrage on a person whose life they held in their hands. The writers who have transmitted these details to us not having been present at the process themselves, have probably exaggerated the picture, either through their extreme affection for Jesus, or for the purpose of casting an odium upon the Judges.

* Let the reader glance at the authorities here quoted, and he will find a contradiction of a most palpable nature, which, to say the least of, certainly requires great ingenuity to reconcile. (Note by the Translator.)

One thing is certain, that the council met again the next day, or the day afterwards, according to law, to confirm or annul the sentence. It was confirmed. Jesus was brought before Pilate, the governor, whom the Romans had appointed over the Hebrews. They had still the power to try a person according to their laws; but the executive power rested with the governor. No criminal could be put to death without his consent. This was in order to deprive the senate of the means of attacking persons that were sold to, and in the interest of the Romans.† Pilate signed the verdict. His soldiers, who were composed of a mixture of several nations, were charged with the execution. They it was who conducted him to the Praetorium, stripped him in presence of the populace, put a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his hand, who, in short, made him undergo a kind of torture, common in Rome, but never practised amongst the Hebrews. (Matthew 27:27.) But, previous to the execution, the governor granted to the condemned an appeal to the people, who, respecting the verdict of the council, would not extend their mercy to him, and expressed their refusal in the following terms: “We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” Pilate then gave them the choice, either to save him or a man who was accused of committing a murder in a revolt. The people declared in favour of the latter, giving their reason that Jesus sowed in the midst of the people the seeds of discord at a time when union was indispensably necessary. Jesus was then put to death. The senators and priests were present at the execution; and, since the sentence rested on the fact that he had unlawfully arrogated to himself the title of Son of God, even that of God himself, they called out to him thus: “He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.” According to the Evangelists, these words were said in mockery; but the character of the people that pronounced them, their dignity, their age, the order which they followed in the trial, prove that they were sincere. Would not a miracle at that very moment have been decisive?‡

† The duties of Pilate, were to inquire to what extent a sentence interfered with the interest of Rome; there ended his province. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that Pilate, who know but little of the Hebrew laws, should have signed the verdict without having personally recognised the guilt of Jesus. It will be seen afterwards, that at that time there were several parties amongst the Jews. Among whom were the Herodians, or the mercenaries, partisans of Herod, and devoted to the stranger. The same persons always spoke of Caesar, of obedience to Caesar, of tribute to Caesar. They insisted that Jesus pretended to be king of the Jews, but the nature of this accusation was not considered by the senate of sufficient importance to demand capital punishment.

‡ The author’s question is too inviting not to add a few remarks on it. Certainly, “a miracle at that moment would have been decisive.” The Jews were not used to see their prophets and godly men so roughly handled, and so ignominiously treated. “Touch not mine anointed, harm not my prophets.” When the man of God came to Jeroboam, to rebuke him for his iniquity, Jeroboam’s hand was withered in stretching it out against the man; nor was it restored until the man entreated of God to restore it. See how fearlessly Elijah presents himself before Ahab, whom he knew not to be friendly disposed towards him. The Jews had hitherto been in the habit of seeing the persons of their prophets, protected by the hand of God, in so far that no human being could frustrate the object of their missions. I therefore say, that if God intended that Jesus should be understood and considered as a god, or even as a prophet, what better opportunity could have presented itself,

than to prevent his execution by a miracle. But it may be said, “It is not for man, to dictate to the Deity, when and where He shall show his miracles.” True enough; but when a new revelation is to be brought to light, which in a measure is to upset and supersede the old one, (at least as it was then understood by the Jews,) it is necessary to have some more substantial testimony, than the mere ipse dixit of the person who alone is apparently interested. (Note by the Translator.)

S. The U.S. is not a Christian Nation

The United States Not A Christian State.

We have often maintained, both in private conversation and in our writings, that no one can claim for the United States the name of a Christian state, in the legal sense of the words; which does not say that the whole people of the country might not, for all that, be Christians, or sectarians of an especial branch of Christianity. All the words mean to convey, is, that Christianity does, as such, not enter into the polity of the government; and that the constitution, the fundamental law, has no necessary connexion with either the dogmas or precepts of Christianity. The proposition, we always thought, was so evident, that we could not help wondering, and our astonishment is not lessened at this day, that people should even dare to call this a Christian country, and speak of the population as a Christian people; when to a surety they cannot point to a single constitutional clause of the Union, and of nearly all the states, except, perhaps, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and North Carolina, which demands the existence of Christianity as a prerequisite of the existence of the government. In this, the various authors of the respective fundamental codes, as we may freely call the several union and state constitutions have shown their wisdom; they found men of the most opposite opinions joined together in this country, and they would not, and could not take upon themselves to decide which should be the orthodox or state religion. The laws of the country know nothing of any religious profession, and leave every man to pursue whatever religion he pleases.

Nevertheless it is not an atheistical country, and there can be no doubt that more is done for the maintenance of religious establishments here than in any other state; in fact, we should say that more is spent in church-building than there is any occasion for. At all events, it is foolish to pretend to assert that there is a state religion ; either that it is Judaism, Christianity, or anything else. All men have an equal right to be here; one does not tolerate the other, nor has he to thank him, legally, for leaving him undisturbed, however practically the minority are at the mercy of the majority. Might makes right here as well as elsewhere; and the fanatics for all opinions know this perfectly well, and they therefore endeavour to make their views those of the majority, that they may carry them through and force them on the community by the brute power of numbers. Hence the great efforts at abolition of slavery, free soil, free trade, protection, bank, and anti-bank, Sunday laws, as opposed to freedom of travelling and labour, Christianity and its opposite, and whatever else you may think of. The agitators first persuade small parties, these again influence, like leaven in a dough, those nearest to them; then there are held conventions, mass meetings and the like; the aid of the press is invoked; public speakers travel about to make their ex parte appeals, and you find yourself opposed to a party strong and united, without any better reason existing for its being there, than that it has become, for the time, the opinion of the public, which means not the people at large, but those who vociferate loudly enough to out-thunder their neighbours, and drown by their superior powers of breath the weaker efforts of others. But if all knew how weak the vociferating party were in numbers, it would remain unheeded, and legislation would progress as though it existed not.

Let us instance the daily-becoming more imminent danger in some states of a compulsory recognition of the Sunday as a universal day of rest. Does any one in his senses believe that the people of any one state would be shocked in case railroad cars, steamboats, and stages, were employed to carry wayfarers on that day? It is ridiculous to maintain the affirmation, or else why do people ride to church in their own or hired vehicles? Why are ferry boats used to carry church-goers to and fro? Why do ministers permit themselves to ride on horseback or to be conveyed in coaches, when they have an engagement to preach or to attend a funeral or a wedding? If they mean to keep a Sabbath let them do it on the Jewish fashion; that is, let them abstain from labour of all sorts; but this they will not do, it is not profitable; and consequently their clamour is to force their peculiar views of Sunday rest on the public, whether they will or not; and but for the faint-heartedness, the cowardice, the meanness of their opponents, they would not dare to lift up their head.

Men fear to be crushed by that awful giant, public opinion; hence they invest him with eyes to see, with ears to hear, and with arms to strike; but if they would but approach him boldly they would discover nothing but a purblind, half-deaf, diminutive pigmy, with no power to injure, and with barely strength enough to grumble. We mean, simply, that the sound sense of the people is for freedom as guarantied by the constitution, and that it is only the dread of offending a supposed majority, which counsels men at all to yield even the slightest point to the loud clamour of interested fanatics.

We have been led to make these remarks in consequence of a recent sketch by Judge [Mordecai Manuel] Noah of a scene in which he was a part actor at the court of the Bey of Tripoli, when he was U. S. Consul, and when he carried a point in dispute by pointing out to the Pasha, that the United States government was not a Christian government, in that usual sense of the word. The Commercial Advertiser of New York doubted the assertion of the Judge, and to prove himself right he sent to that paper the following communication, for which we ask the careful attention of our readers.

(For the Commercial Advertiser.) “In your paper of Thursday evening my attention has been called to the following paragraph:

“ ‘A Very Old Subscriber,’ asks us to tell him whether it is true that a treaty of the United States with Tripoli contains an express renunciation of the Christian character on the part of the former. We cannot give the desired information. The alleged fact was put forth recently, we believe, by Major Noah, in his Messenger. If his account of the matter is true, perhaps he will designate the treaty more particularly.

“The treaty alluded to was negotiated by Joel Barlow, Esq., consul-general and agent plenipotentiary of the United States, with the Bey and subjects of Tripoli, in Barbary, and was confirmed by the Senate in the year 1797; the treaty itself bears date the fourth day of January, 1797. The section referred to is the 11th article, as follows:-

“ ‘As the government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion: it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, and tranquility of Mussulmen [Mussulmans], and as the said states never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation; it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from

any religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.'

"Mr. Barlow was a freethinker in religious matters, and I disapproved of the article, because it was engrafting his private prejudices upon a solemn official contract made with a foreign nation, when the object contemplated could have been reached without using any language calculated to offend the religious attachments of the people, and when, at all events, it was quite unnecessary to inform the Mussulmans of Tripoli that in effect we had no religion at all. Our relations with Tripoli at the time were so threatening that if the Senate had rejected that article and sent the treaty back, it would have been difficult to obtain another.

"M. M. NOAH."

It will be seen from the above, that Mr. Noah completely proves his assertion, there is a treaty made by a minister of the Union, and confirmed by the President and Senate, (mind it takes two-thirds of a majority to confirm a treaty to become the supreme law of the land,) emphatically declaring that Christianity is not the law of the land. What more was needed to establish the point? What need is there for our venerable friend to go beyond the record to defame the character of Joel Barlow? One thing we do know, that Mr. Barlow was for several years chaplain in the army pending the war of Independence, during all which time his ministry was acceptable to his hearers; if he turned afterwards free-thinker, of which we know nothing, it does not argue, to say the least, in favour of Christianity, though we admit that neither does it prove much against it. Wherefore his free-thinking is nothing to the public; enough for all to know that the treaty did and does exist, and it is not very dignified in a Jew, as Judge Noah is, to seek for an excuse which was not needed, to justify the Senate of the United States for merely affirming to the truth.

We honestly believe that not a man in that august body was moved by the critical relations between this country and the paltry state of Tripoli to affirm what he believed to be falsehood. The men who were of that sort of mettle to attack the republic of France, then at the height of power and enthusiasm, would not, in all likelihood, shrink before the Bey of Tripoli, to say what they did not believe. It is preposterous, it is monstrous, it is absurd.

No, Christianity is not the law of the land-let it offend whom it may; Judaism is not the law of the land-let all Jews hear it and be shocked, if they like; infidelity and atheism are not the law of the land-let their supporters wince as they will. There is here freedom for all, and rights and protection for all; and so far from Joel Barlow deserving censure, so far from the Senate of 1797 needing to be screened by false pretences,-for such we consider Mr. Noah's attempted excuse-from public blame, they deserve, one and all, the highest commendation for maintaining that no religion whatever is the basis of the state, though all churches or fractions of churches are alike protected. The treaty contains the simple truth; and well would it be for all parties in the country, if all legislators, and they who agitate public opinion, would draw wisdom from the legacy of those who stood up for the rights of men and the freedom of the subject, at a time when there was danger to be encountered, when men had to march barely clad over the frozen snow, without shoes or stockings on their feet! It is easy for men who sit in easy chairs and on carpeted floors to descant on the legacy of the revolutionary heroes and sages; but it ill becomes those who have been benefited and elevated by their struggles in the field and the Congress for the practical and theoretical rights of all, to defame the name of even one of all who have deserved so well of

mankind, who belonged truly to no country or age, but laboured for all nations and all times. For the present we must close. We regret to differ from one whom all the world, and we among them, esteem so much as Judge Noah; but where the truth of history and true liberty is concerned, we know of no friends, of no party. We protest, then, in the name of freedom and of truth, that we honour the name of Barlow, the Senate of the Union, and the patriotic President, for putting on record a proposition, a law which deserves the deepest gratitude of all men who love truth, liberty, and religion.

S. The Unfaithfulness of Israel

[redacted]

The Unfaithfulness of Israel. A Sermon Delivered In the Synagogue Shearith Yisrael, Montreal,

By the Rev. Abraham De Sola.

[redacted]

“The Eternal said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”- Exodus 32:7-8.

Brethren! The words which I have just read to you from the chapter of our sacred records called [redacted], must needs create in every pious and reflecting mind amongst us, sentiments of the deepest sorrow and shame. The unfaithfulness of Israel in turning aside quickly out of the way which the Eternal had commanded them, making unto themselves a molten calf, worshipping and sacrificing thereunto, and blasphemously proclaiming of it, “Lo, the gods of Israel!” furnishes one of those problems sometimes presented by the history of our ancestors, which all our reasoning and wisdom must fail to solve. For here was a nation of newly-emancipated bondsmen, ay, those freed but a few short months only from the flesh-pots of a galling servitude; having every inducement, every reason, to regard with love, gratitude, and reverence their Almighty Deliverer,-with all the mighty acts, the miracles, signs, and wonders which he had wrought for them before their eyes, fresh as things of yesterday, with the admission of Mitsrayim’s wise men still sounding in their ears, declaring that it was the finger of God which had wrought for them, reiterated by the assurance of the great Eternal himself, that it was He who had led them forth from the estate of slaves,-with the scarcely yet hushed roar of the mighty waters returning to their strength, and miraculously engulphing their pursuers, re-echoed by “the Great Voice” which commanded them “Thou shalt have no other gods save me; neither shalt thou make unto thyself any graven image,” yet could this people ask for a god of gold, and as Holy Writ informs us, “They offered burnt-offerings and brought peace-offerings unto it;”-yet would they do this notwithstanding it was forbidden unto them by Him who is a jealous God, in a manner as positive as it was terrible,-yet could they do this, notwithstanding that the bread which was daily rained down unto them from heaven, proved that the same Benevolent Eternal lived, and that he had not abandoned His chosen. Oh! brethren, how humiliating are these reflections-how mortifying, but how faithful a type does such conduct afford us of the subsequent career of one of the most perverse and stubborn of nations. Nevertheless, let us proceed to bestow upon this gloomy page in the history of our ancestors a full and earnest attention, so that it may not be without its teachings, its profit,

and its comfort. Let us then ask ourselves:- First. In what is the unfaithfulness of Israel shown?

Secondly. What do we learn therefrom? But first to Thee, Great Source of Wisdom and Benevolence, do we pray. Grant, O Lord! that the words, which however unworthily, we may utter now or hereafter, when meditating upon thy holy word, may enter the hearts of thy people for good; and mayest Thou be pleased to accept our prayer and intention with favour. Amen.

I. I. The unfaithfulness of Israel is shown in their past distrust and idolatry. The history of every nation has its instructiveness and its philosophy; but the history of Israel, the ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ is one which no thinking man can view, without the greatest admiration and wonder. Casting a retrospective glance along their annals, we behold instances upon instances, and details upon detail, of their rebelliousness, impiety, ingratitude, and idolatry; and the wonder which such an extreme of stiffneckedness must create within us, can only be equalled by that admiration with which we must be filled at the benevolence, the mercy, and long-suffering of Him who “bare them on His wing, and kept them as the apple of His eye.” Looking back to the rocks, brethren, whence we were hewed, we find that, with very few exceptions, every act of the Patriarchs proved their faith and trust in God, who accounted it unto them for righteousness. Not so with their unworthy descendants, who seldom spoke of God without irreverent distrust, and seldom performed his word without rebellious murmurings. We need not remark, now, upon their faithless cries at Marah, or at Sin, where they reproach Moses with having led them from a place, where they had nevertheless “groaned in agony of spirit by reason of the bondage.” Nor need we dwell upon their disobedience to the divine will, which commanded them to leave none of the manna till morning; nor their going forth to gather it on the seventh day; nor their complaints at Rephidim; but let us rather speak of their flagrant transgression in making and worshipping the golden calf, which senseless act, as being detailed in the Parassah of today, should now claim our especial attention. And this crime, black as it is, assumes at first sight a yet deeper hue from the circumstance that it was apparently participated in and even promoted by Aaron, the man chosen by God to minister in his sanctuary; and who, as well as Moses, had received the direct communication of his will. But happily, brethren, it is at first sight only, that this appears so. For the critical investigation and deep research of our pious sages have supplied us with facts and reasons, in every way sufficient for the complete establishment of his innocence. Thus, when the tumultuous multitude gathered themselves unto him, and said, “Arise,* make us gods,” Aaron does not proceed immediately to do so, by making them of stone or of wood, as he might easily have done; but he adopts a course, which of all others, was best calculated to wean them from their evil purpose. He does not attempt either to dissuade or to prevent them, for with that “froward and perverse generation” to dissuade would be to encourage, and to prevent would be to promote; but he requires them to break off the golden earrings which were in the ears of their wives, their sons, and their daughters, who, from their great attachment to these things, as remarked by one of our most learned commentators,† would no doubt most strongly oppose such a proceeding. He will make them gods, but it must be at the cost of all those precious things which they themselves prized so highly:-“Whosoever has gold,” commanded Aaron, “let him bring it unto me.” Here then had he enlisted two most powerful auxiliaries on his side: the vanity of their wives and children on the one hand, and their own cupidity on the other. But being deceived in his expectations, he is obliged to receive the gold, most freely offered, and “casting it info the fire, there came out this calf.” It is not Aaron, however, but the people, who impiously assert of it, “These be thy gods, O Israel,”-the priest of God appears

to have been entirely powerless amidst an excited multitude bent upon evil. For ■■■■ ■■■■ “when Aaron saw,” or as our commentators happily explain the phrase, “when Aaron found that it was useless to attempt opposition, ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ “then he built an altar before it,” and proving himself a true servant of a true God, ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ “Aaron made proclamation and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Eternal.” Observe, brethren, he does not proclaim it for the god of gold; but ■■■, for the Ineffable One, (blessed for ever be He!) whose splendour filled the tabernacle in which he was the faithful minister; nor does he, as might naturally be expected, appoint the festival for the day on which the idol was finished; but, ■■■ for the morrow. Hence, my hearers, are we supplied with still farther grounds for the very reasonable inference made by our teachers, that Aaron’s great object was delay. For this he strove both earnestly and prudently, evidently under the impression that Moses, who had now been absent forty days, would return in time to prevent the consummation of the contemplated wickedness. But there is another consideration, and an all-cogent one too, proving that in this thing Aaron was “of clean hands and pure heart;” it is that God does not pronounce him guilty, and does not declare at Mount Hor that it was for this that he had incurred the divine displeasure, but because he rebelled, with Moses, against God’s word, at the waters of Meribah.

* From the Israelites using the expression ■■■ “Arise,” when addressing Aaron, it would appear that they withdrew him, forcibly or not, from some other occupation, doubtless one connected with the service of the Sanctuary.

† ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■. ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ This we deem conclusive, and therefore the only possible objection that could now be advanced against Aaron’s conduct, is, that he does not display that noble devotion and high-mindedness which should have impelled him, like Daniel and his companions, to prefer death to unfaithfulness. But even this objection will disappear, when we recollect that if he had permitted himself to fall a sacrifice to a disappointed and exasperated multitude, he would not have advanced the cause of the Eternal one whit the more, whereas by living he not only did not sin himself, but projected such prudential and likely measures, as would prevent the Israelites from doing so.* As we have seen, however, he was disappointed in his pious endeavours, by the unholy efforts of those who desired to promote the idolatry of the calf, the corrupt ■■■ ■■ or mixed multitude, who went up with Israel from Egypt, and who have been regarded by our sages, not only as the primary instigators to the crime, but as the almost sole participators therein. When Aaron in his reply to Moses, says, “Thou knowest the people,-■■ ■■■ ■■■ it is in evil,” we may consider him as informing us of this fact, and from the construction of the phrase, we should certainly be warranted in understanding him to say, “that they are amongst an evil multitude.”† To this interpretation, however, it has been objected, that as Scripture affirms it to have been the people whom God had commanded, which had corrupted themselves, and so indeed speaks our test, it must necessarily be the whole of the people who are implied.

* It has been ingeniously advanced by our early commentators, that Aaron desired to live “not for his own, but for the people’s sakes, because he feared that if by taking his life they would be guilty of the murder of God’s appointed priest, an angry Deity would consume them all.” See Aben Ezra’s Comment on this passage.

† ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ But this will appear with the less force, when we recollect that although Scripture speaks of the whole congregation, it may just as well be understood as alluding here to a portion of the people only,* as on a later occasion, when relating the transgression of an individual, it refers it to the whole of the congregation, thus saying, “The children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing, for Achan the son of Carmi, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Eternal was kindled against the children of Israel.”† Here then we have another reason for concluding with our sages, that the idolatry of the calf, although spoken of all the people, was nevertheless not universal. But what, if even in all this the people feared the Lord, and acted not wickedly? Do they not show their distrust and rebellion at Taberah, and at Kibroth Hataavah? where they again follow to evil this same mixed multitude, who, as Scripture informs us, “fell a lusting” there, and at Paran, where they would have “stoned Moses and Aaron with stones, and made unto themselves a captain to return into Egypt,” and where they follow Korah and his guilty associates, and when they gather themselves a third time against Moses and Aaron, at Kadesh? Do they not show their idolatry and corruption at Shittim, when they joined themselves to Baal Peor, again, when they served Baal and Ashtaroth, and “God strengthened against them Eglon, King of Moab;” again, when “He sold them into the hand of Jaban, King of Canaan again, when “He delivered them into the hand of Midian;” again, when “He sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon;” and yet again, when, as the Haftorah of to-day informs us, “Elijah only remained a prophet of the Eternal, but Baal’s prophets were four hundred and fifty men?” But let us not cite farther instances of their stiff-neckedness, for the task is a long and painful one. Let rather each son of Jacob view for himself, the blind and fatal course his ancestors have pursued. Let him see how they have disregarded alike God’s teachings, cautions, persuasions, reproofs, signs, wonders, prophets, and guides. Let him see how they have been alike unaffected by his rewards or corrections, by comforts or afflictions, and then let him with the poet exclaim:-‡

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“Oh! my God, when I remember how greatly I have provoked thee, my countenance is cast down. For all the good which Thou hast bestowed upon me.-I have requited with evil.”

* Rashi calls our attention to the fact, that it was not proclaimed of the idol, “These be our gods,” as if uttered by the Israelites themselves, but that Scripture twice informs us, that the expression used was “These be thy gods, O Israel,” evidently uttered by some second party addressing them. It is true that on other occasions we find that the Israelites make use of this manner of expression among themselves, ex. gr., when the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, they say one to another, “To thy tents, O Israel!” But this strengthens rather than weakens the remark of our learned commentator, since the expression is never used but by those who dissented from the national polity and laws, divine or not, and who were the promoters of, and ringleaders in, every rebellion, religious or political.

† Judges 7:2.

‡ R. Solomon ben Gabirol, in “Kether Malchut.”

2. The unfaithfulness of Israel is shown in their present scepticism and infidelity. Recollecting, brethren, what God has done for us,-the concern He has ever shown for our welfare,-and his particular attachment to us,-recollecting moreover, that notwithstanding the enormity of our transgressions, “He has suffered no man to do us wrong, but reproved even kings for our sakes,”-that although He has turned the light of His countenance from us, it is not for ever, but that even now it shines visibly upon us in our preservation as a distinct people;-recollecting all this, one would suppose that we had now become more virtuous, wise, and religious. Would to God, brethren, would to God, this were indeed so; but alas! all our miseries, and all our visitations, seem to have had but little effect upon us, and to have profited us still less. For the spirit now prevailing amongst us, is a spirit of scepticism, a spirit of infidelity, a spirit of captiousness, and a spirit of opposition to all restraint and authority. The Eternal hath said by the mouth of his prophet Jeremiah, “Stand ye in the way and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.”* But to this recommendation of our God, we have opposed that presumptuous trust in our own judgment, which is another characteristic of the age we live in, and we have said “We will not walk therein.” With the cry of the spirit of the age on our lips, we have waged a senseless war against the venerable fabric of our religion, and have endeavoured to demolish everything that agreed not with modern fastidiousness, and our so-called enlightenment. Dazzled by the surface of tinsel, we have abandoned the rich mine, and deceived by the shadow, we have lost the substance. Infatuated by a sound, a phantom, we have condemned all established institutions, merely because they are established, and have forsaken the old paths, merely because they are old paths. Far be it from any one who respects the teachings of God’s holy words, to say aught against the reasonableness, or even the necessity, of diligent and serious inquiry into matters of religion.

* Jeremiah 6:16. The Bible teaches, ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ “Ask of thy father, and he will declare unto thee, of thine elders, and they will say unto thee,” and our wise men inculcate that ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ “in spite of all difficulties, let a man occupy himself with the study of the sacred page;”* it is the neglect of such valuable teachings that we would now deprecate. Would men be content with following this most salutary advice, all would be well; but every one will even now make unto himself his own idol, and invite others to worship with him;-and what are old paths, counsel of parents or of elders, when compared with the alluring sounds of novelty and change? God forbid that we should desire to oppose, were it even possible to do so, the exercise of that heavenly privilege, which distinguishes man from the brute, or to say one word against a proper expression of opinion; for doubtless where we employ our reason and acquirements for the advancement of the interests and respectability of religion,-for the honour and glory of the Eternal’s name, it is a sight most pleasing, and most acceptable to Him; but it is their abuse that we now lament.

* Kiddushin, fol. 29, p. 2.

Let us look around us and see the fatal results of that self-sufficiency which tells every man he must be a judge in Israel. Let us see them in the unskillful manner misguided men have used the pruning-knife, by the too great use of which they have completely marred the consistent beauty of

the plant they would themselves foster. Yet if these have acted in the innocence of error, let us hope that they will soon discover the desirableness of retreading the old paths; and, brethren, be they excused in our eyes. But not so those who sacrifice principle to expediency; who care not for the lasting favour of God, so long as they obtain the fleeting consideration of man; who care not for things eternal, when they interfere with the temporalities of this life; and who, to gain the favour, or to avoid the sneers of the gentile, “do after their works, and walk after their ways;” so that it is but a light thing in their eyes, to eat with them of the things positively forbidden to us by God; to desecrate the day which the Eternal hath hallowed, and observe that which convenience has instituted.-to take the stranger unto them to wife, to prostrate themselves in temples which they cannot honour, or to address a godhead which they cannot understand. The religious state of these cannot surely far, if at all transcend that of our ancestors when God plagued them for making the calf. These may as truly and as consistently say of gold, “Behold our gods,” as did the idolaters in the desert. Before this they build their altar, and sacrifice thereon, not only their own immortal hopes, but the everlasting bliss of their wives and their little ones. For so incessant are their adorations to it, so ardently do they slave for it, that they have not a moment to spare for the moral and religious culture of those whose happiness and salvation, thereon dependent, should be their first and chief consideration. Inculcating within themselves a convenient scepticism, they try to persuade themselves that there is no other god but riches and fame, and no other heaven but sensuality and power. Thus proving at once their unfaithfulness and folly, they abandon all thoughts of their Creator, and occupied with an all-absorbing pursuit after gain, Sabbaths, new moons, fasts, and seasons of rejoicing, alike find them at the place of traffic, the only temple which their avarice will permit them to enter. And with such examples, what shall their children become? Shall we ask the calendar of crime? Oh! my friends, let us turn from so painful and awful a contemplation, and with the sweet Psalmist of Israel let us pray:

[redacted]. [redacted]

[redacted]

God of our saving health and peace!

Turn us, and us restore;

Thine indignation cause to cease

Toward us, and chide no more.

Wilt Thou not turn and hear our voice,

And us again revive;

That so thy people may rejoice,

By Thee preserved alive?*

Brethren! with our hearts filled with this supplication, we will proceed to what we have reserved for the second head of to-day’s discourse; and we will now ask ourselves what we are to learn from the unfaithfulness of Israel.

* Psalms 85:5-7. Milton’s version.

II.

1. From the unfaithfulness of Israel we learn that God is infinitely gracious and merciful. “The Eternal repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people,” saith the sacred page, and let us not slightly pass over such an important and blessed assurance. The people in whom He had placed his chief delight, had caused Him to anger; they had sorely vexed Him, although He had bestowed on them nought but benefits and blessings; they had rejected Him, and in their blindness had fallen down to the work of their own hands; and yet we are told, “The Eternal repented of the evil which He thought to do unto his people.” He had fought for them, led them, and cherished them; they, in return, abandoned Him for what could neither guard nor save; but yet-“The Eternal repented of the evil which He thought to do unto his people.” It were indeed impossible, my hearers, to speak in adequate terms, of graciousness and mercy such as this. Has the parent who receives from his child ingratitude and irreverence for care and affection, wounds for caresses, curses for blessings, has even he received such provocation as the Eternal hath received at our hands? Ah! no; then how infinitely above the comprehension and imitation of such poor and revengeful mortals as are we, must be His mercy and long suffering! Like Moses our master, therefore, when the Eternal first proclaimed these his attributes, let us “make haste, and bow our heads towards the earth and worship.”

2. From the unfaithfulness of Israel we learn that as we have been a most favoured, so have we been a most corrupt people. To discover this, brethren, we need not enter very deeply into the details of those transgressions, which our annals so fruitfully furnish. When endeavouring to display to you the unfaithfulness of Israel as proved by their past idolatry, I took occasion to present you with the attestation of Scripture, that in every stage of their journey, until their entrance into the promised land, the house of Israel experienced the most signal love and protection of the Almighty Being who deigned to select them as his heritage, and that in every stage of their journey they exhibited the most vile disobedience and unthankfulness. This alone is quite sufficient to demonstrate the aggravated and atrocious character of their conduct. But let us now add to this, that when they had entered their inheritance, the favour of God was again displayed to them in the extraordinary successes which attended them, so that we behold kings prostrated before them like trees before the tempest-armies dispersed like chaff before the wind, and even nature itself reversed to serve them; whilst they, thankless and perverse as ever, continued the same series of crimes and atrocities. Let us farther add to this, that although God has in his infinite justice permitted Jerusalem to become a desolation, and Israel a prey to all who should lift up their hands against them, yet not only does He not allow the nations to make an entire end of them, but he cheers for them the days of exile by his gracious assurance that “at that time will He bring them, and at that time will He gather them”-in short, brethren, that God’s favour is with them even now. Let us add this, let us revert to the gloomy, but faithful, picture just drawn of their present faithlessness and irreligion; let us recollect how they have remained uninstructed and unprofited by the most extraordinary testimonies of Divine favour; and then let us ask ourselves what can such a people be? Our heavenly Father himself answers us: ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■ “They are very corrupt, saith the Eternal.”

3. From the unfaithfulness of Israel we learn that it is incumbent on us to return quickly unto the God we have so much offended. “How long, O Israel! will ye halt between two opinions, if the Eternal be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.”* How long will ye delay to choose

between the path of sin, and the path of righteousness, “which is the good way,”-when will ye cease to worship the idol for the Deity, to follow darkness for light; will ye wait until the hour of visitation and affliction cometh? Of what avail will a god of gold be unto you then? Ye may “cry unto him from morning even until noon;” but ye will find that “he meditateth, or hath a pursuit, that he hath a journey, or, peradventure, he sleepeth, and must be awakened;” ye may “leap on the altars ye have raised, ye may cry aloud, and cut yourselves with knives and lancets till the blood gush out; but there will be neither voice, answer, nor attention.”† Be not deceived, brethren; it is the Eternal only who can save. Remember the reply He gave to Moses, when he sought to intercede for the idolaters at Horeb. “Whosoever sinneth against me,” said the Eternal, “him will I blot out from my book,-and in the day of my visitation, I will surely visit their sins upon them;” therefore, brethren, we are not to look for salvation through any other mediator, than our own good works and repentance; for, as teacheth the Bible, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” How important, then, how powerful our inducements to turn quickly unto the God we have so much offended. Gratitude in return for his patience and love, should alone be sufficient to lead us back to him; but we have here our own welfare, interest, and happiness, alike calling on us to “walk faithfully with our God.” We surely cannot hesitate now. Therefore, when righteousness raiseith her cry, and saith, “Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come to me,” let not one of us fail in responding to her call, or in ranging himself under her banner; so shall we be invincible in the hour of danger or of misfortune; so shall we be invulnerable to the shafts of pain or ingratitude; so shall we be happy in ourselves, and blessed in those upon whom we place our fondest affections and expectations, and so shall we eternally profit by what we learn from the Transgression of Israel.

* The Haphtora of the day, 1 Kings 18:1-46.

† Exodus 32:26.

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel! Let not thy wrath wax hot against thy people, because they have been a corrupt and rebellious people; but let there know that Thou art the Eternal God, and hast turned their heart back again; consume them not, because of their transgressions; for wherefore should it be said among the nations, It was for mischief that Thou didst bring them out of Egypt? But we pray Thee, to turn from thy fierce wrath; and repent of the evil, which, peradventure, Thou mayest think to do unto thy people. Oh! this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet for this, O Most Merciful, slay them not in the mountain, but remember that this nation is still thy people. Most High! remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, and do not forsake us, but let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I thy servant have spoken according to thy word. Do not forsake us, for wherein shall it be known, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight, if it be not, in that Thou goest with us. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, and it shall come to pass, that if Thou wilt forgive our transgressions, wilt let thy glory pass before us, and wilt send thine angel to be among us, that we will put away the strange gods which are among us, and turning our eyes and hearts towards the tables which Thou didst graciously renew for us, we will walk in thy ways, with one heart and with one intent. Do Thou, therefore, O gracious Father, enable us to do so, that henceforth we may not put every man his sword by his side, and slay every man his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. Turn to Thee, O Lord, every knee which hath bowed unto Baal, and every mouth that hath kissed him; visit not upon us our past unfaithfulness, but let thine attribute of mercy continue to prevail over thine attribute of justice, and thus, O Eternal, bless us, pardon our sins,

and take us for thine inheritance, so that each of us may acknowledge that the Lord he is God! The Lord he is God. Amen!

S. The Union of Israel

The Union Of Israel. by Isaac Leeser "One God, one law, one people." In all the vicissitudes which have passed over our scattered tribes, the idea of one God was always present to them; they ever remembered that the Creator, who revealed himself to their ancestor Abraham, is indeed the same Power who governed all from the beginning, and directs every thing that exists as best suits his unsearchable wisdom. History affords no record that, since the destruction of the first temple; forgetfulness of the Deity could ever be laid to the charge of Israel, or that they at any one time adopted a belief in the existence of a divine Being other than the Creator. This uniformity of opinion has been the bond of union which constituted us one people in all our wanderings; for wherever we met, the exclamation the "Lord is one" proved to the traveller that he had indeed met a brother, who, like himself, sojourned among the gentiles, conforming outwardly to their manners and customs, whilst the heart within throbbed unitedly with all, who, like him, believed in the same God and obeyed the same law, with the hope for the reunion of the scattered elements of the once great nation which was called by the name of Israel.

Differences have, as is natural, sprung up among us at various times; persons have disagreed regarding the interpretation of the law, and some have been rigid observers of outward ceremonies, whilst others have esteemed them of less importance. Yet these men differed honestly, and each party, in endeavouring to prove that their views were the best suited to a liberal interpretation of Scripture, accorded to the other an equal honesty of purpose; as is clearly established by the well-known saying,■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■ "Both opinions are words of the living God."

There was, no doubt, at times, a heated ardour exhibited in their disputations, which, to the casual observer, may appear like bitterness; but independently of the fact, that these ebullitions of temper are of rare occurrence, it is only conformable to human nature, that men, in differing with each other, will occasionally forget the courtesies of life, for which forgetfulness they will ever afterwards feel the sincerest regret. Besides all this, they actually never differed on the great points of religion, on the fundamental articles of belief, on the interpretation of the principal commandment, and in the exercise of personal acts of piety which ought to distinguish the life of those who know their duty, and feel their dependence on the bounty of God.

When, therefore, the hour of danger came, when the Roman conqueror thundered at the gates of the holy city, though dissension reigned within its walls, every sword was turned against the foreign invader; and Sadducce and his opponent, the priest and the soldier, all strove to prove that they could die for their home and the law of their God if it was denied unto them to live free in the land of their inheritance. Times passed again over our captive race, and the disputes that erst shook the state continued in the schools of the learned when elucidating the law which was all that was left out of the wreck of their holy state; dissension, as we hinted already, occasionally was witnessed among the defenders of the faith; but still the union of the spirit was not wanting, and when the edict of persecution burst like the terrific thunder over their heads, there were no faint

souls in the homes of Israel, and many fell before the persecutor's uplifted sword, and those even who appeared lukewarm in the holy cause were among the foremost to embrace the stake sooner than forswear their trust in Israel's God.

What was the cause of this spiritual union among men who had no apparent community of interest? not a common language in their daily occupations! nor a common country in which they could dwell? We may answer that it was owing to the mercy of God, who wished to uphold a nation whom He had once established as his own peculiar people; hence results the astounding fact, that neither exterminating wars destroyed there utterly, nor that a constant intercourse with the world produced that mingling of the mind which is so fatal to the minority in all civil societies. Yet as Providence always works by natural causes, though they be often quite inadequate to the end they produce so in this instance there were springs of action put in force long before the people of Israel went into captivity. During their sojourn in the land of Egypt already, they had a language which had not its birth among the sons of Ham, but sprung from the speech of a nobler race, and was, perhaps, the same tongue which belonged to the father of the human family. With this language of Heber was connected the acknowledgment of the supreme

Creator as the God of the world; and when after their redemption from slavery a uniform law was superadded, given in the same language of Heber; proclaiming the, same great truth of one God: the union of spirit was perfected; and the children of Jacob stood before the world as one people through their belief in one God, their possession of one law, their knowledge of one speech.

Sinning, or what is the same, a falling off from the course pointed out by the law, was not unfrequently witnessed among them; but then at every step they took they found out, to their sore cost, that no good can result from a pursuit of sin, and every punishment, that followed in the wake of transgression, made them constantly more sensible of the superior excellence of the precepts which their law enjoined on them. They thus were sent as captives into Assyria and Chaldea, and became familiar with the domestic habits of the worshippers of idols, whose very images they too had foolishly worshipped in their days of prosperity. For a time they fancied, indeed, that their worldly, prosperity could be best promoted by a course not unlike that of the heathens; as we read in Jeremiah (Jeremiah 44:15-19): "Then all the men who knew that their wives were offering incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, The word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not obey thee in. But we will certainly do whatever we have resolved with our mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, when we ate bread in plenty, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by famine." But when, according to the predictions of the prophet, the downfall of the Egyptian empire was accomplished; when the Israelites, who had never worshipped idols without some reverence for the God Everlasting, saw the unmitigated horrors of paganism, the besotting effects of an unmixed idolatry: they became effectually cured of a hankering after false gods; and ever since that period, when the temple was rebuilt under Ezra and Zerubbabel, the national sin of idolatry was never witnessed among the sons of Israel.

What thus, in human probability, would have led one to believe as conducive to the destruction of the Mosaic system, became in the providence of God the means of removing an inveterate evil, which punishments of an aggravated kind had failed to accomplish during a residence of the Israelites on their own soil for a space of about nine hundred years. And with the destruction of the love for strange gods, the knowledge of the law of their adored Father in heaven grew into a national study, into an employment worthy of the chief of his people, and of the conqueror before whom quailed they who had been the conquerors of the world. And then, as a natural consequence, though their ancient language had ceased to be the vernacular and familiar speech of the people in their daily intercourse, and though it was found requisite to teach them a portion of the word of God in the Chaldean tongue, (Daniel and Ezra in part,) and to transcribe some of the prayers in this same cognate dialect of the Hebrew: the people were referred, as an object worthy of attainment, to acquire by study an adequate knowledge of the Hebrew, and the law, the prophets and the greater part of the service of the temple and Synagogue were ordered to be read in the ancestral language; thus binding the Israelites not only to the law, but to the original language of the law, in order that drinking each man of them out of the same pure fount, they might not be compelled to receive the impressions which religion requires through polluted channels, and to, avoid that great evil, of the word of man being substituted, by arbitrary translations, for the true unmixed word of God.

Moderns have at times cast ridicule on the use of the Hebrew in our prayers, because, as they tauntingly ask him who advocates the old paths, whether he is not better acquainted with the language of England, or France, or Germany, than with that of Palestine? Now, grant that the answer should be what the "wise ones in their own conceit" would have it, what does it prove, but that the modern Jews are not sufficiently sedulous in what behoves them to know, not that this language is not worth knowing, or not worth preserving. Besides, there is a radical fallacy in such a mode of questioning. It may not be in the power of every Israelite, we will even admit of the well-informed likewise, to express himself as fluently in a language which is not spoken any more, as in a dialect which receives daily a new polish or new variations and turns which are not easily expressed in a language which has ceased to be applied to things of daily occurrence; but this does not prove that any one of the dead may not be better adapted for certain purposes than the living languages; there may be causes why the former may have terms of expression which the latter can only approximate; and the former may have a perspicuity and elegance which we look for in vain in the latter. Now precisely this is the case with the Hebrew. We are not able to employ it to write upon chemistry or the modern art of war, or the new inventions, with the same facility as we use English, French, or German; but then it is a language, for all that, well understood by those who make it their study, and it has a peculiar closeness of diction, a richness of imagery which leaves our modern tongues far in the rear. But above all, it is the repository of God’s holy covenant; in it all our laws and statutes, our ideas and opinions, our hopes and our history are all originally contained; and then we know well enough, that with all the care which the most honest men can bestow, errors will creep into the best translations; and so great is the bias of fallible human mind, that preconceived opinions will often sway the translator to detect certain meanings in words which they evidently do not possess, and to convey these to his readers, despite that he himself thinks that he faithfully renders his author. The application of the foregoing will be easy enough. If we discard the Hebrew, we must resort to a translation of the Bible-passages without which our worship would be incomplete; and a translation presupposes an authorized one; and

this we never had among us, it was never attempted, and what is more, it can never be admitted, so long as we have no inspired translator to give us the true version of the words of the inspired writers. To preserve the law, therefore, in its purity, we must preserve the Hebrew, and to preserve this we must at all hazards retain it in our worship, wherever attainable. We do not mean to say, that persons unacquainted with the holy tongue should not be permitted to pray in a language which they do understand; but this we will fearlessly maintain, that the study of the Hebrew ought to be encouraged, and this can best be done by leaving it, as it is the language of public worship; we should prove its necessity, and thus urge our members to hasten to acquire an adequate knowledge of what is of such essential service to them.

Let us sum up our ideas on the union of Israel. The possession of the law and Scriptures in the language of Heber has proved the greatest benefit to our existence as a nation; it has marked us Hebrews by a sacred national tongue, just as our descent is traceable in our features; it has preserved us from heresies which interpolations and mistranslation into a strange dialect would necessarily have caused; it has screened us against the frauds of designing impostors and against the slothfulness of careless transcribers of the word of God. Ay, the very exclamation Adonay Aychahd sounds differently from the LORD IS ONE, sublime and striking as the last may be; there is a charm in the sounds of the language of Israel, it well harmonizes with the latent feelings in our soul; and it is a proper legacy to that nation whose members are the living witnesses of God's unity, of his universal rule on earth. Do we now ask, What is the bond which invisibly unites the Israelites of all lands? we shall be answered, It is the belief in one God, the possession of one law, and the union of the spirits by the use of one language, which, proving them one nation from one common descent, mark them most fittingly as the proper descendants of those great names of antiquity, who first professed themselves servants of the sole God, and vowed unflinching obedience to that holy religion which this God, the Creator of all, instituted as his sole will to stand unchanged to everlasting.* * We have not exhausted the subject, but shall recur to it hereafter.

S. The Unity of God

The Unity of God. THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF THE JEWISH FAITH. A Sermon, by The Rev. Morris J. Raphall, M. A., D. Ph., Preacher of the Synagogue, Birmingham. The following discourse was composed at the request of the Rev. Hugh Hutton, M. A. Minister of the Congregation of Christian Unitarians assembling in the Old Meeting House, Birmingham; who was desirous of placing before his hearers, an authentic Jewish statement of the doctrine of the Divine Unity, as an evidence that the Jews neither entertain the idea of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, nor regard any portion of their Scriptures as favourable to such an opinion. It was first preached by the Author in the Synagogue of Birmingham, on the Commemoration Sabbath of the Martyrs of Israel, April 27th, 5604 (1844), on which occasion it was introduced with the passage preceding the text, and which is here enclosed within brackets. It was afterwards re-delivered, with a different introduction explanatory of its origin and design, by the Rev. H. Hutton; first in the Unitarian Chapel, Warwick, May 5th, and afterwards in the Old Meeting House, Birmingham, November 17th, 1844; on both of which occasions it was listened to by large and attentive congregations. The present season has been one of great affliction and of cruel martyrdom to our ancestors in days gone by. Their sufferings and their constancy we commemorate in the service of these Sabbath days, reciting the hymns which their grief dictated to their piety, and in which they appeal from the cruelty of man to the mercy of God. How intense must have been the mental agony, the affliction of soul, which found a vent in that deep and pathetic lament which this morning has been read to us! How firm, how deeply rooted must have been the conviction that made them lay down their lives, when a sentence, a word, would have disarmed their murderers, and turned their most ruthless persecutors into friends and protectors. For these our ancestors suffered for no crime; they were truly, and in the strictest sense of the word, martyrs, witnesses to that one great and sacred truth, the UNITY of GOD! this truth it was which they were required to renounce, and which, as Israelites, they felt bound to seal with their heart’s best blood. This truth it was which they professed with their latest breath; when on the scaffold or at the stake the only reply the taunts of their enemies could extort from them was, “Hear, O, Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!” Let us, my friends, reflect on the import of these words; and while we drop a tear to the memory of the pious martyrs, who have exchanged the short pains of this life for the bliss everlasting of life eternal, let us with fervour and humility offer our thanks to Him whose grace strengthened their constancy, upheld their faith, and preserved to us, as the most precious legacy, that truth which they received in its purity and transmitted to us unimpaired. Of all the many marks of distinction which the love of the Eternal bestowed on the seed of Israel, his elect, the knowledge of that truth, as it is the greatest, so it has proved the most abiding. Let us, then, my friends, I say again, direct our attention to the sentence of God’s holy law, which Israelites in all ages have chosen as their confession of faith, and with which Moses, the servant of the Lord, opens the instruction he had been commanded to give them.

“Hear, O, Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!”- Deuteronomy 6:4. This was the sum and substance of the first commandment which the Eternal spoke to their whole assembly on the

mount from the midst of the fire, when he said, “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other gods before me.” All this is condensed in the short but powerfully expressive sentence, “Hear, O, Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!” One, absolute, immaterial, indivisible, without equal or associate; without plurality of essence or of person. Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Immutable; who alone of all that exists can proclaim himself, I Am, because He is the only one whose existence is inherent, absolute, and unconditional. Immaterial-He is not confined to space, nor subject to the accidents of matter. Eternal-He is without beginning and without end, therefore not subject to the influence of time. Omnipotent-He suffices to himself alone, and requires neither companion nor associate. One-He is perfect. Such is the God who created and who preserves the universe; the God who brought Israel out of Egypt, and whom alone they worship; the God who revealed himself on Sinai’s Mount, that his unity might become known to mankind. For the principal object of revelation must be, and is, to place within the reach of man those truths to which his own unaided researches could not lead him, but with which, nevertheless, it is most essential for the welfare of his soul, and the happiness of his species, that he should be acquainted. I say truths to which his own unaided researches could not lead him; for man’s researches must ever be guided by his reason; and though religious truth, as such, will always command the assent of reason, or rather, will never present itself in a shape so questionable as to be rejected by human reason; yet as reason, the attribute of man, is, like himself, finite and limited, whereas, religious truth relates to the attributes of Him who is infinite and unlimited; it follows that human reason, unaided by revelation, can not form to itself any conception of that which is so much purer, holier, grander than itself, and in speaking of which, man is obliged to employ words to which he can attach no clear and positive idea, but which he must define by negatives. Thus it is evident that religious truths of a higher order can only become known to man by means of revelation; a fact, to which, moreover, the experience of all ages and of all nations affords its testimony. For if it had been possible for human research to arrive at such truths, the profound wisdom of a Socrates, the sublime meditations of a Plato, the indefatigable studies of an Aristotle, might have led to results as important, to knowledge as certain, and to authority as generally acknowledged as the legation of Moses. But such was not, and could not be the case; for to none of these great men, though the most celebrated of profane antiquity, though gifted with reason as powerful and penetrating as ever fell to the share of mortal man, to none of them was that granted, the want of which Socrates and Plato deplore, and without which the highest religious truth remains beyond the reach of man:-namely, that revelation or communication from on high, which, as God alone knows himself and can reveal himself, proves the legation of Moses to have been divine; and by means of which, whatever of religious truth has become known to man, is either founded on that legation or recorded in its history. And of all the truths which that legation has been the means of promulgating, the first and greatest is the UNITY Of GOD. Indeed to me it appears clear that the chief purposes for which the Jewish religion was founded, for which the law was given, for which the revelation on Sinai was vouchsafed, for which so many miracles were wrought, and so many observances were instituted, were-first, to impart to mankind in the fullest, clearest, and most authentic manner, the knowledge of that greatest of truths, “the Lord our God is one;” and, secondly, to preserve that knowledge among them by means of witnesses, with whose very existence as individuals and as a people, and with whose every act of worship, public or private, the profession of this truth, the belief in the unity of God, should become identified to such a

degree as to render it the distinguishing feature of their faith. Let me direct your most serious attention to these two points; and may He whose loving kindness is extended to all who approach Him with humility of heart and singleness of purpose, vouchsafe to enlighten your minds and my own, that we may clearly perceive, and duly appreciate, the importance of the inquiry on which we now enter.

I. The chief purpose for which the Jewish religion was founded, was, first, to impart to mankind in the fullest, clearest, and most authentic manner, the knowledge of that greatest of truths, “The Lord our God is one.”

If we carefully examine the most ancient and most trustworthy of historical records, the sacred Scriptures, we find that man, in the exercise of that free will with which the Creator has endowed him, soon became disobedient; and that the more he yielded to his own passions, to his sensuality, his vanity, and his sordid selfishness, the more he became estranged from that Being who is all-perfect, and from that truth which it behooved him to cherish: and though a sense of his own weakness and of his dependence on some superior or controlling influence, taught man the necessity of propitiating whatever was greater and mightier than himself, it was not to the Eternal that he directed his thoughts. He raised his eyes to heaven and beheld its hosts, but did not inquire “who created these.” He felt the genial warmth of the sun, and he worshipped; he admired the pale light of the queen of night and of her radiant attendants, and again he worshipped; he heard the loud peals of the thunder, and was alarmed; he saw his favourite deities obscured, and he trembled. Wherever he looked around him he beheld evidences of power far surpassing his own, and he bent before them. But he beheld those powers acting in so many various and even conflicting ways that he could not, because he would not, trace effects so dissimilar to one first great cause. Therefore his imagination, influenced alike by his hopes and by his fears, depicted each manifestation of the workings of nature as the act, either of some malignant being to be dreaded, or of some beneficent being to be thanked: in the former case his terrors extorted the same adoration, that in the latter his gratitude and expectations prompted him to yield. We cannot with certainty decide how soon this worship of strange gods began to be practised by man. Tradition tells us that as early as the days of Enosh, the third in descent from Adam, mankind began to transfer their worship from the Creator to the creature; from Him who gifted them with reason to the offspring of their own imagination. One would have thought that the fatal catastrophe which befel that sinful race must have impressed on the minds of the chosen few who survived the waters of the deluge, a feeling of awe and of love for the power that preserved them: but few as there were, there was a Ham among them; and he who drew down upon his head the just malediction of an outraged parent, cannot have been very scrupulous or attentive to the instruction of his own children. Once more mankind forsook their God! How soon after the deluge they relapsed into the worship of idols sacred Scripture does not tell us; but that the defection began early, and was by no means confined to the descendants of Ham, is proved to us by the words of Joshua, who, addressing the Israelites, says “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel! beyond the river your fathers dwelt of old, Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and worshipped other gods.” (Joshua 24:2.) That it was not long before the adoration due to the Creator degenerated still further, and that along with, or as representing, the powers of nature, men began to worship idols, images made by human hands, is proved to us by the words of Laban, who, when some figures (Teraphim) had been carried away from his, house, complains “Why hast thou stolen

my gods?" (Genesis 31:30.) And that this vain belief, this outrage on reason and on religion, spread more and more, and grew stronger and stronger, is proved to us by the fact, that though in the days of Abraham there was Melchizedeck, a Priest of the Most High God, and who as a priest, must have had a congregation of faithful to which he ministered; that though Joseph, when addressing the Pharaoh of his days, directs the king's thoughts to God, who alone can ease his mind, "God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace;" (Genesis 41:16), and in return hears the king confess the power of God, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art;" (Genesis 41:39) yet when, a few generations later, Moses presents himself before Pharaoh in the name of the Eternal God, so completely is all trace of that name lost, that the king at once confesses his ignorance, and exclaims, "I know not the Lord." (Exodus 5:2.) But though men forgot their God, He did not forget them. Not only did He continue to them his manifold bounties, without which they could not exist even one moment, but while they, in the perverse abuse of their own free will, sought to rivet firmer and firmer the chains of superstition and ignorance, He, in the fulness of mercy, provided for them the means of returning freely and without constraint, to light and to truth. Among the myriads who prostituted their reason and wilfully closed their mind's eye, there was one man who looked around him and reflected. Nature, in the vastness of its immensity, attracted his notice, and while he admired the creation, his soul gradually became conscious of the Creator. Tradition tells us that Abraham recognised God in His works, and when he did so in humility and devotion, Revelation was afforded to him to guide and purify his meditations. His faith was put to many a test, his constancy had to pass through many an ordeal; but his faith still clung to the assurance, there is one El Shaddai, "Almighty God;" and his constancy was rewarded with the promise, that to him and his posterity the Almighty God would continue to be known, so that in him and in his posterity all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Thus strengthened by a knowledge of the truth, Abraham went forth, the missionary of the Lord. Wherever he came he proclaimed the name of the Eternal and Indivisible One, and thus once more a ray of light and of truth broke through the general gloom. The work thus begun by Abraham was continued by his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob; and that which had been the faith of one man, became the belief of a family. Yet among the millions of idolaters, throughout the wide extended sway of craft and ignorance, the influence of one family must, of necessity, have been very limited. Therefore it was provided that that family should increase and become a nation: and in order to preserve the descendants of that family from mixing and becoming lost amongst the crowds that surrounded them, in order to keep them isolated and distinct, they were transplanted to a country, the inhabitants of which, averse to strangers in general, and to shepherds especially,-disdained intercourse or connexion with this alien race. And, as mankind is most strongly attracted by contrast, it was so ordained, that when the descendants of this family had increased and multiplied, and were become a nation, they should he placed in the most abject and degraded condition-that of slaves-used with barbarous cruelty; and that they should be so placed in the most civilized country of the ancient world, but which, at the same time, was the stronghold of idolatry.

If we look at the condition of mankind at the time when Moses entered on his legation, we shall find that, throughout the whole earth there existed not, at that time, one nation or tribe-probably not many individuals-who knew and adored the Creator. The scanty remains of primitive knowledge, faint gleams amid the general gloom, were hidden by interested men, enveloped in mysteries and disfigured by types. The few who were initiated into these mysteries, held that it was needful to

practise on the weakness of the multitude, and that it was dangerous to afford the common people a knowledge of truth; and so effectually did they disguise and conceal it, that in process of time even the initiated lost the key to the types and mummeries they had to pass through, and were but one remove above the ignorance of the mob whom they deluded. Thus the darkness of falsehood overspread the earth; despotism and priestcraft were the twin excrescences to which that darkness gave birth, and by which it was fed. Temples were erected to all the passions, diseases, fears, and evils to which mankind are subject. Suited to the characters of these divinities was the worship offered in their fanes. Absurdity, impurity, and cruelty contended for mastery in their rites. Beastly intoxication was an act of adoration to one, public prostitution to another of these foul creations of a diseased imagination. Human victims bled upon their altars. The cries of infants consumed by a slow fire, in the embraces of a brazen image; of boys being whipped to death before the altar of a female divinity, were held to be music grateful in the ears of the gods; and all these horrors emanated from Egypt, the parent of civilization, which also became the parent of idolatry to the surrounding nations. The power of evil, of falsehood, of superstition had reached its height; and truth, which had sheltered within the household of Abraham, seemed to lose its last adherents, when the descendants of Jacob, slaves in Egypt, were made to join in the foul rites of their masters. But mankind is not destined for ever to be the victim of error. In the moral as in the physical world, in religion, as in every other branch of knowledge, the triumph of truth, though slow, is sure; the downfall of error, though long delayed, is not the less certain. The Great Being who called the universe into existence, and who wills the happiness of all his creatures, still pardons their backslidings and deigns to extend His protection unto them. At the very time when the reign of darkness seemed most firmly established, the victory of light was most sudden and complete. Moses, the messenger of God, appeared. “Truth and liberty” were the potent words which he proclaimed. Before the power delegated unto him, the lofty fabric, reared by superstition, crumbled into dust. Vain were the struggles of despotism and the efforts of priestcraft; the first step towards the regeneration of mankind was effected in the liberation of Israel. Had the end and aim of Moses’ mission been only to free the descendants of Jacob from bondage, and to constitute them into a nation, that might have been effected at once, by a power whom nothing can resist. But the object was higher, it was of universal importance. It was to raise the standard of truth, which, once unfurled, is never to be lowered. It vas to consolidate the opposition to error, an opposition which the unceasing efforts of error, for upwards of thirty centuries, have not been able to overcome. Therefore it was that gradually every hope the Egyptian placed in the protection of his divinities was made to fail him, as one after another, the most potent of them, bent in lowly submission at the bidding of the man commissioned by God. As animate and inanimate creation, the luminaries of heaven and the beasts of the field were alike worshipped by the Egyptians, so the supremacy of the one true God was manifested over each of them. And at the announcement of each new wonder, Moses was directed to declare it was done that men might know the Eternal, and that HIS name might be proclaimed over all the earth-and it was so proclaimed. One, at least, among the nations of the earth had learned to know the Lord. They in whose behalf the first great victory over evil and fraud had been achieved, were also the first who, in the fulness of freedom and conviction, had proclaimed his supremacy in the memorable words, “This is my God and I will praise “Him; the God of my father and I will exalt Him.-The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.” From the shores of the Red Sea, where they had beheld the power of the Creator over the elements, they were led on to Mount Sinai, that there, as had been foretold to them, they might

serve the Lord; and become the witnesses of his unity as they had been witnesses of his power, his justice, and his mercy. Six hundred thousand men with their wives and children, heard the voice of the Lord proclaim, “I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Six hundred thousand men, with their wives and children, heard and repeated the divine precept, “Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!” Thus a host of witnesses was raised whose evidence it has never been possible to discredit; and thus the purpose for which Abraham had been chosen, for which the Israelites had been delivered, for which the Jewish religion, taking its date from Mount Sinai, had been instituted, was accomplished; for the unity of God was made known to mankind, and that knowledge was preserved by means which the experience of thirty centuries has proved to be efficient. And as this was the chief purpose for which the Jewish religion was instituted, so for that same purpose it still stands erect among the many and conflicting systems of faith; which, in that long interval, have arisen and fallen, and those that still survive. Whichever of these has admitted the doctrine of the unity of God, has derived its knowledge of that doctrine from the inspired records of the Jewish religion, and supports itself by their authority. Whilst every system which does not admit this most sacred doctrine meets with a flat contradiction in those records, the divine inspiration of which, admitted by all believers in revelation, cannot be better proved than by the direct and pointed manner in which they meet and refute every departure from this truth, that may have been promulgated by systems which did not come into existence till centuries after the sacred canon of the Old Testament was closed. To the idolater these records briefly but decidedly pointed out his fatal error. (Isaiah 44:9.) “The makers of images are altogether vanity; their delectable divinities avail them not;” a declaration again and again repeated. To the Sabaean, who claimed worship for the heavenly bodies, these records point out a higher power, saying, “Raise your eyes on high-who created these? He fixes the numbers of the stars, and has given names to them all.” When men, unable to account for the origin of evil, asserted that the government of the world was contested by two independent principles, the one of light and good, the other of darkness and of evil, the sacred records of our faith vindicated the absolute unity of the first great Cause, and declared in the name of the Lord, (Isaiah 45:1), “I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things.” When in after ages the doctrine was propounded that divine justice required a vicarious sacrifice, a divine redeemer, who should redeem mankind by taking upon himself and removing their sins, these sacred records rejected the doctrine by declaring, (Isaiah 43:25,) “I, even I, am He who blotteth out thy transgression because of me, and thy sins I will not remember.” And when the doctrine was propounded that the deity is a plurality of persons, proceeding one from another, those sacred records met the assertion by the solemn declaration, “Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts:-I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.” (Isaiah 44:6.) Each attempt to set up an associate to his supremacy, Holy Writ rejects with the words of the Lord, “I am God, there is no other: (Isaiah 45:22.)-my glory will I not give to another.” (Isaiah 53:8.) And every denial of His absolute and indivisible unity it refutes in the emphatic words of our text, “Hear, O, Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is one!” And, as thus the religion resolves itself into one great truth, into which all its records may be condensed, we are warranted in saying that the chief purpose for which the Jewish religion was instituted, was “to impart to mankind, in the fullest, clearest, and most authentic manner, the knowledge of that greatest of truths, “The Lord our God is one.”

II. But it was not enough that this great truth was communicated to mankind; it was also necessary that means should be devised to perpetuate the knowledge thereof among them. And, therefore, the second purpose for which the Jewish religion was instituted, was to preserve the knowledge of that truth by means of witnesses, with whose very existence as individuals and as a people, and with whose every act of worship, public and private, the profession of this truth should be identified to such a degree, as to render the belief in the unity of God the distinguishing feature of their faith. That this was intended to be so is proved by every observance enacted in the law, by every religious rite practised in Israel. That it has been, that it actually is so, is attested by every page of the eventful history of Israel. Therefore, the law enacts, that throughout the wide extent of Israel's land, there should be one temple, in which one high priest should minister at one altar. Therefore the Israelite was commanded to keep holy the Sabbath day, because it commemorates the Unity of God, the Creator who called the universe into existence, the Redeemer who brought Israel out of Egypt, the Preserver who fed them with manna from on high. Therefore, we were ordered to observe the Passover, the festival of our deliverance, to commemorate the occasion when the Unity of God was first made manifest to mankind, by the victory of the One over the many, by the triumph of the One true God who created man, over the many false gods, the creation of man. Therefore, we were ordered to observe the Feast of Weeks to commemorate the season and the day when the hundreds of thousands of Israel surrounded Sinai's mount, when God spoke to all their assembly out of the midst of the fire, and they all heard the Unity of God proclaimed by him who said, "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other gods before me." Therefore, we were directed to observe the Day of Atonement; when once in every year, the one high priest entered within the one holy place, in the one temple, and at the one altar, offered one atonement for the sins of the people to the One God, who had declared, (Isaiah 44:22,) "I blot out like a thick mist thy transgressions, and like a cloud thy sins: return unto me for I redeem thee." Therefore, we are ordered to observe the Feast of Tabernacles, to commemorate how when our fathers dwelt in booths, as they came out from Egypt, the Unity of God was made manifest to them in his supremacy over all creation, when the flinty rock yielded them water, and their daily bread rallied down from on high. Thus, each holy day, each festive season recalls to the mind of the Israelite some great event by which the Unity of God was manifested and made known to them. Nor is his daily worship less calculated to impress that truth upon his mind, "Hear, O, Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is One!" Such is his confession of faith when he opens his eyes in the morning, to hail the light of day; "Hear, O, Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is One!" is again his confession as he closes his eyes at night. That which lies between these two periods of the day, his active life, the time in which he follows his avocations and his pleasures, should, if he be a true Israelite, if he feels his moral dignity, the importance of being a witness to the greatest truth; I say the intervening time, should in thought, word, and deed, be so employed, that his confession of faith may not be a tacit, but absolute condemnation of his life and conversation. Therefore, also, does he wear his phylacteries, which he binds "as a sign upon his hands and as frontlets between his eyes," and fix the mezoozah on "the posts of his house;" for in them is enclosed that portion of the word of God, in which this binding on of the phylacteries and inscription of the mezoozah is commanded, and which begins with the words, "Hear, O, Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is One!" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9.) And all this is done that his mind may be in a constant course of training to qualify him for the important trust that has been confided to the house of Israel by Him, who declared, "Ye are my witnesses,

sath the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me and understand that I am He: before me there was no god formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no saviour." (Isaiah 43:10-11.) And when the Israelite's last day comes, when that inevitable moment is at hand that "his spirit returneth to God, who requireth that which is past," (Ecclesiastes 12:7,) when that serious moment arrives, what are the words in which he bids farewell to this life, its fleeting cares and transient joys? What are the words with which he prepares to appear before the judgment seat of the Eternal One, on whose mercy he relies for life and joys everlasting? What are they but a confession of that Truth to which, through life, he has been the unflinching witness, "HEAR O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE!"

Note by the Editor.-In the above we present our readers with a sermon (for which we are indebted to one of our contributors now in England), by the highly esteemed Dr. Raphall, full of sound doctrine, and entirely coinciding with views which we have frequently expressed in our own pulpit lectures, no less than in the first book we ever wrote, "The Jews and the Mosaic Law <http://www.jewish-history.com/mosaic/index.html>." We have no doubt, that our American friends will thank us for the opportunity thus afforded them of being edified by so valuable an exposition of their faith; hence we have departed from our rule, hitherto strictly followed, of inserting the series of sermons we have given, none but original papers. We hope that Dr. Raphall will not be displeased at the use we have made of his sermon, as doubtlessly he is anxious to spread the truth that is in Israel; and the pages of our periodical are well calculated to effect this, at least among the greater portion of the reading men among the Israelites of America. We cannot help calling attention to the fact, that a Unitarian minister delivered it twice before an audience of his followers. It is a happy sign, that these strangers should come to quicken themselves at our sacred fountain; may it be a harbinger of better days, when under the reign of the Prince of Peace, men from all parts of the world "shall come to the house of the God of Jacob to be instructed in his ways, and when they will all walk in his paths, when from Zion shall go out the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

S. The Universal Belief in the Immortal Soul

The Universality of the Belief in the Immortality of the Soul.

There are some ideas with which the minds of mankind are so universally imbued throughout every portion of the globe, that we are almost forced to the conclusion, that they are either innate or were made known to the minds of men whilst they were yet one family, or that they are truths, the proofs of which are so self-evident as to be demonstrable by the weakest intellect, as well as by those minds through whose gloom the light of revelation has never penetrated. The most important of these ideas is the existence of a Creator; the next in importance is-the immortality of the soul; and as the idea of the latter, cannot I think, be well separated, from that of the former, it will be necessary for its elucidation to examine the nature of the belief of different nations in relation to a supreme first Cause.

It may be said that if the idea of a Creator, or of the soul's immortality is proved by nature, why is it that the most absurd superstitions reign dominant over the minds of the unenlightened? But an observer of human nature, must acknowledge that the chief misfortunes which the mass of mankind labour under, are generally derived from a sluggishness of thought, that render the many more prone to take things as they find them, rather than to make the effort to examine into their nature and causes. And as it is the nature of mankind to be progressive, whether it be in good or in evil, it happens that if their minds have at first taken a wrong tendency, in a few generations the light of truth if even not annihilated, is scarcely seen to glimmer through the veil of extravagances thrown around it, though it is ready to reclaim its ascendancy at the first favourable moment. If on the other hand, this torpor has been thrown off by some violent effort, they generally rush into the wildest extremes, hastily adopting some visionary theory, and then contort facts to bear them out in their new hypothesis; whereas, were they guided by the pure light of reason, ever ready to give facts a calm consideration, they would find no hidden mysteries to contend with, but would generally arrive at correct deductions. But it seems that the most dreaded antagonist that true religion has had to contend with, has been what may be termed "an enlightened philosophy;" for whenever and wherever man has attempted to deify his reasoning faculties, considering his unassisted understanding capable of comprehending the whole scale and purposes of nature and of being, he has generally built up such a structure of ridiculous inconsistencies, as would make the most ignorant blush to own. Let us instance the religion of the enlightened Trojans, Greeks and Romans, acknowledging an immortal deity of mortal birth, neither omnipotent, omnipresent, nor omniscient, with two associates, (Pluto and Neptune,) to make up for his want of attributes, and a number of secondary gods-beings living in the grossest immorality; whilst their exclusive ideas concerning the soul's immortality, precluding all but the noble and celebrated from receiving rewards and punishments in a future state, place the religion of these enlightened nations (if we exclude the Egyptians,) on a level with those debased tribes that occupy the largest part of Africa yet discovered. The religion of the negro race consisting of fetish worship, as of "a divinity dwelling in some inanimate body, endowed with intelligence and with, the knowledge of the secret thoughts and actions of his worshippers, with power to do them good or harm," is as certainly just as worthy

an object of worship as the fate-controlled Jupiter, whose power chiefly consisted in discharging thunderbolts forged to his hand, whilst their cruelty exercised at the funerals of their kings and princes, in burying alive a number of their wives and slaves, to furnish the deceased potentates with a suitable retinue to attend them in the other world, was at least, granting them that immortality which was denied to them by the more enlightened and philosophic Greeks. If we now view that part of Asia, where the Grand Lama is worshipped “as a god dwelling amongst men,” we find a belief of his eternal existence, connected with the doctrine of the transmigration or immortality of the soul; as his followers suppose that he merely leaves the body where he took up his temporary abode, and enters another in a supernatural way, changing his form and not his existence. Somewhat resembling in this particular was the Egyptian worship, whose religion is so blended with the idea of the soul’s immortality, that the one cannot exist without the other. We will instance the god Apis, whose soul, the Egyptians supposed had been transferred to an ox, under which form they worshipped him; and their goddess Io or Isis, whose soul after occupying the body of a white heifer, afterwards remained its natural body.

If we extend our researches, we find that some of the ancient nations had ideas of an Eternal Unity, and as a matter of course juster ideas of the human soul. We will first turn to that people where the light of truth shone with the feeblest lustre. The religious belief of the Brahmins consisted in the idea of “the existence of one in all things, and all things existing in one; God in the universe and the universe in God, and nature as the revelation of divine intelligence; divine rest as the perfection of happiness, consisting in the immersion and absorption in the godhead, attained immediately after death by the deserving;” whereas the souls of those who do not obtain this state of rest, transmigrate into different bodies for a farther purgation; the whole period allotted for this, being 4,230,000 years. The worship of the Persians was of a purer nature, not having entirely lost sight of the great first Cause, but colouring the ideas of a Creator, in the superstitions engendered by a long state of ignorance. “The votaries of Ormuzd, the pure and eternal light and origin of all perfection, would at death pass over the bridge Shinevad into the dwellings of the happy; whilst the slaves of Ahriman (or of evil passions,) would fall into hell, that the spirit of evil would be finally annihilated, the resurrection of the dead to follow, and the earth be renovated and prepared for the abode of the virtuous.” But the religion of the Chinese, in the abstract, approaches nearer to that of the Bible, than any other we have noticed. “The Supreme Deity, the essence of all things, is eternal, invisible, incomprehensible, almighty, merciful, just and beneficent.” But in endeavouring to elucidate these grand ideas, they opened a wide door for superstition to enter in. According to their ideas, he originated from himself; he cannot be represented by any image, neither can he be worshipped, because he is elevated above all worship; but his attributes may be represented by images and worshipped.” Their ideas of the immortality of the soul are also more refined than those noticed-“he who has done good in this life, will be rewarded after death; and he who has done evil, punished. They there are two distinct places for these two sorts of souls, and to each soul a station is assigned according to its deserts.”

Whilst the learned of the different epochs preceding this, have gone through the greatest labour in collecting information concerning the manners and religious customs of the ancient nations, causing their readers to have a more elevated opinion of their state than they would have arrived at by a casual glance; how plainly have they shown the power that preconceived prejudices exist in warping the judgment of those otherwise of liberal and expansive minds. The religion of the

Hebrews, a recorded emanation of the Supreme Creator, the basis of the Jewish faith, and from which the Mahometan and the Christian have derived their hopes of salvation, has been less understood, less commented upon than the superstitious worship of the most insignificant people; and whilst all have a ready access to the records of the tenets of their faith, and whilst all can make themselves acquainted with the sublime attributes of the God of Israel, they have sat in judgment upon the Supreme, by declaring the statutes He enacted for the government of Israel as debasing in their tendency, by blindly casting away the evidence of the Bible to the contrary, and allowing their imaginations to supply their want of knowledge from the pages of prejudice. It is sufficient to call up a smile of pity in the face of the gravest, to find that whilst the belief of the soul's immortality was accorded to the most ignorant nation of antiquity, it was denied to the Jews;*-a nation devoid of all superstition, and in frequent converse with the supreme Creator. One of the arguments used in support of this supposition, was that the Bible does not in any part treat of it.

* It is really laughable to call to mind instances of the ignorance of those called well-informed, concerning the Jews and their belief. I recollect not later than the year 1840, reading in a New York paper words to the following effect:-"We attended the funeral, yesterday, of the late Rev. I. B. Seixas, and were much pleased and edified with a discourse delivered by the Rev. I. Leeser, Minister of a Jewish Congregation at Philadelphia, in which he painted the Jews' belief of the immortality of the soul; an idea, which will be quite new to some of our readers, as it has been supposed that the Jews did not believe in a future state." In this view of the case they seem to have lost sight of the plan and intention of the Bible; the object of which was to give a correct history of the creation, and of man from the creation until the close of the prophetic missions, as well as the laws by which man should be religiously and civilly governed; and as each was enjoined to make himself familiar with the whole, it was necessary that its style should be extremely laconic. Those things which men at the time of Moses had a knowledge of, it passes over with a mere allusion. For instance, we find in the first chapter of Genesis, that God, by the power of his will, created the heavens and the earth; but Moses makes use of no arguments to prove that God had the power to do so, or to show from whence he derived that power; for the people already knew that He was omnipotent and eternal. Knowing this, it would have been a matter of supererogation to have told them that the breath of life that God breathed into man, through which man became a living soul, was co-eternal with God himself. With their sublime ideas of the Most High, it would have been an anomaly for them to suppose that, that which once appertained to the Creator, could cease to exist.

If we proceed a little farther in the Bible, we find "that Enoch was translated to heaven, without seeing death; not that the knowledge of his being taken to heaven excited any surprise; but merely commented upon, because he was translated bodily. Was Enoch, then, the only favored one? were there no others whom God thought worthy of immortality, save Enoch and Elijah? had the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the friends and favourite servants of the Deity, no knowledge of the important truths which ignorant and base idolaters were in possession of? Knew the heathens more than Moses,-he who conversed with God face to face,-he who was deemed worthy of being the leader and conductor of one nation from the midst of another? Knew these sensual tribes more than the holy prophets that succeeded Moses? No! they all knew that, if at death the sun should no longer be their light by day, and if the moon should give no light unto them

by night, God would be their everlasting light, and their God their glory; and if their body should return to the earth, as it was, “their spirit would return to the God that gave it.”

Even if the Bible or the works of the Jewish sages did not treat of the immortality of the soul, ample evidence have we that the ancient Jews believed it, from the fact that the Persians in their creed have adopted, with a little alteration, the ideas which we hold of the resurrection of the dead, no doubt derived from the Jews during or before the reign of queen Esther; and as late researches have shown that a body of Jews have dwelt in China since before the destruction of the temple, we have every probability for asserting that Foe and Confucius were well acquainted with the Hebrews and their Scriptures, and derived from them their ideas of God and the soul’s immortality, from their near resemblance to our creed when divested of the garb of superstition. In regard to the assertion that the modern Jews owe their ideas of immortality to the Christians, it must be remembered that it has always been man’s nature to scorn the oppressor, and to refuse to adopt any ideas forced upon his belief; and when we call up before our imaginations the terrible and countless tortures inflicted upon our helpless race, is it to be supposed that we would have been more ready to adopt this idea than any other tenet of the Christian’s faith? On the contrary, we are and always have been too well satisfied with our belief, either to add to it, or to take aught from it,-too well acquainted with our holy book not to acknowledge that it is a sufficient guide in this world, and a sure guide to the next; and all we ask of others is, that they will not judge us ex parte; satisfied that, if our claims are weighed carefully, and the evidence fairly sifted, we shall hold that distinguished place in the consideration of mankind in which our God has placed us.

S. Solis.

Chapter 101

S. The Vocation of a Minister

The Vocation of the Minister. A sermon preached by Dr. Lilienthal, at his Installation as Chief Rabbi of the German Congregations of New York.

Lord, how can I return to Thee what Thou hast done for me? Thou, Father, who searchest the innermost heart, and knowest all thoughts, ere they have yet sprung up in the mind of man, Thou knowest, Father, how I would pray to Thee to-day, in what words I would express my grateful feelings. My heart is so deeply moved, my soul so profoundly touched, my mind so completely wrapt in gratitude towards Thee, that I cannot find the word, the right word, wherewith thy servant, thy child would approach Thee. Thou hast placed me to-day at the head of three Jewish congregations; hast ordered me to lead them in the paths of right, to teach them to walk in thy Law, in thy holy Law; to bring them all to Thee, in order that one day, which Thou alone knowest, O God! none, none of them may be missing before thy holy throne. O Lord! I profoundly feel this mercy which Thou hast graciously extended to thy servant, I sincerely acknowledge what is thy fatherly goodness Thou hast imposed on me, and humbly I pray unto Thee; who am I, and what is my life, if Thou O Lord! art not with Me? O, listen then, if I implore Thee with the wise Solomon: "Endow thy servant with an understanding heart, which knows how to guide thy people, which is able to distinguish between good and evil." And as Thou hast graciously accepted his prayer, accept mine likewise. O Father, with thy all-kind eye, enlighten Thou my mind, endow Thou my heart with Love to Thee, fill my bosom with a sincere desire, for thy Law, in order that I may labour for the sanctification of thy name, to the glory of our faith, for the welfare of the flock who to-day have placed me before Thee to give a solemn pledge in thy presence concerning what I shall henceforward be to them. Hallelujah! Amen.

Beloved Brethren,-

Since the time your honoured choice, which: places me to-day at your head as religious guide, fell upon me, I had the pleasure of performing three marriage ceremonies,-of being three times the means of uniting loving hearts. But the most beautiful union to be consummated by me, was reserved for the present hour. The love which united us at the first moment, the confidence which animated us from the first hour, the sympathies which from our first meeting brought us together still nearer and nearer, have at last caused us to conclude a holy, glorious, and blessed alliance. As a fair, beautiful bride I look upon you to-day, my beloved congregation, in the youthful bloom of faith, in the freshness of religion, courage, and zeal, in the splendour of the most brilliant early morning light that dawns on you on this beautiful bridal-day ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ -"Thou art beautiful, my friend, thou art beautiful," and loudly beats my heart towards thee in love and delight. Thou art beautiful before the Lord, our God! to whom you have devoted yourselves; thou art beautiful before the world, which you have afforded so brilliant an example of deep, true religious feeling; thou art beautiful before me, to whom thou hadst spoken: ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ -"Long I have sought after him, whom my soul loveth!" Let me then believe, my brethren, that you love me; let me believe that, as you are every thing to me, I likewise am something to you;

that not cold calculation, but a higher and sincerer object has brought us together; ay, let me believe this, my brethren, for your love is my pride, my delight, and my joy. Is it not true, that our hearts beat in unison to-day? that they glow in the fire of love, and of gratitude towards Him, who dispenses all blessings, all salvation, and all success? Yes, the Lord has said: "They shall make unto me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them;" yes, the Lord enters the house of God, the dwelling of faith, and of religion, which we erect unto him; it is He who blesses our covenant; it is He, who with his paternal eye graciously looks down upon us to-day; it is He, who rejoices in the hour in which we begin such great things, and under Him, and before Him, the Almighty, I pronounce the words:- ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■-"I wed thee unto me," my flock! as that being, to whom my life and thoughts, my feelings, and my labours shall be devoted for ever more. Joyously I exclaim with the prophet: "I will betroth thee unto me for ever. I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, in right, and in mercy; I will betroth thee unto me in the holy faith in which thou worshippest the God of thy fathers."

Yes! in this holy faith is our covenant concluded; in this holy faith thou hast assigned to me the duties as Rabbi of three young, but flourishing, and large congregations; in this holy faith thou expectest me to walk and to live, to work and to labour, in order that the vineyard of the Lord may prosper in our midst. To thrive! yes, that is your wish and your prayer, as it is also my wish and my prayer. You will spare neither sacrifice nor trouble, and expect that I likewise, shall be up and doing, until the work of the Lord be completed. You will be active and zealous, and expect the same on my part. We will act and work in concert, you say, in order that the word of God may apply to us: "If thou walkest in my ways, to keep my commandments and laws, like David, thy pious father, then will I lengthen thy days, and thou shalt rise and flourish, as thy Father in heaven wishes it." But if we wish to act together, and if our united efforts shall succeed: then is it necessary, that a mutual, sincere confidence inspire us; but a sincere confidence grows there only, where every one knows his duties and fulfils them faithfully. Let us then devote this hour of consecration and devotion to answering the question: "What do we expect from each other?" by explaining and showing the duties of the Rabbi:-1, in the congregation; 2, in the Synagogue; 3, in the school; and, 4, in domestic life.

We find a very appropriate text in the prophet Malachi 2:6-7 :

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"The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found on his lips; in peace and equity he walked with me, and many did he turn away from iniquity. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and the law they should seek at his mouth; for he is a messenger of the Lord of hosts." And may the Lord show us the way which leads to our salvation, here on earth and hereafter in heaven. Amen.

I.

"What do you expect from me in the congregations?" is the first, and an important and difficult question.

Judaism, brethren, is split, at present, into two parties, a dangerous division has taken place, and where once harmony, peace, and love prevailed, there is now difference of opinion, difference of views, difference of wishes. The one exclaims: "Hold fast to the ancient institutions, hold fast to the venerable customs, hold fast to that which has been transmitted to us by our pious fathers. The law which Moses has instituted must eternally, eternally remain the inheritance of the congregations of Jacob." The others say: " Onward, onward, is our motto; 'onward' is the watchword of the times, onward is the spirit of the age, we cannot, we will not, we dare not remain behind, if cold indifference shall not seize every heart, if all shall not be abandoned. Whoever will not follow the wheels of Time and history will be crushed by the wheels of Time in its mighty, all-powerful revolutions, and then all will be lost." In it this wise, the parties are opposed to each other at present; in this wise the tents of Jacob and the dwellings of Israel, which formerly were the habitations of peace, have become the abodes of strife; the light of harmony which so beautifully illumined our horizon, has disappeared, and night has set in, and the heavenly voice of the prophet Isaiah resounds: "Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night?" And from us, who are standing on the watch-tower of Israel, you expect the answer, you look for the light which shall shine brightly and reunite all hearts. Thank God! this light is kindled; the Lord himself has kindled it in his mercy; the prophet has revealed it in the words of our text: "The law of truth was in his mouth." However diversified the views, however different the opinions may be, the "Law of truth" stands supreme; the teacher of the word of God has only to stand within the Law and he will be sure to walk in the path of right and truth, and to lead his congregation in the way of salvation and peace. In the law, which has preserved us with a miraculous power for thousands of years, lies the means to reconcile the parties; in the law, which the Lord has given us, there lies the "TRUTH," which is acknowledged by all, and as long as the pastor acts in strict accordance with this law, he may feel secure in the protection of God and be sure of the respect of his flock; for not to him, but to the law, this respect will be paid.

Brethren, I pledge myself to-day, before the Lord, our God, to walk in this law, to administer my office according to this law, and to reconcile all parties according to this law. Independent, without belonging to any party, strictly conforming to the law of truth, of God, I shall fulfil the holy and arduous duties which you have assigned to me. For as I consider it an especial honour to have been unanimously elected; as all hearts concentrated in the wish to appoint me as director of our religious concerns, and no parties were arraigned against each other: I must stand above all parties, conciliate all parties, since partiality on my part would be an injustice, an iniquity, and our text says, "and iniquity was not found on his lips." But if the position of the Rabbi is rendered difficult in the present state of things, it will be still more so in a country like that in which we live. The congregations are yet young; the houses of worship but recently erected; the institutions scarcely founded; how should there not be wanting many things? how should there not be forgotten many a desideratum? how should there not be omitted many an indispensable requisite? It could not be otherwise at the first start; no other result was to be expected in the beginning, where the members of the congregations flocked together from the most distant countries and the most varying climes; where every one had to toil to procure his daily bread, to satisfy first his daily wants; and certainly, the Lord looks down upon you with pleasure, and bestows his heavenly blessing on that which you, my beloved congregations, have already achieved for his holy name. But a longing for improvement has been awakened in your hearts; a desire to press onward in the cause of your God has risen in your soul; this wish; which does you more honour than every thing

else, has manifested itself, and it is from this reason, from this motive that you have extended to me the call, to act and labour, in order that the holy wish of these three congregations be realized.

Brethren, truly as I promise to-day to do every thing in my power, according to the best of my knowledge and ability, in order that the works of the Lord may thrive, it is impossible, utterly impossible, for me, where the labours are so many, so accumulating, if I should remain unaided in my efforts. Rabbi Yishmael taught: "Do not rely on thy own opinion, or thy own judgment; thou art man, and liable to error." "To follow the many" we are taught in the Bible; and the wise preacher says: "Two are better than one."

I shall follow this wise and holy counsel. I shall appoint a ■■■ ■■■ of learned, pious, and intelligent men, who will consult, deliberate, and decide with me; whom I shall make acquainted with the most important questions; with whose aid I shall continue to study the Law of God; and according to whose advice I shall regulate my ministration.

I shall follow the wise direction of the already-mentioned teacher: "Say not, Accept my opinion, for they are entitled to vote, and not thou alone." I shall, on every occasion, listen to and appreciate your advice, respected heads of my congregations. Yes, it is this which I urgently beg of you: continue to be to me the same friends, who, in the interest of your congregations, in the interest of your religion, have advised me so sincerely and so truly. Continue to be to me the same friends, who will call my attention to the wants of your congregations; who will direct my eye to any object that may require my examination; who are desirous of knowing the precepts of our Laws and are ready to listen to them; who will continue, as you have so well begun, to aid me in my exertions; who will never withdraw their co-operation, nor slacken in their zeal:-and we will, we must succeed. But you, also, beloved individual members of my congregations, do not withhold from me your assistance or your advice. "Through all my teachers have I became wise," is an old and true saying, and I shall faithfully follow it. The advice of every one will be welcome to me; to the wish of every one I am ready cheerfully to listen, and to comply therewith, if possible; come, come, then, you are welcome to me every hour. With the words you salute me with to-day, "Peace be to thee, and peace to him that helpeth thee,"-I shall, in my turn, salute you: Welcome to the every one, welcome in the name of the Lord; "Then God will help," that we labour and live to his honour, in peace and concord, in delight and love.

II.

"What is the duty of the Rabbi in the Synagogue?" is our next inquiry; and our text says, "And many he turned away from iniquity." "From iniquity? from what iniquity?" Oh, my brethren, the houses of worship, which are all to us, which are the banner round which we rally, which are the places where we meet as Jews, as brethren; which are the only thing that has been left us after we have lost temple, priests, and prophets; these houses which are called "Minor sanctuaries,"-or have become an object of scorn, contempt, and mockery to all nations. Will they designate a disorderly meeting, they say; "They behaved as in a Synagogue;" do they wish to scandalize a discordant chaunting, a simultaneous, confused talking, they say: "They behaved as in a Synagogue," do they wish to describe a running in and out, to and fro, an indecent posture of sitting, standing, and walking, again they say: "They behave as in a Synagogue." Brothers, is it right that we have given cause to such profanation? Brothers, is it not a sin, that the holiest object which we possess on earth, and which leads to the Holy One, who is enthroned in heaven, has

become a by-word and a proverb? Is it not a sin that, while we appear before man in a respectful, becoming manner, we are neglectful in this before God; that we converse and talk together as if we had forgotten the precept, Know before whom thou standest? Is it not a sin that, on this account, many do not frequent the houses of God, do not join us in prayer and supplication, but turn their back rather than their heart and soul towards the house of worship? Is this disorder conformable to our laws? is it prescribed by the ordinances of our sages? No: in the Talmud, Maimonides, the later rabbinical writings, and, lastly, in the Shulchan Aruch, we are taught just the contrary. We are told that we must behave with gravity in the houses devoted to prayer and religious instruction; not to quit the Synagogue whilst the law-book is open for public reading; nor to read our prayers aloud except on the New Year and the Day of Atonement, and then only in such a tone as not to disturb others in their devotion. But nowhere is it permitted to read our prayers in an unbecomingly loud tone of voice, and to interrupt the harmony of worship by conversation, careless responding, and other unseemly demeanour; nay, even the moderate raising of the voice on the solemn festivals, permitted by some, is considered inadmissible by the Zohar and others. Is it not, then, according to the authorities named, a sin which cries to heaven, to have rendered our houses of worship a by-word, a mockery to all nations?

"And many has he turned from iniquity," says our text. It is the duty of the Rabbi to abolish this sin. If we insist on decency and decorum in our house, why should not order, decorum, and quiet prevail in that house, where we pronounce, "We bend the knee, and worship the Most High;" where we are to pour out our hearts in devout humility and sincere devotion before God, our Father; where our soul ascends to Him from whom we expect the welfare of our families, and the salvation of our children? Oh, my brethren, renounce this sin; let me persuade you to leave this course which has rendered us contemptible and a laughing-stock in the eyes of the nations, which has so deeply disgraced our louses of worship. Much as I think it to be my duty to teach the word of God in his house-to proclaim to you His law on every occasion-to preach to you the eternal truths on every solemn occasion-I consider it to be equally my duty to introduce order and decorum into our houses of worship, to see that the divine service is performed according to law and rule, in order that the scandal about our Synagogues cease, and that the words of the prophet be fulfilled: "And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, sanctifying Israel, when my sanctuary is among them for ever."

I have caused, accordingly, to be appointed a special committee, who will act on this important matter, in conjunction with me and my ■■■ ■■■; but I hope, also, that you, all of you, will assist in the effecting of this improvement of our divine service, of this purifying of our devotion, of this exalting of our religion. I shall undertake nothing that militates against the law; but on whatever is founded in the law I must insist, for the sake of the law, of its being obeyed; and you, my brethren, will, I trust, assist me to carry it out. And your co-operation, respected Readers of the Synagogue, I claim more especially. It is you who recite the prayers; it is you who take the lead in the Synagogue; and much depends on the Reader, that the house of God becomes a house, whither the congregation direct their steps with delight and joy, and where they offer their prayers with devotion and humility. A pious, God-fearing Reader can change the house of worship into that house, of which is said, "And I will put my sanctuary among them for ever;" exert yourselves, therefore, soon to make it so. My advice, my support, my assistance shall never be wanting; as friend I will stand by you in every good measure you propose, to accomplish this beautiful object.

III.

"What is the duty of the Rabbi in the school?" is our next inquiry, and a more important and holier point than this we have not to discuss: "For the lips of the priest should keep knowledge." To educate our children as Jews, as good men, as useful citizens is the highest and most excellent commission we have received of the Lord.

Children are the blessing of Heaven. What is dearer to the heart of a father than his children? for whom does he labour and toil but for his children? What is dearer and more precious to the heart of a mother than the little ones that she has borne, whom she has nursed and reared with solicitude and care? They are your all, they are your most precious wealth on earth, as they will be your delight and your pride in heaven, where you one day will meet them; and should we not exert ourselves, and risk, and hazard every thing in their behalf in order to meet them there? "Certainly, certainly," you all must answer; but say for yourselves, my brethren, if these little ones, these dear children do not receive a thorough Jewish education, what have we not to fear for them in this country, where every one is permitted to act according to his will and opinion? We, who are already old, bring with us from our home and our fatherland the old wages, the old customs, the old Jewish life, the old Jewish heart; we, who have lived under oppression and destitution, feel here, how deeply we are indebted to the Lord, who has redeemed our name and our honour; and our heart and our soul instinctively cling to him. But our children, who are brought up in this, to Israel so unaccustomed, liberty; who go forth into the distant parts of the country where the Jews live sparsely and scattered, what will become of them, if Jewish principles are not deeply planted into their minds, if religion is not deeply engraved on their hearts? "Give me back my erring children, or I die!" is the exclamation wrung from many a parent’s aching heart. O, I know there is no greater affliction for parents than to lose one of their children; but how great, how infinitely greater, must this grief be, if a child is religiously and spiritually lost to us. O, may Heaven guard you from any such calamity, which would break the heart and spirit; from any such trial which has hurried to an untimely grave before their time many a loving father, many a fond mother. But if you wish that He shall save you from this evil, you must obey his Law, which says: And thou shalt teach them diligently to your children." Yes, brethren, do every thing that the schools for the religious education of our children may prosper and flourish. You have felt yourselves what is necessary, and that it is high time to make some preparation for attaining this object. You have commenced to erect schools for this end, and you contribute cheerfully to insure their success and prosperity. My assistance shall never be wanting; I shall assign to myself the religious instruction of all boys who will become of legal age (■■ ■■■■) and of all girls who shall have attained their twelfth year. I shall willingly assist the schools with my advice; and I hope that here, as in every thing else, you will appreciate my intentions and not withhold your support. To you, respected directors and teachers of the schools, I address myself particularly. Do not slacken in your attention, in your assiduity, in your diligence, in your sacrifices, to realize this beneficent undertaking. Your best reward you will find in the improvement of the children; there is nothing more encouraging and more delightful than to see the young grow up in the fear of God, in the love of the Lord, and his holy Law, in knowledge and in intellect. Whoever is callous to such impression, knows not the fairest and sweetest joys of life. And you, my brethren, you know these joys, you know to appreciate them, for the undertaking of this work by you proves it; O continue then, to work with me, in order that the holy tongue and the Law be not unknown to our children;

continue to act, in order that the love for our holy faith may be cherished and fostered by our children; and when, long after we shall have departed this life, our religion flourishes in this country, then it is you who have sown the seeds for these blessed fruits, and posterity will bless your name.

IV. And this holy and important consideration leads me to the answering of our fourth inquiry on the relation of the Rabbi to domestic life. In my wish to educate your children that they may become your delight; in my promise to assist you with all my might and power, that they may grow up to the honour of God, and to the satisfaction of their fellowmen; you will easily perceive that I am heartily solicitous for your good-for your permanent welfare. The more cause the members of my congregations will have to thank God for the blessings bestowed on them, the happier shall I feel; the happier you are, the more contented shall I live. Yes, my happiness shall merge in yours, my peace concentrate in yours; and you know, whoever feels in this manner, must be a good, true, and faithful friend.

Yes! I pray you all, as many as are here assembled in the presence of God, to consider me your friend. Do not see in me only the pastor who is to admonish, to exhort, and to preach; do not only see in me the man who has to manage and to direct your religious affairs; no, look also upon me as the friend who ís ready to share your joys and your sorrows. Between us there do stand no little worldly interests which so frequently alienate the hearts of men; I have nothing in common with all those worldly pursuits that have a conflicting and aggravating tendency; I can be to you, in the strictest sense of the term, a friend, true and faithful. I shall make no distinction between rich and poor, wealthy and humble; whoever knocks at my door shall be welcome to me; whoever seeks my advice, shall receive it according to the dictates of our Law, for it embraces every thing; whoever wants my intercession in any cause which lies in my power to intercede in, shall find me always ready to serve him. Where a sick man suffers, I will hasten to his couch, and convey to his aching heart the consolation of religion. Where a family, surrounded by bitter want, prays for the blessing of God, I will help as far as I can. Where a poor widow, or a forlorn orphan weeps, I will plead their cause, and endeavour to procure them support. Where the Lord has graciously bestowed his blessing, I will rejoice with the joyful, and offer thanks to the Lord with those who owe him their gratitude. Yes, the interests of every individual member of my congregation, I shall consider as my own, and shall assist and advise, wherever I am allowed to do so, in order that the ties of love may knit us still closer together; that mutual confidence may increase, that the beautiful work which we have commenced to-day may rapidly thrive and flourish, and that in future days we may look back with gratified feelings on this joyous hour, which we celebrate to-day.

These, my friends, are the pledges which I offer, these the promises which I give to you to-day; I shall endeavour to fulfill the vows made to the Lord, before the whole world. And that He, from whom cones every blessing, who dispenses every success, may support me with his spirit, with his light, and with his power,-is my prayer to-day and for ever. Amen. And thus we approach Thee to-day once more, before we leave thy house, all-kind, omnipotent God! Thou art our beginning and our end, and without Thee all our labor is in vain. If Thou, O Lord, dost not build the house, the builders toil in vain; if Thou, O Lord! dost not watch, then all our labour is idle and futile. Oh, listen then to our supplication in this hour of devotion, which flows from our deeply moved and grateful heart, and in which we invoke thy help and thy protection; give to our enterprize thy divine assistance; enlighten our mind with thy spirit; invigorate our heart with the sun of thy mercy; bless

our undertaking with success, and Israel will prosper, and Jacob will flourish in this country, for the welfare of which we pray Thee.

Like no other country on earth, O Lord, has this one received us: like no other land, it has generously removed from our shoulders contumely, and cruelty, and oppression, and with equal rights and equal privileges it has hailed us as brothers. Take, then, O Lord, this republic under thy special protection; grant that it may rise and prosper as it has hitherto done; that it may improve and contribute towards the happiness of mankind; yes, if Thou blessest it, then will it be blessed; if thou pourest over it the plentitude of thy mercy, then will it prosper with all its inhabitants, for whom we supplicate thee to-day.

Turn likewise, O Lord, thy merciful countenance towards all the authorities of this country. Bless the President and Vice President of the United States; enlighten them with thy light, that they may effect the welfare of this country and the happiness of its inhabitants, that they may acquit themselves creditably and honourably before Thee and men.

Bless the Governor and the Representatives of the people of this state, and the magistrates of this flourishing city, that prosperity, peace and happiness may prevail in the land, and every one may feel contented with his place and station. And on the presidents of these congregations, which Thou hast confided to my charge to-day, look down, O Lord! in love and mercy. Strengthen them in the calling which they have accepted; grant them perseverance in the office which they so faithfully, so conscientiously fill, in order that they may be able to continue their labours to thy honour and effect much good for the glory of thy faith. Be Thou the Head of all our undertakings, the Leader of all our institutions, the Director of our benevolent associations, and they will thrive and flourish, for Thou, O Lord! art the Fountain of love, and of mercy, and of grace, and of truth. And we pray Thee, O Lord, do not withdraw thy paternal hand from all those who, in any way, participate in the management of the affairs of these congregations; teach them, the way they should walk in; show them the path that leads to success; be unto them the beacon-light which warns them of rocks and shoals, and show them the safe course which leads to Thee, O God and Father! And we beseech Thee, O Lord! to watch with thy parental eye over every member of these congregations. Grant their supplication and give to them what they desire and what will promote their true happiness. Protect the fathers who so assiduously work for the welfare of their families; bless the mothers who confidingly trust themselves to thy protecting hand; bless the children, the little ones whom we educate to thy glory, that they may become the joy of their parents, the delight of their Father in heaven. And we implore Thee, O Lord, to pour over us thy blessing, which thou hast spoken in the words of thy prophet Moses, and grant us thy light and thy peace, now and for ever. Amen.

Chapter 102

S. The Work of Regeneration

The Work of Regeneration A Sermon for Sabbath Teshuba, 5609.

O Father and King! have regard unto us, though we come laden with transgressions; listen to our prayer, though our iniquity lies heavy on us! and do according to thy unending mercy, but not according to the measure of our sins; and pardon, because Thou art good, and forgive, because Thou art infinite in love and kindness. Father! let thy ear be attentive to our call; and vouchsafe the light of thy countenance to the children of the dust, and bear them up in thy holy embrace, as the nurse carries the infant, far above the dangers which the earth and its tribulations present to our feet. King Eternal! ride Thou in our soul; implant thyself in our spirit, that we may adore Thee in the singleness of faith, and feel that our sins are forgiven, and that our iniquity has been atoned for, when Thou breathest thy precious peace into our hearts, and causest us to feel joy in righteousness, and pleasure in obeying thy will. And then will we be distinguished as thy people, the flock of thy pasture, when we are Thine, servants devoted to Thee with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might, to love Thee, to fear Thee all the days which we live on the earth. Amen.

Brethren:

What is man in his fallen state? what is he when he is again reconciled to God? These are important questions, which it behooves us well to consider, on which we must ponder with deep anxiety if we wish to solve the problem of our existence. Well did the ancient Rabbi say: “I was only created to serve my Maker;” but when man forgets his God, and neglects the duties which his Father has prescribed, he evidently misses the aim and object of his being. When first we open our eyes to the beauty of God’s creation we are in a state of purity, free from sin, free from guilt, free from the consequence of transgression; we are at peace with Heaven, and in harmony with mankind. The balance of nature has not then been invaded by our wrongdoing, and our sleep is sound, our dreams are peaceful; because our soul feels not the discord between our acts and the beauty of what the Lord has called forth to fill the earth with beatitude and gladness. But as we advance in life, this primitive innocence naturally quits us; “not to ministering angels was the law given,” but to sinful mortals, those whose nature is a well-balanced mixture of good and evil, in whose heart there reigns a twofold spirit, the inclination for enjoyment, and the power to subdue the will in obedience to what God has taught. The very awakening to this consciousness tolls the death-knell of infantine purity; and with it commences the active warfare between spirit and matter, between the brute nature and the sublime man, the image of God which dwells within us. Whatever be the reason of our twofold formation, we know enough to maintain that it does exist, and you all can testify to the fact being so from your own experience, since you never commenced to do what we call a good or bad act without feeling the struggle instantly rise within you, one feeling urging you on to the deed pictured forth in your mind, the other imploring you to desist. If you are suddenly impelled to give charity, your avarice begs you to restrain your hand, and to drop again into your well-filled purse the mite you first meant to devote to the relief of the indigent

brother before you; it tells you of your own wants, of the demands of those in your house on your frugality and prudence, and it persuades you that all gifts not bestowed on you and yours will ultimately impoverish you. Again, let your anger be roused against your fellow-man, and you are ready to strike with the fist of wickedness the helpless offender, or to wound yet more him whom your strong-arm has overthrown: and a still soft voice will counsel you to restrain the uplifted hand, or to sheathe the half drawn dagger, inasmuch as it is not for man to avenge himself on his brother, or to redress his wrong by the strength of his own arm. It is this double heart which constitutes our nature, and in order to teach us how to govern it with reason and sound judgment, and to promote thereby our happiness, was the law of God given us, that we might know when to act and when to desist, to distinguish between the voice which is evil within us, and that which is called good in the counsel of Heaven.

If now in stepping out of his innocent state of infancy, if when acquiring a knowledge of good and evil, a man is fortified by the wisdom which is of God, he will heed the voice which bids him to love his Maker, and to be kind to his fellow-men. But if at that period of diverging ways he foolishly steps into the smooth and level path which he imagines to discover on the road which sinners pursue; if he sees only himself and his in all relations of life, and finds nothing to obstruct his selfishness and those acts which administer solely to self-aggrandizement: he will naturally become estranged from God, a wanderer in the wide domain of his Father, without gratitude, without a sense of obligation, without consulting Him before he ventures to act, before he consummates his foregone thoughts;-he will not recognise the brother in the sons of man; he will not sympathize with them in their sorrow, nor have his heart glad if they are at peace, and prosperity smiles in their dwelling; for he will not believe that the eye of Providence watches over him; he cannot imagine that he is but one of the children of God, and that all others have received the same mission, the same desire for happiness, and are entitled to the same protection and indulgence which he claims for himself. Peace must be far from such a one; he fain would take up his permanent abode on earth, to dwell here unto everlasting; to taste unceasingly of the dainties which the forests, the fields, the brooks, and the seas offer to his palate; to be rejoiced unremittingly by sweet sounds of music, by the splendid conceptions of the poet’s mind, and the artist’s pencil; to revel without limit in the juice of the vine and the smiles of the fair; to be absolute in his will, undecayed in youth, undiminished in strength and the power of enjoying, despite of the vicissitudes which reach others, of the diseases which render the days of mortals full of sufferings and pain. And yet he feels pain in the hours of his highest enjoyment, and when the cup of life seems full of delights to overflowing, he then experiences the gnawing of the canker-worm at his heart, bidding him to experience his mortality. Still he is not subdued; he only plunges the deeper into the enslaving embrace of the passions; he will drink deeper, because his hand shakes whilst he grasps the cup; he will eat yet more largely whilst his organs are dizzy with the whirl of disease; he will clasp more closely to his bosom the fatal seduction that leads him astray farther and farther from the path of godliness; and he will in this way spend his days as though there were no God, as though there were no accountability. Rest on earth, he has none; and where is he to seek for rest in heaven? The earthly pleasure he has tasted to oversatiety; but has he prepared himself to enjoy those which are for hereafter? He himself was, to his imagination, supreme on earth; and has he learned that there is a Creator, an ever lasting God, an unforgetting Judge?

O how the heart of the righteous must bleed whilst viewing one to whom the earth is all-eternity nothing; who toils, who thinks only for what he can see, but has no feeling for the universe, the visible to the eye, and the yet greater world, the invisible which the Lord has formed? And yet speak to him of the folly of his ways; appeal to him that he is immortal, that his end must come before he has enjoyed himself one half as much as he desires: he will, nevertheless, not heed you, vainly deeming himself just in his own eyes, and as pursuing the proper road to happiness; because his spirit is sick, his sensations are blunted, and he has not acquired as yet the power over the brute heart which is within him, and he will therefore continue as he has done, walking the earth without joy, pursuing his selfish ends without satisfaction.

Still that which is not within the power of philosophical appeals to accomplish, is within that of the word of God-that guide to salvation, that voice which constantly warns and teaches the children of man. Though a mortal be plunged far into the mire of iniquity, he is not lost eternally, if he will but awaken and rise in the strength of renewed virtue. Just as philosophy is unable to teach its what is right in the beginning, so are its appeals insufficient to reclaim us when we have erred. The knowledge of our mortality, its greatest realization, may, and perhaps will, stimulate us to “pluck the roses ‘ere they wither;” the uncertainty of our hold on life will naturally admonish us to drink whilst the wine is still flowing, to eat whilst the table is decked with dainty viands. It is no need to hunt up the lives of the voluptuary and the tyrant to prove our position; for your own good sense will demonstrate its reasonableness, since, if we view the earth as our only, home, we must also regard it as the sole source of our enjoyment; hence the very approach of death ought not to deprive us of a single pleasure which presents itself, if we believe that there is no hereafter. But it is different with him who has such a knowledge of God and his ways as the Bible gives us; he has a field of operation not confined to himself, nor is his life bounded by the brief limit of hours, days, months, and years, which are allotted to him here below. He is then but one of a vast multitude all equally alike in being the objects of the tenderest care of the Creator; he with them is accountable to the same almighty Judge; and he is told that though he suffers the various His His of existence, it will not prevent his obtaining the due reward of all his exertions; and should he die without any worldly enjoyment ever having been his, he will still be in the presence of his God, who will recompense him with a delight which no eye has seen, save that of the Lord alone. But this is not all; reason would teach that if we had so glorious a destiny, and we had thrown it away by vain indulgence, and idle dissipation, we must have forfeited all claim to it by our unwise conduct. Religion, however, steps in with an assurance of life even here, and tells that heaven can be regained, though it was lost by transgression; that an offended Father can be reconciled by the contrition of the erring child. There is presented to us in the words of our faith, no reservation about an inexorable justice which must needs be gratified by the death of him who is guilty of death; but we are told that God is “merciful towards all his creatures.” (Psalms 145:9.) ,Multiform may be man’s transgressions; greatly may his sins call for retribution; but the goodness of God is far exceeding all his misdeeds, and the long-suffering Father will forgive, because He delights in pardoning. The question, however, arises: “How is this to be effected? is a man to sin, and yet not be punished? is he to defy the law, and yet escape unscathed?” Far from it; because our religion teaches us “The soul that sinneth, even she shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4.) But it is only the unregenerate soul, the obdurate will, that calls down for visitation; since only for the malefactor untouched by the fear of the Supreme are the terrors of spiritual death prepared; to him, however, whose heart is touched, no matter how late in life, by the word of God, there will be healing, there

will be a remedy, a reconciliation with the Lord, a renewed promise of life. Whilst man indulges in the base pursuit of earthly gain, aggrandizement and pleasure, his spirit is, as was said already, in a state of warfare with God, in a constant opposition to the interests of mankind. When he now awakens from this terrible trance, and finds the unsatisfactory result of all that he deemed good; to experience the cloying effects of mere animal indulgence; the tormenting consciousness of ungratified ambition; the ingratitude of the very instruments he relied on to forward his schemes: and then calls back the early lessons of infancy, or the instruction which wise men have addressed to him in his thoughtless moments, and which he then passed by as of no value or importance; or if he is of his own reflection driven to inquire whether life presents nothing but the earth and the earthly; if, in short, by any of the many roads to in>struction, he is moved to ask, “What has God taught us concerning himself and our destiny in the world?” he will, thus aroused, cast away the thoughts to which he before this clung; he will leave off from the pursuits which he hitherto loved, and attach himself to the Guide who never misleads, to the Lord of life, whose promises never deceive or fail of their fulfillment.

Therefore, says the prophet (Isaiah 57:19), “There is peace, there is peace to him that is far, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I have healed him.” Yet let a man have strayed far from the way of righteousness, or let him be only on the verge of departure, he is admonished that there is hope for him, that the Lord will heal his wounds, and that he shall have peace, peace within himself, a repose of conscience, a satisfaction with his own deeds, whereas before, all enjoyments only tired, whereas hitherto, all pursuits left a dreary void in his heart; he shall have also peace without; mankind, formerly his enemies, or envious of his success, revengefully disposed to him, because of his arrogance and pride, will now become reconciled to him, seeing that he sympathizes with them in joy and sorrow, that his bread is given to the hungry, his garment to the naked; he shall at last have peace with God, the breach which his deeds had made in the wall of righteousness will be repaired, the distance which his sins had placed between him and his Maker will be lessened, add he will be received again as one in whom the Father of all finds delight, the beloved child who is again received with joy, after a long absence, in the peaceful halls of his paternal mansion. In this scheme of repentance there is justice gratified, though no punishment is meted out, God punishes only to amend, to admonish the erring child that the path trodden is one of danger and death; if, therefore, the sinner returns to Him in sincerity and truth, the demands of justice are of themselves satisfied, since the effect of retribution is attained without their aid. To say, that without an atonement actually offered, God cannot forgive, is not only contracting his supreme power, as we would discover it through means of our reason, but is in evident contradiction to his declared will, and the knowledge He proclaimed of himself. He taught us that He will forgive any and every offence if we but return to Him, and obey his voice (Deuteronomy 4:29-30), because He our God is merciful, not because He has been appeased through sacrifice or punishment.

It is true He also declares in another passage (Exodus 34:1-35.), that He will suffer no guilt to pass unrequited; but in the first place, this may refer to the unatoned for man, to the unrepentant sinner, who passes through life without being converted back to God; and secondly even admitting that it refers to all sins, still it will not be asserted that no salvation can be purchased by man through repentance; requiting one for a wrong done, is an entirely different idea from rejecting him altogether, or asking of him something more than is in his power to accomplish. When the father

punishes a disobedient child, he corrects him only that he may be improved thereby; and even so when God requites our sins, it is only to chastise and thereby to improve the heart. He could not mean in calling himself merciful and long-suffering, to contradict himself in the next verse, and assert that every sin should be followed by entire condemnation; reason might indeed demand it, as we have said already, since every departure from the strict rule of right is, when purposely done, a willful disregard of the divine authority; but we are not left to the guidance of naked reason; we are under the teachings of God's holy Spirit itself, and therefore we speak of Him not as we would picture Him by unaided reason, but as He has taught us to regard Him, that is, as the One who is infinite in mercy and goodness, who will not be wroth for ever, nor contend to everlasting, so soon as the spirit is humbled before Him, and the souls that He has made are grieved. (Comp. with Isaiah 57:16.) This exhibits to us the doctrine for which Jews have always contended, in accordance with the express words and spirit of the Scripture, that life and death were surrendered to our own choice at the time we were endowed with liberty of conscience, and empowered to choose between good and evil. We have the disposition to do what is wrong, also the power to control this sinful propensity, whilst we are in a comparative state of innocence; so also have we the remedy given us to amend sin, and to atone for it in our own persons, when we have thoughtlessly yielded ourselves to iniquity. Were it that another could assume our guilt, or that in no other manner could salvation be procured, there would have been a positive doctrinal revelation of the sort imparted to us. This, however, is not the case: in one instance, it is said, "Even I, even I, blot out thy transgression for my sake, and thy sins will I not remember;" in another it is said, "The soul that sinneth shall die;" consequently there is no power to save the sinner from the indignation of God, except the remedy which He also indicated, that is, a thorough repentance and an amendment of conduct. In this spirit does Ezekiel teach, in the same chapter, wherein he exhorts the sinner that he must perish for his wrongdoing, that the death demanded is not absolutely the consequence of iniquity, because it is in the power of man to cause a revocation of the evil decree. And thus speaks the prophet:

[redacted]:

"And the wicked, if he turneth from all the sins which he hath done, and observeth all my ordinances, and [redacted]oth justice and righteousness, shall live, he shall not die." (Ezekiel 18:21.) The death, therefore, annexed to crime, is also removable at the option of the transgressor, since repentance is the antidote to what we may aptly call the poisonous effect of transgression; as the Rabbis express it, [redacted] "The Deity says, If I have created the destroyer, I have also created a remedy to overcome him." Every man, therefore, belonging to Israel, as soon as he has heard the message of life-(and who is there that has not?)-should arise in his strength, and cast away the trammels of passions, which bind him a captive slave to the things of this earth. It is not in the language of human philosophy, in the despair of one who hates mankind and their enjoyments, because his appetite palls by over indulgence, that he is told to forego his own will whilst the powers and zest of existence remain undiminished; but it is the call of a merciful Providence which bids him to number his days, that he may apply his heart to wisdom. He is told that there is abundance of peace to those who love the law of God; why will he then have warfare with Heaven?-why seek contest with the sons of earth? He is told that those who fear the Lord shall have length of days in a world where they shall enjoy delights at the right hand

of the Eternal Father for ever, whereas the sinning soul shall be cut off from the land of life.

Why will he then choose the death of his true portion, the spirit which will remain imperishable? And let him not flatter himself with the miserable hope of annihilation; that the grave will cover all that is left of him; that there is no account and judgment in the tomb, whither he is going. For, oh! there is an hereafter, a world enduring and bereft of earthly attributes, and where we shall be brought to judgment for all the deeds which we have done when sojourning our brief space on earth. The man who has only an existence in this world can soon cut short his sorrows, by severing the weak thread which binds us all to life. The stab of a knife, or the drinking of a small portion of a deadly fluid, or a plunge into the watery element, will remove him beyond the reach of the direst poverty or the pangs of the severest pain. It would be in this instance but to resolve and to be free. But, how does this tally with our actual experience? Let us suffer what we may, we start back with horror at the thought of the fatal leap which hurries us into eternity. Whence this feeling?-whence this dread? Is it not the voice of God within us, which bids us to stay here until He summons us to himself? Is it not in effect the admonition which we constantly hear: “Remain true and faithful-this is not thy abiding-place-there are joys beyond the grave, which are thine only on condition of obedience, patient enduring, and resignation to thy Maker’s will?” But oh! let him not delay to repent whilst his strength remains; let him think of his God before the “evil days come, the years in which he says he has no pleasure.” Let him call on God so soon as he discovers that he has sinned; let him pour forth prayer and entreaty to impress on himself the enormity of his ingratitude,-how he had the path of life laid open before him; how he saw the hand of Mercy stretched forth to guide him aright, and he chose to follow the path which leads to destruction, and rejected the offer which Mercy had addressed to him. Let him weep when he stands self-convicted; let him cover his eyes with his hollow hands when he is confounded and rooted to the spot at the horror of the conviction that he lived days, and months, and years, without hope, without pleasure, without God! Yes, whilst we are in pursuit of worldly things alone, we remove Providence from before us: we enter into business of profit, of aggrandizement, and renown, without his aid being asked for. Our own intelligence is to guide us-our own perseverance is to overcome difficulties-our own industry is to demand success. Happy, then, will it be for us, if we do not wait until all our hopes are dashed to the ground; before disappointment has soured our taste for life and its issues. Why should not the youth learn to love his God? Why should not the joyous bridegroom and the happy bride bow in humble adoration before the Giver of life? Why should not the wealthy merchant prostrate himself in thankfulness for the good which has been bestowed on him, the undeserving? Why should not the philosopher, in the midst of his discoveries, which will immortalize his name, lift up his heart to the One above, who giveth understanding to the wise, and revealeth secrets to the sons of men? Why should not the man of power fall down in the dust before the One by whose will princes rule, and whose are the dominion from generation to generation?

Yes, how beautiful would it be-what a delightful spectacle would it present, were all alike to be active in worshipping God, as all are alike from Him. How happy would it be, would all who have sinned acknowledge their fault, and seek again the God whom they have forsaken, and come again to worship with that renewed innocence as they did when first they lisped their prayers as they learned them pillowed on the bosom of their mother. O how bright would the earth be-what an Eden would the whole world present-and how peacefully would Israel pursue its mission to

propagate the word of God, and plant his standard in view of all the nations! And yet it is the business of each to return to God,-to depart from the evil which he loves.

Let it then be yours, brothers in faith! to commence the new year with a firm resolve to follow God's teaching, and to obey his voice with all your heart and all your soul. And may He, the Father of all creatures, listen to the voice of your prayer, forgive your iniquity, and bless you with his grace and mercy, renewing to you the coming year with joy and gladness, contentment and competency, and grant you his covenant of peace, even for the sake of his great and holy name. Amen.

Eve of Rosh Hashana, 5609. Elul 29, Sept. 27, 5608.

Chapter 103

S. The World and Its Vanities

The World And Its Vanities. A Lecture.

Delivered By Rev. S. M. Isaacs. The Shepherd King of Israel, in his inimitable Book of Psalms, has given us every proof that his towering intellect was fully capable to grapple with every subject that perplexes us children of a day. In reasoning on mundane pursuits, and their vain tendency, religious meditation, and its beneficial effect, his language is truly sublime.

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“Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted by vanity; he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, oh Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee.”- Psalms 39:7-8.

It is a pleasing reflection, that the religion we have the happiness to profess, entwines itself more closely round the fibres of our heart, the more seriously we meditate on its saving efficacy. When calmly we survey our condition on earth, and behold the shoals and quicksands by which we are encompassed, and then with our mental eye gaze on the celestial heights, and the promises made to the virtuous hereafter, we pluck consolation from the blossoms of futurity, in the direct distress; in the darkest gloom, when all around is covered by the cloud of adversity, the eye of hope pierces through its very darkness, and beholds at a distance a sky calm and serene, where trouble will be unknown, and where “the slave will be free from his master.”

Such being the sure result, when we contrast the gloomy present with the cheerful future, how painful is it to the well-constituted mind when he reflects that all man’s motives, desires, and objects are centered in the small spot of earth on which he dwells, to the utter neglect of even throwing an occasional glance at that beautiful expanse where he is destined to live for ever! To arouse a sleeping world from such delusive torpor, to awaken lethargic man from such apathetic feeling, our subject cannot be otherwise than beneficial; for in a condensed form, our text displays the vanities of this world and the lasting benefits of the next, and in its own powerful language, such as could only emanate from the sweet singer of Israel, it appears to instruct every son of man “Do thou choose life.” My Hearers:

It requires no oratorical process to convince every one gifted to think, that every man walketh in a vain show. There exist a multiplicity of cogitations in the heart of man, which, more or less, stand opposed to the council of God; there is an utter incompatibility between human desires and the unalterable order of things established by divine economy:-our weakness and short-sightedness would oft counteract the gracious designs of heaven. “This is our infirmity;” we forget our God; are on this score alone estranged from heaven. Our wish is on earth; and our very desire, framed in selfishness, originating in overweening conceit, is destined to terminate in disappointment. Were our wishes indulged, our feelings gratified, instead of being a “little less than the angels,” we would try to soar above them, without having the angelic qualities to support our pinions; how oft would

our personal desires prove detrimental to our interests, or prejudicial to the well-being of our fellow-creatures. Yes, it is the bane of man ever to desire that which he hath not, and which frequently is unattainable, whilst that already possessed is deemed of little worth. Where is that happy being to be found ■■■■ ■■■■■ who is “satisfied with his condition?” Alas! although God fills his coffers, health mantles his cheeks, and happiness his hearth, he is still craving for more; his carnal eyes, with avaricious glare, desire every thing others have, whilst Argus-eyed, he watches his own, lest others should take a longing look. Yet, how inconsistent is such procedure; for that which is immortal, to gain which he should look upward, he is well satisfied with things below; for that which is mortal, where he should be content with things below, in that case dissatisfied, he longs for things above his sphere; he would be great in earthly things, poor in heavenly goods. “Surely man walketh in a vain show;” not alone are his desires futile, and obstacles to his spiritual and even worldly progression; but in truth one of the worst species of ingratitude to Almighty God for benefits received. If we who are here assembled would but honestly survey our condition, and contrast it with those more humbly circumstanced, our tears would flow from the cheek of gratitude at the manifold benefits we receive, without we, on our part, having done any thing to entitle us to this preference; but here our vanity offers its aid, and we accept the doctrine of our Mishna as applied to the ungodly, “that which is thine is mine, and that which I have is mine;” and even then we are not satisfied; verily, “a man’s desire is his shame.” In truth, according to nature, he wants little here below; and yet insatiable, he would encumber his allotted period on earth to provide for generations still unborn; he would victimize his soul to provide luxury for the body. His morning thoughts and evening meditations all tend to one point,-how to be great as a man, when this very greatness, properly considered; is “all vanity;” still guided by this ephemeral child, he would place himself on the highest pinnacle of greatness, whilst the thoughts and anxieties attendant thereon render him truly miserable. Many and various are the aspirings of vain man in order to gain power, to domineer over others, to receive homage, without on his part exerting his capabilities to merit such distinction. And then he would prolong his days to the fullest limit of human life, while by intemperance he does all he can to contract the brief span of his natural existence. A third disturbs his mind incessantly, aiming to be what nature never intended him for, not having the prerequisites or organization necessary to complete half his desires; for no one can expect to enjoy the accomplishment of the whole of his wishes: hence it has been said ■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ “no man dies with half his desires gratified.” Wishing to become what is perhaps impracticable, man at last flatters himself into the vain belief that the same may be most readily obtained without any strenuous efforts on his own part; and at last, when too late, he finds that his energies have been wasted, his best interests lavished on that which is unattainable. Yet all this is of minor consideration compared with another view of the subject, which places the inutility and absurdity of human desires in a much stronger light. Let us, in extending our remarks on this head, consider the intention, the end of man’s existence. Man is sent into the world for the noblest purposes, not to act the part of an automaton, but he is a “living soul;” he is sent here to benefit his fellow-creatures and himself. How then is this to be effected? Is it by the acquirement of wealth? by the pursuit after fame? by the desire for worldly honours, and personal aggrandizement? or by the endeavour to attain intellectual, moral and religious excellence? This is a question rife with importance. What, we would ask, was the end of the Golden Calf? It was scattered on the face of the waters, that the Israelites might drink of it to repletion, to their own everlasting injury. What is the end of wealth, diverted from its useful

purpose? Man toils for years, his every energy strained to obtain possession of it; for this object he sacrifices every thing, he dissolves the ties of friendship, he strains the bonds of affection, he forgets his Maker, and in the place the Supreme should occupy, he sets up his god Mammon as an idol. “Oh, that we were wise and properly considered this.” Poor, poor, is so rich a man. His acts, nay, his very thoughts, are devoted to the god he has formed, not to the Almighty who created him; to his idol he is ready to offer up every thing as a sacrifice; he has no comfort, his sleep is disturbed, his wife and children are estranged, from the very fact that he cannot divide his love; it is all lavished on gold; and if on some occasion he should utter a prayer, what is its nature? that no bank in which he has deposits may suspend payment, no ship in which he has a cargo may become a wreck, that every thing he hath in worldly goods may increase in value, that Croesus-like, he may be the richest man in the world; but beyond that, he has not a single thought. And what, my hearers, is the end of all this greatness, supposing he has acquired the long-coveted treasure, if indeed his rapacity, increased by what nurtures it, can ever be satiated? Does he enjoy it? Does it give him happiness? Alas! no. Life’s current has already begun to circulate feebly through his veins; feelings so long smothered cannot be called into action by the palsied energies of age; the furrows that time has ploughed upon his withered brow have, like the cankered disease, affected his heart; he is a lonely, solitary being; “he hath heaped up riches; and knoweth not who shall gather them;” he passes away, and others squander the store he hath perilled his soul to acquire. True, at his departure there may be some funeral pomp; nay, more, vanity may be seen on the cold marble; and if he could only for a moment rise from his grave, to read the virtues a grateful posterity has engraven on the monument erected over him, he might still be vain; but this small pleasure is denied him, and the narrow sod possesses the world’s great man. Thus it is with empty fame, with vain-glory, with worldly ambition,; they all end with this terrene existence. But let us see whether religious and moral excellence would not improve their condition. King David, after contemplating vanity in its various forms, exclaims, “My hope, oh God! is in thee,” and proceeding in this holy hope, he asks for wisdom to guide his steps.

Now, what is wisdom? Is it not the knowledge of how much we owe to our God, for his innumerable benefits to us? Is it not that which will teach us to respect our neighbour as ourselves? To give to others what we should wish under similar circumstances they should bestow upon us? Is it not the study of our law, that mandate of truth, the gracious messenger from above, charged to conduct our footsteps, to afford us a clue whereby to unravel the profound mysteries by which we are surrounded? Is it not every man’s duty to see whether the spring from which he drinks contains living waters-to understand the law through which he is destined to inherit immortality-by whose gradual instruction the fountain of the heart is opened, its secret springs called into action, and cultivated by understanding and knowledge? and is it not the acme of wisdom to understand that compass which pilots the soul between those banks and shoals where, alas! so many have foundered? Yes, ye who love wealth, who desire fame, who covet honours, you may all be supplied if you will but adopt the phraseology of David, and say, “My hope is in thee;” in this there is no vanity, but true wisdom, a foundation on which to build a structure that may defy the whirlwind, that the lightning cannot blast, that though man may attack with every weapon which envy or hate can furnish, will still proudly rear its head, unshaken by his bolts, uninjured by his mines. Ye who are rich, would you desire to invest some of your spare capital; ye who are vain-glorious, would you desire some tangible fame? Let us demonstrate how this investment may be obtained, this desideratum effected. In the book which the mouth of God

dictated, and which the hand of his pious servant traced, “the law of the living God,” there is wisdom above peerless worth, wealth a Jew should covet, while all else is vanity, because it is transient; there is wisdom, for it is immortal. When around looks dark and dreary, when the tide of adversity overflows our banks, when the couch of sickness is moistened by our tears, when the world’s treachery wounds our heart, when filial disobedience grieves our soul, when the tongue of slander tarnishes our fair fame, when cold ingratitude agonizes our feeling, when the tyrant death takes our dearest hopes: where shall we look for comfort, where for wisdom? In God’s law. There it can be found, there lies it, as the fabled sand of Pactolus, for all who seek to gather; there are no precipices to climb in order to reach it, no devious roads, no pathless seas; it is a direct and pleasant way, all flowers, all beauty-on the right hand is hope, on the left faith, and before us eternal life. Oh, how blessed is the lot of him who has made the law and its God his study, whose midnight vigils have been passed, not in the amassing or hoarding of wealth, but over the Book of Truth; whose hours of recreation have been spent, not in selfish gratification nor vain employment, but in attending to the religious and moral instruction of his children; whose morning task has been to assemble his household, that together they might thank Israel’s God for having preserved them from the dangers of the past, and pray to Him that he would guide them in safety for the future. Such, my beloved friends, is the occupation of a man of piety; such is a beneficial career, whose end is not vanity. This was doubtless the meaning of the wise king when he commenced his philosophical work by declaring all things “vanity,” that he might conclude his theme by adducing the substantial benefit to the righteous in admonishing man to “fear God and to keep his commandments, for in this is centred the duty of man.”

Sons of Israel! inseparable as are our interests, it is our duty to cull for you such exotics as may be transplanted in the courts of God. We are about building a fane to the glory of our Creator; let us take heed in this holy undertaking, that we are not influenced by vanity nor by personal aggrandizement; but that our motive and aim may be to build a house for prayer, and a school for instruction. Here, in this preparatory school, let the pruning-knife be freely used to cut of all that has hitherto destroyed the utility of our holy worship; and let our endeavour be not to go forward, but to travel back to those days when Ezra preached and prayed, when the Synagogue was what it should be, a house of prayer and instruction, not a building to feed our vanity and self-love. Alas! this species of man-worship has nearly destroyed all that should be holy. To our females, who really deserve credit for the regularity in which they attend, and the devotion in which they pray, but who evince some displeasure when, in general principle, we admonish and reprove our co-religionists:-to them we would say, that we desire not to tinge their cheeks with a blush, when exhorting them to duty; yet let not their vanity lead them to suppose that they are immaculate;-the most tender flower requires the greatest care, lest weeds should usurp the place of the germ of life; far better is it for them to blush for their errors, than that we should blush for their sins. We have duties to discharge to the God of heaven; and, guided by their importance, we must be unmindful if we offend the so-called goddess of earth. To our brethren we have sterner language to employ: we are engaged to do our utmost to save their precious souls; would they have us victimize their souls and ours? Do they desire that our preaching should be all vanity-vain declamation to pall on the senses? To tell them of days gone by, and of time to come, without endeavouring to improve the present hour? If so, then “it is vanity, the worst of vanities.” No, my friends, time has been presented with a forelock, to convey the moral, that if the present be permitted to pass, it can never be recalled. You know it is the peculiar province of our holy faith, to

promote unalloyed felicity in time and eternity, which can only be effected by curbing the impetuosity of our inclinations, and diverting the common course of our affections to their only legitimate channel, to those ennobling desires, that will not mock our most ardent anticipations, and to those aspirings, attentive of the highborn dignity of our nature; in a word, to those lofty conceptions, destined to live in perpetual beauty, harmony, and perfection. We are Israelites, whose avocation in this world consists in preparing for the next. If we discharge our obligations as becomes the sons of Israel, happiness, everlasting happiness, will be our portion: “this is written in the Pentateuch, repeated by the prophets, and reiterated in the Hagiographa;” but if, unmindful of our duty, we gratify ourselves by trifles, what then will be our condition in time to come? Alas, the sturdiest frame must bend at the bare contemplation, if this be really our destination, to live eternally in endless joy or never-ceasing misery. If our life be but probationary and prelusive to a more glorious state, what can those things ultimately avail, for which we unremittingly toil? Shall the heir of immortality devote himself to the acquisition of useless trifles? Granted that the carnal desires require feeding, is it rational that the soul must be starved? Shall an expectant of glory devote his energies on frivolous pursuits? Shall the pilgrim of hope loiter by the way to heap up worthless dross, not of the least value in that country, to which he wends his way, “heap up riches, knowing not who shall gather them?”

No, beloved hearers, the candidate for infinite mercy must not contemn the proffered boon, to revel in the low and grovelling regions of earth-begotten desires; for it will weave a web for his own destruction. Other faults and vices have their intermission; but the desires relating to this world alone increase with age, ever making fresh demands that cannot be satisfied; nothing entirely squares with the cupidity and futility of worldly wishes. All this, rightly understood, verifies the saying of the wise Solomon, “Better is the poor man than one ever wavering,” whose feverish and ambitious mind, in a pendulous state, vacillates in unsteady and unsettled indecision. From adolescence to hoary age, our desires too often prove our destruction. Oh! how much. happier should we be, if we measured our wants, not, by the physical but by the moral eye; for that alone can and does quell the tumultuous desire, banishes discontent, and disarms sorrow and affliction, by those well-founded hopes and serene joys, over which time, or even death itself, has no power ! Oh! my hearers, how glorious is the picture painted by the religious mind! In the foreground is the good man; he requires no folded tapestry to hide his defects; unadorned by the garments of vanity, he is beautiful to contemplate; the placidity of his desires is distinguished by his eye. If such be true beauty, who would be deformed; if virtue be so angelic, who would love the monster vice! Indeed, from all we have advanced, we should suppose that all men would desire to be beautiful, all women divine; yet, truly surprising, in all that relates to eternal interests they exhibit the most culpable indolence, whilst with a lynx-eyed vigilance they watch their worldly affairs. Oh! how lamentable is that state to be courted by flattering hopes, and lured by dazzling prospects, to walk in a vain show, where reason is eventually so debased, so carnalized, that the vitiated mind desires only what proves destructive to its dearest interests: “wo to such who strive with their Maker”-whose wishes are repugnant to the gracious requirements of God. Even when in a favourable mood such as these seek the consolations of religion: they would reduce divine truth to the level of their depraved reason. That which cannot be made to accord with their vague and aberrant understanding is scornfully rejected, as if religion were intended for nothing else than to gratify personal vanity. On the other hand, a pious Israelite is really intent on true felicity; he has studied the grand lesson to diminish his wishes; his earnest prayer is, “Provide me with sufficient

food;" and this wish granted, his wants are few; he is rich whose desires are poor: the fear of God is his stay and prop. Let carriages roll by, he craves not to be the occupant; let the steed prance, he desires not to be the rider; let the mansion be elegantly furnished, if the name of God is not written on the door-posts, he pities the possessor; let gaudy attire please the worldling, he says with the ancient philosopher, "All I desire is a staff for my hand, a spade for my grave." By such limited desires he realizes a condition princes might envy. While the good man feels thus, let us in conclusion discuss the state of the vain-glorious, and we shall readily perceive, that as far as our desires diverge from godliness, so far are we unfitted for unfading good. Though we may be elated for a time, delighted with the approbation of our pliant consciences-big with our own greatness-a day must infallibly arrive when the desire shall fail. At that crisis, where shall we find support? suspended over perdition by the flimsy thread of life, worn in a thousand places? how shall we make good our hold on that guidance to lead us beyond death, if our desire relate only to earth?-how shall we elevate the intellectual eye of the soul to imperishable excellence?

These are vital questions; and God grant that they may be indelibly impressed on our minds, to wean us from those frivolities that engross our undivided attention, to cure our stolid fondness for trifles, to restrain our longing for superfluities, to make our desires tend to life everlasting, to rest satisfied in all the alternations of this existence, to let our unfeigned gratitude follow the bounty of heaven, as sure as effect succeeds cause; that by an unambitious demeanour we devote our zeal and consecrate our talents to the glorification of Him whose express desire is our unalloyed and unceasing happiness. Let this be understood, that "man walketh in a vain show." The most glorious career man carves for himself, if it be unblessed by piety, unadorned by good works, may be compared to a vast edifice, whose foundation is amid the rush of mighty waters; it may tower awhile, and raise its lofty head to the clouds; but the destructive current is undermining its base; it will topple and fall, and not even its ruins shall mark its site, for "they shall be swept away by the everlasting tide." But he who is uninfluenced by the vanities of life, whose constant study is the welfare of Judaism, and its soul-saving efficacy, whose mental eye looks for something tangible beyond the grave, whose way is the way of God, who, clothed in humility's garb, seeks rather to attract by his mild radiance than to dazzle by his meteorous glare, who continually proclaims, the sweet singer of Israel, "Oh Lord, my hope is in thee!" he may be likened to a rock, which will stand the passage of ages, and still remain unmoved; a rude hand or a rough blast may shiver a few fragments, its head may for a time lie enveloped in the overhanging clouds; but the sun will again shine, and restore all by his genial glow; the rock will still exist. So, my beloved hearers, is it with the righteous being; throughout unnumbered generations shall he live, spiritually, though not corporeally, and no lapse of time shall blot out his name from the book of life: "the righteous shall flourish like the palm, they shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon, planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God shall they flourish." May such be the glorious destiny of all here assembled. Amen.

Chapter 104

S. Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 - Part 1

Thoughts on Deuteronomy, 30:6

* "Talmid" is the pen name of Rev. Matthew R. Miller, a Christian minister who was a personal friend of Isaac Leeser. Rev. Miller's articles present the Christian point of view, which is answered in corresponding articles by Henry Goldsmith, presenting the Jewish point of view.

No. 1

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It was, as in our lessons we met with these words of the rabbi, and paused to admire his concise language and discuss his obvious meaning, and as we then examined with greater care and interest the verse placed at the head of this letter, that we proposed and agreed to correspond on the subject. As I trace these lines, I feel that a momentous theme employs my pen. And it should be the desire of each of us the true import and infinite preciousness of the promises. Candid and prayerful comparison of religious views cannot be prejudicial to the interest of truth.

There are various important points in this subject, in which we have no difference of views, as

1. We agree in the interpretation of important points in the language of the text. We agree that this predicted circumcision implies most clearly and necessarily the previous uncircumcision of the heirs of promise;-that upon a people uncircumcised in heart, this promise of spiritual change is destined to descend in all its plenitude of blessing. We concur in our views of the condition of the man uncircumcised in the sense of the text. Let us here pause for a short time, to contemplate, with becoming humility, the uncircumcised man,-the condition of his intellect, heart, and conscience. Want of faith in God is the most distinguishing feature of spiritual uncircumcision. The man of whom we speak is well described in that inimitable song of Moses, where it reads ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■. There is nothing in his moral character that God can trust; and he places no abiding, calm, consoling, humble trust in God. Like the generation of uncircumcised heart and lips, that died in the wilderness, whose murmurings never ceased, whose distrust of God was their ruin, he does not recognise, either in all the deliverances of the past, all the promises that cheer the darkness of the future, either in miracles or in prophecies, or in all the revelations of heavenly love, a God to whom he feels he can commit all the interests of his temporal and immortal existence. How lamentable this separation of man from God! Do you not see in my spiritual condition all the essential features-in my prospects of immortality all the threatening gloom-of infinite, unutterable wretchedness, if unbelief characterizes my spiritual condition? To stand constantly in the presence, to be govrened by the law, to be at the disposal, to be in constant dread of the tribunal

of a God whom I have offended, and whom I cannot trust,-whom I cannot view as my friend, and, with all, to know my condition,-is not this the most sad condition of human existence? This want of faith always implies in an equal degree the want of love. The uncircumcised heart never burns with the flame of holy love to God. It is not the supreme joy of this heart to obey and enjoy God. The soul possesses immense capacity of love, which should be filled with God; but the uncircumcised man loves and serves himself rather than God. His memory is treacherous in the keeping of divine truth, and carefully treasures up sinful folly. Conscience is abused, fails to discharge its duty, and when it speaks, condemns. Imagination's pictures are those of crime and self-indulgence, and an awful coming judgment. The man has neither eyes to see, ears to hear, nor a heart to understand. His body descends to the grave, bearing that primitive curse, and affording a living comment on its dread import, ■■■ ■■■■. In perfect contrast with this dark picture is that condition which is promised. Faith is the distinguishing mark of spiritual circumcision. The text promises a change from rebellious unbelief, to confidence and hope and joy in God. In this happy change Israel will be exhibited, worthy to receive the approving testimony of God.■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ -Surely they are my people, children that will not prove false. This faith will not be mere intellectual assent to truth; but it will be the faith of the most ardent friendship and love. The effect and manifestation of this circumcision is that the man loves the Lord with all his heart and soul. We agree that the sum of the whole law is to love the Lord; that this is the foundation of all acceptable obedience, and that by this circumcision the heart and life of Israel will be brought into conformity to the holy law. There is no room for difference in relation to the consequence of this moral change. This ■■■■ is the life of the soul, the enjoyment of God, the highest happiness of man. This life stands in necessary and indissoluble connexion as a consequence and reward, with perfect conformity to the law of God.

2. We agree in assigning to this prophecy a position of transcendent relative importance. In the preceding chapters we have the most awful curses that can be exhibited in language. Moses, faithfully, and at great length, exhibits the consequences of disobedience to the law; and we have seen Israel visited with this penalty in all its horrors, even to the tender mother's devouring her offspring, and guarding with evil eye, her unnatural food. How consoling the first ten verses of this chapter to the humble Israelite, who has read with trembling the preceding curses? Truly a voice of most consoling promise comes to us, even from the midst of all the prophetic curses of the latter days. After all these prophecies of crime and suffering, of the hiding of God's face and consequent destruction, what do we hear? what sweet voice, as if descending from heaven?-that those driven to the most distant parts of the earth shall repent and return; that the Hand that scattered them shall gather them; that the disobedient shall love the Lord with all their heart and soul, and hearken to his voice, and obey his commandments; that it will be a turning of all the people, and an entire change of heart; and that this will be the end of the preceding blessings and curses. The remark of a Jewish commentator on this passage is appropriate and forcible, that in the days of the second temple, the redemption was not complete, and that the fulfillment of this promise is entirely in the future. Behold on these dark clouds of Israel's sorrows, in the evening of the latter days, this rainbow of glorious promise.

Now, in this great moral change, will the remark of Aben Ezra be verified, that from God is the first work? Or will this change be in its origin, the work of man; and will God appear only as the kind assistant of feeble human effort? Does this blessing, as descending from heaven and belonging to

God, involve even the commencement of the moral change in the soul, the removal of unbelief, and circumcision of the heart? Is the condition of unbelief in itself perfectly hopeless? Is it the natural course of the uncircumcised heart to increase in pollution? Is there everything in sin to perpetuate itself? And is an unbelieving individual or uncircumcised people never saved from self-inflicted ruin, except by the powerful gracious interference of divine agency? Does Israel destroy herself, and is her only help, from first to last, in God? Or does the curse itself spontaneously terminate in the blessing? Will unbelief itself, naturally, and with a favourable concurrence of circumstances, work into faith? From death itself will the stream of life eventually break forth? Does this chapter show us how the sons of Israel will, of their own accord, turn to the Lord, and circumcise their hearts, and fulfill the law, and so first prove themselves worthy of the return of divine favour, and deserving of life? or will divine favour, with transforming power, visit the unworthy and sinking?

Let us endeavour to develop the precise doctrine of the Pentateuch on this question. We will first view the subject in the light of the covenant with Abraham. With affectionate regard, your

Talmid.*

Chapter 105

S. Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 - Part 2

Thoughts On Deuteronomy 30:6

No. II.

(Continued From Issue #1) <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume5/apr1847/deutero.html>

Dear Friend,

We now come to consider the covenant with the patriarchs,-the most comprehensive, grand and merciful of all God's dispensations. Does this covenant show us how, according to the precise meaning of the above verse, the circumcision of the heart is attributable. to divine agency? Does this covenant exhibit it as entirely the work of God, to save from ruin in sin, to renew and sanctify the heart, to form a people for himself, to preserve them loyal in the midst of rebellion, pure amid fatal corruption, alive amid universal death? This is a subject of transcendent importance: we now consider the first covenant, the foundation and grand compend of all subsequent promises. In this covenant are involved those promises and hopes of which the restoration of Israel in the latter days will be only a glorious development and fulfillment. Without any farther introductory remarks we proceed to the following statements.

1st. We venture to say that a careful examination of the first record of the covenant in Genesis 12:1-20, must lead every honest inquirer to the conviction that the blessings there mentioned, are not merely the just and due reward of a righteous man, but blessings which in their excellence, their extent and duration, rise infinitely above all human merit. The Lord visited Abraham, and assured him that he should receive very peculiar favour. The Same who said "Let there be light," and there was light, who speaks and it is done, whose word is always effectual, said to Abraham in the language of command, "Be thou a blessing." No word of omnipotence is ever more necessarily and gloriously accompanied with effect. This commanded blessing implied that Abraham should be free from the condemnation of sin, and be the peculiar favourite of heaven; that God, with infinite parental kindness, would direct and defend him, and provide for all his wants; that his heart should be perfect with the Lord; that his joys and hopes should be in the present help, and the promises of God; that through life he should walk with God, in the clear path of commanded obedience; that he should enjoy peace of conscience; that his life should be a life of faith and holiness and benevolence; that, as it was afterwards expressed, he should live to a good old age, and die in honour and peace; and that his name and life should be a blessing to unborn generations. This covenant presented him before all men, as the chosen and beloved of God, so that He blessing, Abraham was blessed, and He cursing, Abraham was cursed. These same blessings were made sure in this covenant to his seed-the blessings of faith, pardon, favour with God, sanctification of heart, peace of conscience, holiness of life, and consolation in death. To the patriarch and his seed, numerous, according to the promise, as the stars of heaven, the blessing was not limited. All the famines of the earth had part in the promise,-were destined to rejoice in the

sanctification and glory of Abraham's seed.

Now can we find either in the righteousness of Abraham, or in that of his seed, or in that of the families of the earth, or in all put together, a foundation of human merit, commensurate with these blessings, and on which this covenant rests? Or can no adequate foundation for these infinite blessings be found except in infinite divine love? What was the righteousness of Abraham? If he had been visited with the sins of his fathers, would he not have been consumed? In Joshua we read, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the river in old time: even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods." They fell into that sin which, according to the law given to Israel, was to be punished with death. It may be said that Abraham before the promise believed in the unity of God. We answer that mere belief in the unity of God-the assent of the intellect to commanding evidence, is not in itself deserving of reward. The most unholy spirit in the universe may have the strongest conviction of the unity of God. To know that God is one does not necessarily imply that God is our portion. In the history of Abraham we have first an account of his ancestors and family; and then, without anything in relation to his previous character, we are told that the Lord appeared to him, and gave him the promises. Examine the whole narrative, and then inquire, Have we not here the clearest representation of a man wonderfully preserved by divine mercy from the ruin of idolatry, and appointed to give the knowledge and worship of the living God to coming generations? Abraham may always have been a worshipper of the living God; yet doubtless his humble piety always felt itself undeserving of the least of God's mercies. We cannot suppose that God looked forward to the righteousness of the seed of Abraham, and gave the blessing as the reward of their righteousness. The words of Moses to the children of Israel settle this point. "Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people." And, assuredly, this covenant, in its most interesting relation to the families of the earth, exhibits, with the greatest possible clearness, the features of unmerited favour. These nations were left for ages to worship innumerable idols, and to sink into the most hopeless corruption. Nations given up to idols do not deserve the favour of God. The light of Israel, as it visits the gentiles, is an inestimable blessing to the unworthy. There is no truth which the humble pious gentile is more ready to admit. Where then is the human merit on which this covenant rests? We cannot prove its existence in Abraham, and we prove it entirely wanting in his seed and in the gentiles. No principle of common sense can be more clear than this, that nothing can be the cause of itself; and if we have given above the proper explanation of the promises, the application of this principle settles the question. If it constituted an essential part of the promise that Abraham's life should be a life of holiness and faith and benevolence, it is evident that his holy obedience, his faith and benevolence could not have been the cause of the promise. If it was involved in the promise that his seed should walk in the path of holy obedience, their walking so, that is, their righteousness, could not have been the foundation, the cause or reason of the promise. It was involved in the blessing that the nations of the earth, through the teaching and example of Abraham's seed, should be made obedient to the living God; and it is not the meaning that having made themselves obedient, they will receive the reward of their righteousness in the blessing which must come to them from Abraham.

2d. Faith in God was the righteousness of Abraham. This brings us to an examination of the fifteenth chapter of Genesis. The word of the Lord came to Abraham, "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."* Here you will excuse me if I stop to inquire, Is not God a

reward infinitely transcending what man deserves? Abraham on this occasion replied to God, that he had no son to be his heir. The Lord then promised that he should have a son, and led him out, and showed him the stars of heaven, and promised him, “So shall thy seed be.”

* We deem it necessary in this place, although at first resolved not to add note or remark to the articles of our correspondent, who is an Episcopal clergyman, but to leave his papers to be replied to, when completed, by one of our own people, through whom Talmid has been introduced to us, to state that this version of Genesis 15:1, is not accepted among us; the Hebrew text is not ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■, which then would mean, “I am thy shield and thy reward, which is exceeding great,” but it seems to contain a twofold promise, first ■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ “I (am) thy shield,” and secondly ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■ “thy reward (shall be) exceeding great.” This is the idea entertained among others by Onkelos and Rashi, authorities, as all know; of the highest degree.-Ed. Oc.

Immediately after this promise follow the words,■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■, “He believed in the Lord, and God accounted it to him for righteousness.” Few verses in the Pentateuch are more concise and full of important meaning than this. It is clear that his faith was in the word of the Lord,-in the promise that he should have a son, that his seed should be numerous as the stars, and that his seed should communicate spiritual knowledge and consolation to all the families of the earth. God, as revealed in these promises, was the object of Abraham’s faith. Such was this faith in God, that Abraham was willing to leave the land of his birth and his kindred, and follow God,-that he was willing to give up everything in the world that he might inherit the promise,-that he was willing to sacrifice his son upon the command of God. His obedience was the manifestation and fruit of his faith. Now was his faith in divine justice rather than in divine mercy? Did he believe in God as just to reward him according to his righteousness? or did he believe in God as disregarding, and infinitely surpassing, human merit, in his manifestations of mercy? If Abraham was not a sinner, his good works, his personal holiness, rather than his simple trust in God, would have constituted his righteousness. There was no great merit in his faith, if it was merely the belief that God would dispense to him a just reward for his righteousness. Let us see if we cannot, in a few words, prove from this passage, with all the precision of mathematical demonstration, that the blessing was not the reward of Abraham’s obedience. His faith was his righteousness: this is indisputable. His faith and righteousness being one must have had one and the same foundation. The only foundation of his faith were the promises of God: therefore the promises were the foundation of his righteousness. Now if the promises were the foundation of his righteousness, they could not have been the consequence or reward of his righteousness.

If this view is correct, the great sin of Israel at present is unbelief. Happy for thee, O Israel, if thine were now the faith of Abraham; if thou wert sufficiently humbled to cast thyself entirely on the mercy and promises of God; if thou wert willing, with Abraham, to make any sacrifice that thou mayest receive the promises. These are recorded before thee, and God says, Take me at my word. Believe me thy God, and suddenly all the light of the promises shall break upon scattered, weeping and oppressed Israel.

3d. The obedience of Abraham contributed instrumentally, rather than meritoriously, to the fulfillment of the promises. He left the land of the Chaldeans, that, in the unknown land to which God intended to bring him, he might receive on himself, and preserve for his seed, the promised

blessings of Heaven. He went to Egypt that he might not die by famine, without receiving the promise. He often built his altar, and made his offerings; because he believed that the offering of sacrifice was a divine ordinance for obtaining pardon and acceptance with God. He tools his heifer, she-goat and birds, and sacrificed them according to the direction of God, and remained near them as night came on, that he might receive some assuring token that he should possess the land of Canaan. His circumcision was a sign of that sanctification of his heart, with which he had long before been blessed, and, by this outward mark, he and his seed were separated that they might receive the promises. In his bringing up of his family, in all his domestic arrangements, in all his journeys, it was his great object to make use of the best means for bringing upon himself and his seed all the blessings of the covenant. Hence, when God was about to destroy Sodom, he expresses his confidence in Abraham, that he would use all possible means in his family, to secure and magnify and hasten the fulfillment of the promises. “I know him,” says God, “that he will command his children and his house after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord in doing righteousness and judgment, to the end that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken concerning him.” He bound his son, laid him on the wood, and prepared himself for the fatal stroke, because he believed that this most trying sacrifice was required that he might obtain the promises. He made provision that he and his might be buried in the land of promise. He provided a wife for Isaac from his kindred, that marriage with the idolatrous nations might not be an obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise. With his eye always fixed on the promise, he gave all that he had to Isaac. Forming all his plans as the fulfillment of the promise seemed to require, he sent all his other sons from him to the east. Even his faith, which was his righteousness, and which produced these fruits of obedience, is not to be viewed as meriting and so securing the promises, but rather as indispensable in the receiving of the promises. Without faith Abraham could not have enjoyed the hopes and consolations of the promises. We cannot receive the fulfillment of God’s promises of love, while, in unbelief, we disregard and reject them. Let me ask every son of Abraham whose eye these lines may meet, Are you indeed a follower of Abraham in this spirit of obedience? and are you thus intent upon the fulfillment of the promises? Do all the families of Israel live with a constant reference to the promises? Are they endeavouring, in every possible way, to contribute to the fulfillment of the promise that the heart of Israel shall be circumcised in the latter days?

4th. Abraham felt that his dependence was on the gracious forbearance and help of God. Humble and penitent mourner in. Israel, meditate on this proposition, and examine whether you may not find in Abraham himself the same penitence, and the same humbling sense of insufficiency and dependence on God. Was not Abraham a sinful, weak and dying man? As he fled from famine to Egypt, and resolved to call Sarah his sister, because he was afraid that he should be killed on her account, and thus exposed her more than once to wretched abuse, did he not show an improper distrust of the providence of God? Did he not evince weakness of faith, when he asked a sign or proof that he should inherit Canaan? As in deep sleep, mysterious and indescribable horror fell upon him, was there no struggle of unbelief and sin? Can this be the condition of a perfect man? As he sacrificed his victims, did he not feel his need of an atonement and pardon and divine favour, and his dependence on divine forbearance? As he early in the morning gazed upon the ascending smoke from the plain, did he not feel as one wonderfully preserved by divine mercy? As he retires from the cave where he has just taken his last view of Sarah, do we not hear him, in bitter grief, and yet with entire submission, acknowledging that sinful man is justly visited with

bereavement and death? Did he not at last himself fall into that cave, as a sinner; and does not his dust there remain to this day, under the penalty of the first transgression? The same promises were twice made to Isaac. If the view which we have been defending is correct, we must explain in accordance with it, and we can do so without any difficulty, the references to the righteousness of Abraham in the promises to Isaac. Simple faith in God is the highest and the only possible personal righteousness of fallen man; and eternal love, in wonderful condescension, stamps its favours, which infinitely surpass our obedience, our faith, and even our desires, as the reward of our faith.

Jacob before his birth was the chosen heir of the promises; and Esau, though destined to be the elder, was rejected. It may be suggested here that their respective characters were foreknown, and that Jacob's selection was founded on his foreseen moral excellence. Assuredly, however, this choice of God between the sons of Isaac before their birth, involved a predestination of moral influences and events in providence, not under their control, which produced this difference of character. Observe the means by which Jacob obtained the blessings of the covenant. It was by falsehood and deception practised on his father. Never let Jacob speak of the blessing as the reward of his regard to truth.

Light from heaven,-the light of long-cherished hope,-suddenly, mysteriously, gloriously, shines in the countenance of the dying patriarch. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" said Jacob, as he blessed his sons. That was an expression of piety and humility, of distrust in self and trust in God. During all his life, through many trials, he had been waiting for the salvation of God, and now he felt that he was about to attain this salvation. It was salvation from sin and suffering, salvation coming from the hand of God, and undeserved, and not reward, in the near approach of which the patriarch rejoiced.

Yours, very truly,

Talmid.

Chapter 106

S. Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 - Part 3

Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6.

No. III (Continued from Issue #3.) <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume5/jun1847/deutero.html>

Dear Friend,- In our investigation of the teaching of the Pentateuch, we now come to the covenant made at Sinai. In this letter, and the two following letters, with which I trust close my part in this correspondence, my object will be to exhibit some of the designs of God in this covenant, and the precise relation in which it stands to the covenant already considered.

How comprehensive and grand the subject now before us! The revelation of God to his people at Sinai, is full of instruction, of command, and of promise. Behold this revelation with all its dread displays of divine majesty and justice, and consoling displays of divine condescension and forgiveness; with all its solemn assertions of the indisputable right of God to the obedience of his people; with all its commands of the acknowledgment and pure worship of God, of the honouring of his name, and of the sanctification of the Sabbath; with all its injunctions of justice and benevolence in our various social relations; with all its manifestations of the special presence of God with his people, and promises of his abiding presence, first in the wilderness and then in the city which He should choose; with all its provisions for the removal of iniquity by confession and sacrifice; with all its injunctions of those solemn fasts and feasts which were in themselves admirably adapted to express gratitude to God, and to promote humility, piety, general acquaintance, and sacred friendship; with all its regulations of vows, and consecrations of fruits, of property, of priests, and even of a whole tribe; with all its observances designed to remove uncleanness and disease, and to preserve a holy people; with all its promises of long life, of independence, of social happiness, of the highest sacred privileges, and of immortal national renown; and all its threatenings of a deadly and eternal curse in the event of disobedience. We have now before us the host of Israel encamped at Sinai. He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain speaks to them from heaven, comes down upon the mount, and then from the mount to the tabernacle, that He may dwell among his people; and they receive the yoke of his law. The duty of loving Him is the fundamental principle of the law; the duty of constant regard to divine direction is taught by the constant presence of the oracle with the High Priest; the holiness of God is taught in the often repeated command that they should be a holy people; the justice of God is taught in the rewards and punishments annexed to the laws; the pardoning mercy of God is taught in the laws of sacrifices; the great principles of justice are taught in the judgments; the obligation of benevolence is taught in the injunctions to attend kindly to the poor, the fatherless, and the stranger; the peculiar and awful responsibility of the position of Israel is exhibited in all the essential features, and in all the circumstances of this covenant, and especially in the clear revelation that the rewards of obedience, and punishments of disobedience, will extend on to children, and children’s children, to a thousand generations. Observe, particularly, that the Lord placed obedience and disobedience, life as the consequence of the former, and death as the

consequence of the latter, before the people, and that He left with them the infinitely momentous choice.

Now, sir, you do not suppose that I think in the brief survey of this single letter, to comprehend fully the design of God in this great transaction,-to comprehend every momentous relation of this covenant to truth and to Israel. With this very important premise, I now submit, and I will endeavour to prove, that God established this covenant with the certain knowledge that it would prove a magnificent, glorious, and at the same time a complete, most awful, and eternal failure. The point I intend to prove, is, that God established this covenant not that Israel might furnish themselves with ample and everlasting righteousness, but that they might be exhibited completely destitute of all righteousness; or, in more words, that it was one great design of God, by this trial of Israel, to prove that the natural free will of man, with obedience and disobedience, life and death, presented before it, chooses always and certainly, disobedience and death; that it makes this fatal choice even in the circumstances most favour able to the right choice,-even in full view of all that God can present in his threatenings to drive from disobedience, and all that he can present in promises, to draw man to himself; and that the only hope of the salvation of Israel from the curse under which they have fallen, lies in the promise placed at the head of these letters, that God himself will circumcise their hearts, himself will make them obedient, and himself will give them life. From the beginning the working of the law was the working of death. At the foot of Sinai, while Moses was still on the Mount, the Israelites chose other gods and practised the abominations of Egypt. Such was the sin at this time, that the sons of Levi were required to enter the camp and to slay, without any regard for father or mother, or brother, or neighbour. The Lord was provoked to threaten the destruction of the people. Did He, my friend, threaten a punishment that was not deserved? How can you contemplate this first scene, and not acknowledge that the preservation and future glory of Israel has no other foundation than the amazing undeserved mercy of God? No provocation was the last: rebellion followed rebellion. Follow them a few steps farther, and you enter the immense field of the graves of those that lusted. Follow the remnant on to Paran, and here you witness, upon the return of the spies, the tenth provocation. here God determined to destroy all the generation that had come out of Egypt with the exception of two. Now the sentence of divine wrath is that they must turn with their backs to the promised land, and wander forty years in the wilderness, and thirst, and be bitten by serpents, and contend among themselves, and perish fearfully and universally. We have still before us a more humbling scene. Here it was determined that they all should be consumed within the compass of a few years; but on the day after the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, when the people again murmured against Moses, God was ready to consume them all in one moment. Here you see how the law yielded to its first subjects the bitter fruits of sorrow and death. It was not to them the tree of life. The scene in the wilderness teaches us that no external law, however solemnly delivered, and however strict, and no external circumcision, will save the Israelite, unless accompanied with the circumcision of the heart by the hand of God.

If we can prove that this covenant bears on its face essential features, the terrific import of which every candid inquirer may understand, and which clearly distinguish it as a system destined to fail,-as a covenant that will be broken; if we can point out, mingled with all the laws of Moses, predictions which present it as certain that an unprecedented manifestation of human depravity and divine wrath will be the end of this great experiment, we certainly prove our point: and that this

is the fact, we will now endeavour to establish with the clearest proofs. Shortly before the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to him from the pillar of cloud, and said that after his death the children of Israel should worship other gods, forsake their own God, break his covenant, and provoke him to hide his face from them. Moses was then commanded to write the Song, and teach it to the Israelites, that it might be a witness against them when they should be brought to the promised land, and become full, and turn unto other gods, and break the covenant. This passage exhibits their breaking the covenant as indissolubly connected with their entrance into the promised land. Mark the connexion as it is presented in the language■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ “When I shall bring them to the land which I have sworn to their fathers to give them, flowing with milk and honey, and they shall eat, and be satisfied, and become fat, and turn to other gods, and serve them, and despise Me, and break my covenant.” The Lord farther adds, as a reason for this sad prediction, that He knows their imagination (■■ ■■■■■) this day before they come to the land. He sees among them this day a ■■■■ ■■■■ , an evil principle, the development of which must work to the transgression of the covenant. The Song just mentioned, the song of Deuteronomy 32:1-52, teaches us that God could not expect of the children of this covenant any fidelity in their relation to him ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■

Contemplating the end to which the operation of the law would come, He says: “For a fire kindles in my countenance, and burns to the lowest abode of the dead, and consumes the earth and her increase, and kindles the foundations of the mountains.” If we view the promise placed at the head of all these letters, as unconditional, the visitation of the curse upon Israel must have been, from the beginning, certain. It is when the blessing and the curse have fallen upon them, that the Lord will circumcise their hearts: if the fulfillment of this promise is absolutely certain, and if it was so in its revelation, the melancholy antecedent was revealed as equally certain. These remarks lead us to examine some texts, which show us the nature, and especially the duration, of these coming calamities. In Leviticus 26:1-46, after showing how the children of the covenant and curse should be destroyed by their enemies, and should be their own tormentors and destroyers, God says: “And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies’ lands; and also in the iniquity of their fathers shall they pine away with them.” Deuteronomy 28:29 : “And thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled all days; and there shall be no saviour.” Deuteronomy 28:31 : “And thou shalt not have a saviour.” Deuteronomy 28:33 : “And thou shalt be only oppressed and broken all days.” Deuteronomy 28:45 : “And there shall come upon thee all these curses, and they shall pursue thee and overtake thee, until thou art destroyed.” Deuteronomy 28:63 : “And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so will the Lord cause to rejoice over you to destroy you.” Moses, with heaven and earth summoned as witnesses, testified to the people that they should utterly perish if they should serve other gods.

Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 (Continued from issue #6.) <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume5/sep1847/deutero.html>

No. III. In chap. 28:46, the term eternity (■■■■■) is employed to express what in other places is expressed by all days (■■ ■■■■■■). Here it is said of the curses ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ “And they shall be to thee for a sign and for a wonder, and to thy seed to eternity.” The meaning of ■■■■■ is eternity, time without any limit. Applied to God, as in Deuteronomy 32:40 Psalms 90:2, it means absolute eternity. Its more common use, however, is in

the sense of a relative eternity, a duration which, though really limited, appears to us without limit. The term may mean the relative eternity of our imagination, or of our desire, or of some other emotion; yet, in all these uses of ■■■■ its original and boundless import is always understood. Where it is said, “Remember the days of eternity” (■■■■), the past here contemplated, though really having a beginning, is nevertheless here viewed as extending far back beyond the farthest possible view. Where it is said that the “revealed things belong to us and to our children to eternity,” (■■ ■■■■) the obligation of attending to divine revelation is viewed as extending on in the future without limit. The wish was often expressed to kings, that they might live to eternity; in these expressions the term was never used in the sense of a limited time. The mother of Samuel gave him as her offering at the tabernacle to eternity: her meaning was that her holy and ardent wishes set no limits to the duration of the consecration. There is the relative eternity of a law or of a constitution: the term is often used in this sense. God is said to have established with all flesh an eternal covenant in the bow: this does not necessarily mean that throughout absolute eternity, these heavens shall never pass away, and the drops of rain never cease to reflect and refract according to their present laws; neither does it mark a limited time. The idea is that this covenant is without any limit of duration in its relation to the present heavens, the falling showers, and living, breathing, mortal flesh. The Hebrew servant, in certain circumstances, became a servant to eternity (■■■■); that is, not that he should never die, or that no other law should ever make him free, but that this law knows no limit to his servitude. It was to the priests an eternal statute (■■■ ■■■■), that with certain clearly marked preparations, they should in the evening, furnish light before the veil in the tabernacle. The eternity of this statute floes not prove that the tabernacle should never be destroyed: the meaning is that there was nothing in these sacred laws, or in the duties of the priests, or in their relation to the tabernacle, that placed any limit to the duration of this obligation. This same relative eternity is predicated of the obligation to observe the Passover. I have made this lengthy digression because I think the sad mistake is very often made of representing ■■■■ as often meaning a limited time. My opinion is that it seldom if ever is used in this sense. In the light of these distinctions and explanations, let us now revert to the expression that the curses should be upon Israel for a sign and a wonder to eternity. This does not present a direct contradiction to the promise of eventual restoration. The fact that all the darkness of an eternal curse covers the whole domain of the haw, does not prove that no light of salvation can ever visit them on some other and independent field. The law may reveal no possibility of deliverance from the curse, and may know for the Israelites nothing but an eternal ruin; yet the view of the law may not comprehend all the resources of salvation in the mercy and government of God, and the relative eternity of the law may not be the absolute future eternity of our immortality. The law as given to the people of Israel at Sinai, and as received by them, promised to their obedience the highest conceivable and everlasting happiness; but in the event of its breach, and the worship of other gods, it sees no hope, no possibility of salvation. In the midst of the bitter confessions and self-accusings of the transgressors, in the midst of the importunate and incessant prayers of Israel for restoration of the holy hand, and for a second trial of their law, in the midst of all their sincere and confident promises of obedience in future, the law itself sends forth no consoling sound but that of “ye shall pine away in your iniquity,” “there shall be no saviour,” “the curse shall pursue you all days,” “ye shall utterly perish;” to the bitter regret of Israel it administers no consolation but that of an eternal curse. The Israelites who find no light but the light of the covenant made at Sinai, must walk in the darkness of eternal despair. The Israelites who come to

no fountain of consolation but that opened up in this law, drink the waters of eternal sorrow and death. The ■■■■ that is stamped on the law of the Passover is equally stamped on the curse. How can we receive any other explanation of the clearly asserted eternity of this curse? To make it the eternity of the soul's immortality would be to shut out every ray of hope from the deathless souls of Israel. To make it the eternity of Israel as a people, would be equally to shut out every ray of hope from Israel as a people. This the promises forbid. We make it the relative eternity of the law, and so present for the consolation of afflicted Israel, every promise that is independent of the law. The same view appears to be presented in Isaiah 64:4, ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ "Behold thou hast been angry, and we have sinned; in these an eternity, and we shall be saved." This appears to be the language of the penitent Jews, whose hearts have been sanctified according to the promise. It is clear that the pronoun of ■■■ refers to both the anger of God and the sin of the people. The anger and the provocation, the sin and the punishment, both together, the penitents pronounce unending. What hope can there be in a condition of unending sin and unending punishment? We will afterward see how they can add, "and we shall be saved."

History is here the echo of prophecy. The great theocratic system which God established in Palestine, did prove a failure, and in its fall ruin millions. The Hebrew commonwealth reached its highest glory in the reigns of David and Solomon: and the pure light from the upper sanctuary of God that literature, the, poetry and the moral philosophy of the age, and that illuminated the whole Jewish heavens. Soon after this only two tribes acknowledged the throne of David, and ten tribes were taken into captivity that lasts to this day. The history of Judah from this time is a sad account of captivities and oppressions, until at last the Romans destroyed nation, city, and temple. From that day to this, Providence has rebuked every attempted restoration. One of the Roman emperors gave the oppressed people the assurances of his sympathy, expressed his desire to worship their God and their, holy temple, and gathered a great number of Jews to Jerusalem. The powerful favour of Julian, and the enthusiastic devotion with which the Jewish people, men and women, commenced this enterprise, appeared to promise that a temple on Moriah should soon eclipse the splendour of the church of the Resurrection, and that the Jewish worship should soon be restored. But the God of Israel did not favour this restoration as He had long before favoured that of Cyrus, and this enterprise of the people as He had long before favoured that of Nehemiah. Horrible sounds and balls of fire bursting forth from the earth, stopped the enterprise.

Behold standing to this day that church of the Resurrection, and, on the ground of the temple, the Mahomedan mosque, both justly sad spectacles to every pious and intelligent observer. Say, my friend, what has become of the blessings which Moses pronounced on the tribes of Israel? Where are the sons of Levi, with their Thummim and Urim, and their zeal for God? Where are Zebulun and Issachar, calling to the people to bring the sacrifices of righteousness to the holy mountain? Where is Joseph, blessed with all the precious things of heaven and earth? Where are the myriads of Ephraim, and the thousands of Menasseh? Where is the privileged keeper of the portion of the Lawgiver on the east of Jordan? O Benjamin, Benjamin, thou beloved of Jacob, speak out from the mighty dead, from thy peaceful slumber of ages, and tell thy anxious descendants, where is the Eternal One whose abode was with thee, who, according to the blessing of Moses, was to cover thee all the day, and dwell between thy shoulders?

Examine now the song of the fifth chapter of Isaiah, the song to the Beloved concerning his vineyard, and you will find the true philosophy of all this dispensation. This Beloved is God: the

vineyard is the house of Israel. The fruitful hill expresses the peculiar sacred privileges of Israel. The preparation of the ground of a tower and wine-press, expresses the preparation of all external things necessary to make Israel a holy, a happy and an everlasting people. “And he looked that it should bring forth grapes.” This shows what is naturally and reasonably expected from such cultivation. “And It brought forth wild grapes.” There was an evil principle in Israel that disappointed every expectation of good fruit. “What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?” says the Beloved. These words require two remarks. l. This does not mean that Almighty power could not have added another effect. God could have cast an additional hue of terror on the plagues of Egypt, could have performed more wonders in the wilderness, could have made the reign of Solomon more happy, could have raised up more prophets. The meaning is that if miracles and favours and warnings and invitations could have made Israel a holy and a happy people, there was a sufficiency of all these in the divine dispensation to accomplish the end. Having done all that was sufficient, the Beloved pauses and inquires, what could have been done more? 2. This does not imply that God circumcised their hearts. With all this cultivation, the Beloved did not change the nature of his vine; hence it produced poison. God did not circumcise the heart of Israel; hence, with all this external perfect cultivation, they brought forth the bitter fruits of sin and death. The Israelites were rational, moral, and accountable agents, and should have appreciated their duty, their privileges, and their immortal interests. God met them as such, and gave them every possible offer of life and inducement to make the right choice. With all this cultivation, they brought forth poison. It would be blasphemy to say that the fault of this failure was in the law itself. How clear this proof, that it is not in the natural heart of man to produce good fruit? The song teaches us that finally this vineyard must be given up to beasts and briers and thorns, and that the clouds must withhold their showers. The same fearful result is presented in the next chapter. As Isaiah enters upon his prophetic work, he is told that the result of the labours of the prophets will be, the hardening of the heart, the stopping of the ears, the closing of the eyes, and the confirmed rebellion of the people, and, finally, the utter desolation of the land. We present these passages as additional proofs of the infinite eternal darkness without one ray of hope, in which the dispensation of the law terminates. In my next I will endeavour to present the true hope of Israel the-fountain of everlasting consolation in the promise of the circumcision of the heart.

Yours, very truly,

Talmid.

Chapter 107

S. Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 - Part 4

Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6

Part IV. My Dear Friend,- A view of the whole argument of these letters, may now be presented in a few words:-that the covenant made with Abraham was a promise of temporal, spiritual, and everlasting blessing to him, to his seed, and to all the families of the earth, not resting on the merit of man, but on the grace of God; the great divine charter of all our spiritual privileges, incapable, from its very nature, of being broken, sure to be fulfilled in any contingency of transgression and ruin; that the law given at Sinai did propose life as the reward of obedience; that this covenant of Sinai was designed to answer a great purpose in the development of the first covenant, in cutting off Israel by its complete and eternal failure, from all hope of obtaining life by their own righteousness; that hence there arose in Israel two great classes, separated, not so much by visible marks of distinction, as by a difference in every element of spiritual life, and for this reason always, and necessarily, engaged in deadly mutual spiritual conflict; one class holding to the law as their tree of life, hoping that divine justice will give them the reward of their obedience and suffering; the other class placing their only hope in divine mercy,-in the blessings of the covenant offered to every one “without price;”* one class the children of the law and of the curse, and in the event certainly the victims of complete and eternal disappointment; the other class the heirs of the promise and eternal life; and that with the latter class are all the promises, the true faith, the divine life of the true Israel of God. .From this view it is evident that the curse described in the last letter does not annihilate the hope of Israel; but only the extraneous element of self-righteousness, the presence of which is death to the life of Israel, is detached from this divine hope. The law may present not one ray of hope; yet those trusting in the promise may be saved. Where sin abounds, grace may superabound. After many ages of suffering under the law, the light of the first and everlasting covenant may break through the dark clouds upon Israel. If man has become so opposed in his moral character, to the will of God, that God repents that he has made man, and is grieved at his heart (Genesis 6:6): yet divine grace may regenerate man. Though the vine which God brought out of Egypt, and planted in Canaan, with all possible cultivation brought forth poison: yet God may, by a miracle, change the nature of this vine. If the law leaves its subjects to utter despair in the ■■■■ ■■■: they may nevertheless, find ground of hope in the ■■■■ ■■■.

* Isaiah 55:1-3

“And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Observe that this circumcision of heart, which is the destruction of that evil principle that was the ruin of Israel under the old covenant, is here, most clearly, attributed to God. Remember, in this connexion, the comprehensive and awful import of that inquiry of God; presented in our last letter, from the fifth chapter of Isaiah:-“What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” This inquiry, taken in its connexion, clearly asserts the insufficiency of all the works of God in the age of the law and prophets, to effect the salvation of his people from moral ruin. That “first work”

which we attribute to God in the promised circumcision of heart, is not the ancient wonderful works of God which terminated in the desolation of the vineyard; neither is it the final natural result of these ancient works: it is a new and independent and greater work, a new moral creation. The most powerful eloquence, all moral persuasion, all external miracles, all warnings and promises, all overwhelming afflictions, all influences exclusive of the regenerating power of God, cannot effect this circumcision. It is true that these may be employed as means; but the work itself is essentially the work of God. To illustrate our idea from Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones; the prophet may be required to prophesy in this valley; but it is the Spirit of God that restores to life.

We here present a few verses from the prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. 31, which explain more fully the above promise of Moses, and which exhibit very clearly that hope of Israel that stands in bold independence of the promises and curses of the Law. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt; which my covenant, they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Here is a promise of a new covenant, essentially different from the covenant made at Sinai. The readers of these letters are requested carefully to mark the following points in which these two covenants differ: In the essential moral character of the parties. Our idea is, not that there can be any change in the moral character of God; but that the men of the new covenant are essentially different, in moral character, from those of the first covenant. The latter were of uncircumcised heart, were naturally the enemies of God, and no faith could be placed in them; but all who have part in the new covenant are, from the regenerating power of God, renewed in their understandings, their hearts, their consciences, their lives. In the covenant-relation of the parties. In the old covenant, God was to be their God, and they were to be his people, upon the condition of obedience to his law: in the new covenant God is their God, and, without any condition of obedience depending on them, they are made his people. The whole covenant here belongs to God. In the relation of the moral law to the people. In the old covenant the law was an external revelation, meeting the people at Sinai in all the terrors of fire, and smoke, and lightnings, and curses, and death: in the new covenant the law is placed within the people,-written in their hearts. In the old covenant the law from without constrained to obedience: in the new covenant the law of the heart, the law from within, naturally, sweetly, effectually, constrains to obedience. In the vital principle, or in the foundation of obedience to the moral law. The old covenant exhibited the name of the God of Israel as "glorious and fearful:" the people of the new covenant love the Lord with all their heart and soul. Fear is the vital principle of obedience in the old covenant: love in the new. In the relations which they establish between the children and the fathers. "In those days," says Jeremiah, "they shall no more say, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity." Under the old covenant there is much bitter complaining of children that they suffer for the sins of their fathers; but the new covenant presents infinite reason why we should rejoice in the promises made to the fathers; and, as it

offers to all who seek the God of Israel the forgiveness of sin and eternal life, it places at the door of every individual who remains under the curse of the law, all the guilt of a personal rejection of eternal life, freely offered, and the responsibility of the loss of his soul. In the conditions in which they find, and in the conditions to which they bring, the people. The following passage exhibits the fearful contrast between the condition in which the law of Sinai found the people, and the condition to which it has brought them. “And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you: so will the Lord rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought.”- Deuteronomy 28:63. The following passage exhibits the happy contrast between the condition in which the new covenant first finds the people, and the condition to which it brings them. “And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them to build and to plant, saith the Lord.” The first covenant leads from the most precious sacred privileges to the deepest wretchedness and despair: the second elevates from this abyss of death to the most intimate and holy friendship and communion with God. We may explain farther this wide contrast in the following particulars. In the result upon the understanding. Isaiah was taught, as he received his prophetic office, that one sure result of the experiment under the law, and of the labours of the prophets, would be the closing of the eyes of the people; byt in the new covenant all are taught of God, and all, from the least to the greatest, know Him. In the result upon the conscience. The old covenant fills the conscience of the sinner with guilt: the new covenant gives pardon and peace.

You must understand me, however, that this covenant is new, merely in its relation to the covenant given at Sinai. It is really the covenant made with Abraham, as we explained this covenant in our second letter,-the old and everlasting covenant of Israel. We are taught that in the last days of the visitation of the curse upon Israel, God will remember the covenant made with the fathers, and show mercy. This doctrine of free forgiveness was not without abundant manifestation, even at Sinai.

We are now prepared to place ourselves on the high, comprehensive, and commanding position, that this doctrine has been in all ages, the principle of the spiritual life of Israel; that this faith was the only faith, and this hope resting entirely on the mercy of God, the only hope of all the ancient saints. Let us here receive the testimony of four of the most distinguished saints. Probably, the history of no one exhibits more clearly the precise spiritual patriarchal life, than the history of Jacob. Now what were his views of himself and his faith in God? Receive his own answer. “I am not worthy,” said he in prayer, as he returned to his father’s house, “of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant.” Here he confessed that he did not deserve the least favour which came to him in fulfillment of the promises made to his father. Here is the true Jew. My reader, admit not for a moment, the blasphemous thought, that Jacob did not speak as he felt, or that he did not speak in accordance with the true state of the case. Cast not on this grand reality of humble devotion the dark suspicion of assumed humility and empty confession. The same appears to have been the spirit of Moses. In his intercessions to save the people from the anger of God, he never dares to say that the people are righteous, and that they do not deserve sudden and universal death. The threefold argument of the infinite mercy of God, of the glory of God in the earth, and of the promises made to the fathers, is the only argument of all his prayers. When he first received his commission to redeem Israel, he provoked God to anger: on his return to Egypt, God once met him and sought to slay him. Finally, he was forbidden to

enter the promised land, and fell in death, the victim of his own sin. With these two mysterious and humbling events, is his glorious career environed. This potent mediator for Israel needed in his death a more potent mediator for himself. We both believe that the dazzling crown of immortal glory was placed on his head in death; but do we not read on that crown, the inscription, Saved by Grace? Let us now hear the sweet singer of Israel. It is true that David often and strongly speaks of his sincerity, his love to God, his delight in the law, and his holy life. It is equally true, that in these passages, we may have nothing other than an exhibition of that new moral life which, we have been endeavouring to prove, belongs to regenerated humanity, and is not the natural life of man. It is clear that David did not trust in the sufficiency of his own efforts, or of all the moral influences with which he was surrounded; but looked directly to God, for the sanctification of his heart. Examine the prayer of Psalms 51:1-19. “Cleanse me from my sin.” “Behold I was shapen in iniquity.” “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” In another Psalm he speaks of his iniquity as a burden too heavy for him. In another Psalm he appears to give us the true messianic idea of spiritual life and obedience, and the precise spiritual condition promised in the text of these letters, when he represents man as coming at the call of God, as delighting to do the will of God, as having the law written in his heart, and as, in this period, released from the obligation of burnt offerings, and sin offerings; see Psalms 40:6-8 ew:6-8 ew:6-8. The last saint that we here mention is Daniel. Here we might transcribe the whole prayer of Daniel recorded in his ninth chapter; let the following suffice. “O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.” “Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.” “For we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.”

Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 (Continued from page 402.) <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume5/nov1847/deutero.html>

No. IV.

If these proofs are not sufficient, we have still, if this is possible, proofs infinitely stronger. Let the people of the restoration themselves testify what is their spiritual life. Observe the language of the afflicted and penitent Jews who speak in the 63rd and 64th chapters of Isaiah. Mark if the speakers are not the restored Israel, or rather, if they are not enjoying the first joyful rays of the commencing restoration. Mark their abhorrence of their own righteousness,-the impossibility of expressing our views in stronger terms than those which they use. “O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?” “The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.” “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” “Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities.” Let God himself speak, and let man be silent. Isaiah 43:22-25, “But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy

sins." Zechariah 12:10, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son." The following remarkable verse of the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, gives us the great end of God in the afflictions of his people;-"That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord." Well did the greatest of all the disciples of Rabbi Gamaliel, with bitter tears, represent his own beloved people as ignorantly and madly rejecting God's righteousness, and "going about to establish their own righteousness."

We now revert, according to our promise in the last letter., to Isaiah 54:4 : ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■. In that letter we submitted the view that this eternity is the eternity of sinning and suffering, of which Moses speaks in the curses, and that the suppliants here attribute to the grace of God their salvation from this hopeless curse. We find a different view of the verse in the commentary of Kimchi. His words are, ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■. ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ "On them we were leaning all the days of old; that is, in every generation there were among them righteous ones, and we were saved through them, because they made supplication before Thee for us; but now, in the captivity, the pious and the righteous have ceased, and we all are as an unclean thing: there is no reason but that thou shouldst work for the sake of thine own name." What a tribute to our views! It is a grand thought that the support of Israel, in the days of their glory, rested on such men as Jacob, and Moses, and David, and Daniel, men who knew no righteousness of their own, whose faith rested entirely on pure mercy; and that God still preserves his ancient people to display more signally his pure mercy, and to humble all flesh.

Yours, very truly,

Talmid.

Chapter 108

S. Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 - Part 5

Thoughts on Deuteronomy 30:6 (In continuation from Vol. V., page 441.) <http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume5/dec1847/deutero.html>

No. V.

Divine Agency in the Restoration of Israel My Dear Friend, Our first attention must now be given to some objections. It probably still occurs to you with great force, as an objection, that an exceeding great reward is promised to Abraham. On this point, permit me, in addition to what I have already said, to present a parallel case which clearly settles the question that a man's whole dependence may be on unmerited mercy, yet he may ask and receive a reward. Nehemiah frequently and plainly asks to be rewarded. He says, "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people." On another occasion, he prays, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof." It is the prayer of the sane man, "Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy." In the ninth chapter of the Book of Nehemiah, we find him and several outer Israelites, acknowledging that they had done wickedly, and that God had done justly in bringing upon them all the afflictions of captivity and persecution; and they attribute their being spared entirely to mercy. Speaking of Israel, they confess, "Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake, Thou didst not utterly consume them nor forsake them; for thou art a merciful and gracious God." The man who thus attributes the escape of himself and people from utter destruction to the mercy of God, has doubtless no hope of a reward except from the same mercy. Another objection is that if God does not bless us in precise accordance with our previous merit, he acts arbitrarily and blindly. This objection begs the whole question in taking for granted that man, previous to the circumcision of his natural heart, does deserve the favour of God. It is an objection that ought never to come from short-sighted man, as it presumes that all reason for divine favour to man must lie in human merit. Let the objector survey every thought of the Divine Mind, let him search through all the plan of eternity, through all the possibilities and predestinated certainties of the endless future, through all the eternal and infinite depths of divine wisdom, justice, and love; let him prove that there is in all these heights and depths, an universal blank of any motive for the outgoing of mercy to undeserving man in one case, and the full display of justice in another case: having accomplished all this search,-more than any finite mind can accomplish,-let him then assert that in human merit is the only motive and only measure of the displays of God's mercy. Let him behold the wrath of God burning on Mount Sinai, and the whole congregation on the point of destruction, for their worship of the calf. Let him then hear the voice of God, ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ "And will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." This is a voice of sovereignty that should rebuke effectually every such objection.

Let us now take a full view of the comprehensive doctrine we have advanced, and of the first and most natural inferences. The natural condition of man is the condition of moral and hopeless death. Our subject explains the import of that death, which was threatened before the existence of

sin, and which was the necessary consequence of the first sin. God said to the first man, “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” This was said to the first man not merely as an individual, but as the beginning and representative of the whole race. The death of the first man was to be the death of all his posterity. What was this death? All admit that it was not annihilation or the extinction of intellectual consciousness and moral conscience: and probably, upon a moment’s reflection, we will admit that it involves much more than the simple separation of body and spirit. In many instances in which death expresses the penalty of sin, the death of the body appears excluded. Take, for instance, Deuteronomy 30:15 : “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” Now we know that God never set before Israel the possibility of escape from simple natural death. The following instances are equally clear in the exclusion of the death of the body. Ezekiel 18:21 : “But if the wicked will turn from all his sins,-he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Ezekiel 33:11 : “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel?” Here we are entreated to escape from that death which is the natural and certain penalty of sin; yet God has offered us no way of escape from temporal death. The true view is that the death which has fallen upon the human family in the first of men, is essentially a moral death, a death of the soul,-not the soul’s extinction, but its moral corruption, its loss of all holy communion with God, and its subjection to his wrath; and that all the miseries of the body connected either naturally or providentially with his spiritual death, are of no moment in comparison with the moral evil. Now let another point be particularly marked. Death is the extinction of all hope, as it leaves with its subject no power of self-restoration. Moral death turns into everlasting darkness all the sinner’s hope of moral happiness, and leaves the only possibility of restoration in that resurrection which is the work of God. This idea of utter hopelessness as to any resources of the dead, is always, in Scripture, connected with the idea of both natural and spiritual death. Solomon says, “For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.” Hezekiah says, “For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.” The great error of the Unitarian faith, whether held by gentiles or by Jews, is a misunderstanding of the first three chapters of Genesis. It is the most unscriptural and dangerous doctrine that, moral death, in all its hopelessness, has not fallen upon man, and that we may, by our best endeavours to lead a decent life, by a few tears dropped over our sins, and a few prayers in a sacred language, secure and effect and even merit our salvation. The agency of God is as necessary for our resurrection from moral death as for the resurrection of the body. The essential matter in the promised restoration of Israel, is the moral change; whilst the restoration to Palestine and the restoration of Jerusalem, are at best but mere circumstances which derive all their importance from their connexion with the spiritual change. The glory of the Restoration will be God’s putting his Spirit in the heart of Israel. Any return to Palestine not connected with this change, would be another calamity to Israel. It is most bitterly to be lamented that the Israelites are so much disposed to overlook the essential matter. and to magnify unimportant circumstances. It would have been infinitely better for the learned Rabbi Akiba, and all others who were deceived by Barchochebas [Bar Kochba], and thousands of the same spirit in subsequent ages, if, instead of expecting a Messiah who should make the blood of gentiles flow in torrents, and conduct them back to Jerusalem, they had turned their eyes within to the necessity of a change in their own hearts.

Jews and Christians both believe in a personal Deliverer from the curse, and Restorer of Israel. A few words in relation to this Restorer. In the first place: The necessity of a circumcision of heart must be the fundamental and principal doctrine of this teacher. The old, carnal, rebellious, unbelieving heart cannot exist in his kingdom. To the uncircumcised in heart among gentiles and Jews, he must, in fidelity to his mission, speak as follows: “Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.” “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” The following doctrine is probably an infinitely better mark of the true Restorer than the rebuilding of the temple. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Is there anything in all this, more severe than the teachings of the last Song of Moses?

Again: The circumcision of heart must be the work of the Restorer. As this work is ascribed to none but God, the Restorer must come in all the fullness of divine power. He must be in the possession of divine power, greater than Moses; for the uncircumcised heart in the wilderness, irresistible to all the efforts of Moses, ruined the whole generation.

Again: The Restorer must visit Israel under the infinite weight of the curse of the law, and be able fully to meet and satisfy that principle of divine justice which demands that Israel, having once forsaken God, shall utterly and eternally perish; he must be able to take from them and bear away on his own shoulders this crushing weight of wrath; he must sustain their unworthiness by his merit; otherwise he cannot be the Restorer.

Here it is appropriate to remark that the unprecedented exigencies of the world, and especially the exigencies of the Jewish Church, demanded a new revelation from God; and the appearance of the Restorer, some time during the period of the second temple. You know that this remark opens before us a field upon which it is almost impossible to enter without going beyond my space and subject. We say that the time of the destruction of the old local covenant, when the temple and sacrifices ceased, and the people were dispersed, was the most appropriate time for the commencement of the new dispensation, the [redacted] for the establishment of the new covenant promised by the prophet Jeremiah, for the clear development of the new and better, and ancient, and only certain hope. It is reasonable to suppose that divine mercy would, before the dispersion of the people, submit to them in offer, the person of the Restorer, and the blessings of the Restoration; and that, upon their refusal of this offer, their house should become desolate. How tremendous was the exigency of the Jewish people at the time of the final dispersion! Rashi himself says that the Israelite sojourning out of the Holy Land is as if he has no God. The Israelites needed one from heaven to tell them whether the law having completely failed, with all the instructions of the prophets, to preserve Israel in their own land, would not prove a greater failure out of the land and under the curse. They needed one from heaven to tell them whether a Passover without the lamb is any Passover, and whether an annual atonement without a sin offering, is any atonement. They needed one from heaven to tell them whether it was right to gather up what fragments they could of the old law, and make many additions and changes, and thus compose a law for their dispersion. It is acknowledged by the most eminent teachers in Israel, that it was absolutely necessary to break the written law in order to write their present law, and preserve it. They miserably seek an apology for this breach of the law from Psalms 119:126.* These considerations ought to bring the honest Israelite to tremble for the foundations of his

present system, and to inquire most candidly and prayerfully, whether all the blessings of the new covenant and all the blessings promised through Abraham to the gentiles, are still lying buried deep under the ruins of the Theocracy. The deplorable fact is, that the great body of the Israelites during the second temple, were unprepared to receive the true Restorer; and that the same opposition of heart to the work of the Restorer has continued ever since. They desired a Messiah to break the Roman yoke, and make them the princes of the world, rather than a Messiah to establish the kingdom of God in the heart of rebellious man. They thought that external circumcision entitled them to all the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, and did not know their need of a spiritual circumcision. The Israelites at present do not feel the weight of the curse of the law; hence they are not prepared to receive the Deliverer from this curse. Some have gone so far in the deadly delusion, as even to assert that they are under no curse. Unconscious that they are dead in sin, they despise him whom others believe to be "the Resurrection and the Life."

* See Instruction, in the Jewish Religion, translated from the German of J. Johlson, by Rev. Isaac Leeser, page 57. The practical use which we should make of this subject is to admit the sinfulness and utter hopelessness of the moral condition in which we naturally exist, and to pray to God for renewed hearts. God commands us to circumcise our hearts. This command implies that, though we are naturally dead in sin, God has never lost his right to demand from us the acts of living men; that the condition of spiritual uncircumcision is essentially sinful; and that the uncircumcised in heart have no plea before God. This command, taken in connexion with the doctrine of the necessity of divine agency in the circumcision of heart, implies farther, that we should look to God for grace that we may be enabled to lead new and holy lives. That we may humbly look to God for this grace, it is necessary that we admit the reality, and weight, and justness of the curses. We offer a great insult to the word of God when we pass quickly and lightly over the curses; and, without any regard to our moral character, appropriate to ourselves the blessings. A most deluded and dangerous deceiver is that public teacher, who never sees the highest interests of the immortal spirit in awful jeopardy, and who is constantly applying to his hearers, unconditionally, the promises. May God preserve us from the snares and lying tongues of such men! The people of Israel never can be blessed until they feel more effectually the terrors of Sinai. God will never raise us up except from the dust. Bear in mind, too, that we are very liable to be deceived by a false humility. Nothing is more deceiving and dangerous to the soul than this false humility. We may make the most humble confessions before God when our hearts are full of the most detestable pride, We may confess before God that we deserve nothing but wrath, and sincerely think that we are very humble, when we would be highly offended at any man who would dare to intimate that we are not eminently meritorious. It is easy to be deceived, even in our highest spiritual and immortal interests. Let us endeavour to pray in the spirit of the following passages: and possibly we may find as a living reality within us, the true Restorer of Israel. Psalms 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Jeremiah 31:18 : "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me and I shall he turned; for thou art the Lord my God."

Now, my friend, I feel that a thousand thanks are due to you and others, that I have had the privilege of thus publicly and freely addressing you. I am happy to illuminate my last line with the desire that the Restoration which has been my theme, may be hastened in our day, With highest regard, yours,

Talmid.

Chapter 109

S. Thoughts on the Passover

Thoughts on the Passover.

(A Sermon.)

Father of mankind! we adore Thee because of thy abundant goodness which every where meets our view; for, from the rising of the sun to his setting, thy mercies sustain all, and all hail Thee as their Creator. And the wisdom which dwells with us is thy gift also, and the understanding and knowledge which distinguish the children of men too are thine, and from thy superfluous stores hast Thou bestowed them on us. How unwise are we then if we rebel against thy instruction! hew lost are we whenever we presume to be wiser than thy will! Nevertheless has this been always our course; we loved the imaginings of our own hearts, and sought for the darkness to cover ourselves withal, whilst with Thee was ever the abundance of a light effulgent. We, therefore, stumbled on our path like the blind staggers on his uncertain way, and we have been brought again and again to feel the weight of our iniquity. But, O our Father! Thou art mighty to save, thy power knows of no diminution, thy years of no decay; and, therefore, we entreat Thee to be our support as of yore, to make us quick in understanding thy ways, as Thou caused us to be on that glorious day when thou hadst redeemed us from bondage, and hadst brought us to the foot of the blessed mount whence thy majestic voice spoke to us the word of truth from amidst fire and thunder. And with thy mercy bless those who bless us, and overthrow the adversary who lays heavily on us the weight of human power; for we are thy servants, the descendants of those whom Thou didst appoint to show forth thy glory. And thus shall we be acknowledged as thy children in whom Thou delightest, and become the harbingers of thy glory to all ages without ending. Amen.

BRETHREN: In reference to the festival which we celebrate at this season, we read in Exodus as follows:

[illegible]

"And it shall come to pass, that when your children shall say to you, What is this service unto you? you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Passover unto the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, but our houses he spared." Exodus 12:26-27. Our text requires but little explanation so far as its words are concerned; it merely commands, that, in order to remember and to call to the minds of others the miracles wrought at our going forth from Egypt, we should perpetually keep certain remarkable ceremonies, which should induce our children to inquire, "What is the service unto you?" when the answer is to follow from those grown old in the spirit of Judaism, by expounding to those yet young in their experience of divine things, the motives of gratitude which should attach all sons of Israel to the service of their Benefactor, because of the many benefits which He bestowed on them in times and seasons when evil and death overwhelmed those who had oppressed them. This is the whole which the

text we have quoted teaches; and, to this day, the remnant of Israel observe the ordinance, in so far as they are enabled through the destruction of the temple; and if the "sacrifice of the Passover unto the Lord" is not placed upon the tables of the rejoicing pilgrims, at the place chosen to let his glory dwell there, we assemble around the festive board, and with unleavened bread and bitter herbs before us, recount what the Lord has done in the far-away days of antiquity, when He plagued our adversaries who would not obey his will, and took us out from slavery, a nation from the midst of another nation, with signs and wonders and an outstretched arm, and fearful deeds, even as we experienced in Egypt before our own eyes, where we ourselves were the recipients of the divine bounty, where we ourselves witnessed the transactions recorded in our sacred records, which we, therefore, in our own persons, are of right bound to acknowledge.

Thus far the letter of the law. But what says the spirit thereof? It says, that we Israelites have been more favoured than any other people, and hence we have more duties to observe towards our Father. Other nations, no less than ourselves, have been slaves to others; but never in the history of the world were they rescued at once and for ever from the power of their tyrants, whilst these were rebuked and humbled as it were in a moment of time; other nations, too, like ourselves walked in ignorance of divine things; but never in the history of the world was it witnessed, as in our own case, that the glorious majesty of the Lord should be displayed before their outward vision, and a sound should reach their outward hearing, to teach them truths and precepts before unknown. Where so much has been done, some return is surely requisite to prove ourselves worthy, in a slight degree, of the favours undeservedly bestowed; and how shall we requite services to Him who is so exalted, so immeasurably great? Can we do aught to render Him greater? can we in the least contribute to increase his happiness? He is not subject to our actions; He is removed from the sphere of our influence; whilst we exist because He has created us; whilst we breathe because his breath is in our nostrils. And shall we then say how we will be grateful?--shall we determine what we will do to requite Him for all his care, his mindfulness of our sorrows, his beneficence in times of plenty, his bounty when famine devastated the earth? Shall it be by erecting temples in every land? by leading to altars in every town herds of oxen and flocks of sheep? shall sweet incense curl upward from domestic altars in every house? shall thousands of instruments be attuned in full accord? shall millions of voices shout forth his praise in harmonious melody? shall we devote our life to contemplation, our years to constant thought upon what He is, upon the deeds He has done? Or are there other methods by which men have endeavoured to render themselves worthy of the good providence of the Lord, by becoming better and purer through outward acts than their fellows? No doubt, those who have thought and acted thus, did it from pure motives; they imagined there was something in the human mind able to teach it how to make itself worthy of divine goodness; but, who that has intellect does not see, that with all just mentioned, we have not yet reached the point of conferring any benefit on God? Our temples may indeed grace every land; but have we magnified thereby the being of our Creator? Altars may smoke with uncounted sacrifices; but have these appeased his hunger? Incense may ascend from every domicile, but has the odour pleased him that sits enthroned above the heights of the universe? Let choristers and those skilled on the harp and sweet-sounding cymbals join their harmony--let all that have voice in one grand chorus sing without ceasing, will they then have exalted the glorious Governor of all existence? Let the wise and intelligent withdraw from the walks of men; let them immure themselves to spend their days in solitary contemplation, and have they in this wise added aught to the beatitude of our Father who is in heaven? It were folly to maintain

that either of the above, or all of them combined, had effected or could effect the least towards reaching the proposed end; men would still be men on earth, whilst God would still be God in heaven, whether sacrifices be offered or left unslaughtered grazing on the pasture; whether harps be attuned to chaunt his praise, or their chords remain untouched by the hands of those skilled in sound. How then shall we serve our God? how then shall we show that we are grateful? how prove that the goodness which we have received, and which is daily renewed from the Hand which is ever open, whence plenty descends, for ever and aye, into the lap of those who never deserved it by their own merit, has not been unworthily bestowed? Truly the heart desires to return thanks, the spirit longs to requite some of the mercy and the truth which have been bestowed; but the solution of the question is not within the bounds of human reason; for all conclusions of mere human research would necessarily end in vexation and a troubled spirit. Yet we have received the means of solving it, and it is found in the words of the Scriptures which have been given to us for our guide and instruction.

They speak of God as our Benefactor, as the One without whom our existence is as naught, without whose will our days would be vanity and but a shadow on the earth; but they likewise inform us that He has given us the means of rendering ourselves worthy of his favour; that we can, if we will, earn from his mercy all the good we desire on this earth, all the happiness we can expect to enjoy hereafter. But not alone the means, for the manner likewise has been revealed; in other words, we have received direct precepts, which are the emanations of the divine mind, and which are represented to us as the acts which will be pleasing to God. Whatever then is done in conformity to these divine injunctions, is the very thing which betokens gratitude towards the Lord in him that does it; and no matter what those who merely argue from human reasoning may allege, it is a means of deserving yet farther the favour of our heavenly Father. We, perhaps, must admit, if we come to take the subject in its importance in human life, that to eat unleavened bread on the Passover is nowise particularly meritorious; there is nothing in the act itself, which can render it one of peculiar dignity in the eyes of a philosophical inquirer; but it assumes a very different aspect when you search the Scriptures and see the ordinance: "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread;" for herewith is expressed the will of God, that those who belong to the house of Israel shall absolutely and in reality eat, for the space of an entire week, bread which has not become leavened, and with which no leaven has been mixed in the smallest proportion; if, therefore, we abstain from that which is prohibited, and use what has been ordained, we admit at once that we yield up our own will and pleasure, and adopt in their stead, for our government, the expressed commandment of our Creator; we confess the insufficiency of our intellect, and become obedient servants to what He has decreed; we give up our right to self-government where we are certified that our God has taught us something different from what we ourselves would have chosen, and act, therefore, not as we would have acted, but as we are certified that it is his desire we should demean ourselves. Were it, that our reason had any substantive power,--that our knowledge were the result of our own reflection,--then might it be alleged that such obedience is that which a bondman has to yield to his master; not because he wishes it, but because fear or interest compels him to forego his own will. But the case is far different; of ourselves, we know little indeed; our own wisdom is limited, like our days, to the shortest span; and He who teaches us his law is our God, who existed before we were born, who will be after this changeful world shall have lapsed again into chaos, if that be his ultimate will; who sees the connexion of thing with thing, till the utmost end of all that is or will be; to whom little acts done by us are necessarily of equal

importance with the greatest, because to Him all our deeds are alike. If then we obey Him in what He has written down for our instruction, we are like children who follow their father on a road which is new to them, but which he has often trodden before, of which he knows the beginning and the termination, the dangers of which are familiar to him, but the beauties also of which he knows equally well. The child will accompany his father into the open field, will enter with him into the depths of the forest, and into the fastness of the mountain-path, not because he knows them himself, but because he believes that his father has knowledge, that he will not deceive him, and that, should there be danger, he will stand by and give him all the aid in his power. Even so are we taught to trust our Father in heaven upon the perilous journey of life; there is an open field, here a dark forest frowns in the distance; there is a mountain-peak which we must surmount, here is a pleasant meadow which invitingly stretches out at our feet. But for our whole journey it is the same guide which we are bid to follow,--it is the law which has been given to us,--it is the wisdom of everlasting, which has been planted in our midst,--it is the voice of God which every where greets us with its friendly sound, in youth and in age, amidst pleasures and midst sorrows, in prosperity and in distress; and shall we hesitate?--shall we halt because we would not act after this manner, had we ourselves made our religion? What know we--what are we? ask the philosopher in the day of his triumph and he will tell you that his soul feels dark, that he is ashamed at the smallness of his knowledge, and the unsatisfactory state of his experience; and inquire of the most experienced physician what he knows of life,--its origin, its progress, its termination?--what are the operations of the mind, the causes of its decay, the reasons of its recovering new vigour? and when you have learned all that can be ascertained, and seen all that ever has met the human eye, you will turn away sick at heart at what men call human wisdom and human power, and gladly will you seek shelter from the uncertainties and vacillation of our own research to the evident knowledge which beams for you, be you great or small, from the pages of the word of God. For from their perusal you will rise refreshed in your search, satisfied in your painful investigation; and if not all has been made clear to your comprehension, you will have learned at least, that what you cannot comprehend is safe in the custody of the Creator, and that He will direct every thing, yea, the very evil which you have to endure, so that it may at the last redound to the good of all the entire creation, of which you are but a small part at the best, if even you yourselves deem that you are of paramount importance.

Gratitude, therefore, for the benefits we have received, can be shown only in obedience to the revealed will of God; we are not to inquire whether our reason would have sanctioned such a law or not; for submission to the instruction of the Supreme is the test, whether we are truly alive to the importance of regarding Him as all in all, his will as the only light for our feet. Are we then not to erect places of worship? are we not to sink hymns to God’s praise? are we not to contemplate his greatness? Ay, even so, if these acts merely spring from vanity, from a satisfying of our natural wants to do something to express our gratitude. Places of worship should, however, be erected, not to display how we can serve the Lord, but because He has consecrated our so doing by his positive command, and has promised to come and bless us wherever we are assembled in his name. We should sing praises to his holy name, not to please the ear, not to make the worship attractive, to draw the unwilling to the house of God, that they may be delighted and charmed with our psalmody, but because "it is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High." We should indeed contemplate the miraculous works of the Lord, and to recount the mighty wonders which He has displayed; not, however, in the solitude of the cloister,

or in the hermit's cell in the desert; but in the midst of the walks of life, in the populous city, in the crowded market-place, amidst the labourers when engaged in the daily toil, in the society of the reapers, when the richly blessed harvest falls beneath the strokes of their sickles.

Wherever we turn our eyes, there they are met by evidences of surpassing Goodness; wherever, therefore, our lot is cast, there too should we feel sensibly our indebtedness for the bounty, our entire dependence on the Hand that sustains us, not because we deserve mercy, but because the world is governed by the Spirit of compassion and forbearance, who pardons when there is guilt, and who blesses though punishment has been incurred. Yes, worship in deeds, in word, and in thoughts, is becoming to man, since he is the creature of God, and, moreover, and this is the chief part of its meritoriousness, because we have been commanded and instructed to feel reverence of the Adorable and Fearful Name, the Lord our God, and because our fathers, who were inspired by God, set us the example of offering up to Him the meditations of their hearts, expressed in the words of their lips. For thus Abraham prayed; thus Moses sang an undying song on the shore of the sea; thus did David attune his harp and chaunted praises, which yet are heard in our assemblies, which will never perish whilst there lives one child of Israel to be animated by the fire which erst burnt in the soul of the son of Jesse. And just as our prayers and our hymns are acceptable when offered in the spirit of humility, because we feel that we owe every thing to God, so were formerly sacrifices and incense acceptable in the place chosen for his residence by the Lord himself, that is, because they were brought in obedience to the mandate of Scripture. The people in their folly imagined that the more places for sacrifice they had, the more acceptable would they render themselves to the Deity; whereas they were reproved for doing what the Lord had not asked of them; there should be but one temple and but one altar, as there was and is but one God to whom adoration is due. Hence the very acts which were worship at Jerusalem became iniquity and transgression in the places not sanctified by the spirit of our Father; and the few times that in the degeneracy of our state pious rulers governed the land, as was the case with King Josiah, these abominations of provincial places of sacrifice were removed from the land. All this proves what we have set out with, that acts of worship must have the sanction of the Supreme to render them acceptable; human reason cannot establish a standard of acceptability; hence we are bound to yield to the instruction which alone can enlighten us, if we wish to exhibit in good truth the grateful feeling which fills our soul.

How should we then act? we, I mean, who belong to the house of Israel? we, who reside in this country, in the new home where we can and do live secure from the attack and malice of the adversary of our faith? Is it by erecting Synagogues merely, and ornamenting them, and having an attractive worship? Is it that we please the ear and gratify our senses whilst present in the house of prayer? It is indeed true that it would show a poor devotional spirit, were we to have fine houses for our dwellings, and have them ornamented and furnished with every thing that can please and delight, whilst the house of God should be a mean hovel, and not rendered pleasant and agreeable to the eye; since by such neglect we would be like the miser, denounced by the prophet, who brings from his flock the meanest for a sacrifice; so also is it requisite that the worship be conducted harmoniously and decently, that the chaunt be well regulated, and the reading of the law and prayers be done with due devotion and solemnity; that silence and propriety be observed whilst we are within the precincts of the sacred walls; because, if before a human king, we would necessarily feel awe and respect, how much more should this be the case before

the supreme Ruler of the world. But observe well, brethren, that if we have accomplished all this, if we have beautiful houses of worship, and every thing regulated in them, so as to give impressiveness and decorum to our public assemblies, we have not discharged our debt of gratitude to our Father. He has given us freedom; it is not, therefore, the Synagogue alone where He is to he honoured; it would be but a poor commentary upon our pious feelings and devotion, were they to be limited to the Synagogue solely. The whole life of an Israelite ought to be one constant series of worship, not indeed of that species which consists in the recitation of prayers and psalms, in the pouring forth of beautiful words from burning lips, but of that order of which we spoke in the beginning, the surrendering of our will to the religion revealed to us from heaven. But look, how we actually do act! One would be led to suppose that the atmosphere of freedom were incompatible with the Jewish religion; that only under the pressure of circumstances could Judaism strike root in the heart of its followers! Shame, that gentiles should make the discovery that the Sabbath is profaned extensively, that many who have been properly educated by their parents even, distinguish not between the clean and the unclean! Shame, I say, that those who watch for an opportunity to strike a fatal blow against those who are of Israel, by robbing them of their faith, should thus see, or fancy that they see, that they have at length found out the true remedy of destroying Israel from being a people, that by giving them freedom they would soon learn to dispense with the faith which they clung to in adversity, like the traveller that parted with his cloak amidst the assaults of the rays of the sun, which he only wrapped the closer round him when the fury of the storm burst upon him with its chilling blast. Are you prepared to have this remark verified by your own example? My voice, indeed, can not penetrate very far; but let me beg of all of you who now hear me, and do carry the message to all with whom you have the least influence, to do all in your power to prevent the verification of the hopes of our enemies, and the fears of the servants of the Lord. There is no connexion between freedom and irreligion; the true spirit of godliness can only thrive where the fear of man does weigh down upon the soul. God reigns supreme where the power of mortals is not felt crushing the spirit, which ought to be left as free as it came from his creative hand. Why then should we not prove by our whole course that freedom only quickens the plant of faith which is rooted imperishably in our hearts? What is there uncongenial with the brightest enlightenment and our religion? Let science triumph in her achievements and not-yet-thought-of discoveries, Judaism will never lay fetters on her limbs, or make her gainsay the truths she has elicited; let refinement spread over hill and valley, and let war and strife be banished for ever from the earth, what has our religion to fear? It is its own triumph which it beholds; it is the goal which we hope to reach through its blessed influence. Only let us be firm, let us not forget our Benefactor when we have met with enlargement; let us be unlike Pharaoh, who forgot his obligations to God and man so soon as the plague had relaxed of its severity.

Yes, what is the use of all our Synagogues, of all our order and decorum, if the worshippers are away, because they are pursuing their own avocations on the day sacred to the Lord of hosts? why should He accept such service when his laws are contemned? And then this takes place in a country where none can molest us, because of our faith; where we can rest or labour without any one to question us why we do so. It is, I acknowledge, a happy presage; that the observers of the Sabbath are increasing, that more respect has in many places been paid of late to the days set apart by the Lord as holy; but there is much room for improvement yet; all have not been brought in, and many of the ordinances are not as strictly observed as they could easily be. Let me beg of

you to arouse yourselves to one mighty effort for the good cause of the Lord; He has dealt bountifully with you; the labour of your hands has prospered; your stores have increased, and prosperity seems to have attended your undertaking. Devote then a portion of your time, a portion of your means, to the service of our common Father; be righteous yourselves, and contribute the means to bring others to his footstool, to rescue the poor and uneducated so that they may not fall a prey to the destroyers who are ever anxious to seize upon every stray sheep from our flock, to bear it away to a den worse than that of a lion, to an apostacy from the God of Israel. Yes, you have the means, then aid in spreading a knowledge of our religion among the members of our household; and thus will you best prove your gratitude by purifying yourselves according to the spirit of the law, and in drawing others by the bonds of love to follow your pious example. In this wise can you also best celebrate the festival of our redemption from bondage, and with sincere hearts can you assemble round your table all your household, and recount to them what God has done for your fathers, when coming out of Egypt, and return thanks to him for the mercy which he ever displayed towards the sons of Abraham, his beloved. And may his grace yet farther protect and bless us, now and for ever. Amen.

Nissan 14, April 10, 5606.

Chapter 110

S. Walking with God

“Walking With God.” A Sermon, by the Rev. Henry S. Jacobs, Minister of the Congregation Neve Shalom, Spanish-Town, Jamaica.

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“Noah walked with God.”- Genesis 6:9. The annals of the world too surely inform us that one false step generally leads to the commission of many iniquities. The first act of disobedience by our primeval parents was followed by others of a yet more heinous nature on the part of their posterity. No sooner had they begun to propagate on the surface of the earth, than they evinced an antagonistic spirit to the cause of virtue, cast off all allegiance to their heavenly King, and debased themselves by investing senseless objects with the attributes and power of the Deity, till at last they arrived at a point of corruption which called for condign retribution. Unexampled for irreligion and impiety must have been the era to which the text bears reference, since amidst a succession of ages only two individuals, between whom intervened a period of several hundred years, are recorded in Scripture, whose characters were at all redeemed from the awful depravity which then reigned paramount. The first was Enoch, whose earthly career was of brief duration; of the second, we are emphatically informed in the passage which has been chosen for exhortation this day, “Noah walked with God.”

These words follow so immediately the description of the patriarch’s general character, that we are involuntarily induced to pause and reflect thereon, as they are evidently intended to convey a signification replete with wholesome information.

If there be a virtue which calls forth more ardent admiration than another, it is the steadfast attachment and devotedness to God, when all around have apostatized from his ways. It argues a strength of mind, an abnegation of self, and a fidelity to religion, far beyond the usual characteristics of human nature. There are not many, indeed, who have sufficient firmness and self-reliance to disregard the scoffs and sneers of their companions at their so-called bigotry and over delicacy. But how few are there, who will brave actual danger, when imminent peril attends the practice of a proscribed creed? This stability of faith and contempt of personal danger can only be inspired by Him who is “wonderful in counsel, excellent in working.” But Noah was of the truly pious. “When all flesh had corrupted their way on earth,” he was untainted by the general corruption. He stood forward as the fearless advocate of God’s cause, when that cause was derided by his fellowmen. Mark the result: when the justly merited punishment on the human race descended from on high, and by the mighty deluge they were swept from off the face of the earth, “then were left only Noah and those who were with him in the ark.” His undiminished faith produced its own reward, and sheds yet a halo round his memory. The record which is left of his character is one which every individual should strive to attain. The sacred historian, after having informed us that “Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations,” adds the significant, though concise sentence, which has been selected as the text, ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ “Noah walked with God.”

It is to refer to this emphatic designation, that I have particularly in view in addressing you on the present occasion, and to offer for your consideration a few remarks illustrative of the man “who walks with God.” The first point which it implies, is being under an habitual sense of God’s presence, that we are walking constantly in his sight, and that He perceives all our actions. There is no thought which comes home with more peculiar force to the heart of the good man than that all his acts are perceptible to Him who dwells on high; that He is cognizant of his inward feelings and desires; that He views his struggles with the world, and beholds the sufferings which momentarily beset him. Nothing is better calculated to meliorate the condition of man than this feeling, when properly directed. It encourages him in the path of virtue, notwithstanding the privations which he endures, the pangs he continually suffers. It overcomes all the difficulties which beset his path, when harassing care would bow him down beneath an accumulated burden of wo; it teaches him to bear up cheerfully, to press forward undespondingly, and to trust firmly in the promises of that all-merciful Being, who has declared unto such as confide in Him, “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isaiah 41:10) He knows that there is an ever-watchful Providence above him, and he feels stimulated to renewed exertions, being aware that he labours in the cause of virtue, in the presence of Him who will not desert him in the hour of need and adversity. To the irreligious man, the knowledge of God’s omnipresence, when awakened, serves as an inward monitor, to prevent, or at least check, his continuation in those depraved courses to which he has been accustomed. The truth must eventually break on him; it is impossible that he can for ever gloss over his impious acts, and fancy that they are unnoticed or unobserved. When he considers the boundlessness of nature, the infinite variety of beings rising from the hardly perceptible insect to man; the masterpiece of creative wisdom, that fill this teeming world; when he glances above, and sees the sparkling luminaries, which, though apparently smaller than the gem which he prizes more than his faith, yet are worlds in themselves, nay, but the centres of worlds which occupy the infinity of space,-can he then avoid acknowledging that an all seeing Eye beholds his minutest action, that an omniscient Being is aware of his very thoughts, that an all-righteous Judge treasures up in the records of eternity every deed of his misspent life?

Indeed, brethren, the truth must claim an inward, though perhaps an outwardly unacknowledged belief. God is to be seen in all his works; He is as perceptible in each green tree as He was of yore to Moses, although not in so manifest and awful a manner. That admitted, it necessarily follows that He must be cognizant of what he is the Originator, the Sustainer, the Supporter. It is He, indeed, whose presence enlightens, animates, and pervades all things. Wherever we may be, to whatever quarter or object we turn our wondering eyes, we behold the traces of His goodness; His greatness, and His perfection. We recognise his voice in the loud mutterings of the storm, in the thunder’s echoing peal, in the terrific roaring of the striving elements. With clearer vision we behold Him in those faculties of the soul which so demonstrably show the wisdom, and power, and goodness of their great Original. But it is in the great and solemn promises to his people, which we behold daily fulfilled, devised by Him who “neither slumbereth nor sleepeth,” that we may obtain the clearest manifestations and most endearing views of God’s truth, eternity, and glory. Conceiving this of God, as a being present in all His works, to whom he is accountable for all his actions, and who is possessed of power to punish the violation, as well as to reward the “keeping of His commandments,” the pious Israelite will ever walk under an habitual sense of his presence,

and endeavour to conduct himself in all circumstances and situations as impressed with the belief and knowledge that all his thoughts and actions are manifest before the great <<499>>Omniscient. The belief of this doctrine will prove a powerful restraint on the corrupt propensities of his nature; for, though he is not free from the intrusion of evil thoughts and the influence of sin, yet in the hour of temptation his faith will raise him superior to his internal evil propensities, and enable him to say with the patriarch, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

“To walk with God” likewise implies to walk in the ways He has pointed out to us for our observance, and to abstain from all such as are not in consonance therewith. In doing this, we must ever be sensible of our own weakness and of His omnipotence. Our whole lives must be spent in His service, and no duties considered too heavy or too onerous which devolve on us to perform. But, alas! brethren, however painful the admission, there is no denying that the ways of the world are by too many of us more regarded than these obligations. The performance of our real duties clashes too much with our coincidence with the ways of the world; and these latter, being more valued, the former naturally suffers, and from being at first neglected, eventually becomes totally discarded, contemned, and forgotten. A little reflection must show the impropriety of this measure. A great writer has declared, and the words are applicable to the present occasion, “Dire effects from trivial causes spring.” Thus, by overlooking duties which may be considered of subordinate consequence, we at length neglect obligations of paramount importance.

You must be aware that there is no medium course to be pursued. There is but one road which leads to the attainment of enduring happiness, and that is the path indicated in the text as the one trod by the patriarch, whose virtues saved him from the universal destruction, and whose piety secured to him the exalted reward of being the founder of a new race. That you will experience disquietudes and discomforts in the course of conduct which I now strive to impress on you to follow, is a truth which is too palpable to be denied. You will have frequently to look for your sole consolation in the rectitude of your motives. Life is at best but a toilsome journey, and the asperities of the road will often create despondency in your bosoms. In the pursuit of the undeviating path of virtue, you will be obstructed by many difficulties; you will meet with many possessed of less rigid notions <<500>of right and wrong; you will perhaps find some who sneer and rail at revealed religion, who profess a freedom from its restraints and self-denials, who are would-be liberals in the extreme; yet be assured that within themselves, in the dark, deep, and hidden receptacles of their hearts, they feel the impotence of their creed, they know the fallacy of their opinions, they foresee the dread blank which the future presents. Before the world, whose applause is their highest ambition, their most coveted glory, they may affect a well-studied, a calm indifference; publicly they may laugh at all the sacred ties of religion, the holiest duties enjoined by the Supreme; yet they are the first to tremble at the approach of danger, and fly to the opposite extremes in the moments of adversity. Let misfortune but attack them, let calamity but assail them, they become the most rigid and scrupulous observers of all the minutia of their before slandered creed. But I would ask you, brethren, if you would for a moment place any value on such revulsions of feeling?-if you would consider any stability of faith in such individuals, who are only to be thus convinced of the truth of revelation in the time of need and trouble, but who, so soon as prosperity returns, are again the confident scorners of its dogmas? No; God values not, regards not this mode of service; this is not what He requires of us; these are not His ways; these are not

the ways so highly applauded in Scripture as having been those which Enoch, Noah, and others followed. If we would, like these patriarchs, be considered as truly “walking with God,” we must study to be more and more acquainted with our own hearts, that we may thereby know our own weakness, and the grandeur of that holy code which distinctly points out the path in which we are exhorted to walk.

Like pilgrims, our journey may be impeded by difficulties whose strength we have not yet fairly calculated, or which, in the self-deceits of the heart, we may flatter ourselves we are, unaided, able to overcome. But let us not trust in our own strength, or in our present feelings and impressions, which are often deceptive, and at all times an unsafe reed to lean upon; neither let us put confidence in our own resolutions, and safely sleep with the confidence that our intentions are just, holy, and sincere. It is in the practice of our obligations to our God and to ourselves that our best safeguard lies; it is this, and this only, which will prove our greatest consolation, our most stable hope, when the time shall arrive when “we must shuffle off this mortal coil,” “and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” To a pious individual, there is no action so pleasing as that of performing the will of his Maker. The duty is attended with so much pleasure, that we ought to indulge in it, if it were only for the gratification which the consciousness of obedience to the decrees of Heaven inspire. Abstaining therefrom may be easier and less toilsome; but it will be attended, sooner or later, with dire punishment, which will be enhanced and aggravated by the pangs of conscience.

Bitter remorse is always sure to attend our neglect of walking in God’s ways, which is synonymous with leading a righteous life, and of being the performers of the commands of the All-wise. You can have no better examples of the opposite effects which the obedience or neglect thereof produces, than those the sacred volume presents. Turn to the Bible, and in the life of the pious individual that is therein held up to succeeding ages as a pattern to be imitated, behold the final benefit which results to every one who is, like him, “A righteous man, perfect in his generations.” This embraces also the essential duty of training up those with whom God hath blessed you in the paths of rectitude, of instilling into their youthful breasts early lessons of morality, and, above all, of exhibiting before them a model of that piety and virtue, which, be assured, is more powerful than precept, and will make a lasting and ineffaceable impression. It is indisputably necessary that every one should not only himself act in a right and proper manner, but also take effectual means of inducing his family to do the same. It is the duty, as well as the interest of the parent, to train them up in accordance with God’s commands; for in teaching them to reverence the will of their heavenly Father, he strengthens the link which unites him with his offspring, cements the bond of union which nature intended should exist between them, and causes them to recognise as a matter of course the sacred obligation of paying him that obedience, love, and reverence to which the authors of their being are entitled. In closing this brief review of the life of Noah, we must be forcibly struck with the conviction that no good deed is suffered to pass by unnoticed by the eye of Omnipotence. Often the reward follows not immediately on the action; yet the many occurrences of his eventful life strongly remind us that every righteous act will be remembered at a time when we most need the interposing aid of the Almighty,-when from amidst the general wreck we shall shine forth, as did Noah, special evidences of the majesty, power, and glory of the Supreme. Let us not hesitate in choosing which road we will pursue in our career through life. The paths of irreligion are enticing and flowery, while those of virtue are rugged and difficult of attainment; but in

the end we will find “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are those of peace.” Let no obstacles, how great soever, oppose our progress; for they will not prove insurmountable, when we exert our energies to overcome them. The power accompanies the will. Even when we have, for a time, been seduced into the easy, though destructive road of sin, we have it in our power to retrace our steps, and return to the glorious path which eventually conducts to the mansions of peace, contentment, and eternal felicity. Let no false sense of shame at the scoffs of the profane, or a senseless compliance with the ways of the world, induce us to neglect those paramount duties which Almighty God hath enjoined on us.

We may be told by many that to act honestly and justly with our fellows is quite sufficient, and comprises all that is required of us, and is as much as we can be expected to attend to, amidst the many pursuits of consequence which must occupy a paramount degree of consideration. They who argue in this manner may think they entertain a higher notion of the greatness and majesty of the Supreme. They may say that He, the All-wise, the Omnipotent, the Infinite, deigns not to trouble himself with the doings of man -man, so small a speck in the boundlessness of creation. To think otherwise is blasphemy; to imagine differently is to lessen the awfulness, the holiness, and the glory of the Almighty. But what!-after God hath created man in such perfection, hath bestowed on him faculties of which no other creature can boast, hath infused into him an immortal soul, hath formed him after his own moral image, and placed him at the very apex of creation,-what! is he then set at large, free from all superior obligations yet slave to his own passions? So far from aggrandizing the Eternal, it is detracting from his wisdom and goodness, to suppose that He would abandon his creatures to their evil ways, and impose on them no requirements, no active duties by which they might merit his love and favour. No, brethren, guard against this false doctrine; let it be your constant wish to pay obedience to the sacred laws of Heaven. The duties of religion are active ones, and are practical in their nature. In these consist, and on these depend what is termed in Sacred Writ, “Walking With God.”

We approach Thee, O Eternal and Almighty God! with hearts over flowing with gratitude for the manifold mercies of which we have been the recipients. Great have been thy kindness and love unto us, the creatures of thy bounty; and these have been enhanced by our having been undeserving of so many manifestations of thy divine favour. Lord! when we reflect how oft we have transgressed, how frequently we have departed from thy ways, and pursued the opposite course to that indicated in Thy holy word, we are filled with shame at our impiety. We know not how to come before Thee with our supplications, for we are not so hardened of heart as to say, “We have not sinned.” Yea, we have by our own acts forfeited all right to thy favour. Yet we beseech Thee, O merciful Father! neither to look on our transgressions, nor to regard our iniquities, but accord to us Thy pardon for the past, and strengthen us to act rightly for the future. May it be Thy will, O God! to deal bountifully with all who have assembled here to render Thee thanks for all the good derived from Thy merciful hand, and who have congregated in this, Thy holy sanctuary, to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. When we enter its portals, may we be endued with the knowledge “that this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Grant that our prayers may ascend on high to Thy throne of grace, and be favourably received by Thee, and let thy blessing rest on us all, according to thy promise, “In whatsoever place cause my name to be remembered, will I come unto thee and bless thee.” Amen.

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